ABLEISM, RACISM & COLONIALISM IN CANADIAN IMMIGRATION

ABLEISM, RACISM AND COLONIALISM IN CANADIAN IMMIGRATION: EXPLORING CONSTRUCTIONS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

By YAHYA EL-LAHIB, BSW, MSW

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Lay Abstract

This study looked at the ways in which immigration and disability intersect and what this means for social work practice, policy and research. Through a Critical Discourse Analysis of official immigration documents and interviews with immigrants with disabilities, family members and service providers, the study examined the pre-application and application stages of immigration, as well as settlement issues. The main finding of the study is that discourses of opportunity are central in shaping these stages, while reinforcing ableism, racism and colonialism. Implications for future research, policy and practice are laid out to push for a social work role that moves beyond applying oppressive policies and practices to being more in line with principles of social justice.

Abstract

This dissertation reports on the findings of a study that set out to examine how discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism shape Canadian immigration policies, and settlement practices. This research examined how these discourses contribute to constructing immigration applicants with disabilities as an inadmissible social group. With a focus directed to the application process as a key knowledge gap in the intersection of disability and immigration, I launched this study with the aim of answering the following main research question: "***How do discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism construct immigration applicants with disabilities?***

Through a critical discourse analysis study of official Citizenship and Immigration documents as well as episodic interviews with 23 participants (immigrants with disabilities, family members, and service providers), findings demonstrate the importance of understanding immigration as a continuum from pre-application to settlement. I argue that the immigration process is shaped and defined by central discourses that construct immigration as an *opportunity* for a better life through which ableist, racist and colonial discourses are reflected and reinforced. Social workers and other helping professionals involved in settlement services for immigrants with disabilities play significant roles in how discourses of opportunity are actualized and materialized. The dissertation ends with implications for critical research, theory and social work practice.

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I am indebted to the people who shared their stories in this study and opened the space for us to learn from their experiences. Your contributions to the development of this study not only pushed me to grow and learn, but also has the potential to push social work as a profession to be more critical and attuned to experiences of marginalization of people with disabilities; and for that and many other reasons, I am forever grateful!

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Dad, Sam, I dedicate this work to you!

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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

AODA: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

CASW: Canadian Association of Social Workers

CASWE: Canadian Association of Social Work Education

CCD: Council for Canadians with Disabilities

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

CIC: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

DHA: Discourse-Historical Approach to CDA

DRA: Dialectical-Relational Approach to CDA

ENF: Enforcement Manuals

ERDCO: Ethno Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario

IP: Inland Processing

IL: Immigration Legislation

IR: Reference Manuals

IRPA: Immigration and Refugees Protection Act

ISAP: Immigration Settlement Adaptation Program

LINK: Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

NSP: Newcomers Settlement Program

OCASI: Ontario Counsel of Agencies Serving Immigrants

ODSP: Ontario Disability Support Program

OHRC: Ontario Human Rights Commission

OP: Overseas Processing

SCA: Sociocognitive Approach to CDA

UN: United Nations

Declaration of Academic Achievement

This dissertation and the research study it reports on are the sole contribution of the author.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation is born out of my history of activism with the disability justice movement to interrogate the intersection of three fields of study: disability, immigration and social work. My social justice involvement in the Global South and continued engagement with critical scholarships have fuelled my passion for conducting this Critical Discourse Analysis study that included participant interviews and a review of official immigration documents. Over the past six years, I have explored various research studies and theoretical articles and a clear gap in the literature emerged in terms of the intersection of disability and immigration, which has prompted my interest in conducting the research reported on in this dissertation. Driving this dissertation is the following research question: ***How do discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism construct immigration applicants with disabilities?*** In answering this question, I argue that the central discourse of opportunity gives life to dominant discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism in shaping the immigration application process and beyond. Specifically, I demonstrate how discourses of opportunity shape three interconnected stages of the immigration application: pre-application, during the application and after the fact of immigration. Within each of these stages, social work and other helping professions play an important role in promoting, facilitating and actualizing various discourses of opportunity for immigrants and newcomers with disabilities[1].

Indeed, Canada promotes itself as a place of "exciting opportunity" for

[1] I rely on "people with disabilities" language in this dissertation in recognition of the predominant usage of the term in the Canadian context and its association with political and activist circles as well as the academic scholarship; however, I am aware that "disabled people" is the term of choice to reflect a political understanding of disability issues in some other geographic contexts. At times, for grammatical or stylistic reasons, I also use the term "disabled".

immigrants and newcomers (Citizenship and Immigration Canada--CIC, 2013a, "Start Your Life in Canada," para. 1), yet the critical question at the centre of this dissertation is *opportunities for whom and at what cost?* The dissertation begins with this question in an attempt to highlight the complexities that surround the relationship between immigration and disability. In fact, Canadian immigration policies and practices have intensified the marginalization experiences of specific social groups. It has been well documented in the scholarship that Canadian immigration policies have historically been shaped by economic priorities and have aimed to serve colonial, racist, sexist and ableist agendas by constructing immigrants to meet these aims (El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012; Galabuzi, 2006; Isajiw, 1999; Li, 2001; Thobani, 2000, 2007).

Currently, Canadian immigration policies and practices largely exclude people with disabilities from becoming immigrants (Chadha, 2008; El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012; Hanes 2009; Wong, 2011). As a disability activist, I see such exclusionary practices as contradictory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In fact, these practices have been challenged by this convention, the first principle of which recognizes "[r]espect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons" (United Nations, 2006, "Article 3," para. 1). As a signatory country to this convention, Canada has indicated a commitment to its principles. Yet, when examined through a critical disability lens, official Canadian immigration policies and practices continue to reflect and reinforce ableist discourses that construct people with disabilities as a dependent and unwanted social group, and hence, inadmissible (Chadha, 2008; Hanes, 2009; Wong,

2011). This in turn places Canada in a contradictory place to its stated national and international commitments to human rights (CCD, 2013).

Indeed, authors such as Groce (2005), Hanes (2009), as well as Harris and Roberts (2004) contend that immigration policies and practices have intensified the marginalization experiences of people with disabilities. However, these authors argue that this area has not received sufficient attention in discussions of immigration and hence, our knowledge of the impact of these policies and practices on people with disabilities has remained limited and defined by dominant discourses such as ableism, racism, and neocolonialism.

While the extant scholarship does address the intersection of immigration, racism, sexism and colonialism, these discussions have not taken people with disabilities and disability issues into account (Castles, 2002; Dua, Razack, & Warner, 2005; Galabuzi, 2006; Henry, 2009; Laurence & Dua, 2005; Li, 2001; Palmer, 2002; Simmons, 1998; Soldatic & Fiske, 2009; Thobani, 2000, 2007). In addition, there has been little, if any, exploration of how immigration and disability interlock with colonialism and a history of unjust North/South power dynamics and relations. However, there is an emerging body of scholarship that examines disability issues from a postcolonial perspective which opens the door for explorations of intersecting and interlocking systems of oppression and their impacts on the immigration experiences of people with disabilities, especially those from the Global South (e.g. Chataika, 2012; Dingo, 2007; Ghai, 2001, 2012; Grech, 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Meekosha, 2011; Sherry, 2007). This scholarship contests the dominance of knowledge and theorizing of disability issues developed in the Global

North and argues that this dominance can be traced back to historical and contemporary manifestations of colonialism.

Moreover, this scholarship calls for knowledge and theorizations from the Global South to emerge and marry knowledge produced in the Global North in a way that allows for mutual and collaborative relationships where power imbalances are not only acknowledged, but also shifted to account for knowledges and theorizations of disability developed in the Global South. This in turn would challenge dominant discourses about people with disabilities developed in the Global North (e.g. discourses of dependency, burden of care, etc.) currently reflected within Canadian immigration (Chadha, 2008; El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012; Hanes, 2009; Wong, 2011). Such a shift in discourses would have a direct impact on how people with disabilities are constructed which may have a bearing on social policies as well as service allocation and delivery within immigration and settlement programs that are important aspects of social work practice.

In fact, key disability scholars such as Sapey and Oliver (2006), Hughes (2004), Shakespeare (2006), Meekosha and Dowse (2007) as well as Dunn, Hanes, Hardie & MacDonald (2006) emphasize that the helping professions including social work have consistently adopted medical models in working with people with disabilities. These scholars argue for the need to move beyond such problematic and limited conceptions which focus in individual aspects of experience (e.g. cure, recovery, rehabilitation, etc.) and do not take into account broader sociopolitical, economic and intersectional experiences such as immigration. Considering that the social work profession is implicated in implementing social policies, the aim of this study is to contribute to

challenging marginalizing and oppressive immigration policies and practices as well as to contribute to advancing disability rights on government agendas and in public opinion.

This study also aims to address the theoretical gaps mentioned above and to contribute to enhancing our knowledge and practice on issues of immigration, disability and settlement in a way that reflects social work's commitment to challenging oppression and working towards social justice, as indicated within the profession's Code of Ethics (Canadian Association of Social Workers--CASW, 2005a, 2005b). As such, the study relies on a theoretical understanding that highlights the role of social justice as it intersects with disability and immigration, as will be explained later in the chapter on theoretical dimensions guiding this study.

Finally, as will be discussed in the literature review chapter, the studies that do exist are mostly focused on examining the immigration or refugee experiences of people with disabilities *after the fact* of immigration. This has meant that the majority of existing research examines aspects of settlement and resettlement issues. This dissertation addresses these knowledge gaps by providing a better understanding of the dominant discourses that construct immigration applicants with disabilities as inadmissible and shape the conduct of social work and other helping professions involved in providing settlement services. To this end, the dissertation begins with a discussion of the practice context by presenting some background on the application process and available settlement and resettlement policies and programs in the Canadian context.

Current Canadian Immigration Application & Settlement Programs & Services

Immigration in Canada is rooted in multiculturalism which is based on the "belief

that all citizens are equal and that diversity makes us stronger as a country" (CIC, 2010, Respect Differences section, para. 2). Multiculturalism has been recognized as a "fundamental Canadian characteristic" where the government is committed to acknowledging, recognizing and ensuring the acceptance of all Canadians regardless of their race, ethnicities, cultures, religion, and countries of origins[2] (CIC, 2014a, "Twenty-Five Years," para. 1). According to CIC, a sixth of Canadian residents were born outside the country (CIC, 2012a). In fact, CIC notes in its annual report to the Canadian Parliament that "immigration is fundamental to the development of Canada's economy, society and culture, and Canada strives to be a world leader in maximizing its benefits" (CIC, 2012b, "Integration of Newcomers," para.1).

There are currently seven types of immigration applications which could potentially lead to receiving permanent residency status—these are described amply at the link below (CIC, 2013b)[3]. These application types are divided into two main categories, the majority of which emphasize the aforementioned focus on the economy: immigration programs for workers and sponsorship programs. The first category includes: Federal skilled workers, Federal skilled trades program, Canadian experience class, Quebec selected skilled workers, Provincial nominees, Start-up visas, Self-employed people, and Caregivers. The second category includes family sponsorship and sponsoring refugees. Each of these application types has its own requirements; however, these applications are

[2] Although the cultural model of disability is recognized in critical disability academic and activist circles, an understanding of disability as culture is not recognized or included under Canada's definition of multiculturalism. Moreover, as I do not rely on the cultural model of disability in this dissertation, understanding disability through a cultural diversity lens is not part of the theoretical underpinnings of the study discussed in Chapter 3.

[3] http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/index.asp

assessed relying on the same principles and tools according to CIC—these principles and measurement guidelines are taken up again in the discussion of findings based on the CIC immigration documents. Participants in this study came to Canada through sponsorship, as refugees, or as skilled workers. Importantly, as will be demonstrated later in the findings, skilled workers constructed their applications (and indeed, their identities) in ways that strategically played up the invisibility of their disabilities to become admissible.

Given the importance of immigration for Canada, the government invests in settlement and integration programs made available for newcomers to facilitate their fast settlement and ensure their integration process (CIC, 2012a). Settlement is defined by CIC as the "initial and short-term transitional issues faced by newcomers" while integration refers to the "ongoing process of mutual accommodation between individual and society" (CIC, 2012b, Settlement section, para.1). Canadian immigration and settlement policies, programs and practices are shared responsibilities among all levels of government and different aspects of immigration or settlement are the jurisdiction of federal, provincial, territorial or municipal governments (CIC, 2011, 2012b). The federal government through CIC funds, manages and co-manages settlement programs and services and oversees the implementation of such programs offered through partnership with provinces, territories and non-governmental organizations (CIC, 2012a, 2012b). CIC funds and administers three settlement programs for immigrants: The Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP); The Host Program; and the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program (CIC, 2005).

As for the provincial government of Ontario, which is where this study is situated,

its role in settlement can be seen through its Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP), which aims to facilitate the early settlement of newcomers in Ontario (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants--OCASI, 2000). Through this program, the government of Ontario oversees the implementation of settlement services delivered by community settlement agencies across the Province. These services help newcomers to settle in their new communities by assisting them through housing and employment services, language and skills training programs to get their foreign credentials assessed, as well as information and referral about important federal and provincial services and documents such health cards, social insurance numbers and other essential social services (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, 2009). Similar programs are offered at the municipal level with a specific focus on services delivered through various city facilities such as public libraries or neighbourhood centres; similar types of services are offered in various municipalities covered in this study[4].

While none of the programs mentioned so far address people with disabilities specifically, it is important to note a recent development in terms of improving settlement services related to newcomers with disabilities in Ontario. A new collaboration between OCASI and the Ethno-Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario (ERDCO) recognizes the settlement needs of newcomers with disabilities through the recently completed "Welcoming and Inclusive Communities: Accessibility Project". Funded by CIC, the project designed and implemented a training curriculum for Ontario settlement

[4] See www.toronto.ca; http://www.immigrationpeel.ca/en/about-peel-region/settlement-services.asp; and http://settlement.org/findhelp/ontario/hamilton/ for more detailed information on examples of municipal programs in Toronto, Brampton, Mississauga and Hamilton.

workers with a focus on accessibility and implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The project also sought to design and implement a strategy that promotes networking and the building of "bridges between the disability and the settlement sectors" (Settlement at Work, 2012; OCASI, ERDCO, 2013; CIC, 2012a, 2012b).

In summary, the emphasis throughout available programs and research has on the whole been on settlement and resettlement issues with little or no discussion of the experience of immigration during the application process for people with disabilities. This study addresses this gap through an examination of the application process, but also discuss settlement experiences as these were important aspects of participants' narratives considering that the immigrants and service providers interviewed for this research were already in Canada.

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 presents a literature review outlining the main themes in the existing scholarship relevant to this research, specifically the emphasis placed on settlement issues and the importance of intersectionality in understanding the experiences of people with disabilities in immigration. Chapter 3 describes the theoretical dimensions underpinning this research, where I propose an intersection of disability, colonial and social justice dimensions to examine the topic of this study, through a focus on knowledge production, constructions of the Other[5] and ways of resistance. Chapter 4 outlines the methodology

[5] I capitalize Other to signify a distinction between the process of colonial construction of Otherness (please see Barsamian & Said, 2003) and the more mundane uses of the term "other". For direct quotes from other scholars' work, I do not capitalize the term if it appears in miniscule.

and specifically, the theoretical underpinnings of the various Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approaches that guide this study, the Sociocognitive Approach, the Discourse-Historical Approach, and the Relational-Dialectical Approach. Also outlined are some key principles of CDA that guide the analysis including the importance of context, ideology and power. This discussion is followed in Chapter 5 by the detailed data collection and analysis methods adopted in this study including information about study participants and a discussion of some key ethical tensions and considerations.

Moving from background knowledge that underpins this study theoretically and methodologically, Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 present the findings. As Chapter 6 provides a detailed overview of the findings and what is included in each subsequent chapter, I refrain from repeating this information here. Briefly however, the findings chapters are divided into the three stages of immigration including: the pre-application, the application and post-application (landing and settlement). The findings presented in these chapters are discussed in Chapter 10 where the focus is on the main themes emerging from the analysis. The dissertation ends with Chapter 11 which discusses the implications for theory, practice and policy as well as directions for future research. In doing so, I return full circle to the ideas presented in this introduction to highlight the importance of critically examining discourses if we are to contribute to a socially just and anti-oppressive social work practice. In keeping with a commitment to advance this understanding of social work, throughout this dissertation, I engage in a process of critical reflexivity informed by my history of activism.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

While immigration and disability are both considered fields of practice for social work, there has been little attention paid to understanding the experiences of people with disabilities as immigrants. Several scholars highlight the dearth of attention to the impacts of immigration policies and practices on people with disabilities within the social work scholarship (El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012; Groce, 2005; Hanes, 2009; Harris & Roberts, 2004; Wong, 2011). This chapter reviews studies on the intersection of immigration and disability from social work and connected fields and discusses three main themes identified in the scholarship.

The first theme explores the historical development and evolution of Canadian immigration policies and practices that demonstrate the exclusion of immigrants with disabilities (e.g. Chadha, 2008; El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012; Hanes, 2009; Wong, 2011). The second theme focuses on settlement and resettlement and specifically service provision and accessibility of programs in Canada and other countries for immigrants and refugees with attention paid to individuals with disabilities (e.g. Albrecht, Develiger, & Van Hove, 2009; Cramer & Plummer, 2009; Islam, 2008; Mirza, 2011a, 2011b; Mirza & Heinemann, 2012;). A smaller number of studies focus on the third theme of the importance of intersectionality, specifically the intersections of disability, race, ethnicity, culture, gender and citizenship status and their impact on shaping access to settlement services and experiences (e.g. Dossa, 2006, 2009; Meekosha, 2006, 2008, 2011).

Focus on Exploration of Immigration Policies & Practices

A handful of available historical examinations concur that as far as can be traced

back, Canadian immigration has systematically excluded people with disabilities from becoming immigrants (Chadha, 2008; Hanes, 2009; Wong, 2011). Exclusionary policies and practices have relied on selection criteria such as normalized and dominant health discourses, education and employment, to determine admissibility of immigration applicants.

In his comprehensive historical review of Canadian immigration legislations, Hanes (2009) argues that although Canada has made efforts throughout the years to change its racist, sexist and homophobic immigration policies to accommodate social inclusion of historically excluded social groups, people with disabilities remain excluded and subject to ableist legislations that restrict their opportunities to immigrate. The author also questions the ethics of such exclusionary practices and interrogates the moralities that allow for social acceptance of such oppressive policies, and the overemphasis on medical discourses that have underpinned Canadian immigration policies. Moreover, in analyzing the role that discourses play in the introduction of the excessive demands clause[6] in 1967, Hanes observes that the interpretation of this clause has "made it impossible for people with disabilities and their families to immigrate to Canada" (p. 116) as they are seen to pose an economic burden to health and social service systems.

Similarly, Chadha (2008) focuses her historical analysis on examining the exclusionary discourses and language found in early Canadian immigration statutes between 1859 and 1927 that targeted and constructed people living with mental health

[6] A complete official definition and procedures for applying the excessive demands clause is available at: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/medic/admiss/excessive.asp; please also see Appendix P for a copy of the Federal Government's Statement on excessive demands.

disabilities as being "automatically" inadmissible (p. 2). She adds that admitting these populations and "their likes" (p. 9) was perceived to create a financial burden on social services and charities. Chadha (2008) questions the social constructions and discourses that have historically underpinned Canadian immigration laws and legislations that saw people living with mental health disabilities as "incapable of contributing to their communities—that they are morally and mentally weak, unproductive, in need of family and public support, and therefore, a liability for society as a whole" (p. 11). The author concludes that these discourses continue today to shape the inadmissibility of immigration applicants living with mental health histories. In fact, an examination of current immigration practices identifies how people with disabilities have been perceived and treated as a "non-preferred" social group due to their construction as dependent and burden of care on Canadian social and health systems (El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012, p. 96).

Further, The Council for Canadians with Disabilities (CCD, 2013, Immigration section, para. 6) asserts that contemporary immigration "devalues Canadians with disabilities and does nothing to recognize the contribution persons with disabilities and their families can and do make to Canadian society". Indeed, CCD argues "Canadians with disabilities realize that if they had not been born here they could never become a (sic) Canadian for the simple reason that they have a disability" (cited in Hanes, 2009, pp. 91-92). However, when people with disabilities do immigrate under the family sponsorship category or as refugee claimants, they face constant fear of deportation unless exempted from such a fate based on humanitarian grounds (CCD, 2012, 2013; ERDCO, 2005).

In addition, an important point raised by Chadha (2008) and echoed by Wong (2011) concerns the use of inadmissibility based on mental health and/or disability to target unwanted or non-preferred ethnic groups. Chadha notes that cultural norms about "appropriate behaviour" as understood in Canada were used to construct immigrants from unwanted cultures or ethnicities as inadmissible based on "mental fitness" (p. 29-30). Similarly, Wong asserts that constructing people with disabilities as "undesirable also serves to impose the identity of disabled" (p. 11) on other unwanted populations. The author provides the example of constructing thousands of Black immigrants from Oklahoma in the late 19th Century as disabled because they were assumed to be unable to survive in the Canadian climate. As such, constructing people with disabilities as inadmissible not only served to keep unwanted applicants with disabilities out, but was also used to keep out unwanted racial and ethnic populations. This historical development offers a clear example of the intersection of racism, colonialism and ableism within immigration, contemporary echoes of which were reflected by this study's participants, as will be discussed in more detail in the findings chapters.

Further, in an exploration from Australia, Jakubowicz and Meekosha (2002) argue that people with disabilities have been excluded from practices of nation-building and note that imposing immigration restrictions on applicants with disabilities permits the state to declare these bodies as Other. This is echoed in Soldatic and Pini's (2009) case study of public policy that examined Australian attitudes and shifts from citizenship rights and entitlements to "deservingness". Specifically, the authors utilize the work of Hancock who coined the term the "politics of disgust" to refer to the emotionally charged

negative constructions of welfare recipients. Soldatic and Pini (2009) refer to this term to explore how similar constructions have characterized the exclusion and ableism shaping the welfare state's relationship to the entitlements of people with disabilities. In Canada, Wong (2011) utilizes Foucauldian discourse analysis to examine Canadian immigration policies and state practices and concludes that ableism is a foundational element of the Canadian nation state that plays a major role in the pathologizing and "marking of bodies as disabled" (p. 6). In turn, these historical and contemporary immigration policies and legislations shape how settlement services are defined, prioritized and implemented as discussed next.

Emphasis on Settlement & Resettlement Practices

While there are some studies that focus on the intersection of disability and immigration, the majority of available scholarship exploring displacement experiences of people with disabilities focus on the refugee experience (e.g. Harris, 2003; Harris & Roberts, 2004; Mirza 2011a, 2011b; Mirza & Heinemann, 2012; Roberts, 2000; Straimer, 2011). As such, considering the relative scarcity of studies that address the experiences of immigrants with disabilities, the discussion also includes studies with refugees. Moreover, there is a lack of scholarship focusing on the settlement experiences of refugees and immigrants with disabilities within the Canadian context. Therefore, the discussion includes scholarship from outside of Canada.

Within the body of literature exploring the intersection of immigration, refugee experience and disabilities, two main sub-themes emerge: the allocation and prioritization of services in ways that exclude people with disabilities in areas such as education, health

care, employment and youth programs (e.g. Albrecht, Develiger, & Van Hov, 2009; Chung & Samperi, 2004; Cramer & Plummer, 2009; Islam, 2008); and the lack of preparedness of social workers and settlement workers to work with immigrants and refugees with disabilities (Groce, 2005; Harris & Roberts, 2004).

In terms of the accessibility of settlement services, available studies explore barriers experienced by refugees and asylum-seekers with disabilities in Britain (e.g. Harris, 2003; Harris & Roberts, 2004; Roberts, 2000), the United States (e.g. Mirza, 2011b; Mirza & Heinemann, 2012), Australia (e.g. Meekosha, 2006, 2008, 2011; Soldatic & Fisk, 2009; Soldatic, Meekosha, & Somers, 2012; Soldatic & Pini, 2009), some European countries (e.g. Albrecht, Develiger, & Van Hove, 2009; Gabel, Curcic, Powell, Khader, & Albee, 2009; Straimer, 2011), and within refugees camps in various Global South countries including Kenya and Nepal (Mirza, 2011a; Mirza, 2014).

For example, in their examination of the service needs and gaps experienced by refugees with disabilities settling in the United States, Mirza and Heinemann (2012) argue that they are more likely to experience difficulties when accessing services due to cultural and language barriers as well as poor outreach of service providers among ethnic communities. The authors argue that such difficulties can be attributed to the intersection of culture, ethnicity and disability. These findings are also echoed by Harris (2003) who notes that refugees with disabilities in the UK who had faced barriers to health and safety in their home countries, face similar barriers during their settlement experiences in accessing social services and benefits to which they are entitled. They also face difficulties in creating social contacts and accessing basic necessities such as

employment, food and housing. The author links these barriers to language difficulties and lack of access to information on social services and benefits.

Furthermore, in their discussion of Chinese American immigrants living with "chronic" mental health concerns, Chung and Samperi (2004) highlight the issue of acculturation. The authors note that settlement experiences of this population are complicated by marginalization. These newcomers are marginalized due to the "prejudices and discrimination" they face as Chinese immigrants that makes their "assimilation" in American society challenging. Moreover, they face marginalization within their own ethnic group because of their lived experiences with mental health issues (p. 142). The authors describe key aspects of a community treatment day program that facilitates dealing with the marginalization impacting on settlement and integration of this population. These aspects include: designing activities that affirm cultural identity; presenting clients with a multi-ethnic community program that reflects the diversity of American society; and placing an emphasis on conceptions of mental health that de-pathologize illness and treatment. The authors also highlight the importance of family involvement on treatment and easing the settlement process.

Within the Australian context, Soldatic, Meekosha, and Somers (2012) examine the impacts that the marginalization of people with disabilities in immigration has on the health and well-being of their families, especially those from the Global South. These impacts include unbearable financial and emotional costs, challenges to family structures and stability as well as direct health impacts and increased economic insecurity. Similarly, based on a review of the scholarship, Welterlin and LaRue (2007) emphasize

the importance of collaborating with families in understanding the specific cultural values and needs of their children with autism and in designing and implementing relevant interventions.

In addition to a lack or inaccessibility of services for people with disabilities, some studies argue that social workers and settlement services are not well equipped to work with immigrants with disabilities (Groce, 2005; Harris & Roberts, 2004). Based on interviews with social workers and settlement workers in Britain, Harris and Roberts (2004) note the need for better preparedness within social service provision to asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities. The authors observe that while these workers wanted to assist this population, they were bound by policy constraints and felt "confused" and "ill-informed" about entitlements that apply specifically to asylum-seekers and refugees with disabilities (pp. 157-159). Workers also reported feelings of "defensiveness" (p. 158) about assigning responsibility for these cases—i.e. not knowing whether these applicants should be placed with a team focusing on disability or asylum issues. The authors conclude that this has contributed to a situation of fragmentation of the experience of service provision, which calls for the "urgent need for staff training" (p. 159). This issue of fragmentation and training will be discussed more amply in the findings chapters as these were raised by participants as important aspects of service provision.

Similarly in the United States, Groce (2005) argues that while the number of immigrants with disabilities and their families from cultural minorities is on the rise (due to a rise in immigration in general), this has not translated into better knowledge of the

issues faced by people with disabilities nor informed better service provision. In turn, their access to settlement services and other programs (e.g. rehabilitation) is severely limited. The author points out that the concept of cultural sensitivity is inadequate to enhance working with this population. Instead, there is a need for social workers to have not only a greater and more in-depth understanding of culture and ethnicity but also a grasp of culturally-relevant (as opposed to universalized) definitions and understandings of disability.

Within the Canadian context, a recent study by OCASI and ERDCO found that newcomers with disabilities face additional barriers to settlement services as a result of "[c]hallenges in the interaction with settlement workers, due to a lack of understanding of disability issues in general and a lack of capacity, and resources to service them" (Settlement at Work, 2012, General Findings section, para. 1). As noted in Chapter 1, this research collaboration has resulted in designing and delivering a training curriculum for settlement workers and a strategy to promote networking between the disability and settlement sectors.

The Importance of Intersectionality

In addition to the above-noted importance of culture, authors such as Dossa (2006, 2009), Heller (2009), and Meekosha (2006, 2011), as well as Soldatic and Fiske (2009) emphasize the need to recognize intersecting elements of identity. These authors argue that elements such as race, gender, sexualities, and class are important to consider when examining issues of disability and immigration.

For example, through a case study of Fahima, an Iranian woman with disability,

Dossa (2006) questions the construction of social identities and markers within Canada and the roles that immigration policies and state institutions play in the process of defining national identity. The author focuses on the resistance and agency that Fahima embodies when challenging social perceptions about her as a racialized woman and provides an analysis of identity construction. Intersections of race, gender, ability, class and many other social markers render the issues at stake more complex. For example, Dossa (2006) examines how a North/South analysis shapes and impacts who is Othered based on social markers such as normative constructions of ability. Meekosha (2008, 2011) questions the role of colonialism in the production of impairment in the Global South by examining its impairing effects such as war, drugs exporting and trials, the outbreaks of polio in war-torn countries which results of the disruption of immunization, torture, rape, nuclear testing and the exportation of pollution, among other factors.

Furthermore, Meekosha (2006, 2008, 2011) argues that immigration restrictions faced by people with disabilities in Australia are in accordance with building the "new social order" that brings together a history of colonialism, exclusionary immigration policies and practices as well as a collision of race and disability. This point is supported by Soldatic and Fiske (2009) who argue that the intersection of disability and race discourses in Australian immigration reinforces marginalization and increases "the risk of serious human rights violations against people with disabilities from non-Anglo backgrounds" (p. 290). Based on case studies of people seeking asylum in Australia, the authors conclude that policies favour their detention based on the notion that they are deemed "undesirable" as they do not fit race and ability norms and may thus pose a

presumed threat to the "integrity" of the nation (p. 299). Indeed, as will be discussed later in this dissertation, the findings of this study echo the intersections between nation-building discourses and the constructions of inadmissibility of people with disabilities.

Gaps & Limitations

In addition to a general dearth of available studies on immigration and disability, there are several gaps and limitations that I sought to address in this research. First, with the exception of the historical examination of Canadian immigration policies (Chadha, 2008; Hanes, 2009; & Wong, 2011), the organizational study by ERDCO and OCASI, as well as Dossa's (2006, 2009) case studies with racialized women with disabilities (where immigration is not the focus) there are no Canada-specific studies. Most of the available studies are from the US, UK, Europe and Australia. There is a need for Canada-specific studies because of the particularities of this context and history of immigration. The emphasis on multiculturalism in Canada as well as the aforementioned history of racist, ableist, sexist and colonial policies shape immigration experiences of marginalized social groups in specific ways that merit deeper examination (Galabuzi, 2006; Hanes, 2009; Henry, 2009; Isajiw, 1999; Li, 2001; Palmer, 2002; Simmons, 1998; Thobani, 2000, 2007). Hence, this study addresses this gap in knowledge by focusing on the discourses that construct people with disabilities within the Canadian context and shape their experiences in relation to immigration policies and practices.

Second, as noted so far in this dissertation, there is a relative lack of studies that examine disability and immigration, with a clear gap concerning issues faced by people with disabilities from the Global South. As briefly alluded to earlier, the majority of

available studies do not acknowledge Global North/South power dynamics and relations or the history of colonialism and its role in shaping and constructing immigrants' sending and receiving countries; there exist only a few exceptions to this observation (see Dossa, 2006, 2009; El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012; Meekosha, 2006, 2008, 2011; Mirza, 2011a, 2014). I find this to be a key limitation in studying the intersection of disability and immigration as both have been sites of North/South power dynamics.

Specifically, there is a need to challenge the assumed universality and dominance of Northern theories and prioritization of issues related to disability (Chataika, 2012, Ghai, 2001, 2012; Grech, 2011a, 2011b; Goodley, Hughes, & Davis, 2012; Mirza, 2014). As an example, Mirza (2011a) asserts that in humanitarian and refugee camps, tensions between Global North and Global South become very clear when attempts for intervention as understood in the Global North are imposed on the local contexts within these camps. The author concludes that in refugee camps, grassroots disability initiatives have the potential to challenge the dominance of disability theory and practices developed in the Global North and allow for "ideas and practices from the global North and South (to) intersect, engage with and inform each other" (p. 1534). By bringing in an understanding of North/South power dynamics, this research privileges experiences of people with disabilities and their families from the Global South. In keeping with an intersectional analysis, this study acknowledges the heterogeneity of Global South contexts and people's lived realities and builds on this understanding to situate the analysis theoretically and epistemologically. These ideas are developed in more detail through an elaboration of theoretical dimensions related to colonialism, racism, and

disability in Chapter 3.

Third, there is a clear gap in terms of studies that focus on the immigration *application process* of people with disabilities within the Canadian context. Almost all existing studies focus on what I call "after the fact" of immigration (e.g. settlement process and programs, integration, acculturation, etc.), with a clear gap in studies examining experiences before and during immigration application processes[7]. Such a gap is important to address because marginalization happens not only once people with disabilities arrive at the receiving country, but much sooner. As discussed earlier, immigration selection within the Canadian context privileges criteria such as health status, presumed employability and educational attainment, areas where people with disabilities are already marginalized (El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012; Wong, 2011). By examining the experiences of people with disabilities during the application process - not only through settlement but also before and during application stages - this study exposes oppressive discourses and uncovers sites of marginalization that construct admissibility in ways that exclude people with disabilities.

Finally, most studies focus on people with disabilities in terms of accessing services or on how they are constructed as a marginalized social group. Much less of an emphasis is placed on discussion of resistance or agency of people with disabilities. Notable exceptions are the previously referred to works of Dossa (2006, 2009) who provides examples of the agency of women with disabilities in how their identities are

[7] A recent study by Satzewich (2014a, b) explores discrimination in the visa application process for spousal and family applicants to Canada and the role that immigration officers' discretion plays in the determination of admissibility. However, this study does not explore issues of disability or the experiences of applicants with disabilities.

constructed, even though the author's emphasis is not only on immigration. Similarly, Mirza (2011a) provides an example of resistance from the experiences of people with disabilities in refugee camps. The author reports on initiatives taken by refugees with disabilities in some of these camps to "mobilize resources to fill service gaps overlooked by humanitarian agencies" (p. 1531) in addition to other advocacy, organizing and activism attempts and networking based on intersecting identities such as gender, ethnicities and nationalities. Hence, the present study examines how people with disabilities and their families, as well as service providers, negotiate and navigate the application and settlement processes to challenges dominant discourses about people with disabilities as burdens of care and shifts the emphasis onto their agency.

This chapter explored the current state of knowledge on the intersection of disability and immigration within the field of social work and relevant scholarships. The discussion identified some of the gaps within these fields as well as the theoretical tensions within the scholarship as they relate to this doctoral research. As a result, this study takes into account the complexities of North/South power dynamics and relations as well as the impacts of colonialism and neocolonial practices on shaping the current state of knowledge. This research also questions the construction of dominant discourses which define the Othering process that marginalizes people with disabilities and contributes to their oppression within immigration. Taking these complexities into account, the dissertation moves to a discussion of three theoretical dimensions that I constructed to allow my doctoral research to bring together different theoretical frameworks to critically examine the intersection of disability and immigration.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Dimensions

The theoretical bases of this doctoral study are underpinned by critical understanding of the tensions inherent between social justice and social work. Some of these tensions can be seen in the complex relationship between social justice principles, the welfare state, and the professional project of social work (Baines, 2004, 2011; Brodie, 2007; Leonard, 1994; Martin, 2003; Mcdonald, 2006). Other tensions could be located within the philosophical, ideological, or theoretical backgrounds that shape the profession and its essence (Baines, 2004, 2011, Leonard, 1994; Martin, 2003; Pease & Fook, 1999; Pelton, 2001). Addressing such theoretical tensions would allow for a critical understanding of social work as a profession that has a vital role to play not only within the structures of the welfare state but also in questioning transnational issues such as the intersection of immigration and disability. In addition, such a discussion would allow for a critical examination of the complex global sociopolitical and economic realities that influence and shape immigration policies and construct people with disabilities and define their experiences as immigrants.

I am convinced that we can no longer escape the realities of globalization, neoliberalism and other global factors that shape the very essence of our everyday experiences, especially when they reflect the unbalanced power dynamics that define Global North and South relations. Hence, this research explores how theorizing the intersections and interconnections between disability and immigration issues can no longer be assumed to be either locally-specific or universal within the current globalized socio-political and economic contexts of the world. As Ife (2009) suggests, " in the

current social, economic and political climate of change and instability, many of the older certainties of social work practice no longer seem relevant" (p. 211). Within such a globalized climate and in light of North/South power relations, Gray (2005) cautions us against the professional imperialism of assuming the universal applicability of social work theories and models developed in the North and argues for the importance of local knowledge from the South. As discussed in Chapter 2, such reliance on Northern models, definitions and issues assumed to be universal has further contributed to the marginalization of people with disabilities in general and within immigration. Therefore, I construct three "theoretical dimensions", described below, to help bridge between theorizations from the Global North and South to shape alternative ways of addressing the marginalization experiences of people with disabilities in both hemispheres. These dimensions are: the "colonial dimension"; "disability dimension"; and "social justice dimension" which is integrated throughout the discussion and not presented as a separate dimension. As will be demonstrated in the findings chapters, these dimensions helped in exploring what perpetuates oppression and marginalization of people with disabilities from the Global South within Canadian immigration policies and practices, while keeping in mind social justice approaches that inform social work theories and practice.

Moreover, as highlighted in Chapter 1, social work as a profession has been heavily critiqued for its limited role in addressing disability issues. Specifically, these critiques are centred on the dominance of medical models of disability that inform social work practice on disability issues where attention is directed to diagnosis, treatment, cure and recovery (Dunn, Hanes, Hardie & MacDonald, 2006; Hughes, 2004; Meekosha &

Dowse, 2007; Sapey & Oliver, 2006; Shakespeare, 2006). Such problematic focus on the medical aspects of disabilities leaves important social issues such as immigration and immigrants with disabilities vulnerable and under control of policies that value only certain bodies and abilities. As such, this maintains the emphasis on education, health and employability to be among the criteria used to determine admissibility and inadmissibility of immigration applicants (El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012). Thus, the dominance of medical models of disability within social work masks the marginalization experiences of people with disabilities within immigration and other interconnected areas such as education and employment which limits the profession's ability to question and challenge such problematic use of dominant discourses of health and ability.

Taking the gaps and limitations identified in the literature review into account, I construct the three dimensions mentioned above to help in responding to the oppressive construction of people with disabilities as the Other and to contribute to constructing an alternative theorization that can eventually build complex understandings of issues of marginalization. I do not attempt to discard theorization developed in the dominant Northern scholarship; instead, I bring together theorizations from the Global North and South to understand how challenges and resistance to marginalization may be informed by the lived experiences of oppression in both global contexts understood here to be diverse and heterogeneous. The overlaps between the three theoretical dimensions at the heart of this dissertation would allow for the creation of alternative discourses related to disability and immigration.

Introducing the Theoretical Dimensions

I utilize the term "theoretical dimension" to refer to a construction that brings multiple theoretical frameworks from the Global North and South together to examine transnational social issues. Specifically, given the complexity of the intersection between social work, disability and immigration, and the diverse experiences of immigration and disability of people from differing parts of the world, I would argue for the need for a theoretical conceptualization that brings multiple frameworks together. Hence, the colonial, disability and social justice dimensions serve the purpose of not only allowing for such complexities to be examined, but also to situate this dissertation on a theoretical grounding that has the potential to respond to the knowledge gaps identified earlier.

Placing the emphasis on knowledge in bringing the three dimensions together, I am interested in how and where they overlap when it comes to informing my understanding of the intersection of disability and immigration. Put differently, I am not interested in a descriptive and general examination of colonialism, its history or current practices, nor disability theorizations and models of practice. Instead, my emphasis is on how colonialism and dominant Northern knowledge have shaped the construction of people with disabilities and their experiences of marginalization within immigration. In addition, I am interested in highlighting experiences of agency and resistance through the use of the interwoven social justice dimension.

Hence, far from a general theoretical description, I focus on the areas of overlap between these dimensions presented through three key themes that inform my understanding of the intersection of disability and immigration. The first is knowledge

production and dominance in terms of North/South power dynamics and relations. A second area of overlap of these theoretical dimensions is the construction and processes of Othering and how these shape the experiences of people with disabilities in immigration. Finally, the third overlap concerns ways of resisting these constructions of Othering which is a theme that is interwoven throughout the discussion of the former two themes. In short, by creating these dimensions, I am interested in understanding how knowledge production informed by colonialism combined with Othering processes based on ableism and sanism shape the immigration experiences of people with disabilities, especially those from the Global South.

Knowledge Production & Dominance in North/South Power Relations

A key theme informed by the overlaps between all three dimensions is knowledge production and its role in perpetuating dominance and unbalanced power dynamics and relations between the Global North and South. Quijano (2000, 2008) asserts that the expansion of Western and European science and knowledge was restricted to and guided by Eurocentric perspectives. The author adds that "without considering the entire experience of colonialism and coloniality it would hardly be possible to explain such a peculiar intellectual track" (p. 221). In addition, Eurocentric science and knowledge were utilized to construct the Other and to create discourses that have shaped and justified the superiority of knowledge produced in the North and the inferiority of the Other and knowledge produced in the South (Chataika, 2012; Ghai, 2001, 2012; McEwan, 2009; Meekosha, 2011; Quijano, 2000, 2008; S. Razack, 1998, 2004, 2008; Said, 1978, 1985).

For example, as previously noted in Chapter 2, a key tension in the scholarship

concerns the assumed universal applicability of Northern knowledge. Specifically, within the postcolonial and critical disability scholarships, authors such as Chatika (2012), Ghai, (2001, 2012), Grech (2011a, 2011b), Meekosha (2008, 2011), Goodley, Hughes, and Davis, (2012), Withers (2012) as well as Wehbi, Elin, and El-Lahib (2010) question the assumed universality of disability theories and practice models, such as the social or the rights models, and call for challenging their impacts on disability theorization within the diverse local contexts in the Global South. Furthermore, these authors problematize the neocolonial roles of international development agencies in reinforcing dominant conceptualizations of disability theories and practice models. A notable aforementioned example concerns resettlement services within refugee camps where Northern models of practice are assumed to be universally applicable (Mirza, 2011a). Similarly, within the social work scholarship, Baskin (2011), Gray (2005), Haug (2005), N. Razack (2009), and Rossiter (2000) problematize the Eurocentric roots of social work and call for a dismantling of the assumed universality of such knowledge which has been imposed on the Global South as well as on Indigenous populations.

Hence, an important beginning point is to understand and capture how the world, under colonialism, was divided into two supposedly homogenous groups: the colonizers and the colonized; and how knowledge has shaped and defined the power dynamics between these worlds and legitimated the knowledge of one at the expense of the Other (Connell, 2007; McEwan, 2009; Meekosha, 2011; Morana, Dusell, & Jauregui, 2008; Quijano, 2000, 2008; S. Razack, 2004, 2008; Said, 1978, 1993). However, I do not aim to reproduce an "*us and them*" binary; instead, my argument begins by questioning these

binaries and suggests that we can move beyond them only by bringing them together, an idea further discussed at the end of the chapter and again at the end of the dissertation.

Of specific relevance to this dissertation is the contention that theoretical explorations of disability issues have been limited. Specifically, dominant theoretical conceptions of disability have developed based on issues and experiences faced by people with disabilities in Global North contexts, which do not necessarily reflect the issues and experiences of people with disabilities in the Global South (Chataika, 2012; Ghai, 2001, 2012; Holden & Beresford; 2002; Meekosha, 2011). Indeed, as Barker and Murray (2010) assert "Disability Studies problematically transports theories and methodologies developed within the Western academy to other global locations, paying only nominal attention to local formations and understandings of disabilities" (p. 219). Parekh (2007) argues that the intersection of disability, gender and colonialism has been ignored in these fields and calls for studies that examine these interconnections. Sherry (2007) adds that understanding how colonialism has and continues to shape disability experiences and issues is an important contribution to critical disability studies. Baker and Murray (2010) remind us that the bulk of disability scholarship that has developed in the Global North "emerged from traditions that emphasized local aspects of social applications" (p. 223) that respond to contextual issues that may not be relevant or applicable in contexts shaped by colonization. Similarly, Chataika (2012) questions transplanting "contested" models of disability developed in the Global North to the Global South without taking into account socio-cultural, economic and political dimensions.

The dominance of these Northern models and theories has led to a situation where

issues of importance to people with disabilities in Global South contexts are not prioritized, if discussed at all (Chataika, 2012; Ghai, 2001, 2012). For example, dominant theoretical understandings have tended to ignore the importance of prevalent discourses about people with disabilities and their experiences in terms of poverty and development (Chataika, 2012; Meekosha, 2011; Wehbi, Elin, & El-Lahib, 2010). In addition, the over-emphasis on Global North contexts in constructing knowledge about people with disabilities and disability issues has resulted in less importance being placed on examining transnational experiences of people with disabilities - such as immigration - especially within the context of historical colonial relations between the Global North and South. As Loomba (2001) argues, displacement is one of the key impacts of colonialism and understanding the experiences of people who have been displaced as "postcolonial subjects" (p. 16) needs to be brought to the forefront of theorization and practice.

Considering the above noted gaps and limitations, the intersection of the colonial and disability dimensions allows us to understand Northern dominance in terms of the theories and issues that are prioritized and those that are absent. To guide the development of alternative theorizations, I enter into this study with a postcolonial understanding of disability, which as Sherry (2007) argues, allows for "examining the relations of domination between and within nations, 'races', or cultures, recognizing the historical roots of such practices within colonialism" (p.11). Furthermore, a postcolonial understanding allows us to examine how these practices continue in new forms of colonialism or neocolonialism (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffen, 2000; Hoogvelt, 2001). (A more comprehensive discussion of postcolonialism and the coloniality of power is taken

up in the next section about constructing the Other).

In her discussion of postcolonial theory and its importance for disability studies, Chataika (2012) asserts that it is "based upon the concepts of otherness and resistance" (p. 254). The author notes that postcolonial theory focuses on the "colonial past" and its impacts and influences on the social and cultural contexts as well as how this past can shape and define understandings of the world in theory and culture. Like Loomba (2001), Sherry (2007), McEwan (2009), Meekosha (2011), and Hoogvelt (2001), Chataika (2012) does not hyphenate postcolonialism implying that the hyphen would suggest the end of colonialism and that "post" is the way to separate between two different eras. Instead these authors assert that colonialism is still alive and it "will always leave some colonial remnants" (Chataika, 2012, p. 254). These remnants have been evident in terms of scholarship about theories and practices related to disability. Indeed, such colonial remnants continue to shape the intersection of disability and immigration by constructing people with disabilities as a potentially inadmissible social group.

I pause here to offer a personal story from my disability activism to contextualize some of the complexities that surround the above noted issues to highlight the dynamics of North/South power relations and their impacts the construction of people with disabilities within both hemispheres. This is especially important in the contemporary context of a transnational, neoliberal and globalized world. After being absent for four years from Lebanon, while attending the 2009 Annual General Strategic Planning Meeting at the disability organization I have been involved with since 1986, an incident happened that prompted many questionings for me. While I was speaking at the meeting,

using terminologies and discourses that we had historically relied upon in our political disability activism, I was interrupted by one of the new employees telling me to use "politically correct language" to refer to people with disabilities. I was advised to use the terms "people with special needs" or "people with additional needs" instead of the Arabic politicized equivalent of "disabled people" or "people with disabilities".

Today as I write about my doctoral research, I am still questioning what was behind that incident, and the way it reflects how issues of power, dominance and control are shaping our psyche and practices, especially in the Global South. I believe this incident reflects how theories, discourses and practices developed in the Global North become legitimated and acceptable sources of knowledge that influence and inform how we address issues of marginalization of people with disabilities in the Global South. It is important to note that I am aware not to generalize and paint all disability movements in the Global South with the same brush. Although I am aware that the terms I was advised to use (e.g. "people with special needs") are not consistent with critical disability scholarship, I contend that these terms stem from a specific "mainstreaming" ideology influenced by Western disability discourses promoted by international institutions such as the World Bank (Dingo, 2007; Ghai, 2001; Meekosha, 2011).

I see the incident as a reflection of how disability activism has adopted discourses that do not emanate from local contexts and realities. I would argue that such discourses were accepted only because they emanated from the Global North and have been promoted by mainstream global organizations (e.g. World Bank, United Nations). This is not to deny activists their agency or their ability to be creative and open to explore

different theorizations to enhance and support their activism. Instead, I see this example as conveying the need to be aware of a reality that governs our practice today globally and locally: Globalization, neoliberalism, neocolonialism and so many other global and local factors are realities we can no longer afford to escape or ignore because they are shaping our practice even at the level of the terminologies and discourses we use.

Another example of such impacts is provided by Chataika (2012) in her discussion of disability and development in various African contexts; the author examines the roles that Global North development agencies and researchers have played in reinforcing the colonial divide that constructs people from the Global North as the "colonial masters" (p. 255) who are bringing development to peoples in the Global South. The author argues that this divide can be seen through language use and dominant charity discourses instead of emancipatory and social justice discourses. Within such discourses, Global North research agencies and institutions are positioned as the experts as opposed to the building of mutual and collaborative relationships where power imbalances are not only acknowledged, but also shifted to account for knowledges and theorizations related to disability developed in the Global South.

Indeed, Chataika (2012) argues that when it comes to disability and development, there is a wealth of knowledge and experience within both Global North and South. However, as discussed earlier, relations of dominance between North and South dictate what counts as a legitimate knowledge, how it should be disseminated and by whom. Imbalances of power have shaped how knowledge produced in the Global South has been challenged and delegitimized by "experts" from the Global North. Speaking specifically

about knowledge dissemination, Chataika (2012) contends that "writers from the Global South seem to be fearful of being challenged about the relevance of their studies by the global North writers" (p. 260).

Returning to the social justice dimension and taking the above arguments into account, it is important to highlight the potential to resist these practices of dominance in knowledge production and legitimation. The understanding of postcolonialism that guides this dissertation includes "the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism" as well as the inclusion of "the history of anti-colonial resistance with contemporary resistance to imperialism and dominant western cultures" (Loomba, 2001, p. 16). Several authors (e.g. Aschcroft et al., 2000; Bush, 2006; Heron, 2007; Hoogvelt, 2001; Loomba, 2001; McEwan, 2009; Said; 1978) assert that postcolonial resistance places an emphasis on decolonization which "seeks to come to terms with the ways in which hegemonic forces of colonisation insidiously pervade the Global South knowledge systems" (Chataika, 2012, p. 265). Postcolonialism also includes anti-colonialism as a form of resistance which focuses on understanding and resisting "the operation of colonialism in political, economic and cultural institutions" (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 14). Bush defines anti-colonialism as:

> any action, individual or collective, violent or lawful, covert or overt, that is critical of, opposes, upsets or challenges the smooth running of colonial rule…This definition embraces all forms of anti-colonial and anti-imperial resistance, but also cultural resistance and the small acts of day to day non-compliance. (p. 37)

Building on this understanding of anti-colonialism, several authors emphasize the need to resist the power dynamics that exist as a result of colonial histories which make it

difficult for the North and South to have equal relations in terms of knowledge validation and legitimation (e.g. Chataika, 2012; Connell, 2007; Ghai, 2001, 2012; Heron; 2007; McEwan, 2009; Meekosha, 2011; S. Razack, 2004). As discussed earlier, knowledge produced in the Global North is assumed to be legitimate, universal and applicable to the various contexts of the Global South; yet the opposite is not held to be true (Connell, 2007; Meekosha, 2011). Hence, unbalanced power dynamics and relations as well as a history of colonialism have reinforced the dominance of knowledge produced in the Global North and constructed the knowledge of the Global South as inferior or rooted in traditionalism (Chataika, 2012; Connell, 2007; Meekosha, 2011).

As a form of resistance to neocolonialism, Chataika (2012) suggests bringing North and South knowledges together from the strong bases of Indigenous and local knowledge systems. Similarly, Connell (2007) as well as Meekosha (2011) propose bringing together and benefitting from theorizations developed in Global North and South. However, in doing so, it is important to take into account colonialism and its impacts on shaping social, economic, cultural and political factors in the South and the history of power imbalances in terms of knowledge production and legitimation (Chataika, 2012; Connell, 2007; Ghai, 2012; McEwan, 2009; Quijano, 2000).

Taking the example of research to guide and inform knowledge production, scholars suggest that it is indeed beneficial to have collaborations between researchers in the Global North and South (Connell, 2007; Chataika, 2012; Ghai, 2012; Goodley, Hughes, & Davis, 2012). For example, disability scholars from the Global South could be proactive when negotiating research agreements with collaborators from the Global

North. By doing so, these researchers would support local research agendas that are defined by their own needs and would actively contribute to building locally relevant research that holds the seeds of independence from Northern experts and agendas. In fact, authors such as Chataika (2012) and Connell (2007) argue that such collaborations, where issues of power dynamics are addressed and accounted for, would "enable both parties to move away from the typical roles of the Global North as a 'giver' and the Global South as a 'receiver'" (Chataika, 2012, p. 262), to allow for equal and just relations to emerge and take place. In addition, the author argues that building Global North and South collaboration should be accompanied by "South-South research collaboration" (p. 262) to allow for a better way to address common challenges faced by countries within the Global South. However, the author cautions researchers involved in South-South collaboration to maintain an equal and balanced relationship so they do not reproduce unbalanced regional power dynamics similar to those between the North and South. This is consistent with how this study positions understanding of the Global South as heterogeneous, as noted earlier.

Considering the history of Northern dominance, I agree that we need a new way of developing collaborations in terms of knowledge production to bring together theories from different parts of the world to better deal with issues of marginalization and exclusion of certain social groups. Doing so would help us articulate theories that bridge between North and South and allow practitioners and scholars to adapt them to their specific contexts and utilize them to improve the living conditions of marginalized social groups, which is important for a social justice oriented social work. In other words, what

I propose here is not to be passive when adopting theories and knowledges developed in the Global North. Instead, I would agree with the examples provided above by Chataika (2012) of claiming these knowledges and theorizations in ways that would help in the resistance project to the dominance of the Global North.

Constructing the Other & the Process of Othering

As discussed earlier, the dominance of Northern knowledge production has contributed to constructing the colonized and racialized Other. This section begins with a brief discussion of Orientalism (Said, 1978) to examine colonialism and imperialism and their impacts on issues of representation and constructing the Other. This is followed by a discussion of the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000, 2008), and how this can help to better understand constructions of the Other in terms of race and class hierarchies that have a bearing on immigration. This section ends with a discussion of constructions of what I call "the Other of the Other" – explained later in this chapter – namely Othering discourses about people with disabilities, which are informed by postcolonial disability scholarship.

Based on his explorations of colonialism in Arab and Islamic societies, Edward Said (1978) advanced a postcolonial theory of Orientalism, which is often referred to as a founding component of contemporary postcolonial theory (McEwan, 2009). Said (1978) defines Orientalism "as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having the authority over the Orient" (p. 3). Utilizing the work of Michel Foucault, specifically the construct of discourse, Said shifts the analysis of colonialism and imperialism from military or economic control to discourses of dominance, where knowledge production is

understood to be central and connected to the operation of power, dominance and constructions of the Other. In fact, Said (1978) asserts "without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systemic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively" (p. 3).

In addition, Said's (1978) work was not about the Orient, but about representations and constructions of the Orient in European and Western texts, imagination, academia, culture, etc. Indeed, as the author confirms, Orientalism "is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment" (p. 6). Said also distinguishes between the Orientalists (those who teach, write about, or research the Orient) and the Orientals (those who are being studied or subjugated to being discoursed, constructed and conditioned). In fact, the author argues that because of Orientalism, "the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action" (p. 7). This is not to deny people who have been subjugated their agency but to show the extent to which constructing the Other is a process that starts with constructing an assumed common identity that shapes and categorizes a population and eliminates their distinctive characteristics by constructing them as a homogeneous Other. In the case of Orientalism, the Other is constructed as "traditional", a discourse that was essential in justifying the colonizing missions to bring the people of the Orient into (Western and European) modernity; as we shall see in the findings chapters, this representation continues today.

Another important theoretical analysis of colonialism and imperialism from Latin

America sheds a different light on constructing the Other and the process of Othering. Building on, and challenging the limitations of postcolonial analysis, Quijano (2000) suggests relying on "coloniality of power" which he argues is more relevant and reflective of the processes of colonial Othering in Latin American contexts. Specifically, Quijano notes that Indigenous peoples in Latin America as well as the peoples who were brought as slaves were "conquered" only when they were stripped of their histories, languages and identities and became constructed as homogenized "Indians", "Negros or Blacks"(p. 219). The author adds that this conquering process was instrumental in establishing world capitalism, and led to the creation and justification of new structures of society, namely, the division between conquerors and conquered. In turn, this division was essential in "naturalizing" relations of power and domination based on "the idea of 'race' and in the 'racial' social classification of world population—expressed in the 'racial' distribution of work" (p. 218).

Quijano (2000) coined the term "coloniality of power" to refer to the construction of the Other according to class and racial hierarchies in which social relations, especially those related to the division of class and labour enforced by Eurocentric and Western (white) capitalism were categorized and based on superior/inferior classifications of the population. Within this system of classification, European white populations were dominant and in control of the structures of society and played a role in establishing the hegemony of their modes of knowledge production. Hence, as several scholars note, race and whiteness became societal structuring principals that guided knowledge production in ways that allowed for the naturalization of racial hierarchies that maintained dominance

and colonialism (Connell, 2007; Morana, Dussel, & Jauregui, 2008; Quijano, 2000; Said, 1978, 1985, 1993; Tascon, 2004; S. Razack, 2004, 2008). Within the social work scholarship, there is recognition that whiteness and race/racism play a key role in experiences of dominance that have perpetuated marginalization (Razack & Jeffery, 2002; Yee, 2005).

Furthermore, according to Morana, Dussel, and Jauregui (2008), contemporary manifestations of coloniality of power can be seen through globalization and neoliberalism which continue to perpetuate hierarchies of race and class through neocolonialism and capitalism. Indeed, the unbalanced global power dynamics and relations that concentrate power, dominance and hegemony in the Global North lead to the need to question them and bring theoretical alternatives from the Global South as a way of resistance (Connell, 2007; McEwan, 2009; S. Razack, 2004). In fact, Tascon (2004) argues that state borders have been an important element of colonial regimes that have led to the construction of social hierarchies and binaries. This has meant that there is a clear racial binary that shapes the social relations and structures that construct those who live within these imposed borders as dominant groups and those constructed as the outsider Others who are seen to present challenges and threats to dominant society.

Tascon's (2004) argument that brings coloniality of power to bear on constructions of refugees and migrants as the Other, allows us to better understand the process of Othering in terms of immigration. In her example of refugee and migrant rejection and treatment in Australia, Tascon (2004) traces these practices back to "histories, both local and global, and dimensions of power that have inserted within them

coloniality, race and whiteness" (p. 239). The author adds that this process also contributes to the construction of discourses that have naturalized the subjugation of Indigenous peoples and migrant populations. Indeed, she contends that these populations have been treated in similar ways within Australian society as racialized non-citizens, under constant surveillance, and subject to exile and/or detention. In addition, the author asserts that these populations are constructed as threats to Australian society, especially in terms of land and land claims that remain at the center of the colonial struggle. She concludes that the history of colonialism and coloniality of power, with its focus on knowledge production centred on issues of race is still a key component that determines constructions of the Other and defines the processes of how the Othering of these populations is operationalized.

Similar processes of coloniality were discussed in an example from the Caribbean by Kamugisha (2007) in his discussion of the "coloniality of citizenship" that refers to the "complex amalgam of elite domination, neoliberalism and the legacy of colonial authoritarianism, which continue to frustrate and deny the aspiration of many Caribbean people" (p. 21). The author contends that "citizenship" refers to the various practices, "tropes of belonging and identity concerns that Caribbean people experience" (p. 21). The author asserts that these practices are the legacy of a colonial history that has shaped social structures underlying the racial order within these postcolonial states and societies and has led to the denial of full citizenship based on racial identity and belonging.

Adding to this analysis of colonialism and immigration, Dossa (2006, 2009) provides an examination of how racism and ableism—defined in detail later in this

thesis—operate in a way that reflects the North/South divide and defines access to citizenship for people with disabilities within contemporary Canadian society. In her re-telling of Fahimeh's story, Dossa (2006) adds complexity to our understanding of racism, immigration and citizenship by integrating an analysis of the experiences of women with disabilities. Indeed, I would argue that citizenship is a playground where constructing the Other and the processes of Othering play out. Bringing the colonial and disability dimensions together, I would further argue that citizenship emphasizes marginalizing constructions that define the borders between entitled citizens and those constructed as "aliens" who remain at the margins.

As such, examining citizenship construction and its role in immigration allowed this study to examine the relationships that govern interactions between individual citizens or social groups and the state. According to Dossa (2006), "Othering and marginalization are the very processes through which Liberal democracies define their identities" (p. 346). Examining citizenship enabled this research to highlight the processes of Othering in the sense that citizenship becomes more than just an eligibility criterion for entitlements such as accessing services and resources, as will be discussed in the findings chapters. The intersection of the two dimensions allowed this study to discern the absence and marginalization of people with disabilities from discussions of immigration and citizenship.

In addition to understanding the construction of the Other according to race and class hierarchies that have impacted and continue to shape immigration experiences, the overlaps between the theoretical dimensions discussed in this dissertation also include an

understanding of the construction of the Other in terms of disability. In order to understand the complexities of the intersections of disability and immigration, and in addition to the afore-mentioned scholarship on coloniality of power and postcolonialism, I rely on critical disability scholarship that examines constructions of disability and people with disabilities as the Other. As highlighted further below, most of this scholarship is from Global North contexts which again confirms the need to build and bring to the forefront theorizations from the Global South.

Chataika (2012) notes that there is no global consensus on the definition of disability, which explains some of the theoretical contradictions and complexities that surround discussions of disability issues. While it is not the focus of this dissertation to enter into the debate about how disability is defined, it is important to position the study in this regard: in this dissertation, disability is conceived of as a socially constructed site of marginalization and oppression where Othering processes take shape (Campbell, 2008a, 2008b, 2012; Dossa, 2006, 2009; Goodley, 2014; Goodley, Hughes, & Davis, 2012; Linton, 1998; Meekosha, 2011; S. Razack, 1998; Turmusani, 2003, Withers, 2012). In his discussion of definitions of disability, Withers (2012) concludes that "[t]hese definitions, like all definitions of marginalized people, are used as forms of control, creating large groups of 'others' when it is useful" (p. 113). The author adds that these definitions are used and controlled by dominant groups to serve their needs. For example, Withers (2012) asserts that under neoliberalism, some groups are in fact denied their disability identity when it comes to accessing services and resources.

An important bridge and overlap between the aforementioned colonial dimension

and the disability dimension discussed here is related to similarities of the Othering process to maintain dominance and control based on elimination of certain identities and the constructions of new ones that serve specific purposes defined by the dominant group. For example, bringing the discussion of coloniality of power and its role in the process of constructing the Other to disability, Grech (2011a) asserts that the historical and contemporary manifestations of colonialism and domination can be seen in the "homogenisation, simplification and generalizations" (p. 89) of disability experiences and issues within the Global South through disability theorization that is conceptualized by the North. Such processes are achieved through discourses that construct people with disabilities in the Global South as a homogenous social group facing similar marginalization and oppression regardless of their local contexts and realities and an intersectional understanding of identities. The author adds that such a homogenizing process contributes to neglecting issues such as poverty and shapes how people with disabilities in the South are constructed by international and Western development agencies. Such constructions are highly influential in informing and guiding these agencies' interventions in the Global South.

Moreover, constructing people with disabilities as the Other based on a process of homogenization and denial of their specific identities serves as a way to control and limit access to entitlements of disability programs. In other words, only those constructed by the dominant group as disabled can benefit from these programs. Such a process prioritizes preserving these programs at the expense of people with disabilities, who are the reason for the existence of these programs in the first place. This example illustrates

that maintaining dominance and control can be achieved by constructing the disabled Other and upholding principles that facilitate the Othering process based on disability identity lines. Relying on the theoretical dimensions as the basis for this study allowed for a better understanding of not only the process that constructs the disabled Other and facilitates Othering experiences, but also how such a process becomes normalized and justified.

Indeed, Withers (2012) argues that this process of Othering reflects the experiences of people who are outside the normative constructions of health and ability. To better understand this experience, I adopt a critical disability lens because it allows for recognizing and interrogating the complexities that occur when disability intersects with gender, sexuality or ethnicity as well as sites of marginalization based on status such as citizenship, poverty, immigration and so on. In adopting this lens, Goodley, Hughes, and Davis (2012) assert that "disability is *the* space from which we think through a host of political, theoretical, and practical issues that are relevant to all" (emphasis in original text, p. 3). A critical disability lens informing the disability dimension would allow for challenging power relations and questioning the dominance of disability studies developed in the Global North in order to allow for alternative theorizations from Global South contexts to emerge (Chataika, 2012; Ghai, 2012; Meekosha, 2011). Hence, a critical disability lens offers the space to bring contested and complementary theorizations together to interrogate and challenge oppression and marginalization of people with disabilities (Goodley, 2014).

Stemming from this critical disability lens, I rely specifically on the theoretical

concepts of "ableism" and to a lesser focus on "sanism", which is discussed where relevant although it was not the main thrust of the analysis in this dissertation. I am also aware of the related concepts of "disablism" and "mentalism", which are important but not central to this dissertation. All of these theoretical concepts refer to different conceptualizations of oppression and marginalization based on ability or disability (Campbell, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Cherney, 2011; Chataika, 2012; Dossa, 2006; Ghai, 2001; 2012; Goodley, Hughes, & Davis, 2012; Holden & Beresford, 2002; Meekosha, 2011; Poole, 2011; Poole et al., 2012; Withers, 2012).

At the outset of this discussion, it is important to acknowledge that these theoretical conceptions have been developed in the Global North and I use them cautiously because they could potentially impose a universal Western discourse of disability (Chataika, 2012; Ghai, 2001, 2012; Meekosha, 2008, 2011). However, in keeping with my contention that we need to marry theorizations while keeping in mind power differences in knowledge production, I take from these theorizations the importance of understanding disability as a site of oppression where ableism/disablism and sanism/mentalism come into play. In other words, and in keeping with the critical disability scholarship that I rely upon in the disability dimension, I use such terms to refer to the Othering of people with disabilities based on conceptualizations of ability and disability.

Here, I build on the argument advanced by Goodley (2014) who calls for expanding the ways we understand and theorize critical "dis/ability" studies to respond to contemporary global challenges such as neoliberalism and "hyper capitalism" (p. ix). In

this discussion, the author acknowledges that ableism and disablism come from different theoretical backgrounds, yet they also "feed into one another" in ways that advance critical disability studies (p. ix).

Ableism has been described as "denoting an attitude that devalues or differentiates disability through the valuation of able-bodiedness equated to normalcy" (Campbell, 2012, p. 213). For Wolbring (2008) ableism operates through social structures and groups to promote the valuing of certain abilities. In this sense, ableism consists of "[d]eeply rooted beliefs about health, productivity, beauty, and the value of human life" (Rauscher & McClintock, cited in Storey, 2007, p. 56). In fact, Campbell (2008a) contends that ableism is a combination of "beliefs, processes and practices that produce a particular kind of self and body (the corporal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore, essential and human" (p. 153). The author concludes that ableism is reflective of the processes, and I would add, discourses that produce "ableness", implying a construction of normative bodies. Furthermore, Goodley (2014) asserts that ableism "accounts for the shifting practices associated with a contemporary society that increasingly seeks to promote…a citizen that is ready and able to work and contribute, an atomistic phenomenon cut off from others, capable, malleable and compliant" (p. xi). Thus, oppression based on ableism reflects the process of "othering and leads to exclusion and marginalization of people with disabilities" (El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012, p. 98).

In contrast, the concept of disablism locates marginalization of people with disabilities in the belief that they are "inferior" (Withers, 2012). For Campbell (2008a),

disablism is a "set of assumptions and practices promoting the different or unequal treatment of people because of actual or presumed disability" (p. 152). Withers prefers the use of the term disablism instead of ableism because the latter implies that oppression occurs based on the perceived lack of ability when compared to normative bodies, while disablism reflects the idea that oppression occurs because of disability (not ability). This idea is also reflected in Goodley's (2014) contention that: "Disablism relates to the oppressive practices of contemporary society that threaten to exclude, eradicate and neutralize those individuals, bodies, minds and community practices that fail to fit the capitalist imperative" (p. xi).

Considering the differences between ableism and disablism, moving forward in this dissertation, I rely mostly on the term "ableism" for a few reasons. First, this term seemed to be the most familiar and accessible for participants in this study who chose to use "ableism" to refer to their experiences of marginalization within immigration. Moreover, Goodley, Hughes, and Davis (2012) consider disablism to be "a consequence of the prominence of ableist worldviews" (p. 5) implying that ableism is a broader umbrella term that includes experiences of disablism. In addition, Campbell (2012) illustrates the limitations of disablism for research and policy as she argues that it narrowly focuses on the "negative" treatment towards people with disabilities instead of also examining how normative bodies are constructed and valued through ableism (p. 213). As such, in this dissertation, I adopt Campbell's (2009) understanding of ableism who sees it as a "conceptual tool, [that] goes beyond procedures, structures, institutions and values of civil society, situates itself clearly within histories *of knowledge* and is

embedded deeply and subliminally within culture" (p. 19, emphasis in original text). The discussion here builds on Campbell's work (2008a; 2009) and utilizes the term "ableism" to refer to the marginalization experiences of people with disabilities within Canadian immigration as they are constructed against an assumed ideal normative body.

Put differently, one of the key features of ableism is that it builds on dominant understandings of normative bodies to devalue those outside the norm. These features become more pronounced in immigration policies and practices as the disabled body is constantly constructed against the *essentialized and preferred* able body. Indeed, I would argue that if Canadian immigration were to clearly articulate *disablist* discourses and practices (such as having a clearly stated policy that people with disabilities are inadmissible because of their impairments) Canada would be subject to global condemnation. Instead, immigration policies adopt an ableist construction of an ideal and normative body that applicants with disabilities are measured against based on a set of criteria related to idealized notions of productivity, independence, health and ability.

In addition to ableism, this dissertation also explores where relevant the concept of "sanism". As mentioned earlier, I cannot claim that this was the focus of the research but I include this concept here in acknowledgement of its direct relevance for conceptualizing and understanding the oppression and marginalization that people living with mental health histories face. I rely on the work of Poole et al. (2012) and Reid and Poole (2013) to enrich the analysis of the construction of the Other in terms of disability, because as the authors contend, sanism is a more specific concept to refer to the marginalization experiences of people living with mental health histories. Perlin (1992)

utilized the term sanism in his examination of what he called "prejudice" in the legal system: "Sanism is as insidious as other 'isms' and is, in some ways, more troubling, since it is largely invisible and largely socially acceptable…Sanism is a form of bigotry that 'respectable people can express in public'" (pp. 374-375). The concept also refers to how people living with mental health issues have been constructed as "incompetent, not able to do things for themselves, constantly in need of supervision and assistance, unpredictable, violent and irrational" (Chamberlin, cited in Poole et al., 2012, p. 3).

In short, Reid and Poole (2013) assert that "sanism (or mentalism) is the subjugation of people who have received mental health diagnosis or treatment" (p. 210). While the authors rely on sanism and mentalism interchangeably, I have chosen to use "sanism" throughout the remainder of this dissertation for the sake of consistency but also because it was the term used by some participants in this study to refer to marginalization based on the social construction of people living with mental health issues. Participants related experiences of ableism and sanism and I have reported this distinction accordingly; however, it is important to note that the emphasis of most of the participants' interview data was on ableism not sanism in how they chose to speak about their experiences.

Returning to the point about bringing together Global North and South theorizations, I contextualize sanism and ableism within an understanding of colonialism. As such, I would further argue that people with disabilities from the Global South are marginalized and constructed as the *Other of the Other*. This means that in addition to being Othered because they are from the Global South, people with disabilities are also

Othered within their own societies in their countries of origin as well as their diasporic communities as a result of dominant discourses of ableism and sanism. As Holden and Beresford (2002), as well as Meekosha (2011) argue, within already marginalized Global South contexts, people with disabilities are further on the margins because of the intersection of disability with poverty, globalization and Northern dominance. The hierarchies and binaries that construct and define the relationship between colonizer and colonized are at play here in shaping and defining the construction of people with disabilities based on discourses that perpetuate Othering processes. Put differently, sanism and ableism cannot be understood in a vacuum or situated only within Northern scholarship and understandings, but need to take into account the history of colonialism. Given this understanding, the experiences of people with disabilities in immigration are shaped not only in terms of ableist and sanist discourses but also discourses of Othering related to the perceived inferiority of the Global South.

Hence, building on the above discussion and informed by the colonial dimension, postcolonial disability explorations are of particular relevance for this study. A postcolonial analysis centres colonialism which is key to understanding transnational experiences such as immigration especially within the context of unbalanced North/South power relations. As noted early on in this dissertation, one of the key foci of this study is to question knowledge production and challenge the Northern dominance and assumed universality of knowledges about the lives and experiences of people with disabilities. A postcolonial disability lens allows for this critical analysis to unfold and politically positions this study, not only in terms of explorations of marginalization but also in terms

of experiences of anti-colonial resistance.

Specifically, Ghai (2012) asserts that one of the most important meanings of postcolonial theory is that it allows for a better "understanding of the Other, historically and symbolically" (p. 273) which can potentially help in better understanding issues of identity, representation and marginalization faced by people with disabilities. Indeed, the author adds that "postcolonialism can be instrumental in setting the tone for engaging in the idea of disability as 'difference' rather than as an oppositional lack or inability" (p. 273). This is the case because postcolonial disability analysis troubles and disrupts the notions and binary of the "us and them".

Chataika (2012) makes use of the "us and them" binary to examine disability, development and postcolonial discourses in an effort to bridge the theoretical gaps between the Global North and South and to challenge the legacy of colonization; this legacy manifests itself through the construction of binary discourses such as able/disabled, normal/abnormal, etc. (Dingo, 2007; Goodley, Hughes, & Davis, 2012; Meekosha, 2011; Sherry, 2007). Indeed, following the work of Edward Said and Albert Memmi, Ghai (2012) notes that understanding the dynamics between the colonizers and colonized is essential to understanding the processes of Othering of people with disabilities. Ghai (2012) asserts "the creation of a devalued 'Other' is a necessary precondition for the creation of the able-bodied rational subject" (p. 273). These binary discourses of "us and them" are at the heart of the findings of this study, as will be demonstrated in more detail in the findings chapters.

One of the processes of Othering of people with disabilities that relates directly to

immigration takes places through the construction of discourses of dependency that continue to justify exclusionary practices experienced by people with disabilities (Fine & Glendinning, 2005; Gottlieb, 2001). Hughes (2007) notes that impairment and disability are associated with "deficit" (p. 673) which has led to Othering and specifically to the construction of discourses of dependency. Linton (1998) argues that disability has been defined in dominant discourses as the "opposite" of ability; such definitions have emphasized discussions of impairment and have been linked to discourses of dependency. In his example of Arab countries, Turmusani (2003) notes that people with disabilities were institutionalized as a part of this social construction of disability, and this institutionalization has led to their "categorization as an incompetent dependent minority" (p. 49). Ghai (2012) provides the example of the Indian context where disability is still painted with a brush of "dependency and vulnerability" (p. 283).

Hanes (2009) maintains that discourses of dependency have direct bearing on marginalization and exclusion of people with disabilities in Canadian immigration and that these have historical basis. These discourses construct people with disabilities as a potential "burden" on the health and social service systems should they be granted immigration status. Further, people living with mental health histories have been systematically discriminated against and marginalized in Canadian immigration system in ways that justify not only their construction of inadmissibility but also their incarceration and deportation after the fact of immigration (Chadha, 2008; Chapman, Carey, & Ben-Moshe, 2014; Reaume, 2014; Schizophrenia Society of Ontario, 2010). Chadha (2008) contends that people living with mental health issues are constructed to be "incompetent"

and "by nature degenerates, dangerous and dishonest in disposition" (p. 22).

I would argue that these discourses of danger and incompetence and consequent marginalization experiences continue today in dominant conceptions of people with disabilities as dependent Others who are in constant need of care. Reflecting on the incident presented at the beginning of the theoretical dimensions section, I contend that such dominant conceptions are reflected in the shift of discussion from activist discourses of "people with disabilities" or "disabled people" to the pathologizing discourses of "people with special needs" or "people with additional needs". These discourses reflect conceptions of deficiency and reinforce ideas of people with disabilities as lacking agency and being defined by their "needs".

Returning to the social justice dimension to challenge the construction of the Other, and to enhance social work's potential to resist, I agree with Cameron (2007) who argues that we need to begin by challenging Othering discourses that have been adopted in practice. Indeed, Carey (2003) reminds us of the historical involvement of social workers in the marginalization of people with disabilities (through institutionalization and eugenics for example). Instead of relying on medical model discourses that focus on and perpetuate dependency, Cameron suggests social work needs to examine and question how and why we have adopted these vulnerability discourses of people with disabilities. The author argues for the need to shift to discourses that revalue the agency/ability of people with disabilities. Similarly, Dossa (2006) maintains that people on the margin, such as people with disabilities, have a role to play in challenging Othering discourses. I would argue that doing so begins by challenging our understanding of disability as social

workers as well as deconstructing/re-constructing dominant knowledge and discourses about people with disabilities. As Dossa asserts, this could lead to more just and humanizing processes and practices of citizenship and immigration.

Furthermore, Ghai (2012) contends that in challenging dominant discourses that shape the marginalization experiences of people with disabilities, we "must recognize the multiple political, social economic and cultural realities" (p. 279) of our contexts. This implies a shift in understanding disability to be a "fluid and shifting set of conditions" (p. 278), instead of being a fixed category that is defined and signified by dominant understandings of impairment. Withers (2012) adds that such fluidity would enable people with disabilities to take control over their own identity construction as a diverse social group instead of being categorized specifically based on their impairments. Goodley, Hughes, and Davis (2012) argue that such understandings can "shift our focus away from the perceived pathologies of disabled people on to the deficiencies of a disabling society and an abliest (sic) culture" (p. 4). This shift implies examining not the "dependency" of people with disabilities but the marginalizing discourses that shape experiences such as immigration.

The theoretical dimensions and themes elaborated upon in this chapter demonstrate the impacts of dominance and power relations on constructing and shaping the experiences of the marginalized Other. As noted throughout the discussion, the experiences of people with disabilities have been shaped by these relations. Bringing together the dimensions of colonialism, disability and social justice allows us to be cognizant of how knowledge production and legitimation have been tipped in favour of

the North, and how specific experiences of marginalization, such as those occurring at the intersection of disability and immigration, have been largely absent from the discussion. Figure 1 presented at the end of this chapter provides a visual summary of the three theoretical dimensions and the areas of overlap discussed here.

In sum, the "colonial dimension" examines the complex and multilayered power dynamics and relations between the Global North and South. This dimension is utilized to focus on knowledge production and power dynamics and their roles in the construction of immigration policies, practices and experiences as well as the construction of the Other within immigration. This dimension assists in analyzing Global North/South power dynamics and relations and their implications for issues of marginality that include but are not limited to racism, whiteness, coloniality of power, orientalism, postcolonialism, neocolonialism and anti-colonialism. In constructing this dimension, theorizations of colonialism from various parts of the world are brought together to highlight some of the underlying specificities of colonial experiences that have shaped these realities. For example, by bringing together a theoretical framework of Orientalism (Said, 1978) and a discussion of the "coloniality of power" (Quijano, 2000), there is an attempt to capture the complexity of colonialism and the role it has played in knowledge production to shape constructions of the Other. Bringing together these context specific theorizations of colonialism sheds light on how people within these specific contexts have been constructed as the Other, what shaped their constructions and how such constructions continue to shape their place in the contemporary neocolonial and globalized world.

Additionally, the "disability dimension" is useful in this dissertation to bring

together disability theorizations developed within Global North and South to examine processes of othering based on ability and disability. This dimension includes but is not limited to, an examination of discourses of ability and disability, the construction of the normal/abnormal and able/unable body and mind, sanism and ableism, and discourses of independence/dependency and how they are interconnected to dimensions of marginalization and exclusion that have shaped the experiences of people with disabilities. These theorizations are brought together to help shed light on the nuances shaping the marginalization and oppressive experiences of people with disabilities within immigration. These theorizations are strengthened with a focus on a postcolonial disability lens; while building on disability theorizations from the North, this lens allows for an emphasis on colonial experiences and deconstruction of the assumed universality of knowledges from the Global North.

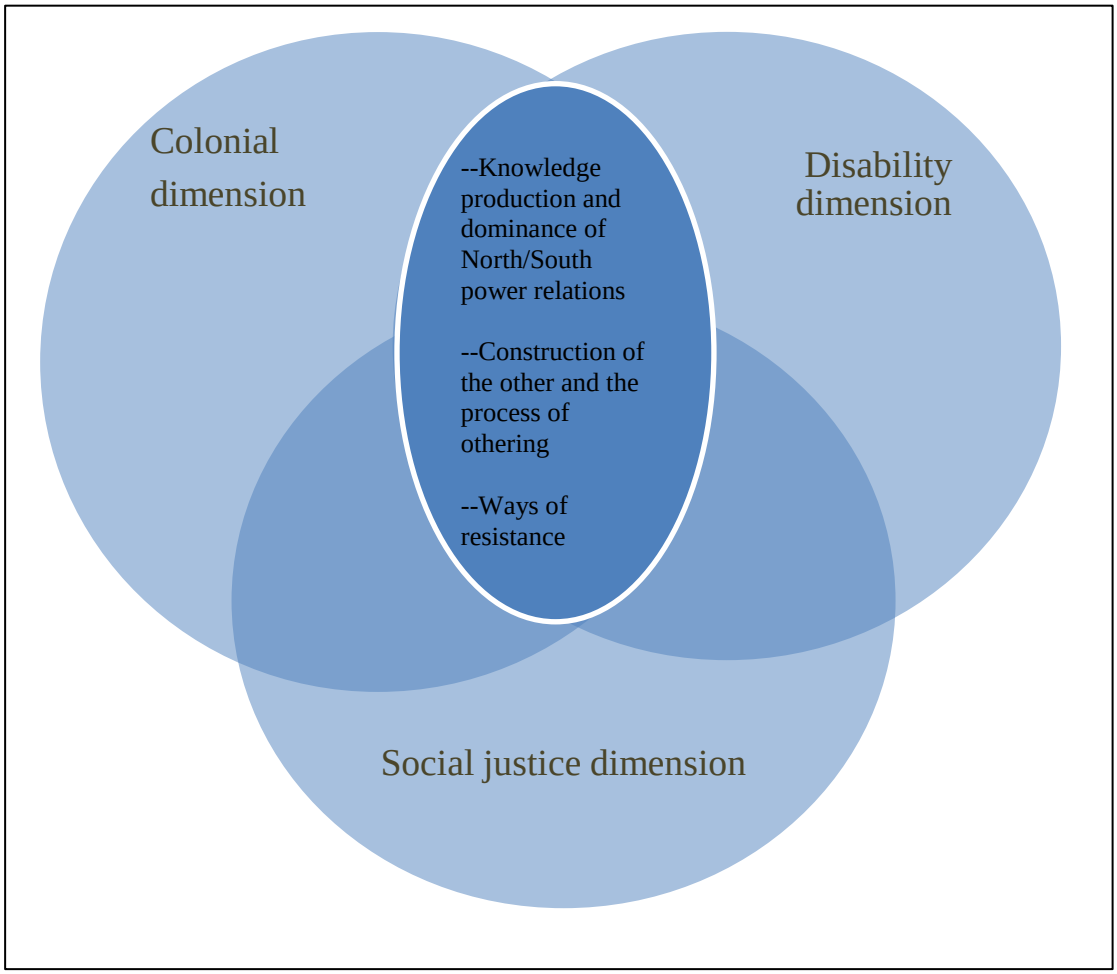
Finally, the "social justice" dimension conceptualizes how forms of resistance can be utilized to challenge experiences of oppression and marginalization. This interwoven dimension situates the discussion within a critical understanding of social justice as a *process* and not simply an outcome in order to inform critical social work practice on transnational issues of immigration and disability. This dimension would allow absent voices and knowledges to be present alongside dominant voices and knowledges. This dimension brings processes of anti-colonialism, decolonization and resistance into the discussion and allows for a counter discoursing of the narratives that define the processes of Othering of people with disabilities.

This counter discourse, discussed later in the dissertation involves various forms

of resistance that include reclaiming lost identities and deconstructing oppressive forms of dominance that have historically and in current days shaped the marginalization of people with disabilities. The social work profession has been implicated in supporting this problematic history and has an important role to play in resisting colonialism and imperialism (Haug, 2005; Mcdonald, 2006; Sewpaul, 2006). As such, the discussion of theoretical dimensions takes into account the need for social work to more fully acknowledge and redress its historical involvement in this oppression and to be part of the creation of alternative social justice oriented discourses to guide professional practice.

Guided by these ideas, this doctoral research rests on the importance of understanding and challenging Othering discourses and how they could potentially shape the construction of people with disabilities within the Canadian immigration system. Considering the theoretical discussion's emphasis on knowledge production and marginalizing discourses, as well as their relationship to constructing the Other and shaping their experiences, the study adopts a research methodology that allows for a critical examination of discourses. Specifically, this study relies on Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the impact of discourses on the construction of people with disabilities in Canadian immigration, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Figure 1: Visual Representation of Theoretical Dimensions



Chapter 4: Critical Discourse Analysis Methodology: Theoretical Underpinnings

Situated within a critical approach to social work theory and practice, this study relies on critical discourse analysis (CDA) methodology informed by the theoretical dimensions discussed earlier. CDA is an appropriate methodology for this study because it focuses on "the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance…defined as the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality" (van Dijk, 1993, pp. 249-250). CDA is a research methodology that is concerned with examining the relationship between power, language and discourses and the roles they play in shaping social processes as well as relationships of dominance and control (Fairclough, 1989, 1993, 2001, 2006, 2009, 2010; Martinez, 2007; van Dijk, 1993, 2008a; Wodak, 2004; Wodak & Meyer, 2001, 2009). Far from being limited only to researching linguistics, CDA is more interested in understanding complex social phenomena that "*require multi-disciplinary and multi-methodical approach*" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 2, emphasis in original text). Indeed, as Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2010) put it:

> CDA is a mode of critical inquiry where theory and methodology are inherently linked to one another. This means that the methodological, relationalism of CDA, privileging social relations rather than entities or individual actions, cannot be thought of independently of its theoretical premises: a dialectical constructionism that views discourse and power as constitutive of social relations through a process of articulation between different but not discreet 'moments' of the social. (p. 1216)

Thus, when conducting research using CDA theoretical and methodological compatibility is necessary. Since this study is situated theoretically within the dimensions discussed

earlier, I find CDA to be a compatible fit to rely upon for this study.

Furthermore, language and discourse have been at the center of my research interest for the past six years. This interest stems from the importance of language and discourse in constructing the Other and shaping their marginalization experiences. Hence, in this research using CDA methodology, the focus is on dominant discourses operating at the intersection of immigration and disability with a specific emphasis on the application process. The study sought to answer the following research question: ***How do discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism construct immigration applicants with disabilities?*** Related sub-questions guiding this study include: *How do discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism shape and construct the immigration experiences of applicants with disabilities? How is construction of admissibility negotiated and/or resisted by applicants with disabilities, social workers, settlement workers, immigration and disability activists? How can the knowledge gained from community stakeholders (e.g. disability organizations, settlement agencies, social workers, immigration and disability activists, family members, etc.) strengthen social work's role within areas of research and practice in the fields of disability and immigration?*

This chapter presents a brief discussion of three aspects of CDA that are most relevant to this study: the importance of language and discourse; emphasis accorded to context in understanding discourses; as well as the potential contributions of CDA to social change. Considering the multi-methodical and multi-disciplinary nature of CDA, the discussion then moves to present three different approaches to CDA, namely the Sociocognitive, the Discourse-Historical, and the Dialectical-Relational approaches, and

illustrates their relevance to this study in order to situate the research methodologically and to contextualize the process of analysis and discussion of the main findings.

Critical Discourse Analysis & Its Relevance for this Study

The Importance of Language & Discourse

Several authors discuss the importance of language to understanding discourses and the operation of social control, power and dominance that has supported specific oppressive societal relations and structures (e.g. Fairclough, 1989, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2010; Fraser & Gordon, 1994; Humphries, Mertens, & Truman, 2000; Martinez, 2007; Mills, 2004; Phillips & Jorgenson, 2002; van Dijk, 1993, 2003a, 2008a; Wodak, 2002, 2004; Wodak & Meyer, 2001, 2009). Wodak (2002) argues that language gains its power by how it is used by people in power to maintain their dominance and control and alerts CDA researchers not to think about it as "powerful on its own" (p. 10). In fact, Wodak (2009) adds that analyzing and challenging power, dominance and control exercised "*in discourses and over discourse"* (p. 35, emphasis in original text) are key features of CDA. Moreover, Fairclough (1989) insists that language can be seen as the main vehicle of social control and that we can no longer afford to ignore its importance if we want to understand the relationships of power in modern societies. Similarly, Phillips and Jorgenson (2002) contend that language is "a 'machine' that generates, and as a result constitutes, the social world" (p. 9) which shapes the construction of social identities and social relations.

Furthermore, Fairclough (1989) links language to ideology and argues that the exercise of power can be achieved through ideology and specifically through the

"ideological workings of language" (p. 2). Indeed, Wodak and Meyer (2009) assert that CDA distinguishes itself from other linguistic types of research by focusing on the everyday functioning and operation of ideology that play out through language and discourse. A key principle here is to examine how ideology functions not only through what is made present through/in language and discourse but also what is absent or missing (e.g. absent voices, absent arguments, etc.). In fact, Fairclough (2010) suggests that ideologies invest in discourse construction and "discoursal practices" (p. 67)—(discursive practices)—to maintain power relations and dominance *or* to resist and undermine them. The author adds that one of CDA's contributions to social research is its ability to provide a systemic analysis and critique of ideology that can eventually lead to empowerment and social change. Here, the above-mentioned authors also caution CDA researchers not to assume that critically oriented discourse analysis is immune from the influence and effect of ideology.

Ideological and political positionality are key features of CDA and its success is measured by its contributions to social transformation and social change (Fairclough, 1993, 2010; van Dijk, 1993, 2006, 2008a; Wodak & Meyer, 2001, 2009). For example, throughout this study, the discussion examines how people with disabilities have been constructed as an inadmissible social group within Canadian immigration through reliance on discourses of dependency and care or excessive demand policies. Understanding the importance of ideology and its role in the construction of discourse as well as in facilitating the discursive practices that manifest themselves through policies, I would argue that the construction of inadmissibility is informed by ableist ideology that

reflects certain ways of conceptualizing the body, as will be demonstrated in more detail in the findings chapters. Consistent with the earlier caution regarding the influence of ideology on CDA, I situate myself as a long-time social justice and disability activist who is conducting this research as a way to disrupt dominant ableist ideologies shaping immigration and settlement policies. Hence, by establishing at the outset the political underpinnings of this study, I do not assume ideological neutrality; instead, I consciously position myself not only to be aware of ideological influences, but also to take an ideological stance of resistance.

Moreover, speaking specifically about discourses, Fairclough (2003) argues that they not only "represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are also projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions" (p. 124). I agree with Poole (2011) that discourses are never "neutral or without real, material effects" (p. 27). In fact, Gill (2000) contends that discourses do not "occur in social vacuum" (p. 175). Hence, language as discourse becomes an important tool that affects people's interactions with the world as well as their ways of seeing it and relating to it (Fairclough, 2003; Humphries, Mertens, & Truman, 2000).

Furthermore, Fairclough (2003) asserts that in order to better understand the current social transformations caused by new capitalism, globalization, and neoliberalism, critical social researchers need to think about language in order to make sense of these transformations because language is an important aspect of social life. Humphries, Mertens, and Truman (2000) add, language as a social system needs to be understood as

historically situated within and through specific discourses tied to the organization and operation of social power. Speaking specifically about the relationship between language and power, Wodak (2004) asserts that:

> [L]anguage is entwined in social power in a number of ways: language indexes power, expresses power, is involved where there is contention over and a challenge to power. Power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distribution of power in the short and long term. (p. 199)

Similarly, in his discussion of the links between language and discourse, Fairclough (1989) argues that language is a social practice and that discourse "involves social conditions, which can be specified as *social conditions of production,* and *social conditions of interpretation"* (p. 25, emphasis in original text). The author insists that understanding language in this way (as a discourse and as a social practice) requires CDA researchers to analyze text, the process of its production and interpretation, and the relationship between them and broader social context and conditions. He adds that these social conditions are linked to different levels of social organization: "the level of social situation"; "the level of social institution"; "and the level of society as a whole" (p. 25).

Applying these ideas about language and discourse to this study informs not only the selection of texts analyzed (e.g. immigration promotional material and policy guidelines), but also how these texts construct immigration to be understood as a "social practice" that participants in this research interpreted, engaged in and internalized. In fact, Fairclough (1989) contends, "people internalize what is socially produced and made available to them" (p. 24). As will be evident in the findings chapters, the analysis shows how participants internalized their interpretations of what is expected of them to be

successful at applying for immigration and constructed themselves accordingly. In this sense, we can see the links between the various levels of social organization referred to above. First, the level of social situation, which can refer to the act of being motivated and deciding to apply to immigration; second, the level of social institution, which can be seen in immigration policies and official texts;and finally, the level of society as a whole where immigration to Canada is constructed through particular discourses. As we shall see in the findings chapters, this level includes central discourses of opportunity that mask, reflect and reinforce ableism, racism and colonialism through the operation of discourse.

To elaborate and make links to policy, I rely on van Dijk's (2008a) idea that an important "condition for the exercise of social control through discourse is the control of discourse and discourse production itself" (p. 31). As such, adopting CDA methodology allowed for a better understanding of the processes that produce oppressive and marginalizing discourses and to examine how they construct immigrants with disabilities within official immigration texts and social practices. In addition, CDA allowed for an examination of the processes of marginalization shaped through social relations and power imbalances and to understand their impact on the immigration experiences of people with disabilities. As van Dijk (2008a) asserts, CDA is a "type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (p. 85). In fact, Taylor (2004) affirms that CDA "is particularly appropriate for critical policy analysis because it allows a detailed investigation of the relationship of

language to other social processes, and of how language *works* within power relations" (p. 436, emphasis in original text).

Hence, the findings chapters present the ways in which discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism construct immigration applicants with disabilities and shape their experiences before, during and after the application process. Also highlighted is the importance of discourse and show how it shapes and defines the ways social work and other helping professions involved in settlement services define, negotiate and navigate their professional roles and practices.

The Importance of Context

Studying language and discourse simultaneously leads to a contextualized analysis of social dynamics and power relations that shape the immigration experiences of people with disabilities. As Wodak (2004) argues, studying language needs to be situated within a context in order to allow for insights into the social process to emerge. Montessori (2011) adds that CDA "analyzes discourse both in relation to socio-historical context and to its co-text, the linguistic environment that surrounds a concrete text location" (p. 174). Indeed, Wodak and Meyer (2009) argue that the notion of context is essential to CDA as it has elements of the social, political, ideological and even psychological aspects that are key to conducting an interdisciplinary research like the one reported on in this dissertation. In fact, Fairclough (2003) asserts that in CDA, language is considered a "social practice" that articulates discourses and CDA researchers should commit to analyzing the "relationship between texts, process and their social conditions, both the immediate conditions of situational context and the more remote conditions of

institutional and social structures" (p.26).

Similarly, van Dijk (2008a) contends that understanding discourses requires understanding discursive practices (e.g. text and talk) within their specific contexts, implying that CDA researchers need to pay attention to contexts and their relations to discourses and how they are constructed and expressed through language. Moreover, Fairclough (2003) as well as Wodak (2004) note the importance of studying language and discourses to capture social and cultural changes; they emphasize that CDA is a useful tool that allows social researchers to understand the nature of such changes. Thus, studying language and discourse needs to be situated within the broader socio-political context where discourses are used and constructed to shape and define social structures and relations of power and dominance (Fairclough, 1992, 2003, 2010; Mills, 2004; van Dijk, 1993, 2003a, 2008a; Wodak, 2004).

For example, I would argue that the recent "pause" that has been imposed on processing visa applications from countries affected by the wide spread of the Ebola virus cannot be seen outside the broader context of North/South social and political power dynamics and relations. In the news release that outlined the pause on visa processing, "protecting the health and safety of Canadians" was used to justify these measures implying that Canada's priority and commitment is only to protecting its citizens and not to battling the spread of the virus, even though such efforts were also mentioned (CIC, 2014b, "Protecting", para. 1). This is not the place here to analyze such measures but I am using this as an example to demonstrate the importance of relevant contexts to CDA when analyzing any discourse. As such, dominant discourses of racism and colonialism

cannot be left out as key influences that shape and define the power relations between Canada and the countries affected by this pause.

Thus, it is important to situate the discussion of the intersection of disability and immigration within contemporary global socio-political contexts to allow for capturing the social practices enforced by the use of specific language and discourses that exclude people with disabilities and construct them as inadmissible. Such a contextual positioning would also assist in capturing the changes occurring within and through discourse and allows for a better understanding of the impacts of these changes on marginalized social groups such as immigrants and newcomers with disabilities coming from countries in the Global South. This is where the afore-mentioned theoretical discussion which takes into account historical and contemporary manifestations of colonialism, ableism and racism comes into play. As Wodak (2004) affirms, "CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use (or in discourse)" (p. 199). The contemporary globalized and neoliberal socio-political and economic contexts that shape our world today and define its power relations, especially those between the Global North and South, have significant implications for immigration and transnational mobility that have been central in this research. Taking this context into consideration would lend a political dimension to this research through the examination of the operation of power and dominance as well as resisting oppression facilitated and manifested through discourse.

Indeed, several authors emphasize the important political role that CDA can play in challenging dominance and resisting inequity that manifests itself through language

and discourse (e.g. Fairclough, 1989, 2003, 2010; Mills, 2004; van Dijk, 1993, 2003a, 2008a, 2008b; Wodak, 2004, 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Wodak (2004) asserts that "demystifying ideologies and power through systematic investigation of semiotic data" (pp. 197-198) is an important contribution of CDA. Montessori (2011) contends that what is critical about CDA is that it questions power and its distribution and exposes the ways in which language maintains and justifies unequal and oppressive power relations. Similarly, van Dijk (1993) stresses that understanding power and dominance is crucial in CDA and that once we gain such an understanding, we begin to understand the roles that discourse plays in formulating power and reproducing dominance.

For example, in her discussion of the importance of addressing sexist language and discourses within educational institutions, Mills (2004) emphasizes the impacts of such campaigns not only on changing language within these institutions but also on the "exposing of sexist and racist exclusionary practices and structures" (p. 39). Like Mills (2004), I believe that the purpose of this doctoral research is not only to explain how inadmissibility is constructed, but also to expose ableist, racist and colonial discourses and illustrate their influence on practices that surround immigration and shape the marginalization experiences of unwanted social groups including people with disabilities.

Contributions of CDA to Social Change

CDA presumes an activist role for researchers as they "take explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality" (van Dijk, 2003a, p. 352). As van Dijk (1993) asserts, the success of CDA "is measured by its effectiveness and relevance, that is, by its contribution to social change" (p. 253). The author calls for

those adopting this methodology to be explicit about their aims to engage in research that is avowedly political. CDA, with its focus on positioning researchers with those who are on the margins, aims to resist dominance and social inequality and contribute to social justice and transformation. As a social justice and disability activist, I believe that adopting CDA in this study allows me to reiterate and be true to my beliefs that conceive of research and knowledge production as an ideological and political exercise aiming to resist oppression and seeking emancipation, social justice and transformation. In fact, as outlined in Chapter 3, engaging in political research and knowledge production is my way to question the construction of the disabled Other and challenge the Othering process that manifests itself through racist, ableist and colonial discourses in Canadian immigration.

As will be articulated in the finding chapters, this research questions, exposes and challenges the myths within Canadian immigration that portray Canada as a place of "exciting opportunities" for all immigrants despite their differences (CIC, 2013a, Start Your Life in Canada," para. 1). CDA is an appropriate methodology to achieve such aims as it "seeks not only to describe and explain, but also to root out a particular kind of delusion" (Wodak, 2004, p. 199). Language and discourse in CDA become more than communication tools and function as a way to create and transform knowledge, organize social structures and institutions as well as the process of exercising or resisting power.

Therefore, this research explores not only the concrete experiences of exclusion of people with disabilities in immigration but also the discourses that shape and construct these experiences. Put differently, the purpose of this doctoral research is not limited to making Canadian immigration more receptive and inclusive of immigrants with

disabilities, although this is important and necessary. Instead, this dissertation identifies the discourses that construct immigration applicants with disabilities as inadmissible and expose immigration policies and practices that marginalize and exclude them based on ableist discourses such as constructions of "being a burden" and a "dependent" social group that may pose "excessive demands" on health and social services. Put differently, in addition to demonstrating where and how Canadian immigration policies construct people with disabilities as an inadmissible social group, this research contributes to identifying the dominant discourses that are central to the structures of immigration policies and practices. By doing so, this study contributes to challenging the historical and contemporary constructions of people with disabilities as inadmissible Others and provides a critical understanding of the roles that social work and other helping professions do and can play within immigration and settlement settings.

Within this understanding, there is a need to focus on the discourses that construct people with disabilities in general and those from the Global South in particular in such a way as to perpetuate their processes of oppression and marginalization. As Hill Collins (1997) reminds academics, intellectuals and researchers, "to those who stand outside the inner circles created by whiteness, wealth and masculinity, language signifies access to or exclusion from communities of power" (p. 20). In fact, Grue (2009) speaks about the tradition of applying CDA in disability studies to deconstruct disabling social structures in ways that shifted social understandings of disability from being individual issues dealt with based on charitable considerations to becoming framed and understood as socially constructed sites of oppression and marginalization. Such contributions have emphasized

a social justice orientation to addressing disability issues.

Van Dijk (1993) adds that an important pillar of CDA is that it allows marginalized social groups to define their experiences in a way that puts their stories at the center to emphasize their voices and reconstruct their narratives as a way to challenge dominant discourses. The author provides examples of immigrants and refugees dealing with racism and women dealing with violence and sexual harassment using CDA to define their experiences as "racist" or "sexist" despite how dominant discourses might characterize such experiences. Utilizing CDA as a research methodology allowed participants in this research to define their experiences and to provide counter discourses through their own stories, a point that is developed further in Chapter 5.

Main Approaches to CDA Utilized in This Study

Wodak and Meyer (2009) assert that CDA is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research paradigm characterized by "common interests in de-mystifying ideologies and power through the systemic and *retroductable* investigation of semiotic data (written, spoken or visual)" (p. 3 emphasis in original text). As such, researchers conducting CDA are encouraged to rely on diverse and multi-theoretical backgrounds and use various methodological approaches to data collection, analysis and communication of findings. These authors argue that there are no fixed and predefined methods of conducting CDA research. These points are echoed by van Dijk (1993) in his discussion of the aims and principles of CDA, and by Fairclough (2010) who contends that CDA is an interdisciplinary or "*transdisciplinary*" form of research that entails "dialogues" (p. 4, emphasis in original text) between different disciplines, theories and methodologies.

Fairclough here advocates against "conformity" in conducting CDA and encourages researchers to take CDA "in different and new directions" (p. 10) to contribute to the theoretical and methodological development of critical and emancipatory social research.

In complying with these recommendations and building on the diverse theoretical dimensions constructed earlier, this study relies on three compatible CDA approaches that complement these dimensions to respond to the knowledge gaps identified in this dissertation. In addition, these approaches are well suited to the multiple methods of data collection utilized in this study, which are consistent and compatible with CDA, namely, analyzing public documents and conducting episodic interviews (as will be discussed in Chapter 5). The three main approaches are: the Sociocognitive approach; the Discourse Historical approach; and the Dialectical-Relational approach.

The first relevant approach is the Sociocognitive Analysis Approach—SCA (van Dijk, 2008c, 2009). In this "triangular" approach that is comprised of the constructs of discourse, cognition and society, van Dijk (2009) invites researchers to examine the "relations between the mind, discursive interaction and society" (p. 65) by focusing on the "mental representation and the process of language users when they produce and comprehend discourse and participate in verbal interaction as well as in the knowledge, ideologies and other beliefs shared by social groups" (p.64). In this sense, the cognitive processing of discourse production and interpretation is central to the analysis of the discursive practices within research data. Van Dijk asserts that studying discourse requires an understanding that it is indeed a social process constructed and influenced by broader societal factors as well as a mental and cognitive process that facilitates

comprehension, interpretation and interaction with discourse.

In fact, van Dijk (2003b) asserts that one of the contributions of this approach is the study of the relation between "knowledge and discourse structures" (p. 87) where knowledge is considered both a cognitive process that takes place in the individual brain, and a social process that takes place at the broader level of sociopolitical and ideological context. These processes have significant influence over discourse production and interaction which requires a sociocognitive approach to examine the role of discourse on knowledge in the broader sense as well as knowledge production in particular. This means that the individual cognitive interpretation and processing of discourse needs to be understood in relation to the broader sociopolitical and ideological context and vice versa.

Like other approaches of CDA, SCA sees research as a political act that seeks to challenge unjust social relations and structures that manifest themselves through language and discourses. Thus, researchers using this approach are encouraged to examine the ways discourse and discursive practices contribute to the production and reproduction of power, dominance and control. In addition, context is a key aspect of CDA and in this approach the context of discursive as well as interdiscursive practices is an essential element that CDA researchers need to take into account. Indeed, van Dijk (2009) proposes the use of "context models" (referred to also as "mental models"), that language users rely on to "adapt" their use of discourse to fit the broader social environment in ways that are acceptable and "socially appropriate" (p. 73). Such a process would allow for an analysis that better takes into account the broader sociopolitical contexts as well as the immediate contexts within which the discourses have occurred, such as time, place,

selection of words, etc.

Relying on this approach pushed data analysis of interviews to a deeper level. For example, the cognitive processing of ableist discourses as they are understood in Canada may not be reflective of how a participant from a country in the Global South may construct his/her experiences with such discourses. Put differently, one of the contributions of this approach to this study consisted in allowing for a better understanding of the impacts as well as the individual interpretations of discourses as they relate to participants' transnational experiences of immigration. Such an analysis brought together individual experiences of ableist discourses and the broader socio-political and economic contexts that significantly influence the immigration experiences and how participants in this study construct it cognitively and otherwise. As has been argued throughout this dissertation, the immigration application process is a space where applicants with disabilities choose to construct themselves in ways that are guided and influenced by dominant discourses as well as produce and reproduce discourse and discursive practices.

The second approach is the Discourse-Historical Approach—DHA (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). Similar to other approaches of CDA, the DHA is rooted within critical theory and emphasizes the historical analysis of discourse where "context" is understood as historical and is taken into account in the interpretation of texts and discourses. Jäger and Maier (2009) argue that a historical analysis is important to understand the origin and developments of dominant discourses and how they shape knowledge within society. Such a process helps in broadening the analysis to capture and explain the discursive

changes that occur over time. This approach is helpful to this study as it contributed to understanding and explaining the discursive changes and shifts within immigration policies (e.g., the shift from earlier discourses of feeblemindedness and retardation to discourses of dependency and excessive demands introduced later in 1967 in the Immigration Act) that continue to construct people with disabilities as inadmissible social groups despite Canada's official commitment to disability rights and inclusion principles.

In addition, Reisigl and Wodak (2009) argue that like other approaches to CDA adopted in this study, 'critique', 'ideology' and 'power' are central elements of analysis and CDA researchers are encouraged to maintain focus on their role in the construction and production of discourse and discursive events (p.87). The DHA aims to "'demystify' the hegemony of specific discourses by deciphering the ideologies that establish, perpetuate or fight dominance" (p. 88). In this approach, the authors invite CDA researchers to rethink and expand their own understanding and use of these concepts. For example, the concept of critique should include not only the researcher's theoretical position on the subject of their research, but should also be used to theoretically justify their "interpretations and readings of discursive events [that] seem more valid than others" (p. 88). For this study, the theoretical positioning (outlined in Chapter 3) includes a focus on intersecting dimensions of colonialism, ableism and racism. These theoretical dimensions inform my reading and interpretation of the data to privilege discourses that are compatible and reflective of these dimensions (e.g., relying on discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism to understand data, as opposed to liberal notions of multiculturalism and discrimination that are dominant within immigration).

Moreover, ideology is seen in DHA as a means of constructing and maintaining unequal power dynamics and relations that operate through the use of language, discourse and discursive practices. In this sense, CDA researchers using this approach are encouraged to investigate language as it is used by those in power to maintain their positions in society. Power is regarded as socially constructed and legitimized or de-legitimized through the use of language and discourse. Thus, an important aspect of this approach focuses on the ways language and discourse use, facilitate, express, and manipulate power to maintain dominance, control as well as the constructions of social structures and hegemony (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009).

Reisigl and Wodak (2009) argue that since CDA is used to study social phenomenon expressed and manifested through language in various formats (oral, written, and visual), researchers need to keep in mind the necessity of employing an interdisciplinary orientation to their research. The authors also recommend that researchers adopting this approach follow the *"principle of triangulation,* which implies taking a whole range of empirical observations, theories and methods as well as background information into account" (p. 89, emphasis in original text) in order to inform their analysis and understanding of the complexities of their research topic. In this study, this has translated into using official immigration texts as well as participant interviews.

Hence, DHA is relevant to this study as it aims to question and challenge the ableist, racist and colonial ideologies that have historically constructed people with disabilities as an inadmissible social group. Today, such a construction is perpetuated by the establishment of desired categories of immigrants based on capitalist and economic

principles that privilege productivity and economic advancements linked to body and abilities (Wong, 2011; Yu, 2014). As an example, the historical colonial practices embedded within immigration can be put under scrutiny by utilizing this approach to show their impacts and influences on contemporary immigration policies and practices.

The final approach I rely on in this study is the Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA), developed and advanced by Fairclough (Choulariki & Fairclough, 1999, 2010; Fairclough 2003, 2006, 2009, 2010). In this approach, Fairclough (2010) argues that discourses are "semiotic ways of constructing aspects of the world" in the physical, social and mental sense (p. 232). The author defines this transdisciplinary approach to CDA as focusing not only on "semiotics", or the study of signs and language, but extends it to cover the "relations between semiotics and other social elements" (p. 231). In this sense, transdisciplinary research can be distinguished by the role it plays in bringing disciplines and theories together to highlight their theoretical and methodological development.

In this approach to CDA, Fairclough (2010) suggests that social process can be seen through the interaction and relation between "three levels of social reality: *social structures, practices* and *events*" (p. 232, emphasis in original text). The author contends that analysis needs to focus on dialectical relations between "structures (especially social practices as an intermediate level of structuring) and events (or between structures and action, structures and strategy) and, within each, between semiotic and other elements" (p.232). In this sense, Fairclough (2003, 2009, 2010) sees that discourses can be intentionally used and operationalized and CDA researchers using this approach need to pay attention to the shifting relations between different elements of discourse and text

(e.g. genre, style) and social structures to examine the operation of discourses and its contribution to social processes that take place within text and talk.

Fairclough (2009, 2010) notes that the cognitive process of discourse is absent from this approach; however, I would argue that DRA is compatible with cognitive oriented critical discourse analysis, such as van Dijk's SCA approach discussed earlier. These approaches are compatible as they emphasize ideology and focus on relations between discourse, social structures and context as well as individual and social interpretations of these discourses. Further, Fairclough argues that DRA emphasizes the theoretical nature of the dialectical relational process that occurs within and through discourse. The author provides four main stages that CDA researchers using this approach need to follow, not in any mechanical, procedural and sequential order, but rather as a way to highlight and emphasize the political and theoretical nature of this approach to inform the analysis process in the research. These stages are: "focus upon social wrong, in its semiotic aspect"; "identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong"; "consider whether the social order 'needs' the social wrong"; and "identify possible ways past the obstacles" as discussed below (Fairclough, 2010, p. 235).

One of the contributions of DRA to this study is the emphasis on the dialectical relationship between discourse, social structures and institutions, and how they influence social processes. In this sense, immigration policies and practices become institutional and structural elements that facilitate access to Canada and define through discourse who is allowed in. Thus, the inadmissibility of immigration applicants with disabilities becomes the default dominant construction of this social group. Using this approach

allowed for a critical examination not only of the theoretical underpinnings of such constructions but also of the "social wrongs" perpetuated in the everyday experiences of immigration applicants with disabilities.

In sum, this study brings together an analysis that covers the sociocognitive process of discourse and how it is internalized by immigration applicants with disabilities, an examination of the historical and contemporary shifts and contexts of discourses within immigration policies, as well as an emphasis on the importance of dialectical relationships between discourse and other social elements such as social practices and social structures. Bringing a combination of the three approaches together, the study aims to respond to the knowledge gap about the discourses that shape the immigration application process for people with disabilities in an attempt to question, challenge and resist ableist, racist and colonial discourses perpetuated within Canadian immigration policies and practices.

Chapter 5: Research Methods

Moving from CDA methodology and its theoretical underpinnings and approaches, this chapter discusses research methods including a detailed account of data collection methods and process, as well as research participants, including characteristics that are relevant to contextualize their participation in the study. The chapter then moves to a discussion of analysis methods and steps. Throughout the discussion, I engage in a critical reflexivity process by highlighting some of the tensions and challenges I faced as well as ethical considerations occurring during these phases of the research and how I addressed them.

Data Collection

This research relied on two main sources of data. The first consisted of CDA analysis of public immigration documents consisting of website pages and operational manuals and guidelines. The second source of data consisted of conducting a total of 23 episodic interviews (Flick, 1997, 2000a, 2006) with participants from three different groups, namely adult immigrants with disabilities, family members of immigration applicants with disabilities, and service providers defined broadly and discussed in more detail below. The study received ethics clearance in March 2013 to be conducted in the geographic area of Southern Ontario, Canada under the Certificate of Ethics Clearance number 2013-034 (please see Appendix N).

In general, the stage of data collection (including selection of documents for analysis and conducting interviews) lasted from March 2013 until August 2014 when the last interview was conducted. As per qualitative research principles as well as CDA

guidelines, data analysis did not wait until the end of the data gathering stage. In fact, it is encouraged that the analysis starts as soon as there is data as this can help CDA researchers refine their data collection tools to focus their analysis process (Fairclough, 2003, 2010; van Dijk, 1993, 2003a, 2008a; Wodak, 2004, 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2001, 2009).

Public Documents

The first data collection method consisted of selecting public immigration documents available on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website. The criteria used to select the documents were consistent with CDA principles as they are of specific relevance to the research questions (Fairclough, 2010; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Documents were selected based on two main criteria: they were either promotional material or guidelines for immigration officers. Promotional materials were key not only in facilitating the immigration application process that participants in this research talked about, but also to a certain extent, in motivating and fuelling the interest of people with disabilities and their families to apply for immigration.

Promotional material analyzed in this study included 45 website pages consisting of: tools and online tests that describe and define eligibility criteria to immigrate to Canada for different classes of immigration applicants (as described in Chapter 1); web pages that outline grounds for admissibility and inadmissibility of immigration applicants (e.g., “Reasons for inadmissibility”, “Determine if you are inadmissible”, etc.); web pages specifically prepared for newcomers (e.g., “Immigrate to Canada”; “Start your life in Canada”, “Use the Living in Canada Tool”, “Find immigration services near you”,

"Welcome to Canada", "Adapt to new culture", "Integrate into your community", "Apply for citizenship", etc.); as well as web pages prepared for Canadian citizens (e.g. "Sponsor a family member", "Adopt a child", "Sponsor a refugee", "Hire a foreign worker", etc.).

Data gathered from analyzing these documents served as a way to provide a backdrop against which the experiences of immigration applicants with disability are constructed and shaped by discourses outlined in these policy and promotional texts. In addition, these documents served as a way to examine how and where the construction of immigration applicants *as admissible or inadmissible* begins and how such constructions define the experiences of certain social groups, such as people with disabilities.

The second set of documents analyzed in this study consisted of a selection of 47 operational manuals that cover different aspects of the immigration application process (please see Appendix O for a detailed list of documents analyzed or consulted). These documents can be found on the CIC website under the title: Operational Bulletins and Manuals. These operational manuals cover a wide range of policies and guidelines but I only analyzed those that have a direct relevance for this study. Specifically, I selected operational manuals that serve as guidelines and official policies that immigration officers rely on for processing applications and determining admissibility and inadmissibility of immigration applicants to Canada.

In general, operational documents analyzed in this category include several types of manuals: Enforcement Manuals (ENF) that cover topics such as determining admissibility and inadmissibility; Inland Processing (IP) and Overseas Processing (OP) manuals, both of which provide guidelines and procedures for aspects such as processing

sponsorship applications, determination of applications based on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, and medcial requirements, among other aspects of application processing. Also included are Immigration Legislation (IL) manuals and Reference Manuals (IR) that provide immigration rules and medical requirements. This study focused on ENF and OP documents as these had direct bearing on the application process; however, other documents were consulted as points of reference but were not part of the analysis. Throughout the remainder of this dissertation, these manuals are referred to by the initials provided above which are the official designations from the CIC website.

In addition, documents that concern the process of granting citizenship were analyzed as Canadian citizenship was an essential motivating factor that people with disabilities in this study sought through immigration. Finally, from time to time, I relied on a variety of documents produced by CIC (e.g., news releases, public speeches by the Minister or other officials, CIC Reports for the Parliament, etc.). These documents were used to provide background and to demonstrate the official stand that the CIC takes on a particular issue. I also sometimes used these documents to raise a point or make an argument in order to confirm the analysis or inform it through the official narrative of CIC. It is important to note that documents used in this category were not analyzed according to CDA principles but only informed the analysis or served as a point of reference. Thus, they are not included in Appendix O but are noted in the reference list.

Episodic Interviews

The second data collection method consisted of conducting 23 episodic interviews

following semi-structured interview guides discussed in more detail later[8]. Developed by Flick (1997, 2000a, 2006, 2009), episodic interviewing is a method of utilizing people's narratives about specific events or situations to collect social science data. Episodic interviewing has been used in a wide range of studies from multiple disciplines and on a variety of social issues such as health psychology (Chamberlain, 2000; De-Graft Aikins, & Offori-Atta, 2007; Flick, 2000b; Flick & Röhnsch, 2007; Flick, Fischer, Neuber, Schwartz, & Walter, 2003); educational psychology (O'Toole & Abreu, 2005); social psychology (Farrimond & Joffe, 2006); information science (Bates, 2004); business (Quaak, Aalbers, & Goedee, 2007); qualitative social research (Allen, 2011; Kuhn, 2003; Temple, 2008; Törrönen, 2002); educational research (Hamarus & Kaikkonen, 2008; McDermott, 2004); and social work (Wehbi, 2011).

Flick (2006) emphasizes that the episodic interview "starts from episodic-situational forms of knowledge. Special attention is paid in the interview to situations or episodes in which the interviewee has had experiences that seem to be relevant to the questions of the study" (p. 182). Episodic interviewing was a suitable method for this study because it allowed for data collection to be centred on the specific events or experiences occurring during the immigration application process, settlement experiences, as well as service provision. Hence, this allowed for a clear, more targeted and focused data collection process as will be discussed below.

Flick (1997, 2000a) traces the background of this method to two different domains

[8] All interviews were scheduled to be conducted face-to-face, but last minute unexpected scheduling conflicts for two participants necessitated phone interviews to accommodate their time (this was suggested by the participants themselves); verbal consent was granted at the time of the interviews followed by written consent sent through e-mail.

of psychology. First, he emphasizes its narrative roots and asserts that people's narratives allow them to assign meanings to their own realities. Flick contends that through the use of episodic interviews, research participants are able to make a story out of their own experiences. These stories involve internal (cognitive) and external negotiation processes. The internal negotiation process "includes the use of prototypical narratives given in a culture" (Flick, 2000, p. 77), while the external negotiation concerns potential listeners' acceptance or rejection of these stories. The author stresses that "[t]he results of such processes are contextualized and socially shared forms of knowledge" (p. 77). Consistent with the CDA approaches discussed earlier, episodic interviewing involves a process of collecting data that is cognitively processed and reflective of, and negotiated through, broader social structures and constructions. Moreover, episodic interviewing is consistent with CDA methodology as it allows marginalized social groups to re-define their own experiences and counter discourse them in a way that contributes to social change and transformation.

The second background of episodic interviewing identified by Flick (1997, 2000a) can be traced back to the distinction between "episodic and semantic knowledge", where episodic knowledge is associated with specific circumstances such as events, time, space, situations, persons, etc., compared to the semantic knowledge that is more "abstract, generalised and decontextualized from specific situation and events" (p.77). An important characteristic of the episodic interview is that it is not concerned with claims of "true" data; instead, it focuses on the interviewee's constructions and interpretations of their own narratives or stories. Indeed, as Flick (2000a) asserts, in episodic interviewing,

to better understand the "subjective and social relevance" of the issue being studied, special attention needs to be paid to the "subjective meanings expressed in what is recounted" (p. 86). As such, interviews and subsequent analysis in this study focused on the events recounted by participants to examine relations between the context of their immigration experiences or their service provision and the broader contextual and structural aspects that can be seen through discourse as consistent with CDA.

Flick (1997, 2000a) notes three main types of situations in episodic interviews. The "episode" (2000a, p. 89) is where the interviewee is asked to recount a particular event or situation (e.g., going through the application process). The "repisodes" (p. 89) focus on demonstrations of episodes or situations that occur regularly (e.g., the regular attempts made by applicants to become eligible for immigration such as attending English classes in their home countries over a period of time). Finally, "historical situations" (p. 89) refer to particular situations or events that participants use as reference points in recounting their stories (e.g., when one participant referred to Terry Fox's story as an inspiration to move to Canada). The author observes that the application of episodic interviewing generates not only different accounts of an event or a situation, but also different types of data that can be derived from "situation narratives, repisodes, examples, definitions, and argumentative and theoretical statements" (p. 89).

Keeping the preceding discussion in mind, interviews focused on recounting experiences related to specific situations that took place during the immigration application process or during service provision related to immigration or settlement processes of clients with disabilities. As such, it is important to note that the interview

guides were developed not only to respond to knowledge gaps identified in the scholarship reviewed related to the research questions guiding this study, but were also informed by the methodological scholarship on episodic interviewing in terms of the content and structure of the guide. As per episodic interviewing guidelines, the interview guides focused on three phases related to the participants' experience: how their experience began; how it evolved or progressed; and how the experience concluded or where it stood at the time of the interview.

Moreover, while conducting an episodic interview, researchers focus on three important aspects: "The meaning of the issue for the interviewee's life" (p. 80); the "key aspect of the issue as defined by the actual research question of the study" (p. 81) through in depth questions and enquiry; and posing more general relevant questions that could enlarge the scope of the interview to include their broader opinions about the topic of immigration and disability (please see Appendices A, B and C for the interview guides relevant to each group of participants described in more detail below).

Research Recruitment & Participants

Participants in the three groups (individuals with disabilities, family members and service providers) self-selected to participate in the study. Two main recruitment methods were utilized: advertisements and snowball sampling. First, recruitment started by contacting Executive Directors of immigration and settlement agencies as well as disability organizations to ask if they could send research recruitment advertising to their listserves so interested participants could self-select and contact me to participate in the study (please see Appendices D, E, F, G, and H for recruitment materials). Permission

was also requested to post recruitment advertising on agencies' announcement boards.

In total, I contacted 70 agencies and networks and met with representatives from the majority of these to explain the study and to ask for their assistance in recruitment. A total of 35 agencies and networks assisted in recruitment to varying degrees from posting a flyer on bulletin boards to sending e-mails about the study to their listserves. In addition, I contacted individuals through my personal networks to ask for assistance in recruitment. Overall, this experience was quite positive and was met with enthusiasm by service providers including activists who confirmed the importance of the study. In fact, through this recruitment process, I was invited to collaborate on developing a training program on disability and immigration for a local agency in Toronto (more on this collaboration in the final chapter). Some of these organizations posted the advertisement online and, interestingly, two participants in the study had come across this information and contacted me despite not being affiliated with these agencies. These participants eagerly emphasized the need to tell their story and to express what their immigration application experience was like and how it influenced and shaped their settlement and integration.

The second method consisted of snowball sampling where interviewed participants were asked to pass on my contact information to any potential participants they could think of by e-mail. In keeping with ethical guidelines to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of all participants, participants who referred someone to participate in this study did not learn from me that the person they had referred had contacted me to participate.

Taking into account critical disability methodological scholarship and the theoretical dimensions, it was important to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in all groups of research participants, including service providers. I also paid attention to the gender and race composition of participants in terms of my recruitment efforts. As such, 14 of the 23 participants identified as having a disability and this group included immigrants as well as service providers including activists. It is also important to note that people with various types of disabilities (physical, sensory, mental health, developmental and intellectual) are included in this study, whether as participants themselves or through the narratives of family members.

A total of five family members of immigration applicants with disabilities (at different stages of their application process, such as pre-application or in progress) participated in this study. In addition, 20 out of the 23 participants identified as racialized and as immigrants or first generation Canadians; 16 of the 23 participants identified as women, and three participants identified as immigrant youth.

Moreover, in keeping with the theoretical dimensions, I purposively outreached to potential participants who can bring knowledge from the Global North and South to discussions of their immigration or settlement experiences (e.g., immigrants with disabilities from the South who are activists and can reflect on their activism in both contexts). As we shall see in the findings chapters, these activists reflect on the dominance of Northern knowledge and challenge the embedded operation of whiteness. Concretely, participants in this study come from various parts of the following regions: Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Arab World, South Asia, as well as Canada. I

do not provide more precise details about countries of provenance in keeping with the ethical commitment to preserve anonymity and confidentiality.

Furthermore, although I had designated discrete groups for this research, there was crossover among the three participant groups, as some participants held dual or multiple roles. For example, some were immigrants with disabilities but were also service providers. Aya[9] spoke not only about being an immigrant with disabilities (what she chose to be interviewed as) but also about her experiences as a disability activist. Similarly, Fartun chose to be interviewed as a service provider as well as a family member. Such crossovers were fruitful to this study as they provided a wealth of information on the existing intersectionalities that participants talked about in their interviews and showed how they negotiate, navigate and embody these identities through their personal and professional realities.

For example, Malia chose to be interviewed as a family member even though she works at a settlement agency and part of her job is to provide settlement services for newcomers. Her reasoning was that she needed to see how the study could help her to think about how to ask the "right questions" so she can find the appropriate services for her adopted child with a disability. As a service provider within settlement settings, Malia expressed the significance of the challenges that immigrants with disabilities, as well as their families, face during their settlement experiences and the lack of knowledge about available services for them. Even for herself, she found that this problem is systemic and that she needed to take matters into her hands to respond to her son's needs.

[9] To maintain confidentiality while socially locating the participants, I selected pseudonyms that reflect their ethno-cultural background and gender (but not country of origin).

A complete list of all participants is presented in alphabetical order in Table 1 (at the end of this section) with brief information describing key characteristics that are relevant to this study. The table also includes information about which group the participants chose to be interviewed as part of. However, as noted above, participants also shared experiences and thoughts related to their other roles. Discussed below is the composition of participant groups and their relevance to the study.

Adult Immigrants with Disabilities

The first group consisted of nine participants who chose to be interviewed as immigrants/refugees with disabilities (keeping in mind that the total number of participants with disabilities is 14 and also includes those who chose to be interviewed as family members and service providers). This group included participants who were newcomers as well as immigrants with disabilities who are now Canadian citizens. These participants came to Canada through different classes such as individual immigration applicants, or family sponsored members. Also included are three participants who came to Canada as UN Convention refugees, two of whom were interviewed as service providers but who also spoke about their own personal experience with the refugee application and the hearing process. All of the nine participants were racialized and six were women.

The relevance of selecting this particular group of participants was due to the study's focus on understanding the construction of people with disabilities during the immigration application process. Moreover, consistent with critical disability lens, research about people with disabilities needs to include and centre their voices about their

own narratives. This group was important to interview because their experiences assisted in gaining knowledge about how they perceived that Canadian immigration policies construct them and learning about current challenges, gaps and limitations within settlement services available for people with disabilities.

In keeping with episodic interviewing guidelines (Flick, 1997, 2000a, 2006), interviews with participants in this group, lasted approximately two hours and focused on the following themes: main motivations for immigration; how they negotiated and navigated their disability in the application; their experiences dealing with immigration officials in Canada and abroad; experiences encountered while awaiting decision on their application; experiences accessing settlement services and with service providers; available supports and challenges encountered during the application process; and recommendations for policy and practice (please see appendix A for the interview guide relevant to this group). It is important to note that I followed the line of the story as narrated by participants and made sure not to interfere in how they chose to recount their experiences. This practice is consistent with episodic interview guidelines as it gives each participant the chance to make meaning of their narrative of the events under question (Flick, 2000, 2006).

As I anticipated before starting this study, recruiting participants in this group was not an easy endeavor as people with disabilities continue to be constructed as inadmissible. As such, only a very small number of people with disabilities are successful in their application. In fact, the majority of participants in this group knew about my research through someone else or through a disability organization in which

they are members. However, it was not easy to encourage some immigrants with disabilities to participate. Two main reasons were given by potential participants to tell me that they were not interested in participating in this study, even though they also expressed that this is indeed a needed study. First, some expressed their fear of the impact that their participation may have on their access to settlement services despite my guarantees of the confidential nature of the study. Others questioned my identity as a non-disabled researcher and felt uncomfortable sharing their immigration stories with me, fearing that my identity may influence how I interpret the information they share in their interviews. I reflect and elaborate on some of these experiences later in the findings chapters as I believe that it is important to engage reflexively with my data.

All of the participants in this group were in fact admitted to Canada—some after multiple attempts—which means that this study does not account for those who have been rejected as immigrants or who are still awaiting decision on their application. Thus, a second group of participants was necessary to include (discussed next) to respond to such limitations in this study and to provide a clearer and broader picture about the immigration application process for people with disabilities.

Family Members of Immigration applicants with Disabilities

To account for the fact that applicants with disabilities may have been rejected or are still awaiting decision on their immigration application, the second group of participants consisted of family members of immigration applicants with disabilities. This group of participants was important to interview as people with disabilities who have become accepted as immigrants are mostly coming through family sponsorship or as

refugees (Sandys, 1996; OCASI, 2000); in addition, some applicants with disabilities are accepted if they have invisible disabilities that they had not declared during their application—as will be discussed by some of the participants in the findings chapters. Moreover, all participants in the study mentioned and emphasized the key support provided by families of applicants with disabilities and discussed their roles in securing a successful immigration application as well as settlement and integration experiences.

A total of five participants interviewed were family members of immigration applicants with disabilities. These participants spoke about the difficulties they faced in sponsoring or supporting the application process of their family members with disabilities. The group included a father of two children with disabilities who himself was a refugee with a physical disability, a mother of a child with disability who herself is living with mental health issues, a mother of an adopted child with disability, a niece of a recent immigrant with disability, as well as a sibling of an individual with disability who has been preparing to sponsor her sister for several years.

Moreover, it was important to include family members because of the unique experiences and perspectives that they brought to this study, as they were able to recount their experiences with different aspects of the application process. In addition, this group of participants provided significant insights on the available support for families who are dealing with the immigration applications of their members with disabilities. Although there were no rejection decisions related to the family members interviewed, all of them expressed fear and concern about the impacts of such outcomes on family members with disabilities should a negative outcome occur. However, as will be demonstrated later in

the findings chapters, one of the participants, who was an immigration applicant with disability, was rejected three times. Although she is not a family member, Aya provided an account of the impact these rejections had on her family and painted a picture of the ordeals that they had to go through during the application process.

In general, each family member's interview lasted approximately two hours and focused on the following themes: participants' experiences with immigration as they relate to their family members; how they prepared for the application and what kinds of support they offered their family members; support that they needed going through the application and supports available in the community; challenges encountered during their family members' experiences; experiences with service providers and dealing with demands from immigration officials; experiences with settlement services; and recommendations for practice and policy (please see appendix B for the interview guide relevant to this group).

Service Providers

The third group included participants active within immigration and settlement agencies as well as disability activists in disability organizations within the geographical borders of Southern Ontario. In this study, the term service provider refers to a broad category of participants involved in immigration, settlement or disability services. I relied on the category "service provider" in recruitment to allow for the inclusion of the greatest possible diversity of stakeholders with a variety of roles. Moreover, the use of an umbrella category also allowed for the fact that some of the participants played more than one role; for example, Fartun and Esther considered themselves activists while also being

educators. Similarly, Farzana and Salma both identified as disability activists but are also involved in service provision related to settlement for people with disabilities.

As a result of the inclusion of the broad group of service providers, participants interviewed in this study included those active in the following roles: social workers within settlement or disability settings, settlement workers, disability or immigration activists, educators and researchers who are actively involved in initiatives related to disability and/or immigration, as well as participants who are involved in policy initiatives related to disability or immigration issues. A total of 14 service providers were interviewed, 12 of whom identified as social workers or social service workers. Service providers included nine women and five participants who identified as people with disabilities; moreover, service providers included 11 racialized participants the majority of whom also identified as having been immigrants to Canada and as such also spoke about their own experiences in this regard.

Each interview lasted approximately two hours. Questions for this group of participants focused on themes related to their professional roles as they fit with the selection criteria discussed above. Participants were asked to recount their experiences as service providers by focusing on themes such as: previous experiences of working with immigrants and newcomers with disabilities or their families; challenges encountered during this process; general observations or opinions on the intersection of immigration and disability in terms of service provision; as well as recommendations to enhance policy and practice (please see appendix C for interview guide relevant to this group).

Table 1 (below) provides a brief description of participants using pseudonyms and

describes some of their characteristics relevant to their participation in this study.

Table 1: Selected Characteristics of Participants

Pseudonym	Some relevant Characteristics	Interviewed as
Amina	• Identifies as an immigrant woman from a South Asian background • Works within the community development sector and is involved directly with policy initiatives related to immigration and settlement • Active on issues of funding for settlement services related specifically to seniors and other marginalized social groups	Service provider
Andrew	• Identifies as an immigrant Black West Indian man • His invisible disability did not impact on his immigration application directly but was significant in shaping his settlement experiences including dealing with unemployment issues, housing and problems with the police • Sponsored a family member after immigrating to Canada	Immigrant living with mental health disability
Aya	• Identifies as an Arab and Muslim mother with disability • Sponsored by her family to come to Canada • Active on issues of marginalization of racialized people with disabilities • Active member of several other initiatives related to immigration and settlement issues for people with disabilities	Immigrant with physical disability
Baljeet	• South Asian immigrant who came to Canada with her family as a young woman • Works at a settlement agency and holds dual backgrounds in social work and health care • Due to her background in healthcare, she is assigned clients who are considered to have "special needs" at her workplace	Service provider
Clara	• Identifies as Latin American-Canadian youth • Active with several disability self-help groups • Immigrated to Canada with her family as a minor and was 23 years old at the time of the interview	Immigrant living with mental health disability
David	• Identifies as white Canadian man • Social worker in a medical institution • Works with immigrant children with disabilities • Involved in several research initiatives to improve available services for immigrants and newcomers with disabilities, especially children with disabilities.	Service provider
Esther	• Identifies as a white Canadian woman • Researcher, educator and disability activist • Active board member of various disability organizations • Involved in several research projects and policy initiatives related to disability issues	Service provider

Pseudonym	Some relevant Characteristics	Interviewed as
Fartun	• Identifies as a Black social worker and educator • Family member, and immigration, mental health and anti-racism activist • Involved in several initiatives to address mental health issues at the policy level	Service provider and family member
Farzana	• Identifies as a first generation Canadian Muslim disability activist • Involved in several initiatives related to disability issues including research and policies	Service provider
Jacob	• White Canadian born and raised activist who identifies as having a sensory disability • Active member of various disability organizations and groups • Volunteers with several immigrant and refugee groups	Service provider
Joey	• Came to Canada as a refugee • Youth worker, community and immigration activist • Involved in several practice and policy initiatives on immigrant and refugees issues at the regional and provincial levels	Service provider
Keisha	• Identifies as a Black immigrant woman from an African country • Immigrated with her son and daughter	Immigrant living with mental health disability
Khaled	• Identifies as an Arab refugee • Came to Canada as a refugee 3 years ago	Refugee with a physical disability and family member
Lorraine	• Identifies as a Black immigrant mother living with mental health disability • In the process of getting her citizenship status • Working towards sponsoring her two children	Immigrant living with mental health disability
Lotfi	• Identifies as a Canadian Citizen born in an Arab country • Claimed refugee status while receiving medical treatment in Canada • Long-time disability activist • Involved in several initiatives related to accessibility and accommodations for people with disabilities	Service provider
Magda	• Identifies as an Arab immigrant woman who is now a Canadian citizen • Settlement worker with background in health care • Assigned clients with various types of disabilities and medical needs due to her practice background	Service provider
Malia	• Identifies as an immigrant woman of Persian origin • Settlement worker but chose to be interviewed as a family	Family member

Pseudonym	Some relevant Characteristics	Interviewed as
	member • Sponsored her adopted child who has a disability	
Margareth	• Identifies as a Latin American-Canadian woman • Occupies a senior leadership position in a settlement agency • Involved in several policy initiatives related to enhancing the settlement experiences of immigrants and newcomers	Service provider
Maria	• Identifies as a Latin American immigrant woman living with mental health disability • Mother of a child with a sensory disability • Was interviewed as an immigrant with disability but also spoke about her son's experiences	Immigrant with a disability and family member
Ria	• Identifies as Canadian-West Indian • Works within the settlement sector and has had direct practice experiences with immigrants and refugees with disabilities (including a focus on women and seniors)	Service provider
Ripa	• Identifies as a South-Asian immigrant • Artist and activist; involved in several networks on issues of disabilities, immigration and settlement • Has been trying to sponsor her sister who has a disability for the past 13 years	Family member
Salma	• Canadian-born disability activist of Arab background • Identifies as having a sensory disability • Involved in an institutional capacity on several initiatives related to disability and/or immigration	Service provider
Saman	• Identifies as a South Asian–Canadian man with a sensory disability • Came to Canada as a refugee • Currently working within an institutional setting on issues of discrimination of people with disabilities	Service provider

Data Analysis

This study relied on CDA analysis methods influenced by the work of authors such as Fairclough (2003, 2009, 2010), Chouliariki and Fairclough (2010), Poole (2011), van Dijk (1993, 2008b), Wodak (2004, 2009) and Wodak and Meyer (2001, 2009). Van Dijk (1993, 2008b) notes that while there are several methods for conducting CDA analysis, the common denominator is that researchers seek to examine the construction of discourses and their links to power and control. Indeed, Wodak and Meyer (2009) assert that in CDA, there is no one prescribed data analysis method. However, these authors identify three main steps: Finding particular concepts, grouping concepts into categories, and returning to the data for further examination. Although these steps may sound akin to thematic analysis, they differ in CDA due to its emphasis on discourse and on how these discourses utilize language in the operation of power, dominance and control (Fairclough, 2009, 2010; van Dijk, 1993, 2003a; Wodak & Meyer, 2001, 2009). This is not to say that other research methods are not interested in questioning and challenging oppression and marginalization. Rather, this is an entry point to highlight what makes CDA a unique and relevant research methodology that is a fit with my research questions and goals.

Fairclough (2010) argues that for research analysis to be considered CDA, it has to have three main characteristics:

1- It is not just analysis of discourse (or more concretely texts), it is part of some form of systematic transdisciplinary analysis of relations between discourses and other forms of social process.
2- It is not just general commentary on discourse; it includes some form of systemic analysis of text.
3- It is not descriptive, it is also normative. It addresses social wrongs in their aspects and possible ways of righting or maintaining them. (pp.10-11)

Moreover, as highlighted earlier in the discussion of CDA approaches, Wodak and Meyer (2009) argue that although there are no consistent CDA methods, different approaches to CDA share common features and analysis steps. Specifically, the authors argue that most approaches to CDA are "problem oriented and not focused on specific linguistic items", and "theory as well as methodology is eclectic, both of which are integrated to be able to understand the social problems under investigation" (p. 31).

An example to help distinguish between CDA and other forms of analysis is suggested by Fairclough (2010). The author notes that to distinguish between "critical" and "descriptive" goals when conducting discourse analysis, CDA researchers must pay attention to "background knowledge" of research participants, as this is key in shaping their social interactions and facilitating ideological representation within the research data. The author identifies four background knowledges of research participants which they draw upon in their social interactions: "Knowledge of language codes; knowledge of principles and norms of language use; knowledge of situations and; knowledge of the world" (p. 36). These background knowledges bring together ideology, language, history and discourse in the ways that research participants interact with the research questions. As mentioned throughout this dissertation, language and discourse are the vehicles that facilitate social processes and structures which are embedded and perpetuated within the background knowledge of research participants.

Considering the diversity of possible methods used in CDA analysis, I chose to rely on the work of Poole (2011), specifically her CDA study of mental health recovery discourses. I chose to rely on the methods proposed by Poole's work because of its

specific relevance for this research, due to its focus on critical disability-specific discourses and the Canadian context. As noted earlier, key CDA scholars such as Fairclough (2010) and Wodak and Meyer (2009) caution against conformity in CDA methods and encourage researchers to enrich CDA's development through theoretical and disciplinary linkages and dialogues. Poole's (2011) work brings critical disability theories in dialogue with CDA and provides a concrete example of how to translate methodological principles of CDA into specific methods relevant for disability research.

Poole (2011) proposes the use of five detailed analysis steps (see Figure 2 at the end of the chapter for a summary of these steps as applied to this study). The first step is to conduct a thorough reading of the interview transcripts. The second step consists of re-reading the transcripts to begin the process of coding key words and phrases that reflect main ideas and discourses at the heart of the study and related specifically to the research questions. For this study, I transcribed the interviews myself which provided me with the opportunity to familiarize myself in-depth with the transcripts and to begin initial coding. As for the documents, I began collecting and categorizing them as soon as ethics approval was granted (March 2013), as these are publicly available on CIC website.

The third step suggested by Poole (2011) is to sort the coded sections of the transcripts and documents into categories and sub-categories included within each. Fourth, the categories are examined in relation to one another to begin to identify discourses. Consistent with Wodak and Meyer's (2009) principle of returning to the data for further examination, Poole notes the importance of reading and re-reading the categories to ensure that themes that were initially identified are further refined. The final

step is to identify themes that group discourses together related to the research questions.

By following these steps in the analysis process, I identified broad categories such as "national identity", "importance of family", "support systems", etc. Examining these broad categories allowed me to see the emergence of a common theme that centred on understanding immigration as "opportunity". This can be seen through expressed ideas of "immigration for a better life", "immigrating to Canada as a dream", and "immigration to Canada for the benefit of the health system", among others. Considering the preponderance of themes related to opportunity, I identified the latter as the central discourse that brought the data together.

The discourse of "opportunity" arose in all the interviews and each participant expressed this idea in ways that responded to what they wanted to say about their own experiences of the immigration application process and settlement experiences. After the third interview, I realized that participants were using the discourse of "opportunity" to highlight or emphasize their desire to immigrate to Canada and to negotiate their experiences during that process. As for service provider participants, discourses of opportunity were present in how they negotiated their professional roles and how they saw their practice with immigrants with disabilities.

As per CDA and episodic interview guidelines, researchers are encouraged to re-visit their data collection tools to allow for accommodation of emerging data (Fairclough, 2009, 2010; Flick, 1997, 2000; Wodak & Meyer, 2001, 2009). Hence, I decided to pay attention to how research participants understood opportunity and how they used it as a discourse that motivates them to apply for immigration as well as a discourse that

constructs and shapes their immigration experiences. It is important to note that I took care not to ask about opportunity discourses directly and without fail, all participants (who are immigrants with disabilities or family members of immigration applicants with disabilities) constructed their immigration to Canada as an opportunity for a better life in ways that are complex and full of contradictions and nuances. In addition, all service provider participants echoed similar constructions that centred their roles on actualizing these opportunities, as will be demonstrated in more detail later.

The same process of analysis described above also revealed other themes and categories within the CIC documents analyzed. While "opportunity" emerged as important in the promotional documents, further analysis of other documents (i.e. operational manuals) revealed the presence of discourses of risk and protection that contribute to constructing immigration applicants in a homogenous way; however, the analysis also demonstrates how these discourses tie back to discourses of opportunity, specifically through discourses that determine "worthiness of opportunity".

Indeed, an important aspect of analysis is the identification not only of central discourses but also of "secondary" discourses grouped together through central discourses (van Leeuwen, 2009, p. 154). Van Leeuwen recognizes the interdiscursive relationship between discourses and suggests that such relationships are context specific as the roles of central and secondary discourses may change depending on the focus or interest of the text under analysis. This implies that what may be a central discourse in this study may not be so in another research depending on the context of the study, research questions, texts used and how they are analyzed.

The findings chapters provide an analysis of the central discourses emerging in this research and illustrate the use of secondary discourses that support the claims of central discourses to serve the agendas of the texts, whether these are documents or interview transcripts. For example, the central discourse is that of opportunity and a secondary discourse from the documents would be portraying immigration as an exciting opportunity, a chance for economic advancement or democracy, etc. Other secondary discourses discussed by participants highlight a contentious relationship to the central discourse of opportunity. Discourses of material cost, family cost, identity loss, uncertainty and the unknown are a few secondary discourses that participants associated with the central discourses of opportunity, as will be apparent in the findings chapters.

Furthermore, as will be demonstrated in the findings chapters, the analysis steps followed in this study allowed for a critical examination of factors such as gender, race, class, ability and disability as they intersect with constructions of admissibility and inadmissibility. It is important to note that the bulk of analysis focuses on racism, ableism and colonialism. I do however recognize the significance of class and gender even though these were not primary lenses of analysis. As such, while these elements are referred to in the findings chapters, I believe a more comprehensive study focusing on these aspects would be an important future research direction. For example, I could foresee a collaborative feminist-centred future research to do justice to the significance of gender as an element of analysis and identity that shapes immigration. I return to this idea in the final implications chapter.

In addition, analysis demonstrated how experiences of immigration shaped who is

considered an "ideal" candidate and how participants reflect this in the knowledge base they brought into the interview. Data analysis also examined the roles of service providers within immigration or disability service settings to show how practitioners' use of their professional knowledges is shaped and constructed by dominant discourses and the role of their background knowledges in perpetuating or resisting such discourses. This allowed for a better understanding of the issues and challenges faced by service providers within such fields of practice, and how practitioners are resisting or not such challenges. Throughout the analysis, I ultimately sought to present "counter discourses" through participants' narratives that define and resist the processes of marginalization and Othering of people with disabilities, discussed amply below as an analysis tool for CDA.

Counter discourse as an important strategy of discursive resistance

This research relies on the term "counter discourse" which refers to the process of resistance that takes place in challenging dominant discourses by constructing alternative ones that reflect the lived experiences and realities of marginalized social groups. Relying on the work of Foucault, Moussa and Scapp (1996) maintain that his concept of counter discourse "aims at clearing a space in which the formerly voiceless might begin to articulate their desire—to *counter* the domination of prevailing authoritative discourses" (p. 88, emphasis in original). For me, counter discourse is a *conscious act* of reassigning new meanings to produce a political discourse that serves a social change agenda for these marginalized and oppressed groups. Put differently, counter discourses not only question the dominance of discourses imposed on these groups, but also involves participants in using their lived experiences to create new discourses that are shaped by

these realities and aims to make them relevant, meaningful and acceptable discourses. I chose to focus on counter discourse here as a methodological tool that engages participants in the analysis process by bringing their interpretation of discourse and discursive events to the forefront in ways that guide my (researcher) analysis and inform the narrative of the findings.

To elaborate, counter discourse involves various forms of resistance that include reclaiming lost identities, deconstructing forms of dominance and reconstructing alternative discourses by assigning new meanings to dominant discourses. As Jäger and Maier (2009) assert, "[t]o assign meaning is not a noncommittal, 'merely symbolic' act. To assign meaning is to animate whatever one comes across, to re-shape and change" (p. 44). Highlighting counter discourses allows us to see that people are not just being acted upon by discourses; they are active agents of change who are using, knowingly or unknowingly, discourses to create and facilitate broader social change. In other words, counter discourse subverts the meaning of dominant discourses and proposes alternatives that have the potential to challenge and resist dominance and control operating through discourses. For example, in her analysis of race narratives, Bell (2009) discusses the production of concealed and counter stories by marginalized social groups to highlight their hidden realities that are obscured by dominant discourses but also to highlight the potential for resistance. As discussed by Moussa and Scapp (1996), counter discourse in the Foucauldian sense is produced when "those usually spoken for and about by others begin to speak for themselves" (p. 89).

Similarly, the narratives of participants in this study highlighted their own stories

that can best reflect the realities of their lived experiences as opposed to accepting realities imposed and defined by oppressive dominant discourses. For example, resisting the imposed discourse of being constructed as "dependent burden of care", people with disabilities in this study chose to resist these narratives by focusing on their actual and potential contributions to Canadian society (e.g., raising good Canadian citizens, or contributing to and pushing forward the disability movement in Canada).

Participants also provided counter discourses that challenged my interpretations of their stories as the researcher. For example, as a disability activist, while I named certain experiences as ableism, this did not necessarily reflect the lived experiences of some of the research participants due to many factors such as history, language and culture, or how they conceptualize ableism to begin with. These participants provided a different interpretation of their experiences and alerted me to the fact that ableism is a discourse that conceptualizes and represents a particular understanding of oppression based on disability. By engaging with counter discourses, these participants constructed their own discourses influenced by their histories of marginalization, their experiences with ableism, as well as their interpretations of these experiences and how they are unfolding. Such a resistance process challenged not only my interpretation as the researcher, but also the legitimacy of dominant discourses of how oppression is experienced and conceptualized in ways that are assumed to be universal and applicable despite differences in social, political, economic and geographic contexts. Counter discourses in this sense serve as a way that allows for new discourses that express the agency of participants to emerge through the research process.

Furthermore, advancing the idea of counter discourses in this dissertation is a way to respond to some ethical tensions and dilemmas within CDA as a methodology. One of the issues worth mentioning here and identified by Hammersley (2014) concerns ethical tensions related to conducting interviews for discourse analysis. The author argues that when research participants are interviewed, they assume that the researcher is interested in documenting their feelings, experiences, perspectives, views, interpretations of events, or the telling of their story, etc. He argues that interviewing for discourse analysis specifically aims to "obtain a sample of the discursive practices" that participants use where the researcher's aim is to study the nature of these discourses and how they operate (p. 532). The author adds that in discourse analysis interviews, participants are "covertly or overtly" expected to "preform discursively so that their performance can be analyzed; and, generally, they are treated as representatives rather than as experts" (p. 532) on their experiences. This differs from the assumption about interviewing for conventional types of research where participants believe that their experiences are the subject matter of the interviews. The author concludes his argument by claiming that interviewing for discourse analysis has serious ethical problems that cannot be addressed by explaining the purpose of the research and its nature in the consent form participants sign.

In response, Taylor (2014) insists that interviewing in qualitative research in general has ethical considerations related to consent and informing participants about the purpose of the research that need to be addressed; as such, these considerations are not specific to interviewing for discourse analysis. The author adds that in discourse analysis, studying discursive practices considers "talk not as a kind of expression or exhalation of

an already existing personness, but as one of the ongoing social activities which constitutes it" (p. 544). Taylor asserts that critical discourse analysts invite participants to their research not to "preform", as suggested by Hammersley (2014) and noted above; instead, researchers interpret "people and social life in terms of performance" (p. 544).

However, I would agree with both authors (Hammersley, 2014; Taylor, 2014) that ethical tensions and dilemmas exist in any qualitative research and need to be considered regardless of the methodology or purpose of the research and the expectations of the interview participants. In this research, in addition to informing participants about the nature of the research, process of analysis and focus on the discursive practices that shape their immigration and settlement experiences or service delivery, I relied on the concept of counter discourse to make a space in the analysis to engage in reassigning meaning that is reflective of the realities of participants. For example, as will be demonstrated in the findings chapters, while I did not specify the concept of counter discourse to the participants during the interviews, they nonetheless engaged in this process of creating counter discourses to the dominant discourses of opportunity by assigning a complex meaning that included costs and challenges.

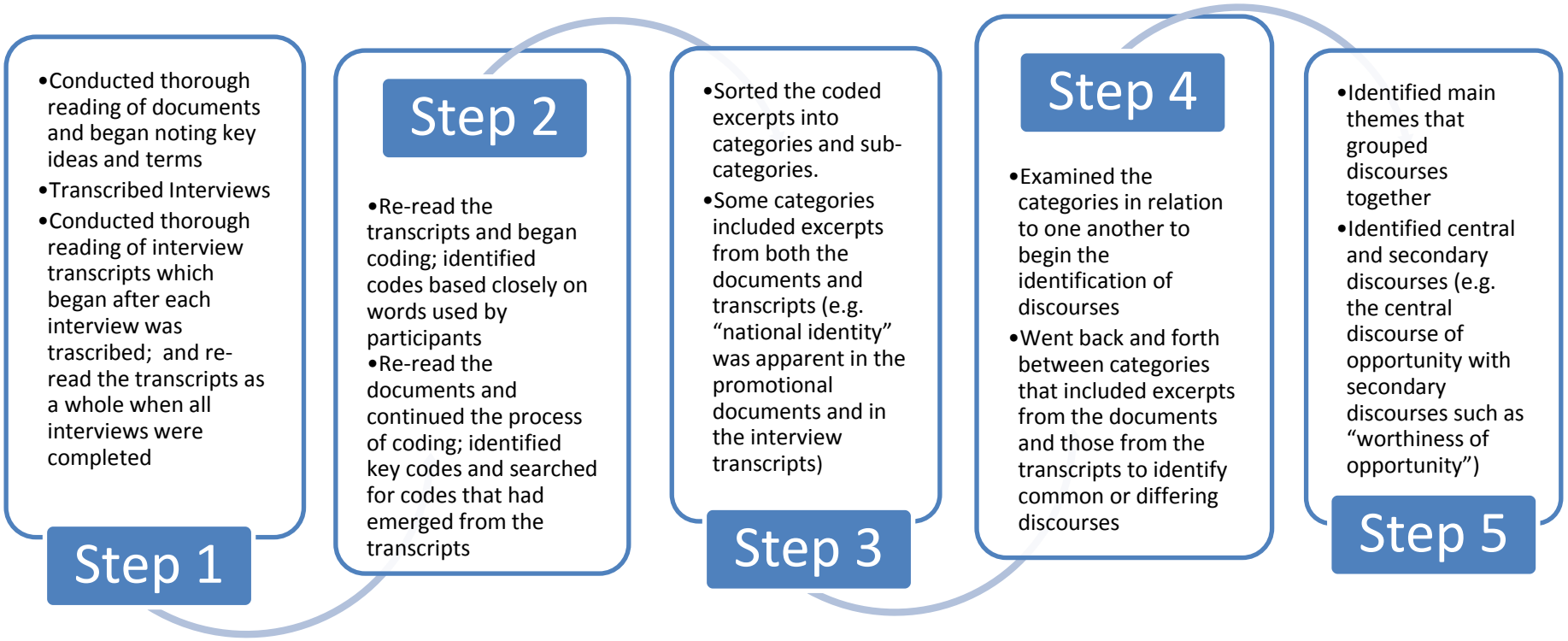
Indeed, by being attuned to counter discourses as I entered this research process, I allowed the analysis process to be informed and guided by research participants' interpretations of the discursive events that shaped their experiences. For example, I asked Andrew, one of the research participants, about his experiences with policing and racial profiling as a newcomer, the following question: Do you feel racism plays a factor in these experiences? Although this may seem like a leading question that raises issues of

racism, in fact up to that point in the interview, Andrew had centred racism throughout his discussion of his experiences as a newcomer. Hence, my question was a continuation and follow up of a direction he had led me towards in the interview thus far. However, his reply to this particular question surprised me in its decentering of racism—as seen below—and made me think about and see the importance of class when it intersects with racism and North/South power dynamics that shape immigrants' and newcomers' realities, as the excerpt below demonstrates:

> Maybe it is racism. But it's the poor thing, the financial thing because racism isn't a thing if you've got money, they leave you alone. Because it's not only racism. You see that in the far Right in Europe. The poor are fighting the rich…I don't think it's race much. Because now the war in Europe, they're killing each other, you hear about it every day and they're the same race, but one poor and one richer. So the rich ones they have all the power because they're rich. If a man is rich he is going to try to keep rich. Maybe it is racism, but not sure. It is the poor thing, it is the financial thing, because racism isn't a thing when you have money.

This excerpt demonstrates how Andrew responded to my question by alerting me to the importance of poverty and class issues to his experiences of marginalization and being constructed as the Other who draws police attention or intervention. This is not the place to engage in analyzing the issues raised in this excerpt. However, I use it here to emphasize that participants do construct their own counter discourses to re-assign meanings and interpretations of their lived experiences that are informed by their own subject location and identity. By redirecting my attention to poverty and class, Andrew here provided a counter discourse that added to my interpretation and analysis of his interview the dimension of class as it intersects with race and immigration status. In the next four chapters, I build on the analysis ideas presented here to discuss the main findings of the study.

Figure 2: Visual Summary of Analysis Steps



Chapter 6: Process of Analysis & Overview of Findings

This chapter offers a summary overview of the main findings which are developed and presented in detail in the next three chapters. The chapter also provides insights into the process of analysis through a reflexive engagement with the main findings outlined here. Through this discussion, I identify theoretical and methodological tensions I contended with as the researcher attempting to stay true to CDA but also to the narratives of participants.

As per CDA guidelines, the analysis of interviews was interwoven with analysis of documents where discourses found within interviews were contrasted with discourses enforced by the documents and vice versa. Such an analysis process allowed for reaching saturation in the sense that data from both sources informed each other as well as the process that shapes the construction of people with disabilities before, during and after their immigration. Specifically, applying CDA principles to the data from participant interviews as well as from the documents analyzed, demonstrates that the immigration application process cannot be separated from the whole immigration and settlement experience leading up to gaining access to citizenship status.

Hence, the argument advanced in the findings chapters suggests that the process of immigration can be understood through three stages: pre-application, during the application, and after the fact of immigration (or the settlement stage). These stages and associated discourses will be presented in three findings chapters, each focusing on one stage of the process. These chapters are then followed by a discussion chapter highlighting main themes emerging from the analysis. A summary of key findings and

discourses is presented briefly below and is provided in visual form at the end of this chapter (please see Figure 3).

Summary of Key Findings

Relying on the theoretical dimensions discussed earlier, in the following chapters I argue that the processes of immigration application, as well as settlement and integration, are shaped and defined by central discourses that construct immigration itself as an *opportunity* for a better life through which ableist, racist and colonial discourses are reflected and reinforced by all key players involved in the immigration process—including people with disabilities themselves. Further, discourses of opportunity are not only used to maintain Canada's reputation at the global level, but also to construct immigrating to Canada as a life changing event that marginalized social groups such as people with disabilities in the Global South desire and actively pursue, regardless of the challenges, difficulties and the systemic exclusion they may face.

In addition, analysis of CIC documents shows particular discourses that are emphasized to inform immigration officers' ways of analyzing and evaluating immigration applications. Some of these documents are promotional material where immigration is constructed as an opportunity for a better life; other documents (i.e., Operational Manuals) instruct immigration officers on determining eligibility and admissibility of immigration applicants in ways that facilitate or restrict their access to such professed opportunities. An analysis of these documents demonstrates how discourses of risk and protection are utilized to determine who is *worthy* of accessing this presumed opportunity to immigrate to Canada and define and identify who deserves

access to citizenship privileges and ultimately Canadian national identity.

Indeed, according to the 2012 annual report to Parliament on immigration, Canada takes pride "as one of few countries with a managed immigration program directed toward newcomers ultimately becoming full citizens" (CIC, 2012b, "Integration of Newcomers," para. 1). These programs are intended to create a "stronger nation" where immigrants and newcomers are constructed as potential Canadians who benefit from and contribute to the development of Canadian society. Hence, immigration itself becomes the place where those assumed to be worthy of holding Canadian citizenship and eventually being part of national identity are constructed and vetted. These arguments will be explored later in this dissertation to show the importance of gaining access to citizenship privileges as an essential component of how immigrants are constructed and how they chose to construct themselves in their applications.

Moreover, constructing immigration as an opportunity through the official narratives of CIC documents makes sense for participants in this study only when living standards in Canada are compared and contrasted to living standards available for them in their home countries in the Global South. Such comparisons are centred around ideas and conceptions of *here (us)* and *there (them)* where the here/us is assumed to be the North and characterized as more advanced and where human rights and other protective measures are seen to be in place for people with disabilities; the Global South as an assumed homogenous whole is then contrasted against these standards. These discourses continue to play an instrumental role not only in how colonial power dynamics and relations between the North and the South play out in immigration, but they also shape

how immigration applicants with disabilities construct themselves in ways that internalize colonial discourses in their efforts to gain access to the better life promised and normalized by constructing immigration through discourses of opportunity.

Put differently, constructing immigration as an opportunity shapes not only how an admissible immigration applicant is constructed, but also defines how applicants construct themselves in the application stage in ways that reflect and reinforce ableist, racist and colonial discourses. These discourses further continue to be essential components of all stages of immigration application as well as the settlement and integration experiences of immigrants with disabilities. However, applicants are not passive recipients of these discourses, and findings will also demonstrate how participants engage in resistance of these constructions of worthiness through counter discourses.

Engaging with the Process of Analysis: Theoretical & Methodological Tensions

Being reflexive about the process of arriving at the above key findings, a personal confession is due here. When I began working on this dissertation, I was naively determined to show (and perhaps "prove"—against all qualitative research principles) the discourses that construct people with disabilities as an inadmissible social group within Canadian immigration systems, as all the scholarship I had reviewed suggested. I started this research with the intention of responding to knowledge gaps specifically related to the immigration application process by focusing on constructions of admissibility and inadmissibility of immigration applicants, which are specifically tied to *outcomes* of the application process. I outlined these intentions in my comprehensive exam by insisting on the political aims and aspects of my doctoral research to demystify the dominant

discourses that construct people with disabilities as inadmissible and to challenge such constructions by highlighting resistance efforts that seek to challenge such marginalization of immigrants with disabilities.

However, after months of research, interviews and meetings with participants, as well as the countless hours of analysis and reflection, I allowed myself to follow the data and went with an open mind instead of following the pre-conceived agenda with which I had started this study. Such openness helped me to see the complexities and nuances within discourses that construct immigration applicants as admissible or inadmissible instead of narrowly focusing on finding out how these discourses shape and define only the outcomes of the immigration process, as I had originally set out to do. At this point, I feel that my understanding of the power of discourse and how it shapes our realities has moved to a level where I can see the complexities to which the research participants drew my attention. They showed me the road map to push my thinking about how to better negotiate and navigate my way when it comes to understanding discourses and how they inform the operation of power and dominance as well as resistance.

As this research unfolded, I realized that the participants brought a complex and nuanced discussion of these processes that went beyond solely focusing on the immigration application outcomes (i.e. determination of admissibility and inadmissibility). Since the participants were already in Canada, they chose to talk about the whole immigration experience leading to gaining citizenship status (or potential of citizenship), and did not simply focus on application outcomes. Immigration for them was a continuum that did not stop with finding out about the outcome of their

applications. In this sense, the whole immigration experience including the application were constructed by the documents as well as the participants in this study as stepping stones to the "ultimate goal" of gaining access to citizenship status, a point I return to in the findings chapters.

As I sat to write the findings of this study, I was confronted with a key tension between presenting immigration in discrete stages, and the more fluid narratives of participants that characterized it as a continuum that does not end with the application outcomes, most notably for applicants eventually constructed *as admissible*. Granted, from a policy point of view, immigration applicants are constructed differently than newcomers or citizens: for example, in the official CIC narrative, applicants are considered and labelled as "foreign nationals"; while newcomers are considered landed immigrants, and citizens are referred to as Canadians (this is discussed in more detail in the findings). These categorizations are significant as they define eligibility for services and access to protection measures such as protection under Human Rights Codes and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which are based on legal residency in Canada (see, for example, Human Rights in Immigration[10]). However, I noticed throughout the interviews that participants chose to bypass these official distinctions in how they spoke about their immigration applications and settlement experiences.

Reflecting on the material I was reading and the interviews, I eventually chose to present the findings in three distinct stages only as a way to facilitate the presentation of findings and not to suggest that such a separation existed in how participants discussed

[10] http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/before-rights.asp

their narratives in this research. Importantly, certain dominant discourses were particular to each stage, and as such, I felt they merited being discussed on their own. Organizing the findings in this way is consistent with CDA methodology where the emphasis is on presentation of central discourses as well as secondary discourses dominant in each stage (Fairclough, 2003, 2010; van Dijk, 1993, 2008a, 2009; Wodak, 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2001, 2009).

Furthermore, the choice of presenting the findings by stages is consistent with the data collection method. Focusing on the dominant discourses within each stage is consistent with episodic interviewing where the interview was divided into three stages that highlight the important aspects of immigration and construct it as an important episode in the lives of research participants. It is my hope that such a presentation will do justice to the voices of participants while focusing on the role of discourses and how they shape not only how immigration is constructed as an opportunity, but also how such a construction reflects and reinforces racist, ableist and colonial discourses.

Another tension that I contended with is related to the focus with which I had started my research where I had intended to examine inadmissibility. In fact, among the study's participants, there was only one participant for whom the application process had not (yet) been successful. As a family member, she has been discouraged for the past 13 years from applying to sponsor her disabled sister fearing an inadmissibility outcome. This participant discussed the impact of constructing people with disabilities as inadmissible and demonstrated how such constructions shaped her life in Canada and contributed to family tensions. However, considering that all of the other participants

who had gone through the application process I had interviewed had already been deemed and constructed as admissible (whether by hiding their disabilities or by relying on family support, etc.) I was challenged to take this reality into account in how I conceived of this research.

I addressed this challenge in my analysis by demonstrating how inadmissibility is constructed in official documents and how it is understood by participants. I also discussed how the fear of being constructed as inadmissible significantly influenced and shaped how people with disabilities and their families negotiated their immigration application and informed what they were prepared to do to become admissible. In addition, highlighting the story of the participant preparing to sponsor her sister serves as a way to illustrate the application process as it is unfolding and demonstrates how discourses shaped by ableism, racism and colonialism continue to be perpetuated through the immigration application process and how applicants are preparing themselves or their family members to be admissible.

Overview of Findings & Discussion Chapters

The first stage of immigration, presented in Chapter 7, refers to the period before application, or the pre-application stage. This chapter discusses dominant discourses that promote immigration as an opportunity and outline how such discourses motivate participants to apply for immigration. In addition, the chapter presents an analysis of how these discourses shape how immigration applicants with disabilities and their families construct themselves in ways that they believe would make them admissible and demonstrate how they negotiate their disabilities within their immigration applications.

This analysis illustrates how service providers—including social workers—involved in immigration and settlement practice settings negotiate their professional roles and navigate the systems within which they operate.

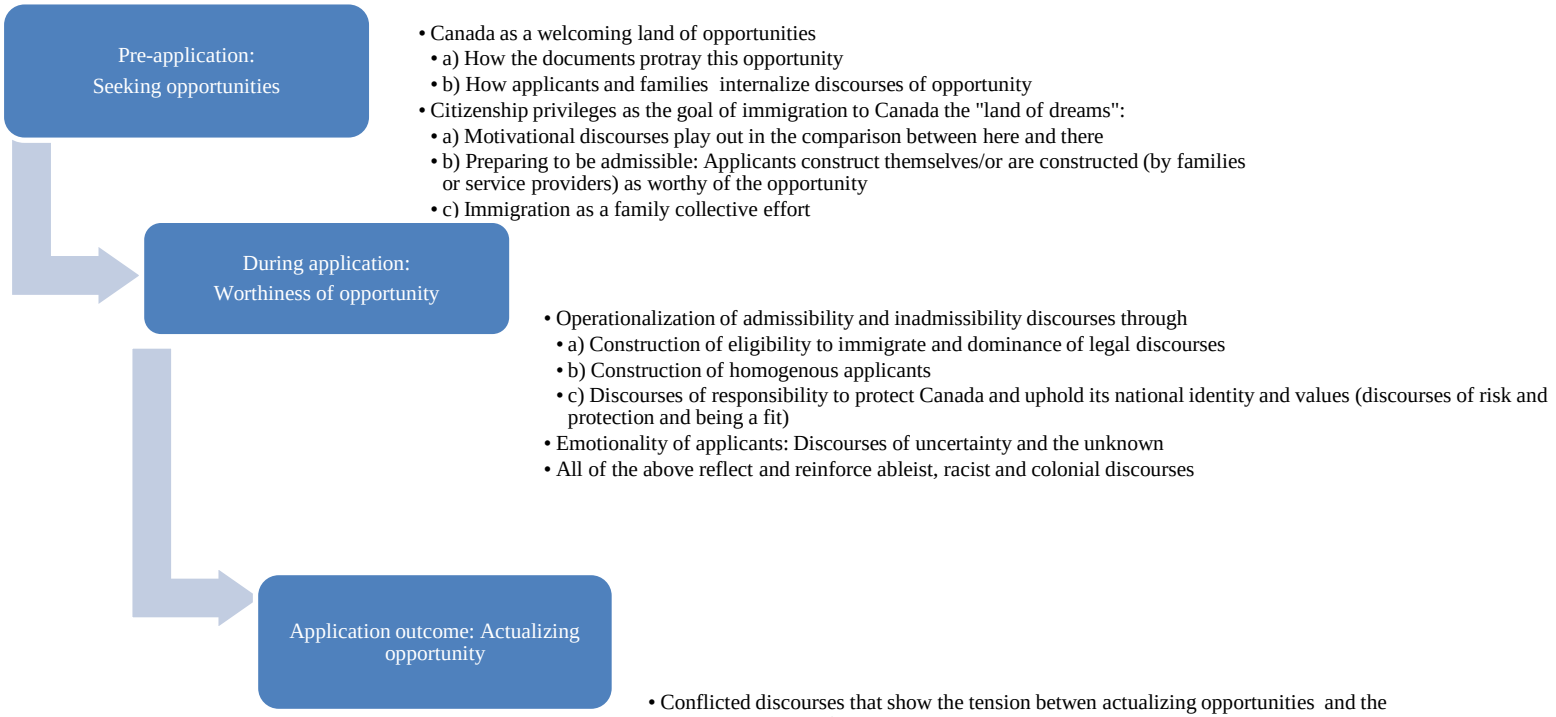
The second stage of immigration which is the focus of Chapter 8, examines the period during the application. The chapter begins by demonstrating how discourses of risk and protection shape the construction of admissibility and inadmissibility within the official immigration documents. Analysis also demonstrates how these discourses of risk and protection are utilized to justify and normalize oppressive immigration processes and neutralize any attempts to resist them. The chapter then proceeds to an analysis of the dominant discourses existing within this stage and the roles they play in the *homogenizing* process that strips immigration applicants—including those with disabilities—of their identities and specificities and assigns them into two new categories, *admissible or inadmissible*. Finally, the chapter presents findings about how applicants interact with how they are constructed through immigration and how this is apparent through emotions such as anger, sadness, uncertainty and fear of the unknown.

The final stage of immigration, presented in Chapter 9, refers to the period after the fact of immigration and settlement leading to gaining or working towards citizenship status. Outlined in this stage are the main discourses that construct settlement services and facilitate the settlement experiences for immigrants with disabilities. In addition, the analysis demonstrates how discourses of opportunity in particular construct service provision and shape how social workers and other helping professions conceive of their roles and define how they see and interact with their clients with disabilities in settlement

settings. I argue that discourses of opportunity at play during this stage continue to be central and shape how service providers perceive their professional responsibilities to be about *actualizing and materializing* such opportunities for immigration applicants with disabilities and their families.

Following presentation of the analysis of the three stages of immigration, Chapter 10 discusses the main themes emerging from the findings and Chapter 11 outlines the implications for policy, practice as well as future research directions emanating from this study. Throughout the presentation and discussion of findings, I engage in reflexivity about the analysis process that helped me identify the main discourses that shape the narrative of the findings of this study by illustrating the influence of such a process on the direction of the analysis. This process is important as it helps in maintaining a transparent relationship with the data where I am always following the lead that it suggests. Such openness minimizes the influence that I could impose on the findings and allows for different narratives to emerge and be appreciated.

Figure 3: Visual Representation of Findings & Key Discourses



Chapter 7: Pre-application Stage—Seeking Opportunities

This chapter outlines the pre-application process leading up to submitting an immigration application. Throughout the presentation of findings, the focus is on the dominant discourses that shape this stage and how they contribute to the construction of admissibility and inadmissibility of immigration applicants with disabilities. The chapter also outlines the impacts of such constructions on how applicants construct themselves based on assumed understandings of what constitutes an admissible applicant influenced by promotional discourses of immigration. In addition, the analysis presented here provides an account of the main discourses that reflect and reinforce colonialism, racism and ableism hidden within and reflected through discourses of opportunity.

The chapter begins by providing an account of the dominant discourses that construct immigration as an opportunity for a better life, as reflected in the CIC documents analyzed. The analysis starts by noting how Canada is portrayed as a land of opportunity in these documents through discourses that emphasize the importance of democracy, multiculturalism, equality, rights and responsibilities, and civic engagement, as well as the advanced health and social services argued to be available for Canadians and permanent residents equally. These values form the legal and legislative basis of immigration policies and have significant influence over settlement and integration programs. The same discourses reflected and emphasized in these documents also appear to be highly influential in motivating people with disabilities to choose Canada as their first destination for immigration or to make refugee claims, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter.

Following an analysis of the documents, I argue that the discourses that construct Canada as a welcoming country motivate people with disabilities in Global South countries to take advantage of such professed opportunities. I also demonstrate how they construct themselves in the immigration application and illustrate the extent to which they are willing to go in order to be constructed as admissible. For some applicants and their families, discourses of opportunity are internalized and supported through the influence and encouragement of other family members already in Canada. For almost all participants, attaining citizenship privileges is seen as the "ultimate goal" of immigration to Canada the "land of dreams". However, it is important to distinguish between the opportunity to immigrate and opportunities sought through immigration. The point to emphasize here is that immigration by itself does not appear to be what immigrants and newcomers are after. Immigration is considered a *means* to citizenship and the privileges that come with it.

Moreover, participants are motivated through discourses of comparison between *here and there* which reinforce colonial, racist and ableist discourses. Such discourses promote and construct the North to be more advanced than their countries of origin in terms of human rights, protective laws and legislations, employment, education, health, accessibility, independence, women's rights, and opportunities for personal growth, etc. To access such opportunities for a better life, participants spoke about how to prepare to be admissible through negotiating disability identities and building an admissible profile (e.g. getting an education, learning English, showing family support, highlighting their potential contributions to Canada if admitted, etc.). Indeed, for some, immigration

became a collective familial effort throughout the preparation process and included activities such as going to English schools in countries of origin, applying as a family to support relatives with disabilities, or even coming as families first and leaving their disabled children behind until they secure citizenship status which might give these children a better chance of becoming admissible through the family sponsorship class.

Canada as a Welcoming Land: Promoting Discourses of Opportunity

As a country that centers its immigration policies and practices on multiculturalism principles (CIC, 2010), Canada appeals to potential immigrants as a place where their ethnic and cultural rights are endorsed and protected. In fact, one of the ways that Canada maintains its image at the Global level as a place of opportunity for immigrants is by emphasizing its multiculturalism polices as the basis that shapes and defines immigration (as was noted in Chapter 1). Canada praises itself on being a country that takes multiculturalism to heart by showing its commitment to Canadians and newcomers, as can be seen in the two excerpts below:

> Multiculturalism has led to higher rates of naturalization than ever before. With no pressure to assimilate and give up their culture, immigrants freely choose their new citizenship because they want to be Canadians. As Canadians, they share the basic values of democracy with all other Canadians who came before them. At the same time, Canadians are free to choose for themselves, without penalty, whether they want to identify with their specific group or not. Their individual rights are fully protected and they need not fear group pressures. (CIC, 2012c, "Canadian Multiculturalism," para. 6)

> The Government of Canada is committed to reaching out to Canadians and newcomers and is developing lasting relationships with ethnic and religious communities in Canada. It encourages these communities to participate fully in society by enhancing their level of economic, social, and cultural integration. (CIC, 2012a, Multiculturalism section, para. 1)

Indeed, Canada promotes itself as a land of opportunity for immigrants and

newcomers in a variety of ways. For example, in promotional material found on the CIC website, immigration is constructed as an exciting opportunity that people from around the world should aspire to take advantage of, as the following CIC excerpt demonstrates: "Moving to Canada is an exciting opportunity but also a great challenge. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is committed to helping newcomers integrate into their new communities" (CIC, 2013c, Support for Newcomers section, para. 1). Constructing immigration as an opportunity requires positioning Canada as a welcoming country as emphasized in CIC immigration promotional material such as in this excerpt: "Canada has a proud tradition of welcoming immigrants. Our immigration system, refugee system and network of organizations to help newcomers settle in and integrate are among the best in the world" (CIC, 2012a, Immigration section, para. 1).

In fact, these discourses are also reflected in the official narratives of the government, as evident in a speech that the previous Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney delivered in 2012:

> As you know, Canada is a land of opportunity for newcomers from around the world.…We have been maintaining the highest per-capita level of immigration in the developed world, as well as the highest naturalization rate, rate of newcomers who go on to be full members of the Canadian family as Canadian citizens. (CIC, 2012d, "Speaking Notes," para. 1)

Similarly, the current Citizenship and Immigration Minister, Chris Alexander, constructs immigration as an opportunity by engaging in a dialogue about the importance of immigration and the roles that potential immigrants can play to ensure the future of Canada and to maintain its national legacy as a developed country on the global scene:

> Immigration is one of Canada's most vital public policy issues. It's not just an issue of bringing people from there to here or of achieving those efficiencies and

> reforms in the program to do it quickly. It's a question of our economic future. It is about nation-building, in that the future of our country depends on getting the economic mix right, economic policies right, the skills set of our workforce right. And immigration has a huge role to play in that. (CIC, 2013d, "Speaking Notes," para. 4)

I will return to the ideas in this excerpt in Chapter 10 when I discuss the emphasis placed on the economic contributions to Canada's future through notions of "human capital". For now, a key feature of the importance of the construction of immigration as an opportunity can be seen in potential immigrants and newcomers being invited to take part and be involved in building the future of Canada; the emphasis is placed on their potential contributions to Canadian society once they immigrate or gain citizenship status. Indeed, through these promotional documents, Canada professes to be a "welcoming" space for all and prides itself on having the "largest and the most successful immigration programs in the world" as highlighted in a promotional video (CIC, 2013e). These messages are echoed by the official Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2014, which states that Canada has "one of the highest per capita rates of immigration in the world and continues to be one of the most popular destinations for immigrants" (CIC, 2014d, "Section 1," para.1).

The documents seem to construct immigration as an endeavour that is easy to access and navigate serves as a way to construct Canada as a place of opportunity available for all. For example, the availability of information lends an apparent accessibility to the immigration process, making it feel welcoming and easy to follow (e.g., online documents describing the application process steps, documents outlining eligibility criteria and online tests that facilitate who can apply and what they need to

become successful applicants, etc.). In fact, immigrating to Canada is constructed as easy and accessible on the CIC website which offers numerous links to online tools that anybody with some knowledge of English or French can easily navigate and use to find out if they are eligible or qualify to immigrate (see for example the link on eligibility[11] or the link to apply directly online[12]).

Indeed, the accessibility of the promotional materials is not limited to information presented as texts. The CIC website offers plenty of videos and tutorials that cover almost every aspect of the immigration and settlement process as well as the values and principles important to Canada as a state and a nation (see for example the links on multiculturalism[13], citizenship[14], etc.). These videos and tutorials provide detailed instructions on the immigration and settlement process ranging from finding out about how to complete and send an application to what to do when arriving to Canada (including finding work, health coverage and even how and where to pay taxes). This information professes to prepare immigrants for life in Canada as potential future Canadians, as the link[15] below suggests. In this sense, immigration is portrayed as an achievable goal and the success stories of other immigrants provided on the website are used, along with promises of help in the settlement process, to support this contention.

I propose that constructing Canada as a welcoming country for immigrants and refugees from all over the world is intentional and has been used by official CIC

[11] http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/eligibility.asp
[12] http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/apply.asp)
[13] http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/multimedia/video/complete-application/complete-application.asp
[14] http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/multimedia/index.asp#cit
[15] http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/multimedia/index.asp

narratives as a reason for national pride that reflects Canada's place at the global scene, as noted in the following excerpt: "Canada has a proud tradition of welcoming immigrants. Our immigration system, refugee system and network of organizations to help newcomers settle and integrate are among the best in the world" (CIC, 2012a, Immigration section, para. 1).

However, the construction of immigration as an opportunity is not as straightforward as the above discussion may suggest. It is in fact a more complex and nuanced construction that is replete with messages that maintain people's interest in taking advantages of such opportunities while simultaneously discouraging those who may be deemed unfit from such an endeavour. Indeed, a quick examination of some of the immigration promotional material on the CIC website shows that when discourses of immigration as opportunity are mentioned, they are balanced by adding that these opportunities come with "great challenges", as the following excepts demonstrate:

> Moving to Canada is an exciting opportunity but also a great challenge. You need to know what documents to bring, what to expect in the first few days and weeks, how to find a place to live and much more. Find out how to get the help you need to settle in Canada and learn all about living in Canada. (CIC, 2013a, "Start Your Life in Canada," para. 1)

> Moving to Canada is an exciting opportunity but also a great challenge. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is committed to helping newcomers integrate into their new communities. (CIC, 2013c, Support for Newcomers section, para. 1)

What is striking about these excerpts is that they attempt to balance opportunity discourses with some of the challenges that immigrants and newcomers may face early in their immigration experiences, along with the promise that help is there if needed. This

way of promoting Canada constructs it as a welcoming country of immigrants by emphasizing the available support that they can rely on when needed. This in turn contributes to constructing immigration as an achievable endeavour that allows *qualified* potential immigrants to direct their energies to overcome challenges and take advantage of the opportunities and support available through immigration. To elaborate, we can see a tension here between ideas of "welcome" and "challenge". I would argue that the interdiscursive relationship between texts that discuss immigration challenges and those that provide supports for newcomers masks the operation of processes that determine who is qualified or worthy of being offered these potential supports. Put differently, balancing challenges with available supports still does not clearly name the fact that some applicants will simply not be eligible for these supports by virtue of being deemed inadmissible. I will return to this discussion about challenges and who is qualified to immigrate later.

Canada as the Land of Dreams: Internalizing Discourses of Opportunity

In short, constructing immigration as an accessible endeavor through the CIC narratives serves as a way to construct Canada as a welcoming country for all. Such a construction was echoed by research participants, who spoke about Canada as a welcoming country and discussed this reputation as one motivation for immigrating which would provide access to these opportunities. Some of the ways participants discussed Canada as a welcoming space for immigrants included Canada's identity and reputation at the global level:

> Canada had a very good image of welcoming country of immigrants and refugees…So, I thought I should come to a Western country. Canada, Australia

> and some Scandinavian countries were high on my list for being a better place for a person with disability, for someone who is Blind, more than just as immigrant or refugee. (Saman)

> I feel blessed and I feel that the government opened wider opportunities for me beyond my dreams. Of course I worked hard and took advantage of them. They were there….what do I give back, and I don't mean to give back charity. Don't get me wrong. We give back opportunity for people to excel in life and to experience life from a different angle. That's what Canada gives to the immigrants. (Aya)

Other participants highlighted the existence of human rights and respect for the rights of people with disabilities as Lotfi notes:

> I lived three years in my home country after I became disabled and then I came to Canada. In these three years, having a disability and living there, it was almost an impossible thing to live. So, as soon as I found out, without knowing what to expect in Canada, whatever it will be, I thought it will be better than those three years that I lived there in (home country) and having a disability there. Basic rights to be a person again after having the disability, in that country, in that culture is a gain by itself.

For other participants, the opportunities provided through immigration centred on inclusion and access to a health care system and to educational opportunities:

> Immigrating to Canada was always on the back of their (parents') mind. They looked into that because they knew of Canada's health care system and sort of the facilities that she (sister) could access. At that point, they knew that the health care system in Canada was a bit more inclusive than (their current country of residency). (Ripa)

> I was back home and I had saved some money, so I said I wanted to visit the outside world to see the difference between my country, and I am glad I am here because Canada is a place of a lot of opportunities. You can go back to school here, and for the education, it's a very nice place, I like it. (Lorraine)

Others highlighted the economic opportunities especially when compared to their countries of origin:

> In Canada, there's more opportunity. You have more opportunity as a poor person. In (country of origin) you have the same opportunity but you have to have money. (Andrew)

The construction of immigration as an opportunity is not only seen and desired by the immigration applicants with disabilities or their families who participated in this study. Service providers also brought a similar understanding of immigration where opportunity was a central discourse. Some highlighted the opportunity for their clients to feel safe and protected:

> Yeah, everybody really likes Canada (chuckle)….it's a beautiful country...It's a protected country, people feel safe here as compared to their own countries…They feel they will get protection here. (Baljeet)

Not only does immigration provide safety, it also provides privileges conferred through access to Canadian citizenship. Ria as a settlement worker and immigrant discusses this idea through reflection on her own experiences and those of her clients:

> For many of us a Canadian passport is a tremendous achievement because with a Canadian passport not only do you have those given rights to vote and whatnot but also you can travel the world whereas as a citizen of (country of origin), a native of (country of origin) with a (country of origin) passport where can I go? … Canadian identity is also (important)…People come from very oppressive war-torn countries; they don't want to identify with that anymore. To become a Canadian citizen and identify as a Canadian might be something that is more, they feel better about that.

Some spoke about the economic opportunities and opportunities for a better life available for people with disabilities in Canada compared to their home countries:

> Most immigrants are economic immigrants. They're coming here for a better life because I think there are more opportunities. Sometimes they're coming because they're getting away from a repressive regime but often they're coming because they think they're going to have a better standard of living here. (Esther)

Echoing earlier excerpts from the interviews with immigrants with disabilities, other service providers talked about how some of their clients saw that immigrating to, or staying in Canada was constructed as an opportunity for access to health care and

education:

> I find that there were so many things she (client) wanted to do, she wanted to be educated, go to school and she had faced those barriers already within her own home country so when she came here she was expecting "Oh! Canada the land of opportunity"… back in her home country, her family was saying well, you're in this situation, we can't afford to send you to school, she's in a wheelchair, she's immobile, so she thought here she could have endless opportunities. (Ria)

> … I'm sure that their families [of children with disabilities] were probably marginalized to an even greater extent than what we experience here; and when I come and I see the medical care that these children have been receiving through medical surgical therapeutic interventions and so on, I am left encouraged… how fortunate that these families and for these children that would never have had this opportunity…and to think that now opportunities are there that could never have been there, that Canada has opened their doors to these families and that these children are being educated and medically serviced. (David)

There are several key issues worth highlighting in the above excerpts from service providers that reflect dominant discourses about Canada's reputation as a welcoming country for immigrants and refugees from all over the world. Specifically, this reputation builds on what service providers witness in their practice. They see potential immigrants seeking change in their life circumstances, be it an opportunity to advance a professional career, to improve their education, to benefit from available social security and health care programs, or the existence of rights and protective measures such as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Indeed, for immigrants with disabilities and their families, Canada is described as a destination where they could access and take advantage of what they have been led to believe is an exciting opportunity. Analysis of participant narratives demonstrates that dominant discourses of opportunity continue to shape how people with disabilities think about and choose to represent their immigration experiences. Immigrating to Canada was

not only a "dream come true" but also a space where issues of identity and belonging were discussed, as Aya emphasizes:

> Canada was a fantasy, you know, you used to read about Terry Fox, and all the beautiful things and the country and the opportunity, it was like a land of dreams, so I came to see for myself…
>
> In (country of origin) to be a mother, you know how much opportunity a girl with disability has there? Zero, like zero, honestly (chuckle). A little girl with disability with huge dreams, like me, I am super ambitious, imagine, it's a frustration waiting to happen, every minute of the day. I wanted to achieve my dream but I wanted to achieve it with dignity. So I came to Canada. And I also wanted independence and I wanted to be a career woman. And I want to be playing an active role and I want to be a mother.

Lotfi provides a similar discussion of issues of identity and belonging as he reflects on the differences between Canada and his home country specifically with regards to his experiences as a person with disability:

> I had the experience of living as an able-bodied person in (home country), I tasted the "normality" of an able-bodied person and then in these three years when I became disabled, that was slipped away from me, taken away from me because of that culture. It wasn't my choice, I didn't see it coming and then when I came here, it's been given to me without me asking for it so it boosted my confidence in myself again that wow, I'm a person again, I'm an able-bodied person, regardless even if I am still using a wheelchair, if I'm confined to wheelchair. But the idea of being treated equally as an able-bodied person…made me feel that the possibility to start living a normal life, it's possible to do that. And inside me there is a lot of appreciation for that, so the loyalty to this country (Canada) that gives it to you without you asking, it's tremendous.

Saman also highlights his feelings of confidence and dignity as well as gratitude to feel protected as a person with disability compared to how he felt in his country of origin:

> Overall, we are all grateful for Canada for all the support and services available in Canada…So, in terms of public image and human rights, individual rights, we feel here we have more opportunities…There (in home country), people can more openly tease you, harass you. There are a lot more ignorant people but here it is much more settled. They are at different levels than we are, we cannot compare apples to oranges. Here, you have more dignity, more independence and

confidence.

The above excerpts demonstrate how Canada is constructed as a place of opportunity that people with disabilities seek to attain. We also see how values that are carefully crafted within the official Canadian immigration discourses (Canada's reputation as a place of equality, human rights, multiculturalism, and the repeated idea of exciting opportunity, etc.) are reflected in participants' narratives in how they discuss their own motivations for immigration to Canada. For example, in the first two excerpts, Aya highlights the opportunities that immigrating to Canada provided her with, even though, the question I asked her was more generally about her motivation to immigrate. In the first excerpt, we can see Canada's global reputation as a "land of dreams" for people with disabilities through the use of national and historical symbols to convey this message. The use of Terry Fox as a symbol of possibilities available in Canada for people with disabilities, to articulate Aya's desire to immigrate is a clear indication of her background knowledge of language and codes that demonstrates how discourses can be internalized and presented through the use of symbols and semiotics (Fairclough, 2010).

Going back to the colonial dimension, the above excerpts demonstrate how the binary of "us and them" is operationalized, by emphasizing the comparison between Canada and the participants' countries of origin. It is not my intention to judge the research participants or to discredit the notion that Canada indeed can be a land of opportunities for them where they can make their dreams come true. These excerpts, however, highlight the complex use of disability discourses to maintain the North/South power divide. Saman's excerpt highlights the steep differences in the experiences that

people with disabilities face in their everyday life between living in Canada and their home countries. These differences, according to Saman, are the result of human rights that contribute to creating a space where people with disabilities can live with confidence, dignity and independence.

Moreover, using Aya's analogy, Canada can and has indeed offered her what it has offered Terry Fox: the opportunity to achieve her dreams and in her case, to become a mother. Aya's dream of becoming independent and a "career woman" speaks volumes to discourses of dependency and care that continue to shape and define the lived experiences of people with disabilities locally and globally (El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012; Grech, 2009, 2011b, 2012; Meekosha, 2011) as well as the specific experiences of women with disabilities. Aspiring to be independent is not at issue here but it highlights the systematic relationships between discourses and other social forms (i.e., marginalization that results from being constructed as dependent). Seen through a critical gender lens, it is a common experience for women with disabilities not to be expected to be mothers or to be independent financially and/or settled in a career of their choice (Sands, 2005). As Aya puts it:

> If somebody is telling you that you are not worth it, how are you going to get up in the morning? Imagine when the whole society is telling you over and over that you are not worth it, that you are a liability…When my kids were younger…I used to use a scooter because I can't do long walks. I used to carry one of my daughters with me and the others are walking next to me and we were going to the mall for a walk. Some people made comments, and some people I didn't give them a chance to make them, but I could read it on their face. They automatically thought that I am on social services.

As stated earlier, CDA speaks to addressing social wrongs. Aya's understanding

of her experience as a woman with disability is reflected not only in how and what she dreams about for her life, but also in how she is able to resist the assumptions that she reads in other people's eyes when they see her with her children in the mall. Aya's use of language codes such as "they automatically thought that I am on social services" clearly demonstrates her "background knowledge of her situation", and her "background knowledge of the world", referred to in Chapter 4. Aya's use of such a statement is typically informed by her own experiences of being constantly assumed to be on welfare assistance because of the fact that she is a mother with a disability. This background knowledge has given her access to provide a counter discourse of her experience by constructing her own code or frame of reference to resist assumptions made about her. Aya's resistance to people's perceptions and reactions to her as a mother provides an example of how she engages in a gendered analysis of disability discourses and the significance of such discourses in this study, as noted earlier.

For others, discourses of opportunity—although not denied—were associated with aspects that highlight the costs or the losses that they incurred because of immigration or their feelings of being lied to. Clara highlights these losses:

> I feel that it (immigration) has been a huge waste of time. I was in my 20s, it's a time when you're really becoming a professional or trying to become part of the working class society or whatever and I feel like instead of that, I had to do all of these things for all of these expectations for me from a place that I didn't care for and I feel like it just took away, it's taking away my 20s. I feel like I'm still fighting to take a degree I wanted so long ago, and I've lost friendships, and I've missed my family for so long. And the pros are so little…"Come, come", and then we come and then it's a battle, you're on your own, it's enraging.

Similarly, Khaled stresses the costs of immigration by showing not only the impacts of immigration on his family, but also by highlighting the (mis)use of immigration and

refugee claimants to maintain Canada's reputation as a welcoming country:

> I was brought here as a refugee. When I first arrived here, they took us to Ottawa; they took our pictures for the news, and promised us everything will be fine, and then they threw us here in (city)…Canada lied to us…They left us with nothing. My family is gone. Now I think about it. They were never interested in us. The brought us here, fed us, accepted us as refugees not because they are humanitarian or because they care about us, as they claimed. They want our kids. They are interested in our kids, they want to brainwash our kids. Brainwash them to forget their cultures, their religions, their backgrounds, they want them to become Canadianized…If this is not colonialism, please tell me what it is.

As a service provider involved in settlement work with people with disabilities, Salma has also witnessed the deceptions and losses that Khaled and Clara refer to:

> And I also think Canada actually lies to immigrants about what life is going to be here…They have this point system that requires good English skills, high education, money in the bank…and then they come here and they say they're a doctor or professor for that matter and there is no job for them. They're going to look at them and say…"You don't have Canadian experience and you don't have Canadian education, you can't teach Canadians". That in and of itself creates lots of barriers for immigrants in general but because people with disabilities have less opportunities and less types of jobs available to them it's harder…because they are excluded from survival jobs, they're excluded from every type of network possible.

Similarly, referring to these barriers and to experiences of racism that she and her family have faced, Keisha describes her regret about immigrating to Canada:

> If I had known this system was like this, I would never, never without end, take my family here, never never never…and I am thinking of going back to my country.

The excerpts presented above offer a different account to what we have seen so far in terms of presenting Canada as an unmitigated land of opportunities. Specifically, participants here articulate the costs associated with these potential opportunities. Participants engage in a process of counter discoursing by associating discourses of opportunities with cost, a point more fully discussed in Chapter 9 when we turn to

settlement experiences.

What is important to emphasize here is that participants shared the same idea that Canada indeed was a place of opportunity for them, *despite* the challenges and costs associated with immigration. Even for participants like Clara and Khaled, there is an acknowledgement of opportunities but only when *compared* to opportunities they felt were inaccessible at home. These opportunities came with challenges, sacrifices, and financial, emotional and familial costs that they continue to struggle with even after immigration and gaining citizenship status—a point discussed further in Chapter 9. Indeed, the professed opportunities within immigration were understood by research participants in ways that demonstrate how far some are willing to go to secure becoming an admissible immigration applicant and take advantage of these opportunities.

Some service provider participants talked about working with clients who left a family member behind (some left their husbands, others left their family members who had disabilities) until they secured citizenship status so they would have a better chance of sponsoring them, as the excerpts below demonstrate:

> I talked to families who came here to ensure their landing process and had to leave family members behind and how difficult that was for them and that family members with disabilities were deemed medically inadmissible. (Farzana)

> It is heart breaking; sometimes they just never talk about it…sometimes they live with the trauma, sometimes they look at the expectations that you know what, we would get there (Canada), and we would do the (application) process right away and send for you, because they are made to understand that this process happens that fast (chuckle). And then they get here and you follow through on your word and they do everything and then it becomes a 5, 10 year ongoing process and that person (with disability) can never get here and then it starts to destroy the family because you start to be seen as a betrayer. People on the other side begin to think that people here don't care, these family members here don't care and then the family members on the other side start to think that they're not grateful for their

> efforts, and it just becomes a damaging situation. (Joey)

It is important to note that while there is an acknowledgement that families are facing difficult choices in how they construct their applications and the hardships they face once here, ableism is embedded within the discourses of some service providers when they do not fully take into account the complexities of immigrating with a disability, as this excerpt from Magda illustrates:

> I worked with women who were told that they should say in their applications that they don't have a husband. And as soon as they fill this information and submit their applications and don't mention their family members, it's finished. Whatever they say in the first document, that's it, and it's going to stay forever with them; it is a mistake. They need someone to orient them, to tell them "you know what, there is no need to be afraid. They will accept you, you are a single mom, you are with kids, you are disabled, you have a husband, they accept you"…And many of them are disabled and they cannot deal with (their kids) by themselves, they have lots of kids and they are crying like crazy, and every day they ask for help, why? All this can be fixed, if they did not lie, their husband can be here and he's going to support, he can work and help.

Indeed, in Magda's excerpt we see how discourses of Canada as an accepting and welcoming country are reinforced to the extent that the blame for unsuccessful applications is placed on individual applicants; simply put, since Canada is so welcoming, the applicant must have done something wrong to be denied admissibility. Moreover, a gendered analysis of blame here demonstrates how women are being faulted not only for lying but also for denying themselves and their children the opportunity of having male support. The problematic discourses adopted by some service providers are elaborated upon in Chapter 9 through a troubling of the discourses that perpetuate the idea of "actualizing opportunities".

In addition to family separations, other participants talked about how they

negotiated their disabilities in the application process to become seen as admissible. For example, participants who have invisible disabilities talked about constructing themselves as strong and as professional thus implying that there are no disabilities to report:

> I think if I had said that [I have a disability] before coming here, I would not have been able to come, I was afraid of saying it in the application. I thought it was important for us to look as strong and healthy and professional as we could, and that's how my dad really said, you know, "whatever they ask just be like: 'I'm amazing, I'm great, I know everything'"(Chuckle)…Because I grew up with the idea that coming to Canada is an opportunity for the best, the people who were professional or able to do good things for that country. (Clara)

As a service provider and family member of an immigrant with disabilities, Fartun reflects on a similar experience of disclosure of disability:

> One of the things that I remember was that there was this constant fear of disclosing that something was wrong with my aunt, this constant fear of, like, if we have to go to a lawyer or if my mom had to take her somewhere. And we always went through this process; there was this fear of not wanting to disclose that something was wrong.

Furthermore, Salma alludes to the idea that some disabilities are easier to minimize or hide than others:

> I know people who are here and they go through the immigration process but they came here before and they have very specific types of disabilities, so low vision, mild mobility disabilities, but most of them are people with low vision. So there's obviously some sort of hierarchy of disability that exists.

The above excerpts suggest that on a "hierarchy of disabilities", some participants would not be able to pass admissibility criteria—this idea of "covering" disability is further developed in the discussion chapter. In fact, all participants with invisible disabilities reported that they chose not to disclose the existence of their disabilities fearing that it may negatively impact on the outcomes of their applications. These decisions were supported by family members who alerted disabled family members to the fact that their

disclosure may impact on the family's chances of being accepted as immigrants. Indeed, some participants expressed feeling a sense of responsibility (or blame) associated with a potentially unfavourable application outcome. I return to this point about how participants with disabilities experienced these family dynamics in Chapter 8 where the application process is discussed.

Although disclosing disability is mandatory and is subject to legal ramifications within immigration if it is discovered that one has failed to disclose, some participants chose not to divulge this information arguing that they could not live with the guilt if their families were rejected because of their disabilities. In addition, not disclosing the existence of disabilities in the application carries with it impacts on applicants with disabilities that go beyond the application to affect their settlement and integration processes, especially with regards to their eligibility and ability to access services, a point discussed in more detail in Chapter 9. The complexity of being disabled and applying to immigrate to avail oneself of opportunities is apparent not only at the application stage but also through the experience of settlement.

In addition to negotiating their disabled identity through non/disclosure, participants with disabilities also discussed how they construct themselves in other ways that give them better chances of becoming admissible. For example, some participants talked about getting advanced higher education in demanded fields in Canada, while others spoke about the importance of acquiring and mastering English or computer skills as a way to show that they can be independent:

> I couldn't read after 10 years old completely so I thought education was the only thing that could compensate my disability…. Because of my education, the types

> of subjects I took [English, computers], so that helped me a lot and also build up the network even before I came here. I had a few people who were able to host me, guide me, but at the same time also learn my mobility training. So, when I came to Canada I can move around, learning the language, knowing the language, when I came here I wanted to learn to live independently. (Saman)

> My father sent us to English schools in (country of origin). There are two sides, you could go to English or French schools. My father sent us to English school because my sister was living in Ontario; he was thinking that down the road if we want to go to Canada we would be speaking the language. So Canada was in the back of my mind even though I wasn't big on immigration. (Aya)

Others were even more specific in speaking about planning to come as conventional refugees:

> I chose to come in as a refugee claimant because I knew that I will have better chances of being admitted. (Saman)

For others, applying as a refugee was a way to avoid being constructed as inadmissible based on medical ground as a result of their disabilities:

> I came to Canada for medical treatment after I became disabled…My first goal was to stay in Canada and there was the option of sponsoring or applying for refugee and I had been advised to apply for refugee as the way to go at that time due to those circumstances. I had a case that would allow me to be accepted as a conventional refugee, being from (home country), being unable to go back. (Lotfi)

These self-constructions as potentially admissible are important to look at within the broader context of immigration as it is understood and perceived by these participants. Hence being seen as capable, independent, educated, etc., meant that they could be potentially constructed as "worthy of these opportunities". The issue here is not whether these applicants are going to be constructed as admissible. Rather, it is how they internalized what they thought to be an admissible profile and how they worked hard to meet its requirements for themselves in the application process.

In short, despite the challenges, participants spoke of the importance of

constructing their identities and experiences in ways that could assist them in accessing opportunities assumed to be available through immigration. Whether directly or indirectly articulated, participants alluded to constructions of "worthiness" of opportunity; as argued in the next chapter, such constructions play a central role during the application stage.

Chapter 8: During application—Determining Worthiness of Opportunity

This chapter focuses on the stage of immigration that occurs during the application process, specifically from the moment applications are submitted until decisions have been made. The motivational discourses of opportunity presented in the previous chapter are a precursor to this stage, referred to here as the period "during the application". This stage is characterized by discourses centering on determination of "worthiness of opportunity", a contention that is illustrated by highlighting the main discourses that govern this stage within the official narratives of the CIC.

Indeed, during this stage, I will show that immigration applicants—in general—are constructed as a homogenous social group and evaluated according to supposedly neutral assessment tools and measures to ensure that equality principles are preserved in the processing of immigration applications. Such processes imply that Canada's goal in applying legal and standardized assessment measures is to impart an air of impartiality and thus fairness. Instead, as I will make plain, these measures lend support to constructions of homogeneity and sameness that serve as discursive practices to construct Canadian identities and national hegemony.

Parallel to these processes of determination of worthiness of opportunity, findings demonstrate how immigration applicants with disabilities negotiate and navigate this typically lengthy waiting stage by emphasizing the highly emotional experiences that shape their narratives of this period. I argue that this heavy emphasis on emotions reflects participants' ways of dealing with potentially negative application outcomes for them and their families. Their "emotional interactions" with the unknown in terms of their

admissibility or inadmissibility shape their experiences after they submit their applications. This highly emotional stage is important in the lives of immigration applicants with disabilities and their families as it is governed by uncertainties and fear of losing an opportunity to become Canadian (or part of the Global North).

Opportunities (not for all): Determining Worthiness of Opportunity

This section begins by articulating the legal and formal aspect of the immigration application process that starts when applications are submitted. The analysis begins here by building on the findings of a previous CDA analysis of three CIC Enforcement Manuals (ENF1, ENF2, & ENF3) where I argued that inadmissibility is the default position when processing any immigration application and that applicants need to prove otherwise to become admissible (El-Lahib, 20150). I further argued that discourses of risk and protection are used to reinforce, hide and justify ableist, racist and colonial discourses that are manifested through the construction of inadmissibility. Here, I build on these findings to further argue that during the immigration application process, these discourses are used to create a process of imposing sameness and homogeneity under the guise of equality and neutrality. Within this process, immigration applicants in general are stripped of their identities and differences and are assigned new and temporary ones to facilitate the determination of their worthiness of the opportunities professed to be found in immigrating to Canada.

As briefly noted in chapter 7, the immigration application process is governed and controlled by a strict legal process and shaped by various acts and legislations that require parliamentary intervention to be changed. The point to emphasize here is that

immigration itself is a legal matter that is systematically controlled by state institutions and is reflective of the values and principles held by the Canadian state. As argued earlier, values such as multiculturalism, equality, human rights, democracy, etc. are professed to be dearly held and to form the basis of the relationship between the state and Canadian society (CIC, 2012c). These same values are also what I begin my argument with to demonstrate the construction of homogeneity and sameness within immigration.

Specifically, embedded within the immigration application process, there is a subtle shift that occurs and works to strip all applicants of their identities and differences by constructing them as "foreign nationals" measured against Canadian citizens and permanent residents as well as the values that Canada professes to hold dear. According to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2001), a foreign national is defined as "a person who is not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident and includes a stateless person" (p. 1). Foreign national identity is temporary and used to distinguish between those eventually categorized and constructed as worthy of opportunities and therefore admissible, versus those deemed unworthy and hence inadmissible.

In fact, reliance on discourses of sameness as a way to construct and emphasize Canadian national identity can be seen in CIC's mandate, vision and mission, which articulate specific discursive practices. The mandate of CIC, created in 1994, reads as:

- Link immigration services with citizenship registration
- Promotes the unique ideals all Canadian share
- Help build a stronger Canada. (CIC, 2014e, Our Mandate section, para. 1)

Another example can be seen in the mission and vision of CIC:

CIC and its partners will build a stronger Canada by:

- Developing and implementing policies, programs and services that:
    - facilitate the arrival of people and their integration into Canada in a way that maximizes their contribution to the country while protecting the health, safety and security of Canadians;
    - maintain Canada's humanitarian tradition by protecting refugees and people in need of protection;
    - enhance the values and promote the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship; and
    - reach out to all Canadians and foster increased intercultural understanding and an integrated society with equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, ethnicity and religion.
- Advancing global migration policies in a way that supports Canada's immigration and humanitarian objectives. (CIC, 2014e, Mission section, para. 1 & 2)

- Vision of a stronger Canada
    - A stronger Canada – a safe and secure country with a shared bond of citizenship and values; a country that continues to support our humanitarian tradition and draws the best from the world to help build a nation that is economically, socially and culturally prosperous. (CIC, 2014e, Vision for a Stronger Canada section, para. 1)

The above excerpts begin to hint at the belief in the existence of common shared Canadian values that I would argue reinforce ideas of sameness and contribute to the promotion of a hegemonic Canadian identity at the expense of immigration applicants who are discursively constructed as a homogenous social group that is "foreign" to Canadian identity. Indeed, the mandate of CIC (as articulated in the above excerpts) to build a "stronger Canada", is a clear indication of the assumptions that place and construct immigration as a unifying element of Canadian identity. Such constructions not only serve as a way to prioritize Canadian interest within immigration, but also to promote and emphasize Canada's reputation at the global level that CIC is also mandated to preserve and facilitate. As previously noted, such constructions primarily reinforce and advance Canada's economic interests.

Moreover, the argument to advance here is that discourses of sameness and constructions of homogeneity are embedded and not directly articulated within the texts of the documents. As noted earlier, CDA helps us to see that discourses can also be embedded within social process and practices, in this case, the process of applying to immigrate. Specifically, the moment an immigration application is submitted, it goes through a centralized and highly standardized processing system where all applications within a given class are evaluated using apparently similar measures. Although on the surface these processes are meant to preserve standards and equality, they also *discursively* construct immigration applicants as a homogenous social group. In other words, the documents analyzed in this study suggest that under the guise of equality, neutrality and impartiality, all immigration applications are processed in the same way. In fact, a quick look at the CIC website and especially at the guidelines for providing quality services for applicants, demonstrates that the phrase "we treat everyone equally" is repeated in several documents (see for example the links below[16]). Indeed, even service providers such as Baljeet (who works in a settlement agency) have adopted this construction of neutrality and the need to protect Canadian interests:

> I know they take each and every application as the same, they don't discriminate…I would say that's a good thing because they're treating everybody as the same not giving priority to someone or not keeping someone's file on the side. They are just saying this is eligibility criteria, if the person is meeting this criteria, the outcome should be positive. If they say this is ineligibility and a person has done a crime, or if any of this applies, then they reject the file. Then I can say "yes", it's a good thing.

[16] http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5561E.asp
http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/3998tempETOC.asp
http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5527ETOC.asp

Such a process of sameness contributes to the elimination of the personal and national characteristics of individuals and constructs them as "foreign nationals" where their status as "immigration applicants" is the defining characteristic that is under consideration. Indeed, within the analyzed documents, immigration applicants are repeatedly referred to as foreign nationals and this construction only shifts when they become constructed as admissible (and therefore eligible for permanent residency status) or inadmissible, in which case their "foreignness" becomes confirmed. The important point to conclude here is that during this stage, individuals from all over the world are stripped of any unique characteristics that define them and become constructed as immigration applicants and referred to within the documents as foreign nationals.

Building on the theoretical dimensions and the history of marginalization within Canadian immigration discussed so far in this dissertation, it is important to question whether there is indeed neutrality in the processing of applications, due to the realities of ableist, racist, and colonial sentiments that continue to exist and shape immigration policy and practices (Galabuzi, 2006; Hanes, 2009; Li, 2001; Thobani, 2000, 2007). This is not to suggest that these principles are only paid lip service. Instead, this analysis seeks to demonstrate the power of discourse and discursive practices that can be embedded within official narratives and the state's institutional policies and procedures.

Moreover, it is important to note a shift in discourse that became apparent when I moved from analyzing promotional material to analyzing the Enforcement Manuals that immigration officers rely on in processing immigration applications. Notably, the construction of immigration as an opportunity is nowhere to be found within these

documents. This construction is replaced by dry legalistic and procedural terminologies that are shaped and defined by the dominant discourses of risk and protection that immigration applicants are sifted through. In other words, immigration applicants—including those with disabilities—are constructed as potential risks and the Enforcements Manuals' purpose is to protect Canada from such assumed risks. As such, the construction of inadmissibility is shaped and defined by the risks potential immigrants are assumed to pose to Canadian society, thereby making them unworthy of opportunities available through immigration. This construction of risk can be seen in an example provided by Saman that applies to people with disabilities specifically:

> But then I have other friends who sponsored their family, parents and all because they have sisters that are learning disabled, they didn't give admission to the parent also because parents had to claim their over age adult kids as dependent…Even though they were making lots of money and profit and they were willing to sign waivers to say we are responsible for all the expenses, but visa officer was adamant, these people may be a burden to the government.

The heavy emphasis on discourses of risk and protection found within the documents can be seen in the changes that took place with the replacement of the 1978 Immigration Act with the 2001 Immigration and Refugees Protection Act (IRPA). Without going into detail in the Act, the inclusion of ideas and terminologies of "protection" within the Act implies a shift of the purpose of immigration from facilitating entry to Canada to protecting the country from potential dangers. These purposes are clearly outlined in all the documents analyzed, and can be specifically seen in their articulated objectives. For example, within ENF documents, "To protect the health and safety of Canadians and to maintain the security of Canadian society" (ENF1, p. 3) is listed as the first objective of determinations of inadmissibility. In fact, protective

objectives using the same phrase or similar ones (such as " to maintain and protect public order, health and security in Canada") are defined as program objectives within ENF2; ENF3; ENF4; ENF5; ENF6; ENF10; ENF11; ENF12; ENF18; ENF19; ENF20; ENF21; ENF22; ENF23; ENF24; ENF27; ENF28. Even if these objectives are not stated exactly in the same way, they all emphasize the protective role that the IRPA plays in ensuring the safety of Canadian society, as can be seen within ENF8; ENF9; ENF15; ENF17; ENF29; ENF34. The same or similar objectives can further be found across the documents within IP, OP, IL, and IR.

Resting on embedded processes of homogenization and discourses of sameness, as well as those of risk and protection, is the actual absence of a clearly articulated definition of admissibility. Interestingly, within the documents analyzed, admissibility is not directly defined or constructed; instead, admissibility is discursively defined by the ruling out of inadmissibility. As noted in Chapter 4, the purpose of CDA is not only to analyze what texts spell out, but also what is missing (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). In this sense, the absence of such a definition or clearly articulated admissibility guidelines renders inadmissibility as the default position that every immigration applicant has to overcome before being deemed potentially admissible (if they are recognized to have something to contribute to Canada's interests, as alluded to in Chapter 7).

In other words, admissibility is defined by the absence of inadmissibility, which is clearly articulated in at least two Enforcement Manuals that are dedicated to its construction (ENF1; ENF2). Within the documents analyzed, while there is no clear definition of admissibility, there are nine categories that define grounds of

inadmissibility: "Security grounds, human or international rights violations, serious criminality, organized criminality, health grounds, financial reasons, misrepresentations, non-compliance with Act, and inadmissible family member" (ENF1, p. 5; ENF2, P. 6; ENF3, p. 5). For people with disabilities, grounds of inadmissibility, and specifically those based on medical grounds or the inadmissibility of family members continue to be one of the main obstacles that they face within the Canadian immigration system.

In a previous publication, I argued that immigration is based on criteria such as education, employment, and medical suitability, which systemically disadvantage people with disabilities, especially those from the Global South (El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012). Hanes (2009) argues that although people with disabilities are not specifically targeted within immigration laws and legislations, legal interpretations (and especially the excessive demands clause) have made it "impossible" for people with disabilities and their families to immigrate to Canada (p. 116). Here, I build these arguments further by contending that the excessive demands clause intentionally constructs any unwanted applicant as inadmissible through the use of dominant discourses of risk and protection. In other words, the use of the excessive demands clause within immigration serves as a way to construct inadmissibility by emphasizing the potential risks that unwanted applicants may present and by highlighting the protective measures put in place to prevent those risks.

Moreover, it is important to note that the documents analyzed use inadmissibility on medical grounds and inadmissibility on health grounds interchangeably. As the following excerpts illustrate, similar terms are used (public safety, public health,

excessive demands, etc.) to describe and justify inadmissibility based on these grounds. Inadmissibility based on health grounds is defined as:

> A foreign national is inadmissible on health grounds if their health condition
> - Is likely to be a danger to public health
> - Is likely to be danger to public safety
> - Might reasonably be expected cause excessive demands on health or social services. (ENF1, p. 5 &24; ENF4, p. 25; ENF 19, p. 35)

Similarly, inadmissibility on medical grounds is defined as:

> A38(1) bars entry into Canada to persons with three types of medical conditions:
> - People with a health condition that is likely to be danger to public health [A38(1)(a)];
> - People with health conditions that is likely to be danger to public safety [A38(1)(b)];
> - People with a health condition that might reasonably be expected to cause excessive demands on health or social services [A38(1)(c)]. (ENF2, p. 25)

This ambiguity in conflating health and medical grounds perpetuates the problematic dominance of the medical model and translates into at least two grounds on which people with disabilities can be constructed as inadmissible. I would argue that such ambiguity in defining these grounds can be traced back to dominant discourses of health and medical construction of impairment that continue to perpetuate and reinforce normative constructions of bodies, able-bodied and/or disabled. Here, the use of the term "health" is associated with the existence of health conditions that can be considered a ground of medical inadmissibility. As such, health is understood and conceptualized by the existence of certain conditions that render an applicant inadmissible. Similar to the discursive process discussed above regarding the definition of admissibility and inadmissibility, the ambiguous use of health and medical inadmissibility interchangeably serves as a way to ensure that only those deemed healthy would be constructed as

admissible. Implied in the health ground is the ableist construction of a normative healthy body against which all applicants are assessed. Moreover, medical grounds reinforce discourses of danger and risk to justify protection measures and discourses. The use of discourses of risk and protection is key to the construction of inadmissibility, and applicants are defined as admissible when their assumed risk and danger are ruled out.

Such discourses of risk and protection become legitimized and internalized by applicants in ways that demonstrate the power of discourse and discursive construction of the Other within immigration. For example while Lotfi questions inadmissibility based on grounds of disability, he expresses his understanding of why Canada bars admissibility to some applicants based on health or medical grounds:

> I see where they are coming from, but disabilities are all kinds. If it's contagious, if it is a disease, I can understand they are protecting the country…But if it is a stable condition or a disability: somebody got hit by a car and is in a wheelchair, and they are living with their disability for years. They are not sick, they are healthy people, but they happen to have a limitation that is not contagious to others, so I see a difference… I totally understand and agree with them (the government) that they want to protect the rest of society. When I say protect, so somebody comes with a contagious disease that is not curable, like with SARS…they have the right to put them in a spot where they try to prevent this disease from spreading.

While questioning discrimination based on disability, Aya frames her understanding of inadmissibility based on grounds of "fairness" to the needs of Canadian society:

> I understand, Canada looks at it like, if you're coming to Canada, how much the system has to invest in you as an individual? And when you will be able to be independent?...We can't blame Canada totally, they need to do that…I am not with toughness and of course I am against discrimination a hundred percent. But I have to be fair, right? We need to find common ground, where we don't just say "no" because they're disabled, right, or they have a disability or they're a liability, if you will, on the system. We have laws to protect us as a country and don't put us out of our comfort zone completely.

As we can see from the above excerpts, participants are aware of the ambiguous criteria through which health/medical inadmissibility is defined, even as some participants justify Canada's need to protect itself from assumed potential risks and dangers. The ambiguously defined health or medical conditions as grounds for inadmissibility add another element to the process that constructs all immigration applicants as a homogenous social group. Specifically, these undefined conditions are used to generally group and categorize immigration applicants together in ways that facilitate the process of ruling out those deemed unfit, or in the case of my argument, constructed as "unworthy" of the opportunity that immigrating to Canada represents.

Put differently, the fluid, broad and general construction of these grounds makes it possible, and in fact desirable, to construct any immigration applicant as inadmissible as soon as an unwanted health or medical reasons are presented. For example, based on the above grounds, the existence of a medical or health condition is a ground of inadmissibility on the basis of protecting Canadian society including social and health services. Despite the apparent contradictions to the universal human right of health care and treatment on which Canada is a signatory country, these grounds continue to construct people from all over the world as a homogenous social group, this time based on supposedly shared experiences rooted within medical or health grounds. These discursive practices not only shape how inadmissibility is constructed, but also make it hard to distinguish between health and/or medical conditions that may in fact put Canada or Canadians at risk—even though I do not agree with such classifications. In fact, these

tensions were the subject of a hypothetical case example that Esther used to demonstrate the flaws in the construction of these grounds:

> Let's say we have two applicant women, roughly the same age. Both of them have the same or similar heart conditions, but one is progressive and the other may have had an aneurism. Let's say these women are quite similar in some regards, but the one who had the progressive heart condition was likely to live longer but her heart was going to deteriorate and she is going to need major interventions and a lot more care and a lot more treatment and whatever. The other one who probably had a poorer prognosis in terms of lifespan is likely to go off on full steam and then one day is likely she would drop dead. The aneurism is going to burst and she is going to drop dead. Based on our current immigration system and the medical requirements and the excessive demands, I would assume that the one who is not going to cost us any money may be admissible, even though she has a serious heart condition. While the other one, who may live but requires more medical care is going to be inadmissible….What is wrong with this picture? We are not discriminating based on health or disability or whatever, but definitely what we are doing is not acceptable because we are discriminating based on criteria that we make up to serve our purposes and help us to keep those we don't want out. Yes, as I said before, whether we like it or not, immigration for us is an economic policy…We (as a country) don't want people who are sick or require too much medical care and again that gets constructed as us being so afraid of the financial burden. It is like we want people who can contribute but cost us nothing.

The hypothetical case example presented by Esther demonstrates a particular construction of admissibility and inadmissibility that is based on economically-driven normative conceptions of health and medical requirements. As a long time disability activist, Esther builds on her involvement and experiences with disability and immigration issues in an attempt to provide a counter discourse to demystify myths (as per CDA principles discussed in Chapter 4). Specifically, she problematizes the idea that by adding such "protective" grounds of inadmissibility, immigration applicants are assumed and expected to fit certain characteristics of being healthy and not requiring or needing any medical attention.

The analysis so far relies on medical and health grounds to demonstrate the effects that discourses of risk and protection have on immigration applicants' construction of inadmissibility. However, this is not to say that discourses of risk and protection can only be seen in the assumed medical and health risks that potential applicants may pose. Rather, discourses of risk and protection are used as a way to facilitate the operation of all inadmissibility grounds including but not limited to medical and health grounds. In the above discussion, the focus was on medical and health grounds as they are apparent ways that people with disabilities are constructed as inadmissible through the use of discourses of risk and protection.

Making a link between inadmissibility, discourses of opportunity, and who is defined as worthy, the rejection of immigration applicants with disabilities based on the above grounds complicates portraying Canada as a welcoming land for all. In fact, immigration is not a welcoming or straightforward endeavor for many, including for Aya who, as we saw in the previous chapter, contended that immigrating to Canada was an opportunity for her and spoke of seeing Canada as a land of dreams:

> I was denied three times, immigration to Canada, and I think the reason being is my disability. Because all my family came, I was the last to come…I was denied three times…the fourth time, I have a sister and they have a lot of assets, they didn't pay money but they showed the government of Canada their assets, and they put the sponsorship and that is how I got here. Also, together with my ability to speak English in the interview in (country of origin), and to fill out the application by myself…I mean I'm taking a wild guess here, but that also showed that I am not a liability…I hate to think that we people are liability, but sometimes if you think about it from a systematic approach, it is right to differentiate, how much a liability and risk you are, like to be burden on the system…So I think it played a factor: that I was educated there, I had my education, I had my English, I am young, and I had support from here, you know, with somebody willing to sponsor me for three years here.

What is important to highlight here are the two extremes used by Aya to tell her story. Her portrayal of Canada as the "land of dreams" where she could achieve her potential, as we have seen in previous excerpts, is contrasted with her desire not to be seen or be constructed as a "liability", a term she clearly rejects. What is telling in these accounts is that Aya has internalized knowledge of what she believes are the requirements to be a worthy and admissible applicant. In addition, although Aya questions and rejects associating people with disabilities with discourses of "liability", this was simultaneously presented as a taken for granted reality justifiable from a systemic point of view.

However, although worthiness of opportunity was unchallenged in the above excerpts by Aya, she did discuss opportunity discourses in a more complex way later in the interview where she questioned the homogenous treatment of people with disabilities within immigration policies that ignores their potential contributions:

> Because no family should really be suffering or no individual be suffering by being away from their family for a better opportunity in life just because somebody has a policy written down that we all have to live by…We are all contributors, so we are all entitled to have our voices heard and then push for what we believe in.

Salma takes up the issue of contributions to Canadian society and questions claims of human rights as an important base within Canadian immigration policies; she argues that inadmissibility based on disability is actually discriminatory:

> Because if it were true then they would not have had the inadmissibility based on disability, if it was a human rights lens, because you would say, "well this person has ABC and D, they can contribute, let them in". But they didn't because the only way they wouldn't consider someone's disability which is also changing at this point, is under the Refugee Act. Otherwise they are considering someone's disability. How is that a human rights lens? Not a human rights lens when you are discriminating based on disability.

This idea is echoed by Margareth who clearly articulates an understanding that applicants are rejected based on their disabilities:

> I know that people have been rejected because of their disability, people who came here in the 80s after the Central American invasions and wars that happened there, they applied and they were rejected because of their disability… Because it is in the legislation, it is in the legislation, the wording there that they would not qualify to be landed immigrants.

In the above examples, participants engage in providing counter discourses to speak of their own experiences as potential contributors (Aya) as opposed to being seen through the lens of liability. Moreover, some participants (Salma and Margareth) challenge the idea that Canadian immigration is free of discrimination and guided by principles of human rights and instead, point to discrimination based on disability. Fartun goes further to problematize ideas of liability based on disability and the embedded subtexts that determine who is worthy of admissibility:

> So then it comes back to this idea of being worthy, because then you would not be worthy when we can go and get another person who may be not as sick or may be as "needy" as you are. Because at the end of the day…how are you going to hold your own and contribute back into the society period, point blank. That is what we're looking at. People still think that the immigrant experience is the same for everybody because it's a fair system, because it's an equitable system and if there are small changes that are made around access for people disabilities then that's enough. But what most people don't know is that there's a lot of subtext that tells us that people with disabilities are not welcome.

As briefly alluded to in Chapter 7, Clara also provides an account of who is worthy of admissibility, and an internalized understanding of the "subtext" of who should or should not immigrate. We see an embedded self-blame that shapes how she chose to articulate her experiences dealing with the immigration process and how she was led to believe who is or is not worthy of opportunities in immigration. Specifically, Clara thought she

needed to look strong which led her to cover her disability. Indeed, she adds that: "My dad, my aunt, everybody kept telling me and my sister that immigration is only for the strong of heart".

Reflected in the above excerpts is the knowledge that immigration is a fixed and set policy and that those interested in going through such an endeavour need to have what it takes to be admissible and thus worthy of the opportunities provided through immigration (strong heart, independent, not a liability, etc.). This in turn reinforces the construction of immigration applicants as a homogenous social group based on having the ability to acquire what it takes to be a successful immigrant. For people with disabilities, this might, for example, be achieved by hiding their disabilities, as was noted by Clara when she contended that following her father's advice, she "thought it was important for us to look as strong and healthy and professional as we could". From a critical disability perspective, and specifically an analysis of sanism, choosing not to disclose her mental health disability serves as Clara's way of maintaining that she has the qualities sought after in immigrants. She and her father both know that discourses of independence, being strong, etc. are favoured by immigration officers, and that the immigration applicant's role is to project these qualities in such a way as to ensure the successful outcomes of their immigration application. The construction of people living with mental health histories as incompetent, as discussed in Chapter 3, has had a significant bearing on constructions of inadmissibility. Clara's complex portrayal of her experience is imbued with emotionality, and she is not alone in this portrayal, as we shall see in the next section.

Reality Hits: Emotions and Uncertainties while Waiting for Opportunities

Analysis of the data highlighted how participants in the three groups interviewed for this study used emotions to express discourses. These discourses were utilized as a way for the participants to interact with how they felt applicants with disabilities were constructed as an inadmissible social group. This section examines the impacts of being discursively constructed through measures of worthiness of opportunity by highlighting the *emotional interactions* that research participants demonstrated. Participants engaged in discursive emotional interactions to negotiate inadmissibility constructions through discourses and to highlight the impacts of such constructions on immigration and settlement experiences.

I use the term *emotional interaction* here to emphasize that participants in this study were not passive recipients of dominant discourses and how they are used to construct inadmissibility. Whether through personal experiences of being rejected several times before finally being admissible—as in the example of Aya—or whether through experiencing constructions of inadmissibility of family members, participants interacted emotionally to constructions of people with disabilities as inadmissible, burden of care, dependent, etc. The emotionally charged interactions with discourses and with the discursive construction of applicants with disabilities also figured in service providers' accounts of their role within immigration or settlement settings.

Participants' emotional interactions went beyond reacting to these constructions to also negotiating, resisting and reconstructing applicants with disabilities in such a way as to show worthiness of opportunities. In other words, emotional interactions are not just

reactions to emotional events; they are in fact used discursively to highlight the social practices and processes embedded within and through discourse (Fairclough, 2010). For example, issues of belonging to Canada were negotiated through emotional interactions, where discourses of identity were emphasized through extreme emotions. Feelings of sadness and anger are expressed to describe how participants interacted with how they were constructed as people with disabilities and how racism, ableism and colonialism played out in experiencing constructions of identity and belonging.

Lotfi spoke not only of his own experience as a person with disability but more generally as a service provider working with people with disabilities:

> It hurts me actually when they said you might be considered as a burden. It is sad for me to hear that we still, people with disabilities are still considered as an inadmissible class because they are a burden and all that blah blah blah…My question to the authorities or immigration officers who approve able-bodied applications: can you guarantee that this person that you just approved as an able-bodied person will not encounter a disability of some form, of an accident or a disease? Can you guarantee that a week after they have entered here legally that you Mr. Immigration approved, can you guarantee that those people will not have a disability and become a burden?

The feelings of sadness expressed by Lotfi and the implied frustration with which he refers to determinations of inadmissibility were also reflected by Aya in how she spoke about people with disabilities feeling like "outcasts" and a liability:

> I'm just saying that humans are humans and they are going to discriminate, regardless. We all have a little discriminator inside us, as I said…But there are differences, different grounds for discrimination. In (home country) for example it is the same ugly thing: you don't support yourself, (and) they don't think the government is supporting you (so) they are supporting you. They feel sorry for you…In Canada (it's) not like they feel sorry for you but they feel like you are a burden. They are taxpayers and you're collecting… For the person with disability, it is the same feeling. You feel outcast; you don't belong; you feel you are further away from achieving that human medal…The feeling is the same but the grounds could be different.

In the case of Malia, she spoke as a family member about sadness and frustration related to loss of professional identity:

> When you are an engineer in your country you give people a picture of yourself that I am an engineer that means that… I am educated …People rely on you because of your profession so you are confident in what you do; you have a job you have a family, you do whatever with confidence. You come here, you are not recognized as an engineer, you go for pizza delivery. You are not the same person, you don't bring the same food to put on the table for your family; you cannot support them you cannot give them the hope…And then little by little this is…how you lose your identity… Are you recognized as an engineer? No! Are you recognized as a professor at University? No! Are you recognized as a social worker? No! You are nobody, you're an immigrant; it is a sad story.

David as a service provider working with immigrant families of children with disabilities, spoke similarly about his anger and sadness with regards to professionals not being recognized for their degrees and training in Canada:

> I am saddened and I shouldn't be necessarily, it's the whole system of professionals coming to North America and not being able to work in their professions and what they were trained for and not being able to get certified to practice and then end up doing other things… I feel a certain degree of anger and a certain degree of sadness.

Keisha highlights what immigrants lose and leave behind by poignantly articulating and directly naming racism:

> It must be racism; it's only racism that's going to bring up all this anger. I tell you, people will curse you here. When I came to this country, I worked with a family of six. One of the girls called me "a Black pig". I could have told her "you are the pigs, but it is your parents are to be blamed. If your parents had put you down and teach you the way you were born and everybody was born the same way, respect everybody, we are all one. You could not have said this to me, but I forgive you"…They think immigrants come out of nowhere, but they come a long way before they reach here; they leave everything they own, they leave their happiness and they come here into sadness. They don't respect nobody, they don't respect their selves.

It is clear from the above excerpts that the construction of people with disabilities as a burden and the idea of loss of dignity, respect and identity were presented through the expression of emotions of sadness or anger. For example, Malia's emotional interactions (through frustration and sadness) demonstrate the effects of being denied access to professional identity and how this can reproduce marginality. Keisha's expressions of sadness and anger are held up as a challenge and as a response to racism. The point here is that emotions amplify the reaction as a way to interact with—and challenge—constructions of burden and unworthiness that continue to shape and define people with disabilities' access to immigration and other services.

Speaking not only about the application process but also about settlement experiences (which are further discussed in Chapter 9), participants demonstrated through their emotions and feelings their understanding of the discursive constructions of inadmissibility and how these constructions particularly shaped their whole immigration experience (before, during and after immigration). Indeed, instead of simply accepting being discursively constructed as a burden and as not belonging to Canadian society, participants relayed a counter discourse that can be seen through their emotional interactions. Hence, some of the above excerpts demonstrate what might be done to question and challenge constructions of inadmissibility. For example, in Lotfi's excerpt, we can see that he did not take the construction of people with disabilities as a burden and as unworthy at face value; in fact, he engaged in presenting a counter discourse to point to the flaws in such a construction of inadmissibility based on perceived burden of care.

Through his emotional interaction, he not only disrupted such constructions but also showed how they are superficial, unrealistic and oppressive.

Emotional interactions were also used to highlight how participants chose to discursively represent their experiences as a way to not only make their stories known, but also to prevent the reproduction of these stories and to save other applicants with disabilities from going through similar experiences, as Khaled asserts in the following excerpt:

> You know, I said yes to participate in your research not because I want anything from you. I was a refugee in a war zone and they brought me and my family here as refugees. True, the situation here is safer, and I feel no more stress about survival. But you know what I lost; I lost my dignity by coming here. I lost my dignity because now I feel that I am nothing, they convinced me that here is better, but it is not. Angry does not even begin to describe where I stand or how I feel. And this is why I…want to participate in this study: to tell everybody my story so no one goes through what my family and I went through. Yes, we are here now but I would choose to be there 1000 times more than I would choose to be here. Losing your dignity, your family, your identity and your kids to be here is definitely not worth it.

The point to emphasize here is that within the emotions described by participants such as Khaled, we can clearly see how embedded discourses were negotiated and how participants in these emotional accounts interacted discursively with these discourses. For Khaled, his participation in the study was an act of resistance to counter dominant discourses of opportunity and worthiness of being here through his use of discourses that question and emphasize the cost that he and his family incurred to be in Canada.

Furthermore, a key emotional interaction during the immigration process that participants emphasized is related to the long waiting period after they submitted their application. The application phase was filled with accounts of fear of being rejected and

being "on fire" waiting for a decision. When I asked Lotfi what was difficult about his application process, he emphasized his "fear of the unknown". In fact, he expressed a strong emotional image of being physically "shot" should his application have been rejected:

> [If I had heard] "We are not going to accept you", it's like you just shot me with a bullet straight to my head, straight to my face saying, "we're going to send you back to all the negativity that you have left". So this, what do you call it, the bubble, that beautiful bubble that suddenly you start to see will be burst when you get rejected, your claim will be rejected and then you go back…To tell you the truth, I never had 100% comfort…until I received that piece of paper that said "you have been accepted as a convention refugee". Those days awaiting the decision, I'm on fire just waiting for the decision.

For Fartun, fear of rejection should her aunt's disability be found out was a constant state experienced through the long waiting period:

> I think that consistently we were in a heightened state of fear, not even just like little fear or perceived fear but real fear and fear that at any point in time if we were found out (that my aunt had a disability) that it would impact our family…I think the part that was most challenging was the fact that because we were here before, our immigration process seemed quite seamless and so for my aunt it was a little bit different…I think we had also heard stories of other people who, their families had a person with a disability and for whatever reason they were denied or rejected or their process took so much longer. So when I say to you that this was not a perceived fear, it was a real fear.

Other participants such as Clara also expressed feelings of fear that point to their responsibility of how being constructed as inadmissible could potentially "ruin" their family's chances at immigration and lead to a rejection of the entire family's application:

> Maybe that way (if we disclosed my disability) we could probably have access to some kind of support right away like even before we came. But I was always afraid that I would be tagged like "not good enough" and in my mind I thought I would maybe ruin the chances for my dad to come here.

Similarly, in telling her sister's story of preparing to apply for immigration, Ripa consistently referred to the "fear of uncertainty" that continued to delay the actual submission of the application should the entire family be rejected.

In short, these emotional interactions were used discursively to present the reality of immigration for applicants with disabilities from their perspective, the perspective of their families as well as that of service providers. Emotional interactions also expressed the extent to which these realities are discursively constructed in ways that contribute to experiences of marginality (e.g. loss of identity, dignity, and respect, etc.). However, emotional interactions were also used by participants to resist these constructions by utilizing a mix of emotionally charged discourses and discursive analyses to emphasize the need for an intervention or for change in immigration policies and practices.

The following chapter builds on the ideas discussed above to demonstrate how the challenges of going through the application process continue through the settlement period even for those deemed worthy of opportunity. However, actualizing these promised opportunities is far from a straightforward endeavour and is one that immigrants and service providers alike struggle to achieve.

Chapter 9: After the Fact of Immigration—Actualizing Opportunities

The last stage of the immigration process discussed in this dissertation occurs after the fact of immigration. Since participants interviewed in this study were already in Canada, whether as immigrants with disabilities, family members of applicants with disabilities or as service providers, the stage reported on here focuses specifically on the dominant discourses that shape and define this stage which is characterized by discourses that facilitate the process of *actualizing opportunities*. The argument advanced in this chapter is that actualizing opportunities believed to be available through immigration is achieved through the use of discourse and discursive practices. Specifically, it will be argued that experiences of settlement cannot be understood as disconnected from the pre-application and application stages, as the discourses in those stages shape and inform how settlement experiences are constructed and discoursed.

As with the previous stages, the settlement stage depends on, or is underpinned by discourses of opportunity, and specifically "actualizing opportunities". Similar to other discourses of opportunity discussed so far in this dissertation, actualizing opportunities through discourse is a process reflective of the operation of dominant discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism that continue to shape the immigration and settlement experiences of people with disabilities.

Findings in this chapter are presented in two main sections. The first section demonstrates how immigrants and newcomers with disabilities and their families seek to actualize the opportunities that they are led to believe exist within immigration. Their efforts are illustrated through their interactions with discourses that position immigration

as an opportunity that they need to take advantage of. The discussion then moves to provide a brief account of the dominant discourses that facilitate such endeavours and associated challenges. The second section of this chapter focuses on the discursive practices that social workers and other helping professionals engage with in their efforts to actualize the opportunities for those deemed admissible. This section provides an analysis of the dominant "White" disability movement and demonstrates its problematic role in perpetuating the process of Othering of racialized immigrants and refugees with disabilities. Also illustrated are some of the ways immigrants and newcomers with disabilities resist such dominance through counter discourses that challenge and question the assumed universality of disability theories and practice models developed in the Global North and their presumed applicability to immigrants with disabilities from the Global South.

Throughout both sections, the focus is on living and materializing immigration as opportunity or through opportunity discourses by highlighting the impacts and costs that living the opportunity or actualizing it have on the people involved in the process. In addition, some of the policy and practice challenges that participants discussed are presented. The voices of immigrants with disabilities and their families as well as the voices of service providers are included in both sections as they are in dialogue with each other about how these opportunities can be materialized through settlement services. Put differently, I do not dichotomize between service providers and immigrants with disabilities, as all participants had much to say about how they perceive service provision as a way for opportunities to be actualized and materialized.

Before delving into the analysis, it is important to provide a brief description of what it means for immigrants and newcomers with disabilities, their families as well as service providers interviewed in this study for the opportunities within immigration to be actualized. Despite the tensions (i.e., costs, challenges, etc.) within the construction of immigration through opportunity discourses, I continue to be cautious about not to challenge the validity of such claims. Instead, I seek to examine the discursive processes and practices that operate within such a construction. Put differently, I would argue that paying attention to the discursive practices within which opportunities are conceptualized and actualized illustrates that the construction of people with disabilities as an inadmissible social group is underpinned by the complex operation of interlocking systems of oppression such as ableism, racism and colonialism. However, this does not negate the need to present how participants in this study saw and conceptualized opportunities and their attempts to actualize these through immigration.

For some immigrants with disabilities who participated in this study, attaining an education, getting a degree, starting a career, or even becoming a mother and "raising good Canadian citizens" (Aya) is how they saw these opportunities unfold and culminate. For others including family members, just by being here and enjoying privileges and entitlements such as the Canadian passport, health and social services, or Canada's commitments to human rights, respect and dignity of people with disabilities were seen as clear indications that indeed these opportunities were actualized. For service provider participants, their conceptualization of actualizing opportunities can be seen in their roles

as professional practitioners who aspire to help and empower immigrants with disabilities and their families to settle and integrate in Canada.

For the purpose of this analysis, the emphasis is not on how participants sought to actualize the opportunities within and through immigration but how they chose to discursively represent these opportunities and negotiate them in ways that reflect the dominant discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism that continue to shape immigration policies and practices. In other words, the focus of this chapter is not on how participants *experienced* these opportunities per se, although important; instead, the discussion centers on discursive processes and practices and how they were negotiated in the narratives of the participants. This focus is consistent with CDA as it directs the attention to the operation of discourses and how they shape and define immigration and settlement as well as the service provision experiences of research participants. As Jäger and Maier (2009) assert, the importance of analyzing discursive processes and practices lies in tracing the social production and construction of meaning within society. As such, how participants discursively negotiate and navigate their immigration and settlement experiences becomes an essential part of the operation of power within and through discourse that continues to shape immigration and settlement for people with disabilities (Fairclough, 2010; Jäger & Maier, 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Negotiating Opportunities: Navigating the Canadian Landscape

The impacts of the highly emotional waiting period during the application process discussed in the previous chapter do not end with finding out the outcomes of the application. These emotionally charged interactions also impact how participants in this

study perceive of their presence being in Canada (here) and how it is constructed as an achievement worth waiting for (as opposed to being there in their countries of origin). Understanding immigration through discourses of opportunity helps in constructing an admissibility outcome as a privilege that needs to be acknowledged and negotiated with a sense of responsibility and appreciation. Here we see a direct link to discourses of worthiness of opportunity. In this sense, phrases like "Canada welcomed me here, and I am forever grateful" as Aya asserts, or "now I am here, the sky is the limit" as Lotfi contends not only complement each other, but also indicate the extent to which immigration is understood and perceived as an opportunity that should be valued and embraced:

> When I became disabled there (in home country), suddenly my identity was gone, changed from Lotfi, the graduate from college, the healthy, the athletic, the sky is the limit, to suddenly somebody who in the eyes of society, in the eyes of my neighbours, my relatives, my friends, everybody around me suddenly started to see Lotfi as the crippled. That's the word they use, "crippled". So just that feeling, it's in my mind, it's been grounded in my mind that I would not want to go back where people were treating me like that. So, as soon as I arrived here, I tried my best to stay here. And now I am here, the sky is the limit (Lotfi)

Building on the perceived opportunities available through immigration, participants confirmed that once they were deemed admissible, they gained access to these professed opportunities such as the facilities provided through Canadian citizenship as Clara notes:

> When I use my (country of origin) passport, they put me aside and ask me questions; when I use my Canadian passport they are like "welcome" (chuckle)…because I'm seen as a first-class citizen of the world and not as a Third World (citizen) smuggling drugs probably…I feel that's how they see me.

Lorraine highlights the opportunity as an immigrant to have access to government economic assistance programs:

> Right now I'm on ODSP; back home you don't get that support from the government. I would get money like Ontario Children's Benefits. Back home we don't get that. Maybe if you pay taxes you get back something but not as much as like here, you get it at the end of the month or whatever.

Fartun adds that immigration provides access to employment opportunities for which she and her family were grateful:

> For the rest of us, my mother, other people we knew, we were able to go work right away and we were able to contribute because there's this whole idea of being thankful that we are here and doing everything that we possibly can to assimilate in this world.

In the above excerpts, we see that the colonial dimension through the comparison between life in Canada and in the country of origin actively interacts with the disability dimension. Specifically, building on comparisons feeds into a desire to stay in Canada and take advantage of advanced disability rights and inclusion, comparatively speaking. An important observation to make here is that the reasons that motivate participants in this study to seek immigration, mentioned in chapter 7, are the same reasons that they use to demonstrate how opportunities for them were or should be actualized. In other words, issues of rights, recognition, as well as access to privileges and services (i.e. employment, education and health care, etc.) among other issues were used to demonstrate and measure how opportunities can or should be actualized. Although these examples were discussed in specifics and based on individual experiences, they are used in the analysis here to reflect the discursive process associated with the broader picture of the intersection of immigration and disability.

For example, in the above excerpts, mention of the Canadian passport by Clara is a reference to the access that it provides when compared with passports from other

countries located in the Global South, again reiterating the colonial comparison between North and South. Similarly, the services provided through ODSP and other similar programs are likely to be considered an attraction for immigrants with disabilities when compared with services available in countries of origin. These examples build on the previous argument about motivations to immigrate to suggest that actualizing opportunities is expressed in two ways: first, through appreciation of being here and second, by measuring or assessing the extent to which participants have access to services and privileges that they are entitled to once they are here.

Put differently, actualizing opportunities within immigration stands on three main pillars. First, the fact that being here represents an idea of opportunity that in fact has been actualized and should be appreciated. These ideas are fuelled and exaggerated by many factors including Canada's reputation at the global scene as well as the existence of protective measures and legislations that are already attractive to people from marginalized communities seeking immigration. The second pillar builds on Canada's reputation and can be seen in the comparison between here and there and how this binary is conceptualized and constructed to express a sense of what being here (in Canada) has added or entitled participants to. Finally, actualizing opportunities is measured by access to services or privileges that are associated and identified with being here. In this sense, there is a reiteration of discourses of opportunity, this time through a discussion of opportunities that can be actualized when entitlement and access to services are compared to what is available to people with disabilities in their home countries.

However, as have argued in other chapters, the construction of immigration

through opportunity discourses is not a straightforward endeavour. Actualizing such discourses is nuanced, complex and full of contradictions that render materializing these opportunities more visible only when contrasted with their apparent absence in home countries. Again, the intent here is not to deny or question that immigration is indeed an opportunity for some. Rather, I argue that the construction of immigration through opportunity discourses can be traced back to the colonial project that shapes immigration and can be clearly seen when immigration is examined through a critical disability lens. This is illustrated in Aya's reflections on her own experiences as well as those of other people with disabilities:

> … you have people who want to come to Canada for a better life to be able to have a better job and to improve their life. People with disabilities when they want to come to Canada, I tell you the truth, if I put myself in (country of origin) and why I want to come to Canada, it's because I want to be recognized as a human being…Which means I want to be able to live without that feeling that I am a charitable case…I want to be feeling human… But you need to work on it and God help you if you fall through the cracks in Canada. We have a very good system but if you fall through the cracks you are toast. That's another story, if you're disabled or not disabled. But if you are disabled, the disability adds layers and layers of vulnerability which maximize the fall. When you fall you fall really deep. And you need a lot more support to be up.

Aya's observations about falling through the cracks are supported by service providers such as Farzana and David who both spoke about the barriers that they have seen immigrants with disabilities and their families go through while navigating their settlement in Canada:

> Oh, definitely, [people with disabilities have opportunities] if they make it here but if they don't make it here, it's problematic. And many of them who do make it here if they don't find the right supports and services it's a challenge…If they find the right supports and services, if they are successful in their settlement process, absolutely it's an opportunity. But if they come here and basically face barriers and they fall through the cracks then they don't necessarily view it as an

> opportunity. (Farzana)
>
> I guess the discouragement for me are the things I have talked about when I see barriers faced by families who have already experienced such obstacles…I just so badly…don't want to see them face further struggles and further challenges and then added onto the fact that I know, that we know the whole area of disability itself comes with obstacles and challenges within our Western, within Canadian society and North American society. (David)

While participants do not deny that immigration is indeed an opportunity, such a construction is relevant only to those who make it to Canada; and even when applicants with disabilities make it here, there are challenges and obstacles that need to be considered and taken into account. In this sense, I would argue that participants provide counter discourses of opportunities beyond the surface of what is potentially offered through immigration by highlighting the embedded challenges and limitations in specific details from their lived experiences. While challenges are mentioned in immigration documents, these are not named in specific detail and lack the nuances of how they are experienced by immigrants themselves, which reiterates their discursive use to discourage those deemed "unworthy" of opportunities to apply, as discussed in Chapter 7. Actualizing these opportunities is also based on the principles of discursively comparing between here and there that continue to reinforce these binaries in the everyday settlement experiences of people with disabilities, and how these are experienced by their families as well as service providers.

Moreover, because of the comparison that is based on constructing the "here" to be better, we also see a discursive process that renders ableism and racism experienced here to be more tolerable and acceptable compared to oppression experienced in home countries:

> I told you, here (Canada) we have discrimination, we have racism, we have ableism, everything is there but at a different level and it's sugar-coated or whatever but even much more tolerable, bearable than there. At least you don't have to feel powerless. At the very least you can quit or file a complaint or something like that; there you can't do that. (Saman)

Indeed, for Malia, the difference in immigrants' situations between countries of origin and Canada is, or should be, the motivating force to immigrate:

> When you're in the situation that you can have two options, bad and worse, if you're in the worst situation you would choose the bad one. So in that situation I would encourage them to come because in some countries there is nothing because they are so poor. But there are some countries like the Europeans, I don't know why they are coming here, or some of the Arabic countries are very rich. I don't know the disability system or… how the facilities look like there…but if they are coming from a country, very poor country, there is nothing over there, there is no term like mental disability, I would urge them to come here.

The idea within the above excerpts is that when people with disabilities finally succeed and make it to become admissible, which in the context of this study builds on discourses of worthiness of opportunity, they negotiate such constructions in ways that minimize oppressive discourses and render them acceptable and tolerable especially in comparison to life in their countries of origin. The efforts to actualize opportunities are particular to easing the tensions of being here but minimize questioning and challenging the quality of life and services that people with disabilities receive as immigrants and newcomers. In other words, advancing the argument made in Chapter 7, the point to emphasize here is that racism and ableism become seen as tolerable and acceptable forms of oppression. This tolerance of oppression is fuelled by comparisons between here and there (which are how colonial discourses operate within immigration, as demonstrated in Chapter 3) as well as fear of losing the perceived privileges and opportunities associated with being in Canada.

The contradictions in the above excerpts demonstrate the extent to which comparison between here and there is embedded in how participants conceptualize their experiences of oppression and marginalization. What is clearly articulated in Saman's excerpt as "tolerable and bearable" forms of racism and ableism are only understood as such when they are compared to similar experiences in home countries. Thus, racism and ableism within immigration can be discursively understood and conceptualized through the colonial practices that operate in the comparison between here and there.

The irony here is that ableism and racism in home countries are the same experiences that motivate people to immigrate to Canada in the first place. Consistent with what I demonstrated throughout the findings chapters, Canada's reputation as a place of human rights and respect for people with disabilities is a central motivation that participants in this study identified as one of the main reasons for their immigration. As Malia contends in the above excerpt, immigration is a comparison between bad and worse situations that justifies tolerating oppressive experiences in Canada—such as the loss of professional identity alluded to in her earlier excerpts. The argument here is that discursive comparison between here and there should be understood within the complex and nuanced realities that continue to shape the power dynamics and relations between the Global North and South and how they shape dominant knowledge about disability within both hemispheres.

Moreover, I would argue that the above excerpts build on and emphasize the position that opportunities are available *only here* in Canada. Such discourses are problematic as they minimize the oppression and marginalization faced by immigrants

with disabilities *here* as compared to what they might face *there* in their home countries. For example, all participants in this study, including service providers discussed experiences of marginalization and exclusion that immigrants with disabilities face in Canada. David offers this example based on his practice experiences:

> An immigrant family that came from a home that was filled with civil strife and war and the child had a disability living in an apartment and therefore the child crawled, had to crawl couldn't walk…and created a little more noise maybe…The neighbors began to criticize, complain; police would come to the family's door and you can imagine what this meant and how…this family became re-traumatized by people in uniforms coming to their door.

Similarly, Lotfi offered this story based on his experiences as an immigrant with disabilities and an activist working with other people with disabilities:

> After I settled, I tried to help a newcomer who had a disability who needed basic accommodation to live. He was living in a shelter, in an inaccessible shelter, and he used to use a scooter, leave the scooter outside and crawl on the stairs step-by-step to go to the shelter that is on the second floor and going back again. So I felt, I have to help this person, so I took him into a disability organization in person, with his broken English, with my better English…I heard the most racist answer that shook me up…I still remember it, when I said this person is in need, and I demonstrated everything and…the answer was: " well, you know, we have a lot of Canadian disabled people here right now who don't have access to accessible housing, he should be lucky that he is in Canada"…So there are two components here, first I understand, maybe the priority is for Canadian people, okay, I get that, but I thought in Human Rights, a disabled (person) is a disabled (person). But then when you say "he is lucky here, that he is here", that means you…admitted this person in Canada but you are treating him again with this racist remark that [he] is still second-class. You are a person who got here but you are a second-class because you are an immigrant or refugee, so, wait your turn longer than theirs.

Interestingly, these experiences were presented as a contested but also taken for granted reality that is part of the landscape. The nuances and complexities that I am referring to here reside within how these experiences were negotiated and navigated. As demonstrated above, perhaps racism and ableism are seen as "tolerable and bearable"

because the comparison between here and there is based on the existence of protective measures and mechanisms that people can refer to when they are faced by such experiences. However, this does not negate the need to question and challenge how people with disabilities continue to face ableism and racism within immigration despite all the contradictions demonstrated above.

Moreover, building on this point about minimizing experiences of oppression, it was intriguing for me to notice how participants such as Lotfi chose to represent their experiences as racism and not an intersection of ableism and racism. In fact, this observation was consistent with almost all participants especially when they discussed experiences of racism and ableism within disability-specific organizations. I was constantly surprised to see that participants chose to categorize their experiences as racism and not ableism. Here, I am not trying to impose my understanding and interpretation of experiences of oppression. Rather, I am using these moments to illustrate a complex tension that became apparent when I engaged reflexively with the data and attempted to maintain an ethical commitment to respect how participants chose to represent their experiences. While I do not claim to have a definitive way to deal with this tension, I know that there is a need to dig deeper into how oppression operates in these instances in ways that allow us to see beyond the surface. One of the principles of social justice oriented practice and thinking is to name oppression and marginalization to be able to challenge and question them. I do not claim to know better how to name these oppressive experiences as I did not live them. Instead, I use these moments of reflexivity to demonstrate the complexity of oppression and perhaps to show how we became

conditioned as marginalized social groups to think in a hierarchal way about our experiences of oppression.

It could be argued that ableism and racism interlock in Lotfi's story demonstrating how immigrants with disabilities continue to face ableism even within disability right organizations. However, speaking reflexively, I wish to argue that no matter how far we advance our theoretical understanding of oppression and its structures and practices, this is only subject to how people experience oppression in their everyday realities. Here, I rely on the social justice dimension as a way to ground my understanding of oppression within lived realities. Such an understanding helps in maintaining a sense that oppression is only defined by those who live through it and as researchers, we are only learners in this process. I am tempted to identify a clash between theory and experience but I contend that theory should be born out of those realities in ways that inform and facilitate the process of social justice and transformation so that our professional roles are not subject to the problematic use of dominant discourses of actualizing opportunities, an argument I return to in the next chapter.

Finally, while constructing immigration through opportunity discourses and noting the need to be appreciative of such opportunities, participants still engaged in counter discourses. Participants questioned and challenged the systemic marginalization of people with disabilities within immigration as well as broader social institutions and structures, as the excerpts below indicate:

> Because I believe immigration policies in Canada have been racist and continue to be for years. I think they have been based on racism since the beginning…So I think immigration policies are very much based on that, based on a language requirement, based on where you got your education, so certain degrees that are

> not recognized for example; that is extremely racist to me. (Ripa)
>
> People with disabilities should not be measured on their disability…I understand the larger issue of the inequities that exist worldwide and in Canada, and I don't want to sound like carte blanche: "don't look at people's disabilities, look at their merits". But then again who gets access to merit? Who gets access to education? Who gets access to programs and opportunities traveling and all that sort of stuff? It's usually people with money, people who could have potentially had the opportunity and this is the cycle that once you're in poverty you stay in poverty; once you're unemployed you stay unemployed…The way the system works is that it privileges the privileged. (Salma)

Lotfi points to these oppressive structures by offering a counter discourse that challenges ableism and racism:

> The ideal world is when I see a prime minister for example that has a disability, a disabled person holding this position, or a Member of Parliament, the people who make decisions…For example I'm going to take the racism that is available in the States. For many years, who would have thought that one day a Black American would come and be a president, it was almost impossible. But when you see a leader that is Black, suddenly…you will notice that maybe racism is on its way out, maybe. Or the people now start to see things different.

Hence, being appreciative of opportunities in ways that minimize oppression does not negate the fact that participants identified and discussed their experiences with ableism and racism. Actualizing opportunities within immigration is not the same as living those opportunities and how participants negotiate and navigate their way around them. Indeed, the impacts and costs of these opportunities discussed in earlier chapters such as family break-ups, loss of identity, feeling deceived and cheated are only examples of being caught between the image and the reality of Canada as a so-called land of opportunities. For example, experiences of ableism and racism were presented in ways that recognized the underlying institutional practices as well as discursive ideologies and processes that perpetuate and facilitate oppression. Keisha points to institutionalized

racism and its everyday manifestations through policing:

> When my son first came in [to Canada]…sometime I send him to the store, police are always stopping him because he is Black... It is racism that control their work, it is racism…Anytime they hire a Black policeman then they use the Black one to get to the people. When they see them in the car, they step aside and they make the Black one go in front but he can't do better because he wants a job.

Saman and Lotfi in their roles as service providers and also as people with disabilities point to the embedded racism and ableism in social service organizations:

> When I first came to Canada, I was alone and I had to find a job and things like that, so I came out and learned things. I faced a lot of discriminations. You know, as a Blind person, sometimes you need a volunteer, so I went to (name of organization) asking for a volunteer. I met with the volunteer coordinator, she was racist. She told me there are so many people here, grew up and working, they couldn't find a volunteer so you're not our priority. I said, here I am alone; I have nobody to read my forms or letters, I need someone to help me come in or help me go to the grocery shop. I am just at the mercy of my friends only and they are new immigrants and they have two jobs and they don't know the language, so I should be one of your priorities. She was determined to delay my volunteer. (Saman)

> A lot of organizations especially the ones that get funding from the government, they still have this mentality of people with disabilities are second-class citizens. It's funny, we did talk about human rights and equality and inclusion; however, when it comes to realities, sometimes actually the true colors will come out. And ableism still exists as long as there are no activists that educate the government, right at the top, that it should be eliminated and not to see us to be a second-class. (Lotfi)

The above excerpts name racism and ableism directly and highlight a role for service providers to enhance access to services, provide support and tackle broader issues of oppression. These ways of conceptualizing practice were highlighted by service providers, as they spoke not only about their multi-faceted role but also about the challenges they perceived as they attempted to actualize opportunities for immigrants with disabilities. Indeed, whether they spoke of their role as challenging oppressive

structures or addressing individual clients' issues of accessing services, service providers perceived of their role through discourses of actualizing opportunities, as demonstrated in more detail below.

Actualizing Opportunities: Conceptualizing the Role of Service Providers

As noted earlier in this chapter, actualizing opportunities as constructed by immigrants with disabilities or family members of immigrants with disabilities differs from how service providers conceptualize and construct their professional roles and responsibilities to facilitate actualizing opportunities. Some service providers (including those who consider themselves activists) conceive of their role through discourses of empowerment and how they can support their clients to not only become admissible, but also to help clients make the best out of their immigration experiences ultimately leading to gaining citizenship. Some service providers conceived of their role as facilitating the process of creating the Canadian citizen who could be empowered to enjoy access to privileges associated with citizenship, and facilitating the definitions of how to be a good Canadian citizen. In this sense, actualizing opportunities within immigration ultimately becomes centred on providing services that facilitate access to social programs and privileges such as citizenship status. Ria spoke of the importance of citizenship in how immigrants think of their success:

> A lot of people to go back; it's like you've given up…I have friends who are also refugees and they won't go back no matter how bad it gets because they don't want to be seen as a failure when they go back. A lot of people won't say, they won't tell their families back home that this is what they are facing here, because they don't want people to worry and they want people to realize: "I'm in Canada, I'm successful. I'm making it. I will be a Canadian citizen". That's the ultimate goal.

Fartun relates the ideal of gaining citizenship and how this is conceived of specifically in relation to the experiences of people with disabilities:

> I think in terms of how we understand…people with disability as citizens in this country, not just citizens but how we actually understand the notions of citizenship, the notions of worthiness, these kinds of ideas and disability… I don't think from my practice experience, even from my helping to teach social work…I don't think we understand people with disabilities in the Canadian context, especially immigrants, especially racialized people…And then to talk about what that sort of commodity of citizenship, what does that translate into? So for me I look at those commodities of cash in my pocket and I trade them for different things, I trade them for access to services, I trade them for a decent place to live, I trade them for a job.

Moreover, continuing with the idea that actualizing opportunity within immigration is not a straightforward endeavour, seeking disability-specific services was presented as a challenge because of fear that this may impact on or pose a threat for immigration or citizenship status. For example, some participants who are immigrants with disabilities or their family members spoke about fear of losing eligibility for certain programs or even being deported if they sought disability-specific services. Moreover, participants spoke about a lack of knowledge about services and entitlement to disability-specific service programs and how they can be accessed. These issues reiterate and confirm the reality presented in the literature review in Chapter 2 that when disability intersects with immigration, all parties involved within settlement settings lack knowledge and clear direction about not only how to provide services for immigrants with disabilities, but also how to make them aware of the existence of these services in the first place. In fact, Amina notes:

> Even people who work directly with the newcomers are not sure what is covered or what is not covered, they are turning people away…and the rules keep changing, with the confusion, some of the health services are covered and some

> are not.

Moreover, this lack of clarity on the part of service providers is compounded according to Baljeet if people with disabilities "came to Canada as a new immigrant they are not aware of the disability services available to them then obviously they have disadvantages". David adds that this lack of clarity and knowledge of services is at times due to language barriers but also to the bureaucratic processes of the state:

> In the area of disability you also want to make sure that families are also accessing and securing all the financial support that is available and that they are eligible for…Even those for whom English is a first language are challenged by the paperwork and then…you're supporting a family where there is a language barrier and you're having to fill government forms and government paperwork and then what tends to happen is that the government, when it comes to funding and financial support they have certain rules about certain things. If you don't tell us that you have moved and we send you a letter and you don't respond to that letter and so on then we are going to remove you from this list or that list and so on. So I have had families come to me and say somehow we are off the housing list or we have now been told that we are going to lose our disability allowances and I look on the forms and the information that the government sent them where they had to submit certain paperwork you can't understand it if you don't speak the language; even if you do speak the language it is so nuanced. And these are people, families who are if anything so careful to not want to have any misstep with government because they are so afraid, of somehow being judged or being penalized…But the ministry ends up sending threatening letters to people who are only wanting to follow the rules, talk about something that has annoyed me and frustrated me.

In addition to the above noted barriers and difficulties in accessing services, participants highlighted the impacts of ableism. For example, Aya spoke about not wishing to have labels about her as a disabled person reproduced through seeking services:

> …when you come new, you don't even know what is available, you don't even know what questions to ask and as a person with disability…you are so vulnerable, that you're afraid to even ask. Because you don't want to be labeled, you're running away from the labels…how do I know what I'm entitled for? After all, they make me feel I am lucky to come here because they make it so difficult for me to get here. So when I come here, oh, I'm so lucky to be here, so I stop asking about services I am entitled to…And then the agencies, of course, they

> choose the easy way out: "I asked her if she wanted a computer and she didn't go for it. What can I do?" This is where the education comes: you want to raise the level of awareness and the level of service you're giving; you have to get it right you have to educate people, educate the receiver of the service and the provider of the service and the government that's approving the fund.

In addition to feeling "lucky" and not wishing to seem "entitled", other participants highlighted fears that prevent them from interacting with social services or other authorities:

> …my mom thought that if she says something was wrong, then my aunt is not going to get her citizenship. And if she cannot get her citizenship then what's going to happen to her? And all this fear, and even things like when the social workers would say, "well it is confidential that we're helping her"…So I remember for a really long time, just this fear that if anybody, if the immigration found out that something was wrong, not only would it impact her, but I also felt that my mom was fearful that for some reason it would impact us, although we were already citizens (Fartun)

> You have to keep away from the law especially the police because if for instance I'm doing my papers now and I get the police stop me, they can stop your papers. It depends on what you do; they can deport you back to your country. (Lorraine)

In these excerpts we see this lack of knowledge and access to services; we also see reference to oppressive institutional practices such as policing and housing. However, as Aya notes, considering the difficulty she faced in being admitted to Canada, she argues that since she is "lucky" to be here, she should not raise her voice and ask for services or challenge service provision. In this example, we see that constructions of worthiness of opportunity are operationalized through an emphasis placed on how opportunities should be actualized and the barriers to doing so.

Furthermore, a key issue that contributes to the lack of knowledge about needed services for immigrants and newcomers with disabilities was identified by almost all participants in this study. Immigrants with disabilities, their families as well as service

providers talked about the "silo" nature of services within the disability and settlement sectors and the urgent need to create some form of collaboration between them. Specifically, participants discussed how the disability sector functions outside an understanding that there are settlement needs that immigrants with disabilities require such as accessible housing, transportation and many other types of services that significantly impact and shape their settlement and integration process. Similarly, participants talked about the need for the settlement sector to have a better understanding and knowledge of disability issues and needs to better facilitate disability-specific settlement services. Both Salma and Ria spoke in similar terms about the siloed nature of social services and the challenges it creates for their clients:

> If you're telling me that I have a child with intellectual disability, and I'm in (one city), and the only services are (in another city), how easy for me is it to get there? I'm new, I'm trying to settle myself and I have to settle my child simultaneously...There is no linked service…There's no coordinated system, again it's very siloed: disability here, immigration here, ESL here…They expect too much from immigrants to be able to navigate the system. (Salma)

> The system itself is not conducive in terms of making it easy for us as settlement workers to support people with mental and physical disabilities. I found that there was fragmentation in the system in terms of the settlement sector working in silos, and the disability sector working within their own silos. So it was a challenge for me to refer clients to the appropriate sources and I felt as though as a settlement agency…the other challenge is knowing what's available. (Ria)

Also referring to fragmentation of services, David spoke about how he has tried to address service gaps to better assist his clients:

> I think some of the resources are available but…through experience you get to know who to speak to within the community. I know that there are certain physicians and there are settlement workers that are my go-to people and I kind of will collaborate with this lawyer and another lawyer who I have also had opportunity to speak to about immigration issues as well…but obviously you would like to wish, hope, that…the system could be more comprehensive. I am

working in my kind of bubble and they are working in their bubbles.

What is important to highlight in these excerpts is that from a practice point of view, facilitating settlement services for immigrants with disabilities requires a particular attention not only to the fragmented nature of these services, but also to how this fragmentation specifically shapes how opportunities within immigration can be actualized and materialized. Put differently, the fragmentation of the settlement and disability sectors significantly shapes and impacts the types and quality of services that render actualizing opportunities within immigration a challenge that all key players in these settings need to address. We return here to the underlying discourses of opportunity that drive service providers to view their role as being about actualizing these opportunities for their clients. Service providers discuss fragmentation, the need to collaborate, and the importance of training, among others, all in line with what they perceive to be their role of actualizing opportunities, without questioning the discourses of opportunity that have become normalized as a given reality within immigration.

Moreover, it is important to highlight a point alluded to by Salma in the above excerpts. Women are expected to take on the role of caregiver for their disabled children with no supports, further complicating their own experiences of disability and immigration. This is confirmed by Malia in her discussion of her own experiences as a mother to a disabled child. In fact, in my interview with David, I noticed that he kept referring to the parents of children with disabilities he had worked with as "mothers". When I asked him about his choice of language, he had this to say:

> I think I've probably been…saying mothers because I have had a strong connection because they have been women, maybe I say that. I certainly admire

> all of the families that I have worked with, but boy, the single mom who is here in a new country without a partner, they are the ones, they have strength when I even hear just a little bit…what they have gone through just to get here.

I would argue that this is a further example of the gendered nature of caregiving as it intersects with disability in the immigration experiences of families. Indeed, David later links these experiences to the oppression women face in society.

Furthermore, for some service providers, the presence of protective legislations and guidelines such as the AODA was seen as the answer to deal with issues of access to services and facilitating the integration of immigrants with disabilities. When I asked participants to discuss what needs to change within policies to ensure that immigration and settlement experiences of people with disabilities become smooth and accessible, participants kept referring back to the AODA and emphasized the need to raise awareness about such protective measures in order to effectively challenge ableism. I conceive of this overreliance on protective legal measures as a problematic neoliberal answer that merits further discussion and challenge, a point that is further discussed in Chapter 10.

However, service providers also perceived of their role of supporting immigrants with disabilities while emphasizing interventions that can move the focus beyond everyday practices and service provision to include ways of resistance to systemic and institutional ableism and racism within immigration. As such, protective measures and guidelines as well as the provision of accessible day-to-day services were not seen as sufficient. Specifically, some service providers chose to recognize and critically challenge the systemic ableism and racism within immigration by questioning the structures that perpetuate and underlie these oppressive practices within society and their

practice settings. Fartun provides this case example from her practice:

> Number one, the fact that you're an immigrant already labels you as less than, as not knowing, we infantilize people. Those are already conceptions of a person who is Other. And then in particular her, she (client) was a Black woman so that's another piece as well. So I think there are things around race, class, the point of departure, the country they are coming from. I can certainly guarantee you that someone who is from Europe or Australia, we wouldn't assume that that would just be the way that they are. For some reason, the assumption was that this person could potentially just be mute…So if I think back to how for example we construct Black women in particular, there are these very clear dichotomies: you are disrespectful, you are loud, you are ignorant or just stupid. You're stupid and quiet. We infantilize you.

Ria also speaks about her own experiences as a settlement worker and how she has felt the challenges of working with other colleagues on issues of oppression:

> I find that it is challenging sometimes not for myself but I have seen colleagues in the sector who necessarily do not have much experience with working in the disability sector. We have an open door policy that anyone can come through our organization but you feel as though when someone let's say, someone who has schizophrenia, or bipolar disorder comes in, while we are trained how to work with clients of such, I've seen colleagues who have challenges within themselves to work with such clients. That's a struggle that they need to deal with and they need to face their own biases and they need to be reminded of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the OHRC policies and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. And I feel as though not everyone practices from an anti-oppressive approach…You have to work from an antiracist, anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory framework and be aware of it.

Salma pushes the analysis further to speak about the links to broader conceptualizations of the West that underpin immigration experiences and stand in the way of challenging racism:

> I think they have those expectations because the West in general has touted itself as being this progressive, more liberal, more accessible more everything, better than the South (chuckle)…I think to an extent, this is a broad generalization, not saying everybody, but people from the Global South buy into it often. They believe it, they get told all these stories and they believe them. So there's this disparity in what the standard of living is, what money means, what taxation is like, what sorts of opportunities exist, what's the social contract, what is racism,

> what does it look like, what does it really look like? I think people make the assumption that racism is only towards Black people. They come here thinking all I have to do is work and I'll get to where I need to be.

The above excerpts demonstrate the desire of service providers to uncover and challenge interlocking oppressions of ableism, racism and colonialism as they engage in the process of actualizing opportunities. These participants engage in a process of counter discoursing to shift their understandings of professional practice beyond service provision to looking at how discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism are reflected in services and internalized by workers regardless of available training.

Moreover, building on this understanding of interlocking oppressions, for some service providers engaged in grassroots activism as well as working in institutional settings, the emphasis did not rest on protective measures or concepts of inclusion and integration, but on challenging the very foundations of the disability movement in Canada. Farzana, a long-time disability activist argues that:

> The disability movement is a fragmented movement; it is not a well-connected movement, the strength of the movement is advocating locally for example for the AODA and things like that. Immigration is not on their radar as much because again racialized people with disabilities are not engaged enough within the disability movement more broadly.

Indeed, through her discussion of a training program on the immigration experiences of people with disabilities, Salma highlights the need not only to name racism but also to find ways to challenge whiteness:

> …when you talk about immigrants with disabilities you're not just talking about disability and immigration status, you're talking about a whole nuanced experience, so issues of race were difficult to address (in the training). So when you ask how does the experience of racialized immigrants with disabilities differ from the experience of white immigrants with disabilities or just even white people with disabilities? Silence. No one wants to have the conversation, and

> these are settlement workers, but there is a discomfort. If there is a white person in the room, no one wants to out the white person, no one wants to make that person uncomfortable…If you speak about it in the abstract, or what are some of the experiences that immigrants may experience in Canada, racism would be one of those items that are listed…they name racism. So we say to them what does that look like? No one is willing to have that conversation. I find that interesting.

Indeed, as succinctly put by Fartun in her discussion of social work practice:

> I think we're still living in a time where racism, experiences of white supremacy, whiteness, colonization, are not understood and people are still not understanding the co-organizing between colonization and experiences of disability and Othering.

In the above excerpts we see how whiteness discursively operates not only in how services are understood and constructed, but also in how actualizing opportunities within immigration becomes about navigating power differences based on white privilege. What these participants refer to are examples of the operation of whiteness in actualizing opportunities and in measuring worthiness of these opportunities. In other words, the dominance of whiteness within the disability movement coupled with the marginalization of racialized people with disabilities can demonstrate how knowledge about the Other, discussed in Chapter 3, can be discursively facilitated to maintain the process of Othering of marginalized social groups. Thus, identifying the needs of immigrants and racialized people with disabilities in settlement settings becomes a place where dominant discourses of *us and them* clash in a way to prioritize once again the needs and issues of dominant social groups.

Participants in this study responded to these practices by actively engaging in creating spaces where issues and concerns of immigrants with disabilities are not only taken into account and "integrated" through service provision, but are indeed at the centre

of their practice. In resisting these spaces of whiteness within the mainstream disability movement and settlement organizations, these participants led the creation and development of initiatives by and for racialized immigrants with disabilities—further details are omitted here so as to not inadvertently breach the anonymity of these participants. It is important to add that for some of these participants, such efforts were based on what they believed to be a contribution of their disability activism history and understandings in the South: namely conceptualizing rights within a framework of collectivity as opposed to being based on individual needs. These ideas pave the way for the development of a broad-based response that complicates how we understand our roles as service providers, with the aim of challenging dominant discourses of opportunity.

Chapter 10: Complicating Discourses of Opportunity

The discussion in this chapter, further troubles discourses of opportunity through the presentation of three main themes based on the findings: reinforcing Northern superiority through comparisons between here and there; constructing a hegemonic national identity through discourses that center on examining the worthiness for opportunities; and troubling the role of social work in actualizing opportunities. In addition, this discussion supports the overarching arguments advanced in this dissertation that demonstrate that discourses of opportunity continue to reflect and reinforce ableist, racist and colonial relations of power and dominance between Global North and South, manifested through immigration.

Here, the intent is not to challenge whether immigrating to Canada is indeed an opportunity. In fact, as an immigrant myself, I cannot deny that immigrating to Canada was, and continues to be an opportunity for me to advance my career. Rather, I aim to demonstrate how discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism operate within constructions of Canada as a welcoming country where immigration is an opportunity for the best that *everybody* can take advantage of, *regardless* of their race, class, gender, country of origin, religious affiliation, etc.

Returning to Wodak and Meyer's (2009) argument that CDA's role is to demystify and debunk myths within discourse, and building on the importance of the DHA approach that brings attention to the role and historical changes within discourse, a note on the history of immigration and specifically the intersection between racism and ableism is important here. Specifically, returning to Chadha (2008) and Wong's (2011)

arguments that assert that throughout the history of immigration, people from unwanted racialized groups were constructed as disabled and deemed culturally unfit as a basis of inadmissibility to Canada. This history repeats itself today and can be seen in a contemporary shift in discourses. The discourses articulated in current immigration documents continue to reflect the same message about unwanted populations even though on the surface, they may appear to make opposite claims (i.e. opportunities for all). For example, instead of the language of "feeblemindedness" evident in historical discourses, in contemporary immigration we see a shift to language such as "posing excessive demands", being a "health risk", etc. While these discourses may appear different, they discursively serve a gatekeeping function that maintains the exclusion of people with disabilities in immigration by constructing them homogenously as an inadmissible social group.

However, despite the colonial, racist and ableist histories that persist in shaping Canadian immigration policies and practices, as has been extensively argued throughout this dissertation, immigration to Canada continues to be seen as a life-changing opportunity by many, including this study's participants. I personally embody some of the complexities that I am trying to illustrate in the construction of immigration through opportunity discourses. When I first came to Canada as an immigrant, I was constantly comparing my access to services and privileges associated with my identity as a newcomer with my access to services and privileges as a working class citizen of my home country. The comparison between here and there was and continues to be an

essential component of how I negotiate space between here—as an immigrant initially and now as a Canadian citizen—and there, as a Lebanese citizen.

The findings chapters illustrate how Canada constructs itself as a welcoming country and how this has been perceived by participants in this research. On the surface, immigration to Canada may indeed appear as an opportunity for a better life. However, the tensions I am trying present here are related to questions such as how are these opportunities constructed? Who can *really* access them and how? And are these opportunities worth taking advantage of when compared to the costs associated with gaining them (as noted by some of the participants)? In other words, the argument being advanced here is that although opportunities in immigration exist and cannot be denied, the construction of immigrating to Canada as an "exciting opportunity" serves a different agenda than the suggestion of openness and welcome for all that the actual discourse appears to be suggesting on the surface, and as will be elaborated upon in the remainder of this chapter.

Reinforcing Northern Superiority through Comparison

Participants spoke passionately about their search for opportunities and this was seemingly reinforced in the promotional conceptions of Canada as a land of dreams, as seen through the analysis of documents. The appealing construction of immigration as an opportunity for a better life advances an agenda that maintains Canada's reputation on the global scene as a place of opportunity. Such a construction reinforces discourses of Northern superiority manifested and advanced through maintaining the binaries embedded in the colonial discourses of here and there (Connell, 2007; McEwan, 2009;

Meekosha, 2011; Morana, Dusell, & Jauregui, 2008; Quijano, 2000, 2008; S. Razack, 2004, 2008; Said, 1978, 1993). Discourses of opportunity here cannot be seen outside of the colonial context of North/South power dynamics and relations and how these shape the process of constructing the Global North as a better place where a potential immigrant would have an opportunity to contribute to its future and steer its direction, as promoted in CIC documents. Such an opportunity to contribute is discursively normalized and emphasized when contrasted against the assumption that the Global South supposedly cannot provide such opportunities.

The arguments advanced in this discussion build on the work of authors such as Fairclough (2003, 2009, 2010), van Dijk (1993, 2008a), Wodak (2009), Wodak & Meyer (2001, 2009) who contend that discourse has been used to maintain power and dominance and that those in power use language and discourse to uphold their dominant positions in society. As discussed earlier, these authors argue that such constructions are ideological in nature and serve to maintain the power dynamics and relations between Global North and South. Indeed, as Fairclough (2010) and Wodak and Meyer (2001, 2009) maintain, understanding ideology and the ideological use of discourse is central to CDA and it is through these ideologies and ideological constructions that the notion of immigration becomes constructed as opportunity. As such, construction of immigration as an opportunity serves as a way to maintain the assumed superiority of the Global North at the expense of the Global South.

In other words, the construction of immigration through opportunity discourses implies that immigrant sending countries, especially those located in the Global South,

lack such opportunities and builds on colonial discourses that construct the Global North as a better place. Such a construction makes immigration in search of opportunities a desired and sought after goal that people in the Global South, especially marginalized social groups, are eager to actualize and take advantage of. In addition, the complexities and nuances of this analysis that positions discourses of opportunity as *colonial* can only be clearly seen and rendered visible when a comparison between the North (here) and the South (there) takes place. Immigrating to Canada becomes an opportunity only when standards of living *here* are contrasted against standards of life *there*.

Through the three theoretical dimensions, we can see how people internalize colonial discourses about them as the Other and how this shapes how they construct Canada and the North according to their histories with colonialism. As noted earlier, according to Orientalism and its colonial construction of the Other in the Arab world, people in this region were constructed as exotic and traditional (Said, 1978). Similarly, people in Latin America were constructed by colonial powers as peasants, implying strict class divisions and rules (Quijano, 2000, 2008). I would argue that these constructions play out in how participants in this study construct Canada and how their immigration to Canada becomes an opportunity to respond to their construction as the Other.

For example, Aya talked about the (lack of) opportunities a "girl like (her)" has in a rural area of her Arab home country, implying that these traditional regions are not as advanced and would not accommodate or understand her dreams because their cultural conceptions of disability is still not as advanced as Canada's. Similarly, Clara constructed immigration to Canada for her and her family as an opportunity only for those

who are "professional and strong", implying that immigration would be their opportunity to move out of the restricted class divisions that shape the existing social structures in Latin America. These examples demonstrate how colonialism is embedded in the psyche of the colonized—Canada is constructed as a better place—and how immigrating to Canada means a move to a more advanced society. This is consistent with the SCA approach to CDA where we see how colonial discourses are cognitively processed and internalized. Thus, participants' efforts to move to what is constructed and perceived as a more advanced society, become justified, accepted and supported through the use of discourses of opportunity.

In this sense, Canada as a place of opportunity becomes evident only when such a comparison is employed. As Oktar (2001) argues, the comparison between different social schema such as the "positive self-presentation" that can be seen in the construction of the "here" (as a place of opportunity) and the "negative-other presentation" that can be seen through the construction of the "there" (places that lack such opportunity) serves as a way to emphasize differences and maintain unbalanced power relations (p. 317). The author adds that such comparisons operate as ideological processes, which is consistent with the emphasis on the role of ideology in the operation of power through language and discourse discussed earlier.

Moreover, I would argue that such ideological constructions continue to emphasize Canada's interests at the expense of those of immigrants. Millar's (2013) interdiscursive analysis of language testing and its impacts on settlement and integration policies of Canadian immigration found that these policies shifted from being based on

racial and cultural exclusion principles to becoming based on the interest of recruitment of human capital. Thus, constructing immigration as an opportunity can be seen as a way to attract those considered to be human capital, and the previously noted accessibility of information regarding immigration serves as a way to facilitate such a process.

Building on Millar's (2013) argument, I would add that discourses that serve as a tool to recruit human capital are problematic for several reasons. Although it may appear on the surface that immigration exclusion principles are no longer based on racial and ethnic criteria, they continue to be based on racist and colonial principles that are rooted within the broader histories of North/South power relations. The fact that immigration is constructed through opportunity discourses to recruit human capital is a reflection of neocolonial discourses that perpetuate "brain drain" which underlies the broader role and intentions of immigration in the first place (Beine, Docquire, & Rapoport, 2008). Put differently, the emphasis on the economic contributions that immigrants and newcomers can bring to Canada could imply that when immigration policies are constructed, *only* Canada's interests are taken into account. I would argue that centering the interests of Canada is contradictory to the dominance of opportunity discourses that fuel the desire to immigrate and shape settlement experiences.

Indeed, "brain drain" has been defined as the process of migration of "relatively highly educated individuals from developing to developed countries" (Beine, Docquire, & Rapoport, 2008, p. 631). Such a definition is highly useful to demonstrate the colonial and ableist discourses that continue to marginalize people with disabilities and construct them homogenously as inadmissible within the Canadian immigration system. On the

one hand, the construction of immigration through opportunity discourses serves as a way to recruit human capital and make immigrating to Canada an appealing and accessible endeavour for those deemed to be potential contributors to its society.

On the other hand, the ableist discourses that construct immigration applicants with disabilities as an inadmissible social group through the excessive demands clause are here at play with the colonial discourses that continue to "brain drain" countries in the Global South through immigration. In this sense, the construction of the "desired" immigrant implies certain bodies, expectation and abilities that applicants need to meet to be seen as potential contributors (and as such, admissible). Thus, the mere fact that people with disabilities are constructed as inadmissible and may potentially pose excessive demands on the social and health services reflects the idea that they are *not* considered "human capital" that Canada should recruit through immigration. Putting Canada's interests first in immigration normalizes constructions of certain social groups as inadmissible based on their assumed lack of productivity and inability to contribute to Canadian society. As such, a second key theme based on the findings moves from discourses of Canada as a welcoming country accessible to all, to the discourses that govern who is *admissible or worthy* of accessing opportunities in line with Canada's interests.

Questioning Constructions of Hegemonic National Identity

The discussion presented thus far, has complicated how dominant discourses of opportunity construct Canada as a welcoming land for all. In this section, the discussion builds on these ideas to argue that the processing of immigration applications can be seen

as a space where the construction of immigration applicants as a particular social group—foreign nationals—serves to compare and contrast between desired (potential) citizens (i.e., worthy immigration applicants) and others (i.e., applicants who are not suitable for Canada because they are seen to be a risk, danger or drain on the system). Relying on CDA analysis and informed by the DHA approach with its focus on demystifying hegemony perpetuated through discourses, the analysis points to immigration processes that construct a supposed national hegemonic identity. Building on the arguments advanced by Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, and Liebhart (2009) who point to the importance of discursive practices in the construction of national identities and their influence on the social and institutional practices of states, I would argue that such processes (specifically of comparison and selection in the application stage) are intentional and contribute to constructing a national hegemonic identity. Through this process, the dominant social group is set as the standard to which immigration applicants—including those with disabilities—are held to be constructed, conditioned, disciplined and controlled.

However, as argued throughout the findings chapters, discourses hide as much as they reveal and as such, this process of constructing a national identity is not always readily apparent. Wodak and Meyer (2009) remind CDA researchers of the importance of examining not only what is present in language and discourse but also what is missing. Looking at immigration through the experiences of people with disabilities, their families and service providers allows us to see and highlight the normative operation of sameness because people with disabilities are already constructed as being outside the norm. Hence, their experiences render visible what is constructed as the hegemonic norm and

social order that can be seen through national identities that people with disabilities are considered not to be suitable for when they apply for immigration.

While it may seem self-evident to have eligibility criteria in immigration and to speak of the Other as a foreign national, I would suggest that this normatively accepted construction masks a process of homogenization that reinforces binary constructions of "us and them" fuelled by a lengthy history of North/South unbalanced power relations. Through a CDA study of French nationalism, Costelloe (2014) argues that the construction of the Other can be achieved through binaries that create "us and them" social groups operating through discourses of sameness. These binaries are built on constructions of supposed homogeneity of French identity to which positive characteristics are attributed, contrasted to the negative characteristics attributed to an "out-group", which consequently leads to exclusion (p. 316).

In another discourse analysis study, Neiger and Rimmer-Tsory (2013) provide the example of war reporting to demonstrate how journalists are often caught between representing truths that are based on facts and are objectively balanced and the call of the national-cultural community "to take part in the conflict, to be its representative and its weapon in the battle of images and soundbites" (p. 724). The call here, according to these authors is to "tell a biased story in favour of 'us', the 'in group'" (p. 724).

The parallel I am trying to draw here is that the construction of national identity can use values and principles (such as equality in the case of immigration) to re-affirm a particular national identity. In this sense, the construction of immigration applicants as admissible or inadmissible serves as a way to strip these applicants of their unique

characteristics and constructs them in a homogenous way as foreign nationals or immigration applicants. In this way, their relegation to the category of "them" versus a hegemonic Canadian "us" is reinforced.

Moreover, building on their aforementioned examination of the discursive construction of national identity within and through discourse, Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, and Libhart (2009) propose strategies within which national identity can be understood. These strategies aim to "construct and establish certain national identity by promoting unification, identification, and solidarity as well as differentiation" (p. 33). The authors add that "strategies of perpetuation attempt to maintain and to reproduce a threatened national identity" (p. 33). Building on this idea, I would argue that the use of discourses of risk and protection within Canadian immigration policies serve as a way to perpetuate a Canadian national identity by constructing immigration applicants as not only different, but also a threat that needs to be addressed. Thus, the construction of inadmissibility through discourses that perpetuate a sense of national identity can be justified as a way to bring Canadians together as a unified entity against such assumed threats imposed by immigrants.

Here, we can see the operation of the arguments advanced by Quijano (2000) referred to in Chapter 3. The author discusses the conquering of Indigenous populations in Latin America through a process whereby colonizers stripped them of their identities and constructed them as "Indians", "Negros" or "Blacks" (p. 219). The author notes that this construction of homogenous identities served colonial and capitalist agendas. What is different in this research is that the stated purpose of immigration is neither to conquer

these populations nor to modernize them, as per the historical colonial project. (However, I would argue that the construction of immigration as an opportunity could be linked to the modernizing mission that the North has historically spearheaded.) Instead, the use of the colonial dimension in this study allows for a more nuanced understanding of the colonial and neocolonial construction of immigration applicants as a homogenous social group where only those constructed as "*worthy*" become admissible. The internalization of oppressive immigration policies and self-blame by participants, discussed in Chapter 8, further serve as a way to reinforce that only those who have "what it takes" are worthy of immigration.

Two points emerging from the above discussion are important to highlight. First, consistent with the SCA approach to CDA, the findings demonstrated the interplay between individual interpretations of discourse and the broader sociopolitical structures and context that perpetuate the operation of discourse through the use of language. Specifically, immigration applicants internalize constructions of risk and worthiness and use these to shape and define themselves in their applications. As with the examples provided in the findings chapters, some participants normalized constructions of worthiness by preparing themselves to be seen as desired applicants (e.g., studying English, getting higher education, etc.). Others intentionally chose to keep hidden their invisible disabilities.

Authors such as Heller (2009) and Lingsom (2008) discuss the concepts of "covering" (minimizing certain aspects of identity) and "passing" (denying aspects of identity) as strategies used by marginalized social groups. While not speaking

specifically about people with disabilities, Heller (2009) refers to "covering" to discuss how LGBT immigrants and asylum seekers "individually and collectively downplay characteristics identifying them as members of oppressed and marginalized groups" (p. 295) to become admissible. Participants in the study reported on in this dissertation did not discuss *denying* their disabilities (or trying to "pass") but that they chose to *cover* these aspects of their identity to be constructed as admissible. In this sense, we can see covering as an act of counter discoursing that takes into account dominant discourses but seeks to subvert them for the benefit of the applicants (i.e., becoming admissible). In both cases, hiding disabilities and preparation to be seen as worthy, we can see the interplay between individual understandings and interpretations of discourses and the broader context within which they operate.

A second point that is important to emphasize here is that the process of sifting applicants through discourses of risk and protection has been normalized and, in fact, been made both acceptable and necessary to protect Canadian society and to advance the interests of Canada to benefit from immigration. This is again where the importance of context, as seen through CDA, comes in and, specifically, the political changes impacting social services. The notion of risk itself is a neoliberal phenomenon that shifts and changes the way we provide services and conceptualize service provision (Ibrahim, 2005; Kemshall, 2010; Pollack, 2010). Discourses of risk shift service provision from universal programs to needs-based programs, by constructing certain social groups as being at risk.

In fact, Ibrahim (2005) advances this argument to assert that the securitization of immigration is a neoliberal phenomenon that reflects and reinforces racism. How this

applies to immigration is that the notion of worthiness (which here refers to *not* being constructed as a risk) is contrasted against discourses of risk and danger to determine who is worthy to be eligible for immigration and becoming eventually a Canadian citizen. Thus, risk here serves a neoliberal agenda by constructing those who are worthy (safe) as admissible, and excluding those who are deemed not to be worthy (a danger, threat and risk), with specific repercussions for people with disabilities as elaborated upon earlier. Importantly, these discussions of risk and danger have been shaped by discussions of race and racism (Ibrahim, 2005) as well as "foreignness" and belonging (Diez & Squire, 2008); here, we see an intersection of racism and ableism in the experiences of racialized applicants with disabilities from countries in the Global South.

Discourses that center notions of worthiness are not a recent development in Canada. According to Thobani (2007), one of the ways that Canadian national identity has long been negotiated and employed is through the use of discourses of worthiness. These discourses form the basis for distinguishing between an "insider"—Canadian national or subject who should have access to power and privilege, and should be "exalted"—and "outsiders" who are required to prove their worthiness of such privileges (p. 21). Hence, the construction of immigration as an opportunity that only particular immigration applicants are worthy of benefitting from serves as a way to maintain the binaries that build on the divisions between us and them.

As argued throughout this dissertation, the construction of the Other through the use of discourse is achieved and maintained by feeding into the binaries that work as dividing mechanisms within which the Other is always measured and contrasted against

the norm or the dominant group. In short, the construction of immigration through opportunity discourses serves as a way to preserve and promote national identity and to construct a Canadian hegemony against which immigration applicants are contrasted and compared.

Actualizing Opportunities: Troubling Social Work's Role

Findings in this dissertation highlighted not only how participants conceived of opportunities (and worthiness thereof) but also how they struggle to actualize these opportunities once in Canada. In addition, findings spoke to how service providers within settlement settings, the majority of whom identified as social workers, conceive of their professional roles as participating in the process of actualizing opportunities. Yet, it is precisely this conception of our professional role that I believe needs to be troubled if we are to build on the two previous themes offered so far in this discussion chapter. Taking into account comparisons which posit the superiority of the North that only a select few are worthy of accessing, I believe we need to develop a critical stance with regards not only to "opportunities" but also to how we think of our role in relation to these dominant discourses.

Here, I push for the need for settlement programs and services to take into account how opportunities in immigration are constructed and what purpose such constructions would serve. For example, this chapter spoke of worthiness of opportunity and highlighted its links to the construction of a hegemonic Canadian identity. As argued throughout this dissertation, discourses and their use are never neutral as they serve social, ideological and political purposes (Fairclough, 2003, 2010; van Dijk, 2008a,

2008b; Wodak & Meyer, 2001, 2009). In this sense, it is essential for settlement services and programs to take into account the importance of discourse and its role in shaping power dynamics and relations, especially those between the Global North and South if we are to challenge and question the oppressive structures that continue to marginalize people with disabilities in immigration.

The argument advanced here is that conceiving our professional roles of actualizing opportunities needs to be understood with great caution and practitioners in settlement settings need to be highly politicized and aware of the impacts of North/South power dynamics on their everyday practices. Put differently, I contend here that our professional roles in such settings are permeated by contradictions that can be traced back to the historical tensions within the profession. Indeed, as many social work scholars insist, one of the key tensions within the profession is the result of the clash between responding to immediate needs and tackling the broader structures of oppression (George, Coleman, & Barnoff, 2007; Martin, 2003; Mcdonald, 2006; Midgley, 2001; Millar, 2008). Similarly, some service providers in this study clearly highlighted the tension between attending to the immediate needs of immigrants and their families while also focusing more broadly on interlocking oppressions shaping immigrant experiences.

Hence, actualizing opportunities within immigration could potentially be a problematic professional role if we do not take into account what underlies our interventions theoretically and epistemologically. I believe that actualizing opportunities without taking the power of discourse and how it operates into account would put us at risk of reinforcing divisive binaries of "us and them" through our professional roles.

Here, I do not claim to have the answer to all the complexities that lie within the provision of settlement and integration services for immigrant with disabilities and their families. Instead, I build on the findings of this study to argue that as a profession, we need to be aware of the operation of discourse and pay particular attention to how it shapes our interventions and professional conduct. Indeed, this is consistent with the DRA approach to CDA that encourages us to examine our practice within a critical understanding of discourse and the dialectical relationship between social structures, and processes that shape immigration (Fairclough, 2010). The caution here is of an ethical and political nature as it is a very thin line that separates between practices that are informed by and committed to social justice and transformation and those where we reproduce dominance and operate as social control agents (Baines, 2011; Benjamin, 2011; Carniol, 2010; Ferguson & Lavalette, 2006; Margolin, 1997; Mcdonald, 2006).

While we can rely on the existence of protective measures such as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Human Rights Code and the AODA, as noted by participants in this study, the existence of these laws and legislations, although important and needed, has not ended ableism, racism or other forms of marginalization. People with disabilities continue to be systematically marginalized within immigration and the broader societal structures and practices. The danger and ethical issues referred to in this discussion concern the assumption that as professionals, our interventions can be directed towards actualizing opportunities within immigration without considering that we may be reproducing oppression through these roles.

Hence, I would contend that the profession needs more than training programs to truly be reflective of its social justice commitment on these issues. Although very important, assuming that training social workers and other helping professionals involved in providing settlement services for immigrants with disabilities would be the answer to their marginalization would be a limited and problematic way of addressing these issues. Focusing only on everyday practice and training could potentially reproduce ableism and minimize efforts to systematically challenge the broader discourses that underlie how we construct our roles as service providers. Focusing on training also does not allow us to address the intricacies of intersectional experiences of ableism and racism experienced by people with disabilities in immigration. Departing from the extant scholarship—discussed in Chapter 2—I would argue against an emphasis on protective measures and training as the solutions to address the needs of service providers to better serve immigrants with disabilities.

Indeed, one of the dangers of AODA and similar protective laws and legislations is that they may become escape mechanisms for the state to avoid dealing with structural barriers that reinforce ableism (Prince, 2010; Titchkosky, 2010). Similarly, for practitioners and service providers, focusing only on the day to day access to services does not challenge broader structures, policies and discourses that maintain oppression. For some practitioners, the answer to addressing ableism is through raising awareness, thereby changing individual attitudes. Such a neoliberal argument is destructive from a critical disability perspective as it implies that more comprehensive social change is not needed and that allowing time for these policies to become socially widespread would

end marginalization and exclusion of people with disabilities. Coming from a history of disability grassroots activism, I believe that social justice resides in the process of change (not simply the outcomes). When we limit our understanding and conceptualization of justice to be measured by the outcomes it can produce (such as specific legislations), we participate in a neoliberal agenda that is interested in measurable outcomes at the expense of creating meaningful long-term social change.

Indeed, the tensions discussed here may on the surface be about our professional role within settlement and integration service settings. However, utilizing the social justice dimension advanced in this dissertation allows the analysis to dig deeper and see that we can be involved in problematic and questionable practices even when we are situated within critical, anti-oppressive and social justice oriented frameworks. What is important to keep in mind is the need for maintaining theoretical, epistemological and perhaps philosophical positions that allow us to see our roles beyond the specificities of the everyday practices that center our interventions on the technical aspects of how to actualize opportunities within immigration. As demonstrated throughout this study, the construction of immigration as an opportunity serves as a way for racist, ableist and colonial discourses to operate within immigration and to facilitate the marginalization experiences of unwanted social groups including people with disabilities. Thus, if we engage as a profession in a process of actualizing these opportunities without paying attention to the power of discourse, we contribute to the operation of ableism, racism and colonialism in our professional practice.

The issue here is neither to stop actualizing opportunities or stop doing what we do best, providing services. One could assume that no matter what the ethical and professional tensions are, immigrants with disabilities will continue to need services within settlement settings; hence not providing these services is not an option. Rather, as service providers, we need to challenge and minimize the impacts of discourse so as to not blur the lines between being anti-oppressive and social justice oriented practitioners and being social control agents. In this sense, the critical underpinning of our professional conduct is not enough to prevent us from reproducing ableism, racism and colonialism if it does not help us to see the long term impacts of our interventions. In this regard, I see that there is a constant need to keep in mind colonial histories and how they continue to shape North South power dynamics and relations and that unknowingly, we could be part of the operation of these dynamics.

Hence, the question here becomes whether it is enough to acknowledge these power dynamics as a way to prevent our engagement in reproducing oppressive relations. Claiming to have an answer for resolving the tensions between addressing the immediate needs versus tackling the oppressive structures and institutions would be beyond the scope of this dissertation. Perhaps a very long term goal would be to see the world as borderless where immigration is not driven by the need to obtain opportunities (constructed to exist in the Global North) because they are perceived to be lacking or absent in the Global South. Instead, we need to think transnationally so as to avoid the binaries between us and them and here and there. We need to ensure that social work practice is consistent with social justice principles. Indeed, it is apparent from the

discussion in this chapter that there are professional tensions that we have to address when it comes not only to providing services for immigrants and newcomers with disabilities, but also in terms of how we conceptualize our professional role in ways that are consistent with our ethical commitments and guidelines.

In sum, the central discourse of opportunity brings together the three main themes discussed in this chapter. It is through discourses of opportunity that motivations to immigrate are shaped and negotiated in ways that reinforce Northern superiority through comparisons between opportunities assumed to be available here (in Canada) but not there (in the Global South). Building on these motivations, the application stage is also characterized by the centrality of discourses of opportunity around which determinations of worthiness are constructed in ways that reinforce and reflect a supposedly homogenous and hegemonic national identity. Applicants shape their own applications (and identities) in ways that seek to access these opportunities thought to be available through immigration. Finally, discourses of opportunity also shape how these opportunities are sought to be actualized by all parties involved in the settlement process. As service providers, we conceive of our role to be about actualizing opportunities; in doing so, we straddle the tensions and fine line between helping to actualize opportunities and seeking to transform practice. The final chapter builds on this complex negotiation to discuss implications for policy, practice, theory and research.

Chapter 11: Conclusion & Implications for Social Work

Situated within a critical understanding of social work, this dissertation examined the intersection of disability and immigration. In order to do so, I constructed three theoretical dimensions, the colonial dimension, the disability dimension, and the interwoven social justice dimension to respond to the limitations inherent in relying on only one theoretical framework to examine transnational and multidisciplinary issues such as the intersection of disability, immigration and social work. Relying on the compatible methodology of critical discourse analysis, I examined how dominant discourses of ableism, racism and colonialism construct immigration applicants with disabilities within the Canadian immigration system.

Through an analysis of public documents from the CIC website as well as interviews with immigration applicants with disabilities, family members of immigration applicants with disabilities and service providers, I argued that ableism, racism and colonialism operate in the construction of immigration through the dominant discourses of opportunity. I further argued that such constructions maintain and perpetuate an assumed superiority of the Global North where immigration becomes justifiably desired and sought after to take advantage of such professed opportunities.

Specifically, I demonstrated the centrality of discourses of opportunity as they not only motivate people with disabilities and their families to seek immigration, but also contribute to shaping and defining who is worthy of these opportunities. I also argued that during the application process, immigration applicants are constructed as a homogeneous social group in ways that serve the construction of Canadian national

identity and hegemony. In addition, I demonstrated that social workers and other helping professionals conceive of their roles as actualizing the opportunities assumed to be accessible through immigration. Moreover, I proposed the need for a critical understanding of discourse and its role in the operation of power and dominance if we wish to maintain social work's ethical and professional commitment to equity, social justice and transformation.

Throughout the analysis and discussion, I emphasized that this research was not about immigration or settlement experiences of people with disabilities per se, but how discourses influence and shape how these experiences are constructed, negotiated, navigated and represented in the narratives of participants in this study. Such a distinction is key to maintain here as it focuses the discussion on discourses and their role in shaping the experience of immigration beyond how these realities are lived by each participant individually. As such, the discursive practices conveyed through the interviews were important to understand within the context of the main arguments throughout this dissertation particularly those related to the role of discourse in the operation of racism, ableism and colonialism within immigration through and within the dominant discourses of opportunity.

Returning to the theoretical dimensions and especially the focus on knowledge production and its role in constructing the Other and shaping Othering processes, I demonstrated the links between dominant knowledges developed in the Global North and illustrated how they shape and construct immigration applicants with disabilities and how they define their immigration and settlement experiences once in Canada. Indeed, I

launched into this dissertation with the aim to better understand the role of discourse and how it contributes to constructing immigration applicants with disabilities as an inadmissible social group. I end this dissertation with an understanding of the roles that dominant discourses of opportunity play not only in how admissibility and inadmissibility are constructed, but also in how we as social workers are implicated in this process in ways that are potentially contradictory to our ethical and professional commitments to equity and transformation. I propose the need to adopt practices that highlight and build on a critical understanding of discourse and its operation within our profession if we seek to maintain our commitment to social justice.

In short, in this dissertation, I argued that a critical examination of policies and practices is necessary in order to challenge dominant discourses that shape immigration processes from the stage of pre-application, to during the application and throughout the settlement stage. Through this examination, and relying on the social justice dimension, I engaged in a process of deconstruction of these marginalizing discourses in order to open the door for a decolonizing and anti-colonial reconstruction process to occur to inform the social work profession on immigration and disability issues and their intersectionalities.

As such, this research aims not only to challenge oppression within immigration, but also to resist discourses that perpetuate the construction of people with disabilities as the Other within immigration and ultimately contribute to a social justice oriented social work practice and policy. The findings also point to the need for a larger research agenda to continue to address Othering processes within immigration specifically related to the experiences of people with disabilities and their families.

Implications for Policy & Practice

Taking the findings into account and thinking critically about the immigration experiences of participants and narratives of service providers, there are a few important observations to make in relation to social work practice. Specifically, in what follow, the discussion will focus on: the importance of targeted settlement programs; challenging assumptions of homogeneity of newcomers; as well as problematizing the impetus placed on newcomers to change and fit in. For each of these observations, recommendations for addressing practice and policy issues will be provided.

In their discussion of settlement practice, Clarke and Wan (2011) maintain that social work practitioners need to push for the development of specialized approaches to working with newcomers and in particular to integrate anti-oppression perspectives. Further, Healy (2004), Valtonen (2001, 2002) as well as Martinez-Brawley and Zorita (2011) highlight the specificity of the experiences of immigrants and newcomers and call on social work practice and education to build on immigrants' knowledges taking into account their pre-migration, migration and post-migration experiences. Indeed, as noted throughout this study, the immigration experience spans serval stages including pre-application, application and settlement. Moreover, specifically related to this study, people with disabilities occupy a place on the margin in the Global North and South when it comes to aspects such as education and employment (El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012; Holden & Beresford, 2002), and as such settlement programs should be aware of these experiences of marginalization. Hence, settlement practices should be tailored to meet these specific needs in response to experiences of marginalization and exclusion of people

with disabilities. Many of the participants in this study spoke of the experiences of racism, poverty and lack of access to settlement services, and indeed not knowing how to locate these services in the first place.

In response, as opposed to a generalist and standardized approach to settlement that does not take into account the specific experiences of immigrants, authors such as Martinez-Brawley and Zorita (2011) as well as Pacheco, Plaza, Fernandez-Ramirez, and Andres (2003) argue for more specialized programs as well as specialized social work training around immigration and settlement issues. Indeed, this need for training was echoed by the participants in this study, whether they were on the receiving end of services, or as service providers. However, as the findings demonstrated, we need to be cautious about seeing training as the answer. Such a recommendation to improve training without paying particular attention to discourse and discursive practices leaves untouched the conception that our role is about actualizing opportunities, thereby leaving unchallenged colonial, ableist and racist discourses operating through and within the discourse of opportunity.

Furthermore, settlement and integration services assume that newcomers are a homogenous social group with specific attention paid only to ethnic and cultural differences, as noted in the discussion of settlement programs in Chapter 1. This can be seen through an examination of integration employment services where there is an expectation that these programs are universal and can be applied to all immigrants regardless of their culture, ethnicity, religion, gender, race or abilities and disabilities. From a social justice and anti-oppressive oriented social work framework, assuming that

newcomers are a homogeneous social group is problematic for several reasons.

First, as demonstrated in the findings chapters, assumptions of homogeneity in the immigration application process reflect ableist, racist and colonial discourses, under the guise of neutrality and equality. Moving from the application stage to settlement, these assumptions of homogeneity and sameness continue to be problematic because they reinforce a settlement agenda that reflects dominant discourses centering on the economic needs of Canada, alluded to earlier. The interests of Canada may not necessarily reflect the actual needs and priorities of social groups seeking settlement programs and services (Clarke & Wan, 2011; Soldatic, Meekosha, & Somers, 2012). This focus on homogeneity can be seen through settlement programs related to developing language and employment skills for newcomers to enhance their participation in the Canadian economy. As noted throughout this dissertation and in the critical social work scholarship, a more socially just settlement agenda would take the interests of newcomers into account and facilitate their integration based on their own realities (Clarke & Wan, 2011; Lacroix, 2006; Martinez-Brawley & Zorita, 2011; Sakamoto, 2007; Sakamoto, Wei, & Truong, 2008).

Second, assuming the homogeneity of newcomers is problematic because it is based on the idea that "one size fits all" in terms of practice, which denies differences among immigration applicants and newcomers (Clarke & Wan, 2011; Dossa, 2006, 2009; Sakamoto, 2007). Moreover, the quasi-absence of settlement services specific to newcomers with disabilities is consistent with the social work scholarship that suggests that settlement agencies are not prepared nor equipped to deal with newcomers with disabilities for the simple reason that people with disabilities are not expected to be

immigrants (Dossa, 2006, 2009; Groce, 2005; Hanes, 2009; Harris & Roberts, 2004). Indeed, through this study, I discovered that in one of the largest regions for settlement of newcomers in Ontario, there is only one settlement worker *specialized* in working with newcomers with disabilities. Yet, as demonstrated in this study, people with disabilities, while facing multiple rejections at times, are indeed arriving to Canada. As such, an assumption of homogeneity would leave social groups such as people with disabilities on the margins during their settlement processes (Dossa, 2006; El-Lahib & Wehbi, 2012).

Questioning the normative constructions of immigration through discourses of homogeneity may not be feasible at the moment, but we need to begin to think about replacing discourses of equality and sameness with equity principles where eligibility criteria are not standardized. In the meantime, to facilitate just practices that are not based on equality principles, we need to recognize people's differences. The current standards within immigration and settlement programs are oppressive for marginalized groups as they only serve the interests of Canadian society and economy and I would add that they function as colonial practices. For example, as demonstrated in this dissertation, we see this in practices of settlement where people are conditioned through racist or ableist practices to fit into Canadian society in order to have access to national identity, privileges and resources.

In addition to the problematic assumption of homogeneity, settlement and integration programs and services with their focus on language, employment and other integration-oriented services suggest that settling and integrating into Canadian society is the responsibility of newcomers and that programs and services are there to facilitate

these processes. I would question the expectations imposed on newcomers to integrate and settle as soon as possible and be ready to gain employment to benefit Canada. Clarke and Wan (2011) as well as Sakamoto (2007) note that this type of approach that places the impetus on immigrants reinforces the idea that newcomers have deficiencies as opposed to questioning the structures that lead to oppression and difficulties with integration. For people with disabilities, this is particularly poignant as it reflects and perpetuates a conception of them as "burdens of care" whether on their families or on the state and broader society, and denies their actual and potential contributions.

Furthermore, placing the impetus on immigrants to change or fit in, implies that only Canada, its culture, society and economy matter and settlement programs and services are there to safeguard these goals to which newcomers need to adhere. Sakamoto (2007) as well as Clarke and Wan (2011) argue that this reflects a problematic process of assimilation, as opposed to integration, and that social workers are implicated in reinforcing these processes. As noted in the finding chapters, this is reflected and reinforced through conceptions of our roles as being about actualizing opportunities. Unlike CIC's claims about settlement and integration programs and their aim to ease some of the challenges imposed by immigration experiences, some social work scholars suggest that current Canadian settlement practices are rooted in colonialism and racism and can be traced back to the "top-down charity" approach that aimed to "Canadianize" newcomers into Canada (Clarke & Wan, 2011, p. 15). Indeed, this is reflected in how participants spoke about the operation of whiteness not only within mainstream settlement agencies but also within disability organizations.

Returning to the colonial dimension, I would argue that this understanding of immigration contributes to widening the gap between the Global North and South and reinforcing the unbalanced power relations that shape interactions between sending and receiving countries. To address these neocolonial and racist settlement practices, Clarke and Wan, (2011), Sakamoto, (2007) as well as Valtonen (2001, 2002) suggest that adopting an anti-oppression framework would allow social workers to challenge racism and colonialism that shape settlement programs in Canada. However, these scholars and others note the current tensions between models of practice within settlement work, such as cultural competency, anti-racism, anti-oppression, acculturation, etc. (Clarke & Wan, 2011; Sakamoto, 2007; Soldatic, Meekosha, & Somers 2012).

I would agree with these authors that it is important to develop a more coherent anti-oppression model of practice in settlement work, a model that takes North/South relations, racism, colonialism and ableism into account. However, I recognize that adopting such a critical framework in social work within settlement practices is not a straightforward endeavour. In fact, Humphries (2004) cautions social workers involved in immigration and settlement work to be critical when relying on an anti-oppression framework because this has become more of "rhetoric" (p.100) than an actual practice. The author questions the "unacceptable role" (p. 93) that social workers unwittingly play in reinforcing oppressive immigration policies and settlement practices if they do not engage in an anti-racist questioning of their own practices. The author argues that if social workers apply what they believe to be an anti-oppression framework without a critical

understanding of racism and critical self-reflexivity, they are merely implementing racist and colonial policies in their work.

Indeed, I echo Humphries's (2004) argument here by relying on the findings of this study to call for the need to build on a critical understanding of discourse and its role in the operation of dominance and control. As demonstrated in the finding chapters, social workers and other helping professions involved in settlement and integration programs are implicated in the operation of racist, ableist and colonial discourses through their role of actualizing opportunities within immigration. I hope to articulate this critical framework for practice that challenges un-problematized discourses of actualizing opportunities through a new collaboration with Across Boundaries, where I have been invited to co-develop a training program for settlement workers. Unlike existing programs that focus on technical aspects and legislations, this program will be underpinned and guided by anti-oppressive, anti-racist, anti-colonial, and anti-ableist frameworks that centre the experiences of people with disabilities.

I would add that if Canadian immigration policies and settlement programs are to address unbalanced North/South power dynamics and relations and to be truly reflective of the ideals of human rights and equality stipulated in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that it would be crucial to take into account the interests of sending countries when designing immigration or settlement programs. Within this understanding, if social workers are interested in promoting social justice in terms of immigration and settlement, bridging the gap between North and South is essential to consider in the implementation of these programs. In fact, Healy (2004) as well as Bartley, Beddoe, Fouché, and

Harington (2012) suggest that it is important for social work practitioners to take the international context of migration into account in settlement practices. Specifically, these authors invite social workers to be familiar with immigration policies and settlement practices of sending and receiving countries if they are interested in improving the quality of their settlement services. These authors also call for increased collaboration between social workers within sending and receiving countries to enhance settlement practices.

In fact, one of the suggestions that service provider participants talked about is the need to implement a disability component for potential immigrants and newcomers during the orientations that embassies and consulates provide for newly accepted immigrants before they arrive in Canada. Such a suggestion would assist immigrants with disabilities and their families to know more about the available services and ways to access them. In addition, such a process would help newcomers to know more about eligibility criteria for such programs and how they can meet the requirement of such programs and services.

Finally, thinking more broadly, the findings prompt me to call for a critical examination of the intersection of disability and immigration beyond service provision. Focusing only on service provision without addressing the discourses, policies and practices that perpetuate the problems inherent in immigration in the first place would only delay the change that social justice oriented social work may aspire to. In other words, the focus on services needed to accommodate and improve the settlement experiences of immigrants and refugees with disabilities is only one aspect of creating more inclusive immigration policies and practices. Approaching issues of disability and

immigration from a service oriented perspective would only allow for a response to the immediate needs currently shaping the marginalization experiences of immigrants with disabilities. Focusing solely on immediate needs is short-sighted as it does not account for the broader sites of marginalization and exclusion as well as the constantly changing sociopolitical and economic contexts, policies and practices that construct people with disabilities as inadmissible, even before they make their first landing as immigrants in receiving countries.

In our current neoliberal, globalized and transnational world, we can no longer see immigration as we do right now, as a relationship and process that is strictly between an individual or family applicant and the state. The findings of this study suggest the need to re-conceptualize this issue through an examination of the historical and contemporary colonial and imperial role that social work and other helping professions have played in immigration. As briefly alluded to earlier, I believe there is a need to push for a transnational social work role that shifts the notion of immigration from being based on the relationship between an individual applicant or family and the state of the receiving country to become about global issues that are shaping this reality. This relationship should involve sending countries, receiving countries as well as international institutions such as the United Nations.

What I am proposing here is a way to think critically about the dissolution of the borders of the state, which continue to exist only as barriers in front of people, not for corporations, and not for products. Hence, globalized mobility stops when people are attempting to cross borders. We can only shift this understanding when we start

questioning the structures that maintain these borders, and social work can play a role in globalizing this movement and those relationships. In this regard, I echo Moosa-Mitha (2014) and Bartley, Beddoe, Fouche, and Harington's (2012) calls for social work to move from *international* to *transnational* conceptions of social work practice. While the answers to how to do this may not be readily apparent, I believe that there is room for social work to play a role in re-conceptualizing global relations related to immigration, instead of only being involved in providing settlement programs and services where we continue to perpetuate oppressive and problematic discourses and practices.

In the end, immigration is a legal process and no matter how valid our critiques, change needs to occur through legislative channels. However, this focus on policy change does not negate the opportunity and need to engage in a process of improving social work professional practice. As a profession, we need to promote a resistance agenda by demystifying the myths that profess Canada as a place of opportunity for all where human rights principles are guiding frameworks. Briefly put, we need to begin by arguing for a fuller discussion of discourses of opportunity so that we begin to see the costs, challenges and oppression embedded through the immigration application as well as the settlement processes.

Implications for Theory Development & Future Research

I began this dissertation by noting the need for research that challenges the dominance of theories produced in the Global North and research that privileges knowledge from the Global South and prioritizes issues and concerns facing people with disabilities within these contexts (Chataika, 2012; Grech, 2011). Indeed, this research is

rooted in an understanding of the need for continued theoretical development that seeks to decolonize knowledge production (Connell, 2007; Ghai, 2012). I would propose that this shift in knowledge production would entail bringing together theorizations about immigration and disability from Global North and South contexts to build on each other in a way that takes colonialism and the history of unbalanced power dynamics and relations into account.

One of the main contributions of this study to theory building are the theoretical dimensions I proposed as a grounding to examine the intersection of disability, immigration and social work. Through these dimensions, I noted the binaries and comparisons between here and there and us and them, that support structures utilized to maintain a social order founded on processes and operations of Othering. This construction can be seen through the concept of inclusion as an example; it is only useful and effective when we can identify exclusion and exclusionary practices. I am not interested in the philosophical underpinnings of inclusion or exclusion; rather, I am using the inclusion/exclusion binary here as a way to highlight the constructed dichotomies that facilitate the operation of both.

Moreover, these types of binaries have strict boundaries and analyzing them requires tools that can help in facilitating an understanding of their rigidities. The disability dimension for example is useful here to help understand the rigid definitions of how inclusion and exclusion are constructed within social work practice. To illustrate these ideas, I have a story to tell. I was recently rejected from volunteering in an accessibility forum because I was told that as with any volunteer, I needed training that I

was unable to attend due to a time conflict (without being told what the training was about or what its purpose may be and without being asked about my background experience). As a disability activist for the past 28 years, I would assume that I have some idea about disability that allows me to volunteer at an event about accessibility issues without the need to attend a 30 minute training program.

As a non-disabled disability activist, I have to negotiate these binaries on a daily basis and these negotiations are based on the construction of "us and them". Indeed, while conducting this study, two people declined to participate citing the fact that I am not disabled. I am not questioning the historical and contemporary reality of ableist research that *studies* people with disabilities (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013), and as such I understand where the reluctance of these individuals may be coming from. However, continuing to define and shape our understandings of identities and roles based on these existing binaries in fact reinforces the ableism that constructed these divisions in the first place. Hodge and Runswick-Cole emphasize the need for research that challenges ableism as an emancipatory and political project that seeks to dismantle ableist structures.

As a reflexive researcher and long-time disability activist, I am not naively suggesting a liberal notion of sameness where we can supposedly move beyond social divisions based on disability (and more generally on identity). Indeed, I am aware of the contradictory need to hold on to these divisions because our current societies are built and structured on their existence and we are not yet equipped or ready to do away with them. However, this does not negate our responsibility to slowly and strategically chip away at

these binaries that keep us divided in the service of dominant and normative understandings of who we are.

Framed within these binaries, I propose that when we think about inclusion, we reinforce understandings of social justice as a measurable outcome, not as a complex process that requires the dismantling of social divisions and structures. For example, measures such as the AODA address the exclusion of people with disabilities through promoting and facilitating inclusion (Prince, 2010; Titchkosky, 2010; Vazquez, 2011). Conceptions of social justice as an outcome (in this case as a piece of legislation) do not in fact do away with the need to have these measures in the first place because they build on and reinforce the existence of these divisions. As Vazquez (2011) argues, "inadvertently or not, those policies further promote segregation rather than structural transformation and, therefore, do not address the deep social prejudices that privilege ableism in our society" (p. 5). As such, seeing social justice as a process would move beyond legislations that reinforce these binaries of inclusion and exclusion to transform society in ways where inclusion becomes the default position on which social structures, practices and norms are built (Titchkosky, 2010).

Moving beyond binaries while also acknowledging the history and contemporary realities of colonialism, racism and ableism allows us to think about how to bring theorizations from the Global North together with those from the South (instead of comparing or privileging one over the other) in future research. As an example, engaging in research that seeks to understand the experiences of people with disabilities who are either in the application process or have been rejected as immigrants within their home

countries may be a starting point for such a process of North/South theorizing to take place. In other words, instead of only looking at the experiences of people with disabilities in receiving countries (thereby continuing to centre the North), future research would examine their experiences at the point where they decide to apply for immigration. This process would provide an entry point into understanding how the experiences of colonialism, racism and ableism are shaped at the beginning of and during the immigration experience as opposed to only after the fact—i.e., once people with disabilities arrive in host countries.

Moreover, a related future research direction could focus on the perspectives of immigration officers. While this study engaged with official discourses through CIC documents, this does not represent the realities and ideas of those who implement these policies. Keeping in mind the social justice dimension, we can argue for the presence of resistance and need to locate it even within the structures and operation of immigration systems. Put differently, future research could begin with an acknowledgement of the agency of immigration officers to show how they negotiate and navigate their way through and around the construction of people with disabilities as an inadmissible social group, and how they perpetuate, navigate or resist dominant discourses of colonialism, racism and ableism.

Another important research direction born out of the findings of this study is the need to articulate a gender-centred CDA analysis of the experiences of immigrant women with disabilities, whether through the narratives of applicants, their families or service providers. In this study, I specifically asked participants about gendered power dynamics

in the application and settlement experiences. As I noted earlier, the data points the way to a rich area that merits its own specialized analysis that continues to centre on discourse and discursive practices. Recognizing the dominance of white, male-centred CDA research, Lazar (2007) argues for "[f]eminist CDA as a political perspective on gender, concerned with demystifying the interrelationships of gender, power and ideology in discourse" (p. 144). However, in keeping with the call to de-centre male privilege in these types of studies, I would propose a study in collaboration with a feminist disability scholar, to conduct a gender-centred CDA analysis of the topic of immigration and disability. In this way, I would build on my earlier acknowledgement of the significance of gender in the intersection of immigration and disability, while respecting the need to have such a study be led by a feminist scholar. I would further argue that such a collaborative approach would embody the challenging of binaries built on us and them identities that I highlighted earlier, without abdicating my responsibility as a critical researcher and social justice activist to engage in transformative research beyond these binaries.

Hence, research that seeks to challenge binaries, highlight agency, and bridge identity and North/South divides in knowledge production could work together with social work practices that seek to challenge the marginalization of people with disabilities as immigrants or refugees. Such practice and research efforts would hold the seeds for resisting dominant discourses that shape the marginalization experiences of people with disabilities within their sending and receiving countries and contribute to a more socially just social work.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide- Adult Individuals with Disabilities

Appendix A: Interview Guide (Adult Individuals with Disabilities)

Ableism, racism and colonialism in Canadian immigration: Exploring constructions of people with disabilities

Yahya El-Lahib MSW, PhD Student
(School of Social Work– McMaster University)

Beginning the interview

Thank you for participating in this interview. As you recall from our previous communication, your participation in this study is valuable and would contribute to our knowledge about different factors that shape and define the immigration experiences of people with disabilities. Just to give you an idea about me, I am a long time disability activist from Lebanon and an immigrant myself since 2005. My interest in this area of research stems from my background as a disability activist and as an immigrant to Canada. Before we start this interview, I would like to review the consent form with you and make sure to answer any questions you might have. To reiterate, I would like to assure you that everything you say here is confidential and that a pseudonym will be used to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants, and no personal or identifying information will be asked or used in the communications of the findings of this study. Also, your participation in this interview will have no impacts whatsoever on your relationship with the organization you are affiliated with. At any point in time during the interview, you can stop the interview for breaks if needed. Also, you can withdraw your participation from the interview at any point in time and all the data from the interview will not be used in the final report of the study. Before I go further, I want to ask your permission to start the recording process.

Just to give you an idea of what will happen during the interview. We will need about an hour and a half to two hours maximum. During this time, I will be asking you about your reflections on your experiences as an applicant for immigration. No personal, identifying or confidential information is needed for this study. All what I am looking for is your reflections on some of your experiences dealing with the immigration application process and the impacts these experiences have on you and your family. For example, what are some of the challenges or opportunities you faced and how you dealt with them? Or what are some of the factors that helped you deal with these experiences? These are some of

the reflections I am interested in knowing about, but it is your story and feel free to tell me what you feel is important for you to talk about. I divided the interview into three sections, the first one is about how everything started, the second section is about how things developed or evolved, and the final section is about how things ended.

Before we start the interview, do you have any question for me?

Section 1: How did everything start?
In this section, I am interested in your story about how your involvement with the issue of immigration began.

Prompting questions include:

1. Please recount your experiences before you decided to apply for immigration and what motivated you to apply
2. How did you start the application process?
3. What types of supports did you have during this process? (e.g. family members, settlement services, social workers, disability organizations, Citizenship and Immigration Canada offices, embassies, etc.)

Section 2: How things developed, progressed or evolved
In this section, we are going to be talking about how things developed, evolved and progressed in your application and during your waiting time. Please recount some of your experiences while waiting to hear about the status of your application.

Prompting questions include:

1. How do you think things evolved, developed or progressed in your application?
2. Were you asked to supply documentation that you felt did not make sense to you? Can you elaborate?
3. What was the waiting period like for you?
4. What types of support did you have that allowed you to continue the process or that hindered you in the process?
5. What would you say are some of the issues in your life that were impacted upon while waiting to hear about the application outcome? (e.g. work, education, family, etc.?)

Section 3: How did things end?
In this section, I would like to hear your story of how things ended or where they stand, and what you think contributed to them ending the way they did.

Prompting questions include:

1. What was the outcome of the application process or where do things stand right now?

2. Reflecting back on your experience so far, what are some of the challenges you faced?
3. Reflecting back on your experience, how would you describe your dealings with immigration officials or social service providers?
4. Taking your overall experience into account, what would you say are the supports that are missing that could have been helpful in your application process?

Ending the interview

Thank you for participation in this interview; before we end:

1. Is there something important we forgot?
2. Is there anything else you think I need to know about?

Appendix B: Interview Guide- Family Members

Appendix B: Interview Guide (Family Members)

Ableism, racism and colonialism in Canadian immigration: Exploring constructions of people with disabilities

Yahya El-Lahib MSW, PhD Student
(School of Social Work– McMaster University)

Beginning the interview

Thank you for participating in this interview. As you recall from our previous communication, your participation in this study is valuable and would contribute to our knowledge about different factors that shape and define the immigration experiences of people with disabilities. Just to give you an idea about me, I am a long time disability activist from Lebanon and an immigrant myself since 2005. My interest in this area of research stems from my background as a disability activist and as an immigrant to Canada. Before we start this interview, I would like to review the consent form with you and make sure to answer any questions you might have. To reiterate, I would like to assure you that everything you say here is confidential and that a pseudonym will be used to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants, and no personal or identifying information will be asked or used in the communications of the findings of this study. Also, your participation in this interview will have no impacts whatsoever on your relationship with the organization you are affiliated with. At any point in time during the interview, you can stop the interview for breaks if needed. Also, you can withdraw your participation from the interview at any point in time and all the data from the interview will not be used in the final report of the study. Before I go further, I want to ask your permission to start the recording process.

Just to give you an idea of what will happen during the interview. We will need about an hour and a half to two hours maximum. During this time, I will be asking you about your reflections on your experiences as a family member of an immigration applicant with disability who (was rejected or is waiting for a decision on his/her application). No personal, identifying or confidential information is needed for this study. All what I am looking for is your reflections on some of your experiences dealing with the immigration application process and the impacts these experiences have on you and your family. For example, what are some of the challenges or opportunities you faced and how you dealt with them? Or what are some of the factors that helped you deal with these experiences?

These are some of the reflections I am interested in knowing about, but it is your story and feel free to tell me what you feel is important for you to talk about. I divided the interview into three sections, the first one is about how everything started, the second section is about how things developed or evolved, and the final section is about how things ended.

Before we start the interview, do you have any question for me?

Section 1: How did everything start?
In this section, I am interested in your story about how your family member's involvement with the issue of immigration began.

Prompting questions include:

1. What motivated your family member to immigrate to Canada and why?
2. How did the application process start?
3. What role did you play in assisting your family member in the application process?
4. What types of supports did you and your family member have during this process? (e.g. settlement services, social workers, disability organizations, Citizenship and Immigration Canada offices, embassies, etc.);
5. What were your experiences like with these supports? (Challenges, assistance received, limitations, etc.)

Section 2: How things developed, progressed or evolved
In this section, we are going to be talking about how things developed, evolved and progressed in your application and during your waiting time. Please recount some of your experiences while waiting to hear about the status of your family member's application.

Prompting questions include:

1. How do you think things evolved, developed or progressed in your family member's application?
2. What was this waiting period like for you or your family member?
3. What types of support did you and your family member have that allowed you to continue the process or that hindered you in the process?
4. What would you say are some of the issues in your or your family member's life that were impacted upon while waiting to hear about the application outcome? (e.g. work, education, family, etc.?)

Section 3: How did things end?
In this section, I would like to hear your story of how things ended or where they stand, and what you think contributed to them ending the way they did.

Prompting questions include:

1. What was the outcome of the application process or where do things stand right now?
2. Reflecting back on your experience so far, what are some of the challenges you or your family member faced?
3. Reflecting back on your experience, how would you describe your dealings with immigration officials or social service providers?
4. Taking your overall experience into account, what would you say are the supports that are missing that could have been helpful in your family member's application process?

Ending the interview

Thank you for participating in this interview; before we end:

1. Is there something important we forgot?
2. Is there anything else you think I need to know about?

Appendix C: Interview Guide- Service Providers

McMaster University
Inspiring Innovation and Discovery

Appendix C: Interview Guide (Service Providers)

Ableism, racism and colonialism in Canadian immigration policies and practices: Exploring constructions of people with disabilities

Yahya El-Lahib MSW, PhD Student
(School of Social Work– McMaster University)

Beginning the interview

Thank you for participating in this interview. As you recall from our previous communication, your participation in this study is valuable and would contribute to our knowledge about different factors that shape and define the immigration experiences of people with disabilities. Just to give you an idea about me, I am a long time disability activist from Lebanon and an immigrant myself since 2005. My interest in this area of research stems from my background as a disability activist and as an immigrant to Canada. Before we start this interview, I would like to review the consent form with you and make sure to answer any questions you might have. To reiterate, I would like to assure you that everything you say here is confidential and that a pseudonym will be used to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants, and no personal or identifying information will be asked or used in the communications of the findings of this study. Also, your participation in this interview will have no impacts whatsoever on your relationship with the organization you are affiliated with. At any point in time during the interview, you can stop the interview for breaks if needed. Also, you can withdraw your participation from the interview at any point in time and all the data from the interview will not be used in the final report of the study. Before I go further, I want to ask your permission to start the recording process.

Just to give you an idea of what will happen during the interview. We will need about an hour and a half to two hours maximum. During this time, I will be asking you about your reflections on your experiences as a service provider working with people with disabilities or on immigration issues. No personal, identifying or confidential information is needed for this study. All what I am looking for is your reflections on some of your experiences dealing with the immigration application process and the impacts these experiences have on individuals or families going through the immigration process. You may choose to reflect on experiences you have already had with clients without divulging

any confidential information, or you may choose to reflect on your experiences in general. I divided the interview into three sections, the first one is about your involvement on issues of disability and/or immigration began; the second section is about how you see your work now and current experiences you may have and the final section is about what future developments you think are necessary to enhance practice on issues of immigration and disability.

Before we start the interview, do you have any question for me?

Section 1: How did everything start?
In this section, I am interested in your story about how your involvement on issues of disability and immigration began.

Prompting questions include:

1. How did you begin your involvement in your current practice (immigration, disability or both)?
2. If this is the case, when and how did your involvement on the intersection of disability and immigration begin?
3. What can you tell me about your role as a service provider and your professional encounters with the clients with disabilities who have dealings with immigration issues?

Section 2: How things developed, progressed or evolved
In this section, we are going to be talking about how things developed, evolved and progressed in your current practice.

Prompting questions include:

1. How do you think things evolved, developed or progressed in your practice on issues of immigration and disability?
2. What types of issues (challenges, opportunities) have you faced when working on issues of immigration and disability?
3. Who have been the key players throughout this experience (e.g. applicants, family members, other service providers, immigration officials, activists, etc.)

Section 3: Future directions
In this section, I would like to hear your reflections on the future of practice on issues of disability and immigration.

Prompting questions include:

1. Reflecting back on your experiences to date, what would you say are the main difficulties in addressing issues of disability and immigration?

2. What future developments do you think are necessary to enhance practice on issues of immigration and disability?
3. What types of supports would you need or changes you would like to see happen to enhance your role and practice on issues of disability and immigration?

Ending the interview

Thank you for participating in this study; before we end:

1. Is there something important we forgot?
2. Is there anything else you think I need to know about?

Appendix D: Recruitment Email Script for Executive Directors of Agencies

McMaster University
Inspiring Innovation and Discovery

Ableism, racism and colonialism in Canadian immigration: Exploring constructions of people with disabilities

Yahya El-Lahib MSW, PhD Student
School of Social Work– McMaster University

Hello (Name of Executive Director of Agency),

I'm writing to ask for your assistance in recruiting participants for my doctoral research study in social work under the supervision of Dr. Mirna Carranza. The study aims to explore how ableism, racism and colonialism play out in Canadian immigration and focuses on the implications of Canadian immigration policies and practices for people with disabilities, especially those from the Global South. The findings of this study could fill gaps in the literature and could allow for a better understanding of the marginalization experiences of people with disabilities within immigration.

You are being approached today because of the leadership role that you and your organization play in your field of practice. Your participation along with that of practitioners and clients from your organization will help in shedding the light on ways of which social workers and other helping professions are responding to immigration policies and practices and contributing to creating more socially just, inclusive immigration and settlement policies and practices.

Your participation is voluntary and would entail sending my recruitment materials to your listserv as well as permission to post these materials on the announcements and bulletin boards in your agency so interested participants can make initial contact with me. Please note that those interested in participating should contact me directly and you will not be told who participated or not. In addition, participation or not in my study will have no effect on participants in terms of either their employment, their status with the agency, or the services and programs offered by the agency.

Participating in the study would entail an interview between 1.5 and 2 hours in length at an accessible and convenient time and location on employees' or clients' own time outside of office hours. Participants will be asked to reflect on their experiences on issues related to immigration and disability, specifically, the challenges and opportunities they face in dealing with these issues. Participants are not going to be asked to reveal any confidential information about their agencies or their clients. Confidentiality measures are put in place to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants and their affiliated agencies. However, should employees choose to be interviewed at their place of employment, their anonymity might be compromised. For further information about the study, please see the attached letter of information/consent form. Please note that participants need to have a good command of English as this is the primary language of the interview (as I am also fluent in Arabic, this is also an option). Other participants interested in this study are welcome to bring a personal interpreter with them; the interpreter would be required to sign an oath of confidentiality.

If you are interested in finding out more about the study and what participation might entail, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Supervisor.

Sincerely,

Principal Investigator

Yahya El-Lahib MSW, PhD Student
McMaster University
School of Social Work
1280 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario L8S 4M4
(647) 244-1045
ellahib@mcmaster.ca

Faculty Supervisor

Dr. Mirna Carranza
McMaster University
School of Social Work
1280 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario L8S 4M4
(905)525-9140 Ext: 23791
carranz@mcmaster.ca

Appendix E: Recruitment Poster for Emails

McMaster University
Inspiring Innovation and Discovery

Interested in participating in a study about your experiences as:

- A service provider within immigration or settlement agency
- A disability activist or a service provider within a disability rights organization
- A family member of an immigration applicant with disability
- An immigrant or a newcomer with disability who has been in Canada within the past five years

Your participation would entail…

- ✓ Interview of approximately 1.5 and 2 hours at a convenient time and location for you
- ✓ Your reflections on the day-to-day experiences related to issues of immigration and disabilities
- ✓ Your reflections on the challenges or opportunities presented by your experiences

* Please note that the interview will be conducted in English (Arabic is also an option). Other participants interested in this study are welcome to bring a personal interpreter with them; the interpreter would be required to sign an oath of confidentiality.

For more information please contact:
Principal Investigator: Yahya El-Lahib MSW, PhD Student
McMaster University-School of Social Work
(647)244-1045
ellahib@mcmaster.ca

Appendix F: Recruitment Poster for Announcement Boards

McMaster University
Inspiring Innovation and Discovery

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR
RESEARCH EXAMINING THE INTERSECTION OF

IMMIGRATION & DISABILITY

I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study that will explore how ableism, racism and colonialism play out in Canadian immigration policies and practices

You will be asked to participate in a single two hour (maximum) one-on-one interview session to reflect on your experiences if you are one of the following:

- A service provider within immigration or settlement agency
- A disability activist or a service provider within a disability rights organization
- A family member of an immigration applicant with disability
- An immigrant or a newcomer with disability who has been in Canada within the past five years

In appreciation for your time, you will receive a thank you card with a gift certificate of $10 dollars. In addition, you will be compensated for your transportation costs to get to the interview location.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Yahya El-Lahib MSW, PhD Student
School of Social Work, McMaster University
(647) 244-1045
Email: ellahib@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance by the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

Please Call
Yahya El-Lahib
(647)244-1045
Or Email:
ellahib@mcmaster.ca
Thank You

Appendix G: Recruitment Email Script

McMaster University
Inspiring Innovation and Discovery

Ableism, racism and colonialism in Canadian immigration: Exploring constructions of people with disabilities

Yahya El-Lahib MSW, PhD Student
School of Social Work– McMaster University

Recruitment E-mail Script

Sent on Behalf of the Researcher by the Holder of the Participants' Contact Information
(for use in snowball sampling)

Sample E-mail Subject line: Study about the intersection of immigration and disability

Dear (insert name),

Yahya El-Lahib, a McMaster PhD student in the School of Social Work, has contacted me asking to pass his information about a study he is doing on examining the intersection of disability and immigration. Specifically, Yahya is working on examining the impacts of immigration policies and practices on shaping the experiences of immigrants and immigration applicants with disabilities.

The following is a brief description of his study. If you are interested in getting more information about taking part in Yahya's research or would like to refer someone to his study, please read the brief description below and or **CONTACT YAHYA EL-LAHIB DIRECTLY** by using his telephone number **(647-244-1045)** or email address: ellahib@mcmaster.ca

Yahya El-Lahib is inviting you to take part in an interview between 1.5 and 2 hours in length at an accessible and convenient time and location to reflect on your experiences dealing with immigration and disability issues. He hopes to learn more about some of the challenges or opportunities that you have encountered during your experiences with immigration policies or programs and how they contribute to shaping the outcomes of your experiences. Should you choose to participate, you could withdraw from the study at any time and if you agree to participate and you change your mind later, all data from your interview will be destroyed and will not be used in the study unless you choose

otherwise. Please note that participants need to have a good command of English as this is the primary language of the interview (as the researcher is fluent in Arabic, this is also an option). Other participants interested in this study are welcome to bring a personal interpreter with them; the interpreter would be required to sign an oath of confidentiality. In appreciation for your time, you will receive a thank you card with a gift certificate of $10 dollars. In addition, you will be compensated for your transportation costs to get to the interview location. For further information about the study, please see the attached letter of information/ consent form.

In addition, this study has been reviewed and cleared by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is being conducted you may contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
Gilmour Hall – Room 305 (ROADS)
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

Sincerely,

Name of the letter sender on researcher's behalf

Appendix H: Recruitment Oral Script

Ableism, racism and colonialism in Canadian immigration: Exploring constructions of people with disabilities

Yahya El-Lahib MSW, PhD Student
School of Social Work– McMaster University

Recruitment Oral Script
Oral information provided in snowball method recruitment

Hello,

Yahya El-Lahib, a McMaster PhD student in the School of Social Work, has contacted me asking to pass his information about a study he is doing on examining the intersection of disability and immigration. Specifically, Yahya is working on examining the impacts of immigration policies and practices on shaping the immigrants and immigration applicants with disabilities. This research is part of his Doctoral studies in Social Work at McMaster University.

I will tell you a bit about his study and if you are interested in participating or in finding out more information, please **CONTACT YAHYA EL-LAHIB DIRECTLY** by telephone **(647-244-1045)** or email address: ellahib@mcmaster.ca

Yahya El-Lahib is inviting you to take part in an interview between 1.5 and 2 hours in length at an accessible and convenient time and location to reflect on your experiences dealing with immigration and disability issues. He hopes to learn more about some of the challenges or opportunities that you have encountered during your experiences with immigration policies or programs and how they contribute to shaping the outcomes of your experiences. Should you choose to participate, you could withdraw from the study at any time and if you agree to participate and you change your mind later, all data from your interview will be destroyed and will not be used in the study. Please note that the interview will be conducted in English (Arabic is also an option). Other participants interested in this study are welcome to bring a personal interpreter with them; the interpreter would be required to sign an oath of confidentiality.

In addition, this study has been reviewed and cleared by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is being conducted I will give you their contact information:

McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
Gilmour Hall – Room 305 (ROADS)
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

Appendix I: Counseling Information Sheets

Ableism, racism and colonialism in Canadian immigration: Exploring constructions of people with disabilities

Yahya El-Lahib MSW, PhD Student

Counselling Services Information Sheet

- *Here is a list of services where you can find someone to talk to, if you have something on your mind.*
- *If, at this time, you aren't ready to use one of these services, you might want to talk to a trusted family member or friend that you would normally go to when you have something on your mind.*

TORONTO AREA

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services
3079 Danforth Avenue, Toronto ON. M1L 1A8
Phone: (416)693-8677 Fax: (416)693-1330
Services: Health services, immigration and settlement services, community services, individual, marital, family, and mental health counselling among other types of services
Interpreters are available for other languages
Wheelchair accessible
http://accessalliance.ca/

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services
761 Jane Street, 2nd floor Suite 200B, Toronto ON. M6N 4C4
Phone: (416)760-8677 Fax: (416)760-8670
Services: Health services, immigration and settlement services, community services, individual, marital, family, and mental health counselling among other types of services
Interpreters are available for other languages
Wheelchair accessible
http://accessalliance.ca/

519 Church Street Community Center
519 Church Street, Toronto, ON. M4Y 2C9
Phone: (416)329-6874 Fax: (416)392-0519
Wheelchair accessible, barrier free washrooms and braille elevator
Services: Multiservice centre offering cultural, social and recreation programs and group meetings for all ages, meeting place of choice for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTTQ) communities
Counselling Program includes free short-term solution focused counselling for individuals and couples on a wide range of issues
http://www.the519.org/

For Youth Initiative (The Bridge - Youth Settlement Services)
1669 Eglinton Avenue West, Toronto, ON M6E 2H4
Phone: (416)785-9900 Fax: (416)785-7074
Wheelchair Accessible & barrier free washroom
Interpreters for Chinese (Mandarin), Filipino, Spanish & Swahili
Services: Settlement Services, Job search & Community Connection Workshops
www.foryouth.ca

Rexdale Women's Center
21 Panorama Court, Suite 2300, Toronto, ON. M9V 4E3
Phone: (416)640-0297 Fax: (416)640-1627
Wheelchair Accessible, barrier free washrooms, designated parking
Services: Settlement services, short term counselling, employment related services, clinets advocacy, translation and interpretation
www.rexdalewomen.org

HAMILTON AREA

Distress Centre Hamilton
The Distress Centre Hamilton offers 24 hour telephone support, crisis intervention, and referral to other agencies where appropriate, for people in distress. This Centre is staffed by trained volunteers.
24 Hour Crisis Line: You will speak to a trained volunteer. The line may be busy at times but this number is in service. **905-525-8611**

Catholic Family Services of Hamilton
447 Main St East, Unit 201, Hamilton, ON L8N 1K1
Phone: (905)527-3823 Fax: (905)546-5779
Fully Accessible
Services are available to all individuals regardless of their faith
Services include: walk-in Counselling
www.cfshw.com

Immigrant Women's Center
1119 Fennell Avenue East, Suite 236, Hamilton, ON L8T 1S2
Phone: (905)387-1100 Fax: (905)387-1770
Fully Accessible
Services: Information, referral and support programs, integration services, health care
www.stjosephwomen.on.ca

North Hamilton Community Health Center, Multicultural Health Services
438 Hughson St. North, Hamilton, ON L8L4N5
Phone: (905)523-6361 **or** (905)523-6611 Fax: (905)523-5173
Fully Accessible

Services: Counselling services (Interpretation available for Spanish and Albanian speakers), advocacy and support for immigrants and refugees, counseling services, health services
www.nhchc.ca

YMCA of Hamilton/ Burlington/Brantford, Immigration Settlement Services
25 Main Street West Suite 105, Hamilton, ON L8L 1H1
Phone: (905)526-8452 Fax: 9905)526-7282
Fully Accessible
Services: Immigration and settlement services for newcomers, referrals
http://mydreamlife.ca/iss_hamilton

Appendix J: Letter of Information/Consent Form- Individuals with Disabilities

McMaster University
Inspiring Innovation and Discovery

LETTER OF INFORMATION / CONSENT FORM

Individuals with Disabilities

Date: ----------

Study Title: Ableism, racism and colonialism in Canadian immigration: Exploring constructions of people with disabilities

Principal Investigator

Yahya El-Lahib
School of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(647) 244-1045
E-mail: ellahib@mcmaster.ca

Faculty Supervisor

Dr. Mirna Carranza
School of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(905)525-9140 ext.: 23791
E-Mail:carranz@mcmaster.ca

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to be a volunteer participant, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this study is to explore ways in which ableism, racism and colonialism play out in Canadian immigration policies and practices. Specifically, the study aims to understand the impacts immigration policies and practices have on applicants with disabilities, especially those from the Global South. In addition, the study attempts to examine social work's professional role within immigration and disability and enhance its intervention within these fields of practice. I am conducting this research as part of my doctoral dissertation in social work.

Description of the study:
If you agree to be a part of this study, your participation involves an interview between 1.5 and 2 hours in length. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed later. In addition, some notes may be hand recorded during the interview; these notes will be destroyed once the interviews have been transcribed. Your participation will involve discussing your reflections on specific events that you have encountered as an immigration applicant with disability. These encounters are related specifically to issues

related to the experiences you faced during the immigration application processes; this could include: encounters with immigration officials, immigration and settlement agencies, disability rights organizations, and your family members during or after the application process. I am only interested in your reflections about such events and no identifying or confidential information is needed; I am only interested in your story and what you would like to share with me.

Risks or Discomforts:
You might experience discomfort during the interview because of the time length or for any other reason including some minor psychological or social risks discussed below. You may experience some discomfort during the interview because it may trigger some personal reactions to irritating experiences such as long waiting time to hear about immigration status, fear of the interview affecting your immigration status or challenges in dealing with policies, just to name few examples. In terms of social risks, you may feel that your employment or access to services may be affected based on the outcomes of your participation. However, please note that you can stop the interview completely or take a break at any point of the interview process. In addition, all steps will be taken to ensure your information is kept confidential throughout the research process to ensure that your participation in this study will not impact your future relations with any services, service providers or agencies you or your family member may be involved with. Please also note that you can ask to stop the audio-recording at any time during the interview and can withdraw from the study up until approximately December 2015. If you decide to withdraw your interview data will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in the study.

Benefits of the Study:
I hope that your participation in this study will allow you to have the opportunity to critically reflect on your experiences as an immigration applicant with disability. I anticipate that this research will help to understand the how ableism, racism and colonialism play out within Canadian immigration policies and practices and how they shape the immigration experiences of applicants with disabilities. The results of the research will be used to: develop theoretical frameworks for better understanding the intersections of disability and immigration; enhance social work's professional role on the issues of disability and immigration; develop an understanding of the issues that shape and impact on the experiences of people with disabilities in immigration; develop an awareness of the needed resources to enhance the social work's role within such fields of practice; and finally to challenge the marginalization experiences of people with disabilities within immigration and foster a more inclusive immigration experiences.

Confidentiality & anonymity:
Confidentiality refers to the efforts and care taken by the researcher to protect the privacy of the data collected in this study. To ensure confidentiality only the principal investigator will have access to the data from the interviews. All data from the interviews

will be audio recorded and kept in a locked location and saved on a password protected hard drive.

Anonymity refers to whether the participants' identities will be made known during all phases of the research study from recruitment to data collection and analysis to communication of findings. All efforts will be made to ensure participants' anonymity is protected in this study. In the interviews, no identifying information will be requested and pseudonyms will be used to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants. However, please keep in mind during the interview that your identity might be recognizable through specific information you provide. To avoid this, no names of organizations or agencies will be discussed to ensure anonymity of participants and their affiliated agencies, if any. The interviews will be transcribed and the original audio recording and any hand written notes will be destroyed after transcription is completed. Data from this study will be saved only until I finish the process of my doctoral studies after which all data will be destroyed.

Voluntary Nature of Participation:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with me or with the agencies that provide services to you, if any. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your participation at any time without penalty or loss of compensation (transportation and gift certificate) to which you are entitled; please note that you can withdraw your consent up until approximately December 2015. At any particular point in the interview, you may refuse to answer any particular question or stop participation altogether.

Payment or Reimbursement
You will be compensated for your transportation cost to get to the interview location, whether or not you decide to go through with the interview. Should you decide to participate in the interview, as a way of appreciation, you will receive a thank you card with an honorary gift certificate of 10 dollars whether or not you decide to stop or withdraw from this interview at any point.

Information about the Study findings and Results
I expect to have this study completed by approximately the end of the year 2015. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you. In addition, I will make an arrangement to present the findings of the study at the community agencies that helped in the study. I will also communicate the findings through academic publications as well as professional conferences.

Questions about the Study:
If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact:

Yahya El-Lahib
School of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(647) 244-1045
E-mail: ellahib@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance.
If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **Yahya El-Lahib,** of McMaster University.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time or up until approximately December 2015
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study.
- I agree that the interview can be audio recorded

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

If you would like to receive a summary of the study's results and findings, please let me know where and how to send them to you:

- Email address: _____
- Mailing address: _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

Appendix K: Letter of Information/Consent Form- Family Members

LETTER OF INFORMATION / CONSENT FORM

Family Members

Date: ----------

Study Title: Ableism, racism and colonialism in Canadian immigration: Exploring constructions of people with disabilities

Principal Investigator

Yahya El-Lahib
School of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(647) 244-1045
E-mail: ellahib@mcmaster.ca

Faculty Supervisor

Dr. Mirna Carranza
School of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(905)525-9140 ext.: 23791
E-Mail:carranz@mcmaster.ca

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to be a volunteer participant, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this study is to explore ways in which ableism, racism and colonialism play out in Canadian immigration policies and practices. Specifically, the study aims to understand the impacts immigration policies and practices have on applicants with disabilities, especially those from the Global South. In addition, the study attempts to examine social work's professional role within immigration and disability and enhance its intervention within these fields of practice. I am conducting this research as part of my doctoral dissertation in social work.

Description of the study:
If you agree to be a part of this study, your participation involves an interview between 1.5 and 2 hours in length. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed later. In addition, some notes may be hand recorded during the interview; these notes will be destroyed once the interviews have been transcribed. Your participation will involve

discussing your reflections on specific events that you have encountered as a family member of an immigration applicant with disability. These encounters are related specifically to issues related to the experiences you or your family faced during the immigration application processes; this could include: encounters with immigration officials, immigration and settlement agencies, disability rights organizations, and your family members during or after the application process. I am only interested in your reflections about such events and no identifying or confidential information is needed; I am only interested in your story and what you would like to share with me.

Risks or Discomforts:
You might experience discomfort during the interview because of the time length or for any other reason including some minor psychological or social risks discussed below. You may experience some discomfort during the interview because it may trigger some personal reactions to irritating experiences such as long waiting time to hear about immigration status, fear of the interview affecting your immigration status or challenges in dealing with policies, just to name few examples. In terms of social risks, you may feel that your employment or access to services may be affected based on the outcomes of your participation. However, please note that you can stop the interview completely or take a break at any point of the interview process. In addition, all steps will be taken to ensure your information is kept confidential throughout the research process to ensure that your participation in this study will not impact your future relations with any services, service providers or agencies you or your family member may be involved with. Please also note that you can ask to stop the audio-recording at any time during the interview and can withdraw from the study up until approximately December 2015. If you decide to withdraw your interview data will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in the study.

Benefits of the Study:
I hope that your participation in this study will allow you to have the opportunity to critically reflect on your experiences as a family member of an immigration applicant with disability. I anticipate that this research will help to understand the how ableism, racism and colonialism play out within Canadian immigration policies and practices and how they shape the immigration experiences of applicants with disabilities. The results of the research will be used to: develop theoretical frameworks for better understanding the intersections of disability and immigration; enhance social work's professional role on the issues of disability and immigration; develop an understanding of the issues that shape and impact on the experiences of people with disabilities in immigration; develop an awareness of the needed resources to enhance the social work's role within such fields of practice; and finally to challenge the marginalization experiences of people with disabilities within immigration and foster a more inclusive immigration experiences.

Confidentiality & anonymity:
Confidentiality refers to the efforts and care taken by the researcher to protect the privacy of the data collected in this study. To ensure confidentiality only the principal

investigator will have access to the data from the interviews. All data from the interviews will be audio recorded and kept in a locked location and saved on a password protected hard drive.

Anonymity refers to whether the participants' identities will be made known during all phases of the research study from recruitment to data collection and analysis to communication of findings. All efforts will be made to ensure participants' anonymity is protected in this study. In the interviews, no identifying information will be requested and pseudonyms will be used to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants. However, please keep in mind during the interview that your identity might be recognizable through specific information you provide. In addition, no names of organizations or agencies will be discussed to ensure anonymity of participants and their affiliated agencies, if any. The interviews will be transcribed and the original audio recording and any hand written notes will be destroyed after transcription is completed. Data from this study will be saved only until I finish the process of my doctoral studies after which all data will be destroyed.

Voluntary Nature of Participation:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with me or with the agencies that provide services to you, if any. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your participation at any time without penalty or loss of compensation (transportation and gift certificate) to which you are entitled; please note that you can withdraw your consent up until approximately December 2015. At any particular point in the interview, you may refuse to answer any particular question or stop participation altogether.

Payment or Reimbursement
You will be compensated for your transportation cost to get to the interview location, whether or not you decide to go through with the interview. Should you decide to participate in the interview, as a way of appreciation, you will receive a thank you card with an honorary gift certificate of 10 dollars whether or not you decide to stop or withdraw from this interview at any point.

Information about the Study findings and Results
I expect to have this study completed by approximately the end of the year 2015. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you. In addition, I will make an arrangement to present the findings of the study at the community agencies that helped in the study. I will also communicate the findings through academic publications as well as professional conferences.

Questions about the Study:
If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact:

Yahya El-Lahib
School of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(647) 244-1045
E-mail: ellahib@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance.
If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **Yahya El-Lahib,** of McMaster University.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time or up until approximately December 2015
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study.
- I agree that the interview can be audio recorded

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

If you would like to receive a summary of the study's results and findings, please let me know where and how to send them to you:

- Email address: _____
- Mailing address: _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

Appendix L: Letter of Information/Consent Form- Service Providers

LETTER OF INFORMATION / CONSENT FORM

Service Providers

Date: ----------

Study Title: Ableism, racism and colonialism in Canadian immigration: Exploring constructions of people with disabilities

Principal Investigator

Yahya El-Lahib
School of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(647) 244-1045
E-mail: ellahib@mcmaster.ca

Faculty Supervisor

Dr. Mirna Carranza
School of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(905)525-9140 ext.: 23791
E-Mail:carranz@mcmaster.ca

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to be a volunteer participant, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this study is to explore ways in which ableism, racism and colonialism play out in Canadian immigration policies and practices. Specifically, the study aims to understand the impacts immigration policies and practices have on applicants with disabilities, especially those from the Global South. In addition, the study attempts to examine social work's professional role within immigration and disability and to enhance its intervention within these fields of practice. I am conducting this research as part of my doctoral dissertation in social work.

Description of the study:
If you agree to be a part of this study, your participation involves an interview between 1.5 and 2 hours in length. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed later. In addition, some notes may be hand recorded during the interview; these notes will be destroyed once the interviews have been transcribed. Your participation will involve

discussing your reflections on specific events that you have had encountered in your role as a service provider within the organization you work with. These encounters are related specifically to issues associated with immigration applicants with disabilities. I am only interested in your reflections about such events and no identifying or confidential information is needed. I am also not interested in knowing the organization's position on such matters; I am only interested in your story and what you would like to share with me.

Risks or Discomforts:
You might experience discomfort during the interview because of the time length or for any other reason including some minor psychological or social risks discussed below. You may experience some discomfort during the interview because it may trigger some personal reactions to irritating experiences such as long waiting time to hear about immigration status or challenges in dealing with policies, just to name few examples. In terms of social risks, you may feel that your employment or access to services may be affected based on the outcomes of your participation. However, please note that you can stop the interview completely or take a break at any point of the interview process. In addition, all steps will be taken to ensure your information is kept confidential throughout the research process to ensure that your participation in this study will not impact your future relations with any services, service providers or agencies you or your family member may be involved with. Please also note that you can ask to stop the audio-recording at any time during the interview and can withdraw from the study up until approximately December 2015. If you decide to withdraw your interview data will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in the study.

Benefits of the Study:
I hope that your participation in this study will allow you to have the opportunity to critically reflect on your professional experiences as a service provider and/or social worker. I anticipate that this research will help to understand how ableism, racism and colonialism play out within Canadian immigration policies and practices and how they shape the immigration experiences of applicants with disabilities. The results of the research will be used to: develop theoretical frameworks for better understanding the intersections of disability and immigration; enhance social work and other helping professions' roles on the issues of disability and immigration; develop an understanding of the issues that shape and impact on the experiences of people with disabilities in immigration; develop an awareness of the needed resources to enhance social work's role within such fields of practice; and finally to challenge the marginalization experiences of people with disabilities within immigration and foster a more inclusive immigration experience.

Confidentiality & anonymity:
Confidentiality refers to the efforts and care taken by the researcher to protect the privacy of the data collected in this study. To ensure confidentiality only the principal investigator will have access to the data from the interviews. All data from the interviews

will be audio recorded and kept in a locked location and saved on a password protected hard drive.

Anonymity refers to whether the participants' identities will be made known during all phases of the research study from recruitment to data collection and analysis to communication of findings. All efforts will be made to ensure participants' anonymity is protected in this study. In the interviews, no identifying information will be requested and pseudonyms will be used to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants. However, please keep in mind during the interview that your identity might be recognizable through specific information you provide. In addition, no names of organizations or agencies will be discussed to ensure anonymity of participants and their affiliated agencies, if any. However, if you choose to be interviewed at your place of employment, your anonymity might be compromised. The interviews will be transcribed and the original audio recording and any hand written notes will be destroyed after transcription is completed. Data from this study will be saved only until I finish the process of my doctoral studies after which all data will be destroyed.

Voluntary Nature of Participation:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with me or with the agencies that provide services to you, if any. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your participation at any time without penalty or loss of compensation (transportation and gift certificate) to which you are entitled; please note that you can withdraw your consent up until approximately December 2015. At any particular point in the interview, you may refuse to answer any particular question or stop participation altogether.

Payment or Reimbursement
You will be compensated for your transportation cost to get to the interview location, whether or not you decide to go through with the interview. Should you decide to participate in the interview, as a way of appreciation, you will receive a thank you card with an honorary gift certificate of 10 dollars whether or not you decide to stop or withdraw from this interview at any point.

Information about the Study findings and Results
I expect to have this study completed by approximately the end of the year 2015. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you. In addition, I will make an arrangement to present the findings of the study at the community agencies that helped in the study. I will also communicate the findings through academic publications as well as professional conferences.

Questions about the Study:
If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact:

Yahya El-Lahib
School of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(647) 244-1045
E-mail: ellahib@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance.
If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **Yahya El-Lahib,** of McMaster University.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time or up until approximately December 2015
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study.
- I agree that the interview can be audio recorded

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

If you would like to receive a summary of the study's results and findings, please let me know where and how to send them to you:

- Email address: _____
- Mailing address: _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

Appendix M: Oath of Confidentiality

McMaster University
Inspiring Innovation and Discovery

Oath of Confidentiality

Study Title: Ableism, racism and colonialism in Canadian immigration: Exploring constructions of people with disabilities

Yahya El-Lahib MSW, PhD Student
School of Social Work– McMaster University

(*Check the following that apply*)
I understand that as:
[ ] an interpreter
[ ] transcriber
[ ] audio assistant
[ ] video assistant
[ ] research assistant
[ ] other (*Please specify*) _____

for a study being conducted by Yahya El-Lahib of the School of Social Work, McMaster University, under the supervision of Professor Mirna Carranza, confidential information will be made known to me.

I agree to keep all information collected during this study confidential and will not reveal by speaking, communicating or transmitting this information in written, electronic (disks, tapes, transcripts, email) or in any other way to anyone outside the research team.

Name: _____ Signature: _____
(Please Print)

Date: _____

Witness Name: _____ Witness Signature: _____

Appendix N: Ethics Clearance Certificate

McMaster University

McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB)

c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support, MREB Secretariat, GH-305, e-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS CLEARANCE TO INVOLVE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Application Status: New ☑ **Addendum** ☐ **Project Number:** 2013 034

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:

Ableism, racism and colonialism in Canadian immigration: Exploring constructions of people with disabilities

Faculty Investigator (s)/ Supervisor(s)	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
M. Carranza	Social Work	23791	mimacarranza@rogers.com
Student Investigator(s)	**Dept./Address**	**Phone**	**E-Mail**
Y. El-Lahib	Social Work	6472441045	ellahib@mcmaster.ca

The application in support of the above research project has been reviewed by the MREB to ensure compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the McMaster University Policies and Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants. The following ethics certification is provided by the MREB:

☐ The application protocol is cleared as presented without questions or requests for modification.

☑ The application protocol is cleared as revised without questions or requests for modification.

☐ The application protocol is cleared subject to clarification and/or modification as appended or identified below:

COMMENTS AND CONDITIONS: Ongoing clearance is contingent on completing the annual completed/status report. A "Change Request" or amendment must be made and cleared before any alterations are made to the research.

Reporting Frequency:	Annual: Mar-19-2014	Other:

Date: Mar-19-2013 **Chair, Dr. B. Detlor / Vice Chair, C. Anderson:**

Appendix O: CIC Operational Manuals Analyzed & Consulted

CIC- Publications and manuals- Operational Bulletins & Manuals: Accesses on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/index.asp

*****Documents and links marked with asterisk lead to the website and do not lead to a PDF document

Citizenship Policy (CP):

- CP2-13, CP 15: See Citizenship Program Delivery Instruction, Accessed On August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/cit/index.asp
- CP 14- Adoption. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/cp/cp14-eng.pdf

Enforcement (ENF)

- ENF1- Inadmissibility: Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf01-eng.pdf
- ENF2- Evaluating inadmissibility: Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf02-eng.pdf
- ENF3- Admissibility, Hearing and detention Review Proceedings: Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf03-eng.pdf
    - ENF3- Appendix C: Direction for Removal Orders. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf03-appC-eng.pdf
- ENF4- Port of Entry Examinations: Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf04-eng.pdf
- ENF5- Writing 44(1) Reports: Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf05-eng.pdf
- ENF6- Review of Reports Under A44 (1). Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf06-eng.pdf
- ENF7- Investigation and Arrest: there is no active link for this enforcement document—make a point in the analysis process
- ENF8- Deposits and Guarantees. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf08-eng.pdf
- ENF9- Judicial Review. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf09-eng.pdf

- ENF10- Removals. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf10-eng.pdf
- ENF11- Verifying Departure. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf11-eng.pdf
- ENF12- Search, Seizure, Fingerprinting and Photography. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf12-eng.pdf
- No ENF 13 and 14
- ENF15- Obligation of Transporters. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf15-eng.pdf
- ENF16- No active link on the CIC website. There is the following sentence: "Reserved for future use"
- ENF17- Maritimes Procedure. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf17-eng.pdf
- ENF18- War crimes and Crimes against Humanity. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf18-eng.pdf
- ENF19- Appeal before the Immigration Appeal Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf19-eng.pdf
- ENF20- Detention. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf20-eng.pdf
- ENF21- Recovering Missing, Abducted and Exploited Children. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf21-eng.pdf
- ENF22- Persons Serving Sentences. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf22-eng.pdf
- ENF23- Loss of Permanent Resident Status. Accessed August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf23-eng.pdf
- ENF24- Ministerial Interventions. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf24-eng.pdf
- ENF25 & 26- No active link on the CIC website. There is the following sentence: "Reserved for future use"
- ENF27- Permanent Resident Card. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf27-eng.pdf
- ENF28- Ministerial Opinions on Danger to the Public and the Security of Canada. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf28-eng.pdf

- ENF29- Alternative means of Examination Programs. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf29-eng.pdf
- ENF30-31-32-33 do not exist on the CIC website
- ENF34- Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Pilot Program. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf34-eng.pdf

Temporary Foreign Worker Guidelines

- Temporary Foreign Workers. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/temp/work/index.asp

Immigration Legislation (IL)

- IL1- Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/I-2.5.pdf
- IL2- Immigration Regulations. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/SOR-2002-227.pdf
- *IL3- Designation of Officers and Delegation of Authority. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/il/il03-menu.asp
    - IL3- Instrument of Designation and Delegation. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/il/il3-eng.pdf
    - *IL3- List of Updates to the Designation of Officers and Delegations of Authority Documents. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/il/il03-menu.asp#updates
- IL4- No active link on the CIC website. There is the following sentence: "Reserved for future use"
- *IL5- Immigration Rules. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/BoaCom/references/ActRegLoi/Pages/index.aspx
- IL6-7-8 & 10- No active link on the CIC website. There is the following sentence: "Reserved for future use"
- IL9- Official Language Act. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/O-3.01.pdf

Information Sharing (IN)

- IN1- Overview on Information-Sharing. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/in/in01-eng.pdf
- IN2- Directives for Sharing Information Pursuant to the 2003 Canada-US SMU on Information Sharing (Directives for Sharing Information Pursuant to the 2003

Canada-US Statement of Mutual Understanding on Information Sharing). Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/in/in02-eng.pdf

In Land Processing (IP)

- IP1- Temporary Resident Permits. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip01-eng.pdf
- IP2- Processing Applications to Sponsor Members of the Family Class. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip02-eng.pdf
- IP3- In Canada Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad and Members of Humanitarian Protected Persona Abroad Classes
    - IP3- Part 1- General. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip03-part1-eng.pdf
    - IP3- Part 2- Resettlement Assistance Program. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip03-part2-eng.pdf
    - IP3- Part 3- Private Sponsorship of Refugee Program. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip03-part3-eng.pdf
    - IP3- Part 4- Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip03-part4-eng.pdf
    - IP3- Appendices. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip03-app-eng.pdf
- IP4- Processing Live-in Caregivers in Canada. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip04-eng.pdf
- IP5- Immigration Applications in Canada made on Humanitarian or Compassionate Ground. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip05-eng.pdf
- *IP6- See Processing Temporary Residents Extensions. Accesses on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/temp/visa/validity/implied.asp
- IP7- Entrepreneur Program. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip07-eng.pdf
- IP8- Spouse or Common-law Partner in Canada Class. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip08-eng.pdf

- IP9- Use of Representatives Paid or Unpaid. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip09-eng.pdf
- IP10- Refusal of National Security Cases/ Processing of National Interest Requests. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip10-eng.pdf
- IP13- OP 27 Start-up Business Class. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip13-eng.pdf

Reference (IR)*--This category has no PDF documents. Links lead to webpages on CIC website

- *IR1- See Visitors. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/temp/index.asp
- *IR3- See Medical Requirements. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/medic/index.asp
    - *Medical Refusal and inadmissibility: Excessive demand on health and social Services. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/medic/admiss/excessive.asp
    - *Or the below links: http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2002-227/section-1.html
    - http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/medic/message.asp
    - http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/medic/admiss/index.asp
- *IR5- See Fees & Cost Recovery. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/fees/message.asp

Overseas Processing (OP)

- OP1- Procedures. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op01-eng.pdf
- OP2- Processing Members if the Family Class. Accessed on August 11, 2013 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op02-eng.pdf
- OP3- Adoptions. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op03-eng.pdf
- OP4- The Processing of Applications that Includes Humanitarian and Compassionate or Public Policy Consideration. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op04-eng.pdf
- *OP5- See Resettlement Overseas. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/index.asp

- OP6- Federal Skilled Workers. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op06-eng.pdf
    - OP6 A- Federal Skilled Workers- Applications Received on or after Feb27, 2008 and before June 26, 2010. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op06a-eng.pdf
    - OP6 B- Federal Skilled Workers- Applications Received on or June 26, 2010. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op06b-eng.pdf
    - OP6 C- Federal Skilled Workers Class- Applications Received on or after May 4, 2013. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op06c-eng.pdf
- OP7 (a)- Quebec Skilled Workers. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op07a-eng.pdf
- OP7 (b)- Provincial Nominees. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op07b-eng.pdf
- OP8- Entrepreneur and Self-Employed. Accessed on August 11, 2013 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op08-eng.pdf
- OP9- Investors. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op09-eng.pdf
- OP10- Permanent Residency Status Determination. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op10-eng.pdf
- *OP11- See Temporary Residents. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/temp/index.asp
- *OP12- See Student. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/temp/students/index.asp
- OP14- Processing Applicants for the Live-in Caregivers Program. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op14-eng.pdf
- *OP15- See Medical Requirements. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/medic/index.asp
- Op17- Loans. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op17-eng.pdf
    - Or this updated copy: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op17-eng.pdf
- OP20- Temporary Resident Permits. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op20-eng.pdf
- OP21- Appeals. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op21-eng.pdf

- OP22- Judicial Review. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op22-eng.pdf
- OP24- Overseas Processing of Family Members of In-Canada Applicants for Permanent Residence. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op24-eng.pdf
- OP25- Canadian Experience Class. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op25-eng.pdf
    - OP25 (a)- Canadian Experience Class. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op25A-eng.pdf
- OP26- Federal Skilled Trades Class. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/op/op26-eng.pdf
- OP27 (Or IP13-They are the same document)- Start Up Business Class. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/ip/ip13-eng.pdf
- *This Category does not have documents numbered as OP13, OP16, OP18, OP19, and OP23.

Protected Persons (PP)

- *PP1- See In Canada Claims. Accessed On August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/canada/index.asp
    - *Or this Link: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/canada/intake/claims.asp
- *PP2- See Pre-Removal Risk Assessment. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/prra/index.asp
    - *Or this link: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/prra/intake.asp
- PP4- See Applications for Permanent Residence from Protected Persons. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/pr/index.asp
    - Or this PDF document: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/pp/pp04-eng.pdf
- *In this Category, there are only three links numbered PP1, PP3 and PP4; PP2 is missing or does not exist

Identity Management (IM)

- IM1- Procedures for Establishing Name Records in CIC Systems. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/im/im01-eng.pdf

Operational Bulletins (OB)

- Operational Bulletins 2014 Updates main page. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/bulletins/2014/index.asp
- Selected relevant Updates from this page
    - OB588- August 1, 2014. Changes to the Definition of a Dependent Child. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/bulletins/2014/ob588.asp
    - OB48- (Modified)- June 11, 2014. Conditional Permanent Residence Measure for Spouses and Partners in Relationships of two years or less and have no children in common. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/bulletins/2012/ob480.asp
    - OB572- April 29, 2014- Ministerial Instructions: Federal Skilled Worker, Federal Skilled Trades and Canadian Experience Class Applications. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/bulletins/2014/ob572.asp
    - OB566A- March 4, 2014- Federal Immigrant Investor Program and Entrepreneur Program Applications: Budget 2014- Communication with Stakeholders. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/bulletins/2014/ob566A.asp
    - **OB567- February 14, 2014- Protecting Foreign Nationals from the risk of Abuse and Exploitation. Accessed on August 11, 2014 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/bulletins/2014/ob567.asp (This document has expired before I downloaded it)
- Operational Bulletins 2012 main page: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/bulletins/2012/index.asp

Appendix P: Federal Government's Statement Policy on Excessive Demands

Excessive demand on health and social services

This section contains policy, procedures and guidance used by CIC staff. It is posted on the CIC website as a courtesy to stakeholders.
As part of the review process, immigration officers determine whether an individual is likely to place excessive demand on health or social services.
Section R1 defines "excessive demand" as:

- a demand on health services or social services for which the anticipated costs would likely exceed average Canadian per capita health services and social services costs over a period of five consecutive years immediately following the most recent medical examination required under paragraph 16(2)(b) of the Act, unless there is evidence that significant costs are likely to be incurred beyond that period, in which case the period is no more than 10 consecutive years; or
- a demand on health services or social services that would add to existing waiting lists and would increase the rate of mortality and morbidity in Canada as a result of an inability to provide timely services to Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

Definitions

For all cases of excessive demand on health services other than for out-patient medication, the procedural fairness process is the same as danger to public health and safety (since the ability and the intention to defray costs are not relevant factors).
Excessive demand on health services Excessive demand on social services Cost threshold for health and social services

Instructions for procedural fairness

Recording the decision and document retention Instructions for medical officers Instructions for visa or immigration officers

Procedural fairness outcomes for different scenarios

If the applicant does not respond to the procedural fairness letter within the given time frame If the applicant challenges the medical opinion and/or excessive demand assessment but has not provided a declaration of ability and intent or a plan to mitigate the excessive demand on health and social services.

Assessing declarations of ability and willingness

Overview

A declaration of ability and intent submitted without a supporting plan is not sufficient to establish that an applicant or an applicant's family member will not impose an excessive demand on Canadian health (i.e., out-patient medication) and/or social services. A declaration of ability and intent must be supported by a **credible** plan. The quality of the mitigating plan is the most significant element in assessing ability and intent, and the plan should reflect the individual needs of the affected person.
To assist the immigration officer, the medical officer may have questioned the viability of the plan as part of the medical opinion. It is the responsibility of the immigration officer to decide whether the questions are of concern or not. In order to assess the applicant's

ability and intent, the immigration officer may want to gather additional information from the applicant by way of a letter or an interview. The immigration officer may consider a variety of factors, including the following:

- If expenses must be incurred, is it likely that the applicant will have the financial ability to cover these expenses, considering the full period covered by the medical opinion? Would persons applying under the investor, entrepreneur or self-employed classes still meet the definition of the class without this money? What is the applicant's prospect of employment? Will the proposed employment cover normal living expenses and the cost of the health (i.e., out-patient medication) and/or social services required?
- If the applicant intends to receive support from a family member, other individual or an organization, how likely is it that this person/organization will provide free or cost-reduced assistance for the period of time assessed? How legitimate is this offer of assistance? Has the individual/organization done this in the past? Can the qualifications and experience of the individual/organization be confirmed? If the individual/organization will provide this service without remuneration, do they have the financial ability to do so? Where this type of information is not readily available in the file, the officer may request additional information from the applicant.
- At what point is the applicant in terms of planning? If the applicant is outside Canada, have they already made all the arrangements for the services to be delivered upon arrival? If the applicant is in Canada, have they relied on publicly funded services in the past? How serious do they appear to be with regard to this plan?
- Has the applicant relied on publicly funded services in the past in the country where the applicant resided? Are publicly funded services available in the country where the applicant resides or resided? Are privately funded services available in the country where the applicant resides or resided?

If the immigration officer is **not satisfied**, and a consideration of all the circumstances of the case suggests that a refusal is appropriate, the officer may refuse the application for inadmissibility on health grounds. Again, detailed case notes are made in the CAIPS, FOSS or CPC system.

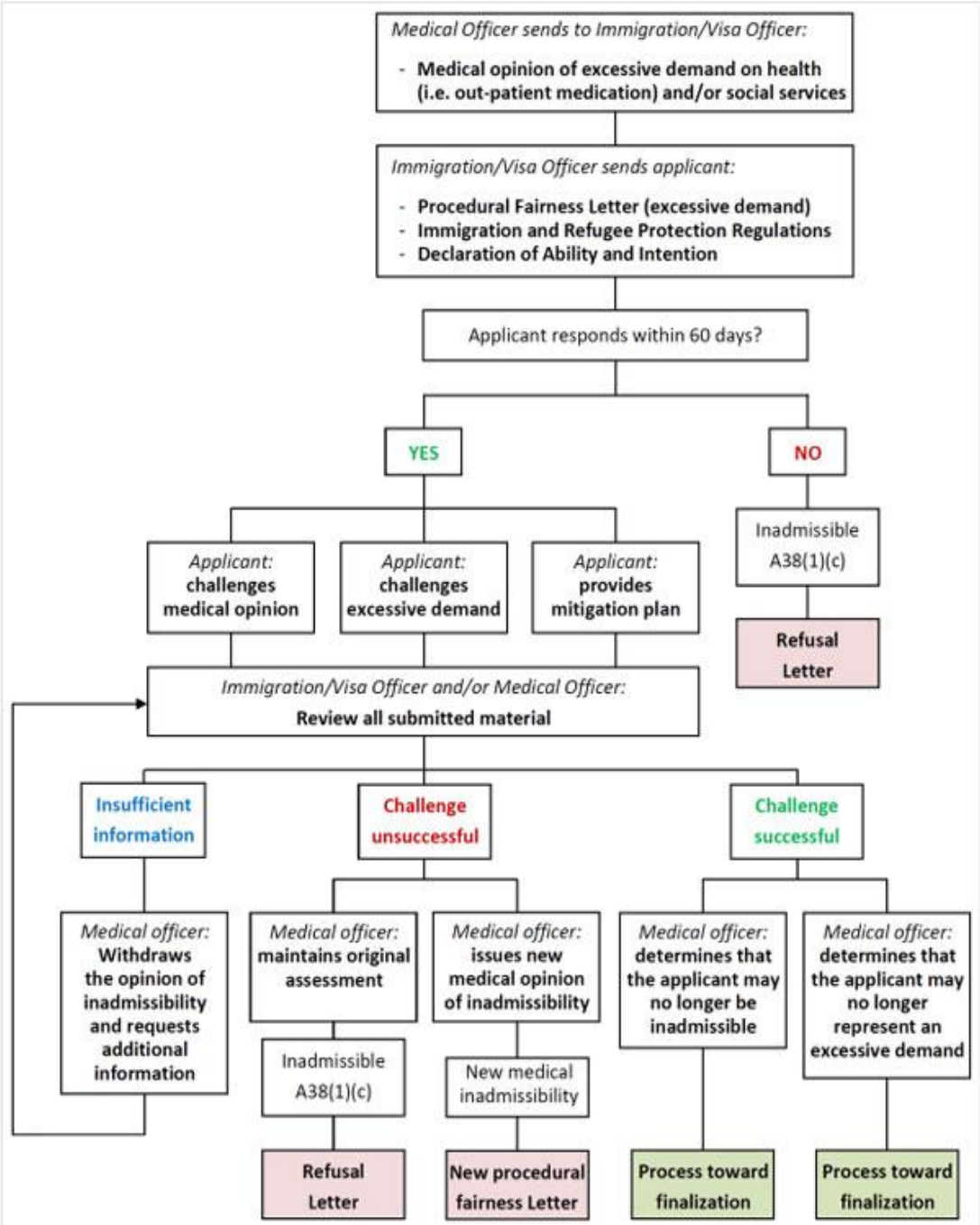
If the immigration officer is **satisfied** that the applicant, or applicant's family member, will not cause excessive demand on health and social services, the officer enters a positive medical admissibility decision. The case then proceeds towards finalization as per standard procedures. The declaration of ability and intent is retained on file, and detailed case notes are made in the CAIPS, FOSS or CPC system.

Coding for excessive demand cases following a favourable procedural fairness outcome

At the end of the process, if the applicant has satisfied the visa or immigration officer that they have the ability and intent to mitigate the cost of the required social services, the visa or immigration officer will change the excessive demand code (H9, T9, or E9) with a positive excessive demand code (H1, T1, or E1) in FOSS or CAIPS, as applicable. Although the medical assessment code will remain unchanged (M5), CAIPS will permit a Final Decision code "1" (visa issued).

With GCMS, instead of putting in a code "1", the officer will select Pass for the medical on the visa or immigration officer side; this will not change any of the information on the medical evaluation.

Procedural Fairness Algorithm



1. The medical officer withdraws the opinion of inadmissibility and requests additional information when the applicant's submission are insufficient to reach a medical opinion;
    - The applicant will have provided information that leaves the medical officer in doubt regarding the initial medical assessment; however, the applicant has provided insufficient information to make a final decision. The medical officer will withdraw the current opinion of inadmissibility and request additional information from the applicant in order to reach a new medical assessment
2. The medical officer sends to immigration or visa officer:
   the medical opinion of excessive demand on health (i.e., out-patient medication) and/or social services
3. The immigration or visa officer sends the applicant:
    - Procedural fairness letter (excessive demand)
    - Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations
    - Declaration of ability and intention

   The applicant responds within 60 days
    - The applicant: challenges medical opinion
    - The applicant: challenges excessive demand
    - The applicant: provides mitigation plan
    - The immigration or visa officer and/or medical officer: review all submitted material
        - **Not successful**
            - Medical officer: maintains original assessment
            - Inadmissible A38(1)(*c*)
            - Refusal letter

              Or
            - Medical officer: issues new medical opinion of inadmissibility
            - New medical inadmissibility
            - New procedural fairness letter
        - **Successful**
            - Medical officer: determines that the applicant may no longer be inadmissible
            - Process toward finalization

              Or
            - Medical officer: determines that the applicant may no longer represent an excessive demand
            - Process toward finalization

   The applicant does **not** respond within 60 days
    - Inadmissible A38(1)(*c*)
    - Refusal letter