

HARD WORKING BUT HARDLY WORKING:
A CASE STUDY OF KOREAN SKILLED IMMIGRANTS IN THE CANADIAN
LABOUR MARKET

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LABOUR MARKET

BY

HYE-JUNG PARK, B.S.W, M.S.W

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AUTHOR: Hye-Jung Park, BSW, MSW

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Mirna Carranza, PhD

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Abstract

The dominant discourse in Korea is that Canada is a multicultural country wherein no racial discrimination exists. This significantly contributes to making Canada their first choice of destination. The purpose of this study was to explore the barriers faced by Korean skilled immigrants in the Canadian labour. This thesis presents the findings of a qualitative study. Six participants were interviewed, who have lived in Canada for at least three, and using a semi-structured interview guide. Interviews were conducted in Korean, transcribed and later translated for analysis. Critical Race Theory and Democratic Racism were used as theoretical frameworks. This informed a critical review of major theoretical concepts, data collection and analysis.

The findings indicate that structural exclusion was a significant barrier faced by the participants. Structural exclusion includes lack of recognition of international knowledge; conventional hiring practice in Canada; accented English; and settlement services not meeting the needs of skilled immigrants. Also, it was found that as their state of unemployment or underemployment continued for a long time, they experienced loss of identity and low self-esteem. Furthermore, how they respond to such exclusion was too a significant finding. While some of the participants sought to take additional Canadian education in order to overcome the barriers, others gave up efforts to integrate into the mainstream or were planning to go back to Korea.

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Introduction

In the context of the globalization, the Canadian economy was transformed from a traditional industrial economy to a post-industrial knowledge-based throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This was exemplified by service and information technology industries. One outcome of this knowledge-based transition was the demand for high-skilled labour by increasing economies (Beckhusen, Florax, Poot, & Waldorf, 2013). Changes in the Canadian immigration policy followed, as the point system (PS) was established, specifically targeting immigrants with high level of human capital (Liu, 2007). Hence assessing potential immigrants on the basis of their education, work experience and language proficiency, using a points-based system (Grubel, 2013), became an established way to enter Canada.

Thousands of skilled immigrants land in Canada every year. They are in their core working age and highly educated. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), in 2014 about 65% of immigrants were economic (or skilled) immigrants. In the case of Korean immigrants, they have been arriving consistently since 1996 thus experiencing rapid growth (Park, 2012). The reality that newcomers confront after landing in Canada is, however, rather different from what they expected (Anisef, Sweet & Frempong, 2003; Aykan & Berry, 1996; Grubel, 2013; Lewkowicz, 2008; Plante, 2010). Despite their high level of educational achievement in their country of origin, skilled immigrants do not seem to gain fair returns from their human capital, with many of them working in temporary positions and receiving low wages.

Korean skilled immigrants were economically stable prior to the migration to Canada. I, however, have observed many Korean skilled immigrants are getting by with income less than the average Canadian. They are unemployed or underemployed even though they have eagerness and capacity to work. Hence, this study began with the wondering of why they live such of economically hard lives in Canada. Though the individual reasons for immigration varied, the PS, under which they arrived in Canada, makes it apparent that Korean skilled immigrants had no financial difficulty in Korea before arriving to Canada. The PS requirements stipulate that those who can prove they have received higher education, and have a certain number of years of working experience in designated fields; and of course a certain quantity of assets is preferred. Thus, it is safe to conclude that meeting the requirements for immigrating to Canada means they lived a middle class life in Korea. However, many Korean skilled immigrants are working in low-paid or part-time positions, irrespective of their previous career in Korea. There is no doubt in my mind that it is not lack of skills or strengths that forces them to live an economically unstable life. My attention is directed to the discrimination and racism that Korean skilled immigrants endure in the Canadian labour market as a reason for the underutilization of their skills and experience. While there have been a number of studies that revealed the discrimination and racism that other ethnic groups have experienced in Canada, only a few have dealt with the difficulties that Korean immigrants have undergone. This disparity propels my interest to the difficulties they face in finding jobs, specifically jobs relating to their careers. If newcomers to Canada are unable to integrate economically and socially into the settlement society, it may have negative effects for both—they and the growth of

the Canadian economy. In this context, the goal of my research is to explore the experiences of Korean skilled immigrants in the Canadian labour market. The study was guided by the following research question:

- What stands in the way of Korean skilled immigrants' economic integration?
- What is the psychological impact of these obstacles on them?
- How do they respond to these obstacles?

To find the answer to the above question Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Democratic Racism were used. Qualitative research methods were utilized to carry out this study. This is regarded as more proper way to find out the deep truth of a certain phenomenon through lived experience (Schwandt, 2006).

Chapter 1. Literature Review

In this chapter I introduce the relation between multiculturalism and racism. A brief history of the changes in Canadian Multiculturalism policies follows as well as some critical perspectives of Canadian multiculturalism—as one that fails to tackle structural racism.

Multicultural Policies in Canada

Multiculturalism emerged as an attempt to address the conflict resulting from racism (Lentin, 2005). It is the consensus of various authors that an atmosphere in favour of multiculturalism started in the late 1960s, and the formal adoption of a multiculturalism policy by the federal government began in 1971 with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's statement in the House of Commons (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010; Dewing, 2013; Trudeau, 1971). Before this time Canada's approach to immigration was not integration-oriented, but rather assimilation-oriented. When Trudeau declared the policy in Parliament, however, the assimilationist approach was formally abolished. The following are the original goals of the multiculturalism policy:

- to 'assist all Canadian cultural groups that have demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada';
- to 'assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society';
- to 'promote creative encounters and interchange amongst all Canadian cultural groups in the interest of national unity';

- to ‘assist immigrants to acquire at least one of the Canada’s official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society’ (Dewing, 2013).

The 1971 Multiculturalism Policy is said to be intended to reduce linguistic or cultural barriers to integration of marginalized cultural groups. The next phase, beginning in the 1980s, was the institutionalization of multiculturalism. During this period the number of source countries increased, and a few individuals and groups that promoted racist ideas emerged in response to the sharp rise in immigration from non-European countries. Two approaches were introduced during this phase: one was the government's concentration on promoting institutional change in order to help Canadian institutions become accustomed to the presence of the new immigrant groups. The other was the implementation of anti-discrimination programs to remove social and cultural barriers separating minority and majority groups in Canada (Dewing, 2013). The most important event with regard to multiculturalism in this phase is the recognition of multiculturalism by the Canadian Constitution in the form of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Section 27 of the *Charter* is particularly important, because it places multiculturalism within the wider framework of Canadian society. The clause states:

This *Charter* shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

Another important clause in the *Charter* is Section 15(1), which states:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability.

These clauses are important in that they empower the court to take Canada's multicultural reality into account at the highest level of decision-making (Dewing, 2013).

Another landmark in the history of Canadian multiculturalism is the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* of 1988. Through it multiculturalism became "a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society with an integral role in the decision-making process of the federal government" (Dewing, 2013, p. 5). It also means that "all government agencies, departments and Crown corporations - not just the ministry responsible for multiculturalism - were expected to provide leadership in advancing Canada's multicultural mix and to take part in the design and implementation of plans, programs, procedures and decision-making strategies that enhance the full and equal participation of minorities within institutional structures" (Dewing, 2013, p.5). I think this is an important statement that can be a criterion of whether "full and equal participation of minorities within institutional structures" has been enhanced in Canada.

Critiques of Canadian Multiculturalism

Compared to Europe's version, Canadian multiculturalism is considered successful. While hate crimes and hostility against immigrants are rising in Europe, popular support for multiculturalism in Canada remains relatively strong, and there are no political parties that are explicitly opposed to it (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010). Not all scholars agree, however, on the success of Canadian multiculturalism (Bannerji, 2000; Fleras, 2014; Kobayashi, 1993). The criticisms of multiculturalism as the culprit for increasing conflict and division (Bissoondath, 1998; Blatchford, 2004) are of no interest to me, because I do

not accept that Canadian multiculturalism has only negative social consequences. The issue that urgently needs deciding is whether multiculturalism contributes enough to promoting social justice

Noteworthy is the fact that the original intention in adopting multiculturalism in Canada and its current meaning are different. Kymlicka (2010) argued that Canadian multiculturalism generally helped new immigrants to integrate into society. He also pointed out, however, that at its inception Canadian multiculturalism was not so idealistic by saying that “Multiculturalism was introduced without any real idea of what it would mean, or any long-term strategy for its implementation” (Kymlicka, 1998, p. 40).

The most serious critique of the multiculturalism policy is that it has no capacity to fight for social justice (Bannerji, 2000; Chazan, Helps, Stanley & Thakkar, 2011; Fleras, 2013; Galabuzi, 2011; Kobayashi, 1993;). Bannerji (2000) argued that while the “usefulness of the discourse of diversity as a device for managing public or social relations and spaces, of serving as a form of moral regulation of happy co-existence” is clear, the over-emphasis on “diversity sensitization or training has largely displaced talk about and/or resistance to racism and sexism” (Bannerji, 2000, p. 38). Chazan et al. (2011) criticized Canadian multiculturalism as fostering the illusion of inclusion and generating new racism by using it to hide a racialized social order (Chazan et al., 2011). Also, Kobayashi (1993) argued that several issues, such as the ‘rights of ... ethno-cultural and linguistic groups outside the French and English “charter” groups [,] ... remain unsolved’ (Kobayashi, 1993, p. 206). Galabuzi (2011) argued that the dominant liberal ideology presented Canadian multiculturalism as neutral and privileged cultural celebration as a positive expression of

difference. He also argued that the privileging of symbolic celebration of cultural difference resulted in displacing claims and contestations of exclusion by subaltern racialized populations.

Disjuncture between Immigration Policy and the Labour Market

Much literature deals with the phenomenon of skilled immigrants' inability to fully utilize the knowledge and skills they obtained in their home countries. This section is intended to examine and organize the findings of earlier studies that relate to the disadvantages that skilled immigrants experience in the Canadian labour market. I first go through the literature that deals with market outcomes of skilled immigrants in Canada. I refer to the studies that reveal the kinds of disadvantage skilled immigrants experience, such as their lower earnings and labour force participation rate (Anisef, Sweet & Frempong, 2003; Aydemir & Skuterud, 2005; Ewoudou, 2001; Li & Li, 2013), and higher rates of unemployment and underemployment (Chen, Smith & Mustard, 2010; Jantzen, 2015; Plante, 2010; Reitz, Curtis & Elrick, 2014; Wald & Fang, 2008).

Mismatch between skills and occupation. “Occupational over-qualification refers to a situation where an individual’s occupational status is lower than would be expected by their training, skills, or experience” (Chen et al., 2010, p. 1). The term ‘occupational over-qualification’ can be replaced with other terms, such as skill underutilization or brain waste. Using the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants Canada (LSIC), Chen et al. (2010) investigated three dimensions (education, experience, and expectations) of over-qualification among a recent cohort of immigrants to Canada for the

four years after their arrival. One feature of their study is that they took into account the variables of expectation and experience, in addition to education. In other words, while most studies have assessed over-qualification comparing an individual's occupation with his or her education and skill levels, their study used a variable of expectation by asking subjective questions about whether they feel overqualified. This is meaningful inasmuch as that people with higher education sometimes deliberately choose occupations that do not require a level of education as high as their own. The result of their analysis was that 51.6% of new immigrants active in the labour market were over-qualified based on education, meaning that their current occupation did not require as high a level of education as the respondents had obtained. Though the proportions of over-qualification based on expectation (42.8%) and experience (44.4%) were a little lower than those based on education, they are still significantly high (p. 612).

Research shows that an increase in the number of highly skilled immigrants does not lead to a similar increase in the probability of being hired in correspondingly highly skilled or educated positions (Reitz et al., 2014). According to the analysis conducted by Reitz et al. (2014) with regard to the trend in immigrant skill underutilization, a substantial disadvantage for immigrant men and a greater disadvantage for immigrant women were identified. More specifically, the data from the 1996 Census showed that among men arriving in the five years before the census, 50.4% of immigrants with a university degree worked in a managerial or professional occupation in Canada, less than the 70.7% of their Canada-born counterparts (p. 9). The gap between immigrant women recently arrived with a university degree and their Canada-born counterparts is even wider: only 34.8% of the

immigrant women in that group were employed in a managerial or professional occupation, contrasting with 64.5% of their Canada-born counterparts. The interesting part is that the trend shows that the percentage of immigrant men arriving within five years before each census (1996 and 2006) and who had succeeded in securing a high-skill occupation went down from 50.5% in 1996 to 43.5% in 2006 (p. 9). This means that the probability of skilled immigrants' getting into managerial professions become lower as time passed. Those who did not successfully enter high-skill occupations can be divided into two groups: underemployed and unemployed. Reitz et al. (2014) also found that the percentage of university-educated immigrants in low-skill occupations is much higher than among their Canada-born counterparts (p. 10).

Another study was conducted by Augustine (2015) comparing employment match rates for immigrants who were educated in a regulated profession with those of their Canada-born and -educated counterparts using Statistics Canada data for 2006 and 2011. Typically, regulated professions are likely to require people to have at least a post-secondary diploma or a certain kind of license. Therefore, analyzing employment match rates for immigrants educated in a regulated profession can be considered legitimate to determine the existence of inequality in the labour market. The research suggests that the match rate for 2011 is dependent on whether the subject is an immigrant or Canadian-born, and where the subject finished school. According to this research, only 24.1% of immigrants who studied outside Canada working in one of Ontario's regulated professions were employed in that profession, compared to 51.0% of their Canadian-born and -educated counterparts.

Guo (2012) examined the economic integration of Chinese immigrants in Calgary and Edmonton. He concluded that many of recent Chinese immigrants suffered unemployment and underemployment due to deskilling and devaluation of their prior learning and work experience after immigrating to Canada. He introduced “triple glass effect”, which consists of a glass gate, glass door, and glass ceiling. A glass gate means that immigrants are denied from entering guarded professional communities. A glass door means that they block immigrants’ access to professional employment at high-wage firms. A glass ceiling prevents immigrants from being promoted to managerial position because of their ethnic and cultural differences.

Basran et al. (1998) conducted a survey with 404 internationally trained professionals living in Vancouver who had immigrated to Canada from India, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China. The results showed that these professionals experienced considerable downward mobility after immigrating to Canada and were living on a relatively low income. For example, 88% had worked in their profession in their country of origin, but only 18.8% had done so in Canada. Most of the participants in the survey experienced difficulty in having their foreign credentials and work experience recognized.

Earning disparity. Even if high-skilled immigrants succeed in being employed, the income they earn is not the same as that of their Canadian-born counterparts. Anisef, Sweet, and Frempong (2003) designed some models to examine how fields of study and education credentials impact the earnings of immigrant racial minorities. What they found was that the average earning of immigrant visible minorities, who are generally more highly educated and well-represented in fields of study with potential high earnings than

Canadian-born citizens, is far below that of the Canadian-born. Another finding was that immigrants with international credentials earn about C\$7,000 less than non-immigrants with Canadian credentials.

Aydemir and Skuterud (2005) found that the market outcomes of immigrants show partial deterioration in entry earnings, which can be explained by undervaluation of international labour market experience. They also added that the deterioration of earning is attributable to the shift of the source countries from European to non-European countries.

Ewoudou's study (2011) to examine whether and how the location of postsecondary study influences the relevant labour market success of immigrants in Canada also supports the above results. His findings revealed that, on average, very-recent immigrants were less likely to find paid employment, and more likely to be out of the labour force, than the Canadian-born. Particularly, those who completed their postsecondary education in Pakistan had the highest predicted likelihood of being out of the labour market, with those who graduated in South Korea following. When it comes to earning gap, it was revealed that the range of earning of very-recent immigrant was 25% to 63% less than that of the Canadian-born. It is worth noting that the relative earnings effect of location of study is not homogeneous across all very-recent immigrants. Very-recent immigrants with the largest earnings gap compared to the Canadian-born were those who completed their postsecondary education in Pakistan, the Russian Federation, South Korea, China, or Iran. Especially, those who obtained their postsecondary credential in Pakistan or the Russian Federation earned, on average, 62% less than the Canadian-born. Conversely, very-recent immigrants with their highest postsecondary credential obtained in the United Kingdom,

the United States, France, or Germany had the smallest earnings gap relative to the Canadian-born.

Plante (2010) found that immigrants who complete their highest level of postsecondary education in Canada have higher earnings than almost all internationally-educated immigrants, even after controlling for the influence of cohort of immigration, gender, province of residence, and the number of worked hours. She attributed these findings, in part, to the lower international transferability of skills acquired through education in some source countries of immigrants other than those in Europe.

Li and Li's (2013) analysis was intended to decompose the employment of immigrants and native-born Canadians in Canada to see how much of income disparity may be attributed to human capital factors, and how much to other factors. The results of their analyses also showed that earnings disparity between immigrant and native-born Canadian men was about 10 percent, and that between immigrant and native-born Canadian women was about eight percent.

Immigrants' Skill Underutilization: Factors

It is agreed that there are various barriers, such as the undervaluation of international credentials and work experience (Cheng, Spaling & Song, 2013; George, Chaze, Fuller-Thomson, & Brennenstuhl, 2012; Reitz, Curtis & Elrick, 2014; Sweetman, McDonald & Hawthorne, 2015), employers' requirement for Canadian experience (Creese

& Wiebe, 2012; Liu, 2007; Sakamoto et al., 2013), inadequate language skills, and discrimination (Weiner, 2008).

Recognition of international credentials and experience. According to the research by Weiner (2008), employers' unfamiliarity with international credentials, and lack of Canadian work experience are the most pressing problems they face in hiring new immigrants. Many scholars have tried to find out why the market outcomes of skilled immigrants are not as favourable as those of the Canadian-born, even though the overall level of education of immigrants is higher (Cheng et al., 2013; Creese et al., 2012; George et al., 2012; Liu, 2007; Reitz et al., 2014; Sakamoto et al., 2013; Sweetman, McDonald & Hawthorne, 2015; Weiner, 2008). The difficulty of having international credentials recognized and acknowledged, and having the licensure and certification testing requirements satisfied has been regarded as one of the highest barriers to successful integration into the labour market. In particular, those with international experience of working in a field where occupations would be regulated in Canada by a governmental agency or professional associations report feeling most frustrated by the process of certificate recognition because they have to pass some tests to have their credentials or certificates recognized.

Moreover, Canadian experience does not mean the same thing for employers and new immigrants (Sakamoto et al., 2010). Sakamoto et al. (2010) suggested that "many skilled newcomers to Canada believe that 'Canadian experience' means having work experience in Canada. They do not understand how they can be asked to possess this when they have just arrived. Often, more recently arrived skilled immigrants seeking employment

perceive 'Canadian experience' as concrete knowledge, and look to social service providers as a source of obtaining this transferable information" (p. 146). Actually, it is more often the case that employers associate Canadian experience with not only hard skills - how particular jobs are accomplished - in Canada, but also the soft skill of understanding Canadian workplace culture and acquiring the communication capacities necessary to operate effectively within it.

Because having Canadian experience includes understanding Canadian workplace culture, many new immigrants are compelled to take part in unpaid volunteer jobs (Wilson-Forsberg & Sethi, 2015). Some skilled immigrants who seek jobs complained that "employers use Canadian experience as a tool to take advantage of immigrants and obtain free labour" (Sakamoto et al., 2010, p. 146).

Hiring practices. Liu (2007) examined the reason for skilled immigrants' low outcomes in the labour market from the perspective of employers' attitudes and practices in hiring newcomers. He pointed out the conceptual gap between employers and skilled immigrants. In other words, he suggested that there is a disconnection between the employer's perception of the human capital assets held by new immigrants and the high levels of skills and education assets that they actually possess. As a result, newcomers are often ignored, and end up being excluded from the labour market, and employers lose opportunities for acquiring immigrants' valuable skills. He also saw the hiring strategies that are preferred by employers and used conventionally in Canada as one of the factors that discourage newcomer job seekers. The hiring process in Canada is heavily dependent on informal candidate searches and internal referral systems. These informal networks,

which are built on existing, locally structured, social networks, tend to bar access to newcomers, because they lack the necessary social capital, with a limited period of residence and a low degree of engagement in mainstream society.

Culture and language. Liu (2007) emphasized cultural barriers as the most problematic obstacle that newcomers suffer. Language barriers are not confined to language proficiency. It is true that employers assess job seekers' language abilities based on their ability to communicate effectively. It is, however, problematic that some employers discriminate against the accents of new immigrants (Sakamoto et al., 2013). Liu (2007) criticized the notion that 'Canadian experience is actually used as a cultural parameter in the evaluation process and equated with proof of required language and communication skills and ability to function in the Canadian business culture. Similarly, it has been discovered that Canadian credentials are also valued as easy proof of the applicant's soft skill, which means adaptability to Canadian culture, and whether they can fit into the new workplace' (p. 10). He argued that the rationale that "being culturally fit" implies "being immediately productive" can create a "systemic barrier for entrance into the labour market as Canadian work experience, accent requirements and culture-specific community skills often place unreasonable expectations on newer immigrants" (Liu, 2007, p. 10). Cheng et al. (2013) identified insufficient English communication capabilities, depleted resources, and a lack of social support as the main barriers to the professional certification that can be very important for immigrants to be integrated into workforce.

Immigrants' Skill Underutilization: Effects

Immigrants risk psychological distress (Aycan et al., 1999; George et al., 2012; Grant & Nadin, 2007) and ill health (Chen et al., 2010; Dean & Wilson., 2009) through exposure to a wide variety of stressful events in the host country, such as poor labour market integration, social stigma, and racial discrimination. Aycan et al. (1999) analyzed interviews with immigrants from Turkey to examine their acculturation process, as well as their employment patterns, and their impact on their psychological well-being and adaptation. It was found that though a majority of interviewees were well-educated and qualified, they still experienced difficulties integrating into the labour market. Also, they discovered that the larger the gap between their socio-economic status in Turkey and in Canada, the greater their acculturation stress. In addition, those whose economic status dropped were less satisfied with their lives in Canada, and less likely to see themselves as accomplished in economic life.

George et al. (2012) conducted a mixed-method study to explore the relationship between underemployment faced by internationally trained engineers and their satisfaction with life in Canada. The result was that internationally trained engineers not working in the engineering field were likely to be less satisfied with life in Canada, and more likely to leave it, than those who were working in the engineering field.

Grant et al. (2007) focused on the experiences of a sample of immigrants from Asia and Africa who were currently facing credentialing challenges. After finding that a significant proportion of the immigrants were suffering credentialing and

underemployment problems, and that they attributed the problems to discrimination, Grant et al. (2007) also measured the psychological reaction associated with difficulties in obtaining recognition from Canadian employers for international credentials and work experiences. Negative feelings, such as disappointment, sadness, hurt, and stress, were intensely felt by a considerable proportion of the sample. It can be interpreted that these negative emotions may hinder the social integration of new immigrants and, therefore, can be the cause of social instability.

Chen et al. (2010) explored the correlation between over-qualification and health status among new immigrants in Canada. The most interesting part of their study is where they tried to explore the association between over-qualification and deterioration in both general and mental health status, comparing sample data over four years. According to them, respondents to their survey who were experiencing over-qualification were more likely to report a decline in mental health over that four-year period.

Another study was conducted to examine the impact on the health status of under- and unemployment among highly skilled recent immigrants in Canada (Dean et al., 2008). Their argument starts from the presumption that, in general, on arrival new immigrants have health superior to that of average Canadian citizens because of self-selection, which means that only the physically and financially healthiest of people are able to migrate, reinforced by the medical screening process imposed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The participants in the study who were highly skilled immigrants responded that their status of under- or unemployment had a negative impact on not only their own health,

but also that of their family. The difficulty of economic integration is thus a problem not limited to the principal immigrants, but extends to their families.

Koreans' Work Identity

In modern society most people do some kind of job, and pursue various activities through their work. The meaning of work can be drawn either from what the work itself is, or what can be derived from the work (Albrecht, 2014). Through work, people obtain not only economic compensation, but also social status, determined by the nature of their job; they then establish their social identity by being given a certain position and class in the social stratum (Kim & Kim, 2010, p. 132). According to the World Values Survey (WVS, 2010), which compared the social importance of work in several countries, the percentage of those in South Korea who replied that “work is very important” is 60.8%, the highest of all the surveyed countries. The percentage of those who answered “work is rather important” is 29.8%, so the total percentage of those who think work is important in life is about 90%. Table shows the importance attributed to work by people in five countries (South Korea, Japan, The U.S., Germany, and China). It indicates that Koreans regard work as more important than any other peoples.

Table 1. Comparison of Importance of Work in Five Countries

	The U.S. (n=2,232)	Germany (n=2,046)	Japan (n=2,443)	China (n=2,300)	South Korea (n=1,200)
very important	35.6	39.4	52.1	38.1	60.8
rather important	44.3	40.5	3201	41.5	29.8

not very important	12.9	9.9	8.4	13.3	4.8
not at all important	6.6	7.0	1.9	2.7	3.4
Total	99.4	96.8	94.5	95.6	98.8

Many Koreans have a tendency to think it shameful to receive money without working, and regard working as a social obligation. They prioritize work even when it means sacrificing leisure time. They believe they need to do any kind of work, even if it does not have any monetary reward (Jeong, Park & Yoon, 2014).

Considering this propensity that Koreans have with regard to working, it can be easily inferred how depressed they could be if they are un/underemployed. Especially, if one used to work in a professional area and live an affluent life in the past, frustration by being un/underemployed must be more severe.

Chapter 2. Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

In this chapter I introduce the theoretical perspectives used in this thesis, which are Critical Race Theory (CRT) and democratic racism. The research design follows. This includes participants' description, recruitment process, insider/outsider, data collection and analysis.

CRT

CRT was developed in the mid-1970s by legal scholars of colour as an alternative to the stalled progress of traditional civil rights litigation, in order to produce meaningful racial reform (Taylor, 1998). Though at first CRT sought to explain how racial progress can occur through laws and court decisions that abolish the most visible signs of racial discrimination, it has gone on to pay attention to patterns in the racial inequality that is seen to intensify in ordinary areas of life, such as housing, education, employment, wealth, and criminal justice, to name just a few (Freeman, 2011). In this thesis CRT is used as a theoretical tool with which to identify the hidden or implied racism in the Canadian labour market, especially relating to the participation of Korean skilled immigrants.

It might be meaningful to refer to the assumption on which CRT is based. The most important assumption of CRT is that the law and other structural frameworks are not colour blind. Some CRT scholars critiqued the argument of colour-blindness by pointing to its logical contradictions (Gotanda, 1991; López, 2007; Siegel, 2000). Gotanda (1991) revealed the inconsistency of the colour-blindness norm by saying that one must first

recognize race if he/she wants “not to consider race” in decision making. He also contended that “a color-blind interpretation of the Constitution legitimates, and thereby maintains the social, economic, and political advantages that whites hold over other Americans” (p. 2). López (2007) pointed to the absurdity of the “equation of laws designed to subjugate with those intended to foster equality” (p. 987). Stiegel’s (2000) argued that colour-blindness discourse has nothing to do with race-neutrality, and that it can, rather, rationalize social stratification, which is defined as “status inequality among groups arising out of the interaction of social structure and social meaning” (p. 77). Though CRT was developed in the United States, it is meaningful to apply it to the analysis of the racism hidden in Canadian society, because Canada's multiculturalism leads people to see it as colour-blind, which is contrary to the case (Stewart, 2004).

Democratic Racism

Racism in Canada is characterized by the term “democratic racism” (Henry & Tator, 2006). Democratic racism is interpreted as a dissonance caused by the conflict between democratic liberalism and the collective racism of the dominant culture. Henry and Tator (2006) contended that dominant elites in Canada are unwilling to acknowledge the existence of racial prejudice, discrimination, and disadvantage by arguing that Canada pursues democratic liberalism in such forms as equality, tolerance, social harmony, and respect for individual rights. Therefore, when anyone experiences and complains of racial bias or differential treatment, it is believed that their condition is the result of some defect

of their own, rather than their race or ethnicity: what is called “blame it on the victim” syndrome.

Democratic racism theory pays attention to the power of “discourse” in contributing to reinforcing and reproducing the racialized beliefs and actions of the dominant culture (Smitherman-Donaldson & van Dijk, 1988). Such discourses of racism exist in the form of blaming the target of racism and denying the existence of racism in a democratic society. Institutions such as the media, the arts, education, policing, justice, the social and health services, and systems of governance are especially regarded as discursive spaces that intersect with one another, and function to categorize, interiorize, marginalize, and exclude racialized populations (Henry & Tator, 2006). In this context democratic racism has something in common with CRT in the sense that both of them argue that racism is deeply embedded in the fabric of society and permeates our social structure and practices. It can be said that the following quotation displays the characteristic of covert racism in Canada:

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

An intersectional element between CRT and democratic racism is that both utilize counter-stories or counter-narratives to disprove dominant narratives, which are the stories told by the white elite. Such an approach, of gathering and analyzing counter-narratives,

helps to generate a deeper analysis of the lived experience of racialized peoples. The importance of storytelling in CRT and democratic racism comes from the argument that:

(a) They can build community among those at the margins of society by putting a human and familiar face to theory and practice, (b) they can challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society's center by providing a context [in which] to understand and transform established belief systems, (c) they can open new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society by showing possibilities beyond the ones they live and demonstrating that they are not alone in their position, and (d) they can teach others that by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

The perspectives of CRT and democratic racism are expected to help analyze the substance of the racism in Canada, and to propose alternative policies with which to mitigate the inequity between dominant and subordinate groups.

Research Design

This study followed principles related to qualitative research. Hence qualitative interviewing was utilized. The latter is understood as a co-production, involving interviewee(s) and researcher, where meanings and understanding are created in an interaction (Mason, 2002, p. 62). This approach to research involves the construction or reconstruction of knowledge more than the excavation of it (Mason, 2002). This method seems appropriate as set to explore the experiences of Korean skilled immigrants. Qualitative research allows the exploration of a wide array of dimensions of the Korean skilled immigrants, including the texture and weave of everyday life, their understandings,

experiences, and imaginings, and the significance of the meanings that they generate (Mason, 2002).

Furthermore, I adopted a qualitative research because it uses interviews as a data collection method. This allows collecting “people’s knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences and interactions that are meaningful properties of the social reality” (Mason, 2002, p. 63). In particular, I chose to carry out one-to-one face interview because these provide knowledge and evidence related to the context and/or situation. They are also interactional (Mason, 2002, p. 64). I expected the one-to-one face interview to help me understand each participant’s specific experiences and their stories with regard to my research question. Qualitative interviewing is also meaningful inasmuch as the depth and complexity of covert racism is more likely to be understood by “people’s situated or contextual accounts and experiences, rather than a more superficial analysis of surface comparability between accounts of large numbers of people” (Mason, 2002, p. 65). Ethical approval was granted by the McMaster Research Ethics Board prior to the commencement of the recruitment process (Appendix D).

Insider/outsider. I am aware of the significance of the researcher’s role in qualitative research. The personhood of the researcher, including her or his membership status in relation to those participating in the research, is an essential and ever-present aspect of the investigation (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). I have both aspects, of insider and outsider, with regard to this research. I am an insider in the sense that I might participate in the Canadian labour market, and try to seek a job as an internationally trained worker with a background similar to those of the participants in this research after finishing this graduate

course. I can sympathize with the fear of not being accepted into the mainstream because of the inability to communicate with others in Canadian official languages. On the other hand, I am an outsider in that I am not an immigrant, and have not yet tried to find a job in Canadian labour market. Also, I have not lived in Canada long enough to have perceived the reality that immigrants face in everyday life. For this reason, I was able to maintain an objective stance.

Being an insider is said to enhance the depth and breadth of understanding of a population that may not be accessible to a non-native scientist; whereas the objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity of a research project can be questioned because one may know too much, be too close to the project, or be too similar to those being studied (Kanuha, 2000, p. 444). Being an insider helped me to be trusted and accepted by the participants, although their stories were not pleasurable to share. It also helped me understand the depth of the feeling that they revealed as they compared their current status with the success of their previous colleagues in Korea. I had to be careful, however, not to let my own experiences and preconceptions influence the participants and induce them to say what I wanted to hear. I also had to keep in mind the possibility that I might distort their real explanation while translating their transcription in Korean. On the whole, I tried to take advantage of being both an insider and an outsider at the same time.

Participants' description. All the participants of this study were Korean skilled immigrants who had had a challenging time finding a job in their own field, or who were experiencing underemployment since landing in Canada. The criteria were as follows: (1) Being born and raised in Korea, finishing post-secondary school; (2) built up their career

in a specialized field; (3) being between 25 and 50 years of age, and (4) having lived in Canada for at least three years. Three years was chosen as criterion because it is long enough for the immigrants to experience various situations in the process of searching for jobs. Assumed names are used for the purpose of protecting the confidentiality of the participants.

Recruitment process. Purposive sampling was conducted in recruiting participants for this study. Purposive sampling means selecting groups to study on the basis of relevance to research questions, the theoretical position, the analytical framework, analytical practice and, most important, the argument or explanation that I am developing (Mason, 2002). I also used a snowball sampling technique, a recruitment method that employs participants' social networks to access specific populations appropriate for this research (Noy, 2008). Through snowball sampling I requested the first participant to introduce one of her friends who is appropriate for my study, and so on.

Participants voluntarily engaged in the study, and were instructed to contact the researcher directly to ensure confidentiality. After asking for agreement from the participants who contacted me, I sent by email an informational note and a consent form explaining the purpose of the study, their rights to withdraw, and protection of their confidentiality. Furthermore, the participants were informed on the phone of the study objective, an outline of the questions, their confidentiality protection, and interview locations. Participants were asked to read and sign two copies of the information/consent form (Appendix B) if they were comfortable with proceeding.

Data collection. Interviews were carried out by the main researcher, myself, in Korean, because all the participants and I have Korean as our mother language. Data were collected from May to June, and each interview was approximately 40-50 minutes in length. Participants were informed that the interview would be digitally recorded for analysis. They were given the right to withdraw their participation at any time, and were given the option of refusing from answering questions they did not feel comfortable answering. Once consent was obtained and signed, one copy was given to the participant, while the other copy remained with the researcher. Participants were also asked if they wished to receive a summary of this thesis, and, if so, how it could be conveyed to them.

Audio recordings and hand written notes were taken to facilitate the collection of information, and to make sure that important information was not overlooked. I also adopted open-ended questions in order to understand their own meaningful experiences. Participants were asked what brought them to Canada, and what their career was in Korea. They were also asked what kinds of barriers they met in finding a job in Canada related to their own field. Further questions explored the structural barriers or challenges encountered in getting a job in their field. Other interview questions are related to their ideas about policies and/or programs that would help them integrate into Canadian society in a smoother manner. I also, however, wanted to leave space for the participants to tell me what they thought was important to share. This allowed flexibility for the participant to share stories or information that I had not considered previously with my questions. Each interview took place at a time and place of each participant's choosing.

Data analysis. The process of data analysis began with completing the transcription process in Korean; later, the transcription was translated into English by me. I listened to each interview, and carefully transcribed the interviews into a .doc (Microsoft Word) format document. In order to ensure accuracy, after completing each transcription I read it carefully, listening to the audio recording. According to Lpadat and Lindsay (1999), by completing the transcription process the researcher is able to develop a deeper understating of the data. The six interviews were translated, and read “literally” for the language used, the structure of the dialogue, and literal content. Each transcript was then reviewed again to identify and code themes that emerged from the transcripts through the interview questions. I tried to catch key words or themes that might explain the reason the participants were not satisfied with their performance in the Canadian labour market despite their proven professional abilities. Whenever I encountered a paragraph that I thought related to the research questions this thesis sought to answer, I wrote the themes beside the paragraph. After doing this throughout the transcripts, I organized the themes according to a few categories that bind related themes. Below is the table that shows the categories and the themes that belong to each one.

Table 2. Categories and Keywords

Categories	Keywords
Structural Exclusion	international credential, international experience, Canadian experience, settlement service, discrimination, disadvantage, inequality, no alternative, nowhere to appeal

Broken Illusion	disappointment, discrepancy between policies and reality
Responses to obstacles	attaining Canadian education, despair, returning to Korea

The above table was formulated through an interpretative reading. An interpretive reading involves researchers in constructing or documenting a version of what they think the data mean or represent, or what they think they can infer from the data (Mason, 2002, p. 149). As a qualitative researcher I recognize that I interpreted the collected data based on my own social locations and my experiences. As well, my participants interpreted the interview questions based on their social world and past experiences.

In the final stage of data analysis, participants were given the transcription of their own interview, and invited to review and respond to the data they had provided. This process is known as member checking (Mason, 2002). This affords participants an opportunity to clarify or add to the interview, but also engenders an additional layer of trust between the researcher and the participants as they renew their engagement with the study (Becker, Bryman, & Ferguson, 2012).

Chapter 3. Findings

This chapter presents the significant findings that emerged in the analysis. The findings are organized according to the research questions of this thesis. The first question, ‘what stands in the way of Korean skilled immigrants’ economic integration?’; the second, ‘what is the psychological impact of these obstacles on them?’; and the third, ‘how did they respond to these obstacles?’.

Structural Exclusion

Lack of recognition of international knowledge. Though Canadian government verifies Korean skilled immigrants’ experience, the fact of the matter remains the labour market and/or employers do not. Most employers require Canadian experience, but most immigrants do not have it. This makes it difficult for newcomers to get a job in Canada. Though all the participants had more than three years’ working experience in Korea, potential employers did not recognize it. With regard to this issue, one of the participants shared her difficulty in finding a job that is similar to her previous career in Korea because she did not have experience in Canada.

I studied accounting in Korea, and worked at a major bank, but that was not helpful when I tried to find a job in Canada. Nobody acknowledged my experience in Korea. Later I heard that experience in Canada is important. Someone said that even general labour experience in Canada is more important than professional experience in Korea. Without working experience in Canada, it is very difficult to get a job. It’s ironic that you need to have working experience in order to get the first job. But it is the reality here. It seems almost impossible for newcomers to get a job with this reality. (*Jennifer*)

Another participant said that he had expected that his working experience would be helpful in find a job in Canada because he had been involved in trade with America region. Contrary to his expectation, years of his working experience in Korea were not recognized in Canadian labour market as long as he did not have Canadian experience. The following is his statement:

I used work for one of the major car companies in Korea as a manager in overseas operation department. The system of international trade is almost the same in every country except a few differences. I am sure I know almost all the knowledge about trade through years of experience in a big company. But the problem is that nobody recognized my experience just because I did not have any experience in Canada. You know, my knowledge is not proved by a kind of certificate. My knowledge is obtained by experience. If Canadian employers don't believe in my knowledge just because I don't have any experience in Canada, I have no way to prove my knowledge and experience. *(Lucas)*

Even those who succeeded in getting a job had to start as junior staff because they don't have experience in Canada. Another participant also complained that when he got a job he had to begin work at the starting point because his experience in Korea was never recognized.

I used to work as a programmer in Korea for several years. After many twists and turns in Canada, I succeeded in getting a job with which I could continue my career. But I had to start from a low position irrespective of my previous experience in Korea. They didn't recognize my experience. So, my salary is smaller than I used to earn in Korea. I think I can prove that I can do more complicated work, but chances haven't come to me yet. *(Clark)*

Four of the participants showed their complaints about non-recognition of international knowledge, which they did not expected before coming to Canada. At first, they did not realize what the reality was. However, as they were getting accustomed to life

in Canada, they realized their difficulty was different from that of Canada-born Canadians. They were worried that difficult experiences similar to theirs could continue as long as employers have prejudice.

Hiring practices: “Discrimination?”. Another participant mentioned the conventional recruit process in Canada as an obstacle to immigrants’ employment. While public recruitment is normal process in Korea, recruitment through social network is normal in Canada. He said that job postings with good conditions went to acquaintances of the workers in an organization. He said that it was very rare for Korean immigrants to find a decent job in this system because they got limited access to the information about open positions with such a small community. The participant stated as follows on this point:

When there is a job posting, the staff of the organization are likely to recommend their acquaintances for the position. It is almost impossible that people like us, who have few acquaintances, will get that opportunity.
(Erin)

Most of the participants had tried to apply for a job online many times, but it was rare that they succeeded in getting an interview. Even when it seemed possible they would get an interview, they could not do so. How can this common phenomenon be explained? They were all recognized professionals in Korea, and the Canadian government has acknowledged that they are capable of working in Canada. Why would they not be able to at least get a job interview? Below are the participants’ accounts of their experiences in this issue. One participant said:

As I saw many companies’ homepages, I noticed there are many online applications. So, I tried online applications for employment many times.

But I have had only few replies calling me for interviews. Even if I got an interview, they didn't call me again. (*Jennifer*)

Another participant told of a similar experience:

I applied for every hiring advertisement I saw on the street or on the Internet. But no one contacted me. I guess that it was because my name indicated I was an immigrant. (*Clark*)

Another participant complained of much the same thing:

Whenever I sent my résumé, I failed to get an interview. Is it because I was unqualified? Or is it because I am an immigrant? I think it is because they ignore immigrants' applications, and they can tell what applications are from immigrants by the names. (*Lucas*)

As above remarks indicate, a few participants thought they were discriminated by employers implicitly even though they believed they were qualified applicants for the jobs in their field.

Accented English: “Not good enough”— “Prejudice?”. All the participants stated that being proficient in English, which is one of Canada's official languages, was very important in the Canadian working environment. At the same time, they said they could not help getting timid when they saw job postings. The participants said that they felt frustrated when they saw “fluent in verbal/written English required” in job advertisements. They believe that they could make themselves understood, to some extent, if they continued to work in their professional field. Many Koreans, however, tend to feel that if they are not perfect in an area, they are not good enough at it. One participant expressed her wish that the phrase about the language requirement in job postings would be changed to “able to communicate in the related professional environment”, rather than “fluent in verbal/written

English required”. They know that meeting as many people as possible is the best way to improve their language skill. It is ironic, however, that they cannot meet many people, and therefore cannot improve their English if they do not find employment because of their lack of proficiency in English. One participant said as follows regarding this matter:

What I was worried about when I looked for a job was English. Though I thought I could make myself understood in the field where I used to work, I could not help feeling daunted when I saw job postings that required fluent command of English. Because of this fear, sometimes I didn't even give it a try. Anyway, I wonder why they don't try posting job advertisement with the phrase 'able to communicate in the related professional environment.' If they did, I think I would take a chance for it because I am confident of my professional knowledge and experience.
(Erin)

The participants explained that the requirement of fluent English hinder them from succeeding in getting a job. One participant's case was shocking and I could feel how strong her dismay was. She went to a college in Canada again in order to get a professional job even though she already a B.S. degree of accounting and job experience in Korea. She was so diligent that she obtained good marks and was never late or absent during Co-op period. However, she failed to get a job while one of her classmates who had been absent from class often and was not good at exams got a job. She thought that it was because she could not speak English as well as her friend. The following is her statement.

After submitting many résumés, I was contacted by an employer. I could start a temporary job. It was about seasonal tax. I happened to meet a friend who went to the same college with me. In fact, I studied accounting at a college in order to get a job here. Anyway, I was glad to meet the friend. However, when the seasonal tax job was finished, the employer told me not to come to work anymore. But I found later that the friend could keep working there. Though it is my personal feeling, I thought it wasn't fair. I cried a lot after coming home. I knew the friend had been absent from class very often, and my test score was always better than

hers at college. Also, I had experience of working at a financial institution in Korea. I couldn't keep the job, but my friend could. I think it was either English proficiency or racial prejudice that determined who could keep the job. She was a Canada-born white woman. We, Korean immigrants, are proud of our sincerity. I studied hard at school and worked hard at my job. But when I faced such a result after working so hard, it was very frustrating and depressing. *(Jennifer)*

Two participants had different opinion. They pointed to their low confidence about English is the problem that hinders their employment.

I don't think I am good at English. However, every Canadian that I have met has said that I am a good English speaker. I think they are flattering me. I always worry what will happen if I cannot communicate in English while working with others. You know, we Koreans seem to have the tendency of thinking that we are not good if we are not perfect. Wouldn't it have something to do with the Korean education environment, where only the winner is recognized? *(Amy)*

Another participant showed similar opinion:

I lack confidence in my English. Because of this, I can hardly think of applying for a professional job. I know I have to do some kind of work if I want to improve my English. But I cannot get a job because of my fear of English. Isn't it ironic? But I know I am not hopeless at English. I am not confident just because I cannot speak like native English speakers. *(Lucas)*

One participant who is now working in a professional field regretted having low self-confidence of his English skill when he was trying to find a job. He said that he could perform his tasks without problems even though his English is not fluent. He said that it was the phrase 'fluent English' in the job postings that lowered his confidence. The following is his remark:

I think lack of confidence in speaking English is one of the biggest obstacles in finding jobs. I thought I could communicate in English without difficulty in everyday life situations. But I used to think that

working in an office required proficiency in English. So, at first I was reluctant to find a job related to my career. Later, I found that that working as a computer programmer does not require high proficiency in English. I regret not being more confident about finding a job in the past. However, it is not my fault. I just didn't think I was fluent in English, and every job advertisement saying "excellent in English" daunted me, even though I found later that I was able to work in an office with my deficient English.
(Clark)

The matter of low confidence in English was not problematic only in the process of job seeking. Even when they succeeded in getting employed, they felt that they were not treated equally with regard to workload and the chance of promotion due to lack of proficiency in English. A participant worried about the possibility of being fired anytime even though she had a full-time job. She thought that if the employer judged that she could not communicate with the colleagues or perform her job smoothly because of her imperfect English, she could lose her job. She said that she was doing irksome tasks that belong to other colleagues in addition to her work so that she could make up her imperfect English skill.

I have a full-time job. My life might look stable to others. In a way, it is more stable than those who have part-time jobs. But I don't feel safe, because I always worry what if my boss thinks my performance is poor because of my English. I help my colleagues with their irksome work after finishing my work because I think it covers my imperfect English. Isn't it a pity? *(Jennifer)*

Five participants all agreed about the importance of English. They also agreed that immigrants' English is inevitably imperfect. However, there was one case that showed that it was possible to work even though English is not excellent as long as one had professional capability to perform tasks effectively. Still, it is true that most of the participant felt that the requirement of fluent English was an obstacle to their job seeking.

Inner group discrimination: “Double discrimination”. The participants who succeeded in getting a job said that they experienced inner group discrimination. A participant said that there is discrimination within visible minority groups. Another participant said that he was happy when he finally succeeded in getting a job. However, after a while he realized that his workload was different from others. His work required a lot of time and care, while others finished their work early. He thought that it was not fair, but he had to put up with it. The following is his explanation.

I didn't know at first. I am just grateful of the opportunity to work. But after a while I felt uncomfortable that I realized that I had been treated unfairly. For example, when my team starts a project, we divide the work among team members. The hardest work is always allotted to me. Why? I am an immigrant who doesn't complain of anything. *(Clark)*

One participant pointed out that the voices of Korean immigrant workers were ignored by workers with Chinese backgrounds. He explained that Korean immigrants experience double discrimination in Canada because Korean community is relatively small among visible minority groups and there exists unbalance of power among them. The following is his statement.

I work in an institution that provides social services to people of Asian origin. So, most of the workers in the institution are Asian. I found there is discrimination even among Asians. The team where I belong is made up of several Korean workers, and other teams are mostly Chinese. Once I noticed that my team was always taking too big a load of work. I asked the director to distribute the load of work evenly among the teams, but the director ignored my request. I think there is also discrimination within minorities. *(Harris)*

The findings from the above interviews suggest that immigrants faced unofficial discrimination within workplaces despite Canadian official multiculturalism.

Settlement services not meeting the needs of skilled immigrants. The participants shared their opinions of how the settlement services affected them. Most of the participants said that the settlement services were not effective to Korean immigrants. They expected customized services when they came to Canada, but most services were basic and limited to general information providing services. For example, main services were to provide information about how to search job advertisements, how to write resume, how to surf the Internet and how to learn English. They were already aware of this information. What they wanted was not this kind of basic/stereotyped information but practical/customized information to satisfy their needs. Another issue regarding settlement services, they suggested that the services be provided to the new immigrants in their native languages even if their community is small. They remembered that it was a strained situation to consult about how to settle smoothly in English when circumstances were unfamiliar to them on arriving in Canada. The following are some their experiences.

What was the settlement service provided to me? Some newsletters used to be sent by e-mail, but I don't think they were helpful, because they contained [only] general information. Such abstract and general information was not practical or helpful to me. Are there skilled immigrants who don't know how to write a resume or a cover letter? The contents of the newsletters were not new, and could be obtained on the Internet. I was given a counselling session, but it was not very helpful either. (*Lucas*)

The information I wanted was the information about where to find job postings, what options are available for me to get a job, or what processes I have to go through. But the information that settlement services provided was simple knowledge, such as how to use a computer, how to rent or buy a house, or how to search the Internet. This is far from what I really needed. (*Amy*)

Settlement service? You mean the ---- I used to look for such service providers. Later I got to know there are many organizations providing settlement services, especially free English learning programs. But the problem is you have to find the service by yourself. If you can't find the service, it is as if it doesn't exist. If there is someone who could just let me know what kind of settlement services are available, it would be very helpful. Finding such a service by oneself wouldn't be easy. *(Jennifer)*

The potential to get a job is related to the ability to access information easily. New immigrants who are unfamiliar with the society and culture have limited human networking and information. Particularly, Korean skilled immigrant communities are much smaller than other visible minority communities. The difficulty Korean immigrants face is therefore more severe. Another participant added:

Most of all, lack of information is the biggest problem. Most of the people I met here at first are Koreans. The Korean community is very small, and the range of people I meet is very narrow, so it is inevitable that the information I can get is limited. You know, human networking is very important to get a job. *(Lucas)*

Another participant mentioned inequality of information attributable to the small size of the Korean community:

It seems that most workers in the organizations providing settlement services are also immigrants. I have never seen any workers who can speak Korean. I think if I had been given settlement service in Korean, it would have been of great help, because when I first arrived here, English was not a familiar language to me. Once landing here, I didn't know what to do or where to ask. *(Amy)*

It was found that most of the participants were not satisfied with the settlement services, and they wanted more practical services to help them to integrated into society. It was also found that the settlement services were different depending on the region and the size of the recipients' community.

Structural Exclusion and Psychological Effects

The second question of this study is ‘what is the psychological impact of the obstacles encountered?’ Findings from the participants in this research with regard to this question show that though they immigrated to Canada by the attraction of Canadian multiculturalism, they realized that Canadian multiculturalism was an illusion. They said that they felt frustrated when they faced the reality of the Canadian labour market. A few participants remembered their anxiety and uneasiness which they felt when the state of being unemployed continued and their financial state was getting worse.

Broken illusion. In Korea, Canada is recognized as a country made up of immigrants. That is, most Koreans believe that Canada is composed of various ethnicities and races, and that it is open to different cultures. Related to this, most of the participants stated Canadian multiculturalism and alleged colour-blindness as their biggest reason for choosing Canada as their destination, rather than other English-speaking countries, such as Australia or the United States. In other words, they decided to come to Canada because they believed that there would be no discrimination against a racial minority, which is a serious problem in those two countries. Since landing in Canada, however, many Korean skilled immigrants have come to feel that multiculturalism in Canada is an illusion. One participant put it as follows:

I think the first of the reasons that Koreans choose Canada among English-speaking countries as a place to migrate to is their belief that Canada has no racism. Canada is believed to be wide open and generous to immigrants, and this belief led me to come to Canada. When I first arrived here, I felt happy with the peaceful landscape and nice people.
(Amy)

The following is another experience:

My husband went to university in the United States. However, we felt that racism and discrimination in the United State were very serious and it would be hard for us to get a job and live there. Though there are more job positions and opportunities in the United States than in Canada, that is the story of the Whites. For immigrants, especially Asian immigrants like us, getting a job appropriate to one's capability and living safely doesn't look easy. In contrast, we were attracted to Canada because Canada always announces it is open to immigrants and everybody in Canada respects cultural difference. So, we chose Canada instead of the United States. (*Jennifer*)

Another participant added:

I came here for my kids' future. You know, competition in Korean is too severe and kid's score record in school is everything to parents. I was worried about the stress our kids had to face. In Korea, the United States comes up in the head first when people talk about immigration. But I had heard news about racist violence in the United States a lot, living there would be another stress to my kids. On the contrary, the image of Canadian multicultural society and peaceful feeling made us choose Canada. (*Lucas*)

As the above remarks show, the Canadian multiculturalism played an important role in attracting Korean skilled immigrants to Canada. When they tried to get a job, however, they realized that the reality in Canada did not match their expectation they had before coming to Canada.

Loss of identity and low self-esteem. For Korean workers, their 'work' or their 'job' is interpreted not only as a means of making a living, but also in terms of one's identity, self-esteem, and self-fulfillment. In other words, leading an ordinary life with a job means that one is a necessary member in the society, which is the essential meaning of being. The current state of being unemployed or underemployed makes the participants feel depressed.

They were frustrated by the fact that they could not utilize the knowledge and skill they had worked hard for a long time to build. Some of the participants said that they would go back to Korea when their children have grown up and can live independently, because living in their current condition is meaningless to them. One of the participants explained it as follows:

When I worked in Korea, it made me happy to see the clients that I dealt with feeling a sense of achievement and that their problems were solved, because I felt like I could help somebody. And I felt fulfilled when I saw they were happy. Work is important, as it is related to feeling alive, feeling they have achieved something, and happiness, as well as in terms of earning money to get by. I was happy when I worked as a nurse in Korea. But now that I am working as a helper in a convenience store, I don't feel proud of myself like I used to when I could help my clients as a professional. I often feel I am a useless person who doesn't function properly. *(Amy)*

Another participant added.

How can I describe myself? Somebody's mom? Somebody's wife? Who am I? I think it is the job I am doing that expresses me. When I worked as a professional, I felt proud of myself. Now I am a housewife, and feel like nothing. *(Erin)*

Another participant said:

A job is a keyword that represents me, as well as being a way to sustain living. Especially for Koreans, a job is something that stands for the person's identity. Koreans also have a tendency to judge a person by his/her job. So do I. *(Harris)*

'Working' is not just a way of earning a living to Korean skilled immigrants. It also represents who they are. It can be found that participants suffered from emotional and psychological trouble as well as financial problem when they failed to find a job in which they could prove their skill and knowledge.

Facing Reality: Participants' Responses

Another question of this research is how Korean skilled immigrants responded to the harsh reality they faced in the Canadian labour market. First, a few participants went to college or university in order to get a job where their professional ability could be recognized or started a new degree course which they had been interested in. Though all the participant agreed that degrees in Canada and Canadian experience are important to get a good job, only a few participants put it into practice. Second, a few participants gave up their efforts to integrate into the mainstream. They were working as helpers in convenience stores or part-time workers not related to their previous career or experience. They restricted their social activities only within Korean community. Third, a few participants thought about going back to Korea if their current state continues. They said that if their career is not recognized and they cannot live a stable life, there is no reason they keep staying in Canada. The following are the detail of the findings regarding this theme.

Attaining Canadian education. Some participants said that a Canadian diploma was one of the things they needed most to get a job after landing in Canada. However, when they applied for a job with their Korean diplomas and/or certificates, these were useless. Only when they obtained a Canadian diploma could they get an interview and, sometimes, become employed. They argued that it was a kind of discrimination to require immigrants to take additional diploma courses in Canada, because it is a huge burden on them in terms of time and money. One of the participants said as follows:

After a while, I realized that I couldn't help doing general labour for the rest of my life unless I got an education again here. So, I am keenly aware

that I need to take courses at a Canadian college or university to get a decent job here. *(Amy)*

Another participant talked about the need for a diploma and the difficulty in obtaining it.

I think I need to take a diploma course to get a job here. But that is not as easy as you might imagine, considering the time spent preparing for entrance and studying at college. It is not easy to spend several years studying without income, especially for those who don't have enough savings, and have to raise kids. *(Lucas)*

Another participant added:

I had been through various jobs, from a convenience store cashier to a restaurant waitress, before getting my current job. At that time, I realized that without a diploma here I had no choice but to do general labour for the rest of my life. Though I graduated from a university, majored in accounting, and worked for a major bank in Korea, nobody showed interest in it. So, I decided to study accounting at a college in Canada again to get the diploma here. It is the reality that most Korean skilled immigrants go to school again just in order to find a job. *(Jeniffer)*

Another participant remarked following:

Though I had a master's degree in social work, and job experience in Korea, it was not recognized by Canadian society. So I took a master's course again in Canada. After finishing the master's course in Canada, I tried again to get a job. But it was still difficult, because I didn't have any working experience in Canada. *(Harris)*

These participants must have felt unfair when they thought they had to take additional courses in order to get a professional job even when they were already aware of the contents of the courses and had working experience in the field. In addition, the age of these participants at the time of immigration was more than mid 30s because they had completed their higher education and worked for more than 4 or 5 years. A few of them

were even married. It must have been a suffering for Korean skilled immigrants with this status to take additional diploma courses in order to get employed.

Giving up efforts to integrate into mainstream. Another response to harsh reality of Canadian labour market was giving up the efforts to integrate into the mainstream. Participants said that they tried to enter the Canadian labour market with their experience but to no avail. After thinking that getting a job that matches their qualification was impossible, they decided to do whatever work they could get because they had to keep their living. They said that they had no time or money to spare to interact with Canadians of other ethnic origins. Especially, those who were working in a part-time job seemed to have no interest in social or political issues in Canada. All their social activities were within the boundary of Korean community. One participant explained the reason that he was doing a job that he was not satisfied with as follows.

If you want an office job, or want to be a white collar worker, you need a diploma here. A Korean diploma or certificate is useless. I don't have a Canadian diploma, so I work as a convenience store cashier. If I quit my current job to study, I cannot afford to pay the mortgage. It is my dilemma that I have to quit my current job if I want to study to get a diploma to become a white collar worker, but my economic situation does not permit this. (*Lucas*)

Another participant explained her situation where she could not but work as a helper in a convenience store owned by another Korean immigrant. She tried to have her credential working as a nurse acknowledged in Canada, but she gave up because the process was too complicated and required documents that she could not get in Canada.

Am I satisfied with my current job? Not at all. Though I don't like this job, I have no choice. However experienced registered nurse I was in

Korea, I am just a general labourer not a professional. I cannot afford to take certificate courses here because I have two sons I have to take care of. I am not satisfied with my current life, but I have no choice. *(Amy)*

These participants' social interaction was focused on Korean community. They seldom had chances to communicate with ethnic groups other than Koreans. They could not spare time for social activities because they were busy working and taking care of family at the same time. Their bosses are Koreans. They went to Korean community church and most people they met were Koreans too.

The convenience store where I work is owned by a Korean who goes to the same church. She gave me a job. Even though it is a part-time job, I am always too busy to have my hobby or enjoy social activities because I have to take care of my children. I don't know how to enjoy life in Canada. *(Erin)*

I am just accustomed to current life. My boss is a Korean, and all the people I meet in ordinary life are Koreans. So, the information about employment I get is limited. *(Lucas)*

As the above narratives show, a few participants were doing a job that is not related to their experience. Though they were not satisfied with the current life, they adapted themselves to it rather than tried to overcome.

Considering going back to Korea. Two of the participants had plans to go back to Korea because they had not found a job in their professional field. They also expressed their frustration when they told about the experiences of failing to get a job matching their qualification. There were deeply disappointed with current state and showed their inclination to go back to Korea, where they believed they could find work to do. One of the participants illustrated:

I want to go back to Korea. Of course, I know going back to Korea will not compensate for the time I have wasted here. But I think I won't live like this doing jobs irrelevant to my capability and intention. (*Amy*)

Another participant who is a full-time worker in a convenience store showed his thought of going back to Korea if he continues to feel he is useless in Canada.

In fact, my current job is unstable. Though you can call it full-time job, it is not secured because if the owner decides to sell the business, it is a matter of time that I am fired. I am still looking for a job that I can utilize my experience. But if I cannot find a job I am happy with, I will plan to go back to Korea seriously. (*Lucas*)

What these participants wanted first was to escape from their underemployment state in Canada. If they succeed in getting a job they want, they will probably stay in Canada. If they don't, they will decide to return to Korea.

Findings indicate that the obstacles to Korean skilled immigrants' integration into the Canadian labour market are lack of recognition of international knowledge and experience; inner group discrimination; settlement services not meeting the needs of skilled immigrants; and racial discrimination. Findings also show that these obstacles had psychological impact on the participants in the form of disappointment, frustration, anxiety, and low self-esteem as their illusion broke when they tried to enter the Canadian labour market. Participants' response to the obstacles can be summarized as pursuing further education in Canada in order to find a job they wanted; giving up the efforts to find a job matching their qualification and accepting underemployment; and/or considering going back to Korea if their underemployment status continues.

Chapter 4. Discussion and Conclusion

My curiosity motivated this study—why many of the Korean skilled immigrants are not working or are doing jobs not related to their professions. According to a survey (WVS, 2010), Koreans regard work as more important than any other peoples. Also they have been among top three peoples who work longest-hour in the OECD countries for more than a decade. I found the findings intriguing. The participants came to Canada because Canada is represented by multiculturalism and they thought they could find a job easily—free of racism and discrimination. After landing, they realized that this was just an illusion.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and many other educational institutions promote study abroad and emigration fairs every year in Korea (uhak2min.com/en/). This is intended to attract prospective immigrants and international students to Canada by suggesting that Canada is a country of immigrants, and that everyone is respected regardless of their origin of birth, skin color, religion, language, or culture. Most Korean skilled immigrants came to Canada believing this as a fact. Not long after, however, their illusion broke, and they realized that the reality was different from what they imagined when they confronted the hardship in adapting to living in Canada as immigrants. Particularly, the participants said that they came to face the harsh Canadian reality when they tried to find jobs in the Canadian labour market. Many of Korean skilled immigrants have had difficulty finding a job related to their previous career.

Though Canada superficially claims to support multiculturalism and antiracism, it is the reality that skilled immigrants are still marginalized in the job market, regardless

of their strengths and capabilities, just because they are immigrants. The participants shared their difficulties in seeking a job and working as an employee. Here, I define successful economic integration as not only getting a job but also utilizing one's skill and knowledge to the fullest so that one can integrate into the mainstream of society. Hence, both being unemployed and underemployed mean that successful economic integration is still incomplete.

The findings indicate that structural exclusion is a significant theme for the participants. They are similar to the results of preceding researches exploring the difficulties of skilled immigrants' economic integration. Researches named lack of international credential recognition as one of the biggest obstacles to skilled immigrants' entrance into the Canadian labour market (George et al., 2012; Hawthorne, 2007; Houle & Yssaad, 2010; Ikura, 2007). International credential assessment and recognition is divided into two forms: formal and informal. Universities, college, regulatory bodies, and provincial assessment agencies tend to be concerned with formal recognition related to educational credentials while the informal recognition is at the discretion of employers, sector councils and NGOs (Ikura, 2007, p. 18). Formal recognition process with standardized systems of credential assessment is advocated by employers because it allows potential employers to judge the quality of newcomers' competence objectively (Sangster, 2001). In case of informal recognition process by employers or other private sectors, however, it is probable that they have prejudice or bias against the quality of international knowledge. I think this is where skilled immigrants confront structural exclusion the most.

The fact that this kind of informal international credential recognition process is not regulated by the government makes it more difficult to correct such structural exclusion.

It is evident that the problem of skilled immigrants' un/underemployment is not confined only to Korean community but true of all the other racialized ethnic groups as revealed in the literature review. Also, this issue has long been discussed by scholars and government agencies, and various alternative policies have been recommended by them (Alboim, Finie & Meng, 2005; Bloom & Grant, 2001; Wanner, 2001; Weiner, 2008). Despite the amount of time and effort devoted to this and prescribing potential solutions to this problem, nothing has been improved in terms of economic integration and equality from the results in the literature review and findings in the previous chapter. Rather, Reitz (2007) showed that the employment success of immigrants in Canada, which is defined in terms of employment rates and earnings to the native-born population, has been in decline for some time (p. 38). As shown in the findings, participants in this research also were in the state of underemployment, or even if they were full-time workers, they received lower salary than Canada-born workers doing the same job. Referring to the global definition of racism by Jones (2002), which states "Racism is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on phenotype ('race'), that: unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities; unfairly advantages other individuals and communities; and undermines realization of the full potential of the whole society through the waste of human resources" (p. 10), I can assert that skilled immigrants in visible minority groups are surely victims of racism considering the findings. Then, why this problem of structural exclusion has lasted such a long time? Why has the number of marginalized skilled immigrants not been reduced

even when a lot of scholars and government agencies have known the problem? I assume that democratic racism theory provides the answers to these questions. According to this theory, racism can be internalized and institutionalized by the use of discourses such as blaming the target of racism and denying that racism exists in a democratic society (Henry & Tator, 2006). Henry and Tator (2006), have argued that these discourses influence both the perpetrator and the victim of racism through media, education, the justice system and the arts. Therefore, the dominant group does not need change the status quo and the racialized do not know what to change. This long-lasting problem of skilled immigrants' failure of economic integration is important in that it causes various troubles to them in terms of financial and psychological aspects. Furthermore, it is a more serious problem in that their being excluded undermines the fundamental of healthy democratic society, which needs active participation from its members.

Furthermore, if Canadian government determined immigrants are eligible to live in Canada on the basis of their education and skill, it should take the responsibility for helping them to get employed. Though scholars with neo-liberal perspective would disagree with the government's intervention, I agree with Bloemraad (2005) when she argued that government intervention can foster immigrants' and refugees' ability to establish and sustain community organizations, especially through settlement and multiculturalism policies that provide material and symbolic resources that immigrants can use to build a large and diverse organizational infrastructure (Bloemraad, 2005). What is important here is that government's intervention should involve "material and symbolic resources."

Another issue through this study that I would like to discuss is that there is also discrimination among racialized groups. Most of the research that deals with racism and discrimination has paid attention to the relationship between the dominant and subordinate groups. It should be noted, however, that not all the racialized groups in Canada are the same. There are subgroups within the racialized groups that are attacked by double discrimination. Government funding is not distributed among racialized groups evenly. Furthermore, due to the recent trend of neoliberalism that has brought about the techniques of financialization, the delivery of social services under the multiculturalism policy has been shackled by the framework of a competitive marketplace (Harvey, 2007; Wade, 2008). As a result, the distribution of resources to help ethno-specific organizations provide various social services, including settlement services, to new immigrants is tilted in favor of the communities that have more power and visibility than smaller ethnic groups (Salaff & Chan, 2007). In this vein, the Korean community organizations are among the ones that do not receive adequate resources to obtain the social services that are practically useful for new Korean immigrants to integrate into Canadian society. The findings in this research also support the above point. Most of the participant said that they did not hear about the multicultural programs supporting immigrants' economic integration.

Implications for Social Work Practice and Research

Some implications have been drawn in terms of social work practice and further research. First, social workers should realize that they are not just deliverers of social services. Especially in the case of multiculturalism policy, social workers have to remain

cautious as to whether the multicultural policies that they deliver to their clients are consistent with social justice. Uncritical delivery can exacerbate and reinforce social inequality. Furthermore, they need to try to request that more antiracism and anti-discrimination measures be included in multiculturalism policies. In this regard it would be helpful to study further the limitations, as well as the achievements, of Canadian multiculturalism. The more they learn about the evolution and limitation of Canadian multiculturalism, the more likely it is that they will know the right direction for it.

Second, considering the population of Korean immigrants, their voices are relatively weak, and rarely heard in Canadian society. As mentioned in the interviews with the participants in this study, newcomers want to be given practical settlement services in detail and, if possible, in their mother tongue. The reality, however, is that the number of social workers and social service organizations or agencies that can provide newcomers with settlement services professionally, in Korean, is definitely inadequate. The Canadian government needs to secure a number of social workers in proportion to the size of each ethnic racialized community.

Third, social workers and organizations in the Korean immigrant community should try to communicate with social workers from other ethnic minority communities so that they can cope with the problem of social inequality caused by racism and discrimination. If social workers from different visible minority groups collaborate to, it will be much easier to address the structural inequality that they confront in common as visible minorities in Canada.

Limitations

One significant limitation of this study is the small size of the sample. I only carried out a total of six interviews. The contents of interviews with six people cannot represent all the experiences that Korean skilled immigrants have had. Although there should be more varied experiences, that can be categorized into more diverse themes, among skilled Korean immigrants, limited data and themes are considered in this study.

Another limitation is that I could not explore the vast and continuing discussion (or arguments) about Canadian multiculturalism. From the definitions of multiculturalism to the pros and cons of its Canadian version, the literature is so large that I could not cover it all. Still, what is evident is that there is a wide spectrum in the evaluation of Canadian multiculturalism, from agreeing on its positive results to criticizing it as a factor in hiding the real inequality in society. It is important to conceptualize the evolution and current implications of Canadian multiculturalism, because it has had an influence not only on the decisions made by people in other countries as to whether they will migrate to Canada, but also on the life satisfaction of newcomers.

Another limitation of this research is that gender differences in the challenges encountered in the incorporation of the Canadian labour market were not explored. This can be followed further by researchers interested on this subject at hand.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that Korean community church in Canada plays an important role in providing a venue for new Korean immigrants to get together and interact with each other. Cohesiveness of Korean community around church is very strong.

It is to be examined in further study whether incomplete integration into the mainstream causes the strong cohesiveness of Korean community or, conversely, the strong cohesiveness makes new immigrants more dependent on the community and less eager to integrate into the mainstream.

Conclusion

This research showed that many of Korean skilled immigrants are not utilizing their professional knowledge and experience in Canada. That is, the reasons that skilled immigrants have difficulty finding a job matching their qualification were said to be: lack of international credential recognition; lack of confidence in English language; lack of social networking; and settlement services not meeting needs. Though several things were mentioned as obstacles to economic integration, it sounds persuasive that democratic racism is the basis of those reasons. It explains the contradictory co-existence of egalitarianism and racism in Canada. In the same context, it explains persuasively the contradictory reality where those who have competence and eagerness to work hard cannot use their capability. It also gave me a chance to think about the limitation of Canadian multiculturalism and its right direction. If Canadian multiculturalism continues to focus only on the promotion of cultural diversity, public insensitivity of everyday racism will last.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Poster

**PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR
RESEARCH IN KOREAN SKILLED IMMIGRANTS**

기술이민에 대한 연구 참가자 모집

**I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study as part of my MSW thesis titled
as *Hard Working but Hardly Working: A Case Analysis of Skilled Korean
Immigrants in the Canadian Labour Market.***

You must meet the following criteria: (i) being born and raised in Korea (ii) finished post-secondary school, (iii) built up their careers in specialized fields (iv) being between 25 and 50 years of age and (v) having lived in Canada for at least three years

Your participation will involve being asked some questions in an interview which will take approximately 30-45 minutes. Interview will be conducted in a language of your choosing- Korean or English.

캐나다 노동시장에서 한국 기술 이민자들의 경험에 관한 연구에 참가해 주실 참여자를 찾습니다. 25 세 이상 50 세 미만으로 한국에서 캐나다에 정착하신 지 최소 3 년 이상 되신 분으로 캐나다에 기술이민 카테고리 이민오신분 중에 이 연구에 관심 있으신 분들은 아래 연락처로 연락해 주시면 대단히 감사 드리겠습니다. 참여는 한 시간 정도의 인터뷰로 이루어 질 것이며 시간과 장소는 자유롭게 정하실 수 있습니다.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Hye-Jung Park
School of Social Work McMaster University
905-818-2166
Email: parkh13@mcmaster.ca

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Opening Question:

Would you share some of your personal information with me, such as your age, marital status, how many children, and educational background in Korea?

Introductory Question:

- What brought you to Canada?
- How long have you been in Canada?
- How long had you worked as a skilled/professional worker in your field in Korea?

Transition Question:

- What was your first impression of Canada's labour market?
- How do you feel about living in Canada?

Key Question:

- Can you tell me what kind of jobs have you had after arriving in Canada?
- Is your current job related to your previous career in Korea?

- If yes, how?
- If no, what made you accept that job?
- What kinds of obstacles have you encountered while trying to find a job in your field?
- How do you explain those difficulties?
- What kinds of service or information did you get from settlement service organizations when you tried to find a job?
- What is helpful?
 - ◆ If yes, what? And how?
 - ◆ If not, why not?
 - What do you think is needed then?
- What kinds of barriers are the most significant for you?
- What kinds of immigration policies or services do you think are necessary for newcomers to be able to integrate into the society in Canada?

Ending Question:

Do you have anything else to add that you consider important, but that I have not asked you?

END

Appendix C: Letter of Information / Consent

DATE: _____



Hard Working but Hardly Working: A Case Analysis of Skilled Korean
Immigrants in the Canadian Labour Market.

Investigator:

Student Investigator:

Hye-Jung Park
School of Social work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

(905) 818-2166

E-mail: parkh13@mcmaster.ca

Faculty Supervisor:

Dr. Mirna E. Carranza
School of Social Work
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

(905) 525-9140 ext. 23789

E-mail: carranz@mcmaster.ca

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to take part in this study that examines the experiences of Korean skilled immigrants in Canada, particularly related to the labour market. I am hoping to learn about

the barriers faced in obtaining employment in your field; and how the experiences impact your life. I am conducting this research as part of my Master degree in the School of Social Work at McMaster University.

Procedures involved in the Research

I am inviting you to take part in an in-depth interview that will take approximately 30-45 minutes. The interview will take place in a mutually agreed upon location. Some examples of the interview questions are age, gender, marital status, economic status and education in Korea; and I am going to ask about your experience finding a job in Canada. I would like to tape record the interview and take notes with your permission. These will be transcribed for analysis.

Potential Harms, Risks or Discomforts

The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. It is possible that you may feel discomforts related to answering some of the interview questions. These risks are not greater than those you might encounter in your everyday life. You have the right to refuse answering any of the interview questions that make you feel uncomfortable. I describe below the steps I am taking to protect your privacy.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality and privacy. The data will be stored in my personal laptop, which is password protected. The laptop will be kept in a

cabinet to which only I have the key to open it. I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified. However, since the Korean Community is small, others may be able to identify you on the basis of the stories you tell about yourself. Please keep this in mind in deciding what to tell me. No one but me will know whether you participated unless you choose to tell them.

Potential Benefits

Although the research will not benefit you directly, I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will help us to better understand the barriers faced by Korean skilled immigrants and its impacts on their life. I hope that what is revealed through this study will help inform policy regarding needing systemic changes leading to the full social and economic integration of immigrants to Canada.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is your choice to be part of the study or not. If you decide to be part of the study, you can stop (withdraw) from the interview for whatever reason, even after signing the consent form or part-way through the study or up until approximately **June, 10, 2016**. If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, any data you have provided will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study.

Information about the Study Results

I expect to have this study completed by approximately **August, 2016**. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you.

Questions about the Study:

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me at:

Or at 905-818-2166

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:

CONSENT

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **Hye-Jung Park**, student 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 **10 June, 2016**
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

1. I agree that the interview can be audio recorded.

... Yes.


... No.

2. ...Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study's results.

Please send them to me at this email address _____

Or to this mailing address: _____

Appendix D: MREB Ethics Approval

		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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Addendum <input type="checkbox"/> Project Number: 2016 057			
TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Hard Working but Hardly Working: The Experiences of Skilled Immigrants in Canada Labour Market Focusing on Korean Immigrants			
Faculty Investigator(s)/ Supervisor(s)	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
M. Carranza	Social Work	23789	carranz@mcmaster.ca
Student Investigator(s)	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
H. Park	Social Work	9058182166	parkh13@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: <input type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is cleared as presented without questions or requests for modification. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is cleared as revised without questions or requests for modification. <input type="checkbox"/> 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: May-12-2017	Other:
Date: May-12-2016		Chair, Dr. T. McDonald 