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Adult Immigrants Seeking Entry into the Trades in Rural Alberta: Navigating the Processes of Credentialing and Re-credentialing

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Adult Immigrants Seeking Entry into the Trades in Rural Alberta:

Navigating the Processes of Credentialing and Re-credentialing

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this case study is to explore a sample of international power engineering students' experiences and perceptions to get a better understanding of the individual and collective strategies adopted to navigate the post-migration transition to the Canadian labour market. Along with document analysis, this thesis analyzes data gained through personal interviews and a focus group with 14 international power engineering students, with the intention of gathering input from their experiences and perceptions of (re-)credentialing to realize successful labour market entry. This thesis offers an analysis of (re-)credentialing as a contested space amidst a process of negotiating an arbitrarily imposed re-training regime. With a sociocultural framework that considers the earlier writings of Lev Vygotsky in support of the contemporary concepts of Pierre Bourdieu, the findings suggest the need for more support of mediated learning experiences to promote abilities to process new and complicated symbolic representations linked to labour market entry requirements. The findings also indicate the profound influence of a field-habitus clash on successful entry to occupations of choice.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, D. Ross. The research reported in Chapters 3-5 were covered by Ethics Certificate number REB14-0752, issued by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board for the project "Adult Immigrants Seeking Entry into the Trades in Rural Alberta: Navigating the Processes of Credentialing and Re-credentialing."

Most importantly, thank you to the 14 participants. I extend my sincere gratitude to you for putting your faith in this project, trusting me, and giving of yourselves by sharing your experiences, perspectives, and thoughts for the good of others. I wish you every success.

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GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS AND ACRONYMS

ABSA – Alberta Boilers Safety Association

ALIS – Alberta Learning Information Service

AUM – Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory

AVC – Alberta Vocational Centre

BDI – Behavioral Descriptive Interview

CEC – Canadian Experience Class

CFREB – Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board

DAT – Differential Aptitude Test

FST – Federal Skilled Trades

FSW – Foreign Skilled Worker

GED – Tests of General Education Development

International Power Engineering Student – An international power engineering student can be defined as a new Canadian citizen or permanent resident who has met the entry pre-requisites for the power engineering training program as specified by participating post-secondary training institutions and who is enrolled in the training program. This population of international power engineering students can be divided into those with international experience and demonstrated competence as power engineers (re-)credentialing themselves in the trade, and those with a propensity for the trades, seeking power engineering credentials.

IRPA – Immigration and Refugee Protection Act

ISO – Immigrant Service Organizations

LINC – Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

NGO – Non-Government Organization

PN – Provincial Nominee

SOPEEC – Standardization of Power Engineers Examination Committee

TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language Exam

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Canadian companies are hiring increasing numbers of internationally trained tradespeople to fill

substantial shortages in various trades (Klingbeil, 2012; Sankey, 2013). Although many

industries demonstrate an awareness of the importance of diversity in the workplace along with

the importance of successful integration of all workers (Klingbeil, 2012; Toneguzzi, 2013),

labour market entry for new immigrant tradespeople is troubled by a combination of barriers

(Girard & Smith, 2013; Grenier & Xue, 2011; Guo, 2013a). Within Canada, the majority of

research in immigrant settlement and integration focuses primarily on the metropolitan areas

(Guo, 2013b). In addition, there is a differentiation of labour market entry between new

immigrants who settle in major metropolitan areas such as Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal,

and those who settle in second and third-tier immigrant receiving cities with smaller populations,

such as Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg (Guo, 2000, 2010a). Thus, there is a need for more

research on immigrant settlement and integration in second and third-tier cities, including

important economic driver locations such as Fort McMurray, Northern Alberta, Canada where

successful labour market entry into trades occupations can be linked to high levels of financial

remuneration and where the skilled trades shortage is being felt more acutely.

Background and Context

It was while working as a Chairperson of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

(LINC) program at Keyano College, the sole college located in the community of Fort

McMurray and within the Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Alberta, Canada, that I began to have

doubts about my work as a program supervisor for a Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)-

sponsored language program for new immigrants to Canada. My job was to manage and

coordinate the human resources to deliver English language instruction from basic levels up to

more advanced levels according to a set, levelled, LINC curriculum. To stay within each year's proposed program budget, I often faced combined classes containing two and sometimes three levels of LINC students. The added stress to the LINC instructors often resulted in turnover of instructional staff that in turn affected the continuity and consistency of the program. In addition, placement of the students was challenging, especially at the lower levels of LINC where testing protocols combined with low levels of English language proficiency made classroom placement problematic and inadvertent misplacement of students common.

A paradox ensued as applications for entry to the LINC program outstripped the capacity of the program to accommodate them. I was managing a well subscribed waitlisted program, but at the same time I could see a growing legion of newcomers who were facing barriers delaying them from entering the labour market. It was apparent that, in the process of offering a well-structured LINC program, within a limited government budget, we were unintentionally acting as gate-keepers to the growing numbers of new immigrants working toward establishing themselves in Fort McMurray.

As waiting lists for the LINC program grew, I began to see some of the outer workings of new immigrant social networks combined with the new learning of new immigrants as they came into the office to apply for the program. It was the people they knew, friends and family, who sometimes helped steer them toward our office, and who helped them through the application process. Conversely, many new immigrants had no one to speak for them as they applied for the LINC program. This was one of the first manifestations of the scope and complexity of the learning challenges that they faced, and the positive and negative duality of new immigrant social networks.

With modern parallels to the economic boom at the turn of the twentieth century and specific reference to the draw for international labour to maintain economic momentum, Canada in the twenty-first century is relying heavily on new immigrant tradespeople to meet the increasing demand for the trades, particularly power engineers (Toneguzzi, 2013). Although "labour shortage" is a subjective term determined by regional assessments done by private companies, several oil and gas companies within the province of Alberta have been facing substantial shortages of power engineers (Sankey, 2013; Toneguzzi, 2013). A sharp deterioration in crude oil prices beginning in 2014 has resulted in less activity in the oil and gas industry and less demand for power engineers. Prior to the economic slowdown, activity in the oil and gas industry was primarily responsible for the shortage of power engineers in Alberta, making it the number one occupation in demand in the oil sands. In addition to the oil and gas activity in other parts of Alberta, the tremendous growth in oil sands development, especially in the greater Wood Buffalo region in northeastern Alberta, further fuelled the demand for power engineering graduates. One study reported that between 2006 and 2020, over 5,000 new plant and facility operators will be needed in that area alone (Alberta, 2007). Since the oil price collapse, construction of an increasing number of oil sands projects have either been delayed or deferred while oil companies wait for the price of oil to go back up.

Prior to 2014, opportunities for international power engineering graduates were made abundant by the challenges associated with hiring for this trade. For example, companies that required power engineers were engaged in hiring due to growth and due to turnover rates, as employees moved from company to company within the oil sands or left the industry to work in competing sectors (Klingbeil, 2012). In addition, an increasing proportion of the hiring was necessary to replace retirees as they left. The currently reduced opportunities for employment

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combined with wages that range from $29.77 to $44.36 an hour (Alberta Learning Information Service, 2014) depending on the level of certificate held, the responsibilities of the position, and the location and size of the employing organization, still make power engineering a sought after occupation for new immigrant tradespersons to Canada, as they wait for the price of oil to return to more profitable levels.

Once in the workplace, power engineers are responsible for the safe and efficient operation and maintenance of industrial equipment such as boilers, steam and gas turbines, generators, gas and diesel internal combustion engines, pumps, condensers, compressors, pressure vessels and related controls. In large industrial or building complexes, they also may be responsible for heating, air-conditioning, ventilation, refrigeration, fire systems and building systems (Alberta Learning Information Service, 2014). Power Engineering is not an apprenticeship trade; however, it is divided into levels of skill and training, much like the apprenticeship trades.

Statement of the Problem

As Chairperson of the LINC program, I also taught developmental English college preparation courses. A number of students who had started out in this program were in the classes that I taught. I learned that many of the students brought education, skills, and hope with them as they migrated to Canada. For example, one student was a university professor in Peru prior to coming to Canada. He was attending College and working low paying jobs to save the money and attain the Canadian credentials to apply to the College's Power Engineering program. Whatever skills and status he had in Peru made little difference upon his arrival in Canada and impacted both his identity and the learning that he faced in order to realize his economic expectations.

The scope and complexity of the learning challenge that new immigrants face is profoundly affected by the intersection of a number of other pressures, not the least of which is ensuring day-to-day economic survival. International migration is taking place in a globally competitive age that has seen, for example, the decline of long term jobs with healthy benefit plans and the rise of short term jobs and contract work with little or no benefit plans (Statistics Canada, 2016). This has resulted in an increased funnelling of people into low-paying jobs, such as the ones many newcomers to Canada end up taking (Baltodano et al., 2007). Newcomers' credentials are not recognized and there are major barriers preventing skilled workers from entering their professions of choice and additional barriers upon entering their professions of choice. Elements essential to the process of learning and adjusting to a new country, such as time and space, are further pressured by the transnational commitments of many new immigrants that include maintaining critically important remittances from themselves to their families in their countries of origin (Baltodano et al., 2007). This resultant pressure to learn at a rapid rate, sustain remittances, and make the successful transition to the labour market is often what will occur.

In order to meet the demands of this type of learning regime, the choices that those new immigrants make about which learning activities to engage in are of paramount importance. My experience as manager of the LINC program and as a teacher of developmental English courses has challenged me to re-examine the relationship between the motives and goals of skilled immigrants, many of whom seek to enter the trades in Fort McMurray, and the activities they choose, to traverse the challenges associated with re-establishing themselves in a trade.

At the same time, I found the discourse around labour market entry of recent immigrants into Canadian society characterized by substantial study of the disjuncture between the promises and perils of immigration including the different barriers preventing smooth entry into the

Canadian labour market (Baltodano et al., 2007; Li, 2003b; Shan & Guo, 2013). For example, barriers may consist of credentials not always recognized, the devaluation of skills combined with an insistence on "Canadian experience", and racial and ethnic discrimination combined with exclusionary workplace conventions (Bauder, 2005, 2013). Exclusionary workplace conventions may serve as a cultural locator for distinguishing between Canadian job applicants and immigrant job applicants.

Purpose of the Research

As manager of the LINC program, I am eager to better understand the role I play as a college educator, in relation to the process that new immigrant tradespeople generally adopt to negotiate a smoother transition to labour market entry in times when skilled tradespeople are in high demand. In observing the experiences of new immigrants making their way through college English courses and prerequisites for further training and subsequent employment, I found them repeatedly engaged in a process of negotiation and adaptation to a new set of "rules." The purpose of this case study was to explore a sample of international power engineering students' experiences and perceptions to better understand both the individual and collective educational and employment strategies that new immigrants to Canada develop.

Research Questions

Throughout this dissertation, I answer the following central guiding research question: What and whom do adult immigrants in the trades in rural Alberta encounter as they navigate the (re-) credentialing regime to transition into the Canadian labour market and what do their responses to these encounters suggest about the interaction of the personal and the social, or of agency and constraint? This central research question is associated with the following three sub-questions:

1. How do recent immigrant tradespersons perceive and negotiate the new (re-)credentialing regimes and transformations in the contemporary Canadian labour market?

2. How do factors such as socioeconomic background, gender, race, and social ties, referred to as social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990) inform the experiences and learning of these immigrants?

3. What strategic tactics and resources have proven successful for these immigrants as they develop a new disposition and practice, which Bourdieu (1998) refers to as habitus, through the (re-)credentialing process?

Not surprisingly, given references embedded in some of these questions to Pierre Bourdieu, his writing was central to the theoretical framework that guided my inquiry and analysis. In particular, I employed his concepts of field, or the non-material relational space of activity where agents take-up and hold positions according to how much capital they have (Bourdieu, 1993b), habitus, which refers to one's evolving set of dispositions – choices, actions, and ways of thinking – shaped by the social contexts one encounters and interacts with throughout life (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Maton, 2012), and doxa, the implicit fundamental social beliefs, opinions, and practices arbitrarily embedded in the field that characterize the field, maintain and reproduce the objective social structures of the field, the linkage between field and habitus, and agents' struggle for position on the field (Bourdieu, 1977, 1999; Deer, 2012). Additionally, Bourdieu's ideas about strategic agency, the experience of acting and doing things, primarily adaptive in nature, guided by the interplay between habitus and field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Swartz, 1997) figured into my study. These ideas were complemented by the socioconstructivist perspective developed by Vygotsky (1930-1934/1978, 1930-1934/1981, 1930-1934/1983), from which learning and knowledge are understood as culturally and socially

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situated in which learning drives individual development and is based on prior learning experiences and knowledge is considered as concept formation rather than information acquisition. I continue to explain these terms and concepts and outline how they are taken up in relevant research in subsequent portions of this dissertation.

Methodologically, these questions were explored with participants using qualitative case study methodology, which I discuss briefly next and outline fully in Chapter 3. The case that I have chosen to explore my research problem is a set of 14 international power engineering students, new immigrants to Canada, enrolled in a power/process engineering training program at Keyano College, Fort McMurray, Alberta. The study took place in the trades' school setting within Keyano College. Participants' experiences and perceptions of (re-) credentialing in a trade were explored through their stories, which I accessed through the use of individual interviews and focus group discussion, supplemented by document review.

Researcher Perspective

At the time of conducting this study, I was employed as a faculty member in the College and Career Preparation department of Keyano College. As a researcher, I brought practical experience as an instructor of increasing numbers of international students seeking pre-requisites for entry to the trades and I had knowledge and understanding of the environmental context within which these students are interacting. There is more to explaining the perspective that I brought to my research than these facts though. Working from the inside out, I begin with a discussion of my personality. I am a kind, caring, quiet person who likes to live and work in structured environments. I like the effectiveness of following regular routines to accomplish tasks in an efficient, methodical manner. I am a thoughtful person, an analytic thinker, preferring to reflect on issues and challenges before coming to a decision about them. I am friendly, but not

overly gregarious. I have a small number of long-time friends in relation to a large bank of acquaintances. In social situations, I am a careful, considerate listener attuned to the non-verbal and verbal signals of the person I am interacting with. I have an ongoing interest in helping people. For most things that I do, I am quietly self-critical because I want to get things as correct as they can possibly be.

Beyond that description of my personality and disposition, I consider my social location and how it helps explain the person I have become. Moser (2008) states that "the past two decades have brought a growing recognition that we never shed our identities or biographies to become neutral observers" (p. 384). The institutional privilege that I have as an instructor in the College articulates itself in the "multidimensional geography of power relations" (Rose, 1997, p. 308). These power relations need to be made clear to avoid any "mystery" from being associated with the research process (Rose, 1997). When I reflect on my journey to becoming a teaching professional, I recognize my privilege as a white, male, fourth-generation Canadian of European ancestry. I faced few barriers to entry and opportunity in my profession. Conducting research within the institution where I am employed extended advantages, in terms of the cooperation I have received from my research participants.

I also acknowledge that the same experiences that stand me in good stead to provide insight could act as a liability, biasing my judgment of the research design chosen and the interpretation of my findings. In addition to my assumptions and theoretical orientation being made explicit in the initial stages of my study, I remained committed to ongoing self-reflection in the form of journaling and consultation with my doctoral committee advisors. Furthermore, to address my subjectivity and strengthen the credibility of my research, various procedural

safeguards were put in place, such as the use of multiple methods of data collection (Simons, 2009; Yin, 2014). I discuss these methodological matters further in the Methodology chapter.

Assumptions

Based on my reading of the literature and my involvement in educational programs delivering prerequisite qualifications to international students seeking to (re-)credential in the trades, I had four primary assumptions at the outset of this study. First, non-recognition and mis-recognition of international credentials is commonplace among new immigrants to Canada (Cheng, Spaling, & Song, 2012; Esses, Dietz, & Bhardwaj, 2006; Grenier & Xue, 2011; Guo, 2009). Mis-recognition of international credentials involves the devaluation of credentials of immigrants by the host country based on origin of education (Buzdugan & Halli, 2009). Fraser (2000) describes the concept of mis-recognition using the "identity model," based on the Hegelian idea that one's identity is constructed through a process of mutual recognition where, in an ideal reciprocal relation between subjects, each subject sees the other as equal, yet separate.

Furthermore, one becomes a subject only through the process of being recognized, and, recognizing another subject. "Recognition from others is thus essential to the development of a sense of self. To be denied recognition – is to suffer both a distortion of one's relation to one's self and an injury to one's identity" (Fraser, 2000, p. 109). My first assumption is based on the declining labour market outcomes of economic class immigrants in Canada over the past 20 years along with an increasing subscription to a (re-)credentialing regime as a required part of the labour market trajectory for new immigrants (Fang, Samnani, Novicevic, & Bing, 2013; Ferrer, Picot, & Riddell, 2014; Li, 2008).

Second, I acknowledge that recent immigrant tradespersons face difficulties finding a clear path to the Canadian labour market. This point was noted above, and is raised in critical

literature on the topic of immigration to Canada (Baltodano et al., 2007; Li, 2003b; Shan & Guo, 2013). In my experience, I have witnessed recent immigrant tradespeople changing their original career plans and educational pathways after arriving in Canada.

Third, I am guided by the principle that adult learners prefer to take responsibility for their own learning and to utilize self-efficacy as adult learners to achieve their learning and employment goals (Cercone, 2008; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2012). Further to that premise, I assume that a smooth transition to the Canadian labour market is disrupted for recent immigrants who face barriers in the (re-)credentialing process. Barriers include identifying and accessing strategic tactics, resources, and culturally normative dispositions.

Fourth and final, I assert that social networks are of limited use to recent immigrants in the trades in gaining entry to the Canadian labour market. This premise emerges from the reality that most recent immigrants have a small network of social connections in Canada, from their countries of origin, which they can draw on for helpful information (Li, 2004; Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2012).

Rationale and Significance of Study

In light of the increasing global competition that Canada is facing to attract and retain skilled immigrants to replace an aging workforce, my research question centers on primary issues affecting trades credentialing and, in turn, labour market entry for new immigrant tradespersons to Canada. This seems to be a reasonable question considering the growing influence of transnational migration. A key aspect of transnational migration is the choice of where to migrate and this is often based on best prospects for sending critically important remittances to families in countries of origin (Carling & Hoelscher, 2013; Eckstein, 2010; Erdal & Oeppen, 2013). This is also a question of relevance to Canadian companies striving to fill vacancies as quickly as

possible (Ferrer, et al., 2014; Klingbeil, 2012). When I began formulating my research question I found, through my experience as a program manager at Keyano College, that energy corporations, trades training centres, and government agencies are all increasingly interested in optimizing the training and hiring processes for new immigrant tradespeople.

Although new "fast track" training programs are being implemented, designed to speed up the (re-)accreditation process of internationally trained power engineers (Toneguzzi, 2013), my study focussed on the experiences of international power engineering students with no previous power engineering training. This group is particularly interesting because the majority were trained for other occupations, some making a complete turn away from their occupation in their country of origin. Individuals in this group are from different countries and cultures and have immigrated to Canada for different reasons, but they all share in common the experience of gaining entry to the power engineering program and meeting the requirements of the program once admitted. The challenge that they face while (re-)credentialing in a new trade is extended by the challenges of learning to work in a new language, learning to train in a new educational system, and learning to fit into a new sociocultural setting.

This training program at the heart of this study was developed as a result of identified needs from industry to have process operators with power engineering certification. The two-year program prepares students for entry-level positions in mineral and hydrocarbon processing primarily focused on the major oil sands companies. I chose to look at power engineering students because power engineering is a trade at once facing increasing demand from the high volume of development in the oil sands and attrition from the high volume of those retiring from the trade. It also requires a substantial level of cultural competency including the negotiation of Bourdieu's (1990) habitus, which I explain in the next chapter, in order to be successful with the

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training and successful in the trade. Entry into the training program for this trade requires the acquisition of Canadian educational prerequisites, such as high school level Math, English, and Physics or equivalent education. Applicants must also pass a behavioral descriptive interview and a differential aptitude test. A mandatory part of the training includes successful completion of Alberta Boilers Safety Association examinations and subsequent two years of supervised work placement. This appears to me to be a reasonable representation for a formal study of labour market success for new immigrant tradespeople, and a contemporary real-life setting in which to explore habitus at work in immigrants' learning about themselves and their place in Canadian society. Having established the rationale for my study, I turn now to presenting the organization of the dissertation.

Organization of the Dissertation

In this dissertation, I share the results of my research project, which was designed and carried out to explore the experiences and perceptions of adult immigrants (re-)credentialing in the trades in rural Alberta. As I establish, without the habitus and social capital to be accepted as legitimate entrants to the field, the 14 power engineering students I interviewed and who participated in the focus group discussion struggled to apply successful strategies for appropriate entry to the Canadian labour market. These results appeared in the form of four themes, discussed in the Findings chapter, which emerged as I engaged in the process of analysis of my data with the assistance of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Bourdieu's theory of practice.

In the second section of this chapter, I introduce a problem that I think calls for further exploration: the ongoing struggle that newcomers to Canada encounter with non-recognition of credentials, including the major barriers that delay or block skilled workers from entry to their professions of choice. One principal research question guided my data collection and analysis:

What and whom do adult immigrants in the trades in rural Alberta encounter as they navigate the (re-)credentialing regime to transition into the Canadian labour market, and, in terms of my chosen theoretical framework, what do their responses to these encounters suggest about the interaction of the personal and the social, agency and constraint (Bourdieu, 1977)? To support my investigation of this central question, I developed the three sub-questions noted earlier.

In the next chapter, I present my theoretical framework and then I review the literature that I found related to my problem and my questions. That chapter is followed by a discussion of the methodology and methods that I used during my research project. Next, I discuss my findings and what insights emerged for me through analysis of my data. In the final chapter, I provide my conclusions and discuss what possible contributions they might provide to future researchers and those involved with adult immigrants navigating the (re-)credentialing process in the trades.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I examine the literature pertaining to the processes of credentialing and (re-) credentialing faced by adult immigrants seeking entry into the skilled trades, using Bourdieu's theory of practice as the main framework to structure my review. I have formatted the chapter to begin with my theoretical framework. Then, I build out from an historical overview of immigration to Canada contrasted next with a section on perspectives and research on contemporary immigration of tradespeople, where I highlight the gap in the literature that exists around how international tradespeople realize their entrance to the labour market in the trades. I then move on to a review of the literature concerned with two larger bodies of literature that have been defined with regard to my research topic: acculturation and assimilation studies; and sociocultural studies. Next, I review the literature on the ongoing challenges with immigration and recertification. I examine four main challenges, outlined in the literature, that new immigrants face. Then, I examine specific empirical research guided by Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical approach on the impacts of persistent and complex barriers to (re-)credentialing in the trades. The section covering specific empirical research is followed by a section where I apply Bourdieu's key concepts to research into immigration, work, identity, and learning. Included toward the end of this section is a critique of Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework and a further exploration of the supporting role that Vygotsky's theoretical framework plays in my study. Having established the rationale for my study in the previous chapter, I now turn to the theoretical framework that guided the development of research questions, methods, and analysis. The literature review contextualizes my inquiry and prepares the reader for the discussion of my findings and analysis in the following chapters.

Theoretical Framework

In guiding the development of this inquiry and the analysis of its findings, I employed Pierre Bourdieu's theory of power and practice, complemented by Lev Vygotsky's ideas about socioculturalism. It is at the nexus of these two theoretical perspectives that I locate the complex, contextualized intersection of migration and education for (re-)credentialing.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Learning Theory

For Vygotsky (1930-1934/1978) and other sociocultural learning theorists (Das, 1995; Kozulin, 2002; Wertsch, 2007), an individual's social contexts and networks gradually become internalised as a set of behavioural and cognitive dispositions. Amongst the sociocultural theorists mentioned here, Wertsch (2007) brings a distinct perspective and represents only one of several sub-traditions of Vygotsky studies. Research conducted by Wertsch (2007) focusses on language, thought, and culture, with special attention to text, collective memory, and identity. For Vygotsky, psychological tools, or any means that an individual uses to reason and think acquired through the process of internalisation, play a mediational role in helping individuals deal with their sociocultural contexts. For Vygotsky, it is the meaning embedded in the psychological tools such as language, writing, schemes, and other conventional signs that facilitates mediation and, in turn, self-construction of the individual. The importance that Vygotsky assigned to external symbolic, cultural systems speaks to the role the individual plays "as an active agent in development and it affirms the importance of sociocultural context in that development takes place through the use of those tools which are available at a particular time and a particular place" (Daniels, 2008, p. 9).

In Vygotsky's view, the mediated nature of the learning experience is closely tied to the "intermental" and "intramental" nature of agency (Thorne, 2005). Here, agency is considered

more than just an individual character trait or activity, but a contextually dependant and enacted way of being in the world (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001). Thorne (2005) argues that agency is formulated relationally and historically and involves learners taking an active part in putting together the terms and conditions of their own learning. Ahearn (2001) describes agency as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" in a world where "all action is socioculturally mediated, both in its production and its interpretation" (p. 112; Thorne, 2005).

Mediation and agency both play an important role in how Vygotsky's theory contributed to the conceptualization of adult learning in my research project. The notion of mediation was first put forward as one of the cornerstones of the Hegelian philosophical system (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995), which, along with the writing of Marx, influenced Vygotsky's work. Hegel posited the connection between human consciousness and self-consciousness in a process of mediated work. From that perspective, work's success depends on interactions between material tools and natural objects, other people's work and social and psychological characteristics, and existing symbolic representations and modes of their transmission. Vygotsky suggested three major classes of mediators, which contribute to one's development of identity: material tools, psychological tools, and other human beings (Kozulin, 2002). With reference to the "Other," Vygotsky (1930-1934/1983) wrote, "One may say that only through the Other do we become ourselves, this rule applies to each psychological function as well as to the personality as a whole" (Vygotsky, 1930-1934/1983, p. 144).

Mediation lies at the center of understanding how cognition is tied to cultural, institutional, and historical settings (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996), which present the cultural tools that individuals strive to master and characterize the complex nature of the new cultural settings that immigrants work to join. Mediational means can be described as the "carriers" of

the sociocultural patterns and knowledge that new immigrants must acquire for labour market entry (Wertsch, 1994, p. 204). A process of transformation is facilitated by the concept of semiotic mediation which is intended to suggest the qualitative transformations in the human mind that take place over time as a result of an individual's sociocultural interactions. According to Vygotsky, studying something historically or over time, means studying it in the broadest sense of history and studying it in the process of change, a fundamental aspect of any theoretical study.

Moreover, participants faced change as they met the challenge of re-emerging themselves in a learning regime with mis-matching "implicit semiotic mediation," the "pre-existing independent stream of communicative action that becomes integrated with other forms of goal directed behaviour" (Wertsch, 2007, p. 181). Like all semiosis, implicit semiotic mediation is grounded in language or written text that is interpreted (Hasan, 2012) and more specifically refers to relationships that already exist in daily interactions and that individuals bring with them to a learning situation. Vygotsky's (1930-1934/1978) concept of "sociocultural mediation of the learning processes" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995, p. 67) posits that the learning process does not take place in isolation, rather it is a "process of appropriation by the individual of the methods of action existent in a given culture" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995, p. 67).

From this perspective, the learning and development that new immigrant tradespeople assume in order to enter the labour market takes place in culturally and socially shaped contexts. I looked for evidence of how immigrants seeking (re-)credentialing negotiate the complex social relationships, different cultural values, and necessary symbolic representation, required to facilitate entry to the Canadian labour market. An additional advantage of the sociocultural approach is that it allows for the study of new immigrant tradespeople "dynamically, within their

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social circumstances, in their full complexity" (Moll, 1992, p. 239). Their cultural diversity, combined with the collaborative and transformative way that knowledge is co-constructed from the sociocultural theoretical approach, reflects the complex cultural and social context that they are compelled to negotiate.

Still, there are critiques of Vygotsky's model that it over-emphasizes internalization and individual mental construction of knowledge. To secure the place of a sociocultural perspective in this work, I now move to an explanation of Bourdieu's theory.

Bourdieu's Concepts

Bourdieu's (1977, 1998) framework for explaining social relations and socially contextualized practice has become both highly cited and highly criticized (see Bankston & Zhou, 2002; de Haas, 2010; Raghuram, Henry, & Bornat, 2010; Raza, Beaujot, & Woldemicael, 2012). The innovation of Bourdieu's framework is the essential distinction made between social networks and the resources that can be mobilised through such networks (de Haas, 2010). In relation to my inquiry, making this distinction is essential for understanding the positive and negative roles that social capital plays in the processes of migration and entry to the host country labour market. In the following sub-sections, I outline the key pieces of Bourdieu's model that I applied in my inquiry.

Habitus. Bourdieu's concept of habitus is based on "a system of schemes of perception and thought" that "acts as an organizing principle" of behavior (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 18). Elsewhere, Bourdieu (1990) offers the following explanation of habitus as

a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to

function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize

practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without

presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations

necessary in order to attain them. (p. 53)

By "structuring structures," Bourdieu (1993b) was referring to the ability of one's dispositions to

initiate practices adjusted to specific situations; in other words, dispositions can be adapted and

reworked to guide adjustment to novel situations or contexts.

Bourdieu posits that these practices are phenomena that coalesce through the relationship

between actors' habitus and their contextual social fields (Maton, 2012). Habitus and its place in

helping frame the discourse around labour market entry of new immigrants to Canada is further

reflected in the additional terms Bourdieu has used to describe it. For example, additional terms

include "cultural unconscious," "habit-forming force," and "generative principle of regulated

improvisation" (Maton, 2012; Swartz, 1997). According to Bourdieu (1993b), habitus is a

generative structure; the practices generated by the habitus offer evidence of the structure of the

habitus. My study will analyze the practices adopted by new immigrant tradespeople to gain

entry to the host country labour market to determine what dispositions of the habitus are at play

within the relational context in which habitus operates.

Although others had used the term habitus, Bourdieu's contribution was in his emphasis

on the underlying structures of practices and the underpinning of behaviours by a generative

principle. Swartz (1997) does note that Bourdieu's use of the concept of habitus evolved over

time from a normative and cognitive emphasis to a more dispositional and practical

understanding of action. Bourdieu postulates that habitus results from early socialization

experiences where external structures are internalized, and the consequent internalized

dispositions continue to set the broad parameters and boundaries of people's practices in a

stratified social world through further socialization. Hence, in one instance habitus generates

perceptions, aspirations, and practices that match the structures of earlier socialization and in another instance, it serves to set structural limits for actions. Within this context, habitus tends to shape the actions of the individual to take advantage of and perpetuate existing opportunity structures.

Field and structure. Structure plays a key role in Bourdieu's theory of practice, for the way it is integrated with habitus and for the way structure is integrated in the key concept of field. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) define field as

> a network or configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions. (p. 97)

Bourdieu proposes that the "obscure," yet dialectical, relationship between the structures of habitus and the structures of field act as organizing principles that give rise to individual practices (Maton, 2012). Furthermore, the ontological complicity of this "obscure relation" is reflected where fields, constitutive of the evolving contexts in which we live, structure the evolving habitus, and in turn the habitus forms the basis for individuals' understanding of the fields, including their lives (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 92).

By using the analogy of a game and the notion of strategy Bourdieu asserts the active, creative nature of practices within social fields. The strategic improvisation individuals engage in to maximize their positions lacks at the outset "the full knowledge of the state of play, the positions, beliefs and aptitudes of other actors, or the full consequences of their actions" (Maton,

2012, p. 53). Instead, through time and experience, an actor's initial point of view on proceedings based on his or her initial position gradually transforms to match the tempos, rhythms and unwritten rules of the social field of practice. Thus, Bourdieu's point of view sets out to transcend the structure/agency dichotomy by positing the notion of actors, over time and through prolonged immersion within a field, developing "a feel for the game" in a broad sense; one that is never perfect and one which is based on a practical understanding of practice. With the exception of circumstances such as the situation of crisis where the immediate adjustment of the habitus to the field is disrupted, Bourdieu's assertion of how agency is enacted is in contrast to, for example, the accounts of rational choice theorists that suggest rational calculation or conscious choice is the basis for the actions of the individual (Maton, 2012).

Nonetheless, Bourdieu (1986) explores the role of agency as actors undertaking conscious strategic action within the context of the emphasis he places on the domination of habitus in individuals' lives as set forth in his cultural reproduction theory. However, Bourdieu does not view all behavior as being governed by the habitus. Rather, Bourdieu (1977) posits that habitus helps to explain behavioural patterns in situations where normative rules are not explicit and where habitus encounters objective structures radically different from the objective structures under which it was originally formed. Habitus may be suppressed, but is discernable in every situation, for example, when there is a shortfall in "fit" between habitus and field. This study is concerned with such a circumstance by primarily focusing on how adult immigrants navigate and negotiate processes of (re-)credentialing in the trades in Canada.

According to Bourdieu, field is made up, in varying measure and combination of four structural properties: where fields are arenas of struggle over valued resources in the form of different forms of capital and the right to overturn existing structures of distribution of capital;

where fields reflect the structured spaces of dominant and subordinate positions dependent on the varying types and quantities of capital; where fields witness specific forms of struggle legitimized over others and imposed on actors; and a fourth critical property, where fields maintain their own degree of insularity and autonomy from neighboring or intruding fields, through an inherent structure based largely on the field's own internal mechanisms of development. (Bourdieu, 1993a; Swartz, 1997).

Within the framework of Bourdieu's social field theory, the common theme in the literature of deskilling and devaluation of prior learning and work experience of new immigrants further increases the disproportional draw, posited by Bourdieu, of individuals on either cultural resources or economic resources, the two major competing principles of social hierarchy and main constitutive elements of the field of power (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Swartz, 1997). According to Bourdieu, the dominant principle of hierarchy, economic capital, is based on the distribution of wealth, income, and property, and is in constant competition with the second principle of hierarchy, cultural capital, that is based on the distribution of knowledge, culture, and educational credentials. Of further relevance to my study, at the most general level, is how the opposition between the two poles of economic capital and cultural capital, as they are located within the field of power, delineate other fields and their locations within the field of power, specifically their proximity to the two poles. For Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Thomson, 2012), the analysis of the position of a given field vis-à-vis the field of power constitutes the first of three steps to investigating the structure of the field. The second step, according to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992),

> involves mapping out the objective structures of relations between the positions occupied
>
> by the agents or institutions competing for legitimate forms of specific authority within

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this field. The third step is the analysis of the habitus of the agents, the different systems

of dispositions they have acquired by internalising a determinate type of social and

economic condition, and which find in a definite trajectory within the field … a more or

less favorable opportunity to become actualized. (pp. 104-105)

Using this approach, the researcher can reveal the fit between a position in a field, and the

position-taking of the agent occupying that position (Guo, 2009; Thomson, 2012). Where there is

equilibrium in a field, the space of positions tends to stipulate the space of position-takings. In

other words, the mediational nature of the field influences what agents do in particular economic,

social, and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the intertwining of field and habitus form a dialectic

"where specific practices produce and reproduce the social world that at the same time is making

them" (Thomson, 2012, p. 73). The three steps that Bourdieu outlines help frame the continual

construction of numerous aspects of one's life, including the (re-)credentialing experiences

among adult immigrants in the trades and their work to navigate and negotiate entry to the

Canadian labour market.

Capital: Completing the trio. Bourdieu's concept of capital completes an

interdependent and co-constructed trio that is comprised of habitus, field and capital. Capital is

part of the process of entering a field, part of the process in a field and part of the product of a

field. For Bourdieu (1986), capital is the set of essentially usable resources and powers an

individual holds; its effect in a given social space is what enables the individual to obtain specific

profits through participation and contest in it.

Bourdieu asserted four forms of capital: economic capital (money and assets at one's

disposal); cultural capital (forms of knowledge such as taste, aesthetic, and cultural preferences

including language, narrative, and voice); social capital (affiliations and networks as well as

family, religious, and cultural heritage); and symbolic capital (representations of all of the other forms of capital that can be exchanged in other fields, for example, credentials) (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu declares that unlike an actual football field, for instance, there is no level playing ground in a social field. Instead, players who start with particular forms of capital have an advantage at the outset of the game because the field calls for and produces more of that type of capital. These players then become eligible to leverage their capital and advance further than others on the field.

The strategic utilization of specific objective structures, rules, regularities, and capitals in competition for power also applies in situations of crisis where the immediate adjustment between habitus and field is disrupted. This allows for the implementation of what Bourdieu (1986) acknowledges as the conversion feature of capitals where, for example, the different types of capitals can be derived from economic capital and transformed into other types of capital commensurate with the principle of the conservation of energy, where profits in one area are compensated for by cost in another.

Of strategic significance to the participants in my study, is the concept of social capital. It can be sourced to the classical beginnings of sociology in the late nineteenth century (Ferragina, 2012). Bourdieu extended the scope of social capital, developing the first systematic, contemporary analysis of social capital and a focus "on the benefits accruing to individuals by virtue of participation in groups and on the deliberate construction of sociability for the purpose of creating this resource" (Portes, 1998, p. 3). In Bourdieu's (1986) words, "Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (p. 248). That definition is significant because it clarifies that social networks are not ready made, easily

negotiable, or easily accessible, but do become a basis for valuable social capital. Bourdieu's definition clearly delineates social capital into two tandem elements by, first, illuminating the influence of the social relationship that allows individuals access to valuable resources, and second, illuminating the interchangeability of the quality and amount of those resources. Bourdieu draws attention to the linkages between the acquisition of social capital and its potential to be converted into economic resources such as financial loans, access to protected business markets, and, of relevance to new immigrant tradespeople, access to valued credentials.

Bourdieu's framework, including his interpretation of social capital, is more extensive and useful than, for example, Coleman's (1988) or Putnam's (1995, 2007) treatments of social capital. In addition to emphasizing the interchangeability of different forms of capital, Bourdieu's framework illuminates "the uncertainty and lack of transparency characterizing the dynamics associated with social capital" (Portes, 1998, p. 4). For example, his framework illuminates the unspecified obligations, uncertain time horizons, and possible violations of reciprocity expectations linked to transactions involving social capital (Bourdieu, 1998). Furthermore, Bourdieu posits that it is the lack of transparency of social capital's function that obscures its connection to the acquisition of other forms of capital, namely economic capital.

Social capital: The role of strong and weak ties. Further to Bourdieu's writing, Putnam (2007) highlighted the importance of the norms of trustworthiness and reciprocity and how these norms are converted to other forms of capital (Raghuram, et al., 2010). In the context of my research, such norms can prove central to immigrants' (lack of) success as they strive to enter the host country labour market. Putnam's definition promotes the notion of "strong ties" and "weak ties" to differentiate the types of social network relationships formed. For example, the characteristics of strong ties include emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocity in the context

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of strongly overlapping network membership within the same social group. In contrast, weak ties are marked by the same characteristics, but are limited and of a different nature, in the context of individuals' relationships with those of other social groups. Strong ties reflect what is described as "bonding capital," which brings people who are like one another together, whereas weak ties reflect what is described as "bridging capital," which brings together people who are unlike one another (Putnam, 2007). Putnam's discussion of weak and strong ties and their utility in relation to labour market success puts social resources, including social networks within the theoretical discussion of social capital and helps extend social capital as a research concept for this study.

The central role that social networks play in successful entry to the host country labour market is further characterized by the complexity of the social networks themselves and their relation to the host country labour market (Portes, 2010). Weak bridging ties, which are more common than strong or bonding ties, play a critical role in diffusing information and influence related to work opportunities by allowing the person to reach beyond their small well-defined social circle with greater frequency (Levin & Cross, 2004; Lin, Ensel, & Vaughn, 1981). Because there are more weak ties in social networks than strong ties, most weak ties, by definition, convey information of less importance, but not necessarily less usefulness. The key role that social networks play in the labour market is further exemplified by the preference for employers and employees to learn about the attributes of each other from personal sources that they can trust. This example of social capital emanating from the use of social networks highlights the usefulness of accessed and mobilized resources contained within social networks (Lin, 1999).

Bourdieu's conceptual heuristic scheme has remained central to, if not defined, contemporary approaches to social capital theory by providing the framework for understanding

the complexity of social networks and how that complexity bears upon successful entry to host labour markets (de Haas, 2010). What sets Bourdieu's social capital theory apart and what helps define the scope of the complex, contextual, and contested workings of social networks for new immigrant tradespeople, is the "distinction he makes between the *networks* themselves and the *resources* that can be mobilised through such networks" (de Haas, 2010, p. 1589). Bourdieu's interpretation of social capital provides a framework for understanding how social capital can produce and reproduce inequality in network migration as a result of persons possessing differential amounts of social capital depending on the size of their network connections and the amount of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital that each person in their network holds and exercises.

Applying Bourdieu's model. The theoretical overview above presents a general discussion of how I can understand human practice when it is influenced by disruptive, reorienting experiences that have a profound effect on integration to the host country's labour market. While Bourdieu's understanding of human practice, at once, moves beyond and considers the dualistic nature of individual/society and agency/structure (Margolis, 1999), it also explores, in detail, how the dispositions of individuals and social groups tend to absorb and reflect the social structures of where they are located. This provides insight into the processes and experiences new immigrant tradespeople participate in with (re-)credentialing in the Canadian labour market. These processes and experiences can be further framed using Bourdieu's exploration of how individuals and social groups work to adapt and change those same social structures.

Here, Bourdieu's notion of habitus plays a central, transformative, and bridging role between the individual and society and can be an important part of the framework for examining

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how new immigrant tradespersons negotiate entry to the labour market. This framework includes Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital and symbolic capital as they occur within the context of a specific field of social relations organized around the struggle for economic, social and/or cultural capital, that in turn constitute the habitus. And within this framework, it is the habitus that reflects the differing field relations and the range of subject positions that are subscribed within these fields around the various types of capital. When taken together, these concepts provide a Bourdieusian framework for analyzing the (re-)credentialing experiences of new immigrant tradespeople.

Putting Bourdieu and Vygotsky Together

Although they emerged at different times and in different places, Vygotsky's (1930-1934/1978) and Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) concepts are compatible. First, Vygotsky's idea on how psychological tools mediate individuals' understanding of their social contexts intersects with Bourdieu's concept of the internalisation of habitus and the mediational role that it plays (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Wertsch, 1994). Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field, and capital have as their cornerstone the two-way relationship between objective structures such as those present in social fields and incorporated structures such as those present in the habitus (Bourdieu, 1998; Panofsky, 2003). It is this two-way or mediational role, apparent in the bridging between practices of individuals and groups on the one hand, and cultural, historical, and institutional settings on the other, that is helpful in exploring the negotiations that (re-)credentialing among adult immigrants entails.

A key point of conceptual intersection between Vygotsky and Bourdieu is Vygotsky's emphasis on the primacy of the social over the psychological. Vygotsky argued that nothing became present in the human brain, the intra-psychological, without first becoming present at the

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level of the social, the inter-psychological (Grenfell, 2009). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is based on the Marxist principles that human development from birth to maturity needs to be addressed through a developmental or "genetic method" or an account of human mental functions emerging from an individual's sociocultural history (Thorne, 2005, p. 395), that human consciousness is seen as social in origin (Marx, 1845-1888/1972), and that the mediation of tools and signs mediation is central in human functioning. Like Vygotsky, Bourdieu was interested in social life in relation to objective material, social, and cultural structures (Thorne, 2005). In other words, Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field, and capital are a good match for sociocultural theory because they form a theory of action and focus on the analysis of practices (Panofsky, 2003).

Further adding to the common ground, Vygotsky's notions of "inner speech" and the "Zone of Proximal Development" to illustrate how individual knowing is developed exemplify the "structural constructivist" world view shared by both theorists. Other scholars raise further points to suggest how Vygotsky's and Bourdieu's ideas are complementary. Heller (2008) links the "habitus expertise" of individuals to the role that "socially derived" signs play in activities involving learning. Heller argues that socially derived signs perform the role of mediating the individual's interaction with the social, material world. Sawchuk (2006) argues that habitus plays an integral part in "articulating the effects of social difference and social consciousness" (p. 207). That effect, he maintains, gives us the ability to better conceptualize Vygotsky's early writings on what acts as a basis for our thoughts, particularly, what motivates our thoughts, which includes the influence of our emotions, impulses, and interests (Vygotsky, 1930-1934/1978). Furthermore, Sawchuk argues, in his discussion of working-class learning habitus, of evidence of patterned forms of participation built upon unique cultural and material contexts, further highlighting the relationship between habitus and mediation. In the context of my inquiry, I note

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that the complementarity of Vygotsky's concepts of the intra and inter-psychological and Bourdieu's concepts of the habitus and field suggests how a theoretical framework based on both theorists' work is capable of and useful in analyzing the negotiated work of (re-)credentialing faced by new immigrant tradespeople.

After discussing my theoretical framework based on the ideas of Vygotsky and Bourdieu, how their ideas complement each other, and some of the criticism their ideas have drawn, I think this section should close with how I position myself in relation to their writings with regard to my inquiry. I agree with Vygotsky that learning is a mediated process and that it is influenced by the cumulative social and cultural experiences we have had in our lives. In a similar way, I agree with Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field, and capital and Bourdieu's view of these notions functioning in relationship with each other. For example, I agree with Bourdieu's notion that habitus and field are evolving at the same time they are structuring each other, and that the quantity and type of capital one possesses influences the process of entering a field and the attributes of one's habitus. For me, the ideas of Vygotsky and Bourdieu best address the complex cultural and social context the participants in my study have to negotiate to (re-)credential in the trades and gain entry to the host country labour market. In putting Bourdieu and Vygotsky together, it gave me the opportunity to examine my research questions from the internal perspective emphasized in Vygotsky's writings on mediation and the external perspective emphasized in Bourdieu's ideas of habitus, field, and capital. Next, I turn to a brief historical overview of immigration in Canada.

Immigration to Canada: Historical Overview

Intertwined with the transformative dynamics of integrating to a different culture are the arguably transformative effects of globalization. These contested effects include the increasing

integration of the world economy accompanied by increasing movement between countries characterized by migration. As a result, Canada and other countries in the Global North have augmented their efforts to attract skilled and economic immigrants to address labour shortages and the effects of an aging population (Guo, 2010a). To better understand the mixed success new immigrants have accessing the Canadian labour market, it is useful to contrast this present context with a brief overview of Canada's immigration history.

The official history of Canada clearly emphasizes European settlement, originating with the British and French settler societies at Confederation in 1867 (Li, 2003b). This predominance has influenced the push and pull forces of immigration and migration to Canada and their ebb and flow at different times since Confederation. Consistently affected by a European tradition and the economics and politics of the time, Canada's immigration policy, as it has evolved, has shown different sides of itself to hopeful new immigrants. For example, the first period of four major periods of immigration, 1867 to 1895, was a time of open immigration from England and the United States. The second period of immigration from 1896 to 1914, in answer to an economic boom tied to agricultural development, saw a massive influx of people immigrating to Canada from Europe.

Immigration from Europe continued through the third period of immigration: 1915 to 1945. Restrictive and discriminatory immigration policies overlapped during the third and fourth periods of immigration, across the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, stemming from The Great Depression, when Canada closed its doors to many potential immigrants (Verbeeten, 2007). Changing industrial demand of labor in Canada, combined with a shortage of professional and technical workers (Li, 2003b), eventually resulted in the abandonment of admission criterion that explicitly discriminated on the basis of race or national origin in the 1960s, and its replacement

with criteria introduced in 1962 and then a "universal points system" introduced in 1967 that emphasized skills, education, and training" (Verbeeten, 2007, p. 5).

In that fourth period of immigration, spanning from the end of the Second World War to the present, Canada has been placing increasing emphasis on occupational skills and educational credentials as important selection criteria for economic immigrants (Li, 2003b). Emphasis on occupational skills and educational credentials has continued and can be further illustrated by Canada's need for adaptable human capital to meet changing needs and labour demands combined with the need to remain competitive in an increasingly globalized economy. In 2001 Canada implemented a new immigration policy that increases the focus on having highly skilled immigrants (Li, 2003a). The resultant structure to be negotiated by new immigrants to Canada includes the juxtaposition of on the one hand being viewed as a net benefit to Canada, while on the other hand facing devaluation of credentials and complex (re-)credentialing processes. The structure to be negotiated by new immigrants, just described, has unfolded against the backdrop of a nation with an ethnic identity, culture, and ideology (Li, 2003a) framed within a well-established European tradition.

Contemporary Immigration of and Barriers for Immigrant Tradespeople: Perspectives and Research

Literature in migration, integration, ethnic, social, and work journals addressing the multiple barriers that recent immigrants face in accessing the Canadian labour market in their intended occupation drew my attention to the need to better understand how immigrants negotiate barriers to their employment and deploy coping strategies. The relatively large body of literature on the roles of factors related to social capital and its influence on facilitating entry to the labour market for new immigrants helped me identify the moderating factors that might affect the labour

market integration of new immigrant tradespersons. This literature and the recent literature on sociocultural theory and its relevance to the mediated and thereby transformative nature of integrating to a different culture helped shape my research question and my choice of a theoretical framework.

In spite of a well-developed body of literature describing the barriers facing immigrants in host labour markets that includes, for example, lack of English ability, cultural barriers, devaluation of immigrants' credentials, insistence on Canadian work experience, and the logistical complexities of recertification (Basran & Zong, 1998; Cheng, et al., 2012; Fang, et al., 2013; Girard & Smith, 2013; Hum & Simpson, 2003; Shan & Guo, 2013), a gap in the literature exists around how immigrants realize their entrance to the labour market in the trade of their choice. Studies in the field of adult education that have explored the activities that immigrants undertake in order to achieve targeted entry into the labour market suggest that the entry process to the labour market is confusing and full of contradictions, and is replete with personal and emotional challenges (Baltodano et al., 2007; Bauder, 2005; Gibb & Hamdon, 2010; Guo, 2013a; Shan, 2009; Shan & Guo, 2013; Webb, 2015). Furthermore, given the world-wide increase in competition for skilled labour brought on by the changing context of migration influenced by globalization, there is a recognized need by the Canadian government to develop smoother intake and acceptance systems for those who migrate to Canada (Akbari & MacDonald, 2014; Anwar, 2014; Ferrer, et al., 2014). This may include better support and training systems that complement and facilitate rather than hinder and block labour market entry for skilled immigrant tradespeople seeking to reaccredit themselves in a trade (Adamuti-Trache, Anisef, Sweet, & Walters, 2013; Bauder, 2003; Gibb & Hamdon, 2010).

Even more significant are the differences of opinion about how best to ameliorate the barriers faced by immigrants as they learn the process of entering the labour market. These differences of opinion originate from the variety of conceptual frameworks that couch this issue and from the discussion and conclusions in the literature dealing with this issue. Thus far, two larger bodies of literature have been defined with regard to this topic and illustrate the complex nature of the topic. In this section, I review literature connected to research focused on acculturation and assimilation, and research grounded in sociocultural studies.

Perspective 1: Acculturation and Assimilation Studies

First, acculturation and assimilation studies, such as the early work of Gordon (1964) view the assimilation of immigrants to the host country as one of moving along a linear continuum influenced by change, maintaining their national heritage and culture at one end and adaptation to the host country's culture at the other end. Gordon is a sociologist whose speciality is intergroup relations and intragroup communal life organizations. He interviewed 27 officials, representing 25 different well known private national organizations working in the field of intergroup relations (Gordon, 1964, p. 9). "A major theoretical contribution of Gordon's work is his view on the interrelated stages of assimilation, calling attention to different complementary dimensions of the assimilation process, including structural patterns as well as cultural behavior" (Rebhun, 2015, pp. 473-474).

Gordon isolated and specified major variables in ethnic relations and categorized seven basic sub-processes in assimilation according to their linear evolution and their interrelations (Rebhun, 2015). For Gordon, the first sub-process in assimilation is acculturation, also described by Gordon as cultural assimilation. In Gordon's view acculturation is an integral first step and is of high priority for immigrant adjustment to the host society. It is described first in Gordon's list

of seven sub-processes of assimilation that follow: cultural assimilation (acculturation) into the main society's language, dress, customs, ethics and values; structural assimilation into a socioeconomic class and into a social network; marital assimilation (amalgamation); identificational assimilation (a strong identification with the people of the host society); attitudinal reception in terms of lack of prejudice, for example, as legal, political, and cultural obstacles disappear; behavioral reception (absence of discrimination); civic assimilation (absence of value and power conflict) (p. 475). Gordon views assimilation as a cumulative process that relies on structural assimilation to occur along with or subsequent to acculturation for the other sub-types of assimilation to take place. "Gordon defined structural assimilation as the development of primary-group relationships, incorporation into social networks and institutions, and entrance into the social structure of the majority society" (Rebhun, 2015, p. 494). Gordon posits that "acculturation may take place and continue indefinitely even when no other type of assimilation occurs" (Zhou, 1997, p. 977).

Subsequent researchers, such as Gudykunst and Kim (2003), propose that immigrants by necessity "deculturalize" and "unlearn" their cultural identity as a means of fitting themselves into the "objective reality" of the host society. Their work focusses on "what it takes for an individual to adapt to a new and unfamiliar cultural milieu taking a communication approach that links the individual and the surrounding environment in a single large frame" (Kim, 2001, p. xii). A major theoretical contribution of Gudykunst and Kim's work in the field of intercultural adaptation is anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory (Gudykunst, 1998; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001). AUM theory is "based on the assumption that managing uncertainty and anxiety is necessary and sufficient for effective communication and intercultural adjustment" (Gudykunst, 1998, p. 228). Furthermore, Kim (2006) describes the

related dialectical "stress-adaptation-growth dynamic" underlying "a continual dialectical process of push and pull, or identity engagement and disengagement" at the centre of interethnic identity development (p. 292). In a study that tested two assumptions of Gudykunst's AUM Theory, a group of international college students composed of 75 males and 46 females from 12 different ethnic groups were given a questionnaire asking them to rate their degree of certainty they experienced when interacting with Americans (Gao & Gudykunst, 1990). One result of the study showed "the larger influence of anxiety over uncertainty in predicting perceived effectiveness" of communication in interacting with strangers (Gao & Gudykunst, 1990, p. 67).

In contrast, Baltodano et al. (2007) describe "settling stories" where new immigrants discover that they must sharply reduce their work expectations in order to find work, and when they find work, it is at the lowest part of the labour market. Baltodano et al. (2007) call this process of adapting to reduced expectations or working below one's level of training "learning in reverse" (p. 102). For their research conducted between 2003 and 2007, Baltodano et al. (2007) collaborated with the Montreal-based Immigrant Workers Centre to interview 50 workers from countries in the Global South. The interviews were in-depth, semi-structured, and exploratory. The focus of their research was on the learning process that "immigrant workers go through to survive, negotiate, or adapt" (p. 102) in the Canadian labour market . Amongst a number of significant contributions of the research project was the attention drawn to how immigrant workers are being used as a "pool of people who fill low-wage, mainly service jobs in a sector of the economy that is largely unregulated" (Baltodano et al., 2007, p. 111). In addition, the researchers found that, for immigrants, there is often an unlearning of a former status conflated with a redefining of the self as a means to becoming an updatable resource for the Canadian labour market.

Others have framed immigrant and host cultural identities without placing them at diametrically opposing poles. For example, Berry (2001) conceptualizes immigrant and host cultural identities as both dependent and distinct processes that develop in close association with each other. For Berry, the nature and level of development of immigrant cultural identities is strongly influenced by how much immigrants wish to maintain their heritage and culture and adopt the ways of the host culture. According to this conception, immigrants may be considered, "integrated, separated, assimilated, or marginalized" (Berry, 2001, p. 619). Berry's major theoretical contribution is his model of acculturation. In Berry's model, "acculturation is a process of cultural and psychological changes that involve various forms of mutual accommodation, leading to some longer-term psychological and sociocultural adaptations between both groups" (Berry, 2005, p. 699). An important factor influencing the success of acculturation is both the history of immigrant experiences and the attitude toward immigrants that immigrants encounter in the host country. For instance, some societies accept cultural pluralism, while others expect immigrants to assimilate as in the "melting pot" model. Yet, other societies have policies targeted at segregating or marginalizing their diverse populations. Berry uses the term acculturative stress to denote both the positive and negative affects of the acculturative experience. Amongst a number of important findings from a series of studies on the experience of acculturative stress by a variety of cultural groups in Canada over the period 1969-1985, Berry et al. (1987) observed that "those resisting acculturation, and who feel marginalized by the process, tend to be the most stressed by the process, while those accepting a continuing (but not necessarily a submissive) relationship with the larger society tend to be least stressed" (p. 509).

Kramer's (2010) cultural fusion theory moves beyond both of these conceptualizations by proposing that difference between immigrants and the host society never completely disappears. Instead, there is a "co-integration" and "co-constitutional and co-evolutionary identity formation" process whereby immigrants and host communities mutually transform and enrich each other (Kramer, 2010, pp. 386-388). One of the main theoretical contributions of Kramer's cultural fusion theory is that it suggests the malleability of culture for both the immigrant and the host society and the view that adapting and assimilating to another culture need not be a so-called zero-sum game. Cultural fusion is "an open system where a multitude of variables such as an individual's identity, personality/psychology, biology, demographics (socioeconomic, political, religious), host culture acceptance, media (availability, options), and many more interact to affect newcomers' speed and levels of fusion" (Croucher & Kramer, 2016, p. 5). These variables are in constant interaction affecting both the newcomer and the dominant cultural group, in this open, dynamic, cultural fusion process. Kramer asserts that integration of newcomers involves cultural fusion, "a process whereby subjects encounter a host cultural form, adopt it, and inevitably, add their accent to it" (Kramer, 2010, p. 388).

The different opinions within the acculturation and assimilation literature lend themselves to differences of opinion on how best to support the adaptation of new immigrant tradespeople through the processes necessary for successful entry to the Canadian labour market. Kramer (2010) views culture as a shifting phenomenon for both immigrant and the host society. Shan and Guo (2013) extend this view by alerting us that viewing culture as a fixed construct, as it relates to immigrants' experiences, should be accompanied by a caution about "cultural essentialism," (p. 29) the mistaken belief that culture is set and experienced, enacted, and embodied in the same way by all members of a cultural group. Cultural essentialism can result when culture is seen as

being based in biology or nature, or understood through historically developed biases (Abu-Laban, 2002; Bauder, 2006; Goodhart, 2003; Li, 2003a; Pehrson, Brown, & Zagefka, 2009; Shan & Guo, 2013). Thus, there should be an awareness of the counterproductive influences of cultural essentialism as researchers examine phenomena under the larger umbrella of foundational processes affecting support and adaptation for new immigrant tradespeople learning to enter the Canadian labour market.

Perspective 2: Socioculturalism

The second, more recent and larger body of literature relevant to understanding of immigration and differences and how new immigrants learn to deal with differences between cultures of origin and mainstream cultures in a host country is sociocultural studies. The primary focus within this body of literature is on social, communal, and institutional complexity and how immigrants' experiences are shaped in negotiating difference (Bauder, 2005; Deters, 2006; Guo, 2009; Kozulin, 2002; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Raghuram, et al., 2010; Shan & Guo, 2013; Webb, 2015). This body of literature highlights the structuring of work activities, the recognition of newcomers, and the ways of negotiation and adaptation to the (re-)credentialing experience (Beynon, Ilieva, & Dichupa, 2004; Deters, 2006; Rismark & Sitter, 2003). In relation to the new immigrant to Canada, this body of literature explicates the epistemological misperceptions of difference and knowledge that result in non-recognition of immigrants' prior credentials and work experience. Furthermore, it illuminates a mainstream, if not always articulated, ontological commitment to positivistic measurement of immigrants' credentials, which results in differential legitimization of forms of knowledge and is manifest in the non-recognition of the learning and work experience of foreign-trained tradespeople (Cheng, et al., 2012; Guo, 2009; Krahn, Derwing, Mulder, & Wilkinson, 2000; Reitz, Curtis, & Elrick, 2013; Webb, 2015; Yap, Holmes,

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Hannan, & Cukier, 2013). The sociocultural literature sheds light on how new immigrants remake their social conditions through the activities they engage in, for example, in order to meet the requirements of (re-)credentialing in a trade.

Sociocultural research uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to document cognitive and social change as it is shaped by cultural and social contexts (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). The utility of the sociocultural approach is further reflected in instances where it has been used in combined experimental and ethnographic research (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). These and other sociocultural studies have further highlighted two important themes in sociocultural approaches related to learning: (a) the role of providing the educational setting for the co-construction of knowledge and (b) the analysis of the resultant learning from a sociocultural perspective that inherently honours the co-construction of knowledge.

The (re-)credentialing process, when viewed through a sociocultural lens, informs the need to better understand the influence of social conditioning on immigrants' learning experiences. Furthermore, it informs the need to better understand the actively negotiated, ever-evolving "mediated property" (Shan & Guo, 2013, p. 38) of immigrants' learning experiences as they change practice to meet the challenges of entering the Canadian labour market. The mediated property of learning refers to how a person derives the meaning of a thing through how "other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing" (Mead, 1934/1974, pp. 4-5). The actions of other persons through the course of social interactions "operate to define the thing for the person" (Mead, 1934/1974, pp. 4-5). Kozulin and Presseisen (1995) further explain the mediated property of a learning experience by asserting that, "the interaction between the individual and the environment is never immediate, it is always mediated by meanings that originate outside the individual, in the world of social relations" (p. 68).

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While a number of studies address an important part of the mediated property of immigrants' learning experiences by suggesting the challenges faced by new immigrants seeking to (re-)credential and re-establish themselves in the labour market can be overcome with improved institutional recognition (Bauder, 2005; Buzdugan & Halli, 2009; Gibb & Hamdon, 2010; Shan & Guo, 2013; Webb, 2015), these studies also suggest that there is more to the process, notably, interconnected influences that affect the (re-)credentialing process for immigrants. The interconnectedness of these influences further reflects the complex nature of migration (Portes, 2010). These influences include host culture assignment of social and cultural status (Li, 2001), host culture insistence on immigrant deployment of costly and often lengthy lifelong learning strategies for labour market entry (Gibb & Hamdon, 2010; Khan & Watson, 2005), and host culture privileging of social and cultural commonalities over social and cultural differences (Bauder, 2003; Grenier & Xue, 2011). Fraser (2000) and Guo (2010b, 2013a) discuss how these influences result in the impairment of "recognitive justice." Gale (2000) explains recognitive justice as a necessary extension of social justice with its focus on material and economic goods expanding in scope through recognitive justice to include social goods, for example, opportunity, position, and power, as well as institutional inequities (p. 260). As an expanded form of social justice, recognitive justice insists on three necessary conditions for social justice: "(1) fostering of respect for different social groups through their self-identification; (2) opportunities for self-development and self-expression; and (3) the participation of groups in making decisions that directly affect them, through their representation on determining bodies." (Gale, 2000, p. 260). In relation to my study, I note that little attention has been paid both to how immigrant tradespeople in Canada negotiate the (re-)credentialing

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process, and to ways of helping them learn about the tacit aspects of entry to the Canadian labour market.

Summary

Overall, the various viewpoints shared in the preceding literature provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by immigrant tradespeople as they negotiate (re-)credentialing processes to gain access to the Canadian labour market. I will discuss these challenges further in the next section. Here, I provide a brief summary of the take-aways from the diverse perspectives in the assimilation and acculturation literature, and the sociocultural literature that I have reviewed. An essential take-away is that there appear to be differences of opinion about how the process of assimilation and acculturation takes place for new immigrants. For example, Gordon (1964) maintains that the stages of assimilation are interrelated and complementary to each other and that assimilation is a cumulative process. In contrast to Gordon, Gudykunst and Kim (2003) posit that immigrants "deculturalize" and "unlearn" their cultural identity in order to "fit in" to the host society. Furthermore, Kim (2006) outlines the related dialectical "stress-adaptation-growth dynamic" underpinning a continual process of identity engagement and disengagement essential to interethnic identity development.

Further illustrating the differences amongst acculturation and assimilation theorists and researchers, Baltodano et al. (2007) highlight a process of "learning in reverse" characterizing a learning process for new immigrants in which they must harshly reduce their expectations if they hope to find work. Yet another aspect of the assimilation and acculturation perspective is provided by Berry (2005) who underlines the significance of the historical and attitudinal situation immigrants face in the society of settlement. Berry points to acculturative stress as a means of accounting for the positive and negative effects of acculturation. Yet, other theorists

such as Kramer (2010) move in a different direction by proposing a process of acculturation and assimilation in which immigrants and host communities mutually transform and enrich each other within an open system.

On the other hand, the sociocultural literature examines how work activities are structured, how newcomers are recognized, and how newcomers negotiate and adapt to better meet the (re-)credentialing experience. A main take-away from the sociocultural literature is the focus it places on how new immigrants remake their social conditions in order to meet the credentialing requirements to gain entry to the Canadian labour market. Shan & Guo (2013) describe the actively negotiated, ever-evolving mediated property of immigrants' learning experiences where immigrants find that they must change practice to gain entry to the Canadian labour market. The sociocultural literature suggests that the actively negotiated, ever-evolving mediated property of immigrants' learning is fraught with complexity and appears to be precipitated by the interconnected influences that affect the (re-)credentialing process for immigrants. These influences include host culture assignment of social and cultural status, insistence by the host culture on the deployment of lengthy and costly lifelong learning strategies, and privileging by the host culture of social and cultural norms over social and cultural differences.

After discussing the two models that I have taken up in the literature, I close this section by stating my position in relation to these models and how these models relate to my inquiry. I position myself most closely subscribed to the sociocultural literature. This is evident in my use of the sociocultural ideas of Vygotsky and Bourdieu for my study's theoretical framework. I think that the sociocultural literature most accurately reflects the problem that I investigate in my study. The sociocultural literature illuminated how work activities are structured, how

newcomers are recognized, and the actively negotiated continually evolving mediated property of immigrants' learning experiences, closely influencing how I organized and carried out my study. I agree with some aspects of the acculturation and assimilation perspective. For example, I agree with Kramer that newcomers and host communities can mutually transform each other, but I think this is a long-term process in relation to the time it would take for the transformation to take place. I think that Gordon's seven stages of assimilation are useful for examining the extent to which one may have assimilated to the host culture and for providing a perspective on where newcomers may be starting from in relation to assimilating to the host society. I think that Kim's stress-adaptation-growth dynamic somewhat reflects the mediational process involved in new learning and adaptation of the habitus to new situations. In relation to my study, I think the acculturation and assimilation perspective complements the sociocultural perspective through the different ways it proposes for acculturation and assimilation to occur. What follows is a discussion of the challenges precipitated by the interconnected influences that affect the (re-) credentialing process for new immigrants.

Ongoing Challenges with Immigration and Recertification

New Canadian and permanent resident power engineering students, as part of the larger group of recent immigrants seeking to enter the host labour market as skilled tradespersons, face some common challenges that have been identified in the literature. The first of these challenges include acquiring trades' skills and adapting to a new learning and work context, while accommodating the structuring of learning and work activities and interactive opportunities with other learners and workers (Shan & Guo, 2013). Shan and Guo (2013) identify a multi-challenging learning environment for immigrant professionals where their identity becomes contingent on institutional recognition that directly affects their successful entry to the labour

market. They explain how learning is more likely organized by institutions to favour the dominant culture and favour the credentials obtained in the host country. They identify how learning for immigrants is largely a process of conforming and that the (re-)credentialing process is likely to involve a very busy process of credential attainment that includes learning things that are not relevant to the attainment of their employment goals as they strive to meet the administrative needs of licensure bodies, so they may be selected for conditional inclusion in the occupation (Shan & Guo, 2013).

My study extends their empirical work by continuing to explore the social and cultural impacts of the (re-)credentialing process for power engineering students and by exploring how these students navigate this multi-challenging learning environment in the context of rural Alberta. Related to the challenges outlined by Shan and Guo (2013) is the struggle to understand the intrapersonal components and dynamics of working in the trades (Shan, 2009; Webb, 2015) and the transferring of skills from source country work settings to Canadian work settings (Banerjee & Verma, 2012; Chiswick & Miller, 2007). Baltodano et al. (2007) outline the struggles new immigrants face negotiating power differentials in a workplace setting that is characterized by lack of recognition of their credentials and by their acceptance of positions in the labour market much lower than their expectations.

Similarly, Shan (2009) examines the socially stratifying effect of credentials in today's society. Her empirical work considers the effects of a deficit approach to foreign credentials that leads to immigrant workers being employed at a level in the labour market incommensurate with their skills. In these instances, the transferring of skills across national borders is shown to be problematic for new immigrants. My study will further explore credential recognition and the

effects of social stratification pertaining to adult immigrants (re-)credentialing in the trades in the rural setting of Fort McMurray.

A second challenge is communication skills. This encompasses understanding the English language, including the nuances of communication linked with both the theoretical and the culturally determined affective and encountering different cultural values related to work roles (Adamuti-Trache, Anisef, Sweet, & Walters, 2011; Ferrer & Riddell, 2008).

A third challenge is structural knowledge. This includes negotiating a culturally different learning environment (Jarvis, 2013; Rismark & Sitter, 2003; Shan, 2009) and is also reflected in the non-recognition of credentials (Andersson & Guo, 2009; Guo, 2010b; Hum & Simpson, 2003). Structural knowledge challenges are manifested in the task of coping with racial and cultural difference that includes discriminatory perceptions of "lack of soft skills", for example, communication and decision-making perspective, resultant in denigration of technical qualifications and low rates of promotion to management (Bauder, 2013; Esses, et al., 2006).

A fourth challenge is adapting to the local setting. This involves developing the social support needed in order to adapt (Baltodano et al., 2007; Raza, et al., 2012). It also involves negotiating entry to trades certification programs at different life stages with associated family and financial obligations (Eckstein, 2010; Faist, 2010) and entering trades training programs following a length of time away from school (Girard & Smith, 2013). In addition, it involves living with the culture shock of immigration (Baltodano et al., 2007; Ngo & Este, 2006) along with the experiences of social isolation and loneliness (Khan & Watson, 2005; Raza, et al., 2012). This process of adaptation also includes dealing with cultural barriers, overt discrimination, and devaluation of immigrants' credentials (Basran & Zong, 1998; Dion, 2010; Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2012; Shan & Guo, 2013).

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Impacts of Persistent and Complex Barriers

How new immigrant tradespeople seeking recertification in a trade learn to meet these challenges and barriers and move toward successful labour market outcomes is an important question. If the primary strategy lay with filling technical gaps in knowledge and upgrading credential recognition systems, then programs such as the ones suggested by Sangster (2001), Picot (2004), Green and Worswick (2002), and others would be sufficient. But a number of studies have suggested that the challenges and barriers affecting labour market entry are complex and persistent in nature and evoke a learning process fraught with struggle, emotion, and stressful impacts to identity.

In a qualitative study of 15 immigrant and Canadian-born workers in a multicultural immigrant-serving settlement organization in Mississauga, Ontario, guided by Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical approach to capital and the concept of identity capital, Ho and Bauder (2012) identified how workers exercise their identity capital and how exchanges between people can create social capital that supports the formation of social networks. "Valuable identity capital refers to the learned ability to connect to different clients when negotiating different social situations" (Ho & Bauder, 2012, p. 293). Data for this empirical study was collected through in-depth, semi-structured personal interviews. The results of the interviews "showed that identity is neither fixed nor consistent across social situations" (Ho & Bauder, 2012, p. 288). The authors identified challenges with communication and the connection between identity exchanges and the exercise and accumulation of identity capital to stem these challenges. The authors recommend that power in social relationships be considered because of its close connection with the construction of identity capital, that "culture" be considered because of its propensity to be

misused as a social identifier of difference, and that the historical context of Canada's national identity be considered because of its persistent, underlying reproduction of difference.

In a study, using qualitative methods, of six "highly skilled" immigrants and eight employees in a Non-Government Organization (NGO) adult education employment program in Ontario, Slade (2012) used reader's theatre and institutional ethnography. She found that the six immigrants that she interviewed experienced challenges with recognition of their international credentials, labour market inequality, mismatched curriculum, and precarious employment relationships, as they strove to acquire Canadian work experience. The participants' stories illustrated how their Canadian volunteer work experience did not translate into commensurate gains in employment status. For example, job placements, when acquired, were either below or were not a match for the high level of training and experience of the study participants. In addition to the interviews, she compiled archival materials and incorporated them into her analysis. She recommends a critical analysis of the social organization of power and how ruling relationships shape people's experiences of marginalization.

In a study, that used qualitative inquiry, of immigrant women working in two Immigrant Service Organizations (ISO) in Edmonton, Alberta, Gibb and Hamdon (2010) found that the 21immigrant women they interviewed struggled with symbolic and cultural injustices that acted as barriers to their attempts to bridge in to the host labour market. The 21 women interviewed included staff, volunteers, and immigrant students. Some of the volunteers were former students served by the ISO. The empirical data for that study was constituted from a re-examination of an earlier larger study that took place between 2004 and 2006 (see Guo, 2006), whose research questions focussed on the formal and informal learning processes that occur in immigrant service organizations. For the most recent study, key organizational documents were reviewed such as

vision and mission statements, websites, and conference and symposia proceedings hosted by the

ISO, as well as program documents. The earlier larger study used the case study method at four

separate ISO sites to observe the workings of classes, social spaces, administrative meetings, and

formal functions (Gibb & Hamdon, 2010).The immigrant women in the more recent study

identified injustices manifested through restrictive ISO policies that make knowledge a

commodity symbolically represented through credentials, establishing a type of barrier,

particularly when credentialed knowledge brought from their home country is invalidated.

Participants also identified cultural injustices exhibited through the use of essentializing

language in written and visual text material framing them as a separate group or as "cultural

Others" (Gibb & Hamdon, 2010, p. 196). The authors recommend ISO policies that reflect a

critical recognition orientation, and policy documents and text that are non-essentializing. They

recommend policy changes that would increase the advocacy role of ISOs, for example, to

promote recognitive justice, while at the same time reassessing the amount of focus on programs

aimed at the redressing of perceived learning deficits.

In a study that used in-depth qualitative interviews with 35 skilled immigrants from

Bangalore, India living in Toronto, Ontario, Somerville and Walsworth (2010) found that the

group of skilled immigrants all expressed frustration with the discrepancy between the

recognition of their credentials pre- and post-migration. On the one hand, they found that

Canada's point system credited them for their foreign credentials, while on the other hand they

found that Canadian employment requirements do not. The group expressed confusion and

frustration over the lack of coordination of evaluative systems between the Canadian

Government and potential employers. The authors recommend the Canadian Government

improve the alignment between admission criteria, employer requirements and integration into

the Canadian labour market by ensuring relevant information reaches immigrants pre-migration so that they are better prepared. The study suggests that "Canada's slow integration of immigrants could lead to difficulty attracting skilled workers in the future" (p. 350). This research is part of a larger study of over 50 immigrants that explores the different types of transnational ties that are maintained in addition to examining the employment and economic situation of new immigrants.

Together, these studies give the impression that new immigrant tradespersons are learning more than what can be prescribed in a course or presented in a textbook, as they work to integrate into the Canadian labour market. Why should new immigrant tradespersons with proven skills have to experience such an ordeal (re-)credentialing in Canada? Why is integrating to a new work environment not like learning a new trades technique or learning to be a tradesperson to begin with? Specifically, why aren't the personal resources of this group of individuals adequate enough for them to achieve smooth entry to the Canadian labour market? My study seeks to extend the findings of these studies through an examination of the role of different types of capital, power relationships, and identity in the process of successful integration to the labour market by examining these influences within the context of rural Alberta. Research in the field of social capital theory can help frame my study and my questions.

Summary

The preceding review sheds light on some specific challenges that new immigrants must contend with. For example, the recommendation to better align admission criteria to Canada, employer requirements, and integration into the Canadian labour market by ensuring relevant information reaches immigrants before migration to Canada is clearly borne out in Somerville and Walsworth's (2010) study. The fallout from the confusion over lack of coordination of evaluative

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systems between the Canadian government and potential employers plays out in Gibb and

Hamdon's (2010) study of Immigrant Service Organization's (ISO) policies that also explored

how knowledge is commodified and how international credentials are invalidated. The authors

recommend increased emphasis on recognitive justice and the reassessment of programs targeted

at redressing perceived learning deficits.

Slade (2012) takes this further as she investigates similar challenges faced by immigrants

with recognition of international credentials, and labour market inequality brought on by

precarious employment relationships. Her advocacy for a critical analysis of the social

organization of power is central to her investigation of how ruling relationships form people's

encounters with marginalization. Furthermore, Ho and Bauder (2012) also recommend that

power and social relationships be considered and that "culture" be considered for its tendency to

be used as an identifier of difference. In particular, the researchers reference the historical

context of Canada's national identity for its persistent, underlying reproduction of difference. In

the next section I discuss how Bourdieu's concepts apply to research into immigration, work,

identity, and learning.

Applying Key Concepts to Research into Immigration, Work, Identity, and Learning

Research in the field of social capital can help frame this investigation into what happens as new

immigrant tradespeople work toward labour market integration. Social capital theory has been

put to rigorous tests by increasingly diverse applications within different contexts and toward

different events, since the inception of social capital as an entity, dating back to 19th century

sociological theory (Portes, 1998). From its inception, social capital has been based on the idea

that the involvement and participation in groups can result in positive consequences for the

individual and the community.

Much of the research that has been guided by Bourdieu's framework has been done using qualitative interviews and questionnaires along with statistical comparisons of the results. These studies have generated findings confirming the variability, contextuality, and conditionality of the process of social capital (Bankston & Zhou, 2002). For instance, the difficulty in defining the concept (Portes, 1998) and the varied influence of elements such as the role of ethnic group membership as a source of social capital (Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2012) help confirm these three characteristics of the process of social capital. Along with its current popular use has come its application to so many events and to so many different contexts as to dilute its distinct meaning.

Bourdieu's notion of habitus and field theory has seen considerable application in the literature of recent decades critiquing the (re-)credentialing processes of adult immigrants in Canada. At the highest level, the barriers that adult immigrants face integrating to the labour market can be framed within the relations between the field and the field of power. For example, the historical shaping of the field by mostly white, European settlers (Li, 2003b) has, on the one hand, created, what Bourdieu describes, a "meta-field" that acts as an organizing principle of differentiation and struggle throughout all fields, and has on the other hand, further highlighted the struggle new immigrants face integrating to the Canadian labour market by delineating a relational construct, Bourdieu labels, a field of power designated by a dominant social class (Swartz, 1997). A substantial amount of literature reflects the paradox of Canada's expressed preference for highly skilled immigrants and the barriers they face integrating to the labour market, manifested in the deskilling and devaluation of their prior learning and work experience (Guo, 2000; Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2012; Raza, et al., 2012; Shanahan, 1997; Shinnaoui & Narchal, 2010; Slade, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2006).

Some researchers reveal the key role the mediational nature of the field plays in successful integration experiences of new immigrants. Overall, their research suggests that social capital can be useful for labour market integration depending on the types of social capital, the ethno-racial group that utilizes them, and the forms of economic integration (Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2012). The conclusions in their research stress the effect of the dialectical relationship between field and habitus in reinforcing class structure and affecting employment outcomes for adult immigrants. For example, Nakhaie and Kazemipur (2012) demonstrate through their research that institutional structural barriers prevailing in Canada result in lower levels of employment and socio-economic scale for visible minority immigrants as compared to white immigrants. Their research evidence suggests that the white immigrants are better able to utilize institutional means in order to access cultural goals. The study suggests that the habitus of the white immigrants more effectively matches the structure of the field than the habitus of visible minority immigrants and in turn affects their chances of successful integration to the labor market and Canadian society.

At the same time, Bankston and Zhou (2002) and Portes (2010) point out that ethnicity can be used as a source of social capital because membership in an ethnic group forms the foundation for systems of social relations that can result in connecting individuals with advantageous networks. Nevertheless, most researchers studying immigration and integration in Canada discover that structural constraints, for example, the social construction of the term "immigrant" that places uneven expectations on immigrants to conform over time to the norms values and traditions of the host society and the claimed incompatibility of immigrants real and alleged differences with the cultural and social pattern of "traditional" Canada act as structural barriers to integration (Guo, 2013a; Li, 2003b). Moreover, current immigration policies in

Canada focussed on labour shortages and state interests fail to address the barriers immigrants must face as they work to transition to life in their country of destination.

Ethnic Ties and Social Networks

The ethnic background and ethnic ties of the individual combined with the experience of migration provide the implicit or explicit boundaries for delineating effective social networks such as those described by Pierre Bourdieu (1986). According to Bourdieu, effective social networks are those that promote successful labour market outcomes by providing potential and actual resources to facilitate access to jobs, career mobility, and social mobility in the host country. Underlying ethnic and migration networks is the notion of migrant as "Other", like a stranger, or an individual who, as originally represented, shares little in common with non-migrants, and who is enclosed within and defined by migrant experiences (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Raghuram, et al., 2010). Less illuminated in the research, yet impinging on and affecting the migrant experience, are the effects of non-migrant networks where privilege is often reproduced, where migrants must learn to fit in by reworking their circumstances, and where the acquisition and application of social capital becomes even more complex.

Whether through migration inducing structural forces such as warfare, colonialism, conquest, occupation, or labor recruitment, the process of migration and the emotional work of fitting in to the host country labour market involves the identification, creation, sourcing, and leveraging of social capital. Shared culture, language, and geographical proximity also play a central role in the initiation of migration and the ensuing implementation of social capital by migrants to improve their labour market outcomes in the host country (de Haas, 2010). Intertwined with these migration-inducing factors is the truism that individuals migrate for economic reasons and to take advantage of opportunity differentials between nations. The

diverse group of factors that affect migration reflect the complexity of migration studies and the

resultant context dependent elements and conditionality that influence the formation, use, and

varied outcomes of social capital through, for example, the use of transnational social networks

(Kelly & Lusis, 2006; Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara, 2008) and social networks established upon

arrival in the country of destination.

There has been a well-established interest in migrants' social networks and their role in

migrants' labour market outcomes, particularly access to jobs, career, mobility, and social

mobility in the host country (Bonacich, 1973; Boyd, 1989; Poros, 2001; Raghuram, et al., 2010).

The concept of social capital and the primary idea that involvement and participation in groups

can have positive outcomes for the individual and the community can be found as far back as

"Durkheim's emphasis on group life as the antidote to anomie and self-destruction, and to

Marx's distinction between an atomized class in-itself and a mobilized and effective class-for-

itself" (Portes, 1998, p. 2).

A common theme emerging from the research on immigration and integration to the

Canadian labour market is the discrepancy between admission criteria that grants entry to

Canada (i.e., *foreign* education and work experience) and employment criteria (i.e., *Canadian*

education and work experience) and the resultant frustration from being left underemployed from

the mismatch between the two. Soon after their arrival in Canada, immigrants come to realize

that the education they bring with them from their home countries is often devalued through non-

recognition and that Canadian credentials and experience are necessary if they wish to work in

their given fields (Gibb & Hamdon, 2010; Green & Worswick, 2002; Grenier & Xue, 2011; Guo,

2010b, 2013b; Somerville & Walsworth, 2010). Furthermore, the research reveals frustration on

the part of skilled immigrants that stems not only from credential devaluation, but from the

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feelings of deception generated from the gap between Canada's immigrant entry criteria and Canadian employers' hiring criteria. Shan's (2009) analysis of some immigrants retraining and re-schooling experiences examines the resultant bridging efforts to the host labour market that immigrants are compelled to stage, through a Western-centred credential and certificate regime.

Shan and Guo (2013) further analyze the learning activities that immigrants engaged in to reach their goal of entering the labor market and highlight the relationship between learning activities that new immigrants engage in, the mediated nature of their learning process, the rules of the market they are working to enter, and the community involved in producing the learning experiences for the immigrants. A central focus of their analysis is how immigrants actively reconstruct their sense of identity and identification to meet the major gap resulting from non-recognition of foreign credentials and qualifications and navigate and negotiate their way through the process of entering the labour market. Although their study uses a sociocultural framework, there are a number of commonalities between foundational aspects of this framework and Bourdieu's social field theory. Commonalities can be found in the derived non-dualist ontology of sociocultural theory that highlights the mutual constitution of the individual through the social practices of human relationship and community (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). Participation in social practices in relationship with other people places person and social world in dynamic tension and person in active search for identity in a process couched in transformation of person. In a similar way, Bourdieu's concepts of social field and habitus capture the interrelation of social context and person through the ontological complicity of habitus and field where each determines the constitution of the other and where Bourdieu's transformation of habitus comes in to play, particularly in situations of crisis where immediate adjustment between habitus and field is disrupted (Bourdieu, 1993b).

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More recent formulations of activity theory or sociocultural theory that extend Vygotsky's notions of sociocultural learning, can help our understanding "of the social, communal, and institutional complexity of work and life" in the host societies and how immigrants' experiences in dealing with labour market differences are shaped (Shan & Guo, 2013, p. 29). For example, Rismark and Sitter (2003) showed how the "invitational qualities of workplaces" (Billett, 2002, p. 37), "the structuring of work activities, the recognition of newcomers, and interactive opportunities with other workers provide immigrants with differential access to communities of work" (Shan & Guo, 2013, p. 29). Engestrom, Engestrom, and Vahooho (1999) identify another way of viewing the relational construction of agency by considering that the individual "is mediated not only by material and symbolic tools, but also always by social formations such as immediate communities of practice (in the sense of Lave & Wenger, 1991)" (Thorne, 2005, p. 400). These more contemporary expressions of the socioculturalism developed by Vygotsky, can help extend the sociocultural perspective and framework for my study. Also, they provide further avenues of intersection with Bourdieu's framework, in addition to the explicit alignment with sociocultural theory suggested by Bourdieu's consistent focus on the theoretical construct of social practice in his framework.

In general, Bourdieu's notions of social field, capital, and habitus can provide a reliable framework for explaining the complex, contextual, and contested interactions adult immigrants are compelled to navigate and negotiate in order to access the Canadian labour market. In addition, Bourdieu's notion of the social field appears reasonably well suited to being adapted and refined to delineate actions and positions within this field (Mutch, 2006). Bourdieu's three notions of habitus, field, and capital act as the keystones positioning his social field model as a sturdy framework for descriptive analysis of the complex interplays and multiple processes

involved in the (re-)credentialing experiences of adult immigrants in the trades. Bourdieu's model allows for the placement of boundaries around the place of action, reflecting either a snapshot in time, or changes that happen over time. His social field theory can be expanded to include, for example, complementary notions such as framing (Bernstein, 1971, 2000) or insiders versus outsiders (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Furthermore, the size of representations on the field can provide the opportunity for qualitative description regarding the strength of the group. However, Bourdieu's social field model is derided by critics for being too static, too dense, too complex, and too needful of careful explanation. It could be viewed as being too reductionist, subtractive of the authentic voice and rich description of high value in a qualitative study. For example, a participant's rich narrative or bounded interaction could potentially be reduced to a graphic shape such as a small dot or arrow on a diagram. An individual's position on the field can only be shown once for each setting with their position determined, located, and labelled. Micro-micro levels, required to show the complexities within a group or an individual, are not delineated.

In response to these criticisms, Shusterman (1999) points out the relevance and utility of Bourdieu's social field model with respect to its complexity:

> Bourdieu's theory of the dynamics of habitus (not a rigidly fixed or mechanical habit) and of field (not a stationary space but a dynamic field constituted by struggles over changing positions) demonstrates that social structures must be understood not as static, typological and hard-edged but rather as dynamic formations of organized diachronic complexity, poised between stability and change. (p. 8)

In large part, these critiques miss the mark. The generative capacities, schemes, and perceptions that Bourdieu attributes to the habitus are reflective of its central role in ascribing agents' wills,

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intentions, rational actions and positions in social space (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Maton, 2012). Since my study tended to explore the processes and strategies adopted in situations of crisis, tensions and uncertainties, the generative capacities, schemes, and perceptions of the habitus take on a primary role in determining a pathway from means available to goals attained.

Summary

Bourdieu's social capital theory has seen considerable use in the research on (re-)credentialing processes of adult immigrants in Canada. Bourdieu's framework provides a unique framework for researching how contextual, variable, and conditional social capital can be. Barriers adult immigrants face, entering the Canadian labour market, have been explored using the variety of perspectives Bourdieu's framework provides. Bourdieu's notion of a field of power designated by a dominant social class is an example of how research using his framework can be used to further our understanding of the barriers adult immigrants face entering the labour market. The interplay of ethnic ties with the utility of social networks during the process of migration occupies a key role in social network formation according to Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1986). Based on my review of the literature, it appears less research has been done on the effects of non-migrant networks, where privilege is often reproduced and where it becomes more complex to acquire and apply social capital.

Furthermore, the mismatch between entry and hiring criteria for adult immigrants is a common theme in the literature. My examination of the literature seemed to reveal a frustration about credential devaluation and the retraining regime to which adult immigrants are compelled to subscribe. Compounding this sense of frustration, as it appeared in the literature, is the analysis from the sociocultural perspective of how immigrants actively reconstruct their sense of

identity to address the gap resulting from the non-recognition of their credentials. Vygotsky's

notions of sociocultural learning and more recent formulations of sociocultural theory, employed

in the research I examined, show how agency is relationally constructed and how the individual

is mediated by social formations, not unlike Bourdieu's theoretical construct of social practice.

Concluding Thoughts Regarding the Literature

Throughout this chapter, I have attempted to convey what I have found in the literature regarding

the historical development of immigration in Canada, contemporary immigration of

tradespeople, and the two larger bodies of literature that deal with ameliorating the barriers

immigrants face seeking entry to the labour market. From the research that I have examined, it

appears that adult immigrant tradespersons' experiences have yet to be appreciated in sufficient

volume in the existing literature. For my contribution, I chose to perform original research

focusing on those very experiences that I believe require more attention. To be clear about how

that research unfolded, I now turn to Chapter Three: Methods and Methodology.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

When I set out to consider which methodology and methods would best fit my research, I started by reflecting on my research questions, which ask adult immigrant tradespersons who are navigating challenging circumstances to fulfill successful labour market entry, about their experiences, thoughts, and feelings while facing a process of life transitions and social transformations and while learning to meet unfamiliar (re-)credentialing processes. Specifically, I wanted to know about experiences: What experiences and/or perceptions do adult immigrant tradespersons have as they negotiate the (re-)credentialing process? What additional concerns or issues do they have with this process pertaining to their strategic agency, re-formation of social capital, re-adjustment of habitus, and re-orientation to field? Which concerns or issues did they view in most need of attention in order to better facilitate the (re-)credentialing process and successful entry to the labour market? Although I had decided, prior to refining my research questions, to use case study methodology, I still needed to carefully plan how my research would proceed, including careful consideration of my research questions. This chapter will explore this process and its constituent components.

I have split this chapter into four sections. The first section summarizes the concepts that underpin an interpretive approach, including an overview of the tensions and debates in qualitative research and the nature of qualitative writing. The second section examines my research design, including my rationale for choosing case study and the type of case study used in my research. This section also includes a description of my research sample and the selection process used for my participants. The third section begins with my discussion of the capability of case study methodology to accommodate story, which then leads to an exploration of how I organized my individual interviews, the focus group, document analysis, and subsequent data

analysis. The fourth section addresses issues of trustworthiness in research. In addition to identifying specific ways of ensuring trustworthiness in data collection and analysis relevant to my research, there is also a discussion of limitations, epistemological limitations, practical limitations, delimitations, and ethical considerations for my study. The chapter concludes with a recapitulation and further explanation of how I began the analysis process for the interviews, focus group, and document analysis.

Considerations in Qualitative Research and an Interpretive Approach

Neuman (2011) asserts that "all scientific research rests on assumptions and principles from these two areas [i.e., epistemology and ontology] whether or not a researcher acknowledges them" (p. 91). Epistemology, or beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how we know what we know, is an integral part of both the theoretical perspective and the methodology that a researcher chooses. It also encompasses the possibilities associated with that knowledge including its scope and general basis (Carter & Little, 2007; Crotty, 1998). Ontology is the study of being and reality, of "what is." Ontology relates to epistemology because it plays a key role in how we know the world and how we acquire knowledge about the world. Varied and different epistemological and ontological perspectives work together to inform the varied and different research paradigms "a basic set of beliefs that guides action" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 15), so that methodology is inherently a theoretical determination and process involving a philosophical debate about "how things really are and how things really work" (Crotty, 1998, p. 10). This debate continues amongst scholars (Shenton & Dixon, 2004). In recent years, debates have also arisen about what constitutes interpretivism, postmodernism, constructivism, and deconstructionism, particularly as they are used in different ways by different people (Howe, 1998).

In much of the social sciences, an epistemological shift occurred beginning in the mid to late 20th century away from positivism, which "assumes that reality exists 'out there' and it is observable, stable, and measurable," toward interpretivism, which "assumes that reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single observable reality, rather there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event" (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). The ontological notion that realities exist outside the mind, known as realism, is often bound together with objectivism, the epistemological notion that meaning exists in objects independently of any consciousness (Crotty, 1998; Searle, 1999); however, a number of scholars disagree with this position. Amongst them are Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (Crotty, 1998, p. 10), both early influences on the formation of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice (Grenfell, 2012b, p. 21). For example, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty maintain that the world was always already there, and neither of them is considered to be an objectivist (Crotty, 1998).

From an interpretivist perspective, which I have adopted in this inquiry, there is an assumption that researchers will conceive of or accept the idea of multiple realities based on the gathering of multiple forms of evidence. Within the constructivist paradigm that I have also adopted in this inquiry, for example, this is known as relativist ontology. The epistemological assumption in this form of qualitative research, and the one that I hold, then, is that interpretive researchers will come to know through getting as close as possible to the subjective experiences of the study participants. Within the constructivist paradigm, this is known as a subjectivist epistemology. In a subjectivist epistemology the knower and respondent co-create understandings within a naturalistic (natural world) set of methodological procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 13). Field studies, conducted where participants live and work, determine the "context for understanding what the participants are saying and the evidence that is being

imparted between the researcher and the participant in the study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). The epistemological perspective is affected by the subjective evidence that is gathered in the study and the subjective evidence is based on the individual views of the study participants.

Ontologically, I worked with the assumption of structural constructivism, which suggests two types of reality. On the one hand, structuralism suggests that reality is relational and both structured and structuring. The basis for the structure is the relationship between the individual and the sociomaterial world. Structure is referred to "in both an objective and subjective sense and as both stable and dynamic – structured and structuring" (Grenfell, 2012a, p. 153). With reference to Bourdieu's ideas, I return to the point that habitus is both structured and structuring. It is the product of our position in a social structure and it shapes the thoughts and actions that reproduce the social structure (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). On the other hand, constructivism suggests that reality is the result of individual perspective and cognitive processes, so that a sense of reality can be explained by individuals, based on their perceptions.

The primacy of relations as posited in Bourdieu's structuralism manifests in both his notions of habitus and field, and in the mediated properties of Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory. Structuralism considers both interactional and psychological explanations of social facts which ensure a focus on the structure of relations to explain how agents take on the content of the visible relations of interaction within the space of the field. As I established in Chapter 2, an examination of the (re-)credentialing experiences of immigrant tradespersons in a rural setting is well suited to the structural constructivist ontology to which I subscribe, which facilitates consideration of both individual and sociocultural factors. The stories of participants in my study played a key role in the construction of reality as they contributed to constituting reasonable beliefs about the social world.

Tensions and Debates in Qualitative Research

Just as epistemological and ontological perspectives are influenced by different interpretations of what constitutes knowledge and reality, qualitative interpretive research is influenced by different resistances, legacies, and definitional issues. Resistance to qualitative studies, especially interpretivist studies, comes in the form of criticism from positivists who assert that qualitative researchers write fiction instead of science and have no way of verifying their truth statements (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Positivists reject the textual, narrative, interpretive turn put forward in much qualitative research.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state that "qualitative research operates within a complex historical field that crosscuts at least eight historical moments. These moments overlap and simultaneously operate in the present" (p. 3). The eight historical moments include the traditional (1900-1950), the modernist or golden age (1950-1970), blurred genres (1970-1986), the crisis of representation (1986-1990), the postmodern, a period of experimental and new ethnographies (1990-1995), post experimental inquiry (1995-2000), the methodologically contested present (2000-2013), and the future (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The contemporary qualitative researcher deploys whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand and invents new tools and techniques as needed, to support a "just in time" interpretive practice inclusive of both the context of the research questions and what the researcher is able to do within the context of the research setting (Becker, 1998). The strength of qualitative research, as I further discuss below, lies in the fact that no single method can fully capture the complexity of human experience.

Research Design: Case Study Methodology and Methods

My reading of the literature in both devaluation and non-recognition of foreign credentials in trades occupations suggested a qualitative approach to the primary question of how new

immigrant tradespersons describe their post-immigration (first 12 months) experiences in re-establishing themselves in their trade. Merriam (2009) states that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 5). But qualitative research as a set of activities includes no theory or paradigm that is exclusively its own. Rather, it includes multiple theoretical paradigms, research methods, and strategies and is cross-disciplinary in its application (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 6). The inherent choice of paradigms, research methods, and strategies contained within the qualitative paradigm is an opportunity to get closer to the individual's point of view accessing rich descriptions of the social world, while at the same time embed findings within the natural constraints of the social world.

One type of qualitative research methodology whose application accesses rich descriptions of the social world and illuminates findings within the natural constraints of the social world is case study. By definition, a case study is "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). Yin (2014) contends that case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 16). Stake (2008) emphasizes the importance of pinpointing the unit of study in case study research. Each approach adds to our understanding of the constituent components of a case study. For example, Merriam (2009) posits that the single most defining characteristic of case study research is the delimiting of the object of study. Merriam concurs with Stake (2008) who emphasizes what is described in case study methodology as a bounded system; a single entity, a unit whose admission criteria for membership is strictly defined. The phenomenon to be studied must be intrinsically bounded in order for it to be considered a case. A bounded system or case could be

chosen because it is an example of a process, issue, or concern (Merriam, 2009). An effective method for determining the authenticity of the bounded system is to consider whether there is both a limit to the number of people one could interview in the study and whether there is a finite time for observations. According to Merriam (2009) both of these criteria need to be met in order for the phenomenon to be considered sufficiently bounded to qualify as a case.

As mentioned, Merriam and Stake hold similar views on the bounding of the case. Their epistemological stances are a close match as well, with both of their perspectives advocating a constructivist approach to qualitative case study (Yazan, 2015, p. 137). With Merriam's exception of not expecting the reader to be involved in construction and interpretation in the research process, like Stake does, Merriam aligns with Stake in her and his view that there are multiple interpretations of reality, "multiple layered reality or knowledge construction" (p. 138). In contrast to Merriam and Stake, Yin advocates a less clearly delineated epistemological orientation to case study, but no less detailed. Instead, his epistemology is reflected in his positivist, scientific, view of case study that emphasizes the importance of design quality through, for example, ensuring such conditions as, "construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability" (Yin, 2014, p. 46). Moreover, Yin leans more toward a single interpretation of reality through the exercise of his positivistic case study methods, in comparison to Merriam and Stake.

Along with determining the parameters that delimit the subject of the study and making the pertinent boundary decisions, the researcher must choose, from amongst a variety of different types of case studies, the type of case study that best fits the research question and the study purpose. In addition, the researcher must decide if the research design is of a single case or a multisite study (Merriam, 2009). In addition to my discussion of Merriam, Yin, and Stake above,

I briefly review Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) case study typology in the following brief review of three common typologies of case study that form the background of the rationale for my choice of case study type and case study design. Due to the number of similarities between Merriam's and Stake's case study methodology, I chose to compare and contrast Merriam and Stake above and delineate between three substantially different case study methodologies as follows.

First, Bogdan and Biklen (2007), in their typology, distinguish between historical organizational case studies, observational case studies, and life histories. An historical organizational case study adheres to the description in its title as it is the study of the development of a particular organization over a given period of time with the inclusion of observations and interviews of people directly related to the case. An observational case study focuses on a data gathering technique of participant observation supported by formal and informal interviews and document review. The focus of the study is on an organization and any of its main components or operations, such as a specific group of people or a specific activity. Also included within Bogdan and Biklen's case study typology is the life history case study. The life history case study calls for the researcher to conduct extensive, in depth, interviews with one person for the purpose of assembling a first-person narrative (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Bogdan and Biklen's typology accents the unique strengths of case study as a research method that utilizes a full array of evidence including documents, interviews, artifacts, and observations.

Second, Yin (2014), in his typology, differentiates case studies as explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive. The explanatory case study centres on an analysis of the facts of a case that includes accurate description, alternative explanations, and credible conclusions to explain phenomena. Exploratory case studies investigate phenomena in a more preliminary way where the research context is not clearly outlined providing the researcher the flexibility to

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investigate phenomena that have no clear, single set of outcomes. In contrast to the exploratory case study is the descriptive case study where the focus is on being highly detailed and where propositions and questions concerning a phenomenon are carefully looked at and analyzed prior to being set forth at the outset of the case study. This process is also known as the articulation of descriptive theory and is considered to be an essential part of conducting a descriptive case study.

Third, Stake's (2008) typology identifies three types of case studies whose choice depends on the researcher's particular interest. They are intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. The intrinsic case study, exemplified by my inquiry, is used when the researcher's intent is to better understand the case from the standpoint of having a genuine interest in the case and not necessarily to build theory or make connections from one case to another case. In the instrumental case study, the focus shifts to "providing insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else" (Stake, 2008, p. 437). A collective case study is similar in nature and description to a multiple case study wherein a number of cases are studied "to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition" (p. 445). The individual or single cases in a multicase study share common characteristics that categorically bind them together. It is Stake's (1995) earlier writing about case study methodology that first appealed to me, because it allowed me to concentrate on the complexity and importance of a set of people and experiences constituting a single case.

Furthermore, my constructivist epistemology matches most closely with that of Stake. I am an interpreter and gatherer of interpretations in terms of the approach I took to my inquiry. I have investigated an issue, and through this I have rendered a construction of my interpretations

of the experiences of my participants. To further illustrate how I match with Stake, I expect

readers of my dissertation to be involved in the construction and interpretation of my research

once this inquiry is completed, further facilitating Stake's (1995) view of multiple layered reality

or knowledge construction. Like Yazan (2015), I am of the belief that knowledge is socially

constructed and emerges from peoples' social practices. I position myself most closely with the

constructivist paradigm. When I combine this with the purpose of my research and theoretical

framework I employed in my study, I realized that the particular contributions of case study

methodologists such as Yin, whose perspective is more positivistic, and Bogdan and Biklen, who

are more oriented toward organizational case studies and life history, would not be central in my

work; instead, Stake's approach to case study methodology was central. I now return to how my

case study was bounded.

My case study was bounded by three inter-related processes: the common sense bounding

of the case, the methodological bounding of the case, and, most importantly, the theoretical

bounding of the case (Elger, 2010, p. 58). These three bases of bounding of the case are

distinguished by a fourth process known as temporal bounding (Elger, 2010). First, the common

sense bounding of my case is the trades' school setting of Keyano College, Fort McMurray,

Alberta where the research was conducted and from where analytical insight is sourced.

Although the trades' school site is a solid and clearly demarcated entity, I am aware of the way

the informants in my study define, understand, and experience the boundaries of their activities

and I am aware of the permeability and precariousness of the boundary I have established and

how it can potentially be reconfigured from my original design.

Second, the theoretical bounding of my case will be based on the notions of Bourdieu and

Vygotsky and how these notions provide a unified framework for analyzing the (re-)

credentialing experiences of new immigrant tradespersons as previously outlined in Chapter 2. In addition, the theoretical bounding of my case serves the important role of providing analytical insight to the common sense bounding of my case and to the methodological bounding of my case by providing the opportunity for reconceptualization of the boundaries of my case through the lens of my theoretical framework.

Third, the methodological bounding of my case is constituted by the temporal requirements of my funding and educational sponsors; this meant that, initially, my data collection, that included individual interviews, was intended to take place over an approximate three-month period when power engineering classes were in session. Subsequently, the time period of data collection for the research study was extended by approximately five months when I modified the study to add focus groups to the earlier individual interviews, to better capture the richness and complexity of the case, further strengthening my methodology. In addition, my case is methodologically bounded by the way I detail my investigation and by the way I theorize about the (re-)credentialing experiences of new immigrant tradespersons. My interpretation of the findings has led to an improved understanding of a specific aspect of a situation as well as the external context of the case, and provide affective information that could not be collected otherwise (MacNealy, 1997). To further support my interviews, I examined relevant documents to illuminate the external context of the case and provide the humanistic and holistic understanding of a complex situation typical of rigorous case studies.

The two documents that best illuminated the external context of my case study discussed recent changes to Canadian immigration policy including preliminary evaluation and future implications of these changes. One document is a paper by Akbari and MacDonald (2014), which discusses how economic considerations play an important role in determining immigration

policy. Akbari and MacDonald also discuss the regionalization of immigration and the shift from a human capital focus in selecting immigrants to immigration selection based on labour market demand for specific skills. The second document by Ferrer et al. (2014) discusses the recent changes to Canadian immigration policy and several goals that are driving these changes. Ferrer et al. examine early evaluations of new programs that have come from these changes in addition to discussing some potential future issues stemming from the recent changes to Canadian immigration policy.

Yin (2014) asserts that case study methodology is "the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (p. 2). According to Yin, the focus on contemporary phenomenon is facilitated by the use of multiple sources of evidence, the creation of a case study database, and the maintenance of a chain of evidence. The task of confirming theories put forward to be tested throughout the process of the case study entails a systematic, analytical approach to the hypotheses and concepts upon which the case study is based. Central to this approach is the emphasis on the interpretive perspective and its role in relation to the data generated during the course of the research.

Stake (2008) further asserts the significant role of the researcher as interpreter by stating that if the case is "more human or in some ways transcendent, it is because the researchers are so, not because of the methods" (Stake, 2008, p. 119). As such, case study firmly positions itself as constructivist with its provision for integrated interpretations of situations and contexts (Stake, 1995). For the case study researcher and interpreter these integrated interpretations are underpinned by explanation and descriptions, including both "commonplace description" and "thick description" (Stake, 1995, p. 102). Constructivist case study theory has at its core a

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reflexive stance on ways of knowing and representing studied phenomena. A reflexive stance supports the notion that research data is created through the interactive relationship with the participants, an elemental feature of case study methodology. With this in mind, I have conducted an intrinsic, exploratory case study engaging Stake's (1995) methodology because it affords the opportunity to understand, with depth and breadth, the particularities of the case, and I am interested in the reconstruction of experience that this type of case study allows. "The intrinsic case strives to capture the richness and complexity of the case" (Grandy, 2010, p. 500). This type of case study presents a good match for the complex nature of my research topic.

Research Sample

The data for my study of the (re-)credentialing processes for adult immigrants in rural Alberta came from the interplay of the stories that emerged as new immigrant trades people talked to me about their experiences re-establishing themselves in their chosen trade in Canada. I have focussed my research on a case consisting of a single cohort of between 50 and 70 Power Engineering students, many of whom are new immigrants to Canada. I delineated the unit of analysis of the case by presenting brief classroom presentations of my research study to the five class sections of the single cohort and from those responses narrowed the size of the group for interviews.

After receiving approval from the Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary and approval from the Research and Ethics Committee at Keyano College, I reached out to prospective participants for my study by delivering classroom presentations to five separate classes that comprise the 50- to 70-person Power Engineering student cohort. I sent out letters of invitation describing my research study to Power Engineering students in one intake at Keyano. My participants were selected using the process of purposive sampling, where my

research focussed on one intake of power engineers at Keyano College. I provide more information about the individual participants in Chapter 4, to help introduce my discussion of my findings.

Methods of Data Collection

Another elemental feature of case study methodology is its accommodation of participants' stories as an important means of highlighting the significance of the case. In order to avoid confusion between what I did in my case study and the separate methodology of narrative inquiry, I tend to use the word "story" in place of narrative, although I recognize the similarity in meaning and function between these two words. To provide an avenue for the stories, I engaged the participants in my study in a conversation about their experiences re-accrediting themselves in their chosen trade through the process of individual interviews and a focus group discussion. I told the participants what I was looking for with respect to the questions I asked, and I asked them about the types of issues that they have experienced during the process of re-establishing themselves in their trade. I let the participants know about my interests and biases to the extent that I have identified them going into the study. I was aware that further ideas and biases of mine may become evident as I moved through the study and heard from the participants. I assumed that the participants also have their own interests and biases.

Both the individual interview questions and the focus group guiding questions focus on the trades credentialing experience of the new immigrants during their first 12 months in Canada. I narrowed the number of questions for both the interviews and the focus group to nine to focus specifically on what I want to know. At the same time, I encouraged conversation with the participants to take its natural course. I did this for two reasons. I wanted to make my role clear in co-constructing the overall story that emerged during and from the interviews and, at the same

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time, be clear about the contrast that exists between the objectivity of the interview questions and the provocative and constrictive elements, inherent in the interview questions, that influenced how participants constructed their responses. Elements influencing the co-constructed nature of stories include tailoring stories to an audience and as both circumstances and people change, and making efforts to avoid dissonance (Goffman, 1959; Silverman, 2006). We are constantly adjusting our stories based on what it is that we would like others to know about us and our experiences.

As much as I wanted both the interviews and the focus group processes to be conversational and open-ended, I had to impose some time limitations on the process in keeping with the busy study and examination schedule stipulated by Alberta Boilers Safety Association (ABSA), the credentialing body for Power Engineering. I assumed that many of the students that I interviewed would be on a tight time schedule and I felt that they may be too busy for in-depth interviewing. For this reason, I used the shorter, focussed interview for the individual interviews, as Yin (2014) suggests. Budgeting an hour for an interview helped me balance an open-ended, conversational interview with a set of questions designed to elicit certain information. To the extent that I was able to, I encouraged as much sharing of experience as possible through the interview process, while at the same time being aware that all stories are influenced by their co-constructed nature.

Interviews. To access participants' stories, I used a series of questions to provide some structure to the interview. The conversations that arose were as heterogeneous as the migration process the participants were negotiating, "encompassing a series of events, influenced by a number of factors over a prolonged period of time" (Palmer, 2012, p. 49). Each interview conversation reflected the complex reality of the migration process. To explore this complex

reality in relation to my research questions, participants were encouraged to freely discuss issues they felt were important to them. The data analysis is based on a close reading of the interview transcripts, although I recognize that they are, at best, partial representations of participants' experiences and reflections.

Conversational tactics include such things as pauses in speech shown as "….," with each dot acting as the equivalent of 1/10ths of a second. Wherever possible, I quoted stanzas of speech as transcribed; however, I have not included affirmations such as, "you know," "yeah," or "mmhm" as they appeared in the transcripts, unless I determined that these affirmations informed the substance of an interview.

Participants were recruited in collaboration with the Power Engineering Co-ordinator, who organized a series of classroom presentations where I delivered a letter of initial contact (see Appendix A).[1] As part of the consent process for the study, I asked each of the power engineering students to choose a pseudonym. Two of the power engineering students left the choice of pseudonym up to me. One of the power engineering students suggested a letter and a number. For the sake of consistency and to preserve anonymity, even when it does not appear to be an issue, I ensured that all participants had pseudonyms in the form of names. In keeping with case study methodology, the stories that emerged from the individual interviews appear in the same chronological order as the individual interviews that produced them. I personally transcribed the individual interviews and the focus group discussion.

For the individual interviews, I offered to meet each immigrant power engineering student at a time and place that was convenient to their study schedule. In all instances, I had a

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[1]The items that appear in these appendices refer to my original supervisor. Changes in my supervisory committee were made part way through my program.[1]

small digital voice recorder. All participants signed a formal consent form approved by the

Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) before the interviews started and before the

audio recorder began recording (see Appendix B).

Interviews lasted for approximately one hour. At the beginning of the interview, I asked

participants to answer a series of questions about themselves (e.g., age, year of immigration to

Canada, educational level, employment before immigration, and current employment income)

(see Appendix C). I explained that I was asking these questions to collect demographic

information for the study. Some of these demographic questions were answered more fully in the

interview, which both followed a set of prepared questions (see Appendix D) and allowed for the

insertion of ad hoc follow-up or probing questions. In methodological terminology, this process

exemplifies a semi-structured interview (Yin, 2014). The interviews were also instrumental in

the sense that I was purposefully looking for descriptions and stories to interpret and report in

relation to the study (Brinkman & Kvale, 2009).

At this point, I note discussions in the methodological literature of the inherent power

asymmetries of interviews (Brinkman & Kvale, 2009; Nunkoosing, 2005; Seidman, 2006). As

the interviewer, I made it very clear as to why I was doing the research. I initiated the interview

not only for the purpose of talking about the experiences of (re-)credentialing for new immigrant

tradespersons in rural Alberta, but for the purpose of finding better ways for new immigrant

tradespersons to gain their credentials and enter the labour force. In this respect, power

asymmetry was aided in balance by the participants' interest in the aims of the research. All of

the participants were eager to tell and reflect on their stories in order to improve (re-)

credentialing processes for those following their path. Furthermore, I hoped that my transparency

of purpose would balance the power asymmetry of the one-directional questioning present in the

interviews by valuing participant responses for the critically important information that they could provide as "privileged knowers" (Nunkoosing, 2005, p. 699). Thus, my role in the interview process was to ask the questions, be an active listener, and look out for opportunities for appropriate follow-up questions. For instance, at least half of the respondents consistently focused their responses for the majority of the interview questions on how (re-) credentialing processes could be improved. In this sense, the participants' life story specific-knowledge precluded the two-way sharing of information between the participants and the researcher, noted for diminishing the power asymmetry in the interview relationship. With this level of transparency complementing my interview structure, I hoped to avoid the charge of being manipulative (Brinkman & Kvale, 2009, p. 33). To mitigate power asymmetry, I employed the *in vivo* method for coding interview responses that calls for the use of the exact words of the participants in my coding scheme.

Nonetheless, as a researcher I realize that I retain a monopoly on interpretation (Brinkman & Kvale, 2009; Nunkoosing, 2005). As Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) emphasize, it is the writing of the researcher itself that creates value, and a particular view of reality. On the one hand, I involved the new immigrant tradespersons in the analysis of the interview with my active listening and with summarizing what I think I was hearing them say in the framing of my follow up questions. On the other hand, I hope to balance the power asymmetry inherent in the interview process and subsequent data analysis by maintaining my awareness of the value constituting aspects of the writing. Within the array of research interview features that constitute power asymmetry, I sought a balance, more or less, between my role as researcher, seeker of knowledge, and purveyor of methodological expertise and participants' positions as privileged knowers (Nunkoosing, 2005). I focussed on valuing the participants as privileged knowers by

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encouraging them to share their lived experience and its effects on their identity, work experience, and perceptions of their abilities.

From a philosophical perspective, the interview discourse was prominently structured by the influences that act on all discourse: "semantic conventions and prosody of language" (Nunkoosing, 2005, p. 700). From a methodological perspective, the interviews used a mix of structured questions and unprepared follow-up or probing questions. To increase the levels of trust, transparency, and relationship intrinsic to the life story interview, I shared the written questions with the participants. If, in the course of recounting their life experiences, participants inadvertently answered a subsequent question, I did not ask that particular question.

A member check was done following each interview transcription. Each transcript was read several times to get a feel for the continuously linked and dialectically made life stories of the participants (Jones, 2003; Palmer, 2012; Stake, 1995). I borrowed from the biographic narrative interpretive method interview technique (Wengraf, 2001) that uses a single, initial narrative-inducing question to elicit an extensive, uninterrupted narration. I sustained this interview technique throughout the interviews so that I might make the shift from knowledge privileged investigator to reflective passive participant. In this way, I hoped to access a window on the "structural linkages that individuals perceive among positive and negative attributes and experiences" (Jones, 2003, p. 62). By adopting this approach, participants had the opportunity to better focus on the chronological order of substantive events in their credentialing and (re-) credentialing experience, with more time to identify, emphasize, and order the topics or themes they chose to adopt or omit in their life story. Furthermore, involving immigrant power engineering students as active participants, I hoped, would result in more cogency between how

the lived life informs the told story and how the subsequent in-depth analysis of the interview texts stands alongside the biographical details and themes manifested in the participants' stories.

Focus groups. A second method that I used to obtain data for the study was a focus group with five students who had participated in individual interviews. Participants for the focus group were recruited in consultation with the Power Engineering Co-ordinator, as a number of the students were away from the College on work placements by this time (see Appendix E). All participants signed a formal consent form approved by the CFREB before the focus group discussion commenced and before the audio recorder began recording (see Appendix F). The focus group took place in the evening in a tutorial room located in the Skill Centre at Keyano College.

The central purpose of a focus group is to derive a baseline of perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of participants, using a set of carefully sequenced and focussed questions that progressively direct the attention of the participants toward the topics of greatest interest to the researcher (Barbour, 2007; Kreuger, 2006; Merton, 1987). Answering easier questions first helps the participants get ready to respond to more challenging questions, encourages universal participation within the group, and generates momentum that allows time for underlying opinions, meanings, feelings, attitudes and beliefs to emerge alongside descriptions of individual experiences (Kreuger, 2006). To set the stage for this process, I established common ground by ensuring that the pre-conditions for focus group participation were clear. I clarified the questions before the focus group began, I established an atmosphere of trust, I encouraged participants to exchange experiences and question one another, and I encouraged participants to challenge each other and explore a range of perspectives. In keeping with effective focus group facilitation, I took a peripheral role, rather than a centre stage role, in moderating the discussion because it is

the inter-relational dynamics of the participants that are more important than the researcher participant relationship in a focus group discussion.

The unique powers of focus group methods include opportunities for participants to manage their individual identities while making a collective representation to the researcher. Focus groups can give the researcher a collective view of the attitudes and dispositions or habitus of the wider community the researcher is investigating (Barbour, 2007). Focus groups allow participants to respond, react, and add to the responses of other group members. The combined effect of the group setting together with the flexibility of focus groups can provide the researcher with rich data that might not have surfaced in individual interviews.

To ensure effective inter-relational dynamics amongst the focus group participants I remained alert for silences and the emergence of sensitive topics during the discussion. I also remained alert for the emergence of a dominant speaker. Clarification of the questions beforehand and involving the group from the beginning in monitoring the pacing of the focus group discussion, helped ameliorate these potential issues.

From a methodological perspective, the focus group discussion was semi-structured with an emphasis on participant elaboration and co-construction of knowledge. The questions were open ended, designed to stimulate discussion without directing it too much. For example, the questions do not draw attention to any specific aspect of the stimulus in the question and the participants select the aspect or dimension to refer to. The questions were developed to address issues most central to the participants and were directed toward problems to be discussed in the group with cues to cause participants to reflect on links to their prior knowledge and to other participant's contributions. All nine of the focus group questions were explored during the 80-minute focus group session (see Appendix G).

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Document Analysis. A third method that I used to obtain data for my study was document analysis. Document analysis is an analytical method that employs a systematic procedure for the evaluation of documents. Document analysis is distinct from the literature review in that documents identified by the researcher are treated as a source of data, much like interviews and focus groups. For example, documents can be analyzed for demographic or historical information and can confirm or contradict data that emerges from the other methods used by the researcher in the study. In contrast, the literature review, which also includes data relevant to the topic of study, is primarily intended to present the sum of current knowledge on the study's topic, as well as demonstrating the researcher's critical thinking.

In comparison to the interview and focus group method, the text and images that appear in the documents are recorded exclusive of any interaction with the researcher. For example, "Document analysis yields excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from records, correspondence, official reports and open-ended surveys" (Labuschagne, 2003, p. 101). The category of documents that I used in my study included secondary, public record documents to "provide a window into the historical, political, social, economic, and personal dimensions of the case beyond the immediacy of interviews and observations" (Olsen, 2010, p. 318). I used document analysis in combination with the individual interview method and the focus group method as a means to validate and corroborate data obtained during the study. For this case study, document analysis included newspaper articles that addressed changes to Canadian immigration policy, government immigration policy reviews such as those contained in the papers by Akbari and MacDonald (2014) and Ferrer et al. (2014), college/institute policies, for instance, the policies contained in college and institute credit calendars with reference to power engineering pre-

requisites, and credentialing body policies such as those of ABSA, the Alberta Boilers Safety Association, the regulatory body for power engineers.

My rationale for selecting the documents I chose for document analysis was influenced by two main purposes related to my research. First, documents such as newspaper articles, college/institute policies and credentialing body policies, were selected to provide valuable background and context information for my study. Second, documents such as the government immigration policy reviews found in the papers by Akbari and MacDonald (2014) and Ferrer et al. (2014) were selected because they provided a third source of data related to my research questions, which could be compared with interview data and focus group data to strengthen the results from my study.

The primary purposes of document analysis include, first, providing information on the context of the data collected from the interviews through background information and historical insight contained in the documents. Second, information from the documents can further the research process by suggesting questions that need to be asked. For example, document analysis can contribute to the formulation of interview questions. Third, the selected documents supplement the research data collected from the research participants. Fourth, document analysis can provide valuable information to track changes and developments to further contextualize the data obtained from the research participants. And fifth, document analysis can be used to verify findings. That is, evidence from documents can corroborate findings or contradict findings. Document analysis plays an important role in case study research because it provides the means for increasing the convergence of information from different sources, inspiring confidence in the trustworthiness of the findings (Bowen, 2009, p. 30).

Data Analysis

Having fully adopted the belief shared by most contemporary qualitative researchers that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered, I realize the potential for the analysis of the interview data to be potentially daunting. With this in mind, I employed the data analysis strategies recommended by Stake (1995) that include such things as using short hand notes supplemented with member checks to confirm what was said, while at the same time maintaining audio recordings of the interviews to ensure that I have captured the exact words of the participants. While thinking, reading, and planning about how I would tap into the stories of the participants, I came across a quotation from Frosh (2007) recommending that narrative researchers maintain an awareness that not all human experience fits neatly into more or less coherent narratives. He asserts that the human participant is "*never* a whole, is always riven with partial drives, social discourses that frame available modes of experience, ways of being that are contradictory and reflect the shifting allegiances of power as they play across the body and the mind" (p. 638).

My interview data and its analysis are further framed through an awareness of the tensions that exist in qualitative research. On the one hand, my interpretivist approach understands the human participant as an agent in, for example, a network of competing discourses; on the other hand, my humanistic approach takes the integrity of the participant as both the starting-point and end-point of analysis (Frosh, 2007). Stories related during the study both integrate and fragment the participants in terms of identifying both common experiences and common themes.

With this in mind, I saw my role as researcher as filtering, isolating and analyzing aspects of participants' stories about their personal and social pasts and presents, specifically as they

related to (re-)credentialing experiences and as the trade worker diaspora. As the stories were co-constructed through the conversation that took place during the interview, I transcribed both what the interviewee said and what I said. In addition, I accounted for the influence of signals that happen below the surface of explicit meaning of words in conversation (Brinkman & Kvale, 2009). Thus, I include the pauses and non-lexical expressions (the "mmhms" and the "uh uhs"), the pauses and resumptions, the discourse markers (the "yeahs" and "you sees") and other dysfluencies.

I began by analyzing each interview internally to establish the contexts that govern the realities invoked by the interview text (Silverman, 2006). I accomplished this in part by noting how the participants describe themselves in relation to a particular category, for example, whether they described themselves as a student, a new immigrant, a Canadian, or a Power Engineer. The way in which the participants described themselves provides assumptions whereupon which I, as the interviewer, could structure my interpretations of what participants said. Next, I noted the themes that came up through the course of the conversations, using the case study strategies of "direct interpretation of the individual instance and aggregation of instances to make determinations about what can be said about the case (Stake, 1995, p. 74). I coded the interview transcripts to aggregate frequencies of patterns and find patterns from the data. Following that, I looked at both the context in which the stories were composed and the context in which the stories were received to ensure the most appropriate representation of the data and the optimum representation of voice. Once the analysis of context was complete, I used a pattern-matching technique to analyze the data for similarities.

My conversations with participants were recorded for transcription and analysis. I paid particular attention to the contexts of the stories of each participant as well as the structural

elements of the interviews and focus group. In keeping with Stake's (1995) recommendations, I took notes as the interviews proceeded in order to support my interpretation of what was said in the interview. I analyzed the transcripts based on my initial theoretical propositions related to my research questions of how new-immigrant tradespersons re-establish themselves in their chosen trade in their new country. As part of this process, I examined rival hypotheses and descriptive frameworks prior to my analysis of the case study data and in preparation for analyzing the contrasting perspectives of the participants revealed during the interview process.

Document analysis provides another avenue for thick description of the case with the advantage of the absence of both the potentially distorting effects of the researcher's presence in the field in terms of behaviors, attitudes, and feelings, or reactivity, and the potentially distorting effects of researcher and respondent bias. Document analysis was instrumental in refining ideas, identifying conceptual boundaries, and determining the fit and relevance of categories (Charmaz, 2011). Using the *in vivo* method, I reviewed line, phrase, sentence, and paragraph segments from the documents to code the data. Codes were grouped into categories and these category codes were compared with interview and focus group transcripts so that themes would emerge across all three sets of data. Using this process, I identified similarities, differences, and general patterns (Bowen, 2009, p. 71).

As a basis for the examination and analysis of the documents, I retained the notion that documents are social products. They contain the values and ideologies, the interests and perspectives of their authors, either intended or not (Saldana, 2009, p. 199). The value of document analysis for my study lies in its ability to shed light on multiple facets of the case such as relationships between case participants and credentialing bodies, on-going changes to immigration policy, and embedded power structures.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in data collection and analysis relies just as much as reflexivity on attention to detail. Qualitative researchers must ensure sufficient detail is provided so that readers can assess the validity or credibility of the work (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Tracy, 2010). For example, in case study research trustworthiness is increased when there is an emphasis on clearly written propositions or issues and clearly written research questions; if the study design matches the research question; if data collection is managed systematically; and if the data is analyzed correctly. Having the opportunity to view the phenomena from multiple perspectives also increases trustworthiness and data quality.

The trustworthiness of qualitative research is generally cast into doubt by positivists possibly because the concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way between the two methodologies. To ameliorate this concern qualitative researchers including those engaged in case study have to some degree adopted Guba's (1981) constructs that correspond to the criteria used in quantitative research. Guba's constructs focus on credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to correspond with internal validity, generalizability, reliability, and objectivity respectively. In case study, trustworthiness is further enhanced by the principle of exploring the phenomena from a number of perspectives.

The use of focus group as part of my methodology for my case study, on the one hand, enhances trustworthiness by providing another perspective from which to explore the phenomena in this inquiry. On the other hand, the use of focus group methods comes with its own set of potential risks and harms for the participants in relation to trustworthiness. Anonymity is not possible in focus group research, even though I have anonymized identities in my study. Another risk inherent in focus group methods is confidentiality. To address this, I secured agreement

between the participants and me regarding confidentiality at the start of the focus group discussions. In addition, I made myself aware of the full capacity of focus groups as a research method and ensured that the focus group discussion was well organized and that the discussion guide was refined to reflect my research objectives. Another potential harm, and a risk to privacy, is that some participants may reveal more information than they intended in the course of the discussion and they may make revelations that they may regret in retrospect. For example, participants who have remained silent for a length of time, as others talk, may feel compelled to say something, just to get involved in the discussion. This may result in them disclosing more information than they intended. There is also the possibility that disagreements that arise during the focus group discussion continue outside of the focus group meeting.

As the facilitator of the focus group, I listened carefully to the discussion, keeping in mind that the focus group discussion guide is a flexible guide in relation to a tightly ordered protocol, and I was prepared to redirect the discussion away from sensitive issues that may have been irrelevant to my research. Nonetheless, I realized that some participants are less inhibited than others and that as a focus group moderator I needed to allow participants to change the sequence of discussion guide questions in response to issues raised by the group during the discussion. To further address risks, harms, privacy, and confidentiality, I conducted a short debriefing at the conclusion of the focus group discussion. The debriefing provided another opportunity to re-visit the protections I had put in place for the privacy and confidentiality of the focus group participants and attend to possible risks and harms from the focus group discussion.

Limitations

This study was based on the constructivist assumption that knowledge is socially constructed, that microsocial patterns of relations create and maintain social processes and structure. These

sociocultural patterns of relations can be understood by the researcher through the exploration of participants' subjective meaning making of their own personal experience. We are all born into a world of meaning that is primarily influenced by the culture in which we are raised (Crotty, 1998). The cultural products of thought, emotion and action are influenced by a set of culturally unique control mechanisms that include the plans, recipes, rules, and instructions for conduct (Geertz, 1973). As a result, there are as many ways as there are cultures for imposing meaning on experience. My efforts to interpret the meaning of the new immigrant tradespersons' occupational reestablishment experiences that I will interview will be limited for both epistemological and practical reasons.

Epistemological Limitations

The study of human behavior is distinct from the study of any other behavior because of intentionality. Intentionality occurs when human consciousness reaches out to an object or reality to establish what that object or reality is about. Aspects of intentionality are contained within constructivism to the extent that objectivity and subjectivity are brought together to generate meaning about the world. Intentionality implies an active process of human beings engaging with their world to establish "referentiality, relatedness, directedness, and 'aboutness'" (Crotty, 1998, p. 44). This epistemology implies that when human beings become conscious of an object or an occurrence in the world they immediately begin to reach out to it and relate to it in order to make sense of the object or make sense of what is occurring. The replicable, quantifiable studies used to establish causality linked to the positivistic scientific method are not a good match for the study of human intention because two people may do the same thing for different reasons. In order to acquire an understanding of why an individual did something we must first have an understanding of their intentions and the part the person plays in their own story (MacIntyre,

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1985). When determining a person's story, one must also consider the interactive influence that the researcher's own story has on the process.

One aspect of the interactive influence the researcher is a part of is the "human inclination to simplify data and information through over interpretation and through preference for compact narratives over complex data sets" (Taleb, 2007, p. 63). It is easier to analyze and interpret narratives or stories that are replete with "meaning", than it is to analyze and interpret a series of "meaningless" data. Sandelowski (1991) posits that there is a natural inclination on the part of human beings to simplify data by reading meaning into it and by making up stories, influencing the relationship between truth and fiction in the interpretation and analysis of narratives. Narratives are tellings, "remembrances, retrospections and constructions about the past in a fleeting present moment soon to be past" (Freeman, 1984, p. 4). We interpret these narratives or tellings within a hermeneutic circle of (re-)interpretation where stories with common elements can reasonably be expected to change from one recounting to another, "making the idea of empirically validating them for consistency or stability completely alien to the concept of narrative truth" (Sandelowski, 1991, p. 165). Narrative truth relies instead on credibility established through rich descriptions of the complexity of natural situations accomplished as accurately as possible through peer debriefing, triangulation, and member checks (Guba, 1981). The temporal and liminal nature of the telling of a story married with its meaning-making functions put the emphasis less on how we know the truth and more on how experience is endowed with meaning.

Clifford Geertz (1973, 1983) wrote at length on ways we can interpret the narratives of others. He asserts the value of the hermeneutic circle as an effective means of interpreting our findings from the narratives of others. By continuously connecting local detail with global

structure in narratives, and analyzing the parts of a narrative in relation to the whole and the whole of a narrative in relation to the parts, we come to a better understanding of both (Geertz, 1983). Both truths and fictions are contained within narratives because all interpretation (including rationalistic inquiry) involves human fabrication (Sandelowski, 1991). Human fabrication is involved as soon as we make sense of what happened or what something means. All interpretations (meaning all mental activity) is a mix of truths and fictions, so that stories can be seen as truthful fictions with rules for their fabrication.

Practical Limitations

There are a number of practical concerns that impinged on my ability to make a good interpretation of the stories that emerged with the Power Engineering students that I interviewed. The first limitation, with an obvious bearing on the truths and fictions inherent in all stories, is asking the Power Engineering students to recall their early experiences of re-establishing themselves in their trade in Canada, in some cases after having spent a number of years gaining the language training and pre-requisites to be admitted to the Power Engineering program. Their memory of their thoughts and feelings at the time will have been influenced by their subsequent experiences. One possibility for mitigating this is to follow the Power Engineering students over time, interviewing them once a month in the year prior to their admission to the Power Engineering program, but this was beyond the time and financial resources of my study.

A related issue is the limited time I had to spend with each Power Engineering student. All of the Power Engineering students are on a tight academic schedule stipulated by the body that regulates the training of Power Engineers: ABSA. As such, each student must subscribe to a heavy study schedule that includes covering comprehensive training modules in short periods of time. The time that they spent with me is time that could have been spent studying or preparing

for another examination, or time they could be spending with friends and family. I felt fortunate to able to spend one hour with each of the students who agreed to participate in the study.

Another limitation related to the time that I had with each Power Engineering student was that I did not have time to talk with them beyond the structure of the research study. In other words, we did not have time to go beyond the socially constructed roles of researcher and the researched.

Another limitation is the selection bias of the study. At Keyano College, I had an existing pool of Power Engineering intakes from whence to choose my participants. I drew my participants from one intake or cohort. The Power Engineering students who were eligible to participate and did participate in this study were new immigrants to Canada.

A further limitation is the size of my sample. The representation of cultural groups amongst the participants that I interview is located on the spectrum somewhere between broad and narrow. Including a broader cultural and national diversity of participants might bolster or refine my ultimate conclusions about the primary issues affecting trades credentialing for new immigrants to Canada.

Delimitations

I had limited my study to power engineering students who have either studied or spent time in related trades in their countries of origin. Because of their experience working in the trades in their countries of origin, they are predisposed toward pursuing the Power Engineering credential. Prior to being accepted into the Power Engineering Program they may have taken pre-requisite courses at Keyano College; some of those courses consist of high-school upgrading courses. They have been selected for the Power Engineering program based on their academic achievement.

At the outset, I planned to survey students from a number of different countries of origin with the purpose of making determinations about how I will limit the number of countries of origin for the study. Instead of a survey, I made presentations supported with information letters to all five classes of Power Engineering students in the same cohort focussing on the international students in each class for participation in the study. The international students in each class consisted of students with a limited number of countries of origin. Limiting the number of countries of origin is based on a suggestion from Berry's (1997) work that cultural distance will influence strategies for adaptation and career reestablishment. Limiting the number of countries of origin helped me make clearer connections with the co-constructed themes and ideas that emerged from the interviews.

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative researchers address a number of ethical issues during the process of data collection and analysis. These ethical issues can be grouped into informed consent procedures; deception or covert activities; confidentiality toward participants, sponsors, and colleagues; benefits of research to participants over risks; and participant requests that go beyond social norms (Creswell, 2013). Strategies for properly addressing these issues include full disclosure of the research study and its purposes to the participants and sponsors; protecting the identity of the participants by assigning them numbers or aliases; representing a composite picture of individuals within the research methodology being used versus representing an individual picture of the individual; and not engaging in deception about the nature of the study. Other issues that the researcher is ethically bound to address include maintaining confidentiality about and deleting "off the record" information; and avoiding the sharing of personal information from the researcher during the course of the study so as not to minimize the "bracketing" necessary to

construct the meaning of participants in a phenomenology, or lessen the amount of information

shared by participants in a case study or ethnography (Creswell, 2013).

Further to this, Guillemin and Gillam (2004) emphasize the importance of recognizing

ethically important moments during the practice of doing research. These interactions can be

dramatic as they typically arise during the interview process and summon the researcher to call

upon their position on reflexivity, carefully considering its importance as a tool in qualitative

research. In this instance reflexivity helps maintain an ethical approach to the research, while

simultaneously improving the quality of the research process and the analysis of the research

data.

Power issues can often be addressed through attention to ethics in a research study. For

example, full disclosure and authenticity between researchers and participants is a key to

reducing power differences. Other more penetrating and transformative approaches to reducing

power differentials include focussing on a more collaborative research model. The use of this

social science research model involves such things as personal accountability and caring. It also

involves expressing the capacity for empathy, the sharing of emotionality, and the valuing of

individual expressiveness (Collins, 1991). Other strategies for reducing power differences in

qualitative research include choosing an appropriate site for the interviews and paying careful

attention to the interpretation of the research data, keeping in mind that knowledge is co-created

between the researcher and the participants. I foresaw power issues arising from the power

differential between student and teacher.

Based on my personal experience as an instructor at Keyano College, I have found an

extraordinary level of deference toward me because of my role as a teacher. For example, if I am

walking behind a group of international students they will often stop, open a way for me, and

ensure that I am walking ahead of them. They inform me that, in their countries of origin, teachers are highly respected and should walk ahead of them. I acknowledged this positive outlook toward instructors and, at the same time, encouraged participatory sharing and a caring dialogue. A related power issue stems from my position as an employee of the College. I am aware of the potential for participants to feel coerced to participate in the study because I am an employee of the College. This may have influenced the responses of the research participants. For instance, students may have felt obligated to either confine or elaborate in their responses to the research questions based on their view of what they stood to gain or lose based on their perceptions of the amount of influence I hold as an employee of the College on their program of studies. I mitigated this potential power issue by assuring participants of my neutrality with regard to their status in the power engineering program. Furthermore, I carefully described the purpose of my research study in the letter potential participants received.

Toward Analysis

I began the analysis process by first transcribing the individual interviews and focus group discussion, and by reviewing the documents I chose for analysis by line, phrase, sentence, and paragraph segments to code the raw data. To ensure optimal accuracy of my data to the greatest extent I could, each participant received a copy of his or her transcribed individual interview as well as a copy of the transcribed focus group discussion and was given 14 days to confirm the accuracy of both transcripts. With only one request for revision in one of the individual interview transcripts, which I promptly corrected, I turned to engage in the process of coding of the interview and focus group transcripts to aggregate frequencies of patterns, identify prominent patterns, and begin to identify themes. While engaged in this process, I (re)read articles and books that I thought had connection to my study, and I searched for recent literature that held

research germane to my data and emerging themes. Combined with the existing literature, the

constructed stories and information shared and collected during this process yielded the data I

turn to focus on in the following chapter. In the following chapter I discuss my findings and

analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

In setting up my presentation of findings, I review the setting of the case, including its context and environment. Then, I introduce the participants. The bulk of this chapter consists of my presentation of findings from the data – namely, selected documents that I reviewed, the individual interviews, and the focus group discussion. As I conclude my discussion of these analytical themes, I relate my findings to the core ideas of Vygotsky and Bourdieu to ground them theoretically. Finally, I summarize the key findings of the study.

Setting of the Case

My study took place in the important rural economic driver location of Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada. Participants in the study were drawn to Fort McMurray for the opportunity to train as process operators/power engineers and for the opportunity to work in the lucrative oil and gas sector. These opportunities coalesced for the participants in the form of a co-op training program, offered by Keyano College, consisting of education and training opportunities that alternate between set periods of classroom time and set periods of paid on-site work placement.

The study took place at Keyano College, a comprehensive community institution located in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Opened in 1965 as the Alberta Vocational Centre (AVC) in Fort McMurray, with an official opening January 26, 1966, the college opened again under the name of "Keyano" in 1975. Keyano is a Cree word that roughly translated means "sharing." In 1978 Keyano College went public and became a community college. Keyano College has grown to become a modern series of buildings on many campuses. Some of the building completions over the years include, Reidel Place Family Housing (1976); Mackenzie Campus (Heavy Industrial Campus) (1977) renamed Suncor Energy Industrial Campus in 2001; Clearwater Campus (1981) with additions of Clearwater Hall Single Student Housing and the

Nursing Wing in 1983, and the Power Engineering Wing in 1985; Family Housing Complex (Penhorwood Place) (2001); Syncrude Technology Centre (2003); and Fort Chipewyan Campus (2011) just to name a few.

The College has stewardship responsibility for the northeast region of Alberta which requires that it provide access to a range of post-secondary programs and services for the population located in its service area. Over the course of history, Keyano College has proactively positioned itself as a community builder along with its industry and community partners and, accordingly, has facilitated the achievement of rural development objectives by educating and training the human resource capital required for industry expansion.

Power Engineering Credentialing Requirements

The system that governs Power Engineering consists of skill levels or standardized certifications that are referred to as classes, with either Fifth or Fourth Class being the entry level and First Class being the highest level of achievement. Standardized certificates are certificates recognized by all Standardization of Power Engineers Examination Committee (SOPEEC) jurisdictions. Each class entitles the holder to supervise specific types of equipment in specific operating conditions. Each progression in certification entitles the holder to supervise larger plants and assume greater responsibility. A combination of work experience and course completions (either at a post-secondary training institution or by correspondence training), followed by successful completion of interprovincial examinations, allows a power engineer to progress from one class to another (Alberta Boilers Safety Association, 2016).

The Alberta Boilers Safety Association (ABSA) is the regulatory authority in Alberta, whose mission is to work with stakeholders to ensure that pressure equipment is designed, constructed, installed, operated, maintained and decommissioned in a manner that protects public

safety. ABSA's pressure equipment safety programs include an education and certification department that administers Alberta's province-wide power engineers' graduated certification program. ABSA is also responsible for the evaluation of credentials and determining which level of certification an applicant may fit into including if they are eligible to challenge an examination for that level.

Gaining entrance to a power engineering training program is a competitive process. Any person seeking to apply to the program at Keyano College in Fort McMurray, for example, requires a High School Diploma or Tests of General Education Development (GED). Applicants must also present a minimum English 20/23 or English 20-1 or 20-2, Math 20/23 or Math 20 Pure/Applied, and Physics 20 or Science 20 or equivalent post-secondary education. Power engineering program pre-requisites are becoming increasingly stringent. For instance, the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) has raised the minimum English, Math, and Physics requirement to the 30 or 30-1 level with minimum grades of 50% for Fall 2013 and 60% for Fall 2014 (see website Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, n.d.). In addition to these requirements applicants are required to successfully complete a Differential Aptitude Test (DAT) with a minimum score of 4500. Due to the competitive nature of the program, only successful applicants are contacted for a Behavioral Descriptive Interview (BDI). The BDI is based on the Conference Board of Canada's "employability skills." The interview looks at five key skills: organizational, communication, interpersonal, technical, and motivation. All applicants must demonstrate English language proficiency. If required, applicants must receive a minimum score of 80 with no score below 20 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam.

Successful candidates are accepted into a training program that takes two years to complete full time and typically consists of two 15-week semesters per year. A number of

training programs, such as the co-op program offered by Keyano College, include cooperative work placements where students with appropriate ABSA certification and academic achievement gain the relevant work experience necessary for further certification from ABSA. The work placements are located at company work sites in the area surrounding Fort McMurray.

     During the first year of the program, coordinated with the work placements, students write two exam certifications through ABSA to earn a fourth-class certificate of competency. In the second year, they write four provincial exams to earn a third-class certificate. Through this process, students become eligible to write the first three exams toward a second-class certification (Sankey, 2013). The courses and exams are in English. The Fifth and Fourth Class examinations are made up of 150 multiple-choice questions. The Third Class examination is a combination of multiple-choice and long answer questions. The Second and First Class examinations are made up of long answer questions only (Alberta Learning Information Service, 2014).

The Participants

In this section, I provide a brief overview of the 14 people who participated in this study. As I noted previously, all participants are referred to with pseudonyms assigned to them, so that the participants are anonymized.

Brian was a 42-year-old man who trained as an electrical engineer in a South American country. After working in that country for a number of years, including as an electrician, he came to Canada with his wife. He came to Canada in 2008, drawn by the opportunity for more work. He planned to re-qualify as an electrical engineer in the oil industry in rural Alberta.

Lennard was a 25-year-old man who holds a degree in physics from the United Kingdom. His parents migrated to Canada when he was in his first year of university studies.

When Lennard completed his degree, he spent a short time looking for work in the UK, but jobs were scarce; so, he followed the path of his parents and migrated to Canada to look for work in 2011.

Golf was a 43-year-old man who graduated from university in a South Asian country with a Bachelor of Science degree and a four-year Engineering Diploma specializing in automobile engineering. He was an air traffic controller in a South Asian country for 11 years, before immigrating to Canada in 2011 to look for work related to his qualifications.

Steve was a 54-year-old man who obtained a Mechanical Engineering Diploma from technical university in an African country. He has always been interested in the mechanical side of work and he completed specialized training in equipment maintenance before immigrating to Canada with his wife and children to put that training to use.

Otwo was a 36-year-old man who left an African country to study accounting in the Faculty of Commerce at a university in a nearby African country, where he completed his first year of studies. Halfway through his second year he "made a quick decision to drop out of school and start a new future" (interview, November 20, 2014). He got his papers ready and immigrated to Canada in 2001, initially planning to continue his training in accounting.

John was a 36-year-old male who studied mechanical engineering in a South Asian country. Before immigrating to Canada in 2010, John worked as an engineering technician in the hotel industry. John immigrated to Canada to look for work as a mechanical engineer.

Richard was a 45-year-old male who holds a Bachelor Degree in Mechanical Engineering from an Asian country. He worked as a service engineer for a pneumatic automation system before immigrating to Canada in 2008. When Richard immigrated to Canada, he had a

pre-chosen career path, as an electrician, prepared for him through the advice and support of his brother, who had immigrated to Canada before him.

William was a 43-year-old man who worked as an air traffic controller in a South Asian country before immigrating to Canada in 2007 with his wife and children. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from a South Asian university. William came to Canada to support his wife, a trained physician, with obtaining work in Canada.

Crofton was a 54-year-old man from a South Asian country who worked as a manufacturing manager in the ceramics industry before immigrating to Canada in 2009. He holds a Bachelor of Science from a South Asian university in the physical sciences, specializing in geology and chemistry. Crofton came to Canada to look for work related to his previous training and credentials.

Ria was a 39-year-old woman who immigrated to Canada from a South Asian country in 2007 with a Bachelor Degree in Chemical Engineering. She worked in the electro blading industry, computer services, and manufacturing in a South Asian country before immigrating to Canada for economic reasons including more opportunities for work and career advancement.

Enrique was a 41-year-old man who holds a Bachelor Degree in Chemical Engineering from a South Asian country. He immigrated to Canada in 2014 with his family, leaving his job as a technical sales representative and occasional purchaser for a new life in Canada. Enrique came to Canada with the modest ambitions of, "Finding a stable job, becoming financially stable, and raising my family in the simple life" (interview, December 12, 2014).

Kiki was a 32-year-old woman from a European country who immigrated to Canada in 2000 with her family. Prior to immigrating to Canada, she completed high school under the British system in a nearby European country. She came to Canada to continue her education, "I

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wanted to study psychology and mass communications, thinking that I was going to work in some sort of media world or broadcast job or newspaper job" (interview, December 12, 2014).

Bee was a 31-year-old man who completed two years of a Bachelor of Science program at a university in an African country before immigrating to Canada in 2004. Prior to arriving in Canada, Bee developed a strong interest in pursuing a career in the health field. Bee came to Canada to pursue work in the medical field, "I wanted to become a doctor" (interview, December 17, 2014).

Wolander was a 36-year-old man who immigrated to Canada as a student from a South Asian country in 2006 with a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering. Wolander planned to continue his studies in Canada and pursue a Masters Degree in Mechanical Engineering. Before immigrating to Canada, he worked as an assistant lecturer for two and a half years at a South Asian university.

The table below summarizes the backgrounds of the participants including their geographic area of origin, their credentials and/or work employment, as well as other information that gives form to their experiences and perceptions.

Table 1

Summary of Participant Characteristics

Name	Age	Gender	Geographic Area of Origin	Credential/Work Employment	Year of Arrival in Canada
Brian	42	M	South America	Electrician	2008
Lennard	25	M	United Kingdom	Physics Degree	2011
Golf	43	M	South Asia	Bachelor of Science; Engineering Diploma	2011
Steve	54	M	Africa	Mechanical Engineering Diploma	1999
Otwo	36	M	Africa	Accounting (partially complete)	2001
John	36	M	South Asia	Engineering Technician	2010
Richard	45	M	Asia	Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering	2008
William	43	M	South Asia	Bachelor of Science	2007
Crofton	54	M	South Asia	Bachelor of Science	2009
Ria	39	F	South Asia	Bachelor of Chemical Engineering	2007
Enrique	41	M	South Asia	Bachelor of Chemical Engineering	2014
Kiki	32	F	Europe	High School	2000
Bee	31	M	Africa	Bachelor of Science (partially complete)	2004
Wolander	36	M	South Asia	Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering	2006

Emerging Themes

After striving to put together summaries of 14 richly detailed individual interviews, a focus group discussion, and a document review, I engaged in a process of reflection aimed at responding to the research question that I was investigating: What and whom do adult immigrants in the trades in rural Alberta encounter as they navigate the (re-)credentialing regime to transition into the Canadian labour market? In responding to this question, I used the Vygotskian and Bourdieusian theoretical framework to highlight what participants' responses to these encounters suggest about the interaction of the personal and the social, agency and constraint (Bourdieu, 1977). As I indicated in the Introduction, I associated three sub-questions to highlight several key issues: how immigrant tradespersons negotiate the (re-)credentialing process toward successful labour market entry, the influence of socioeconomic background, gender, race, and social capital on their experience and learning, and successful strategies and resources employed whilst moving through life transitions and social transformations linked with the (re-)credentialing process. Based on my reading of the literature and of the data, I identified four themes in response to these questions:

1. Forced career change

2. The elusiveness of "real" work

3. The need for assistance with the transition process

4. Challenges navigating sociolinguistic barriers

Theme One: Forced Career Change

This section explores the most prominent theme emanating from the personal interviews, the focus group, and document review. Here, I illustrate that, while all the participants arrived in

Canada with varied career experiences and credentials, they shared an urgent feeling that they had to face a change of career.

When asked about the problems or barriers encountered with getting Canadian qualifications during their interviews, most participants mentioned that non-recognition of their credentials was a major factor in forcing them to make a career change and forcing them into a regime of re-training. Interestingly, most participants did not plan to become power engineers. Instead, they viewed power engineering as a viable and time-efficient pathway to acquiring "real work," a job that provides opportunities for career advancement and good remuneration. In addition, all of the participants mentioned how power engineering was related to the credentials they brought with them to Canada. This illustrates that all of the participants felt that power engineering would provide a suitable entry point to the Canadian labour market and help them build on their existing credentials. For example, both John and Wolander planned to combine their power engineering training with their engineering training to one day realize their goal of becoming professional engineers. In that way, at least some participants suggested that they were prepared to acquire the habitus to realize a short-term career goal of power engineering, putting a longer term goal of becoming a professional engineer on hold. Bourdieu's theory supports the sense that they felt a sufficient level of "comfort" with their habitus and with the Bourdieusian notion of "rules of the game" or practical mastery for accessing the power engineering trade.

Brian provided a good example of the quick career calculations that he made when his initial plan of re-qualifying as an electrical engineer was stymied by at least three factors. In his words, "I wanted to get involved in the field right away, but I had to challenge exams, I didn't have enough Canadian experience, and I had to upgrade my English" (interview, November 3,

2014). Brian told me that, while upgrading his English at college, he talked with students who were taking power engineering and they piqued his interest enough for him to enroll in the program. The data I obtained from Brian provides evidence that he was quite satisfied to be taking the power engineering training and that he appreciated the role of his student contacts in steering him toward a decision to enter the program.

John also faced career change and his first stumbling block as soon as he landed in Canada. His mechanical engineering training from the Philippines was not recognized. When asked during the focus group about his thoughts when he discovered a mismatch between his assessed skills and the Canadian labour market, John shared his discovery that he would need to do 20 technical tests and have Canadian experience as an engineer as part of requalifying as a professional engineer. He told the focus group that it is only possible to do three or four tests per year. So, he made the point that it could take up to five years before he could become an engineer in Canada. The data provides evidence that John's questioning of the process was clear: "So that was like a gap that we have to deal with" (focus group, June 29, 2015). Although his identity was closely tied to his engineering credentials, he told me in another conversation that he did not "feel that people see me as a mechanical engineer" (interview, November 24, 2014).

Like John, Steve encountered the non-recognition of his mechanical maintenance credentials, and he was forced to enter a regime of re-training. That experience left him short of income to support his family and faced with starting at the beginning with upgrading his credentials. Steve mentioned that, with the mechanical engineering chemistry training, together with the mechanical maintenance training that he had, "I want to be more. All of my training supports what I do as a job" (interview, November 20, 2014).

Golf, too, was faced with having to make immediate plans for a change of career. In contrast to those other participants, Golf had learned, in advance of immigrating, of the likelihood that he would need to change careers. Friends that had immigrated before him had told him how difficult it would be to continue with a career as an air traffic controller. Going through his friends' stories, he learned that, "It's very hard to get to the air traffic controlling. There are guys who passed through the exams and the interviews as well, but none of them could get employment" (interview, November 18, 2014). Golf began reconsidering his career objectives prior to arriving in Canada; at the same time, he arrived in Canada unsure of which career direction to pursue.

Ria recalled how she faced a similar kind of forced career change when her Bachelor Degree in Chemical Engineering was not accepted after she immigrated to Canada. She told me that she was not given a chance to get work in her field because her "education was considered to be different, lower here in Canada" (interview, December 12, 2014). She talked about how this forced her to return to school for several years to upgrade her high school courses and get the safety courses that she needed to enter the trades, a process that took several years because she had to work part-time to support herself. She chose power engineering because, as she explained during her interview, "I needed to change my career path." Ria's comments illustrated how non-recognition of her credentials accelerated the need for economic survival, necessitating a change of career as well as the introduction of an unexpected process of working and learning in order to negotiate a new path to the Canadian labour market.

For other participants, the issue of forced career change either did not figure in their experiences of immigration or figured differently, as family members encountered similar

pressures in their work search. Lennard had completed his degree in physics and, with jobs scarce in the UK, followed the path of his parents by immigrating to Canada. Once in Canada, he "had no idea what I would do for work" (interview, November 18, 2014). He started off working in a large chain grocery store and then progressed to an audio sales position before a conversation with friends steered him toward the power engineering program. Having followed the path of his brother, who had immigrated to Canada before him, Richard did not have an education or career plan before immigrating to Canada because he "had made arrangements with his brother to challenge the Canadian electrical exams and work as an electrician" (interview, November 25, 2014). William's initial career plan was to stay home and look after his children while his wife, a physician who immigrated with the family, went to work; however, when his wife could not find work as a physician, he was forced to change his plan and begin looking for work to support his family.

Interestingly, each of those three participants encountered issues that eventually precipitated career change. Lennard talked about looking for a career that would provide him with a better financial future. Richard grew tired of the seasonal and tenuous contract work as an electrician and sought a more stable career in power engineering. William described going from thinking about what he could do as a career to needing to find work as soon as possible once he learned of his wife's challenge finding work.

This theme of facing a forced career change suggests that participants had to deal with the realization that applying pre-immigration training and career experience upon immigration to Canada was, first, fraught with barriers, heavily demanding of time, and economically challenging. Second, it was a process with more contradictions and dissonance than any of them had expected. Perhaps this theme most aptly reflects the delays and detours that all of the

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participants had to absorb to negotiate the way toward (re-)credentialing in the trades and just

making a life in a new country.

Connecting this first theme more directly to the writing of Vygotsky and Bourdieu, I

begin by noting that participants told me of the immediate decisions that they had to make when

they realized their credentials from their home countries would not be recognized. Many of the

decisions were directly related to economic survival as initial career plans upon landing in

Canada could not be realized. From a Bourdieusian perspective, the participants' lack of valuable

cultural capital resulting from non-recognition of their credentials blocked them from a social

trajectory of improved and improving field position. From a Vygotskyian perspective,

participants faced the challenge of re-emerging themselves in a learning regime without the

necessary learning tools grounded in understandings of language and written text that play an

important role in mediating the learning process. Participants were isolated because they had a

limited grasp of a new learning process, typically acquired through social and cultural exposure

and experiences (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995, p. 67). It is just this Vygotskyian description of

isolation that came through in participants' comments when they were asked about how they felt

when they realized that they needed to change their career pathway and set off on a new quest for

credentials. Ria mentioned to me that getting a grasp on the new learning process toward re-

establishing herself in a career "required a lot of adjustments and a lot of time" (interview,

December 12, 2014).

In Bourdieu's writing, habitus involves an unconscious calculation by the individual of

the possible, the impossible, and the probable in a given setting in a hierarchical social structure.

Habitus tends to be predominant when opportunities and constraints in a given field are most

consistent with one's own dispositions formed by primary socialization in the childhood years.

Furthermore, one's process of adaptation when facing unfamiliar situations becomes highly conscious and slow when one encounters new situations in which one's existing habitus seems out of place or mismatched to the situation.

All of the participants talked to me about how, early in their (re-)credentialing experiences, the slow process of adaptation and the limited time to re-establish themselves on a new career pathway affected their decision-making process. Bourdieu's theory supports the understanding, when faced with forced career change, participants' practices were influenced by the intersection of economic imperatives of survival and the slow process of elaboration and adaptation of habitus to match the field. Furthermore, all of the participants initially lacked the conditions to transpose the perception scheme of their habitus to the new context of the host country labour market field without considerable (re-)structuring of their habitus, marked by facing a forced career change and entering the (re-)credentialing regime. John talked about how he changed his habitus, ways of being, dispositions, when he mentioned, "that's why I shifted my goal. I will take power engineering. I can become a Fourth Class Power Engineer in six months and then I can start working, so there's a step" (focus group, June 29, 2015).

Earlier in this section, I talked about how it seemed the participants' identity impacted their decisions when facing forced career change. Rowsell (2012) explains that "as individuals, we establish our identities and history-in-person in the manner in which we make meaning" (p. 248). As I have already mentioned, habitus mediates how individuals make meaning of the social world. Also, I made mention that habitus and field structure each other, so the structure of the field participants face also mediates meaning-making and impacts their identity. When participants were asked in the interview what they thought when they discovered a mismatch between their assessed skills based on migration policy and the labour market in Canada, all of

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them responded by sharing their strong connections to their work history and credentials and how this reflected their identity and how they fit in in their pre-migration occupations. In the stories they shared with me, I found it intriguing that, even when participants' meaning-making either stopped or slowed, their sense of identity persisted. Evidence from the data and Bourdieu's theory supports that the participants' strong sense of identity guided their decision-making, specifically toward which alternate career fields they felt capable of taking a position in, considering the numerous instances amongst the participants of non-recognition of credentials.

Returning to my discussion of unlearning and learning in reverse that I mentioned in my literature review, it appears that the participants in my study were able to avoid a steep reduction in their expectations for work by maintaining a strong connection to their work history and their identity. They faced having to work below their level of training, yet their strong sense of identity steered them toward alternate career fields that allowed them to gain a somewhat lesser field position than originally sought, nonetheless a field position that they could improve upon within two to three years.

In the stories that the participants shared with me, there was consistent mention of the determining influence of the sociocultural context they encountered within the first few months of landing in Canada and their lack of success entering the labour market with the credentials and associated work-related habitus they brought with them. Moreover, all of the participants alluded to the constraints they faced to continue in the careers they migrated with. Vygotsky's ideas and evidence from the data illustrate that this resulted from the double bind of first, being unfamiliar with the range of signs or tools they encountered upon their arrival in Canada, necessary to engage in active agency, and second, facing the daunting task of adjusting to the socially shifting availability of these signs or tools in time and place in a new sociocultural context.

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I found several connections between this first theme and the ideas of Bourdieu and Vygotsky. First, from a Vygotskian perspective, the majority of the participants were faced with navigating a new learning regime in order to (re-)credential and were forced to revise the pathway they had initially assumed to access real work in the Canadian labour market. The participants encountered a new sociocultural context in Canada that thrust them into the challenging position of having to learn new signs or tools to re-enter the learning regime and become active agents in the labour market. Without the resources of an established social network, they lacked the people who could mediate their new learning and labour market entry. Second, from a Bourdieusian perspective, the majority of participants were denied entry to the labour market field based on the non-recognition of their credentials. In addition, their existing habitus did not match what the labour market field called for to gain a position on the field. These field conditions were difficult for the participants to adapt to without adequate habitus. The participants had no choice, but to subscribe to the inherently slow and highly conscious process of the habitus to adapt, when existing habitus is mis-matched with the field. Another connection between this first theme and the ideas of Bourdieu is the evidence I found of resilience and persistence of participant identity, when the structure of the field participants encountered caused meaning-making to stop or slow. This was illustrated by the decision of the participants to use their habitus to combine their previous training with related training toward labour market entry, preserving their identity and utilizing their habitus, by choosing power engineering as a route to real work.

Theme Two: The Elusiveness of "Real Work"

Another theme that emerged in the analysis of the data was that participants shared a belief that "real work" was elusive, especially in the first months after immigrating to Canada. The insights

provided by the participants indicated to me that they felt this had much to do with their lack of job contacts and a social network where they can get the help of others to get an adequate work opportunity. From the participants' comments in both the individual interviews and the focus group discussion, I heard a feeling that their initial social network, consisting primarily of friends they already knew or met through their own studies, was of more help to them in finding real work than any of the programs for immigrants that they mentioned.

When asked the individual interview question about their expectations for work in Canada when they first arrived, as mentioned above, almost all of the participants talked about having to deal with a career change, but they also mentioned how their efforts to find real work met with having to settle for jobs that they did not really want. The elusiveness of real work experienced by, generally, all 14 participants corroborates evidence from my document review of a shift in immigration policy in Canada and other countries of the west to "focus toward more targeted selection based on labour market demand for specific skills … and regionalization of immigration" (Akbari & MacDonald, 2014, p. 801). The experiences that all of the participants related to me suggest that the shift referred to above is still a work in progress.

This was further borne out in Wolander's response to my individual interview question, "What could Canadian government and adult training institutions do in meeting the needs of a diverse community of migrant learners qualifying and requalifying in the trades?" when he commented, "Canada takes people into the country for their skills but drops them here and these people don't know what to do" (interview, January 2, 2015). Further on in the interview, Wolander told me that part of the problem is, "people are just trying to apply for work when they get here. They don't know what kind of resume to use because Canada has a different format for the resume. Some people don't even know what the resume is." What Wolander told me was

echoed by all of the other participants. Excerpts from the data illustrate that there are hurdles to overcome just to get to the beginning of the process of applying for real work.

In addition to Wolander, Golf talked about how the promise of real work through further training can go awry for immigrants. When he could not get work as an air traffic controller he looked for courses he could take toward a career in Alberta's oil industry. He considered a program offered by a training institute in Western Canada; however, after talking with friends he learned that the program required a difficult-to-acquire, independently arranged work placement. Golf told me that "there is no way being an immigrant because they don't have the contacts and they don't have much of a social network where they can get the help of others and get the work term opportunity" (interview, November 18, 2014). He told me that some of his friends spent two years and a lot of money, only to end up with no credential. Golf mentioned that there are so many opportunities and so many programs, but "Finally, the matter is how to get to the 'real work.'"

I note that, in relation to this theme, Steve's story was different from the other participants' stories, in that he was the only one of the 14 participants who adopted what seemed to me to be a forward-thinking, personal development approach to acquiring real work. Steve mentioned that, after taking a similar oil and gas technology training program, he was able to find the work he was looking for by depending less on a social network and more on personal initiative: "If I was not someone who could look for myself, I couldn't have finished my degree .... I went to the drilling site to start upstream. It's good to make yourself open to go and look" (focus group, June 29, 2015). Steve told me that his decision not to wait, but to step in and try has kept him, more or less, on a "mechanical" career path since coming to Canada.

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These comments on the apparent ease of gaining real work did not mean that Steve encountered none of the obstacles and delays of the other participants. Steve told me that, before he was given a chance to demonstrate his skills on the job, he had to work at jobs that he felt were below his qualifications. Steve claimed that it was the opportunity to display his skills to supervisors and training program managers along the way that resulted in him getting closer to getting real work. From a Vygotskyian perspective, Steve's opportunities to display his skills demonstrate a key aspect of Vygotsky's writings: the value of the dialectical relationship, which Steve manifested, when his internal mediated representations adapted to evoke external mediation, resulting in a new context of employment. In other words, the environmental stimulation that Steve reached out for influenced him from the outside, positively influencing his goal directed behavior and employment outcome. Steve's comments emphasize the importance of learning how to demonstrate competence in a training or work setting and the importance of doing so.

Supporting all of the stories of participants experiencing difficulty finding real work is corroborating information from my document review on new directions in immigration policy in Canada. One of the main drivers of recent Canadian policy concerns is "the need to improve the economic outcomes of immigrants in the face of deterioration over the past three decades" (Ferrer, et al., 2014, p. 863). In this document, a paper that discusses the recent changes to Canadian immigration policy, Ferrer et al. discuss the "paradoxical result – poor labour market outcomes for many immigrants while simultaneously there are calls for immigration to meet 'shortage' situations" (p. 863). Many of the participants told me that, prior to immigrating to Canada, the information they had indicated they stood a good chance for success in matching

their credentials with a commensurate job in Canada. Based on their interviews with me, this either did not happen or was slow to happen.

To summarize, the overall uniformity of participants' comments on the elusiveness of real work suggests what all participants experienced as an unexpected and unwarranted struggle to get to employment with potential as a fulfilling career. A large part of this struggle to find real work that participants consistently mentioned was the length of time it would take to requalify in his or her trade. Another part of the struggle, supported by Bourdieu's theory, was the mismatch between the participants' habitus and their sought-after position on the field. An interesting result of this combination of factors slowing the path to real work were the participants' realization that they would need to adjust their approach in order to get to the real work faster. For instance, in response to the interview question, "What choices and decisions worked best for getting your qualifications in the trades since arriving in Canada?" all of the participants told me that their choice of the power engineering program provided the best fit for their credentials and the best option for expedient access to real work.

In relation to the ideas of Vygotsky and Bourdieu, all of the participants spoke of the challenges of getting to meaningful work without a developed social network, underlining the prominence of the sociocultural process and development of social capital in securing employment. They spoke of how they were prepared to be active agents in securing real work, at the same time as they found it difficult to exercise their agency toward this end. When asked about how their pre-existing and developing social networks had helped them qualify in the trades since arriving in Canada, all of the participants responded with stories about how their quest for real work was affected by lack of information, direction, and guidance. Golf indicated that immigrants "don't have the contacts and they don't have much of a social network where

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they can get the help of others" (interview, November 18, 2014). Enrique wondered, "Do I have

to work from the positions down below to apply when there is a vacancy for a higher position, or

do I need to study and then apply for the job I want?" (interview, December 12, 2014). Steve

noted simply, "I had to wait" (interview, November 20, 2014). Seeming to offer some sort of

answer for the relevant dilemmas, Bee suggested, "The more people you meet, the more people

you talk to, the more information you get and that helps you in knowing what is required"

(interview, December 17, 2014). Wolander's response in particular suggested an unexpected

theme for my study: lost in the field. As he commented during the focus group, "We need more

training and experience to get into the 'real field.' What kind of working environment is here?

What is the culture here?" (focus group, June 29, 2015). Although participants had their

individual challenges with acquiring "real work," those challenges illustrated in excerpts from

the data, shared a lack of the "right" social networks post-migration.

Earlier in my discussion of the elusiveness of real work, I drew attention to participants'

stories that tell of having to settle for jobs they did not really want. In relation to Bourdieu's

writing, it seemed that all of the participants weighed the objective chances they faced, and then

based on the slow pace of their elaborating habitus and their habitus' present relationship with

the field, chose jobs that could give them the best outcome for the short term. It appeared that the

participants' difficulties finding real work had much to do with the evolving structure of their

habitus not being at a sufficient level of fit or match for the evolving structure of the new field

they sought to enter. Moreover, a by-product of the field-habitus clash and structure-agency

clash all of the participants faced is the Bourdieusian notion of self-elimination from the field

that all participants talked about as they shared their experiences with me. As the participants

saw less chance of gaining entry to the field, they found that they had to drop out of the race and

select themselves out of the competition. Unable to exhibit the field-specific form of cultural capital, they could not be regarded as legitimate entrants to the field.

Furthermore, adding to the challenge the participants faced finding real work is the unfamiliar structure of the fields and the struggle for position this imposes on actors. When asked what they thought when they discovered a mismatch between their assessed skills based on migration policy and the labour market in Canada, all of the participants mentioned that they did not know what to do at first and that they observed the structure of the field when it came to things such as the habitus structure required to perform well in job interviews and to write effective resumes. Amongst the similar responses the participants gave, Golf told me that "When I go to an interview I am at a disadvantage. My cultural differences are there. My way of thinking is different from a native-born Canadian" (interview, November 18, 2014). John shared "At first in Canada, I really didn't know what to target, what to focus on, or what program I needed to study" (interview, November 24, 2014). William stated, "The next challenge I have to face is finding a job once I complete my studies" (interview, November, 25, 2014). These responses from the data and others like these ones, supported by Bourdieu's theory, are evidence that all of the participants seemed to recognize the structure of the field they wished to enter, yet they appear to be concerned about how the field conditions alter their habitus as they perceive the field conditions to be unfair and unclear for them, particularly when it comes to the process of getting real work.

Theme Three: Transitions into the Canadian Labour Market

The third theme that emerged during the analysis of my data was that each participant appeared to experience challenges making the transition into the Canadian labour market. The challenges the participants faced seemed to revolve around two general issues. The first was that some

participants experienced funding issues related to training. Most participants mentioned that funding issues stemmed from lack of timely advice to access funding, lack of coordination between funding agencies, and shortcomings in evaluating immigrants' eligibility to access funding. Another general issue was the lack of a dependable social network to increase the chances of obtaining desired employment. Most participants told me that they relied on a small group of social contacts to steer them toward, oftentimes, "stop-gap" employment. The theme of lack of information, direction, and guidance came up repeatedly in most of the participants' comments. In this section I will explore how Vygotsky's central concept of mediation plays a pivotal role in possible understandings of participant experiences. I now look more closely at how these issues were manifested according to the participants.

Generally speaking, the participants acknowledged having to engage in a tremendous process of re-calculation in answer to the focus group question, "What did you think when you discovered a mismatch between your assessed skills based on migration policy and the labour market in Canada?" Most participants mentioned the expense they soon realized they would need to incur to enter the re-training regime in Canada and how funding was a key part of that. Lennard stated that, when he came back for his second year of power engineering training, "The funding was there, but the sorting out with the different Canadian Government offices was an issue" (interview, November 18, 2014). Upon these remarks, I asked Lennard what he thought seemed to be the problem. He replied, "I guess because one department doesn't speak to another on a constant basis … to get the money to come through, to make sure you qualify. Lennard was explaining to me that eventually he was successful in getting funding for his second year, but he thought it odd that there was this seemingly extra work in ensuring the funding.

Bee and Otwo further talked about the challenges with funding. Otwo stated, "The one-year wait period for government financial assistance should be shortened. He suggested, "That a better alternative would be to shorten the wait time" (interview, November 20, 2014). On the other hand, Bee eventually worked himself into the position of student in the power engineering program by working at related jobs in the oil sands, but not before having his own experience with the funding system. To Bee, the most common hurdle for immigrants is the funding issue. He told me that each province has its own specific education loan system, "but for the most part it doesn't make it easy for people" (interview, December 17, 2014). As the interview moved on, Bee stated, "It's hard to qualify for a loan and when you do qualify, you don't get enough." According to him, this causes you to weigh your options and you feel stuck, forced to work versus getting along with a career. He further noted that he felt that he did not have enough opportunity to explain his financial circumstances during the funding application process. As he put it during his interview, "Usually when we are declined for a loan we take it the way it is. As a result, we often end up just doing ordinary jobs, as opposed to getting into jobs that we're good at or that we're passionate about."

Throughout the interviews and from my document review, stories and information about the participants' struggle to enter the job market were generally common. The participants all agreed that the struggle they experienced to enter the job market seemed largely a function of the size and usefulness of their social network, yet based on their stories their resilience throughout their struggles was also clearly evident. As the participants unfolded their stories to me, I sensed the heartbreak that the participants felt at what seemed to be a lack of information and guidance for entering the labour market. Based on the stories of most of the participants, supported by Bourdieu's theory, the hysteresis they encountered, where their habitus is not a match for the

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field they wished to enter, indicated the intensity of the struggle and of the adjustment they had to engage in to successfully achieve labour market entry.

My document review appears to provide empirical evidence of the struggle most of the participants experienced entering the labour market. The research discussed in the documents that I reviewed provides the backdrop for the deterioration in the economic performance of immigrants, particularly in the past three decades. One of the documents by Ferrer et al. (2014) is a paper that explores the recent changes to Canadian immigration policy and examines early evaluations of the new programs. The other document I reviewed is a review article by Akbari and MacDonald (2014) that examines recent changes in immigration policy in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. Empirical evidence from the research in the review article indicates "declining earnings, rising unemployment and mismatching of human capital and occupations in which immigrants work" (Akbari & MacDonald, 2014, p. 808). The declining economic outcomes are attributed to immigrants' weak language skills, a theme that I will discuss next, non-suitability of human capital brought from their countries of origin, and labour market discrimination.

It was labour market discrimination, in different forms, that appeared in many participants' stories describing their transition to the labour market. The focus group question, "How do you see the training and hiring processes in Canada?" elicited similar stories of barriers met in the transition to the labour market. In response to that question, Ria told me about the gap that appears to exist between Immigration Canada and the Canadian companies. According to Ria, they do not communicate with each other. "Before we came here we're told that Immigration Canada is requiring you, you have to have these qualifications, so that when you get to Canada you'll be able to land a job" (focus group, June 29, 2015), she said. Ria stated that she

did not have a problem adjusting or spending a lot of money waiting for a job. The point she made was, "So you accomplish those qualifications before you come to Canada, but when you get here the companies are requiring another qualification, so there's a difference there." This unexpected circumstance that Ria described to the focus group illustrated one form that labour market discrimination assumed.

Labour market discrimination came up a number of times in the comments of most of the participants, especially when they shared their stories of frustration about the difficulty of having their skills recognized as part of the hiring process. Steve provided a foil to the hiring experience he has faced in Canada by mentioning how the hiring process works in his country of origin. "In my country if you know the job you're going to get the job. You can submit a resume, but it is not the tool to get hired" (focus group, June 29, 2015). Golf described his perception of the hiring process in Canada: "Companies in Canada use computers to scan for exact words and key words. This creates a disadvantage for us. They just select certain resumes and then call for interviews" (focus group, June 29, 2015). Ria stated the importance of having a network of people who know you and your work. As she worded it, "You need to know someone who is in there in the companies where you want to work and to face the training process you have to have a lot of money … It's so expensive" (focus group, June 29, 2015). John provided a contrast in his comment about networking comparing his experience finding work in his country of origin and finding work in Canada. "Where I come from in Philippines, networking is not used that much. Here it's very important. So, this is something we have to adjust to" (focus group, June 29, 2015). As if to clarify, Golf added, "But we can adjust to things when it comes to that. We can have a network, but we still need to know somebody, and this takes two to three years to establish that kind of network" (focus group, June 29, 2015).

Golf's clarifying comment in the focus group resonated in my individual interview with Crofton, who told me his story of attempting to move from a job he felt was below his training and qualifications to one that would match better with his qualifications. Among all of the participants' comments, Crofton's story provided me with the most blatant example of labour market discrimination that he experienced during his transition to the Canadian labour market. Midway through his interview, Crofton talked about how immigrants need references to find a job. He told me, "Within six months, within a year, we cannot find a person to take responsibility for us because this is a new environment that we don't know anything about" (interview, November 26, 2014). He explained that he got an interview with a major oil company and he included a reference from the manager of the lab where he was work, noted on his resume, but he could not get the job, even though he knew his qualifications were more than enough. He went on to tell me that the company where he worked "changed the way they treated me after I asked for their references."

In contrast to other participants who shared difficult experiences in transitioning to the Canadian labour market, Enrique had a network of family comprised of his cousins who had immigrated to Canada before him and who advised him on the best course of action when his credentials from a South Asian country were not recognized. Enrique had to take the first available job that came along in order to support his family but found his cousins instrumental in providing him with the advice he needed to move closer to his desired career. He said that his cousins told him, "If I wanted to go to my career of choice, I had to study first and then later on you'll get what you want" (interview, December 12, 2014). Enrique mentioned that he was glad to get this advice because his career plans changed as a result. He had originally thought that he might work his way up from lower positions and wait for a vacancy in a higher position.

Nonetheless, toward the end of the interview, Enrique added his hopes for improvements in qualification assessment and decisions associated with the interview process: "I just hope that they honor or acknowledge the qualifications and job experiences and the things that have been learned from our home countries."

Assessment of qualifications and decisions associated with the interview process were mentioned most often by all the participants as factors influencing successful transition to the labour market. Interestingly, neither gender, nor race was talked about as a valid factor in response to any of the interview questions including questions about labour market transition. I think that this could have been due to some structural issues that were apparent in relation to this theme. For instance, the participants were all in the midst of their program, in a college setting, where they may not have felt that it was appropriate or in their best interest to mention concerns about gender or race. In a Bourdieusian sense, the participants could be concerned about upsetting the regular and ordered patterns of the training field, which they are participating in, and their place in the hierarchical structure of this field. Instead, all of the participants' responses seemed to coalesce around how they saw themselves in the context of being an immigrant working to enter the Canadian labour market. The inclination to individualize problems and solutions seems consistent with the rise of neoliberal doxa around word and education, so that a lack of credentials is emphasized over social structures of race. For instance, Kiki and Ria both mentioned how well they were accepted in the power engineering program. Kiki stated that she was lucky to have a brother to talk to who had recently graduated from the power engineering program when she was getting ready to enter the program. "At the same time, I met a lot of his friends that are power engineers and slowly we all became friends" (interview, December 12, 2014). Toward the conclusion of the focus group discussion, all of the participants put forward a

positive outlook on their decision to immigrate to Canada in spite of the challenges they all

mentioned transitioning to the labour market. In line with the way Kiki commented on how she

was accepted in the power engineering program, are the comments from the focus group

indicating how much they liked the diversity of peoples in Canada. They liked the team approach

to getting things done on the job. And, all of the participants mentioned that they felt the future is

bright for them in Canada.

It was interesting that at different parts of the focus group discussion and in the individual

interviews all of the participants showed their keenness to suggest improvements and supports to

help migrants with the challenges of the transition process based on some of their own

experiences. Their recommendations ranged from addressing the language barrier to suggesting

improvements to existing government programs designed to help migrants through the transition

process to the Canadian labour market.

When I considered the third theme, transitions into the Canadian labour market, I further

reflected on the role that mediation played in the labour market success of the participants. Van

Der Veer (2007) explains that, in his writings on the relationship between the individual and his

or her environment, Vygotsky (1930-1934/1978) posits this relationship as one where each of

these factors mutually shape each other versus viewing these factors as separate and distinct from

each other. Furthermore, based on this, Van Der Veer (2007) concludes

> that for human beings it is difficult to define the environment if only because human
>
> beings attach meaning to aspects of their environment and because this environment is
>
> partly a social environment that changes in response to the person's actions, capacities,
>
> age, and so on. (p. 23)

Based on the struggles transitioning to the Canadian labour market that the participants described to me I draw further connections with Vygotsky's writings on the role that sign or tool use plays in mediation. According to Van Der Veer (2007), "the creation of stimuli by individuals, of a specific nature, namely, signs" (p. 28), indicates the importance of symbolic mediation to how individuals develop and interact with their environment. Bakhurst (2007) extends that idea, noting that individual development and interaction is a process that emerges from an individual's cumulative appropriation of culture and that the tools and signs involved in mediation are social in nature. Golf's focus group comments about the difficulty finding work placements after completing the requirements of study reflect the challenges that participants experienced with this process. "It's very hard to get a placement because we don't have the real social network. Those who are born here have the social network, so it's easy for them," Golf explained (focus group, June 29, 2015).

When I considered the third theme's connections to Bourdieu's theory of practice I thought of the way a field reproduces, maintains and changes itself and how that is reflected in the struggle it perpetuates for individuals who choose to enter the field of play and for the struggle it presents for established position-takers in the field. The third theme in my study reveals just such a struggle for all of the participants. Bourdieu writes of three types of field strategies that further structure the struggle for position on the field. These strategies include "*conservation, succession, and subversion* [emphasis in original]" (Swartz, 1997, p. 125). For instance, Steve, Ria, Golf, Crofton, Bee, William, and John encountered the conservation strategies proliferated by educational institutions when they learned that they would have to complete a lengthy and costly program of studies to gain entry to their chosen careers. All of the participants adopted succession strategies when, as new entrants to the field, they attempted

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to obtain valuable field position. And, interestingly, as I previously mentioned, it seems that Steve's success entering the labour market can be traced to his adoption of the field strategy of subversion because he challenged the dominant group's insistence on resumes and interviews for selecting people and propelled himself forward in the labour market through the demonstration of his skills.

Nonetheless, succession strategies for transitioning to the Canadian labour market appeared to garner the balance of attention in the conversations I had with the participants when I asked them about the choices and decisions that worked best for acquiring qualifications in the trades since arriving in Canada. Although several of the participants questioned the doxa of the field, particularly in terms of fairness, all of the participants' eventual acceptance of that doxa of the field is evident in the choices of succession strategies they employed after initially being blocked from transitioning to the host country labour market. For example, Crofton told me that, when his credentials as an engineer from his home country were not recognized in Canada, he realized, as did the majority of the participants, that his career would need to change. As he put it, "I have to think in the future now" (interview, November 26, 2014). With regard to labour market transition, Crofton explained, "In the beginning, I need to step in to oil and gas." Bourdieu's theory and excerpts from the data supports that (re-)credentialing in a trade is a succession strategy that allowed the majority of the participants the opportunity to position-take on the occupational field where they otherwise would not have been able to do so. Furthermore, evidence of preparation for position-taking as described above seems to indicate at least partial acceptance of the doxa of the field. This appears to include the adoption of a long-term succession strategy which inherently allows

more time for habitus-field structuring and subsequent fit or match between habitus and field to occur.

Notwithstanding the pursuit of a long-term succession strategy, which all of the participants spoke of in their stories, it appeared from their comments that, as they accepted the doxa of the field, they came to understand that they would need to acquire valuable cultural capital in the form of credentials and work experience if they were to succeed given their identified handicap of a habitus-field clash. As I mentioned in my discussion of the first theme about facing a forced career change, the participants told me that their choice of the power engineering program gave them an opportunity to use skills that they already had, to be regarded as legitimate entrants to the field and position-take on the field. In addition, I note that the participants' field calculations to enter the power engineering field appear to reflect a strategy to preserve their identity based on their training from their home country. I gathered from the viewpoints they expressed that the prestige, legitimacy, and value, in short, the symbolic capital of a career in power engineering made that field of work an appealing career direction for all of the participants. I now turn to a discussion of the fourth theme that I identified from my analysis of my data: sociolinguistic barriers.

Theme Four: Sociolinguistic Barriers

Throughout my conversations with participants, the challenges posed by sociolinguistic barriers surfaced as an issue. In response to the focus group question about the supports most helpful in the transition process, more than half of the participants identified the need for more assistance with learning English. Although developing English language skills was not always the top priority for participants, it did surface routinely as a major concern. At least three participants placed the focus on recognition of skills toward employment first and gaining

proficiency in English second. Generally speaking, all of the participants acknowledged facing an immediate issue with language, oftentimes limiting or restricting the results of their forays into the Canadian labour market. In addition, all of the participants pointed to the critical role that language plays during the job interview.

When asked about what the Canadian government and adult training institutions could do in meeting the needs of a diverse community of migrant learners qualifying and requalifying in the trades, Wolander identified the problem with language that immigrants face along with some possible solutions. Wolander told me that coming to Canada as a student before entering the workforce gave him more opportunities to mingle with people, talk to students, and make many friends. In Bourdieu's (1986) terminology, he was able to develop social capital through his experience as a student in Canada, and that social capital proved helpful when it came time for him to look for work. In his mind, immigrants who come to Canada as a family, with plans to enter the labour market directly, face a greater challenge: "These people don't get as much opportunity to mingle because of the communication barrier that comes from not speaking English in their house" (interview, January 2, 2015). Toward the end of the interview, Wolander suggested, "Without just dropping people into Canada, there should be a mechanism to improve their English, improve their knowledge of Canadian culture, improve how to mingle and connect with people, and make their resumes properly." Just before his interview ended, he gave his own example of how mingling with other people while working a part-time job resulted in his resume being passed to an employer who soon after hired him.

In contrast to the success that Wolander experienced, there was much suspicion of the hiring process, particularly when it came to the participants' perceptions of the value placed on

the resume and the job interview, both of which depend heavily on English ability. All participants expressed the feeling that neither the resume nor the job interview process was fair for immigrants because their developing English skills placed them at a disadvantage next to native English speakers. Golf suggested that immigrants need to receive some sort of preference, because "it is unfair asking us to face the same interview as the native English speaker" (focus group, June 29, 2015).

At least one participant, Steve, relayed a story about how he managed to avoid the problematic resume-writing and interview steps for his first job working on an oil rig. "If it was just resumes, they would never take me" (focus group, June 29, 2015), he commented. He also mentioned that he found a website that aimed to help applicants print out typical interview questions, but that he had never printed out such questions and memorized them. He went on to tell me that he finds this strategy unrealistic for himself. "A big problem that we are having is that for this kind of question I need this kind of answer." For Steve, even knowing questions in advance offered no assurance that the answers anticipated or desired by the employer were obvious and could set up a feeling that, in trying to construct ideal answers, he was approaching lying about what he had done. In addition, printing reams of paper and memorizing everything for an interview is very hard for him. Simply put, in his words, "I'll never do that."

Others in the focus group supported Steve's comments about the interview process. They pointed to the weaknesses of the process and how the process favors a type of storytelling over the exploration of an interviewee's actual work history. Golf told me that "most companies follow the behavioral descriptive interview because the company's argument is that past history tells you who the people are. But in reality, in the interview, anyone can say

anything. … These are fabricated stories that people are telling" (focus group, June 29, 2015).

Golf's response encapsulates the linguistic challenge that immigrants face with the interview process. These excerpts from the data illustrate that immigrants lack the experience with the English language to be able to feel confident with the interview process. For instance, Golf commented on the opportunity that behavioral descriptive interviews give to native English speakers to use their linguistic abilities to tailor their responses to better answer the interview questions. What you do say in the interview and how you say it is just as important as what you do not say: "If someone asks you how you perform in a situation and you had a fight with your manager, I can make my own story." John quickly added to Golf's comment by emphasizing that you do not have to tell everything.

Evidence from my document review illustrates the central role that language skills play in gaining meaningful access to the Canadian labour market. Ferrer et al. (2014) state that explanations for the increased gap in earnings between recent immigrant cohorts and Canadian born job seekers point to language skills as having the most impact on the rate of return to formal education. They say that overall, "language skills appear to have a significant direct and indirect influence on labour market outcomes, and are key to positive outcomes" (p. 851). An in-depth analysis of recent changes to immigration policy including factors impacting immigration policy is beyond the scope of my dissertation. However, it is useful to mention just a few factors from my document review that address how the federal and provincial governments are currently changing language requirements for immigrants with the goal of improving economic outcomes.

In brief, under the Government of Canada Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) of (2001) principal applicants to the main federal programs must now take an approved

language test and submit the results. Minimum language requirements are set higher for the

Foreign Skilled Worker (FSW) and Canadian Experience Class (CEC), while language

requirements are somewhat lower for the Federal Skilled Trades (FST) workers. Of particular

relevance to my study from my document review is the variability of the language

requirements for the provincial nominee (PN) program. "Some streams and some provinces

have language requirements, others do not, and the requirements vary among streams" (Ferrer,

et al., 2014, p. 852).

While the Government of Canada continues to update, adjust, and evaluate its

immigration policy, particularly with regard to evaluating language skills participants like Golf

offer his reflection on the focus group question that asks for participants' thoughts, based on

their experiences, about the relationship between education and the labour market. Golf told

me "When qualifications do not match the real Canadian workforce they should stop us before

coming here. Then these mismatches of qualifications don't happen" (focus group, June 29,

2015). Throughout the individual interviews and in the latter stages of the focus group I began

to feel the let down in the participants' expectations of how they would initially fare in the

Canadian labour market and this data provided evidence of the profound influence of

sociolinguistic barriers on this process.

William's comments to me in the individual interview provide evidence that

summarizes the sociolinguistic barriers the participants elaborated about to me in this section.

William points to three areas that need more attention from the Canadian government and post-

secondary institutions. The first area deals with the focus on English abilities in the interview

process. William mentioned that non-native speakers of English are the ones faced with the

most difficulties. "We come to Canada with a certain amount of knowledge, but when it comes

to competing with a native speaker of English, the non-native speaker doesn't stand much of a chance" (interview, November 25, 2014). The second area deals with how language abilities influence the weighting of qualifications for new immigrants. William suggested to me that employers could not discriminate against a person based on their English ability if that person were granted a basic qualification or level of proficiency with a note to improve English proficiency. William adds that this would allow the international applicant to be considered on a par with others.

The third area William told me about and that most of the participants mentioned to me deals with the emphasis language ability has on entering the labour market once training is concluded. He commented to me that this part of the transition process is largely dependent on the strength of the social network one has built, in other words "who you know" in the industry. He stated that the realization of an effective social network and the subsequent recommendations and references that one gains from one has much to do with language ability. Add to this the participants' comments about what is at stake when success in the labour market is weighted toward language ability. William commented to me "If companies do their selections based primarily on language skills, I'd be out of the race, I guess. I hope they wouldn't view the language with that much importance" (interview, November 25, 2014). William finished by emphasizing a point mentioned by most of the participants: that it is the person's attitude and his knowledge in the subject that should be prominent when companies select people. It is the establishment of initial levels of "intersubjectivity" (Daniels, 2007, p. 323), an important characteristic of effective social interaction and a Vygotskyian concept of sociocultural learning, that most of the participants' comments suggested to me as needing more attention, that I will discuss further in this section.

The theme of sociolinguistic barriers can be connected with "meaning" and "meaning making," core aspects of Vygotsky's (1930-1934/1981) writings. The data provides evidence that this concept occupies a central position in my analysis of my data in relation to all four of the themes I have identified in my study, but particularly with regard to sociolinguistic barriers. Continuing from my discussion of the social nature of mediation in the previous paragraph, meaning develops from human social interaction and is "The internal structure of the sign operation. It is what is lying between the thought and the word. Meaning is not equal to the word, nor equal to the thought" (Mahn, 2003, p. 126). Vygotsky put the concept of meaning to use to investigate "The ways the meaning of words mediate mental processes" (p. 126). In my research project, all of the participants expressed a readiness to negotiate the (re-) credentialing process toward entering the trades. At the same time, the stories they shared with me exemplified the sociolinguistic barriers and the incumbent challenges with meaning they experienced while engaged in this process.

Wertsch (2007) explains that "Humans use signs before understanding what they are doing" (p. 186). What follows from early adoption of sign use is a process of working toward greater proficiency with sign use and/or tool use through social interaction and through self-monitoring feedback, and eventual internalization of the sign in the individual. Interestingly, several of the participants confirmed a willingness to use signs before being fully familiar with them and work toward greater proficiency with sign use when asked the question about what the Canadian government and adult training institutions could do in meeting the needs of a diverse community of migrant learners qualifying and requalifying in the trades. Four of the fourteen participants individually responded that there should be an adjusted level of English proficiency accepted to facilitate the training and hiring processes for international tradespeople. William

told me that "If you've satisfied the basic qualifications you should be considered on a par with others" (interview, November 25, 2014). Kiki shared her realization about a language barrier she experienced while applying for a job: "English is a second language to me when in competition with somebody that was born here" (interview, December 12, 2014). Wolander mentioned that "We use different kinds of words back home, in English. So they don't even use this technical term here" He added, "Some people don't even know what the resume is" (interview, January 2, 2015). In his conversation with me, Golf mentioned that a job applicant's interview performance is often based on "how well they can tell a story" (interview, November 18, 2014).

Excerpts from the data illustrate that meaning and meaning making play an important role in the use of the sign system of language for the participants in my study. It could be that, as most of the participants described, it takes more than a few months and often more than a year to establish a sufficient social network to become acquainted with and proficient with the sign system of language. In telling his story to me, Steve emphasized how his career trajectory was influenced more by opportunities to demonstrate his skills and less by going through a series of interviews. In his words, "You see the skills first and then the interview," and that the interview process "is the wrong way to choose people" (interview, November 20, 2014). In contrast, Richard experienced fewer challenges with English acting as a barrier to (re-)credentialing in the trades. As he explained, "I just talked a lot to my brothers, to my friends about the qualifications. I was lucky with my brother. He came to Canada five years before me. I didn't have to waste my time" (interview, November 25, 2015).

Perhaps in Richard's instance the first stages of acquaintance with the sign system of language were facilitated by his interactions with his brothers. As I discussed in the theoretical framework section in the first chapter, Vygotsky (1930-1934/1978) posits that "Each function in

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an individual's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, *between* people (*interpsychological*), and then *inside* the child (*intrapsychological*). … All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals [emphasis in original]" (p. 57). Excerpts from the data illustrate that the tips Richard received from his brothers helped him to more quickly internalize the new forms of cultural behavior necessary to make his way forward with the (re-)credentialing process. For Richard, his brothers provided the mediated learning experience for him, so he could initially rely less on social interaction and negotiation between experts and novices, or novices and novices to gain familiarity with the new cultural tools required for the (re-)credentialing process.

Wertsch (2007) explains that the sign systems that are integral to instruction are "incredibly robust in that they can allow interpretation and understanding at many different levels, and yet still support some form of the intermental functioning required to move learning and instruction along" (p. 187). For instance, Steve appeared to have more confidence in the sign systems involved in demonstrating his skills versus the sign systems involved in writing about them or talking about them. Indeed, he validated his approach in the stories of labour market success that he shared with me. It appeared that Steve's harnessing of the more familiar sign systems of skill demonstration permitted him the minimal level of intersubjectivity or shared understandings of a topic between individuals, to move beyond the barriers he experienced with the less familiar sign systems of resume writing and interview skills.

To summarize, all of the participants indicated some problem with sociolinguistic barriers and how it affected their (re-)credentialing decisions, and spoke about the need for more mediated learning experiences to enhance their abilities to process new "sophisticated symbolic representations" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995, p. 72) contained in the linguistic sign system of

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the Canadian job market and workplace. The resumes and job interviews that they had

difficulties with, but nevertheless have to navigate, exemplified where sociolinguistic barriers

and mediated learning experiences came into play and required some accommodation.

Regardless of the level of success with the (re-)credentialing process, evidence from the data

illustrated that each participant was faced with some sort of crisis, in a Vygotskian sense, which

appeared to result from a disruption in meaning and meaning making "in and with their

sociocultural environment" (Mahn, 2003, p. 123). Next, I discuss how Bourdieu's field theory

imposes struggles for field positions and what Moore (2012) refers to as "hierarchies of

discrimination" (Moore, 2012, p. 101) on agents seeking to gain more advantageous position in

the field, and the possible similarities to the experiences described by the participants.

As I mentioned earlier in my discussion of the theme of sociolinguistic barriers, all of the

participants acknowledged in their conversation with me that their level of expertise with

language closed a number of (re-)credentialing options for them and limited them in others,

Interestingly, as much as they conveyed their understandings of the situation to me and its

implications, they seemed to be part of what Schubert (2012) explains as the production and

maintenance of the social hierarchy and of social inequality through what Bourdieu and

Wacquant (1992) perceive as "symbolic violence." Symbolic violence does not involve violence

or physical force, instead, it involves the perpetuation of an insidious form of domination to

maintain the social hierarchy through the reproduction by members of the dominant class (those

with predominant field positions who act and identify collectively) in their actions of conducting

their normal day-to-day lives and following the rules of the system that gives them their

positions of privilege. Symbolic violence is insidious because the forms of domination linked to

it are often misrecognized by the dominated as representing the accepted way things are done,

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resulting in the reproduction of the systems of domination, especially when it comes to the power and action that Bourdieu attributes to language. Bourdieu's theory and evidence from the data supports that the participants in my study do not have the habitus, when it comes to language, to coincide enough with others competing for the same positions in their desired field to give them a reasonable chance of success at gaining those positions. Moreover, Bourdieu's theory also supports that this manifestation of symbolic violence and domination places the participants in a perpetual struggle for position at lower than their desired levels of the social hierarchy in the fields where they are competing.

Further connecting with Bourdieu's field theory, I had earlier noted in this chapter that several of the participants were critical of having to engage in long term succession strategies to acquire the habitus connected with language to better access the labour market field. The data provides evidence that these participants appear to be challenging one of the four structural properties of fields that I discussed in chapter one of my thesis and earlier in this chapter: fields observe specific forms of struggle legitimized over others and imposed on actors. To take this a step further, it seemed that the field of the labour market appeared more daunting to the participants when they realized the role language skills plays in position-taking in this field. Although they contested the emphasis placed on proficiency with the subtleties and nuances of language to tell the "best story" about themselves to increase chances of success, for example, in job interviews for the Canadian labour market, the data provided evidence that all of the participants realized that the fields of their occupational training and hiring in their home countries do not match the fields of schooling and hiring in Canada.

Furthermore, as Kramsch (2012) explains, "fields are not fully autonomous" (p. 39). A number of different fields of experience can come into contact with each other that do not have

completely overlapping values, yet still contribute to the success of the individual in strategizing toward position-taking on a given field. The pre-migration participation by the participants in different fields of experience such as sports, travel, schooling, and previous work experience may help to explain their impetus to challenge the form of struggle imposed on them by sociolinguistic barriers they encounter in the field of the Canadian labour market. This cross-resourcing of fields and subfields by all of the participants may provide the backdrop and beginnings for their lack of satisfaction with their "sense of one's place" and their "position occupied in social space," as they experience and observe it, determined by their sociolinguistic proficiency. According to Bourdieu (1986), a sense of one's place means what an agent can or cannot permit oneself and refers to an agent's own sense of limits. The evidence from the participants' conversations with me challenging the focus on language for labour market success, as I have noted earlier in this chapter, demonstrates the tension between their struggle for more favourable field conditions for entry to the labour market, the corresponding struggle for established position-takers to perpetuate the current hierarchy of the field, and the struggle of the participants against sustaining the legitimacy of this hierarchy.

Connecting Bourdieu's writing on capital with the participants' experiences, Rowsell (2012) explains that "Capitals at contest within a field are intertwined with the particular logics of that field" (p. 250). Bourdieu's theory and evidence from the data further explains the struggle the participants experienced crossing occupational fields from their home country to the host country. Even though fields are not fully autonomous and allow for different fields of experience to complement each other, increasing chances of success for the agent, capital from one field is not always accepted by the other field. When it comes to language, the logics of the host country labour market, met by the participants, appear to bear this out.

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In order to be successful at crossing fields, the participants had to internalize and incorporate the structure of the new field, including field-matching habitus with language, and complying with the field's doxa. Also, they needed to acquire the requisite amount of language dependent cultural capital in the form of credentials, and, in short order, a sufficient amount of social capital in the form of concrete job contacts and references, to be accepted as legitimate actors to the Canadian labour market field. Bourdieu's theory supports that for this to occur they need time to modify their habitus and time for an exchange of capitals between fields to take place. Perhaps the biggest challenge related to language for the participants that I gained from listening to their stories was how conscious they became of their habitus, as it relates to the actions and impressions it provided for improvisation within their present social conditions. With regard to language, evidence from the data illustrated that the participants struggled to transform themselves and reproduce their social structures with so little time to restructure their habituses. Exacerbating this, as Wolander made mention of in his conversation with me, is the barrier many international tradespeople meet when they are sometimes reluctant to mingle with people and connect with people. They have a tendency to stay in their houses and speak only in their home country's language. Bourdieu's ideas support that this slows the transformation of their habitus concerning language, blocks them from acquiring necessary social capital, and delays their acceptance in the valuable socialization sub-field.

Summary of the Findings

In this chapter, I began with a description of the setting of the case that included its context and environment. Following this I introduced the participants. Then, I turned to an exploration of the four main themes that emerged during the analysis of the data I gathered through selected documents that I reviewed, the individual interviews, and the focus group discussion. The first

theme was that each participant encountered forced career change within the first few months of arriving in Canada. The second was that participants gained the impression, from their forays in the Canadian labour market, that real work is elusive. The third was the need participants described for assistance with the transition process to the Canadian labour market. The last theme was that each participant experienced challenges navigating sociolinguistic barriers as they strove to meet the labour market entry requirements of the resume and the job interview.

As part of the exploration of these four themes, I made connections with the sociocultural appropriation of the learning process as posited by Vygotsky, and the relational concepts of habitus, field, and capital, which constitute Bourdieu's theory of practice. In summary, the evidence indicates that the participants in my study were isolated when they discovered they did not possess the relationships based in language and written text, necessary for entry to the host country labour market. The participants' mis-matching implicit semiotic mediation limited the (re-)credentialing options for the participants as the length of time involved for sociocultural appropriation of the learning process intersected with imperatives of economic survival. Similarly, from a Bourdieusian perspective, the findings reveal the impact of a field-habitus mis-match on participants' decisions to change career and on which career direction they chose to take. The slow process of elaboration, adaptation, and structuring of the habitus to match the field appeared to limit the participants' choices of (re-)credentialing options. Interestingly, the findings also indicate that the time pressure for participants to adjust to the new field conditions did not diminish their sense of identity, for example, when it came to their choice of power engineering as a career and its relation to credentials and work experience from their home country.

Other findings that emerged during analysis suggest that the participants had to overcome hurdles in order to be considered as legitimate entrants to the labour market field. Hurdles included the challenge of building a useful social network within months of immigrating to Canada. Participants were forced to rely on the advice of a small number of friends to navigate the (re-)credentialing process and find real work. Adding to the hurdles, excerpts from the data provided evidence of a disconnect between pre-migration assessment of credentials and the credentials required by employers in Canada. Further compounding these hurdles, as Golf made mention of, are the effects of lack of information, direction, and guidance, pre- and post-migration.

The findings also indicate that a by-product of the field-habitus clash encountered by the participants was self-elimination from the field. With the number of exams and years John faced to socioculturally appropriate the learning process and structure his habitus to (re-)credential as a professional engineer, he eliminated himself from initially (re-)credentialing in this career, and, instead chose the more accessible, yet related, power engineering career pathway. This lends light to another finding that although all of the participants recognized the structure of the field, they expressed suspicion about re-structuring of their habitus to be considered legitimate entrants to the field. In particular, the participants identified the field conditions as being unfair and unclear for them and recommended that they be given preferences to compensate for the predominant value they see placed on the resume and the job interview.

Interestingly, the findings indicate a contrast amongst the participants (re-)credentialing experiences with connections to the writings of Vygotsky and Bourdieu. Steve circumvented the resume and interview process by early adoption of sign use and relying on demonstration of his skills to gain entry to the labour market field. Richard received help from his brothers, who had

immigrated to Canada before him; he more readily internalized new forms of cultural behavior necessary for success with the (re-)credentialing process, thereby initially relying less on social interaction and a social network. Wolander, who I mentioned had come to Canada as a student before entering the workforce, recommended that there be more opportunities for immigrants to mingle with people outside of their family and close circle of friends. Based on his experience, opportunities to mingle and develop social capital are curtailed by the communication barrier that ensues when the host country's language is not spoken in the family residence. In line with Vygotsky's writings, success with meaning and meaning making is reflected in the social nature of mediation; meaning develops from human social interaction.

Lastly, there was one other theme that emerged directly related to the (re-)credentialing experiences of the participants, and their struggles to enter the host country labour market. Seven of the participants in my research project discussed the theme, Wolander coined, of being lost in the field. All of the participants mentioned that the skills they brought with them from their home countries were not recognized and that this left them in limbo as to what to do next. Connected with this, meaning and meaning making stalled as participants encountered an unfamiliar hiring process that relied on acquisition of a social network and mastery of the hiring mechanisms of the resume and job interview. Facing a habitus-field mismatch, being lost in the field meant being denied legitimacy as entrants to the competitive Bourdieusian field of play and an impairment of the participants' abilities to compete in the struggle that the structure of the field imposes on those seeking to enter and position take on the field.

Viewed as one, the themes I have discussed and the findings that were indicated, show how Vygotsky's earlier writings complement Bourdieu's theory of practice to provide insights into the experiences and the struggles of adult immigrants seeking to (re-)credential in the trades

in rural Alberta. I now turn to the discussion and conclusions chapter of my thesis for a discussion of how these experiences and themes connect with the struggles adult immigrants face as they navigate the process of (re-)credentialing.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

I start out on this final chapter of my thesis by reiterating the purpose and findings of my research project. Next, I summarize my findings in terms of how they related to my research questions, which asked participants about their experiences and perceptions of the (re-) credentialing process. Following that, I compare the findings and conclusions from my research to previous research identified in my review of the literature. The final section of this chapter provides my thoughts on possible ways my findings could contribute to the work of future researchers looking into the problem of navigating the (re-)credentialing regime faced by new immigrants to Canada.

Aside from researchers, I also discuss how my findings could be applicable to several other stakeholders related to this issue. Other relevant stakeholder groups include the ISOs who occupy a key position for providing important information to new immigrants and the individuals, organizations, and employers who provide the initial opportunities for economic survival and social interaction for new immigrants. Members of that last group have the means to mentor their employees, become familiar with their skills and qualifications, and provide the starting points for building an extensive social network.

Next, I outline recommendations that are applicable to post-secondary institutions. One has to do with acting on opportunities to leverage international skills and training with Canadian qualifications toward employment positions within the institution. The other relates to recommending that those designing educational programs build aspects into their program to increase inclusiveness and potential for achieving success.

The last group that could benefit from my findings and conclusions is the human resources leaders in the oil and gas sector. They need to be aware of how unfamiliar and

irrational the hiring processes they use appear to international tradespeople navigating entry to the Canadian labour market. Before presenting these recommendations, I offer a quick review of my research purpose and key findings.

Overview of Purpose and Findings

The primary purpose of this case study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of a sample of international power engineering students to gain a clearer understanding of the individual and collective educational and employment strategies that new immigrants to Canada develop. I wanted to know what adult immigrants in the trades in rural Alberta encounter as they navigate the (re-)credentialing regime to enter into the Canadian labour market. Also, what do these encounters suggest about the intertwining of the personal and the social, and agency in making tangible progress toward (re-)credentialing and labour market entry. To facilitate my understanding of the process that new immigrant tradespeople adopt to navigate this process, I interviewed 14 international power engineering students. I supplemented the interviews with a focus group discussion with 6 participants from the group of 14, and I conducted a review of documents relevant to my study. During the interviews and the focus group discussion the participants shared with me their personal stories of the barriers they faced and the struggles they experienced with (re-)credentialing and with entry to the labour market. They also shared with me their understandings of what they believed could be done to make the (re-)credentialing process smoother for other international tradespersons like them who want the opportunity to make better use of their training from their home countries, acquire the social capital to get real work, and gain more exposure to the sociocultural learning essential to fitting in to the host country labour market.

(Re-)credentialing: Mediated Learning, Habitus, Capital, and Field

In the first chapter of this thesis, I presented the ideas of Vygotsky that primarily address mediated learning to complement the more recent ideas contained in Bourdieu's theory of practice for a robust theoretical framework. Prior to the data gathering phase of my research project for this thesis, I believed, as Vygotsky and Bourdieu posit, that mediation plays a central role in sociocultural learning. I believe that in order to grasp a "set of rules" or have a reasonable chance at certainty about which strategy or actions will produce the greatest return, mediation must be involved. I think that being able to take an active role in one's own development relies on the use of the signs or tools contained, for example, in language and writing which in turn facilitate mediation. Being unfamiliar with external, symbolic cultural systems embodied in a host of conventional signs integral to mediation, acts as a barrier to the individual's sociocultural development. Furthermore, I think the social plays an essential role when one considers the concepts of habitus, field, and capital in relation to mediation and the effectiveness of the relationship between the three concepts. For example, Bourdieu's concept of the internalisation of habitus and the mediational role habitus plays is reliant upon the effectiveness of the relationship between the objective structures of the social field and the incorporated structures present in the habitus. Moreover, the effectiveness of this relationship requires the acquisition of sufficient amounts and forms of capital prescribed by the field. The acquisition of field prescribed capital supplements the effectiveness of the habitus in relation to how well habitus can then match the conditions of the field. I think that the (re-)credentialing struggles experienced by the 14 international power engineering students I interviewed and held a focus group discussion with, demonstrate my conceptualization of the issues contingent upon successful integration to the Canadian labour market.

As I discussed in my findings chapter, the participants in my research project described facing a forced career change soon after immigration to Canada. In many instances, participants talked about how the credentials they brought with them were not recognized when they landed in Canada, forcing them into a regime of retraining. The findings in my study suggest the disadvantaged position the participants experienced without the matching implicit semiotic mediation required to successfully cross from one field to another and have their skills translate to the new labour market. The findings in my study also suggest a similar position of disadvantage for the participants when the forced career change they faced intersected with a habitus-field mis-match, the economic imperative for survival, and the slow process of elaboration and adaptation of the habitus to adjust to the new field. The findings support the idea that the process of adaptation in unfamiliar situations is highly conscious and slow when habitus encounters new situations. Conversely, habitus inherently involves an unconscious calculation by the individual of what is possible, impossible, and probable in a given setting and hierarchical social structure. It follows then that the participants' calculations to preserve as much of their acquired skills and identity as possible by choosing power engineering training seems to comply with the unconscious habitus' functioning to determine what is possible. It also demonstrates the exercise of the participants' conscious habitus which is slow to elaborate and adapt when facing unfamiliar situations. Moreover, it appears possible that both the conscious and unconscious habitus played an integral part in the participants' self-elimination from career fields they felt they had little chance of accessing, particularly given the added time pressure, borne of economic necessity, to gain entry to the labour market field as soon as possible.

In my findings, I indicated how all of the participants I interviewed and who took part in the focus group discussion appeared to experience challenges acquiring real work. Their initial

social network, consisting of friends they already knew, was useful in helping them access the secondary labour market and make choices amongst various retraining options, but was not well enough developed to facilitate the socially mediated process of acquiring sought after real work. The participants faced hurdles just getting to the beginning of the process of applying for real work. Without the tutored attention, guidance, and personal recommendations, that a well-developed social network can provide, it appeared that the participants were isolated and dominated by what they encountered in the environment. It also appears that the hurdles they face getting to the real work are linked to participants' perceptions of the structure of the labour market field. I think the field calls for certain types of capital they do not hold.

This sense of isolation and domination resulting from the field conditions the participants met, I believe, was compounded by the struggles the participants faced transitioning to the host country labour market. As mentioned in the themes section of this chapter, a small group of reliable social contacts helped to ensure economic survival for the participants by steering them toward gainful employment but did not really lead them in the direction of the real work they were seeking. I believe that for all of the participants in my study, being forced to take "work unrelated to original training" means the addition of another step to an already confusing, complicated process of transition to the labour market. In addition, actualizing (re-)credentialing training depended on field structures that imposed a wait time of up to a year to qualify for government financial assistance, and further issues with funding stemming from what appeared to be lack of timely advice to access funding and lack of coordination between funding agencies. I think that what exacerbated the sense of isolation all of the participants felt, is the symbolic violence connected with mis-recognition of credentials relevant to appropriate labour market entry. Participants appeared to experience domination by the reproduction of the hierarchical

social order through the exercise of symbolic violence manifested in their experiences and perceptions of workplace discrimination, for example, when it came to a lack of endorsement from dominant actors in the field for participants who were applying for work more commensurate with their qualifications.

Participants appeared taken aback by particular struggles they experienced to enter the host country labour market, especially given the sense that they felt Canada let them know their skills would be needed post-migration. I think that this is one of the reasons that a third of the 14 participants indicated in the interview and discussion group that skill recognition should be given precedence over language proficiency in facilitating entry to the labour market. A common perception amongst the participants was a distrust of the hiring process that appears to grant more success to agents with the language habitus to match the field condition imposed by the behavioral descriptive interview and the resume. Moreover, without the time to establish broader acceptance in the socialization sub-field, participants appeared to be without a key mediational component for establishing meaning and meaning making as well as a key vehicle for internalizing the sign system of language. Faced with insufficient time for their habitus to improvise and adapt, and unexpected barriers for an exchange of capitals to take place between fields, evidence from the data supported the participants' frustration with the absence of field doxa that would allow greater cross-resourcing of fields and more mediated learning experiences to level the field of play. In addition to the emphasis they placed on providing them more mediated opportunities to acquire the symbolic representations that are an important part of the linguistic sign system incumbent in the job application process and in workplace navigation, excerpts from the data illuminated the suggestion from the participants that being given an

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accommodation for language would help stem the reproduction of social inequality as a result of being excluded from acquiring appropriate work based on a language barrier.

Connecting my Research to the Existing Literature

In chapter two of this thesis, I examined some of the existing literature regarding the ongoing challenges with immigration and recertification for international tradespersons. From my overview of the literature, I mentioned that much of the research has explored how newcomers are recognized and how they must change practice and revise their social conditions to adapt and navigate in order to gain entry to the Canadian labour market. In my literature review, I briefly referred to four specific research papers (Gibb & Hamdon, 2010; Ho & Bauder, 2012; Slade, 2012; Somerville & Walsworth, 2010) which contributed to informing my own research project. In short form, I now shift to relating my findings to the findings in those articles.

Ho and Bauder's (2012) article explored identity capital and how it is deployed in the context of a Canadian immigration and settlement workplace. As a type of capital aligned with Bourdieu's theoretical approach to capital, as mentioned in chapter two of this thesis, identity capital employs the notion that social gains rely upon how effectively people are able to define themselves and in turn how others define them. As I found in my study, Ho and Bauder (2012) claim that identity capital is a strategically deployed resource to be used to negotiate new and evolving workplace environments. In addition, identity capital is very important in exchanges between individuals from cultural backgrounds that are different from each other. Fluid and strategic movement of people in different social environments relies on the acquisition and accumulation of identity capital.

In contrast to Ho and Bauder's (2012) study, findings in my study indicated the challenges all of the participants experienced modifying their store of identity capital to suit the

situation they faced (re-)credentialing and entering the host country labour market. One of the participants in Ho and Bauder's (2012) study used the term chameleons to refer to the varied and interchangeable way that values, educational background, and use of language for example, could be deployed to increase effectiveness in given workplace situations. On the one hand, with far fewer identity resources to deploy, all of the participants in my study spoke of the difficulties this posed gaining membership in social groups, particularly those groups that could provide job references and (re-)credentialing opportunities. On the other hand, there was agreement between the results of my study and Ho and Bauder's (2012) study when it came to a sense amongst the participants that identity characteristics such as patience and resourcefulness do not change. Steve seemed to most closely exemplify this in his willingness to forego acquisition of new identity capital in the form of resume and interview skills to rely on demonstration of skills to access employment opportunities.

With further reference to the resume and job interview process all of the participants in my study recognized that success with (re-)credentialing and labour market entry depended on being able to deploy identity capital commensurate with the social situation and the audience. Ho and Bauder's (2012) study results confirm the importance of being able to adjust the nature of social exchanges in relation to the hierarchical nature of the workplace. In comparison, the participants in my study talked about being unable to influence the nature of social exchanges such as those needed to build a reliable social network or those needed to be successful with resume construction or job interview performance. Bourdieu's theory and evidence from the data illustrates that my study's participants recognized that they needed time to develop the ability to deliver the appropriate identity performance and apply the requisite identity capital to be considered "in the running" for the real work they sought to attain. For example, my findings of

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the participants' sense of the sociolinguistic barriers they faced to negotiate entry to the labour

market appeared to echo Ho and Bauder's (2012) findings that language is a strategic identity

aspect, specifically when it concerns how one presents oneself in hierarchical social situations.

Somerville and Walsworth's (2010) paper was interesting to me for its exploration of the

connection between credential devaluation and the points system Canada uses to determine

entry. While not explicitly aligning with Bourdieu's principles in exploring the frustrations

amongst new immigrants to Canada over non-recognition of their credentials and a sense of

deception about the system of entry, the paper looks at human capital by analyzing the

experiences of the participants and their perceptions of how their human capital is being used. As

I found, Somerville and Walsworth (2010) found post-migration participant experiences

characterized by challenges with obtaining appropriate employment and situations where

participants had to accept being underemployed to ensure economic survival.

In my findings I discussed the considerable re-calculation and disappointment all of my

participants faced when they realized their pre-migration credentials would not transfer to the

host country labour market. Like Rajeshri in Somerville and Walsworth's (2010) study, several

of my participants spoke in the interviews and the focus group discussion of their frustration at

discovering the discrepancy between what they were led to believe about the opportunities to

enter the Canadian labour market pre-migration and the low level of success with labour market

entry they experienced post-migration. As several of my participants discussed in the focus

group, if there are no jobs available for them, they felt they should be stopped before coming to

Canada.

Somerville and Walsworth's (2010) conclusions regarding the connection between labour

market success and having Canadian experience are similar to what I found. In my findings there

were repeated instances where the career aspirations of my participants were delayed or practically put out of reach by the organizations' or the employers' insistence on Canadian experience. With relation to Bourdieu's principle of habitus and supported by excerpts from the data, it was illustrated that the participants in my study realized that they lacked the habitus to contend with the demands of the field for a particular type and quantity of Canadian experience, without extraordinary investment of time and economic resources, and in a number of instances, as I previously mentioned, this resulted in self-elimination from the field. The findings in my study and Somerville and Walsworth's (2010) study reflect the concerns immigrants have about the lack of coordination and consistency between Canadian government and employer evaluative systems and the profound impact this has on labour market entry.

Slade's (2012) research was useful for me particularly in its use of reader's theatre and institutional ethnography to understand the experiences and perceptions of immigrant professionals struggling to find appropriate employment in the host country labour market. Through the skillful use of reader's theatre, Slade's (2012) findings further highlight the discrepancy between pre-migration selection processes calling for highly skilled workers for Canada's economy and the multi-barrier post-migration environment immigrants meet that calls for difficult-to-obtain, Canadian experience. Through institutional ethnography, Slade's (2012) research illuminates how ruling relationships contribute to people's feelings of marginalization. As such, Slade's (2012) findings relate closely to my research and findings, especially with the connections that can be made to Bourdieu's notions of symbolic violence domination and social capital.

Comparing my findings to Slade's (2012), it seems that dominant actors in the education field need only to perpetuate the symbolic violence that is characteristic of the field by the

imposition of cultural practices on those seeking position in the field. Such practices can pertain to how the content is taught, what the content is comprised of, and the requirements that are set for mastery of the content. Beginning with a disjuncture of habitus, my participants and Slade's (2012) participants appeared to lack the cultural capital to challenge the social hierarchy of the (re-)credentialing regime and the Canadian labour market field due to being dominated by its structure. Furthermore, like Kaji in Slade's study the participants in my study suggested the importance of the social network, for instance, for being able to make connections with people who could open doors to employment, to help navigate the different potential employment situations, and to improve the chances of being in the right place at the right time for employment opportunities– intangible aspects that seemed difficult to fathom in terms of acquisition, and appeared out of short-term reach for the participants, as they struggled to find appropriate work.

Like my study, Slade's (2012) conclusions regarding how labour market inequality is reproduced for immigrants are noted in Slade's discussion of the challenges immigrants encounter related to securing work placements and the inadequate role these work placements play in leading to real work. Although the work placements that are examined in Slade's (2012) research are volunteer placements, it is noted that they are stressful and difficult to acquire and retain and are often unrelated to the participants' pre-migration training. In addition, a by-product of these work placements is that they often result in precarious employment, including jobs where workplace discrimination takes place. For instance, Slade's (2012) findings indicate that Canadian volunteer work experience appears to be being accessed as a source of free labour and does not seem to translate to appropriate employment in the host country labour market.

Gibb and Hamdon's (2010) article was particularly interesting to me in that it used Fraser's (2000) work on the redistribution of recognition and cultural and symbolic injustice as a framework to re-examine case study data from an earlier study (see Guo, 2006) that examined the vital role that Immigrant Service Organizations (ISOs) play in facilitating transitions to the Canadian labour market and Canadian society. With relevance to my study, Gibb and Hamdon re-visited data from two ISOs whose mandate is to provide settlement assistance for immigrant women. Like me, Gibb and Hamdon found that there is a sense of bewilderment amongst the participants at the materialization of barriers to the labour market linked to non-recognition of credentials. Similar to my findings, Gibb and Hamdon found that the symbolic capital associated with the valuing of credentials creates a barrier to accessing the labour market.

Similar to me, Gibb and Hamdon (2010) found that the way the symbolic capital of the participants is valued, particularly through their experiences of non-recognition, leads to a number of factors that participants are forced to navigate. A primary factor is the structure of the field that determines how credentials are valued. Also, Gibb and Hamdon point to the commodification of credentials in Canada that appears to be designed to correct deficiencies in credentials immigrants bring with them from their country of origin. As in my findings, Gibb and Hamdon's findings illuminate the personal impacts on the participants of credential devaluation and commodification. The findings indicate a sense of uncertainty for the participants connected to the cost and time it will take to re-enter the educational system and re-credential. There are also commonalities between the findings of my study and Gibb and Hamdon's study when it comes to the participants' sense of loss of dignity, self-esteem, identity, and profession resulting from encounters with the Bourdieusian notions of mis-recognition, symbolic violence, and domination by established actors in the field.

Lastly, on the role and effectiveness of ISOs, that four of my participants were particularly critical of, Gibb and Hamdon's (2010) conclusions indicate similar challenges to those spoke of by the participants in my study. Gibb and Hamdon conclude that ISOs have the difficult task of balancing liberal state policies with advocacy for the clients they serve. Furthermore, Gibb and Hamdon conclude that the presence of restrictive ISO policies limits the ISO's ability to address recognitive injustices toward a more effective deployment of knowledge recognition.

In summary, when I consider the primary similarity between all of these works and mine, I think it is in how all of them indicate the challenging consequences from non-recognition of credentials, which appears to lend itself to being framed in terms of the effects of mis-recognition, and how navigating (re-)credentialing processes has to do with one's habitus, the structure of the field, and the amount and type of capital available for one to access. With close similarity to my findings, Somerville and Walsworth's (2010) findings add to our understanding of experiences skilled immigrants have with devaluation of their credentials from pre-migration to post-migration, particularly related to how the Canadian point system for entry, gives the misleading impression that their international credentials will translate into appropriate work in Canada. Slade's (2012) findings further illuminate the challenges and barriers immigrant professionals consistently experience obtaining appropriate employment in Canada. That study was remarkable for the additional insights that the use of reader's theatre provided into the participants' volunteer work experiences, undertaken in the quest for Canadian work experience, and the cost of these experiences related to time, money, precarious employment, and the reproduction of labour market inequality.

Ho and Bauder's (2012) paper, utilizing the Bourdieusian concept of capital, points out the key role identity capital plays in the successful movement of actors in social settings and how the acquisition of social capital is linked to an actor's proficiency with types of identity capital and its strategic deployment, for example, in the way language is used in various situations. Furthermore, similar to what I found regarding the connections between how one presents oneself and success with the resume and interview process, Ho and Bauder (2012) point out that successful deployment of identity capital relies on an actor's strategic combination of static, and contingent identity characteristics to match the situation. Finally, Gibb and Hamdon (2010) explore the struggle immigrant women encounter to overcome exclusion from their fields of training by subscribing to a regime of re-education that subordinates their identity as professionals. Gibb and Hamdon's findings are similar to mine in that both show the costs incurred in terms of time, dignity, self-esteem, and identity in being forced to accept the field's doxa of re-education to acquire the "right" field-matching capital and habitus to align with entry to the host country labour market.

Limitations of my Research

Before setting out on the final section of this chapter, I would like to offer what I think are the limitations to the research I conducted with regards to my findings and conclusions. By doing this, my goal is to supplement the more detailed examination of limitations to my research that I presented when I discussed the potential impact of certain factors on the methodological rigor of my study in chapter three of this thesis.

Several times in this thesis I referred to the strength of weak ties (see Granovetter, 2002) and its role in generating useful bridging capital for accessing the host country labour market. Time constraints for completion of my research and the scope of my research did not allow the

opportunity for a more in-depth examination of the connections between the efficacy the

participants expressed in relation to their training from their home countries and the extent of

their reliance on a few close friends for temporary pointers for improving their (re-)credentialing

experience and labour market trajectory. All of the participants in my study relied on self-

confidence in their abilities and a small number of close friends or acquaintances for (re-

)credentialing advice. To further address the key role of social capital, related to how it applies to

my study, I think valuable findings could come from examining the role that a more developed

social network has on generating bridging ties or weak ties, whether there would be a

proliferation of weak ties, and their value in actors' position-taking on the labour market field.

In both the first and third chapter of this thesis I broached the topic of researcher

reflexivity for the purposes of proffering balance and clarity and to minimize bias and distortion

related to how my values and expectations may have influenced the conduct of the study, my

interpretation of the data, and how I arrived at my conclusions. Nevertheless, I realize that much

like Slade's (2012) reader's theatre, the focus group discussion and each interview can be seen as

a dramatic performance of a sort. Given this, I realize that there will be certain things that are

said by the participants that will stand out more than others to me and that it is my subjective

valuing system that is being employed to decide where to direct my focus. My wish is that my

efforts to render the participants' experiences and perceptions they shared with me as evenly and

accurately as possible is worthy of the personal investment they made in participating in my

study.

To end this section on limitations, I return to the demographics of my participants which I

presented in chapter four of this thesis. There, I indicated that two of the fourteen participants

that chose to participate in my study were female. Although I had initially hoped to have a more

even balance between male and female participants, the chances of that happening were substantially lessened by the small number of female power engineering students taking part in the training program at the time of my study. Nonetheless, part of one of my research questions explores the effects of gender on (re-)credentialing experiences and labour market entry. My findings did not indicate that gender played a role in the participants' (re-)credentialing experiences, although both male and female participants mentioned experiences they had with workplace discrimination. I have no way of knowing if the predominance of males in the focus group discussion muted references to the role gender may have played. I think it would be interesting if I could repeat the study with a balanced number of male and female participants to find out if there is talk of how gender affects the (re-)credentialing process. Included with the limitations that are attached to my study and my findings, are the gains made in what I have learned and had the opportunity to share here. With the hope that my research will lead to new research that addresses the limitations I have encountered, I now turn to my final section of this chapter: future implications.

Implications and Recommendations

Returning to my problem of the struggles faced with recognition of credentials and entry to the labour market for new immigrant tradespeople, I look at the findings I have presented in this thesis with a view toward addressing this problem from additional perspectives. There are ample opportunities for performing additional qualitative research to further explore these tradespeople's experiences. My contribution to the scholarship represents only an initial exploration of this topic from a rural Alberta context. Further research on new immigrant tradespeople's (re-)credentialing experiences and perceptions in rural Alberta could contribute toward extending understandings of the topics I was only able to get to the early stages of

exploring. I was fascinated by the large number of stories the participants shared with me, telling of their inadvertent arrival in rural Alberta to pursue (re-)credentialing opportunities. One possible topic, with implications for the future, could be the dissemination of labour market information about opportunities in rural centres for new immigrants to Canada. The majority of my participants mentioned that they were given no information about the opportunities available to them in rural Alberta. Yet, for them, finding the right program meant embarking on a journey to this particular location. It would be interesting to investigate how the training and job information for rural training and employment opportunities is presented at ISOs. What is the nature of that information? How are the connections made to potential opportunities in rural areas by new immigrants seeking Canadian educational credentials and Canadian work experience? What are the experiences and perceptions of new immigrants as they work to utilize this information? What is the help they require to avoid becoming "lost in the woods" and for the purposes of better finding their way and shortening the time-lag to align their habitus for appropriate opportunities for labour market entry?

Could, as Gibb and Hamdon (2010) suggest, the critical examination of restrictive liberal state policies on the ability of ISOs to address symbolic injustices associated with non-recognition of skills and training have a positive impact on knowledge recognition and recognitional justice? Evidence from the data supports that one response to experiencing immigration and adult education policies that devalue credentials from countries outside Canada, is a persistent questioning and challenging of the doxa for entry to the host country labour market. One example of this I found in my study is workplace advancement based on skill demonstration. Nevertheless, matching the requirements to be considered as legitimate entrants to the labour market field still appears to be of pre-eminent focus, tipping the balance largely

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toward acquiescing to the doxa called for by the field. This serves only to reproduce the symbolic violence and mis-recognition pervaded by the doxa of the existing labour market structure. All of these questions, and many others, deserve to be asked of newly arrived international tradespeople and those who serve them, as these adult tradespeople work to fit in to the host country. Questions such as these press me to consider what implications and recommendations I believe I can set forth as illuminated in my findings.

Returning to my discussion of the LINC program in the first chapter of this thesis, and the limitations I felt this program faces in terms of meeting the demand for the services it offers to newcomers, I believe that there are individuals and organizations who could realize mutual benefit from taking steps to create conducive conditions, places and times, for social mingling where skilled international tradespersons have laddered opportunities to work on development of a broader, more reliable social network. Managers and team leads have a key role to play in structuring laddered opportunities for mingling, for example, through connections made with training institutions, other businesses, and industries. I think that tuition reimbursement programs in secondary labour market jobs such as those found in the food service industry and grocery industry can help initiate the trajectory toward greater recognition of skills and most efficient avenues for (re-)credentialing. Managers in different occupational areas can network with each other at the same time they are getting to know their employees' skill set and credentials and act as mentors and promoters of their workers' skills.

Following on this recommendation, post-secondary institutions should be encouraged to go beyond the standardized methods they have established for evaluation of international credentials, by establishing a similar system of mentoring and promoting of the individual's international training and skills as they gain qualifications in the area they have chosen for (re-)

credentialing. This could range in form from short term work placements within the institution to teaching assistantships to actual teaching positions. This would perform a number of functions for new immigrants that could include bolstering of valuable identity capital, proliferation of useful social capital, and an overall strengthening of perceptions related to re-training for international tradespeople.

The inadvertent arrival of the majority of the participants in rural Alberta was only the beginning of a (re-)credentialing process whose worth was yet to be proven. However, based on the participants' remarks in my study, I think that there is considerably more confidence of obtaining a successful employment outcome from having taken the decision to journey north to enroll in the power engineering program in this rural setting. Earlier in this thesis, I had mentioned it was the two-year length of the program and its relation to the pre-migration training and experiences of the participants that made it a more appealing match than other programs for the participants' habitus and stock of capital. Furthermore, what essentially firmed up the participants' decision to move forward with the power engineering program was the program's feature of finding work placements for its students. This forms the basis for another one of my recommendations which would be for those designing educational programs to build in features that help level the playing field for those, such as new immigrants, who require time for their habitus to improvise adjust and adapt to the Canadian labour market.

To the human resources leaders in the oil and gas sector, I ask for modifications in the current hiring system that relies on applicants' grasp of complex relationships grounded in language and written text that new immigrants have not had time to acquire. Constructing a resume to increase its chances of being selected by prospective employers and performing well in behavioral descriptive interviews were just two aspects of the transition to the labour market

that the participants in my study mentioned they struggled to grasp in terms of their relevance to their skills and training. The job application and interview process can be altered to provide more opportunity for applicants to both explain and show what they can do. As I mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, I have been involved with the instruction of newcomers to Canada for over a decade now, and one aspect that consistently stands out for me is their reliance on literal interpretation of questions and tasks when participating in learning activities. I think that this is an inherent part of the initial stages of sociocultural appropriation of the learning process. I also think that an approach characterized by an unembellished focus on what one's skills and abilities are is a preferable pathway to labour market entry, especially given the isolation that participants in my study felt and the lack of the time available to them to develop implicit semiotic mediation or habitus in response to the nuances and complexities of the hiring process.

To improve the economic outcomes of international tradespersons, it will be necessary to continue, as Ferrer et al. (2014) recommend, with evidence-based immigration policy development and long-term program evaluation. The findings presented in this thesis shed further light on the need for a mechanism that leads to a better-managed flow of immigration to meet host country labour market needs. Echoing the remarks of the participants in my study, I conclude that there is a need for increased and more accurate labour market information pre-migration and upon landing in Canada that addresses questions regarding credentialing and offers guidance and support to migrants in acquiring new credentials or (re-)credentialing, to increase the likelihood of their successful career and economic outcomes. There is also a need for immigration policy makers, educational policy makers, ISOs, employers, post-secondary instructors, and other key players who come into contact with adult immigrants navigating the (re-) credentialing process to alter their approach to help address the paradox that this group

seems to encounter of poor labour market outcomes in the face of calls for immigration to remedy apparent or looming labour shortages.

Finally, I share some lessons I have learned as a scholarly researcher through the course of this research. Most prominent for me is the understanding I have gained, from a Bourdieusian perspective, that capital, habitus, and field play a prominent role in conducting research. For instance, when I revisit my positionality discussed in Chapter 1 and reconnect to the literature in Chapter 2, in an effort to make sense of participants' silences on the matter of race and gender, I wonder whether my own whiteness and maleness had an impact on participants' willingness to bring up those matters or their inclination to avoid doing so. I even consider the matter of an appropriate habitus in the field of research and wonder whether my position as a researcher/instructor, an individual loaded with cultural and symbolic capital, influenced my research process and findings. From that perspective, research itself might entail an idealized habitus and a doxa that participants and I were engaged in. The presence of any such habitus and doxa might help explain or qualify some of the participants' responses, including their silences on matters such as how race or gender figured into their experiences. Even more broadly, there is the matter of a normative Canadian habitus and doxa that guide understandings of how "good" Canadians behave. Perhaps the lack of commentary about race and gender by participants said something about the image of Canada as a socially progressive, multicultural society in which continued talk about structural barriers seems, at best, impolite and, at worst, a sign of personal weakness. Especially given the educational backdrop to this study and participants' awareness of my own work in trades' education, that possibility seems to warrant a note.

One more lesson I note from conducting this research came from putting together the ideas of Bourdieu and Vygotsky for a two-pronged theoretical framework. I did so, intentionally,

driven by my perspective as a scholarly researcher that I talked about in Chapter 1, particularly, how important it is for me to get things as correct as possible. From a Vygotskyian perspective, I wanted to reach out and engage with the external environment as much as I could to extensively address my research problem in the way that it deserves. I looked beyond the ideas of Bourdieu, so that I might overlay the two writers' ideas to more thoroughly address what I viewed as a complex issue. I learned, from doing this, that additional complexity was introduced by trying to integrate these two pieces into one theoretical framework. Nonetheless, I felt that by doing so, it gave me a greater vantage point and opened up a wider territory to explore in making sense of the participants' (re-)credentialing perceptions and experiences. As I strove to tie together all that I have grown to understand through the course of conducting this research, I return to my two-piece theoretical framework. The (re-)credentialing journey of the participants deserves better. There must be a different way that improves their transition to the Canadian labour market. For them, this should include less time taking part in misrecognition, less time struggling to recognize the field doxa, and less time wrestling with appropriating the internal semiotic mediation to be successful with the (re-)credentialing process. Navigating a river of change in their ways of being and dispositions to grasp a new set of rules, the adoption of better mediating external forces holds the promise of reducing the delay with utilizing their skills.

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Letter of Initial Contact

Date: August 21, 2014

Project Name: Immigration in rural Alberta: Navigating and negotiating processes of credentialing and re-credentialing among adult immigrants in the trades

Primary Investigator: Dr. Shibao Guo

Co-Investigator: Mr. Douglas R. Ross

Dear (Name of Potential Participant),

We invite you to participate in an individual interview which seeks to understand your personal and lived experiences with credentialing and re-credentialing in the trades, especially with respect to how you are navigating and negotiating your training and learning experiences to fit into the power engineering trade. The interviews will take place in a classroom booked for this purpose at Keyano College. The project is led by Doug Ross, Ph.D. student, University of Calgary, CCP Instructor, Keyano College and supervised by Dr. Shibao Guo, Professor, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, █████████████. The audiotaped interview will take approximately one hour of your time. Your participation is voluntary, but

highly appreciated. All information will be kept strictly confidential. The researchers are not affiliated with Keyano College and no interview data will be shared with the College. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time and your withdrawal will in no way affect your program of studies. The findings will assist researchers by providing needed information about the learning practices and experiences of adult immigrant power engineering students in a rural setting, and by enriching our perspectives of inclusive citizenship, ethnic identity, and lifelong learning.

If you would like to participate, or if you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact me through the information provided below.

Yours sincerely,

Doug Ross, Ph.D. Student

University of Calgary

E-mail: ███████████████

E-mail: ████████████████ (preferred e-mail)

Tel: ████████████

Interview Consent Form

Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

Douglas R. Ross, Ph.D. Student
Werklund School of Education
Tel: █████████████
Email: █████████████

Supervisor:

Shibao Guo, PhD
Werklund School of Education
Title of Project:

Immigration in Rural Alberta: Navigating and Negotiating Processes of Credentialing and Re-
credentialing Among Adult Immigrants In the Trades
Sponsor:

N/A

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed
consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here,
you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any
accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study

Canadian companies are hiring increasing numbers of foreign trained tradespeople to fill substantial shortages in various trades. Before foreign trained tradespeople can begin work in their trade, they must submit to an often lengthy process of credentialing and re-credentialing. This study examines immigrants training and learning experiences in rural Alberta and aims to create new knowledge in an understudied research area. In particular, this study examines how adult immigrant students enrolled in the power engineering program at Keyano College, Fort McMurray, Alberta navigate and negotiate their training and learning experiences to fit into the power engineering trade.

The following general topic area research questions are addressed:

1. How do new immigrant adult tradespeople navigate and negotiate credentialing and re-credentialing processes as they work toward accreditation in the power engineering trade?
2. How do adult immigrant power engineering students work together to negotiate culture, and communicate, transfer and transform knowledge across place?
3. How is power engineering students' learning and practices socially organized?

What Will I Be Asked To Do? What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

We invite you to participate in the individual interviews, to take place at Keyano College, which seek your personal and lived experiences with credentialing and re-credentialing in the trades. Each interview will take approximately one hour. If you agree, it will be audio-taped and transcribed. However, your agreement for audio taping is not a necessary condition for your participation. Your participation is voluntary. Your identity will remain confidential in all references to your transcript and your involvement in this project, if you so choose. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time. If you choose to do so, data collected to the point of withdrawal will be erased, but your withdrawal will in no way affect your program. Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to provide your name, age, gender, address, contact number, and personal e-mail address.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please put a check mark on the corresponding line(s) that grants me your permission to:

I grant permission to be audio taped: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym: _____ Yes: ___ No: ___

You may quote me and use my name: Yes: ___ No: ___

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

No foreseeable harm should come to you as a result of your participation in this research. As a voluntary activity, you will not receive any payment.
What Happens to the Information I Provide?

No one except the researchers will be allowed to hear the interview tape. The interview tapes and transcripts are kept in a locked cabinet only accessible by the researchers. The anonymous data will be stored on a computer for three years, at which time, it will be permanently erased. The researchers are not affiliated with Keyano College and no interview data will be shared with the College.

_____

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

<div align="center">

Dr. Shibao Guo
Werklund School of Education
University of Calgary
██████████████

Tel: ████████████

</div>

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact an Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Participant Demographics

Project Name: Immigration in rural Alberta: Navigating and negotiating processes of credentialing and re-credentialing among adult immigrants in the trades

Primary Investigator: Dr. Shibao Guo

Co-Investigator: Mr. Douglas R. Ross

Date: August 21, 2014

These questions are asked at the beginning of each interview and represent suggested general demographic areas of questioning, and are subject to change according to the background of each participant. Some of these questions will be answered more fully in the interview and the focus group.

1. What is your age?
2. What year did you immigrate to Canada?
3. What is your educational level?
4. What was your employment before immigration?
5. What is your current employment?

<u>Interview Schedule</u>

Date: August 21, 2014

Project Name: Immigration in rural Alberta: Navigating and negotiating processes of credentialing and re-credentialing among adult immigrants in the trades

Primary Investigator: Dr. Shibao Guo

Co-Investigator: Mr. Douglas R. Ross

These questions represent suggested general topic areas of questioning and are subject to change according to the background of each participant.

1. Tell me the story of your education and career plans before immigration to Canada.

2. Describe your experience with getting your qualifications in the trades since coming to Canada.

3. What kind of problems or barriers have you encountered with getting your qualifications since arriving in Canada?

4. Do you think the educational programs for trades qualifications in Canada meet your needs?

5. What did you expect to do for work in Canada when you first arrived?

6. How has your career plans changed since arriving in Canada?

7. How have social networks and the people you have met helped with getting your qualifications in the trades since arriving in Canada.

8. What choices and decisions worked best for getting your qualifications in the trades since arriving in Canada?

9. What could Canadian government and adult training institutions do in meeting the needs of a diverse community of migrant learners qualifying and requalifying in the trades?

Letter of Initial Contact

Date: June 3, 2015

Project Name: Immigration in rural Alberta: Navigating and negotiating processes of credentialing and re-credentialing among adult immigrants in the trades

Primary Investigator: Dr. Shibao Guo

Co-Investigator: Mr. Douglas R. Ross

Dear (Name of Potential Participant),

We invite you to participate in a focus group discussion which seeks to understand your personal and lived experiences with credentialing and re-credentialing in the trades, especially with respect to how you are navigating and negotiating your training and learning experiences to fit into the power engineering trade. The focus group discussions will take place in a classroom booked for this purpose at Keyano College. The project is led by Doug Ross, Ph.D. student, University of Calgary, CCP Instructor, Keyano College and supervised by Dr. Shibao Guo, Professor, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, ████████████████ .The audiotaped focus group discussion will take approximately one hour of your time. Your participation is voluntary, but highly appreciated. All information will be kept strictly confidential. The researchers are not affiliated with Keyano College and no focus group discussion data will be shared with the College. You have the right to withdraw from this

study at any time and your withdrawal will in no way affect your program of studies. The findings will assist researchers by providing needed information about the learning practices and experiences of adult immigrant power engineering students in a rural setting, and by enriching our perspectives of inclusive citizenship, ethnic identity, and lifelong learning.

If you would like to participate, or if you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact me through the information provided below.

Yours sincerely,

Douglas R. Ross, Ph.D. Student

University of Calgary

E-mail: ███████████████

E-mail: ████████████████ (preferred e-mail)

Tel: ███████████

Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

Douglas R. Ross, Ph.D. Student
Werklund School of Education
Tel: ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉
Email: ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉

Supervisor:

Shibao Guo, PhD
Werklund School of Education
Title of Project:

Immigration in Rural Alberta: Navigating and Negotiating Processes of Credentialing and Re-credentialing Among Adult Immigrants In the Trades
Sponsor:

N/A

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study

Canadian companies are hiring increasing numbers of foreign trained tradespeople to fill substantial shortages in various trades. Before foreign trained tradespeople can begin work in their trade, they must submit to an often lengthy process of credentialing and re-credentialing. This study examines immigrants training and learning experiences in rural Alberta and aims to create new knowledge in an understudied research area. In particular, this study examines how adult immigrant students enrolled in the power engineering program at Keyano College, Fort McMurray, Alberta navigate and negotiate their training and learning experiences to fit into the power engineering trade.

The following general topic area research questions are addressed:

1. How do new immigrant adult tradespeople navigate and negotiate credentialing and re-credentialing processes as they work toward accreditation in the power engineering trade?
2. How do adult immigrant power engineering students work together to negotiate culture, and communicate, transfer and transform knowledge across place?
3. How is power engineering students' learning and practices socially organized?

What Will I Be Asked To Do? What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

We invite you to participate in focus group discussions, to take place at Keyano College, which seek your personal and lived experiences with credentialing and re-credentialing in the trades. Each focus group discussion will take approximately one hour. If you agree, it will be audio-taped and transcribed. However, your agreement for audio taping is not a necessary condition for your participation. Your participation is voluntary. Your identity will remain confidential in all references to your transcript and your involvement in this project, if you so choose. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time. If you choose to do so, data collected to the point of withdrawal will be erased, but your withdrawal will in no way affect your program. Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to provide your name, age, gender, address, contact number, and personal e-mail address.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please put a check mark on the corresponding line(s) that grants me your permission to:

I grant permission to be audio taped: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym: _____ Yes: ___ No: ___

You may quote me and use my name: Yes: ___ No: ___

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

No foreseeable harm should come to you as a result of your participation in this research. As a voluntary activity, you will not receive any payment.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

No one except the researchers will be allowed to hear the focus group discussion tape. The focus group discussion tapes and transcripts are kept in a locked cabinet only accessible by the researchers. The anonymous data will be stored on a computer for three years, at which time, it will be permanently erased. The researchers are not affiliated with Keyano College and no focus group discussion data will be shared with the College.

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Dr. Shibao Guo
Werklund School of Education
University of Calgary

Tel:

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact an Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Date: June 3, 2015

Project Name: Immigration in rural Alberta: Navigating and negotiating processes of credentialing and re-credentialing among adult immigrants in the trades

Primary Investigator: Dr. Shibao Guo

Co-investigator: Mr. Douglas R. Ross

These questions represent suggested general topic areas of questioning and are subject to change according to the background of each participant and to facilitate group discussion.

1. Looking back, how did you feel about your decision to immigrate to Canada?

2. What kind of effect did immigrating to Canada have? Who was affected?

3. What did you think when you discovered a mismatch between your assessed skills based on migration policy and the labour market in Canada?

4. How do you feel about the transition process for migrants?

5. What did you think about when you first realized you needed to change your career pathway?

6. When it comes to your experiences, what are your thoughts about the relationship between education and the labour market?

7. How do you feel about training and hiring processes in Canada?

8. When do you use your social network? Give an example.

9. What do you think are the key supports to help migrants with the transition process?