

Running head: Post Graduate Work Permit and International Students in Canada

**A Sociological Review of the Post Graduate Work Permit Program as a Pathway to  
Permanent Residency for International Students in Canada**

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Human Kinetics

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**List of Acronyms**

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| AUCC  | Association of Universities and Colleges Canada  |
| CIC   | Citizenship and Immigration Canada   |
| CBIE  | Canadian Bureau of International Education   |
| DFATD | Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development   |
| GAC   | Global Affairs Canada (Used interchangeably with DFATD as per department's name changed after Canada's 2015 federal elections)                   |
| IRCC  | Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (Used interchangeably with CIC as per department's name change after Canada's 2015 federal election) |
| PGWPP | Post Graduate Work Permit Program  |
| PGWP  | Post Graduate Work Permit  |

### **Definition of key terms**

**International Student (Canada):** In the Canadian context, an international student is a person who is authorized by a study permit to engage in studies in Canada (Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, SOR/2002-227).

**Permanent Resident (Canada):** A permanent resident is someone who has been given permanent resident status by immigrating to Canada but, is not a Canadian citizen. Permanent residents are citizens of other countries. A person in Canada temporarily, like a student or foreign worker, is not a permanent resident (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2017).

### **Acknowledgements**

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### **Abstract**

This project is a multifaceted analysis of the Post Graduate Work Permit Program (PGWPP), a temporary work permit that allows international students to live and work in Canada following graduation. This dissertation explores a) the program's development throughout the years, b) the lived experiences and the perceptions of the students who used the program for transitioning to permanent residency and, c) an art-based autoethnographic introspection about this transition.

The research question focuses on how the PGWPP, which provides the government with economic projections regarding student migration, influences the social and economic integration of international students/graduates. This dissertation consists of three self-containing articles all of which employ mobilities paradigm to examine the following secondary questions and purposes: a) Article 1 is an archaeological review of the development of the program that assesses how well the program meets its objective to settle international graduates as successful future permanent residents, b) Article 2 investigates international graduates' experiences and perspectives about their transition to permanent residency via the PGWPP, c) Article 3 investigates the impacts of migratory-related difficulties among international students on their trajectory as immigrants.

Each article approaches the PGWPP from a different methodological angle to provide a comprehensive analysis of the program that ultimately considers the wellness of international students in their pathways to Canadian residency.

## **Chapter1: Introduction**

This doctoral project provides a multi-faceted outlook of Canada's Post Graduate Work Permit Program (PGWPP), a temporary work permit that allows international students to stay and, find work as well as immigrate in Canada following graduation (Citizenship Immigration Canada, [CIC], 2017a). This topic was inspired by the global expansion of temporary and permanent mobilities (Urry, 2007), as well as the ever-increasing importance of international education as a prominent economic immigration strategy in Canada (Department of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Development [DFATD], 2012). This research takes place under the umbrella of the Mobilities Paradigm (Urry, 2007) where the notion of [im]mobilities addresses the discriminatory elements embedded in the lived experiences of migrants under existing immigration policies and programs. The project examines the ways in which these factors relate to the institutional, personal and idealistic manifestations of being on the move (Fortier, 2014; Urry, 2007). This implies that the literal act of moving, as well as the institutional elements that restrict it, are perceived as fundamentals to this research and serve as conceptual tools when investigating the individual transformation of experiences and lives through immigration.

Over the past decades, the mobility of international students has increasingly become centralized around immigration worldwide; at the global scale, the number of international students has risen from 0.8 million in 1975 to 4.5 million in 2012, a fivefold increase (Canadian Bureau for International Education [CBIE], 2016; Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada [AUCC], 2014). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) predicts that there will be more than 7 million students studying outside of their home country by 2020 (Becker & Kostler, 2012; Brooks & Waters, 2013; Robertson, 2011; The British Council, 2012 & 2013). Not all students studying abroad are engaged in post-secondary education. Yet, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates

that the number of post-secondary students enrolled abroad will grow from 3.7 million in 2009 to 6.4 million by 2025 (OECD, 2014).

The increase in the number of international students itself is influenced by the global trends of South to North mobility and skilled migration (Brooks & Waters, 2013). This trend appears to have encouraged the Canadian government to improve its status and reputation as one of the top destinations for international students (OECD, 2015). Currently, Canada is the 4th most popular country for incoming international students (OECD, 2017). Global Affairs Canada (GAC) introduced Canada's International Education Strategy (IE Strategy) in 2012 and counts for its success by attempting to make Canada's rank first in the global competition for talent (DFATD, 2012) and increasing the number of international students to up to 450,000 by 2022 (Advisory Panel on Canada's IE Strategy, 2012).

At the time of drafting the IE Strategy, Canada was the seventh most popular destination for international students worldwide. In 2017, Canada seemed to be ahead of its projections with 494,525 international students at all levels. In fact, the number of international students rose 92% between 2008 and 2015 with 184,171 students in 2008 and 353,570 in 2015. The increase leaped again by 119% between 2010 and 2017. According to Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC, the former CIC) report in CBIE's 2017 conference, the number of international students between autumn 2016 and autumn 2017 brought the total number of full- and part-time overseas university students in the country to 192,000. At the same time-period, 268,631 international students (including non-university students) entered Canada (*The Pie News*, 2017). The total number of study permit holders in Canada as of 31 December 2016 was 414,946, which represented an 18% increase from 2015 (351, 330 students). In 2014, Canada derived \$11.4 billion from international student expenditures, including tuition and living expenses (GAC,

2016). This data highlights the importance of conducting an analysis and close examination of international students' presence and pathways in Canada.

The above-mentioned skilled migration trend has created an indispensable connection between international mobility of students and immigration in immigrant accepting countries, such as Canada, who often portray student migrants as economically-striving (Bouajram, 2015; Brooks & Waters, 2013; Chira, 2016, 2013; Gribble & Blackmore, 2012; Kelly, 2012). Academic institutions pursue their national government's direction and seek to attract students from around the world to make the best of what will become the nation's skilled work force, as well as educated future immigrants (Bouajram, 2013; Brooks & Waters, 2013; Chira, 2016, 2013; Gribble & Blackmore, 2012; Kelly, 2012). This presumption is central to the Canadian government's decision to assist with international students' transition to permanent residency status. One of the facilitating programs for the immigration of international graduates is the PGWPP, which was established in 2008. The current PGWPP is essentially the introduction of a more flexible permit that prior to 2003 allowed international students to remain in Canada. The permits were often very limited in time and employment conditions. PGWPP made it categorically simpler for international graduates (former international students) to stay in Canada following their studies for up to three years, without requiring them to be employed (Immigration and Citizenship Canada, 2016).

Many formal statements, including the annual reports from the CBIE, insist that the tremendous increase in the number of incoming international students from 2008 demonstrated the impact of the PGWPP. CBIE says that 50 to 60% of the international students in Canada apply for a PGWP (CBIE, 2016). The organization's survey shows that 51% of the international students who resided in Canada considered staying in Canada as one of the objectives that has encouraged

their mobility for coming to Canada (CBIE, 2017b). This rate was recorded at 71% in Chira's 2016 study on international students in the Atlantic region. Therefore, the PGWPP is said to have made immigration even more attractive for international students (Chiose, 2016; OECD, 2014, p. 348). The PGWPP has received multiple evaluations from immigration commentators, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Canadian politicians (CIC Report, 2012; Grubel, 2016; Kunin, 2012). Canadian officials often call the program as a success and insist that the criteria for the eligibility of immigrating international students should come with many restrictions to prove their potential for economic contribution (Chamber Report, 2016).

Considering the dynamic of student migration in the past decades, there has also been an escalation in the number of academic studies that investigate student migration in Canada. Many studies in the past few years have looked into the social, economic and migratory concerns of international students who study or/and immigrate in Canada (e.g. Andrade, 2006; Grubel, 2016; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). These studies often address students' migratory issues drawing on the economic framework of the state (Hou & Bonikowska, 2015), or that of immigration and rights (Chira, 2016). This research specifically focuses on the sociological implications and the outcomes of the PGWPP, such as the discourse and policies foundational to the program, the impact and lived experiences of being a temporary resident and international students' social trajectories.

This dissertation is an article-based project and consists of three articles, each of which employ different theoretical and methodological strategies for exploring international graduates' pathways to residency through the PGWPP. It begins by assessing the program through an archaeological analysis in chapter Two via a Foucauldian theoretical lens of governmentality (Foucault, 1984). Chapter Three employs in-depth semi-structured interviews with international graduates who have benefited from the PGWPP and have immigrated or, intend to permanently

reside in Canada. This chapter highlights the students' ability in detaching themselves from the limbo of their immigration application, despite its effect on their daily lives, and their proactive persuasion of their mobility-oriented goals in Canada. Chapter Four elaborates on the intensity and endurance of temporary living conditions through an art-based autoethnography.

This introductory chapter begins with a review of the relevant literature on international students mobilities in general, as well as within Canada, while discussing the issues surrounding their immigration. This section also highlights trends, numbers and a description of the PGWPP. After presenting the general theoretical framework informing this research, a more thorough description of the project is provided, as well as explaining the 3 articles with their respective methodologies and research design.

## **Review of Literature**

### **International Education as an Issue of Migration**

Over the past decades, international mobility of students has presented itself as a major economic and political component within national governments' and academic institutions' planning and programs (AUCC, 2011; CBIE, 2014b; The British Council, 2013; The New School, 2012). In these programs, knowledge is introduced both as a constitutive and a derivative of transformational strategy among national governments, academic institutions and international organizations (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Collini, 2012; Marginson, 2007; Salmi, 2003). Through this strategy, the agenda of education is to promote internationalization and fulfilling the global practice of competing for talent, as well as portraying the country as a favorite destination for study (Wildavsky, 2012). Simultaneously, international students are considered to be a generation of hyper mobile individuals who capitalize on their international credentials and increase their chances of success in the global neoliberal market (Brooks & Waters, 2013).

Arguably, the internationalization of education programs roots back into the functions of the market in the so-called neoliberal economy where a nation's progress is measured against other nations on international scales (Unterhalter & Carpentier, 2010; Harvey, 2005). Nation-states compete with one another, and in this competition, they expand their nationally confined forms of production and strive for furthering growth and capital accumulation by shifting towards diverse forms of capital; especially by off-shoring labour resources (Giddens, 2002; Harvey, 2013; Sassen, 2002). Outsourcing the labour force, especially in the post WWII period, has led to loosening immigration policies, as well as an increase in labour migration from the Global South to the Global North (Harvey, 2013, 2015; Messay, 2015). The market-oriented logic behind furthering migration encouraged the states to select immigrants with language skills, local education and lived experience in the country so that their mobility will put less of a burden on the state (Banting, 2014; Harvey, 2013, 2015; Unterhalter & Carpentier, 2011); this shifted the scope of international education from developmental programs to a bedrock for future migration strategies. Since the 1980s, there has been a substantial shift in immigrant accepting countries, such as U.K, U.S., Australia and Canada, toward the higher education sector when attracting the young and the educated "workers" of the world (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Picot, Fou & Coulombe, 2007; Robertson & Runganaikaloo, 2014). This means international student mobility programs and advocacies present mobile students as an apparatus for the growth of national human capital, as well as part of the global elite (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Reitz, 2005). Concurrently, there are evidently far more students coming to the Global North from the South than the other way around, which shows that student mobility tends to follow the same pattern for global labour migration and essentially presents student mobility as a growing faction of

migration studies (Anderson, 2013; Banting, 2014; Brooks & Waters, 2013; Lowell & Avato, 2014; Mas, 2016; Winter, 2014).

National governments reinforce the effort of attracting those who they refer to as the world's "top talents" and the "best minds" through academic institutions (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Collini, 2012; Wildavsky, 2012; World Bank, 2014). This has made universities increasingly centralized in international trade (Breton, 2013; Collini, 2012; Wildavsky, 2012). Western Universities particularly accommodate OECD's annual ranking (which takes place through Programme for International Student Assessment, [PISA]) by going beyond national agendas and by continuously reinvigorating their programs (or become internationalized) for attracting more talented students from around the globe (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999).

The perceived [economic] benefits of attracting international students and the prospect of retaining them as immigrants/permanent residents have led some OECD countries to ease their immigration policies so as to encourage the temporary or permanent immigration of international students (Brooks & Waters, 2013; OECD, 2015, 2014; Pike, 2012; Moltaji, 2014). The UK, U.S., Australia and Canada all have introduced mobile students as better future migrants/residents and essentially base their competition for work force on attracting them (Adey, 2006; Fortier, 2014; Giddens, 2002; Messay, 1990).

Student mobility is one of the many forms of human mobilities. Juno and Usher (2008) describe student mobility as an academic mobility, which takes place within a student's program of study in post-secondary education. The length of mobility can range from a semester to the full program of study and beyond. The geographical distance of mobility could also vary from moving away from one's parents' home in order to study within a country, province or state, to

moving across national borders to another country (Juno & Usher, 2008). This project is specifically focused on the international mobility of students studying in Canada, those who are enrolled full-time in university or college programs that entitles them to the PGWPP following their studies. This is the type of student mobility that is concentrated around the immigration discourse (AUCC, 2014; Institute of International Education [IIE], 2013).

### **Post-Graduate Migration in Canada**

As mentioned above, Canada ranks fourth among the top ten destinations for international students (CBIE, 2017a). At this point, the country sees itself a few steps behind the U.S., UK and Australia in this global competition for attracting top talent. Notably, there are strong speculations, which indicate that in 2016 and 2017 there has been an incredible increase in the number of incoming international students. It is said this presumed hike may be due to Brexit in the UK (CBIE, 2016), as well as the results of the 2016 U.S. elections, and that foreign students around the world are now looking to Canada for its tolerant and inclusive reputation as their best choice more than they did before (CBIE, 2016; Todd, 2018). Nonetheless, even with the formal 2016 statistics, with about 11% of campus populations made up of international students (which counts for about 200,000, that would be more than half of the total international students), international education is a strategic component of the Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan introduced in 2012 (DFATD, 2012, 2014).

Similar to many pioneering states that have advanced the nexus of international education and student migration (Robertson, 2014), Canada views international students as future immigrants and citizens (CBIE, 2016; Fortier, 2014). By expanding internationalization of universities and promoting the benefits of staying in Canada following graduation, the country is seeking a prospect for higher national economic gains (Lu & Hou, 2015; Scott, Safdar,

Trilokekar & El Masri, 2015), as well as fulfilling the host countries' demographic needs (van Huystee, 2011).

Retention of international graduates is such an important priority in Canada's immigration agenda that the current minister of immigration himself has been promoting pathways to permanent residency for foreign students in his recent visits to African countries (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation [CBC], 2017). Both former immigration ministers have made statements, which affirmed the country's persuasive attitude aiming to improve its status and reputation as one of the top destinations for international students as well (CBIE, 2015). To these officials, according to 'existing data' and 'based on evidence', a higher level of language proficiency and Canadian degrees and diplomas helps with the economic prosperity of these immigrants (Grubel, 2012; Mas, 2016).

Canada's IE Strategy was first drafted during the most recent conservative government (DFATD, 2014) and aimed at making Canada a world leader in international education by doubling the number of international students from its 2012 mark of 275,000 by 2022 (DFATD, 2012). While the above-mentioned recent flow of international students (CBIE, 2017b; Todd, 2018) seems to have led to achieving these numbers earlier than expected, this strategy does not take for granted that the biggest portion of the international education fiscal engine comes from the students' expenditures on tuition and living essentials while they are attending school. This IE Strategy portrays international students as the customers of the higher education industry where their economic contribution is more prominently emphasized than any likely academic or social contribution (Breton, 2003; Brooks & Waters, 2013; Collini, 2012). Notwithstanding, it emphasizes that the plan is to reap the benefits of long-term international students who provide a highly qualified and skilled work force (DFATD, 2014).

There are many studies that draw on DFATD's IE Strategy and provide an ultimate support for internationalization in Canadian institutions (CBIE, 2015, 2016; DFATD, 2014; Kunin, 2012). These texts perceive the retention of international graduates as the supreme scenario for reassuring Canada's nobility both in competition for attracting top talent, and for securing the fulfilment of demographic objectives of immigration through a safe and economically sensible fashion. There is, in other words, a systematic faith in international students' potential for higher income attainment over time (OECD, 2014, p. 5; Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008; Wildawsky, 2012). The presumption underlying this potential seems to be based on the stated fact that by having spent a number of years on campus and among Canadian communities, as well as by being fluent in one of the official languages, international students will have a higher likelihood of finding their way inside the Canadian job market (CBC, 2012; CIC, 2012b; Wyld, 2012).

The studies that present support for increasing the number of international students seem to idealize the more performative side of international education such that they often overlook the deeper and practical questions regarding any existing evidence for the presumed long-term success of internationalization of education and the consequent promoted migration flow. For example, when the DFATD drafted its IE Strategy in 2012 (revised in 2014), there was an undeniably substantial emphasis on the economic benefits of educational export; this report heavily focused on the 8-billion-dollar immediate contribution of international students while projecting IE Strategy as a long term economic action that yields a solution to Canada's labour and demographic shortage through long-term students. Yet it does not describe how the long-term students will help advance the Canadian economy after their studies are finished, nor does it define what makes a long-term student. At the time that this report came out, which only

included the mentioned immediate tuition expenditures, any data that could explain the economic outcomes of the retention of international students other than. This revenue has risen to \$11.8 billion in 2016.

In 2015, a longitudinal study by StatCan researchers specifically focused on the economic outcomes of student migration. This study clarified that the income levels of international students who become permanent residents in Canada were not significantly higher than any other groups of immigrants, even a decade following their entering the country (Hou & Lu, 2015). This report is of significance in this context because it is a follow-up and a counter-argument to a set of presumed benefits of internationalization of universities, which, up until this point, have been central to student immigration discourse.

Some higher education reports took the above-mentioned longitudinal StatCan study as a justification for declaring post-graduate migration dynamic as problematic. A report in the Vancouver Sun, for example, pointed to fake marriages among Indian international students as a way of coming to Canada and possibly fast tracking to citizenship (Todd, 2017). Among these critiques, some draw attention to the programs and avenues that allow for international students to remain in Canada (e.g. Chiose, 2016, who wrote about the PGWPP) and encouraged the government to review its settlement programs as soon as possible by harnessing retention of only those with higher potential – or existing capital (Chamber of Commerce, 2016). The essence of their critique is directed at the PGWP, the 3-year permit, which they believe has led to a 92% increase in the number of international students up to 2015 (CBIE, 2016).

### **Post Graduate Work Permit Program**

Despite the long history of incoming students in Canada from the post WWII era (e.g. Library of Parliament, 1953), it was just before the 1990s that the federal government began to

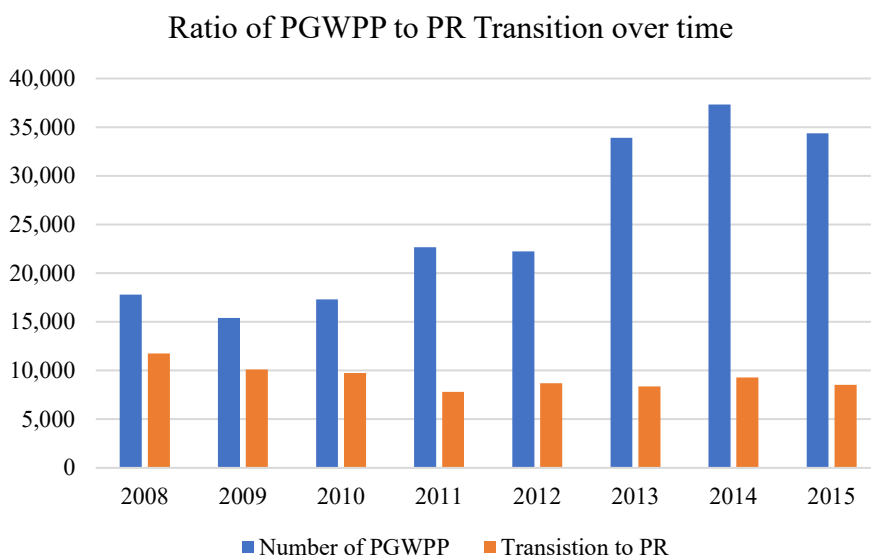
prioritize the recruitment of a highly skilled work force through higher retention of international students as immigrants (CIC, 1999). Since the early 2000s, the government has developed specific programs, such as the PGWPP, to encourage international students to transition to permanent residency status immediately following graduation (CIC, 2016, 2008a).

The PGWPP, and the possibility of staying in Canada for more than one year after graduation for international students, was first introduced as a pilot project in the Prairies and then the Maritimes in 2003. Prior to that, international students were required to leave the country following graduation, and in case they intended to pursue permanent residency they would wait for the result of their immigration application from abroad. They could transition to worker status upon finding a job, however the process was not regulated. This [more] flexible post-graduation work permit was launched as a national project in 2005 (CIC Archives, 2008). At this stage, international graduates were required to be employed in a field related job in order to obtain a post-graduation work permit. It was in 2008 that considerations for more flexibility of the program lead to looser requirements for post-graduation work permits. From then onwards international students could obtain the permit regardless of their employment status. Currently, whether an international student wants to only stay in Canada following graduation, or intends to immigrate to Canada (CIC, 2016, 2012), it is essential for them to obtain a PGWPP.

In 2008, there were 17,815 international graduates who obtained a PGWP. In that year, there were also 11, 575 international graduates who transitioned to permanent residency status. The number of issued PGWPs has risen steadily since 2009 and reached 34,375 in 2015 (CBIE, 2016). Yet the transition rate to permanent residency does not seem to have risen proportionately (See Figure 1.); in 2015 there were only 8,535 international graduates who transitioned to permanent residency status (CBIE, 2016). The available information on the number of

international students who become permanent residents is taken from the tracking those permanent residents who enter Canada with study permit back to their entry status (Lou & Hou, 2015). There are however no tracking data that show how many of the issued PGWPs each year lead to a permanent residency or what happens to those cases that do not end up permanent residency status. There has also been an 8% decrease in this transition from 2014 to 2015 which, especially if considered proportionately to each year’s increase rate in PGWPP uptake, can indicate the presence of certain conditions that has discouraged international students from obtaining the permit.

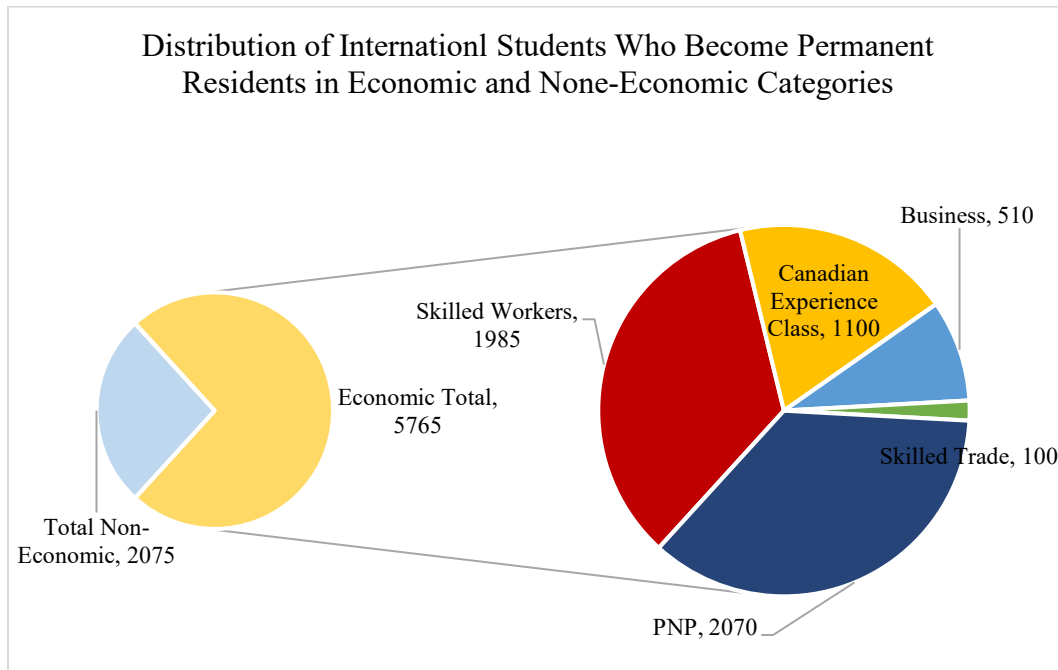
Figure 1: Ratio of PGWPP to PR transition among international graduates over time. Source: CBIE 2016



Another notable detail from the available data in the CBIE’ 2016 report is that among those who transitioned to permanent residency in 2015, only 5,825 were economic immigrants (See Figure 2.). In Canada, economic classes of immigration consist of those candidates who settle based on their human capital and points they receive on the Express Entry system, Canada’s main immigrant selection online tool (CIC, 2017c). These classes include the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), the Quebec Skilled Worker class, the Provincial Nominee

Programs (PNP), the Canadian Experience Class (CEC), Skilled Trades and Live-In Caregivers. Non-economic categories include Family Class, Protected Persons and Humanitarian and Compassionate Public Policy (CBIE, 2016; Government of Canada Archives, 2011; Government of Canada, 2001). This technically means the number of international students who became permanent residents through their credentials, and based on their program and Gross Domestic Product, attributions that lead into a presumed potential (or lack thereof) for contributing to the national economy, is a small portion of the total number of international students in a given year. From the requirements of PNPs the provincial and territorial nominees do not need to be employed at the time they apply for permanent residency through this category; the applicant, however, will receive far more points in case they have a field related job. Nonetheless, being a provincial nominee in essence indicates the person's potential for contributing to the province's economy even if they are not working at the time of the application.

Figure 2: Economic versus non-economic immigration among international graduates



It is not surprising that critics of the PGWPP are convinced that the permit plays a role in creating low wage labour. While these critiques do not explain how a permission to work can lead international graduates to take on jobs in unrelated fields to their expertise, it appears that not many the PGWPP holders are likely to take jobs, as their immigration category suggests, to begin with. This might be partly the reason why after 10 years of obtaining a study permit, international graduate’s income on average is not any higher than other immigrants; not many may end up working in their first transitioning years. On top of that, research on post-graduate immigrants has already demonstrated that this mobility might not be economically and socially as feasible as anticipated; the most salient economic impact of international education comes from their initial mobility and tuition expenditures, [seemingly] not from what they do while becoming immigrants (Hou & Bonikowska, 2015; Hou & Lu, 2015).

Over the past few years, sociological studies on student migration have sought to understand the shortcomings of post-graduate migration, including the suggested under-

employment of international graduates who transition to permanent residency status (Chira, 2016, 2013; Kelova, 2016; Scott et al., 2015). These studies consist of qualitative analyses that elaborate on social, cultural and economic issues among international students who stay in Canada to immigrate by tapping into their narratives (Andrade, 2006; Smith & Khawja, 2011), and often provide correctional approaches that seek to fix the flaws within the system. There is a strong suggestion that systemic issues, such as social isolation (Smith & Khawja, 2011) and existing racism and discrimination against minorities (Henry & Tator, 2009), might have contributed to the less-than-ideal post-graduate migration experience. These studies take the route of immigration narratives that view migrants as often-impooverished and disadvantaged and whose mobility is a means for betterment of their lifestyles. Such a perspective likely fails to address the transnational capitalist imagery that the government seems to have built around international students. More importantly, existing studies do not specifically point out how the PGWPP, as the major transitioning pathway to permanent residency for international students, can help international graduates fulfil not only the government of Canada's prospect for them, but also achieve their own goals and the reasons for their mobility, which must have introduced them to Canada in the first place.

Additionally, unlike general migration schemes that employ in-depth analysis and spatial narratives of mobile individuals (e.g. Hron, 2009), work around post-graduate migration, despite all of its overlapping elements with migration as a whole, continues to be devoid of expressive and unconventional methods and studies. Critics of the PGWPP, for instance, are mainly concerned with tightening the agenda of admission of international graduates as immigrants more than the social experiences of post-graduate migrants as individuals, such as the impact of the society on them and their viewpoints toward their new place of residence. On the other hand,

migration and post-graduate migration studies that have a more critical outlook, link the hardships of migration with tangible social issues, such as isolation, absence of fluency in the host country's language and discrimination (Belkhdja, 2006; Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Will, 2016). These studies focus on recommending the development of programs that could help refine international graduates' skills as a means for their success in the host country. This is while student mobility, similar to any other form of mobility, deals with inherent inequalities. A singular and linear contrasting of mobile students' economic issues with the government's perspective that has estimated an unproblematic integration for them does not seem to address the depth of their realities; the imbedded inequalities in immigration programs are induced by the states and not in the people who use the programs. And those obstacles and inequalities need introspective accounts and analysis rather than brushing them over as being mere hurdles to the objectifying money-making scheme of a neoliberal market.

The PGWPP is especially promoted as a flexible program that should benefit the permit holder, but there has been barely any expansions to the limitations of the permit. A PGWP holder, for instance, requires a study permit to register to another degree program, but the very possibility of taking on formal studies are not widely known among permit holders. More importantly, immigration settlement services do not have the funding and are not permitted to provide settlement services for PGWPP holders (CBIE, 2016). This means that international students are not only restricted in accessing settlement services while they are attending university, due to the restraints of Bill C-24, and international offices are not permitted to provide immigration/visa/permit application for them unless they hire trained officials from CBIE's International Students and Immigration Education Program (ISIEP) program (CBIE, 2017a). Once they graduate and obtain a PGWP, the onus is on them to figure out immigration

regulations that applies to them, and to fulfil their professional goals, which are expected to resonate with the government's objectives, in achieving employment and desirable socio-economic status. Meanwhile, PGWP holders are expected to carve their own networks and convert their credentials to economic capital, while landed immigrants have access to free language services and employment consultation that connects them with employers who hire newcomers. It's as if the PGWP holder, in the absence of any kind of assistance, has been set up to fail before even starting.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Mobilities Paradigm**

An investigation of post-graduate migration requires a comprehensive theoretical lens that encompasses the complexities of mobile lives (Quayson, 2015; Urry, 2007). Student mobility studies often employ the conventional migration approach in which there exists an assumption about a mobile world where mobility is the goal, and research attempts to reinforce notions of fluidity, accessibility and eventual demand equality in accessing mobility for those who are deprived of it (Brooks & Waters, 2013). Such research seeks to reinvigorate the desirable outcomes of mobility through immigration policies, or through encouraging the drafting of policies with the best presumed economic and social outcomes. Notably, the enforcement of economic orientation in mobility regulations is often not just for the sake of helping the newcomer/mobile population, but for advancing their prosperity as an economic apparatus for the nation-state. In other words, mobility regulations are employed as forms of interrogation and screening regulations that are in essence imperial, discriminatory, and fetishize mobility as capital (Sheller, 2014, Urry, 2007 & 2016).

This project employs Urry's mobilities paradigm (Urry, 2007) as an overarching theme in all of the chapters. Mobilities Paradigm centralizes mobility as its criteria for the level of subjectivity, social positioning and personal achievements. In Urry's view, people are not stratified in the same way as the classical social class theories once assumed. Rather, the stratification of people in the mobile world is based on their access to activities, values and goods (Urry, 2007, p.187). This paradigm is poignant in stating that the structures of mobility often create [im]mobilities through the very attempts to contain mobility and to regulate the mobility of the most qualified; however, the paradigm is not only up against these inequalities as in a rights or advocacy perspective. It rather takes into account that in a world that fetishizes mobility the same way it fetishizes commodity, mobility becomes a form of capital, and those with less access to mobility become – or are considered - marginalized. National states advocate for mobility but this advocacy is applied only to those forms of mobilities that impose the least perceived economic risks to the state. In analyzing such contexts, a mobilities paradigm can help cohering the social spaces in which mobility itself becomes a stratifying agent that assigns its benefits to certain activities, such as tourism and the travels of North to South expats and otherwise, is accompanied by spatial restrictions. In a project as such, mobility does not only refer to the physical act of mobility, but also the social inequalities that are put forward for those who are partially/less mobile or immobile.

The value of mobility and what perpetuates fetishizing mobility in today's world is its perceived and direct relation to freedom of access. The increased scale and ease of physical mobility has made accessing the services and rights that come with membership in societies scattered, decentralized from citizens to various groups of people. In other words, mobility itself is not a noble notion. What distinguishes today's mobile world, one which requires the

examination of mobilities through a mobilities paradigm, is that the increase in mobilities and in the variety of travelling and residencies types, have hollowed the concept of citizenship.

Mobility and migration research suggest that the states are now facing a [at the least] notional obligation to extend their membership rights and services to those who they recognize as a valid traveller, i.e. future immigrant or citizen.

The creation of programs, such as the PGWPP, is an example of this extension of rights; the foreign student can remain in Canada and move about relatively freely, even without a job, for up to 3 years; an access that seemed impossible before 2000s without a solid job offer and even then, only for the length of one's contract (Government of Canada Archives, 2001). For those who obtain the permit to immigrate, the development of the PGWPP seems to aim at allowing access to membership into Canadian society for international graduates while they are fulfilling the state's time and documentation criteria to become immigrants. But the PGWPP is no exception to other mobility regulations, and the program perpetuates certain inequalities in access, immobilities and the temporary conditions that can go unattended by the grand scheme of its intended execution and description.

Mobilities paradigm asserts that more than ever, the world is on the move, and mobilities are central to lives, societies, institutions (Sheller & Urry 2006). The mobilities at work in international student migration places emphasises on the complex patterns and the interconnectivity enabled and constrained by policies, sensed through migrating identities and experienced through critical introspection. Inquiry about mobility should take into account a wider range of elements other than the prominent economic objectives that exist in migration strategies and programs. This implies that the literal act of moving and the elements that restrict it should be taken as the substance of research and should be considered as tools for

contemplating the transformation of experiences, cultures and lives, both on an individual and institutional level (Fortier, 2014; Urry, 2007). The current project places an emphasis on the transformation of experiences, both on an individual and an institutional level, in relation to mobilities (Elliott & Urry, 2007; Kurki, 2014; Sheller, 2004). It therefore, has selected three different theories and three different methodologies to suit the bases of a mobilities-oriented research and to approach the PGWPP from different angles.

### **This Project**

The purpose of this study is to provide a multifaceted analysis of international graduates' pathways to Canadian residency through the PGWPP. This work explores the implementation and procedural changes of the PGWPP through an archaeological review, the lived experiences of former international students, their perceptions of the PGWPP while transitioning to permanent residency and, the art-based autoethnographic introspection of a program holder. All of the mentioned studies converge around the fact that policies, related to restrictions within immigration programs, as well as expectations, ways of coping, or feelings of hopelessness, lead into perpetuating a condition of temporariness for the immigrant applicants.

The project was established, methodologically and theoretically, in a way that reflects its compliance with the mobilities turn in social sciences from the 2000s, as this research is directed by post-disciplinary modes of inquiry (Pink, 2013; Urry, 2007). Conducting research under mobilities perspective entails employing methodologies and theoretical perspectives through the use of non-linear, non-positivist modes. Urry introduced the Mobilities Paradigm as a response to an increasing need for connecting the analysis of mobility with the construction of people's identities as they move, which are undoubtedly touched, shaped and reshaped by their various aspects of their lives and their [im]mobilities (Urry, 2007, 2000; Brooks & Waters, 2013;

Robinson, 2013). In this work, the mobilities highlight the complex sensory and non-linear experiences of [im]mobilities as expressed by post graduate migrants while going through PGWPP and immigration process. The project addresses those elements of the PGWPP that are actually contrary to the settlement objectives of the program.

Whether the PGWPP helps with social and economic integration of international students/graduates has been discussed elsewhere (Fou & Ho, 2015; Grubel, 2016). For this study, however, what is at stake is the contrast between the objectives of the program and the impact that it has on the lived experience of immigrating as an international student in Canada. A review of the development of the program assesses its consistency with its objectives in settling international graduates as successful future permanent residents. The secondary research questions and purposes of each article are as follows: In what context and grounded in which discourses was the PGWPP created? Why and how did the PGWPP change through the years? Do international graduates mirror or agree with the state's discourse on their role in advancing the country's economy? Has the program encouraged them to immigrate in Canada? How do migratory related difficulties among international students, as evidently pointed out in the literature, take place and affect the trajectory of the student migrant? How do the students perceive and articulate their experience with the PGWPP? What are the deep feelings associated with being an international student aspiring to Canadian residency? As mentioned, this research project consists of three self-contained articles that explore the PGWPP and its role in assisting international graduates' settlement in Canada. Each article approaches PGWPP from a specific angle to provide a comprehensive analysis of the program, and to answer each sub-question with the view to providing a bigger picture of the role of PGWPP. Below is a brief review of the

upcoming chapters, contextualized in the importance of international education, its direct relation to student migration in Canada, and with situating PGWPP in this field.

## **Chapter Two**

Chapter Two provides an archaeology of the PGWPP and discusses the latest changes that have taken place regarding student migration, from prior to the establishment of the program and particularly between 2008 and the present time. It begins by discussing the program from an economic perspective and marks its development as an extension to the country's shift toward skilled migration. Following a thorough review of the history and processes that led into the establishment of PGWPP at the national level, the chapter sheds light on the hasty changes that have taken place to the program over the past few years. The chapter notes that these changes were made in response to recent findings about the income trajectory of international graduates in the past decade and, aimed to restrict the criteria for the settlement of post-graduate migrants. The heightened restrictions are central in the chapter's argument that these alterations lead to temporariness among post-graduate migrants, likely prolonging their attempts at achieving their prospected economic integration even further. The goal of any further restrictions that might follow, according to some critiques, is to assure higher income among PGWPP holders and to ensure retention of international graduates with the highest human capital. The chapter brings to attention that the induced temporariness, as a result of these changes, has detrimental effects on immigrants' sense of stability and therefore deters their integration. The article deciphers the program through a timeline with specific expansions during the years between 2008 - 2015 in order to demonstrate what the subtle and explicit impacts of the changes to the program have meant for post-graduate migrants as temporary residents.

This article employs Foucauldian governmentality (Foucault, 1984) as its main theoretical perspective. In Foucauldian governmentality, governance is a strategy, process,

procedure or program for controlling, regulating or managing any known object at a local, organizational or global level (Lemke, 2011, p. 34). Accordingly, the article reviews the PGWPP as a technology of power (Faubion, 2000), with the goal of understanding how temporariness is induced, defined as immigrant applicants' lack of access to mobilities and rights that are associated with permanent residency and citizenship (Winter, 2014), and affect their trajectory in settlement.

The chapter uses Foucault's archaeological analysis to provide an in-depth inquiry into the development of the program and binds the chapter with an outlook that critiques the state discourse from a mobilities perspective. This archaeological review compares the formations of the program in different periods or snapshots in time (Prado, 1995). Understanding the discourse around the different modes that the programs has been through serves the purpose of understanding how this system, that constitutes international students as future immigrants, has developed into what it actually is currently. The research material for this archaeological review was pulled from academic sociology and public search engines in the websites of government departments and archives, as well as various organizations, such as the Canadian Bureau of International Education.

Given the temporary/permanent divide that seems to have become an integral part of immigration in Canada in general (Rajkumar, Berkowitz, Vosko, Preston & Latham, 2012), and in the conditions of the PGWPP – as the article reviews - in particular, this analysis suggests that there is a likely constitution of a *permanently temporary* imagery of student migrants. This temporariness appears to be a fundamental issue, which makes the prospect and expectation of the economic integration of international graduates less reasonable. The chapter makes note of

other studies that affirm international graduates are gradually integrating into the job market, perhaps just not as quickly as the government had projected.

### **Chapter Three**

The third chapter of this dissertation examines international graduate's perspectives regarding transitioning to permanent residents via the PGWPP through in-depth semi structured interviews. How do they reflect upon the state's discourse and the role the program plays in encouraging immigration in Canada? What are their opinions about the program? What is their take on the ways in which the PGWPP has influenced their mobile life trajectory? In order to answer these questions, the third chapter, remains devoted to exploring international graduates' experiences via in-depth semi-structured interviews with seven former international students (international graduates) who obtained a PGWP anytime after 2008, the year that the permit became part of a comprehensive national program in Canada (CIC, 2008a & b). The former international student participants provide insight into the importance of social networks and offer their critique of the bureaucratic shortcomings they faced during their transitioning period. In addition, they critique the resultant immobility, which grasps in the multilateral nature of student migration. This study seeks to highlight their perspectives on PGWPP with a view to illustrating the improvements that, given the objectives of the program, seem plausible yet are overlooked.

The chapter focuses on the importance of desired activities and social relations, as these enable the person to find her social positioning and habitus (Bourdieu, 2001, 1984). The text perceives that habitus is formed continuously for mobile people. The difference that being an international student makes is that mobility places them in a new social map after moving for which they have to strive to find their positioning. Bourdieu's theory of practice is focused on the interaction between the habitus and the social structure and avoids objectification of the individuals as subjects of the state. Therefore, this perspective is specifically chosen for this

article in order to connect, compare and contrast the viewpoints of these post-graduate migrants as individuals with the stated goals of the PGWPP.

In this article, similar to the other two, the Mobilities Paradigm (Urry, 2007) is adopted as an overarching theme and allows for a greater justification of the mobility of international students as individuals with distinct habitus and decision-making capacities through the social space (Costigan, Lehr & Miao, 2015; Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu's concept of habitus helps with the thematic analysis of the participants' experience with the program, which provides insights into whether and how it has impacted their pathway to permanent residency, based on their intentions for achieving desirable outcomes of their mobility, as well as knowledge of self and the host society.

Three main findings are presented in the discussion section of this chapter. The first finding resonates with the government's estimate that claims the PGWPP is a determinant element in international graduates' decision making for staying in Canada and immigrating following graduation (CBIE, 2016). Secondly, their discourse does not suggest that their mobility to Canada follows the linear South to North migration imagined for international students in most of the literature (Brooks & Waters, 2013), nor does it reflect the opportunistic rhetoric of the Canadian government that views them as the best future immigrants. Through analysing the interviews via Bourdieu's concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1984) this chapter demonstrates that following a personal adventure, persuasion of an imagined future is more prevalent among these graduates as opposed to money-making or immigrating in Canada as a trend of migration, and as a way for increasing their employability. The third, and possibly the most important finding of this study, was the bureaucratic burden that the participants encountered during their transitioning with PGWPP and other immigration programs, which was

always accompanied by very weak communication with the CIC. While the participants mentioned that these hardships had not changed their perspective on staying in Canada, they did clarify that it had made them concerned and feel overwhelmed during the period they were subject to these programs.

#### **Chapter Four**

This chapter is an art-based autoethnography that alludes to my own experience transitioning from international graduate to immigrant via PGWPP. This art-based autoethnography focuses on the issue of social suffering through analysing the artwork I created during my transition to permanent residency via the PGWPP. This part of the project draws on the presence and the persistence of migratory adversities, such as experiences of discrimination, financial instabilities, unemployment and under employment among international graduates as a woven thread in the academic and literary writing about migration. The chapter first discusses how, despite studies such as Chira's (2016) and Stein and de Andreotti (2016), the scope of student migration remains devoid of tapping into their suffering with an explorative and in depth approach.

Chapter Four's critique begins by attempting to describe, through examples, how the existing approach toward student migration normalizes the existing migratory difficulties that in result, masks the importance and the intensity of these experiences and, prevents the very persistence of adversities from entering into the literature as valuable information for further exploration of mobile students' expressions.

This work borrows the concept of anomy from Durkheim to better describe the non-conventional signifiers of social suffering that often remains under-represented in academic writing about post-graduate migration. Anomy is the state of de-regulation when a shift has taken place in the social world surrounding the individual so that they cannot position themselves in

their known, familiar and existing spot in the social realm. Having to adjust to the new rules or regulations that they are subject to, and consequently failing in doing so becomes the harbinger of expressions and elaborations on this matter. This text adds depth when examining the relation between mobilities and temporariness and delves into an introspective outlook of a chaotic lived experience as a product of mobility and capitalist signifiers of values.

This chapter uses an alternative mode of inquiry with an art-based autoethnography and draws on existing academic texts that employ such methods for challenging the social discourse around certain subjects (e.g. Buchner [autoethnography], 2017; Mitchell, 2011 [art-based research]; Pink, 2013 [art-based]). With this method, this chapter attempts to shift the attention of those interested in student migration from complementing only the type of information on student migration that portrays this form of mobility as an “everybody wins” (Brooks & Waters, 2013, p. 135) type of situation, to the empirical evidence derived from the lived experience of the participants; one that is closer to a mobility-oriented research and allows for the inclusion of what Urry (2007, p.43) refers to as “things of mobility.”

### **Potential Contributions**

Each article in this study makes potential theoretical and practical contributions to the field of post-graduate migration studies. The second chapter, which employs Foucault’s governmentality, draws attention to the role of the state in creating an imagery of international students. Its concluding critique is in contrast with the existing economic-oriented outlook toward migration that develops long-term income-related expectations and presumptions about student mobility and presents their conditions as infinitely unproblematic and prosperous. The article encourages detailed attention to how the conditions of the program unfold overtime in the field, and the way in which these accounts of unfolding can at times run counter to the “best and

the brightest” imagery of international graduates. By making unpredictable changes to PGWPP, the government induces temporariness among international graduates, a condition that can lead to their less than ideal economic performance overtime.

The third chapter provides an outlook to the particular issues that the interviewees have encountered during their transition to permanent residency via PGWPP: the first notable issue is that four out of eight of those interviewed experienced inaccurate assessments of their visas and permits at some point during their studies or transition; two had their immigration application rejected due to CIC’s mistake, or due to lack of information about the conditions of the PGWPP. This high rate of bureaucratic issues in the processing of immigration related files, which is consistent with the anecdotal evidence, highlights the difficulties that international students encounter when managing their legality in Canada. This is even more important given their limited or lack of access to settlement services during and after graduation. Another notable issue that stood out in the interviews was that the length of the proclaimed 3-year PGWPP for these eligible candidates (CIC, 2017b) was adjusted to the expiry date of their passport, which meant they had to go through the process of renewing the permit. This had not only created barriers in their professional development, but also appeared as a burden and an additional source of anxiety.

Chapter Four provides is a first of the kind art-based autoethnography written to provide an analytical review of the PGWPP, and also possibly the first study that employs Durkheim’s concept of anomy to highlight social suffering in post-graduate migration. Aside from methodological and theoretical specifics, the article yields a detailed view of the demanding conditions of PGWPP, such as inaccessibility of settlement services and inability of registering at degree programs, for the permit holder, which can result in an ever-exacerbating social situation

replete with disrespect, suffering and anguish. The article establishes the use of difficult realities as tangible constituents of mobility; instead of justifying these difficulties as a rite of passage, or the driving force for further success, the article acknowledges the endurance of negative experiences. Suffering and pain in this article are encountered as bold impactful notions that do not take place merely due to the newcomer's cultural and linguistic inefficiency, as it is often suggested (Hron, 2009). Rather it can be fuelled by the diminished access to social networks and a forced compromise of lifestyle due to the conditions of the industrial host society and the immigration program.

Notably, all three articles and especially chapters three and four imply that shortcomings in immigration and resettlement policy for international students can jeopardize their wellness; that despite the overt emphasis on the obligation of immigration policies and programs to tract presumed economic advantage of this group, little to no evidence of any existing policy or programs dedicated to retention of immigrant and immigrant applicants' health (Beiser, 2005).

In conclusion, the project calls for a review of many of the PGWPP characteristics that appear to act as barriers to the social and economic integration and wellness of international graduates. It also exemplifies how an active engagement with international graduates' experiences and expressions provide important and crucial information on the working of the PGWPP, those that are implied but impossible to thoroughly investigate without a mobilities approach. The mobilities approach in the dissertation helps with merging the revelations of the archaeological outlook that deemed the program as a generator of temporariness with the non-linear and non-conventional information found in the two other chapters. By contextualizing the information contained in the three chapters under the umbrella of mobilities, this project demonstrates that identifying the subtle constitution of international graduate as temporary,

which is in contrast with the portrayal of the economic immigrant, in fact has a negative impact on the lives of international graduates themselves. Whether it be paper-work problems or social suffering, the expressed drawbacks mold the longing presence of the individual as a newcomer in Canada. It is hoped that this multi-faceted approach will be helpful when drafting any future changes to the PGWPP. These proposed changes, it is hoped, will assist the Government of Canada when attracting and retaining future international students, as well as improving the government's level of communication and assistance in their settlement.

Figure 3: An example of Post Graduate Work Permit

Citizenship and Immigration Canada / Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada

PROTECTED WHEN COMPLETED / PROTÉGÉ UNE FOIS REMPLI - B

CANADA IMMIGRATION

CC171 044 646

U940588176

**WORK PERMIT**

CASE TYPE : 20

TRAVEL DOC : PASSPORT 113881864  
 BONDED : NO  
 EMPLOYER : ANY EMPLOYER  
 OCCUPATION : OPEN EA  
 EMP LOCATION : UNKNOWN  
 FEE STATUS : FPC 03633347

CONDITIONS:  
 1. UNLESS AUTHORIZED, MUST NOT ATTEND ANY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OR TAKE ANY ACADEMIC, PROFESSIONAL OR VOCATIONAL TRAINING COURSE.  
 2. MUST LEAVE CANADA BY 23 JUN 2013

|  |                                     |                         |
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| 13 JUL 2011                                    | 23 JUN 2013                         | 03                      |

REMARKS: POST GRADUATE WORK PROGRAM. MUST RENEW PASSPORT FOR FURTHER STATUS EXTENSION CONSIDERATION. KAP-H\*

THIS DOES NOT AUTHORIZE RE-ENTRY.

Canada

CPC VEG 9518  
 THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA  
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## **Chapter Two: Post Graduate Work Permit and Temporariness among International Students in Canada**

### **Abstract**

This article is an archaeological analysis of the development of the Post Graduate Work Permit Program (PGWPP). This program, which deviated from an existing conditional work permit program in 2002, is considered a technology of power (Foucault, 1988) and impacts the permit holder's economic and migration trajectories. The article seeks to understand the ways in which the PGWPP possibly produces and prolongs the temporariness of international graduates in Canada. Temporariness restricts spatial and professional mobility and contrasts with the stated objectives that the Canadian government has designated for PGWPP, namely the economic integration of foreign graduates.

**Key Words:** Post Graduate Work Permit, International Students, Immigration, Canada

## Introduction

This article reviews the instatement, objectives and the changes made to the Post Graduate Work Permit Program (PGWPP), which is a temporary work permit that allows international students to stay and (find) work in Canada following their graduation (CIC, 2017b & c) and apply for permanent residency (CIC, 2010c). Numerous changes were made to PGWPP and the corresponding immigration programs, often with the intention of achieving quick economic integration for international students. The aim of this chapter is to help understand the ways in which these developments conform to the portrayal of international students as transitioning from temporary status to permanent residents, who are likely future citizens in Canada.

It appears that international students' immediate expenditure on tuition and other expenses drives a presumption regarding their ability in attaining a class status that essentially portrays them as ideal future citizens in Canada's current neoliberal social and political context (Neiterman, Atanackovic, Covell & Bourgeault, 2018; Scott, Safdar, Trilokekar & El Masri, 2015). On the contrary, data suggest that their income levels are not any higher than those of other immigrants even 10 years after entering Canada (Hou & Bonikowska, 2015; Phillpot & Kennedy, 2014). Despite this, the transition rate of international students to permanent residents seems to have been consistent, and has not declined (Lu & Hou, 2015).

Via the lens of Foucauldian governmentality (Faubion, 2000), this article considers PGWP to be a tool of power that helps constitute the imagery of international students. This article argues that hasty changes to the PGWP have subjected international students to social and economic anxiety with the result of keeping them in a temporary state, chronically under-employed and subject to unstable work conditions (Robertson, 2014), which is in contrast to the imagery of an ideal future citizen (Neiterman et al. 2018). Temporariness is associated with un-

and under-employment (Winter, 2014). Considering that international graduates naturally require some time to learn and navigate the host country's system and, given that they do not have access to social services that those who enter Canada as landed immigrants do, by inducing temporariness for international students, the PGWPP's specific conditions are potentially counter-productive to the program's very own objectives. By segregating the permit holders from permanence through constraining their financial resources, social relationships, and their ability to conform to particular state-based criteria of desirability (Robertson, 2014), temporariness goes against the PGWPP's projected positive impact on international graduates' economic attainment (Jane & Levi, 2013). Therefore, it is suggested that the presumed economic integration of international students would more successful if quick changes to the PGWPP that make pathway to permanent residency ambiguous and complicated, were ceased.

### **An Overview of International Students Immigrating in Canada**

The selection of permanent residents in Canada is based on three general criteria: family reunion, refugee claimants, and skilled labourers (Banting, 2014). Skilled labourers are referred to as Economic Classes (CIC, 2017a). The Government of Canada, especially since the 1980s, has aimed at improving its economic prospects by leveraging international students' potential ability to integrate into the country's labour market through immigration (Schmitt, Harris & Easton, 2005). This is accomplished through programs such as PGWPP that allow international graduates to apply for immigration and enter Canada's job market.

At the moment, and after obtaining a PGWP, international students can apply for permanent residency through different streams under Economic Classes. Those consist of the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), the Quebec Skilled Worker class, the Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP), the Canadian Experience Class (CEC), as well as other classes (CIC,

2010d). International students are eligible to apply for permanent residency through CEC, PNP and Skilled Worker classes (CIC, 2013a, 2011 a & c, 2010 d & e Government of Canada, 2001).

The opportunity of staying and working in Canada with a PGWP is shown to have been influential in international students' decision to come to Canada. In fact, 49% of university and 74% of college [international] students rate post-graduation work opportunities as very important (CBIE, 2012). The CBIE's 2015 and 2009 reports consistently indicate that 50% of these students mentioned that they planned to stay in Canada. CBIE's 2012 report points out that it is possible the increase in the per-year growth rate of international students, from 2008 to 2015 – 184,155 to 353,00. This may be partly due to the improvements made in the PGWP; affirming the construction of 'international student as future immigrant' (Sweetman & Warman, 2014).

The Canadian government's discourse proposes a potential for international students to attain higher income (OECD, 2014, p. 5). However, studies such as Hou and Bonikowska's (2015) longitudinal research on international students shows that having only Canadian study experience does not lead into higher income among former international students in comparison to other immigrants. This remains the up to 10 years after entering Canada. International students often experience a form of disconnect from their community and consequently lack of access to field related, meaningful employment following graduation (Chira, 2013; Kelova, 2016). This has led to some questions about the success of the programs through which international students settle in Canada. Policy makers are asked to respond to this "disappointment" that the presence of international students imposes on the Canadian economy (e.g. Chiose, 2015a; Grubel, 2013). The following gives a closer look into how the hasty changes derived from reviews such as Chiose and Grubel's (2016 and 2013) are likely to bar facilitating the economic integration of international graduates (Open Parliament, 2016) and may subject them to temporariness.

## Theoretical Perspective

This article employs Foucauldian governmentality as its main theoretical perspective (e.g. Donzelot and Gordon, 2008). In Foucauldian governmentality, governance is a strategy, process, procedure or program for controlling, regulating or managing any known object at a local, organizational or global level (Lemke, 2011, p. 34). Compellingly, governmentality seeks to understand the constitution of the ‘subject’ - here the international graduate - from the state’s point of view. In Foucault’s sociology, there appears to be a space in which the state views people as subjects and uses its tools of power to configure groups in ways that serve the purposes of the state. This is prevalent in the government’s discourse around the PGWPP, and generally post-graduate migration as post-graduate migrants are introduced as future citizens, best and the brightest and a skilled work force – which makes them technically current and future subjects of the state (CIC, 2012a). Accordingly, PGWPP is regarded as a technology of power (Faubion, 2000), with the goal of the article being understanding how it can induce status related conditions such as temporariness.

Temporariness is defined as immigrant applicants’ lack of access to mobilities and rights that are associated with permanent residency and citizenship (Robertson, 2014). As subjects governed by the nation-states, temporariness presents the least stable and the least desirable condition for people (Winter, 2014). In a way, lack of access to full resident rights creates economic and social divisions, or what Rajkumar, Berkowitz, Vosko, Preston and Latham (2012) call “paper borders,” between temporary and permanent residents in any nation-state.

Governmentality is in essence related to mobility as its rationales deal with matters such as housing, migration and economic growth at local and international levels (Dean, 1999, pp. 99-100). Foucault does not see these rationales as only impositions by the state, he considers also

the ways in which such practices are adopted by and influence individuals' pathways and trajectories (McDonald, 2011; Foucault, 2003 [1976], pp. 240-250). In this context, the concept of mobilities is borrowed from Urry's work where the individual's ability in benefiting from the possibility of moving via means of mobility plays an important role in defining the person's agency in any socio-political system (Urry, 2007). [Im]mobilities in this case are consequential to temporariness and, mobilities research is interested in the ways in which immobilities are primary to the constitution of the imagery of a people who are subject to certain governance, rules and rationales. With the same logic, this study reviews the PGWPP through a Mobilities Paradigm, as the program constitutes international students as temporary residents, while at the same time making claims that it facilitates their transition to permanent residency and eventual citizenship.

A number of studies have examined the flows of immigrants through the lens of Foucauldian archaeology and governance (e.g. McDonald, 2011). These studies have particularly investigated the ways in which national policies shape individuals' construction of self as subjects in the relevant governing systems (Shore & Wright, 1997). The present study incorporates the significance of the expansion of forms of temporariness as an influential element that affects the governance of mobilities and the consequent constitution of mobile individuals. This article particularly outlines the discontinuities in the management of the PGWPP and the ways in which these can lead to the production of temporariness, despite the program's claim of doing otherwise (Rajkumar et al. 2012).

## **Methods**

Archaeology is a critical investigation of systems aimed at understanding the discursive practices that produce those systems (Prado, 1995, p.29). The goal is to understand how this

system, that constitutes international students as future immigrants, has developed into what it is today. Archaeology is to remain neutral to the truth of the systems that it investigates and focuses on neglected similarities and differences between systems of knowledge (Prado, 1995). As it is the mandate of archaeology in Foucault's work (1972), the analysis ultimately investigates and charts the PGWPP to help uncovering the principles and consequences of the changes in the program and consequently in the field. Reviewing the development of the PGWPP is a critical investigation of a system (a program for student migration) that pursues understanding what this system claims to do and what it, in fact, produces. By highlighting and connecting previously marginal and obscure elements (such as discontinuity in descriptive statistics on the trajectories of international students with the PGWP) the article paints a different picture of the program.

Similar to Banting (2014) and McDonald (2011) this analysis consists of developing a timeline (see Table-1) on the trends and changes to the PGWPP. This comprehensive review provides a basis for understanding the current portrayal of international students as permanent resident applicants. This article considers the three stages of Foucault's work in *The History of Sexuality* (1978) for conducting archaeology and takes the first stage of his work as its reference. Drawing on MacDonald's interpretation, in the first stage of archaeology in *History of Sexuality*, the researcher seeks to discover whether the investigated system works, and what it produces. At this level the research deals with the relationship of a system's statements, such as mentioned economic presumptions that were stated in official government publications and are prominent in student migration in Canada. Archaeology remains focused on the formation of discourses overtime and, treats the evidence of discourse (e.g. government publications) as its very source (Foucault, 1972, p. 155). These statements are retrievable from the documents that retain the essence of their formation. Foucault insists on archaeology's difference from a historical review

because of its critical interpretation of such sources and defining their outcomes (Foucault, 1972, pp. 153-156). At this stage, archaeology does not seek the latent meaning making of discourse through means such as power relations and governance of self that are the following stage of archaeology in the History of Sexuality. Notwithstanding, this article similar to Banting (2014) remains at the document level<sup>1</sup>.

In order to access the research material, I conducted a term-specific search for: Post Graduate Work Permit Program, Post-Graduation Work Permit Program, PGWPP, PGWP, international students, foreign students, international graduates, foreign students, and student immigration, in the following websites: Department of Citizenship and Immigration Backgrounders, Department of Foreign Affairs, Statistics Canada, Open Government Section of the Government of Canada website, Library of Parliament, Open Parliament, Archives Way Back Machine, Canada Archives website and Open Canada. The results were categorized in time frames in relevance to the introduction of the PGWPP. A brief overview of the developments that led to the introduction of the PGWPP in 2003 is provided, followed by a detailed outlook towards the specific dynamics of the program in the following years up to the writing of this study.

Please note that the article assumes permanent residency as an accepted form of membership into Canadian communities, and as a step toward accessing citizenship (Ortiz & Choudaha, 2014). This is because firstly, permanent residents in Canada access the rights of citizens, except for federal voting. Secondly, Canadian authorities who have made statements about international students especially those who applied and became permanent residents, have

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<sup>1</sup> The next stage of Foucault's work in History of Sexuality, are power relations which focuses on the transformations of the discourse overtime and genealogy of self.

repeatedly referred to them as both ideal future immigrants and citizens (e.g. CBC, 2012; CIC Press Release, 2012).

### **International Students as Immigrant Applicants**

#### **Prior to 2000s**

The first Parliamentary debates around international students appear in the Hansards of the 16<sup>th</sup> Parliament of Canada in 1927 (Library of Parliament). These are however, notes on specific groups of students, children of settlers studying in Canadian schools or Canadian students as legation abroad. It is only Post World War II, when the federal government's strategies revolving around international students became linked to Overseas Development Assistance with international student recruitment (e.g., Library of Parliament, 1953). Policy changes that occurred prior to the 1990s, for example, were largely instituted to handle sudden inflows of international students, or to take advantage of another competing country's lack of interest in the area (Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, 2015). In other words, Canada lacked coordinated policies to oversee the recruitment of international students until the 1990s (Chandler, 1989, pp. 73-80).

It is in the 1990s that the agenda of the federal government prioritized the recruitment of highly skilled workers that implied, [among other establishments], higher retention of international students as immigrants (CIC, 1999). In 1998, for example, a legislative review advisory group advised the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration that the CIC should facilitate the entry and transition of international students to permanent residency status (LRAG, 1997). One of the recommendations states that "Immigration and Citizenship legislation should allow foreign students who have successfully completed a course of postsecondary studies in Canada to apply for landed immigrant status in Canada if they have an acceptable, permanent job offer" (Legislative Review Advisory Group, 1997 [LRAG], p. 24). The Government of Canada's

subsequent report stated a desire to “support and facilitate a coordinated international student recruitment strategy led by Canadian universities” (Government of Canada, 2001, p. 9).

The policies that were enacted after 2000, including the establishment of PGWPP, were mainly driven by an immigration model that was put forth through the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) in 2002 (Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario [HEQCO], 2015). This act asserted the desirability of bringing in greater numbers of highly skilled, qualified immigrants. The proposed changes drove higher numbers of international students and could have affected their decision making about staying in Canada (Dolin & Young, 2002; HEQCO, 2015; Lrag, 1997). The federal government since has expressed strong interest in facilitating the entry and transition of international students, who are typically highly skilled and *likely* to provide significant benefits to Canadian society (e.g. CIC, 2012).

### **Early 2000s**

In 2002, the post-graduation work permit was not considered a distinct program. However, sections (v) and (w) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, made clear that students could apply for and renew an open work permit (Government of Canada, 2001). Accordingly, students fell under the category of foreign nationals who may apply for a work permit after entering Canada, if they were the holder of a study permit and (i) a full-time student enrolled at a designated learning institution (as defined in section 211.1 of the same document). This part is followed by section (w) where the document made clear that applying for a work permit following graduation was allowed: “a foreign national who is or was the holder of a study permit and who has completed their program of study” (IRPR, 2002, section i) can apply for a work permit. In section (ii) the text clarifies that this person must have applied for a work permit before the expiry of their study permit. The work permit was renewable as long as the

renewal application is made prior to the expiration of the existing work permit, and the applicant complied with their entry conditions.

Up until this moment, obtaining a work permit following an international student's graduation seems well regulated. However, there is little mention made regarding the limits and relevance that this work permit has for changing one's status from temporary to permanent residency. It can be concluded from the same document that a foreign national who is a temporary permit holder and has resided continuously in Canada for three to five years, depending on their inadmissibility grounds (IRPR, 2002), can apply to become a permanent resident. This means that those foreign graduates who have resided in Canada long enough and have held study and work permits can apply for permanent residency. According to more recent backgrounders (e.g. CIC, 2006) this permit would be valid for only one year, which could have only meant that if a foreign graduate intended to become a permanent resident and their application was not processed within that one year, they would have had left the country while awaiting their permanent residency to be approved.

### **2003-2008; Post-Graduate Work Permit**

From 2000 to 2005, Canada signed federal/provincial agreements with each province and territory to outline shared priorities in immigration policy. This meant prioritizing attraction and retention of international students as major themes of immigration discourse in the following years (CIC, 2010a). The name "Post-Graduation Work Permit" or "Post-Graduate Work Permit" was used mainly in 2003. PGWP began as a pilot project in Manitoba in 2003, followed by similar agreements (between the federal and provincial governments) in 2004, which led to the implementation of the program in New Brunswick and Quebec. As a stand-alone program the PGWPP became official as a result of these enactments post-2008 (CIC, 2008b).

The PGWPP made it possible for international students who had obtained a one-year work permit following their graduation (as the existing rules allowed them) to extend that permit for another year, with the provision their employment remained in a field related job and in the same province as the pilot program (CIC, 2003, p. 36). Canada's Foreign Workers Manual (2004) included instructions for processing applications for one-year extensions of post-graduation work permits under pilot projects with certain provinces (FW1, 2004, section 5.39). In 2005, CIC added a 'bonus' year where the PGWP could be extended for up to 3 years for graduates outside Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver who intend to work outside of these three major centres. The above-mentioned changes presented a substantial shift in the federal government's priorities toward harnessing the economic potential of international students by allowing them to work. Yet it is unclear how settling in Canada's economically stagnant regions (Dobrowolsky, 2011; Gates-Gasse, 2012) would have helped spread the benefits of immigration to more of Canada's regions. Nevertheless, the national expansion of the Post Graduate Work Permit introduced international students as eligible candidates under various immigration programs (CIC, 2006).

### **2008-2013; When Everything Was Heart Shaped**

In 2008, considerations for more flexibility in allowing international students to stay and immigrate within Canada lead to even looser requirements for post-graduation work permit. In 2008, it was no longer required for international students to be hired in a field related job in order to obtain a PGWP; this was perceived as great news for students and for Canada as this flexibility gave students "much needed Canadian work experience" (Open Parliament, 2008). From this moment onwards, international students were encouraged to apply for a work permit immediately, and up until 90 days after a formal letter of graduation had been issued by their

relevant academic institution (CIC, 2016, 2008a). It was also amended in 2008 to further accommodate international graduates by extending the possible length of the PGWP to up to three years after graduation if the student's program lasted for two years or longer (CIC, 2010b). The permit has been cited as an important tool for international students to gain work experience before applying for permanent residency.

Concurrent to these changes, the federal government made an explicit effort to market international education in Canada as a globally known brand (Garcea & Hibbert, 2014). Marketing and recruitment efforts included spreading promotional material to Canadian consulates abroad and organizing activities through overseas universities to demonstrate the advantages of studying in Canada (Department of Foreign Affairs and Development [DFATD], 2012; Garcea & Hibbert, 2014). As a part of these efforts, the Edu-Canada brand was created with the order of DFATD. The number of consulates and embassies receiving funding for Edu-Canada increased from 15 in 2006 to 95 in 2010 (Kunin, 2012). The measure for success in Canada's IE Strategy, which was introduced as part of Canada's 2012 Economic Action Plan, was to double the number of international students, increasing from more than 250,000 to 500,000 in 2022 (Kunin, 2012).

These efforts seemed to have paid off; the CBIE's 2009 Survey notes that about half of their surveyed international students reported that they remembered seeing or hearing advertising about studying in Canada. Among those who report seeing or hearing such advertising, about 90% say it at least somewhat influenced their decision to come to Canada to study. A significant increase in the number of international students had taken place by 2011. In this year, there were 239,131 international students studying in Canada, marking a 75% increase over the previous decade (CBIE, 2013).

It was reported that international students spent \$7.7 billion on tuition, accommodation and discretionary items in 2011, up from \$6.5 billion in 2008. The advisory panel began the branding of Canada through DAFTD's vision 2020 and emphasized that the contributions added to the GDP through international students are higher than many other forms of international trade (DFATD, 2012 p. x). Even though logistically these early earnings are not related to international students' income and economic integration following their graduation, in this DFATD's strategic plan the government openly stated that the biggest portion of the international education fiscal engine comes from the side of the long-term international students who provide a highly qualified and skilled work-force (ibid.). The government stated that by having spent a number of years on campus and in Canadian communities, as well as by being fluent in [one of] the official languages, international students will likely easily find their way inside the Canadian job market (CIC, 2012). In other words, a systematic faith in international students' potential for higher income attainment seems to precede the Canadian Government's position on constituting their images as future immigrants (OECD, 2014, p. 5).

### **2013-Present; Permanently Temporary**

With the establishment of the considerably flexible PGWP, foreign graduates who remain in Canada still tend to fall short in acquiring the income level prospected for them (Hou & Bonikowska, 2015). The reason, aside from the known contemporary difficulty of finding work after graduation (Chria, 2017), can be traced back to ongoing policy shifts. Since 2014, the changes made to those immigration programs that proceed the PGWP have caused setbacks for international students who wish to settle in Canada (Chria, 2017).

In June 2014, Bill C-24 removed the credit that was previously given to immigrant applicants for their time spent [studying] in Canada. The bill also increased the required years of

residency (four out of six instead of three out of five) from permanent residents to become citizens. Such extensions of temporariness through time (Robertson, 2014) and delegitimization of permanent residency, would make applicants appear more punishable (or removeable in this case) by state law (Rajkumar et al. 2012); the new law implied that even after becoming a dual citizen, a former international student would not enjoy the full rights of citizenship. In effect, PGWP holders would be considered indefinitely temporary from the perspective of the same state that encourages them to remain in Canada (Rajkumar et al. 2012).

Prior to Bill C-24, Bill C-35 had banned international offices inside universities which provided immigration guidance to international students (Library of the Parliament, 2011). This meant that the role of Canadian universities that used to manage assisting international students with information about immigration without a direct partnership with the CIC, was complicated (Neiterman et al., 2018). These changes were referred to as a discrepancy between overwhelmingly emboldened recruitment of international students and settlement regulations, having a negative impact upon attracting and retaining these students (Humphries, 2013).

The current immigration system operates through Express Entry (CIC, 2015; CIC, 2011b), which is a competitive online point system that credits applicants for Canadian education and work experience (Shen, 2016). The introduction of the Express Entry to the system, however, was disruptive to the pathway for many international graduates who had applied for permanent residency. First, many PNPs closed their international graduate stream before the launch of Express Entry (Chira, 2017). In the same year, reportedly thousands of international graduates were rejected under the new FSWP (Oved, 2014).

These changes are the examples of discontinuities in rationales of governance (McDonald, 2011). By making the scope of immigration into an increasingly temporary

environment, the state undoubtedly affects the imagery of holders of a PGWP and presents international students as temporary residents, which is a direct contradiction to the very statements that characterize them as immigrants and future citizens. The conduct of the government and the temporariness it produces throughout, speaks to the formation of a discursive practice (Foucault, 1972) that result in temporariness. The very rules and regularities behind this outcome, can be looked into as technologies of power that influence international students' trajectories.

During this period, some research, such as Hou and Bonikowska's (2015) longitudinal study, showed that having Canadian study experience without Canadian work experience does not lead to higher incomes for former international students in comparison to other immigrants, even up to 10 years after them entering Canada. Research points out that there seems to be a tendency for international students to remain unemployed and in an unstable situation after graduation, specifically while transitioning from a study permit to permanent residency (e.g. Chira, 2016). These conditions are perceived as economic underachievement experienced by student migrants, which appears as contradictory to the opportunity-driven imagery that is constructed about them by the state policies.

Questions regarding the efficiency of the PGWP in attracting and successful settlement of international students as skilled workers in Canada (e.g. Chiose, 2015; Grubel, 2013) encouraged policy-makers to aim at fixing the results of this program, which some regard as economic "disappointment". Therefore, some policy writers and influencers (such as the Chamber of Commerce) called for other drastic and sudden changes to programs such as the PGWPP (Chamber of Commerce, 2016; Mas, 2016). As a result, Express Entry's language, education and employment requirements from PGWP holders have been set much higher than before; on the

one hand, a field related job places the applicant in a much higher ranking among other applicants. On the other hand, employers in certain fields who wish to hire a PGWPP holder must obtain a positive Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) from the Employment and Social Development Canada determining that the candidate's position could not be filled by an equally qualified Canadian worker and that it does not have a negative impact on Canada's labour market. In the case of workers with the PGWP, if one needs an LMIA to meet the program requirements for immigration, they have to ask their employer to obtain an LMIA for them (CIC, 2017a). If anything, this, only bars foreign graduates from getting the jobs they would have, even if that did not mean that their income is higher than other immigrants (Open Parliament, 2016).

These policy shifts can turn living on the PGWP into an intense 'passing phase', as opposed to a period for practices of settlement. Therefore, the PGWPP period operates as a controlling point for the numerous strict screenings that the foreign graduates will have to go through. It is as if the program is aimed at creating a temporary work force that is merely in Canada for the duration of their PGWP, and not much longer. This not only bars international graduates from seeking employment, along with their full potential that they possess, but can demotivates them from remaining in Canada altogether. Table 1 below provides a timeline for the development of the PGWPP over the mentioned periods.

Table 1: Post Graduate Work Permit Timeline

| <b>Year</b>           | <b>Immigration Program</b>  | <b>Characteristics</b>  | <b>Objectives/Outcomes</b>  |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>1980s to 2000s</b> | - Open work permit (post graduation)  | - Valid for one year<br>- Requires field related full-time employment   | - Managing occasional in-flows of international students<br>- Support regulation of student immigration since 1990s   |
| <b>2000 - 2003</b>    | - PGWP regulated under Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, SOR/2002-227   | - Valid for one year<br>- Requires field related full-time employment<br>- Renewable in compliance with entry conditions  | - Continued objectives of early 2000s   |
| <b>2003 – 2008</b>    | - Establishment of PGWPP as a stand-alone program specific to int'l students  | - Federal/ provincial agreements and shared priorities in immigration policy (2003 – 2005)<br>- Employment requirement for PGWP was lifted<br>- Possibility for renewal of PGWP up to 3 yrs   | - Continuation of encouraging retention of int'l students   |
| <b>2008 - 2013</b>    | - PGWP extended to three years and eliminated the requirement for job offer or offer of employment in a particular field of study   | - Country branding effort initiated outside Canada/ DFAIT & Council of Ministers of Education Canada in 2008 collaboration in 2008<br>- A significant increase (265,000 in 2013, 95% increase since 2001), happened in the number of international students in Canada | - Nationalistic provisions of student immigration entered Canadian politicians discourse around international students<br>- Prominent economic prospects for international education was instated in DAFTD's (2012) Vision 2020 |
| <b>2013 - Current</b> | - Bill C-35 was enforced to international offices (2013)<br>- Bill C-24 (2014)<br>- Express Entry Electronic application (2015)<br>- Candidacy through CEC only with exempt occupation or with sponsored no-exempt occupation | - Halted immigration services to international students<br>- Increased temporariness and lengthening of the processes of becoming a member of Canadian society<br>- Tight deadlines/ invitation-based PR/confusing  | - Employer driven projections<br>- Increased residency requirement, study and PGWPP would not count towards citizenship<br>- Unrealistic demand for keeping up to date to the changes made to immigration procedures            |

## Discussion

A look at Canada's immigration policies reveals that despite the government of Canada's explicit and pronounced support for the retention of students (Government of Canada Archives, 2011a; Mas, 2016; University Affairs, 2016), by default, the system had not been prepared for the permanent migration of this expanding number of temporary residents (Hou & Bonikowska, 2015). Studies show that the Canadian government's preference for increasing the number of temporary residents (IRCC, 2015) has been accompanied by a steady number of permanent residents (Winter, 2014). This, considering the explicit discourse around the desirability of international students as permanent residents, blurs the traditional boundaries around categories of permanent and temporary migration (Robertson, 2014).

The number of PGWPs issued each year have increased proportionate to the number of international students; There were 34,375 PGWPs issued in 2015, which is almost twice as many as 2008. The Canadian Employer–Employee Dynamics Database (CEEDD) on Temporary Residents File's (Lu & Hou, 2015) illustrated that only 24% to 28% of international students from early the 90s to early 2000s actually transition to permanent residency. However, this data represents their status over 10 years after receiving their first study permit. No exact data on the number of PGWP holders as immigrant applicants directly after graduation is available. Existing data (e.g. van Huystee, 2011) estimate transitions to permanent residency from PNP, CEC and other categories only. The closest knowledge of their intention for immigration is CBIE's 2009 report, which showed that 59% of international students intended to migrate. CBIE's 2016 report, however, shows an 8% decrease in the number of international students who transitioned to permanent residency from 2014 to 2015. This decrease can be associated with the complexity and ambiguities of the transitioning pathways for international students.

Whether the Government of Canada plans to increase the number of permanent residents through admitting international students, or the aim is to increase the size of the temporary skilled work force, the above-mentioned continuous changes to the immigration programs exposes international students to temporariness. Temporariness not only contributes to increased anxiety associated with unwanted or untimely mobilities such as in the case of Nigerian Students, CBC, 2013), it can also lead to emerging forms of temporary migration (Robertons, 2014) which reproduces the cliché of the unemployed temporary resident (Scott et al., 2015).

The general rule is that careers open within the borders to the nation-states and not between them (Brubaker, 1989). Relevantly, access to the labour market is general and unconditional for citizens. For non-citizens, or non-members, it (has always been) partial and conditional (Brubaker, 1989). Notably, temporariness, whether in employment or residency, has been on the rise since the establishment of neoliberal regimes (Jane & Levi, 2013; Standing, 2014); as has been the number of international students and those who apply for PGWP in Canada.

Mobile students are often portrayed as a part of the global elite and as an apparatus for advancing the growth of national human capital (Brooks & Waters, 2013). Yet temporariness affects them similar to other non-members of societies. As temporary residents, international students do not receive many benefits of permanency in Canada, e.g. eligibility for applying for welfare while unemployed, or benefiting from those settlement services that are offered to landed immigrants. Being blocked from accessing such state services could potentially render international students as vulnerable to exploitation in a low-cost workforce (Goldring & Landolt, 2013). This condition can create insecurities, risks, fragilities, and emotional instability that have

become an inseparable part of international students' lives in Canada, especially after graduation (Kelly, 2012; Spiro, 2008).

Studies that highlight students' social and economic struggles during and after their studies suggest that those struggles that student migrants experience takes place under migration schemes constructed by the state (Robertson, 2014). Therefore, a need for more supportive social institutions that will allow flourishing international students to express and achieve their potential (e.g. Philpott & Kennedy, 2014) has been identified. Organizational level mediation with the goal of facilitating foreign students' economic integration, that aims at the elimination of the experiences of temporariness, seem to be in conflict with recommendations that deem sudden changes to the PGWPP essential.

## **Conclusion**

The majority of nation-states, including Canada, govern their immigration and citizenship policies that privileges permanent residents who enjoy almost all of the rights of citizenship, while the rights of temporary residents remain limited (Anderson, 2013). In contemporary societies, membership is an expanded form of the ancient Greek notion of citizenship (Marshall, 1998). Nevertheless, becoming a permanent member or resident of a state is among the most understated, yet sought-after status (Davidson, 2010). Immigration is considered a step toward this membership and is regulated under certain attitudes and procedures that define the meaning of 'immigrant' (Winter, 2014; Valiani, 2013).

As McDonald (2011) states on the relationship between Canada's Citizenship Acts and Foucauldian governmentality, the emergence of citizenship itself as a technology of governance allows the Canadian Government to control membership in Canada. Accordingly, the PGWPP and the relevant programs are examples of the embedded forms of rationality and technologies of

power. The PGWP allows for the governance of the membership of international student population of Canada. Additionally, the PGWP has been perceived to have encouraged many international students in Canada to actively “think” immigration (Chira, 2016). At the same time, as a suggested path for permanence, it blurs the boundaries of temporariness and permanence. Given the overall increase in the flow of international students during the past decades, reproduction of temporariness through a strategy of control for the gradual transitioning of temporary residents to permanent residency, only contrasts the stated goals of the PGWPP.

International students continue to make immediate contributions to the Canadian economy through tuitions; they spent \$1.28 billion in tuition fees in 2015 alone (CBC, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017). Nonetheless, they continue to be subjected to global screening procedures for a prospected high economic potential that is presumably to be unlocked upon immigrating and attaining permanent residency status in Canada (CIC, 2010). The current discursive support for a quick proceeding towards the economic-driven imagery of students as permanent residents ironically subject them to temporariness. Temporariness is deteriorative to achieving this potential.

The highly anticipated integration of student immigrants into the job market might take an indefinite time. This integration is possibly lingering behind the shocks of overnight policy changes more than the organic impact of mobility. The constitution of international students who immigrate to Canada would be affected by temporariness less and would more likely meet the economic integration prospects overtime if the pressure for immediate economic gain was lifted. The outcomes of the relatively new PGWP could also be assessed in relevance to other facilities that international students as temporary residents have access to. In the current political and social climate, sudden changes to the programs that govern the eligibility and rewarding of

permanent residency to international students can potentially negatively affect their economic integration into Canadian society (Open Parliament, 2016). Sudden changes to these programs imply higher levels of temporariness – as well as economic instability – for students as immigration applicants. Considering the economic provisions that the Government of Canada has for international students, and in order to ease the retained student immigrants' access to the local job market, it seems only logical to cease making sudden changes to PGWP and the relevant programs that affect the functionality of this permit.

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### **Chapter Three: The Role of Canada's Post-Graduate Work Permit Program in International Graduates' Social and Economic Integration**

#### **Abstract**

This study highlights the perspectives of former international students about the Post Graduate Work Permit Program (PGWPP) to examine whether they reflect on the state discourse about the role of the permit in helping their integration into the Canadian job market during their transitioning to permanent residency status in Canada. The study draws on seven in-depth semi-structured interviews and incorporates Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1984) to better understand international graduates' strategies for positioning themselves within Canada's social field. The study contextualizes their pathway to residency within a mobilities paradigm (Urry, 2007) and indicates how a prospect of desired mobility has helped them chose PGWPP for immigrating to Canada. The interviewees highlighted that there have been administrative issues in the case by case management of their PGWPs. These issues induce temporariness and impact the pace at which they situate themselves in their desired position in Canada. While this has not prevented the participants from negotiating their place while residing on Canadian soil, it seems to contrast with the designed role of the PGWPP, which was designed to facilitate international graduates' social and economic integration.

**Keywords:** International Graduates, Post Graduate Work Permit, Canada, Immigration

## Introduction

This study examines international graduates' perspectives on PGWPP, which is a temporary work permit that allows international students to stay and [find] work in the country following their graduation. The research question examines both if and the way in which the program has helped them integrate into Canadian society. The study borrows Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus (Bourdieu, 1984) for a greater understanding of international students' persuasion of a desired position in their immigration trajectory (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 723; Costigan, Lehr & Miao, 2015;).

PGWPP is said to be an incentive to the foreign students' conducting research and contribution to the Canadian economy, as well as an affirmation of the Canadian interest in the likelihood of their integration into Canadian society and economy as skilled labour, immigrants and future citizens (CBIE, 2016; CIC, 2017b; StatCan, 2015; Sweetman & Warman, 2014). The PGWPP is therefore a substantial piece in the tapestry of post-graduate migration to Canada and requires specific attention as it is the period during which international graduates are inside Canadian communities as temporary workers while pursuing their goals, be they personal, professional, migratory or all of these.

With the important role that the PGWPP plays in the unfolding of the dynamic of international graduates' economic and social integration in Canada, their perspectives about the program can help with addressing any possible shortcomings in achieving their desired positions and in the state's prospected integration. This is especially notable because of the recent investigations that suggest not only international graduates' income is not higher than other immigrants (Hou & Lu, 2015), but that they also face migratory social vulnerabilities such as unemployment and under-employment (Chira, Barber & Belkhodja 2013; Kelova, 2016), as well as

racial discrimination (Stein & de Andreotti, 2016). An elaboration on their experience with the program can therefore address those issues that can help with lifting the existing barriers for their integration, as well as advancing the government's economic prospects in retaining international graduates.

### **Review of Literature**

In the Canadian context, an international student is a person who is authorized by a study permit to engage in studies in Canada (Government of Canada, 2001b). The number of international students in Canada has been on the rise for the past two decades. In 2013, more than 293,500 foreign students resided in Canada, while less than 15 years earlier that number was about 97,300 (CBIE, 2014a; van Huystee, 2011). In 2016, international students were more than 11% of the population of Canadian campuses (StatCan, 2016).

The increase in the number of international students has been accompanied by the country's strategic shift toward skilled migration (Brooks & Waters, 2013); through retaining international graduates as permanent residents. Canada selects immigrants who are seen as possessing a higher potential to advance the countries' economic and demographic prospects (StatCan, 2015). Attracting international students as temporary residents with the intention of exploiting their human capital potential became a strategic component of Canadian immigration system, particularly in the 1990s (Government of Canada, 2001a). Ever since, the government of Canada has developed avenues for international graduates (former international students) to encourage and facilitate their retention as immigrants (CBIE, 2016). One of these avenues is the PGWPP - essentially a fundamental step toward immigration to Canada (CIC, 2017b).

Despite the valuable explorations on the economic integration of international graduates in Canada and calls for research that includes variables beyond economic statistics for assessing

international graduates' integration qualitative studies on post-graduation migration and Post Graduate Work Permits remain limited.

Studies that view and analyze international students' migration often suggest that foreign graduates experience social vulnerabilities (Belkhodja & Esses, 2013; Chira, 2016), which is said to signal their absence of integration into Canadian society and the job market (Belkhodja, 2006). The existing literature often explores these issues within migratory and racial division perspectives (Liu, 2017; Stein & de Andretorri, 2016) and remains focused on the grand scope of the difficulties of immigration and immigrants' employment, concluding in recommendations for improvement of immigration programs (Chira & Belkhodja, 2013; Robertson, 2014) or employers' openness (Arthur & Flynn, 2013). Proposed resolutions to the delayed or under-achieved economic integration of graduate migrants vary from recommendations for quick policy changes (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, 2016), to removal of confusing and segmented approaches in immigration rules, and a better distribution of information regarding the settlement of international graduates (e.g. Chira & Belkhodja, 2013).

In academic social research, coming up short in the prospected economic achievements for international graduates is said to be due to a number of elements, such as the absence of social capital (Smith & Khawaja, 2011), cultural competence (Chow, 2007; Lui, 2017) and weaknesses in language and communication skills (Chira et al., 2013). Some studies also suggest that international graduates' un and under-employment can be a result of employers' lack of desire to hire these recent graduates (Arthur & Flynn, 2013; Chira et al., 2013; Kelova, 2016), as well as a result of social microaggressions toward minorities and immigrants, characteristics that are embedded within Western societies (Houshmand, Spanierman & Tafarodi, 2014; Stein & de Andretorri, 2016). The existence of the issues listed above highlight the disconnect between the

real lived experiences of international graduates and the state's rhetoric, which portrays them as the global elite and quick-to-integrate as future citizens (Scott, Safdar, Trilokekar & El Masri, 2015).

Unlike critical social research, state-related and economic-oriented discussions around post-graduate migration often recommend further restricting the selection criteria of international graduates manifested in, for example, further conditions to eligibility for the PGWPP, with the aim of retaining the most qualified applicants who possess higher human capital (Chamber of Commerce, 2016). Accordingly, immigration authorities are encouraged to view international graduates with a less than ideal economic trajectory as ineligible for becoming immigrants (Chiose, 2016). Further restrictions also subject international graduates to a form of economic objectification, for example if international students fail to attain higher incomes in comparison to other immigrants (Hou & Bonikowska, 2015) they are deemed as being less desirable. Only recently has the functioning of PGWP been explored in detail to illustrate how the program's increasingly temporary character can in fact prolong the economic/social integration process for recent international graduates (Chira, 2016).

This study draws on these recent developments and makes an effort to bring forward the perspectives of those who have enrolled in the program and have 'on- the-ground experience' with integration and transitioning to permanent residency via PGWPP. It asks the participants about their experience with PGWPP and contextualizes their trajectories in a Bourdeusian sociology where their desired positions in Canada's social field corresponds with the concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). In this study their overall mobility, both as in migration and social mobility toward their desired positions, entails elements beyond merely economic prospects. A social space beyond the economic field requires the study to a obtain mobilities perspective as

the overarching paradigm that allows for a comprehensive review of immigration. To achieve this, this text draws on Urry's Mobilities Paradigm (Urry, 2007).

### **Theoretical Perspective**

This study contextualizes immigration of international students in a Bourdieusian sociology. In this analysis the host country is a social space, not limited to the economic field, and is where individuals situate their habitus (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990). The habitus includes the activities of international students as a part of the social field, or the product of strategies that take place within it to reproduce forms of capital that in effect reproduce the social positioning of each group or individual (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 102). The present study articulates the participants' choice to relocate as integral to the fulfilment of their self-realisation projects (Brooks & Waters, 2013, p. 138; Oliver & O'Reilly, 2010). Unlike the abstract imagination of the student migrants that tends to suggest that the drive behind graduate migration is the inherent virtues of static competition in revenue generation stemming from international education (Brooks & Waters, 2013, p. 39), the present text makes an effort to understand how international graduates seek desired social positioning in a social field. The analysis goes beyond focusing on strategies that international students develop in response to social difficulties (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011) and explores their discourse around the positions that they want to occupy based on the various forms of capital they possess, or eventually acquire (Bourdieu, 2001, 1984).

Bourdieu considers educational, social and the mobility of capitals as influencing elements that drive the practices of groups and individuals in the social field, regardless of the immediate recognition they receive from the state, or the pace at which they convert these forms into economic capital (Crossley, 2001). From this perspective, mobilization of a group seeking to pursue only economic opportunities is not a dynamic enough approach to describe their practices

(Bourdieu, 1984) – in this case those of international students. Immigration from this vantage point, therefore, is a series of attempts that include employing opportunities for mobilizing capital, prior to and beyond converting it to economic means (Bourdieu, 2001).

In this study, international students are viewed as a social and geographically mobile group with dynamic objectives (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 727). Their dynamic positions in the social field are better understood through a mobilities paradigm. Urry's Mobilities Paradigm is the overarching theme in this text, that is a way of seeing the world that is sensitive to the role of movement in ordering social relations. Mobility criticizes the viewing of immigration as a linear and fetishized mobility toward economic achievement (Urry, 2007). Mobility, rather, is part "discovery travel" (Urry, 2007, p. 10), one through which social life is performed. This translates into the participants' capacity for reproducing their habitus in Canada; one which might in effect mobilizes their existing position in a complex manner that cannot be defined by upward or downward economic mobility – such as what economic research often suggests (Urry, 2007).

Bourdieu proposes that habitus impacts upon the structures that shape it, with the potential to change the field from where they stem (Skeggs, 2004). Accordingly, the study suggests that these students' opinions about immigration (particularly PGWP) can bring forward new resolutions for the challenges that student migration programs seem to ensue. Relevantly, in a mobilities paradigm, the role systems of control in restricting mobilities is realized as central to inequalities (Skeggs, 2004) and, as such, any difficulties that international graduates might face in exploiting PGWPP in their desired trajectory is relevant to post-graduate migration discourse.

## **Methods**

This study is based on in-depth semi-structured interviews with 7 former international students (international graduates) that obtained a PGWP after 2008, the year that the permit

became part of a comprehensive national program in Canada (CIC, 2008b). Interviews have been prevalent as a qualitative method of inquiry (e.g. Belkhdja, 2013; Chira, 2016; Houshmand et al., 2014; Liu, 2017). Semi-structured interviews can be used for assessment of policies as they posit a casual relationship between policy and outcomes (Jibladze, 2013). In such cases, the interviewer does not focus on intended outcomes of the policy of interest so much as the way policy and its implementation is interpreted and perceived by the interviewees (ibid.). The in-depth aspect of the present interviews allows for delving into the details of the participants' activities and perceptions as it encourages a detailed exchange of information and authentic insight into people's experiences (Harvey, 2012-18). As in any semi-structured in-depth interviews I had a set of questions (please see Appendix A) but I was more focused on the interview as a whole as I intended to have the participants talk in their own terms, so the questions were not asked in specific order, and not the exact same wording and timing is used during the interviews (Dyment, Morse, Shaw & Smith, 2014).

In this study, all participants had already obtained permanent residency (one was a citizen) via PGWPP or, were in the process of obtaining permanent residency and held a PGWP at the time of the interview. Snowball sampling and referrals (Chira, 2016) was conducted for recruitment of participants. All interviews were conducted in English, in Ottawa, Ontario, between October and December 2017. Among the participants, there were four women and three men. One participant had a Canadian college degree (with a master's degree prior to coming to Canada), One had two Canadian undergraduate degrees (studying a master's at the time of the interview), one had a bachelor's degree, three had masters' and one held a Ph.D. Two of the interviewees were from Africa (Tunisia & Nigeria), two from the Iran, one form Europe France, one from China, and one from Brazil. Interviews lasted between 1.5 to 3 hours and the

mentioned names in the text are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the participants (please see Appendix B).

I employed Bourdieu's notion of non-intrusive interviews in the *Weight of the World* (1999), and the interview process was treated as a social relation; I did my best to develop what he refers to as a *sociological feel or eye* (Bourdieu & Accardo, 1999, p. 607) and recognize the participants as the experts on the matter. This meant that unlike most interview traditions known in social science, the participants were active agents in informing the research (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 7) and I was a vessel for knowledge transfer (Bourdieu & Accardo, 1999, p. 607). The fact that I shared their experience in student migration in Canada facilitated carrying out each conversation in such manner where a realistic construction between the interviewees and I was made (Bourdieu & Accardo, 1999, pp. 607-609).

I initially intended to carry out between 10 and 12 interviews and in the end conducted eight interviews where one was the pilot case and included seven in this final report. The small likelihood of finding people with the shared experience of PGWPP who were also willing to inform an academic study of their opinions and perceptions in a lengthy conversation and, my emphasis on the depth and reflexivity of the work, can justify a small sample size as the method of choice (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). Notable is also my time restrictions as well as an absence of collaboration from organizations that I had approached for interview referrals<sup>2</sup>, which limited the ability of having a higher number of interviews and possibly interviewees from regions in Canada other than Ottawa. But due to mentioned restrictions, all but one participant lived in Ottawa where I have established academic relations and could carry out face to face conversations with the potential interviewees.

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<sup>2</sup> University of Ottawa's International Office, OCISO and World Skills Ottawa

The sample of this study is not meant to be representative of international students in Canada. This is because small-sample studies mostly revolve around investigations of personal experience and, the interviewees are chosen based on having certain and narrow criteria in common. These interviews target the respondents' perceptions and feelings rather than the social conditions surrounding those experiences. Nonetheless, these in-depth interviews serve as an out set from previous scholarship and, add a nuance to the existing accounts of international students' social positioning in Canada (CBIE, 2014b, 2009; Kunin, 2012; McMullen & Elias, 2011), and more specifically to scrutinize the role of the PGWPP from their side of the story.

This entailed a systematic approach to review the interviews in a chronological manner and finding resonating major themes. For that I did a thematic analysis (Aronson, 1995) of the interviews to understand the ways in which the interviewees had managed to position themselves within Canada's social field while under PGWPP. Data saturation was reached after analyzing the 7 interviews as the information related to student migrants' struggles overlapped with that of existing literature (e.g. Chan, 2018; Hanbazaza, Ball, Farmer, Maximova & Willows, 2015). More importantly, the analytical critique of the PGWPP by the participants - which is the main contribution of this study as such angle has not been given to student migration interview studies before - overlapped with humongous anecdotal evidence that I have encountered throughout my time in Canada.

### **The PGWPP: Placing Habitus in the Canadian Social Field**

The probes in this study sought to understand whether the PGWPP has helped the participants with economic integration while transitioning to permanent residency and what issues had likely prevented them from achieving the potential they sought in Canada. This was

important in order to help the study illustrate how they exploit their educational and mobility capital for social positioning (Chan, 2018).

At the time the interviews were conducted, all participants had applied for permanent residency (among them those who had already landed as immigrants and one was a citizen), however, their trajectories differed. These participants, the majority of whom held intermediate level professional positions, had gathered considerable knowledge about the country before deciding to move to Canada. A few had considered the opportunity of staying in Canada as a major element in their decision-making process, in combination with the encouragement of family members, previous positive experiences with living abroad, and some others had chosen Canada merely for their attraction to the country. For example, Adalie, a master's student who has obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Aboriginal Studies, has moved to Canada due to her fascination with nature, and the Canadian indigenous cultures, which she had become familiar with at an early age. Another participant, Feisal, who with a master's degree and a college diploma in journalism, has held advanced administrative positions on and off campus, thinks his choice was influenced by many reasons, including his desire for living among diverse peoples, and the fact that he had met many Canadians, specifically those from Ottawa, in his home country. So, he not only felt familiar with the place, he identified with the adventurous people from here.

Not all participants had applied for permanent residency immediately after receiving a PGWPP. Those who had not applied first wanted to make sure they can secure a place where they are satisfied with their life, to the point where they see themselves settling here. In other words, with the PGWPP, now that they are present in Canada's social field, they examined the potential of their acquired capitals in reproducing habitus in this society (Skeggs, 2004). This is

conceptually different from an economic exchange-value model that the majority of post-graduation immigration literature introduces. At first glance, situating one's habitus can be interpreted as converting educational capital to economic capital (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 106). Yet, these interviewees preferred to emphasize on the quality of life, lifestyle and their social prospects as what had made them stay in Canada. For example, Rose, a store manager with a Canadian MBA degree, admits there are economic advantages that life in Canada has for her versus her home country, but she is also aware what has made her stay here is that she likes living in Canada and is very successful at her job.

Mehrnoosh, who obtained her Ph.D. in Canada, and is now teaching as a part-time professor, says:

“I noticed I have way more opportunities and freedom here to do research and [to] express my ideas. After publishing a paper about discourse analysis which was sort of a political literary article ... I said to myself; that's it! I was working on this article back home, but I couldn't find resources to support this article. Here there is a free flow of information. I experienced the joy of being free”.

Even though participants shared relative satisfaction with life in Canada, this did not mean that the participants were in complete denial of occasional junctures of encountering discrimination or ignorance. Yet, they would claim that it had not been outright discrimination or racism that has kept them from achieving their goals. For example, Danilo, an engineer who obtained a master's degree in Canada and had not found a field related job at the time of the interview, did not perceive her under-employment as much a result of discrimination (e.g. in Houshmand, Spanierman & Tafarodi, 2014) nor resulting from her lack of proficiency in job

search. On the contrary, she realized under-employment was the result of her limited social networks in Canada that would eventually and organically be resolved over time.

“I did my research before coming to Canada. I know I will find a job in my field, but it is only going to take time. I had my support system back home. Many people knew me, this is Danilo and she is from this school and she is good at this...here nobody knows me [yet]... it takes time... I have had interviews, so I know I have a chance”. (Danilo, recorded interview conversation, fall 2017).

Sociologically speaking, she had not successfully or completely converted her educational capital [degress] (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 102) into economic capital. Nonetheless, having lived abroad prior to coming to Canada had taught her practice patience in learning social codes, and building networks is key that will eventually pay off. Rose illustrates on that point;

“It is easier for [Canadians] to find better jobs easily even with an undergrad degree and ... if they do a master’s like I did it is super easy for them. But I can understand that, they are from here...I don’t think it has to do with the fact that they are Canadians and we are not...it’s just they have their networks, they did their undergrad here. They know people. It just takes longer for us”. (Rose, recorded interview conversation fall 2017).

It can be argued that these people perceived integration, or improving employment status, beyond the mere notion of attaining a higher income. In other words, they do not feel as though they are stuck in the hassle of finding a job that, “everybody (including white locals and white immigrant) goes through after graduation” (Belkhodja, 2013). This means that each of the interviewees understood they have potential for succeeding on their own terms because of their

educational and new social capital, which is what encouraged them to acquire PGWPP to elongate their experience in Canada in the first place.

### **A Chance for Finding Desirable Networks**

From academic freedom to a passion for their job and studies, Mehrnoosh, Rose, Feisal Austin and Adelle emphasized that they had found a balance between social relations at work and outside work with, they were comfortable. Saman, a part-time engineer with a Canadian master's degree, was the only participant who *didn't mind* working in his company. He also was the only one who stated that he socialized almost exclusively with his country-mates, which represents the case of ethnic isolation reflected in research (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Will, 2016). This overall social satisfaction of the participants can be related to their ability in socializing and outgoing capacities, which will be discussed next.

Social interactions, including building a network of friendships and romantic relations with domestic students and natives, and establishing relationships with instructors and advisors, plays an important role in the healthy adjustment of international students (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). The participants, relevantly, spoke to the fact that they understood an integral part of their success relied on their capacity for absorbing cultural differences. They understood that a part of their mobility consisted of various forms of public cultures of assumption, disposition, and actions in the social space (Bourdieu, 1984). Mehrnoosh, for example, had found that her relationship with her supervisor was very different from the relationship she had with her supervisor back home. She preferred this less hierarchal relation and was satisfied with the adjustments she had to re-make in herself accordingly. Danilo had also observed that in order to learn the new protocols she would need to consult locals. At the same time, she plays her part in her social circles:

“... [My landlady] supported me a lot and I also support her in an environmentalist cause that she is active in. I believe it’s a two-way process, you need to give in order to receive from the community here...”. (Danilo, recorded interview conversation, fall 2017).

While she seems to have moved through this new social field very carefully to secure her place and habitus. Feisal, however, identifies more as a nomad:

“I never felt I was a stranger here, I don’t feel foreign, and I think it has helped me to have relationships with people here.” (Feisal, recorded interview conversation, fall 2017).

All other participants also recounted numerous occasions where their friends and loved ones in Canada had helped them through crucial moments. In short, these participants were notably satisfied with their social circles. Even those who were still looking for other/better professional opportunities knew that their community was supportive and appreciated their vision of who they are. This seemed to have had an immense impact on their time as a temporary worker and had assured that their situation will only improve overtime.

### **The PGWPP: The Administrative Battle**

During the interviews it was revealed that two of the interviewees (as well as the pilot case) had their application for permanent residency rejected once. Additionally, 3 other interviewees stated accounts of incorrect assessment of their professional, educational or medical documents by their institution or Immigration Canada at one point or another.

The ease at which students can get the appropriate paperwork to study in a place is an influencing element in choosing the country of residence for international students (Moore, 2008). Canada’s explicit portrayal as a country attracting and retaining highly skilled immigrants

(Picot, Hou & Coulombe, 2007) is distinctly reflected in the extension of PGWP to 3 years; the foreign workers' manual (CIC, 2008b) indicates that the 3-year PGWP is to facilitate the ability of graduates to find work if they wish to qualify for the work criteria of CEC.

It was mentioned that the participants of this study had gathered knowledge about immigrating in Canada. Relevantly, the PGWPP appeared as an attractive choice for them to continue their examination of Canada's social field and/or continue elaborating on the lifestyle they had started and would admit they cared for. Interviews revealed, however, that despite a promised three-year work permit (CIC, 2017c) being issued, in cases PGWPs do not exceed the expiry date of the applicants' passport:

“I got fired because of a mistake that Immigration Canada made...I was a program interpreter at the Museum of History and I went [on] to apply for the prolongation of my PGWPP – the permit was expiring at the same time as my passport. I sent them medical exams because it was necessary for someone who works with children. Somehow, they lost my medical files and issued a new work permit that stated I was not allowed to work in contact with children... I managed to find another job as a research assistant and eventually became permanent resident but losing a job I loved was extremely difficult”. (Adalie, recorded interview conversation, fall 2017).

“I got the permit, but I didn't get the three years and... I was shocked. I had to go to immigration to find somebody to ask about this... I was very scared ...I have visas from other countries, and they would give me 10-year visas [regardless of when my passport expires]. It is something that is not clear, and I didn't know in Canada they don't give you permits exceeding the expiry of your passport”. (Danilo, recorded interview conversation, fall 2017).

The situation of these two participants is reflected in the literature that has documented the effects of pressure from Immigration Canada on students' physical and emotional well-being (Hanbazaza et al. 2015). While the interviewees emphasized that it is likely they are getting one of the better treatments regarding their documentations as temporary residents, they highlighted that the numerous administrative and bureaucratic issues had bewildered them during their transitioning period. Such issues came as a surprise to them especially since they had researched Canada's immigration system prior to each step of the applications:

“...my passport was going to expire in two years and a month, so I didn't get the 3 years ... instead of two years I had to sign [a] one year [contract]. It created problems with my career development, speaking from the perspective of the Canadian government who wants the immigrants to integrate, produce wealth and pay taxes etc. I really wonder if they want people to integrate into the market. I understand it's a bureaucratic problem to a certain extent.... but...there is absolutely no reason someone wouldn't get three years because their passport is expiring!” (Feisal, recorded interview conversation, fall 2017).

He goes on to say that his application for permanent residency was also rejected due to CIC's mistake in interpreting the issuance and enforcement date on his PGWP:

“...my PGWP had 2 dates one it, one was the date my application was accepted [in June] and one the date it was sent [August]. The law says they (the CIC) are supposed to start counting the [physical presence] days from the applicant applies for the PGWPP. So, if you apply in March and it is issued in June and you start working in August, they are supposed to count from March. But apparently the immigration officers don't know this, or don't remember, I don't know what happens, but [according to the lawyers I

spoke to] they always miss it and they make up different rules!” (Feisal, recorded interview conversation, fall 2017).

He, and the one other interviewee who had their first attempts for permanent residency rejected, both hired lawyers for their second attempt. They both admitted that they bore the financial toll of hiring a lawyer because the lack of clarity in the system had made them concerned, they could be rejected again. Understandably, they didn’t want to go through the administrative loopholes another time. Relevantly, their investigations had informed them that appealing the CIC’s decision (Immigration Refugee Board, 2017) would include fighting their case in a court. Considering the timelines and the expenses it could have, re-applying for permanent residency with the help of a lawyer before their PGWPs had expired, seemed to be their best option.

For these participants who have demonstrated their ability in seeking information from the regulating bodies, the flow of information about applying for immigration and relevant permits did not seem to be as clear as it is advertised. They pointed out that many organizations and businesses, even the universities, are not completely familiar with various work permits. This nonetheless did not appear to them as the state’s failure in keeping them a promise [for a better life], as “being wholesaled” or “milked” the way other research might refer to (Cantwell, 2015; Sue & Harrison, 2016). Mehrnoosh, for example, had experienced a halt to her pay due to her university’s human resources unfamiliarity with temporary work permits said that with the university’s significant foreign students the H.R. staff need to update themselves on the required paper work;

“They stopped paying me before the expiration date [of the work permit] and even though I already had applied for a renewal. ... I was towards the end of my PhD, I

was super stressed ...it took me a lengthy period emailing, calling and going [to the Human Resources] to have them figure it out”! (Mehrnoosh, recorded interview conversation, fall 2017).

In another case, an organization had to postpone one of the foreign graduates’ working start date in order to determine if a person with PGWP can legally occupy such a position. These bureaucratic misunderstandings become even more disappointing considering that there is no front-line for these graduates from which to seek guidance. The interviews suggested that Immigration Canada makes it extremely difficult for applicants to communicate with the organization. The very rare interactions with the CIC that had taken place after several phone calls and emails, were actually perceived as being very unhelpful and unwelcoming.

Austin, a biologist studying a master’s in neuroscience, describes his reasoning for his dislike of filling out paperwork for CIC:

“They don’t give you a contact. You send them your stuff and three months later they send it back to you and say it’s not good. I didn’t want to go through any of that again”. (Austin, recorded interview conversation, fall 2017)

As much as international students are encouraged to base their expectations and trajectories upon facts and the rules of CIC, there appears to be systematic misunderstandings, which have resulted in what post-graduation migration refers to as a form of distrust of the immigration procedures (Robertson & Runganaikloo, 2014). These interviewees had to constantly stay alert about their processing times and documentation, at least until they receive their permanent residency. Meanwhile, they felt that they had to endlessly think about a Plan B because despite their eligibility, their experience had showed that cases of miscommunication or

sudden changes to the immigration policies affect international students (e.g. Oved, 2014) were quite numerous.

“.....that’s what I remember from my undergrad, I loved my program, I loved my courses but just the pressure from immigration system was too much – I had a few friends from around the world who quit and went back to their home because of all the changes”. (Adalie, recorded interview conversation, fall 2017).

Some of the recent policy changes that the interviewees pointed out include the introduction of C-24 (Parliament of Canada, 2014). This bill implied a de-legitimatization of the time spent in Canada as a student. That time would no longer count toward their citizenship as it was the case prior to the introduction of Bill C-24. It also required an additional year of residency (four out of six instead of three out of five) from permanent residents to become citizens. The Liberal government that took over in 2015, followed the tradition of being pro-immigration in comparison to Conservatives and, repealed Bill C-24 in 2017 - as it was promised in the Liberals’ electoral campaigns (Open Parliament, 2017). Nonetheless C-24 had already affected a great number of international students (including the participants of this study) at the time it was active.

Theoretically speaking, those who were affected by the act would appear more punishable (or removeable in this case) by the state law and would have a much later access to the resources such as settlement services and health insurance that is dedicated to permanent residents. International graduates would have to wait even much longer than those who enter Canada as permanent residents to acquire stability (Rajkumar, Berkowitz, Vosko, Preston & Latham, 2012).

What stands out is that drastic policy changes, alongside the mentioned paper work issues the unfamiliarity of institutions on a PGWPP, unsettle the progression of becoming a permanent resident and deem living on a PGWPP an intense and uncertain time for the participants. In effect,

the interviewees' demonstrated considerable objectivity, and did not allow such problems to prevent them from negotiating their place in Canada's social field. Yet, they view themselves infinitely temporary (Rajkumar et al. 2012) at least until they have received their permanent residency.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The PGWPP, as an opportunity for international graduates to stay in Canada following graduation, is the pragmatic reflection of the governments' pronounced desire for retaining them as immigrants. The program's impact on international students' decision for coming to Canada (Chira, 2016) is clearly reflected in the participants' statements. However, acquiring the PGWP does not mean that international graduates fully embrace the expectations of the state institutions (Choudaha, 2016); that they are here merely because they can immigrate in Canada.

Rather, they intentionally exploit the fluidity of the contemporary world and possibilities for moving according to their personal, academic and professional aspirations (Sheller & Urry, 2006). Taking a PGWP seems to be an organic way for creating the space that gives them access to a social field within which they pursue a change and embark on creating a self that is known to them (Oliver & O'Reilly, 2010). To them, the grounds on which the government of Canada grants them permanent residency are, in fact, the forms of capital that potentially enable them to reproduce their social positioning. These capitals are institutionalized by the host state (Bourdieu, 2001) and international graduates acquire them to negotiate their place in the social field (Bourdieu, 1964, pp. 82-83). The PGWPP, accordingly, is a system of control (Urry, 2007, p. 187) through which the state provides ability and space for international students to examine the social field and their ability in situating themselves in a desired position in Canada.

In other words, international students who want to remain in Canada fit more within the category of cosmopolitan international students as discussed in Wu and Wilkes (2017) personal and adventurist reasoning. This imagery is neither the global elite (Wildawsky, 2012) nor the precarious and transnational (Brooks & Waters, 2013, p. 130; Chira, 2016).

An outstanding finding of the thematic analysis of the present interviewees' experiences with PGWP was accounts of inconsistency of the relevant paperwork. The participants suggested that even with the most regulated details, the CIC seems to manage PGWPP differently case by case. Weak and un-coordinated administration of the permit has led to an increase of interviewees' criticism. For example, the CIC does not always grant eligible graduates with the full three years of the program which in cases, has resulted in difficulty maintaining employment. Additionally, other policies and details of immigration programs that directly impact student migration have kept changing often over the past few years. These instabilities create temporariness that is associated with anxiety, unemployment and social immobility (Robertson, 2014). From the participants' perspectives, this temporariness, and the resultant anxiety, appears to be what might prohibit them from full exploitation of their capital. They collectively pointed out that their prospected economic attainment is largely dependent on becoming 'free' of the often-chaotic administrative struggles they face as temporary residents and under the PGWPP. This freedom will allow them to move more easily through Canada's job market, communities, and cities without having to be concerned about late processing times or halts in the progress of their application. Student immigrants' attitudes differ from case to case, and participants in this study do not represent the entirety of the Canadian international student body. Yet, drawing on a mobilities paradigm, this research includes the following set of variables, such as immobilities, peoples' failures in achieving prospects of migration and the way

in which various restrictions have applied to them, what impact this has on their lives, as well as their future trajectory in the social space.

In conclusion, and based on the participants' stated trajectories, opposite to the view that holds that their integration takes place slower than expected (Chiose, 2015), this study suggests that the very same data (Lu & Hou, 2015) provides proof that international graduates eventually integrate into the system. The time for economic integration, from a Bourdieusian perspective, in itself is an investment and, as interviewees admit, their time navigating their opportunities in Canada is not desolated. Accordingly, the participants' relative social immobility induced by the temporariness of PGWPP has not prevented them from morphing through the host society's social field and attain experiences that will allow them to fully unlock their acquired capital into their desired roles, at least once they have settled as permanent residents. If anything, these interviewees had a positive perception of change (Smith & Khawaja, 2011), which had allowed them to seek modifying their social field and strategizing for positioning themselves in the new one, despite difficulties they had with paper work in Canada.

If one of the goals of the PGWPP is to ensure the complete and hassle-free transition of international graduates into permanent residents and eventual citizens through Canadian work experience, there are improvements and modifications to the administration of the program that should take place, as this study and others (e.g. Belkhodja & Esses, 2013; Chira & Belkhodja, 2012) point out. Components of the PGWPP, such as the expiry and issuance date of a PGWP, and the interpretations of presence/working days from CIC can be a major determinant of whether a person's application is accepted or rejected. The administration of these elements seems to lag behind the provisions for smooth transitioning of international students to permanent residency status. The administrative shortages, as well as sudden policy changes that

the participants of this study experienced, seem to contradict the stated objectives of the PGWPP and simultaneously hinder international graduates' capacity in placing their habitus in Canada's social field.

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## Chapter 4: Post Graduate Work Permit and Social Suffering

### Abstract

This study is an art-based autoethnography that examines the first-hand experience of immigration-related adversities during transitioning to permanent residency in Canada via the Post Graduate Work Permit Program (PGWPP). The text draws upon a body of research that acknowledge immigrant's experiences of social suffering, a recurring theme and an impactful hardship associated with immigration. The article takes a different route from the studies, which explore the possibilities of eventual integration through adaptation and acculturation for immigrants, while suffering is still present among them. In such cases the suffering is either overlooked or marked as an organic part of migration. This article provides an introspection of the existing suffering and argues that the conventional emphasis on integration normalizes and even attempts to eliminate such suffering from the discourse of migration. More importantly, this article emphasizes that the social suffering of immigrants cannot be comprehended separately from the entirety of a society that undoubtedly plays a part in inducing their suffering. Therefore, it views this suffering to be the result of the relation of the transitioning migrant to the host society, the conditions of the PGWPP, as well as the societal norms that cultivate suffering. The researcher's drawings made during her time on the PGWPP express temporariness, her relation to the social landscape and her anomic state in Canada as an international post-graduate transitioning to permanent residency status.

Keywords: Immigration, art-based autoethnography, Immigrant Suffering, Post-graduate Migration

## Introduction

This art-based autoethnography provides an introspection of the representations of pain and social suffering associated with immigration (Hron, 2009) through my experience of transitioning from an international student to a permanent resident in Canada via the Post-Graduate Work Permit Program (PGWPP). The PGWPP is a temporary work permit that allows international students to stay in Canada for up to three years following their graduation, find work and apply for permanent residency (CIC, 2017a). In this art-based autoethnography I employ my expressions of social suffering (Bourdieu & Accardo, 1999) in four drawings that I created during my transitioning. The analysis of the images elaborates on the representation of pain and suffering, including bodily transformations and torments, signs of anguish and regret. Throughout the text I associate these adversities with the way I related to the social landscape; a relation infused with temporariness (Rajkumar, Berkowitz, Vosko, Preston & Latham, 2012) as a condition created by the PGWPP, directly related to the notion of anomy (Durkheim, 1951). Anomy provides an appropriate theoretical explanation for the intensity of suffering expressed in the art work as it is a prevalent condition in industrial societies, as well a product of detachment from the society.

In short, the field of post-graduate migration is devoid of many introspective explorations of the hardships experienced by these students beyond the implications made in surveys and interview-based studies (e.g. Brooks & Waters 2013; Chira, 2016; Khawja & Stallman, 2011). This absence of non-conventional outlooks towards post-graduate immigration can be related to the fact that the applicants (international graduates) are often identified for their high human capital (CIC, 2016), and that the state does not seem to consider the possibility of any intense experience of immigrant suffering among them. This is despite the fact that immigration

narratives, those other than post-graduate migration, are often laden with suffering, tragedy, and enduring of feelings of alienation generally referred to in the literature as ‘immigrant suffering’ (Hron, 2009, pp. 10-16).

Similar to other immigrant groups, international graduates tend to develop social and psychological anxieties that are often associated with culture shock, limited financial resources and an absence of social networks in the host state (e.g. Neiterman, Salmonsson & Bourgeault, 2015). Despite elements of reality in the existing qualitative literature on migration and suffering, the discourse itself is conceptually subject to neoliberal and colonial perspectives that singularize personhood in economic production (Skeggs, 2013). In other words, studies that seek to understand immigrant suffering redundantly exploit terms such as ‘multiculturalism,’ ‘pluralism,’ and ‘hybridity’ which are admittedly, and from experience, the circulating currency in contemporary immigration discourse (Hron, 2009, pp. 10-16). These terms do more to mask suffering than to highlight and address the problem. Pluralism, more often than not, goes hand in hand with the definition of the successful immigrant, or as Hron (2009) puts it, happy strangers who overcome their inevitable social suffering through accepting their inefficiencies, lack of skills and naiveté. It is often upon us to believe that an utter integration resolves immigrant suffering. Even if it does not, the immigrant who lays her dispute against the system through joining a cause that opposes discrimination, is laterally, exploiting and celebrating suffering and otherness (Hron, 2009, pp. 10-16). Suffering becomes an acceptable norm and even an expected rite of passage. By embracing this mentality, very little is done to address the problem, and is not even looked upon as being a problem in the first place. The conventions of immigration suffering generally rely on these conditions to either find ways for improving immigrants’ situations

through social and cultural education, or through politicizing their suffering (e.g. Stein & de Andretorri, 2016).

In this chapter I identify social vulnerabilities and salient immigration stressors of social suffering and the personal and social resources that increase the persistence of the state of anomy and endanger the mobile person's well-being to inform research and policy. This requires the employment of a theoretical paradigm that allows for coherent and non-linear narratives, and an exposure of the difficulties of immigration that often go untold in favor of the integration agenda. For this reason, I employ the Mobilities Paradigm (Urry, 2007), a research practice that allows the study of what Urry refers to as "things of mobility" – essentially narratives and non-linear parts of mobility that are not usually included in conventional research.

### **Review of Literature**

In this text I first problematize two of the main conventional contemporary outlooks in post-graduate migration literature; the first conventional perspective is the state's discourse in which post-graduate migrants are expected to turn their cultural capital into economic capital with an eye on recuperating their economic status (CIC, 2012a; Skeggs, 2013). This rhetoric anticipates social success and integration for international students (CBIE, 2016, 2015; DFATD, 2014; Pham, Bao, Saito & Chowdhury, 2016), and does not foresee that their mobility could become anything short of an economically productive activity. In other words, student mobility and economically productive activities are seen as synonymous. In the case of any less than ideal social experience where the outcome of transitioning is proven to be lamented by social isolation (e.g. Chira, 2016; Belkhodja, 2013), bureaucratic struggles (Kelly, 2012) or low income (Picot, Hou & Coulombe, 2007), the investigations seek ways for accelerating graduates' integration. These investigations are often preoccupied with correctional approaches that seek fixing the

flaws of the system, which might have resulted in these the less-than-ideal post-graduate migration experiences (e.g. Pham, Saito, Bao & Chowdhury, 2018; Smith & Khawja, 2011).

These existing studies suggest that the negative experiences of post-graduate migrants are linked to international graduates' precarious and temporary status (Rajkumar et al. 2012), as well as their levels of acculturation and adaptation (Smith & Khawja, 2011), and an absence of satisfying social networks (Andrade, 2006). From this vantage point, integration is often associated with levels of communication skills, sociocultural adaptation and acculturation, defined as eventual reciprocal change following encounters with a new society (Stein & di Andretoni, 2016). They proceed by recommending better regulations of information distribution regarding immigration policies (Belkhodja & Esses, 2013), development of programs that can assist, for example, international students to have higher levels of contact with host nationals and attain better fluency in the host country's language (Smith & Khawja, 2011; Thomson & Esses, 2016). These qualities are undoubtedly a newcomer's instrumental ability to negotiate day-to-day social tasks in the new culture (Thomson & Esses, 2016). But these studies seem to take for granted that social suffering can take place despite expertise in language and contact with the host nationals, and that it might be a result of a broader scheme of issues beyond a migratory narrative. More importantly, the experience of suffering does not need to be eliminated, but rather can be used to describe and critique the existing conditions that induce it (Hron, 2009).

Parallel to the studies that focus on an acculturation and adaptation viewpoint is research that links hardships of post-graduate migration to race, ethnic and socioeconomic issues that are inextricably linked to colonial history of south to north migration (Stein & de Andretorri, 2016). There are exemplary former international students who write about immigration themselves, and who often address systematic issues of colonialism that perpetuate a structural deficit in

integrating immigrants (e.g. Chira, 2016; Winter, 2014). Yet unlike general migration schemes, work around post-graduate migration continues to be devoid of expressive and unconventional research material that highlight the social suffering of post-graduate migrants.

Social suffering here is equivalent to social disintegration (Durkheim, 1951) or social displacement (Bourdieu & Accardo, 1999; Hron, 2009) and speaks to issues such as lack of collective sensibility, as well as the presence of culminated detachment that is a source of depression among people (Durkheim, 1951, p. 172). These conditions are in fact more present among immigrants (Hron, 2009, p. 30; Smith & khawja, 2011). This presence makes revealing these conditions substantially important in Canada with its more than 20% foreign born population (StatCan, 2017a). Thus, it is important to attain a more comprehensive understanding of the existing suffering among immigrants as opposed to normalizing and positioning it within typical nation building and ‘multiculturalism discourses’ (Hron, 2009, p. 23). There appears to be a space for research that offers a closer dissection of post-graduate migrants’ experiences with social suffering.

Attempting to provide this dissection, I stay away from fetishization of mobility. Rather, draw on Bourdieu and Accardo (1999) in inspecting suffering associated with migration as a very tangible and an academically relevant part of the human condition. I explore this condition through my experiences as expressed in vignettes that I created during my time transitioning from an international student to permanent residency status under the PGWPP. I identify social suffering as recurrent and pervasive events that lead to a prolonged sense of ‘alienation’ among immigrants (Hron, 2009, p. 28). I seek to challenge the generic immigration narrative with its underlying assumption that there is an inevitable trajectory for all immigrants; that the mentioned suffering is their rite of passage and, will and should lead to eventual social integration and

relative success – even if that success comes only for their off-spring (Djajic, 2003; Hron, 2009, p.16). I argue that both the economic oriented perspective of the state, and the academic discourse that seeks a reduction of suffering, perpetuate suffering at the cost of successful integration, and underline immigrants' progress by making suffering an expected norm. This attitude inevitably silences this substantial part of human condition and reduces the emotions involved in the mentioned suffering, as a justifiable part of immigration (Hron, 2009, p. 28) via the PGWPP.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

In the present text I examine social suffering through Durkheim's interpretation of the exasperation and weariness of mood among persons who find themselves socially disintegrated (Durkheim, 1951, p. 172 & 324). Durkheim's concepts of exasperation and weariness are employed here as the precursors of anomy; a state that is blatantly present in [post-graduate] migration and research has demonstrated its accounts of social, physical and psychological defect (Chira, 2016; Robertson & Runganaikoo, 2014). Anomy begets a state of exasperation and irritation that *may* turn one against themselves or others (Durkheim, 1951, p. 324). Given the chance, international students may open up about their suicidal thoughts and dissatisfaction with the detached social interactions they experience something seen on Niagara College's website for mental health awareness iamnotok.ca. So, it is known that such experiences do exist, yet not much theorization has taken place to describe their prominence academically.

For Durkheim, anomy is not merely a problem associated with individuals, but a reflection of the society as a whole (Durkheim, 1951, p. 333). Durkheim's anomy provides an explanation for various forms of suicide and homicide within post-industrial societies. He theorizes that the underlying reason for suicide, for the most part, is the [low] level of social

integration of the group (Berkman, Glass, Brissette & Seeman, 2000). In other words, anomy has many representations, and is a collective state for which increased suicide rate is a symptom. Relevantly, immigration research, in fact, has shown that increased migration in Canada has been accompanied by an increase in suicide rates (Trovato, 1989). The presence of anomy, as an existential state accompanied by a chronic suffering among individuals, has been in fact illustrated in forms other than suicide, including psychosocial pathology of immigration (Hron, 2009). In these studies, accounts of sadness, hurt and trauma are paramount (see Hage, 2008). The cause is said to be the severing of one's social relations, the financial distress and cultural shock often present in immigration (Trovato, 1989).

In *Suicide*, Durkheim states that efforts for representation of the collective state of anomy should be made as opposed to oppressing it for the sake of "pluralist success" (1951, p. 333). He, in short, defines this notion of illusion of success as a machinery response to relative financial security and overwhelming emphasis on the singularity of persons in industrial societies. In here I respond to Durkheim's call for reflexivity and through an acknowledgement of the hardships that lie within human condition. Accordingly, my drawings in this text display a transformation of my human body into a whale that appears to be dying while painfully dragging her bloody body along the streets of Toronto. Through Durkheim's concept of anomy, this symbolic representation of suffering reflects on the results of unsettling of social integration and loss of recognition (Durkheim, 1951), both of which have become central to immigration.

## **Methods**

### **Art-Based Autoethnography**

Autoethnography is turning the personal struggle, resistance and dialogues into the critical inspector of everyday urban life under late capitalism (Denzin, 2003; Mills, 1959). For that I had to develop a critical imagination that dramatically moved within the personal troubles experienced

under Canada's neoliberal migration system and the system itself. The use of art comes as a complement to autoethnography as a research derived from social imagination is [has to be] performative (Denzin, 2003; Spry, 2011). McNiff (1998) defines the domain of arts-based research as the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expression in all of the different art forms, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies. Incorporation of art pieces allows my research to encompass a different capacity for communication through imagination and reflexivity (Chenail, 2004; Holt, 2003; Osvath, 2017). By becoming simultaneously the researched and the researcher, (Finley & Knowles, 1995; Forde, 2013), or putting the researcher's own body on the stage rather than writing about others (Moreira, 2017), I place an emphasis on how explicit artistic expressions regarding the aesthetics of experiences and events can integrate into and advance [the] research (Collins & Chandler, 1993, p. 182).

This method is inspired by the contemporary autoethnographers who explore narratives of estrangement (Keenan & Evans, 2014), political divergence among family members (Lanthorn, 2017), violence and racism (Moreira, 2017), and even generational clashes (Hernández-Ojeda, 2017; Buchner, 2012) and race (Forde, 2013). In autoethnographies, such as *Bird on the Wire* (Buchner, 2012), and in *Decolonizing Narratives of Silence Between Being and Belonging* (Lanthorn, 2017), the authors seek closure to some form of mourning, hurt or suffering that is directly or indirectly related to social, cultural and political issues. Similar to the work of immigrant literary writers who seek to communicate their misunderstood suffering (Hron, 2009), a search for healing of the endangering of immigrant health (Beiser, 2005) is also present in this work.

The use of drawing as a method of inquiry has become a part of social research for a variety of reasons, including drawing's tangibility and concreteness, their capacity for prompting or eliciting further data, and their potential for moving the audience (Pink, 2012; Mitchell, Theron, Stuart & Smith, 2011). Drawing enables the creators to freeze and study their memories, aspirations, or thoughts (Mitchell, Theron, Stuart, Smith & Campbell, 2011). When researchers use drawings to make experience, perception, or emotion visible, the analyses of the drawings are only sufficient once they engage the creators to make meaning out of what they are seeing. This goes one step further when the researcher is the creator (e.g. Forde, 2013) and engages in the very process of analyzing and understanding the drawing (Mitchell et al., 2011). Working across a variety of disciplinary areas including cultural studies, literary studies, archaeology, anthropology, sociology and art history, non-textual records re-frame what counts as data and how it can be read. As a projective technique, drawings make parts of the self and/or levels of development visible (Mitchell et al., 2011). Similar to Forde (2013), I provide my written narrative and description of the drawings to generate data about my transitioning memories to unravel fallacies within the host society's policies and interplays (Hron, 2009, p. 45). This allows for close examination, and better understanding of life events as the drawings represent both the events, as well as how I felt about those events. An important factor to keep in mind, while reviewing the analysis and the drawings, is that I did not create these pieces with any specific intention; as an artist I allow my drawings to come out as I have envisioned them. The current analyses, therefore, are my objective and conscious understanding of the work that has been created in the past, while I was a PGWP holder transitioning and aspiring to Canadian permanent residency. Like children's ability to capture feelings and emotions through drawings prior to developing spoken or written language, as someone who was only distantly familiar with social theories, these drawings captured my mindset

about my social suffering at the time; the images' implications as material for social research in fact, have multiple overlapping with the very present-day issues regarding temporariness and a clash with capitalism. As Denzin (2003) puts it, through an art-based autoethnography I become the antihero and reflect an extreme external situation through my own extremity. My autoethnography is not only a diagnosis of myself but of the phase under PGWPP and temporary residency. In other words, these drawings can function as a mirror to view our perceptions of self as a social agent, as pieces give life to personal experiences and yet are frequently overlooked or downplayed in public accounts of social research (ibid.).

### Study Material and the Context of the Drawings



I created the presented four drawings during the period I transitioned from an international graduate to a permanent resident via the PGWPP, between 2011 and 2013. I had moved to

Canada as an international student from Iran, pursuing a master's degree at the University of Windsor (2009 – 2011). Following graduation, I moved to Toronto as I awaited my permanent residency under the PGWPP, and continuously looked for field related jobs in health research. During this period, I held zero-hour contract<sup>3</sup> jobs at a restaurant, a fitness gym, and as a door-to-door sales person. I lived in shared houses, and I often was harassed by roommates and landlords. The processing of my immigration application took 2.5 years<sup>4</sup>, ostensibly longer than the advertised time by the CIC (CIC, 2016). The unsettling living conditions and ever-extending delay formed an erosive sense of living in limbo that is specific to temporary residence status; a condition that is known to have detrimental effects on post-graduate immigrants (Chira, 2016; Moltaji, forthcoming; Robertson, 2014). Understandably, I had grown to despise and suffer from the ongoing subordination to the subsequent un-satisfying social condition. These conditions never improved until I landed as an immigrant in 2013 and was able to finally register as a graduate student (A PGWP-holder cannot register at any degree program).

In short, my drawings demonstrate my self-transformation into a whale. The whale keeps dragging herself on the streets of Toronto, while bleeding and in a state of dying. It is a surreal description of my relation to the social landscape through alienation and suffering at the time. Almost a pathological response to the suffering induced by the feelings of un-belonging. Not belonging is the parallel to the symbolic representation that the whales might project in this series of drawings.

Whales are not to be seen on land; but they do shore and they strand themselves on beaches. There are numerous pictures and videos taken at the beaching incidents of whales (e.g.

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<sup>3</sup> This meant that I would only have work if I could sell training sessions.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably due to closure of the Iranian Embassy in Ottawa (2012) that affected security check timing for Iranian applicants and, the closure of the case processing center in Buffalo (2013) for which the government of Canada transferred applications to Ottawa

2017 in Indonesia, 2018 in Australia), a grim, deathly scene. Dozens of whales, each of which weighs many tons, lay packed together in the surf. The catastrophic outlook is the likely a consequence of disturbance to their echolocation caused by human generated under water sonic activities (Gibbens, 2018; Talpalar & Grossman, 2005). These sonic activities generate signals and frequencies from a variety of sources, from oil and gas exploration or military sonar (Yusof & Kabir, 2014), that the whales process and interpret as vital. If this happens during a deep dive, failure of echolocation, which is crucial for their orientation, may lead to the whales' disorientation. In other words, they escape their very habitat at a speed that their body cannot bear while taking wounds from the high frequency radio signals burning their skin and innards (Gibbens, 2018; Talpalar & Grossman, 2005). In my drawings the whale is first birthed at a moment where I come face to face with my social condition as a barrier to connecting with the cityscape and the social scene. Whether a form of escapism, or an act inherently intended to enhance the symbolism of that escape; in the following three pieces after birth, the whale grows full size, beached and bleeding, as I become the very expression of disintegration, weariness and exasperation.

One of the speculations around mass whale beaching is that they – knowingly or unknowingly - revolt against the intruding signal so therefore their ascending is at least partially intentional; one whale's response to the deteriorating sonic waves or resultant sickness is followed by other whales because they do not want to leave the disoriented whale's side (Gibbens, 2018). The whale in my drawings however, is more reminiscent of the 52Hz whale, an individual species that calls at a significantly higher frequency than the blue and fin whales. This has been perceived as making it unidentifiable by other whales, remarking the animal as the

loneliest creature in the world<sup>5</sup> (BBC, 2015; Persico, 2017). The whale in my drawings is a singular entity as the city where she is at, had an incredible indifference, and unnamed ability in not seeing monsters, and not seeing blood (Moreira, 2017). And even if the city did see her, it would turn the other way as if the bloodied monster didn't even exist. To be not seen is painful enough but seeing others pretend not to see is even more painful, for there is a realization of the absence of human empathy. And in that absence, a deep sense of anomy and disconnection sets in. Blood is life, and when enough of it pours out, death ensues.

For analyzing the drawings, I follow analytical methods conducted by Howells and Negeriros (2013) and Forde (2013), which mark the corresponding figures with the main themes in analysis in each drawing. Every image in the series has indications that can be interpreted as a combination of a) disdain for capitalist notion of success consumed by both the general and immigrant public, b) social immobility as a result of temporariness which is described as the uncertainty of immigration application outcomes and, infinitely unsuccessful attempts for securing an income and, c) feelings of alienation and estrangement specific to un-empathic [sub]urban environments.

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<sup>5</sup> Upon knowing the case of 52Hz whale I titled the full series of drawings which consists of 13 pieces “52Hz” They were formerly titled Toronto Series. Visit the drawing series here: <https://golbon-moltaji.squarespace.com/52hz/>

**400 Univ. Ave.***Figure 4: Drawing 1 – 400 Univ. Ave.*

This drawing shows me kneeling in front of Zurich building, No. 400 University Ave., which is where I had handed in my application for the Provincial Nominee Program (CIC, 2012b) as a part of the preparation for the federal immigration process. The vision for the drawing comes from the day I made my way to this building to deliver my hand-made birthday card to an immigration officer whom I had met at the University of Windsor. This trip essentially marked the conclusion of my interactions with him. The fact that we never met that day, or any other day, could simply be described as an indiscriminate failed romantic endeavor. But in this drawing, the abhorrently industrial background, the building ‘looking-down’ on me, with the CN

tower and the Canadian flag by its two sides, as if they are guarding it, all imply a form of oppression and some form of inferiority complex (Galarza, 2014, pp. 3-4). This complex stemmed from the fact that my urge for attaining membership in Toronto's society was often hostilely downplayed by people that I interacted with.

Yearning for membership in a society is considered to be among the classical elements of citizenship<sup>6</sup> (Urry, 2012, p. 188), as distinctly separated from one's formal status; yet, failure in acquiring membership in the host society appears to be an integral part of immigration. This absence of membership is mainly influenced by the attitudes of the host society towards the newcomer, and it is namely this *structural violence* (Hron, 2009, p. 24) that causes it. I sought participating in certain activities, which I hoped would bring me close to those with similar interests (Bourdieu, 1984). However, most of my social circles seemed to recognize success in a pluralist frame and found satisfaction in making one's ends meet (Hron, 2009). For immigrants I knew specifically, this set of pluralistic and capitalistic (Skeggs, 2013) values appeared as the hegemonic collective, and the meaning of their presumed path towards integration (De Leeuw & Wuchelen, 2012). The only friendship I formed that was remotely similar to this membership or social bond was my interaction with this immigration officer, or at least with the numerous interests we shared. His short-lived company made me feel *that I existed again*. The miscarried attempt to reconnect, yet another social failure, meant to me that he had retreated back to the structure that demonstrated hostility towards me. I had to understand that he was possibly a part of that structure that continuously reduced and rejected me to begin with. I had to acknowledge the fact that I am a temporary worker – a nobody with no connections, and no capacity for emotions that I could even express for the purpose of experiencing simple human connections. In

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<sup>6</sup> Urry refers to this membership as classical citizenship.

this drawing, I am removing a mask that represents my failed attempt at fitting in, or for looking pleasant, for appearing less like a temporary resident who is running around to find a place to live and seeking employment, and more like a woman with pop-culture feminine attributes. This in itself, is an indication of an effort to comply with a system that asserts that a person's recognition, and even level of desirability, depends on her economic and social status (Skeggs, 2013). This moment, therefore, was shockingly painful and I felt like *I was dying*.

As is evident, I had not died. Even, paraphrasing Durkheim (1951), my act in creating this drawing was not even directly antecedent to death for death to be regarded as its effect. There is the indirect relation and the nature of the phenomenon that remains dreadful nonetheless; creating in response to pain, giving birth to a new identity that is manifested in corporal suffering and an urgent need for relief (Hron, 2009, p. 67). I bleed, and a whale is born from within me.

### **York Mills Road**

*Figure 5: Drawing 2 – York Mills Road*



From this second piece onward, I disappear from the drawings, and the full-size whale represents what I had become; my social suffering. As she bleeds and drags herself on the streets, an embodiment of being overcome by the magnitude of the suffering and rejection looms. The whale is a symbolic revolt against the self—a normally-must-suffer imagery that was imposed on me by my surroundings. There is a long-standing history of various forms of embodiment of suffering in migration literature. Embodiment of suffering, *mal partout*, or malaise, has been studied in clinical pathology as an established phenomenon (e.g. Hron, 2009, p. 121-129). Hron herself summarizes one of these experiences that captures the pain of the rejected who revolts against the hostile system by self-harm. Similar to Adda's sister in *Ce pays dont je meurs* (Zouari, 2000 as cited in Hron, 2009, p. 81) who dies due to refusing food after dealing with negative attitudes toward her for being an immigrant despite her relative success at school, the bleeding whale recounts a clear negative and revolting attitude towards her surrounding resulting from anomy (Durkheim, 1951). My yearning to be a part of urban life in Toronto had brought me to mark myself in contrast with the structure that deluded my desire to think I had to be content with my conditions: being pushed to live in places where there was no sign of a dynamic lifestyle, my suffering as a bleeding whale on land is a manifestation of the commonplace sacrificial immigrant experience.

From a sociological perspective, York Mills represents a non-place (Urry, 2007); where the social agent loses her agency to arbitrary regulations of capital. It was a non-place among many that I had to commute through; a cut-off community with wide, empty and senseless surroundings. In these suburbs the most human form of activity, and the only form of practicing social power, is shopping; accumulation of goods and fetishization of accumulation. In this proverbial no-man's land, success was defined by an ability to commodify everything. In York

Mills, commuters seemed to define themselves in some culture that did not go beyond identifying consumption as power. *They think this is life in Canada. And I despised this life.*

The whale is enormous, yet, invisible, stained and frightening in an undesirable way; even though her blood stains are everywhere, no one cares to rid themselves of her. The whale is a monster whose only purpose is to bear the suffering. And she is hopeless that the magnitude of her pain will never bring about change, attention, or sympathy. My revolt, unlike Adda's sister, remained symbolic. Notwithstanding, actions of self-inflicted hurt (in the case of Adda's sister) or pathologic responses (such as psychosomatic gastrointestinal disorders that I developed back then and prevail today) amidst social suffering related to immigration, are recurring events in the immigration literature. These events or revolting actions, from Hron's point of view, make the immigrant authentic and distinguished (Hron, 2009, p. 81-82) and from Durkheim's point of view are provoked by indifference and social detachment. Provocation is another theme in Durkheim's critique of the pluralistic philosophy of industrial societies; the philosophy that views success in accumulation of values marked by financial security.

### Queen at Spadina

Figure 6: Drawing 3 – Queen at Spadina



This drawing is related to the role of the host state in inducing suffering (Hron, 2009, p. 54), specifically through temporariness as subsequent to PGWPP's conditions. PGWPP defined me as a temporary resident who could not use immigration employment services and was not allowed to register into any degree program either. Thus, a feeling of entrapment, or what in social sciences referred to as social immobility (e.g. Urry, 2007), was prevalent in my sensory experience.

Queen at Spadina was the center of the world. I kept coming around this intersection as much as I could; for spoken word poetry competitions at Drake Hotel, for attending the University of Toronto's socio-cultural studies classes (as a free participant), for science and business meet ups that I would read about online, for the University of Toronto's summer school, for Nuit Blanche, for Comic Book Festival, for employment workshops and for recruitment

meetups. Despite my efforts, I would either find myself back in the suburbs I lived in, or in the dichotomizing corridors of immigrant settlement and employment centers. Often questioned about why I could not ‘sell myself’ well, or acquire an ‘elevator pitch’, or be ‘happy’, ‘feminine’ and ‘smile’ enough to get a job, I had eventually internalized a sense of inefficiency (Hron, 2009, p. 58-9). As if I had accepted that I had to adjust accordingly, I remained focused on monetizing my ability, my degrees, my body, my looks, my intellect, and all of that was external and attached to me (Hron, 2009, pp. 10-16; Skeggs, 2013). For doing so, I would agree with unfair employment and accommodation offers, falsely thinking that a temporary degradation would eventually help me gain work experience by the time I landed as an immigrant.

In other words, I experienced the very eventual internalization of self-disrespect and acceptance of suffering as an outcome of the mentioned structural violence (Hron, 2009, p. 58-60). This, from Skeggs (2013) point of view, is an integral part of colonial formation in which the respectability of a person relies on the possibility of a self that can conceive of a future in which value is realized as a specific exchange-value. This transforms any story into employability adventure (Skeggs, 2013), which means that if I appeared unemployable, it automatically deterred me from respect and increased my social suffering.

This piece arguably poses a critique to the fetishization of mobility (Sheller & Urry, 2007), which is a common concept in international education and skilled migration discourse (e.g. CIC, 2012c). From my perspective, the economic criteria/social class that is imagined for student immigrants (Chira, 2016; Picot et al., 2007) seemed absurdly bogus; as a result of temporariness, I was pushed to believe I was unemployable, unrespectable and socially immobile, blocked in my ability to make any substantial decisions about my future. I was essentially a mobile person who had become socially immobile, frozen in a moment of suffering. The image reflects this by

the whale trapped on a vehicle and between wires, as does any effort on the part of the whale to move does not lead to its liberation, rather exacerbates her suffering.

The emphasis in the artwork is not only on the symbolic presentation of death, but the suffering that is a predecessor to that death. The act of dying, or being murdered, theoretically relates this piece to anomy – the state that, as Durkheim describes, can manifest itself in acts of violence against oneself or others. The artwork is an indicator of bafflement by subjectivity, to the point of aesthetic excess and implosion. The self transforms into another being; “the self no longer has any real existence, only a perspectival appearance as a site where all the referents converge and implode” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 83). The subconscious expression of violence makes explicit the non-conventional discourse about suffering. The beached whale is only magnifying her suffering by letting herself die on a vehicle that is iconic to downtown Toronto. Making explicit what suffering looks like, here the drawing carries an introspection towards the conventions that partially reproduce the existing homogeneous perception about international students as immigrants.

### Hudson's Bay

Figure 7: Drawing 4 – Hudson's Bay



During transition period, I felt more depressed and estranged in the winter months, especially around the holidays. This depression and estrangement, of course, was amplified by an overdose presentation of signifiers of the holidays in Canada. The whale's explicit despair here among Christmas shoppers, however, is not a cry for joining the collective of Holidays' celebrations or to resist it: she is impervious, disturbed, and subconsciously continues an urge to break with the structure.

This very structure is one that bares an over-representation of immigrants during the holidays since those in weak socio-economic conditions [should] not have time for holidays (or any form of ritualistic celebration per se) only to mark their marginalization (e.g. Moreira, 2017). And, this structure is the one that categorizes immigrants as a hegemonic group, the one that reduces the criteria for recognition to those qualifications that alienate them with the very colonial markers of singularity and marginalization. These markers have become the pre-sets of

theoretical happy endings to the immigrant's integration journey (Henley, 2016); the hard-working immigrant, who takes on anonymous positions and odd working hours, is usually depicted as the naïve hero that is eventually integrating into the host society (Hron, 2009, p. 10, p.16-17 etc.).

In this structure, the naïve hard worker, the immigrant, is given an alternative option; to belong to the pain-filled discourse of politics that fights for equality of marginalized people. This latter is aimed at attaining political recognition and in doing so, celebrates the social suffering that it is opposing as a means to represent hybridity, otherness and resistance (Hron, 2009, p. 23). And doing so, it affirms the same anomy and isolation that was created it in the first place.

The spiteful monster I had become revolted against living within the dominance of these two discourses, both of which seemed to perpetuate suffering. I had simply become an ultra-thing, a malevolent and infinitely sad thing, dragging myself along some of the most commercial spots in Toronto, hoping to stand above and beyond the holidays' routine; in fact, I recall that in some moments, I felt that my sadness was so enormous that it could turn into an extra ordinary piece. As if this whale was real, it would turn heads, it would frighten some, and it would be phenomenal.

## **Discussion**

The meaning making in my drawings presented in this study converge in the symbolic use of whales, blood and urban spaces. The feel of the space emboldens pondering social outcomes of mobility; in here my internalization of inefficiency and disrespect takes place due to interactions with a society that subscribes to the pluralist notion of success. But a part of my suffering is concealed in the fluctuating sea of feelings towards the places of living and working; on the one hand I am aspired to become a part of the dynamic downtown, but my social

positioning puts me in a disempowered condition that makes my presence in that very location anomic and unrelatable. On the other hand, I am torn between the downgrading effect of living in an environment and a community that identifies me – supposedly ordinary-first-world – aspirations snobbish and effectively acts like a swamp drowning my nervous pursuits heedlessly.

These become the generative engine of depression and plant a sense of alienation in my conscience that my artistic presentation of self, formerly done through self-portraits – alters into the symbolic anomic state of a whale. The creature is caught in a friction and absolute suffering, to the point that it encloses the subject, the whale, to death. I refer to this alienation mainly as a consequence of inaccessibility of physical and social mobilities in the suburbs and urban places, being pushed into the margins, due to socio-economic status and temporariness, integral parts of immigrant suffering discourse (Hron, 2009, p. 78).

These art pieces are not seeking to politicize the pain, nor do they demonstrate hope for turning the whale into a happy stranger. That is the status integrated immigrants seem to comply with despite their pain throughout the process (Hron, 2009). The suffering here is more relevant to Urry's explanation of inequality that is manifested in an absence of membership in societies, one that is regardless of one's formal status, and resonates more with human connections. As both Urry and Durkheim mention, such membership in capitalist societies is less socially constructed, and depends more on the individual's success in accessing the desired networks (Durkheim 1951, pp. 124-125; Urry, 2012, p. 189). The more capitalist and hegemonic illusions of success become centralized in a society, the more potential desired networks become decreasingly accessible. Relevantly, inequalities in this sense affect immigrants more, only for that bonding with any new society that is immersed in its consumption of capitalist values is less likely. The inability to access institutions, while bearing the weight of unhealthy social

interactions, are completely different issues from that of facing outward racism or, encountering a lack of recognition for foreign degrees both of which that are often brought up in anti-discrimination discourses (e.g. Arthur & Flynn, 2011; Bodycott, 2009). These interactions, nonetheless, bring crucial moments of suffering into one's trajectory.

The main arguments and contributions of this article can be divided into considerations for reviewing the conditions of the PGWPP, an emphasis on social [im]mobilities magnified by the living conditions that proceed temporariness and relentless efforts of fulfilling the capitalist prospects of success. As well there is an argument for an expansion to the body of post-graduate migration literature into expressive and subjective narratives. For the former, my review of the art pieces demonstrated the effect of temporariness as an influential element that can produce feelings of suffering and alienation for the PGWPP holder as the condition slips the individual toward social interactions, personal relationships and especially wrong networks which I refer to as undesired networks or social interactions. In the analysis I emphasized on the detrimental impact of an absolute absence of access to institutions, particularly the inability of a PGWPP holder to benefit from immigration services in employment searches. These conditions only deteriorate respectability, perpetuate demeaning living conditions and aggravate the state of anomy. In a way, such an anomic state reflected in drawings provides an alternative introspection towards the proclaimed mobility of the educated and skilled migrant, which is linked to the study's first appeal calling for a review of the conditions of the PGWPP, as per permit holder's access to immigration services.

I also focused on the ability of expressive forms as carriers of knowledge and truth about immigration suffering (Hron, 2009, p. 48), and therefore connected post-graduate migration to a larger body of work that recognizes the significance of suffering and opposes the silencing of it.

For the past several decades, the assumption underlying some social policy has been that humans can be treated as machines whose actions can be predicted by attempting to gain the maximum reward for the least expenditure of resources or effort (Graeber, 2018). Presenting those very people as the “cream of the crop” and as the axis of progression is only a sugar coating for the very realities that many top down programs do not seem to consider in depth. The suffering presented here should be noted for the profoundness of the effect of such social immobility, one that is comparable to the doom of beached whales, anomic and dreadful. The suicidal state of the whale is largely due to being cut from reliable echolocation/communities, which is due to a disrespect for the sensitivity of the animals/lack of realization of one’s cultural capital from the side of her social circles.

As Hron clarifies (2009), the host state is a determinant of the type of suffering and negative experiences that immigrants will face. The issue of suffering of immigrants, therefore, can be traced back to a system that assumes the possibility that profit can be made from all practices, and that profit can then be stored in the self for the self to have value (Skeggs, 2004). Values in such perspective are generated and organized via practices that are imposed by this colonial formation of the self. In such conditions, the essence of respectability is informed by the ability to monetize oneself. In other words, the individual in this system either has a place in the political economy or is romantic, gendered and poor, and thus looked upon as valueless (Skeggs, 2013). There appears to be little room for anything in between these two dichotomies.

For immigrants (and temporary residents alike) who have severed their existing social relations, and those who are particularly barred from accessing institutions, (PGWPP holders in this case), such system is more detrimental and inevitably leads to emotional and physical distress for those affected. This distress, and the subsequent suffering, positions them in a state of

anomy. Anomy is not specific to them as immigrants, but is the condition of industrialization, individualism and singularizing, which are core elements of the modern-day western societies (Durkheim, 1951). Such state of affairs has shown to have specifically inflicted higher rates of suicides among immigrants in Canada (Trovato, 1989). Therefore, it is a reasonable proposition that expressions of immigrant suffering should not be divorced from the social arrangements and attitudes which have an impact on immigrants and who, as a result of this, display classic neoliberal symptoms (Springer, 2017).

What is at stake here is living in an anomic state that makes one feel as if she is passing through a slow and agonizing death. Even if there is no actual death in this article, the artwork can be interpreted as re-creations of a purely dismal mood, resulting from social suffering. In realizing this suffering, its magnitude should stand above and beyond monetization or fulfilment of conventional immigrant imagery. This study, in the end, is an invitation to abolish modesty in the academic literature when expressing internalized guilt for remaining invisible and under-employed (Skeggs, 2013). The impact of such suffering has been shown to be abiding and enduring (Durkheim, 1951, pp. 124-125; Moreira, 2017). The risk and toll of losing the existing connections and creating new ones for those on the move, especially in an era that is marked by its anomic state as a result of heightened signalization and individuality (Durkheim, 1951), should take center stage when defining sociological and economic studies of mobility. Both the feeling of alienation in space, and the embodiment of ineffable pain, are prevalent in immigration literary – yet not academic – writing.

Studies like this demonstrate that suffering and pain can be viewed as a source of knowledge in itself instead of viewing it as a rite of passage toward some economic goal which, in many cases, continues to be illusive (Hron, 2009, p. 48). To speak in Durkheimian terms, to

contend with pain as a part of life is the reason that there has to be, beside the current of optimism which impels post-graduate migrants regard the world confidently, an opposite current, less intense, of course, and less general than the first, but one that is able to restrain it partially (1951, p. 333). A country such as Canada, which relies on a diverse population, needs to avail itself of knowledge that is at arm's reach. People on the move, including post-graduate immigrants, are in need of monetary optimization just like any other human being. In addition, they carry a contemporary 'feel' of where they are and who they are (Urry, 2012). And who they are, their selves, may or may not have proved as compatible with any state discourse about them. As long as their lifestyles and aspirations are forced to change so as to conform to the state discourse, the real narrative of who they are is left unexplored.

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## Chapter 5 - Conclusion

### Overview

The purpose of my doctoral research was to present a multifaceted exploration of PGWPP and its influence on the constitution of [im]mobilities among international graduates who use the program for immigrating in Canada. I aimed to understand whether the development of the program was consistent with its objectives in settling international graduates as economically and socially successful future permanent residents. This meant not only reviewing the available textual evidence and statistics of post-graduate migration, but also examining the students' perspective and opinions on the matter. For doing so, I delved into the development of PGWPP by employing an archaeological review (Chapter Two), then through interviewing a number of international graduates who have enrolled in the program to immigrate in Canada (Chapter Three), and through an art-based autoethnography in which I reflected on my own experience with PGWPP (Chapter Four).

The research questions that were examined in the three self-contained articles of this project were the following:

- 1) How does PGWPP affect the construction of international graduates' imagery as immigrants in Canada, and is that image in line with the objectives of the program?
- 2) How do international graduates reflect on their [im]mobilities in relation to PGWPP, and how do they pursue their desired social position accordingly?
- 3) How do the brunt of migratory related difficulties impact international graduate's and life trajectory in Canada?

Below, I summarize the study's articles, the way in which they connect to one another and, provide interpretations of the findings from each chapter. I then discuss the policy and theoretical implications of my research and the contributions that it makes to the existing literature. Finally, I

make recommendations for future policy making and studies and present concluding thoughts on my research.

## **Chapter Two**

In the second chapter I explored the characteristics of PGWPP through an archaeological analysis, via a Foucauldian governmentality perspective (Foucault, 1984), where I discussed the latest changes to the program that have influenced student migration overtime. The article deciphered the program through a timeline with specific expansions on the changes in the years between 2008-2015. This brought about the first and most important finding of this chapter which is that, contrary to the presumed potential successful integration and settlement of post-graduate migrants, the PGWPP extends their temporariness while present in Canada. By inducing temporariness, defined in immigrant applicants' lack of access to mobilities and rights that are associated with permanent residency and citizenship (Winter, 2014), the PGWPP affect their settlement trajectory. This is especially the case when one considers the overnight changes in the program that have a negative impact on the immigration pathway of PGWP holders, by making it more difficult for them to become permanent residents, as well as the uncertainty about the success in their immigration rate. This runs contrary to the projected outcomes of the PGWPP.

Temporariness might be a part of an initial pathway to permanent residency, yet it is also a detrimental element in settlement and mobility (Robertson, 2014). It is a fundamental issue which makes the prospect and expectation of the economic integration of international graduates less reasonable (Rajkumar et al. 2012). Temporariness amplifies the duration of uncertainty, such that, an overdue estimated application return and feeble communication with the regulating body becomes intolerable after a while.

### Chapter Three

The third chapter of this dissertation examined international graduate's perspectives on transitioning to permanent residents via the PGWPP through in-depth semi-structured interviews and by employing the Bourdieusian notions of social space and habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). The findings of these interviews unanimously address the issue of the induction of temporariness through PGWPP; first, the bureaucratic difficulties that the participants had faced during their transitioning with PGWPP, almost always accompanied with very weak communication with CIC, deterred their confidence in the system, and in themselves. Second, the interviewees endorsement of the substantial importance of strong social networks and relations in finding success. This is in compliance with the fact that social networks are largely known to be key in becoming successful in the global North (Brooks & Waters, 2013; Urry, 2007). The third finding of this article shows that student migrants' discourse does not suggest that their mobility to Canada follows the linear South to North migration imagined for international students in most of the literature (Brooks & Waters, 2013), nor does it reflect the opportunistic rhetoric of the Canadian government that views them as the best future immigrants. Through analyzing the interviews via Bourdieu's concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), this chapter demonstrated that following a personal adventure, persuasion of an imagined future is more prevalent among these graduates as opposed to money-making or immigrating in Canada as a trend of migration, and as a way for increasing their employability.

Given the relative success of the interviewees in achieving an acceptable income within less than 10 years of their residing in Canada, they are arguably some representatives of what is referred to as the best of future immigrants, the ideal successful international graduate. At the same time, the interviewees' difficulties with instability, as well as policy changes, are in sync with existing critical immigration research (e.g. Chira, 2016; Belkhodja, 2013). While their

success can be summed up with the relative accuracy of the governmental statements that places an emphasis on the prospect of international students' success (CIC, 2017b), it is also evident that this relative success has not annulled their critique of the nonchalance in the immigration program. As stated, dissatisfaction with their immigration pathway at times had made them hesitate as they were constantly 'on their toes' in possible preparation to leave Canada, and being forced to rearrange their lives for an extended period of time. Although the applicants' 'satisfaction' with the PGWPP and the relevant immigration pathways is not listed anywhere in the reviewed literature or reports, yet the participants' statements affirmed that their satisfaction would have a significant influence on their decision making.

#### **Chapter Four**

By alluding to my own experience transitioning from an international graduate to immigrant, via PGWPP, through an art-based autoethnography, this chapter dissects the very essence of social suffering in student migration in Canada. The first finding of this article comes from its review of the literature, which demonstrates that the scope of student migration remains devoid of studies that tap into social suffering of student migrants through an introspective approach. Relevantly, the studies and reports that do reflect on the existences of social adversities, mainly advocate for a correctional outlook, imagining ways for enclosing social suffering to immigration, one way or another (e.g. Pham, Bao, Saito, & Chowdhury, 2018). The chapter identifies two issues with this approach; first it legitimizes the painstaking and alienating social and formal interactions of the PGWP holder as a normal part of immigration, retrieving the metaphors of the impoverished and unequal migrant. Secondly, that it does not recognize the transition phase with its specific temporary-resident related seizure of access to social services.

This article borrows the concept of anomy from Durkheim (1951) for interpreting the graphic and mundane revelations of my drawings that were used as research material in this

article. The research's main implication is in line with Durkheim's stance, that the social suffering of immigrants should be at large looked at in relation to the attitudes of the host society, and in relation to the [im]mobilities that are created and reproduced through the very mobilities policies and programs (Adey, 2006) - such as PGWPP. This comes from that chapter's introspections through art work; first, by acknowledging that the expressed suffering is for the most part, a result of these [im]mobilities, created through the conditions of temporariness and, by placing the permit holder in social networks that are tremendously incompatible with her aspirations. Second, and more importantly is that temporariness enforces the pluralist notions of financial success as value, which leads to an intensification of a sense of alienation and social suffering. And last but not least, is social detachment associated with industrial societies that leads into anomy, eventually causes the temporary resident or migrant to internalize a sense of inefficiency, assuming that his/her perceived incompetence means having no place in the host society.

### **Policy Implications of the Temporariness embedded in the PGWPP**

Through a Foucauldian governmentality (Faubion, 2000; Foucault, 1984) perspective, PGWPP is in many ways similar to other existing state regulations that are designed with the aim of screening and controlling peoples' mobilities; contemporary immigration programs, in essence, are reminiscent of the existing tradition of othering and land-based administrations that existed from the feudal era - if not before (Anderson, 2013). The state here is autonomous in configuring the ways that permit holders serve the purposes of the state; The practical problem with this autonomous approach is that it justifies any alterations that serve the purpose of unifying the incoming flow of students as desired by the state. Many recent restrictions were

added to PGWPP in the past few years that have created instability and induced prolongation of temporariness for permit holders.

The conceptual problem with the preservation of state autonomy in regulating the mobility of students lies within the compliance of drafting this tool of power to be consistent with the global trend of praising human capital and fetishizing mobility. This trend, and the consequent shift toward educational and skilled migration, seeks high aspiring middle class individuals, or what Brooks and Waters call the “transnational capitalists” (2013, p. 133). This approach presumes that mobility, so long as strong screening systems for approving the mobile individuals’ compliance with the standards of Global North are in place, should give the state an access to a work force that is itself ultimately in search for a second chance of success. This cohort is unlike the traditionally deprived and struggling migrant who is in pursuit of a better life in comparison to her existing living conditions. Now, it is unclear if this view is realistic at all, when mobilities research has shown that for more than a decade the actual act of moving (unless it takes place in the bubble of professional travel and tourism and such) ignites adjustments and deregulates the individual of her social positioning (Sheller & Urry, 2006). In other words, the research highlights the fact that the real value of PGWPP rests in granting international graduates the experience of living and working in Canada by authorizing their capacity for attaining a desired professional (and ultimately social) position, not only through endorsing their educational capital but, through pronouncing the networks that they are presumed to seize. Once an international graduate obtains a PGWP, their mobility has supposedly advanced as they engage in social mobility in Canada. In other words, the premised transnational talent is now provided a second chance of success in a country other than their own. Yet, the PGWPP is an exemplary screening and mobility-control program or a tool of power (Foucault, 1984). Although it is built

based on the presumption and fetishization of a seamless mobility, the PGWPP restricts international students' access to services and potentially networks that deems their conditions susceptible to temporariness.

### **Policy Implication of the Bureaucratic Management of the PGWPP**

The second paper's findings highlight the fact that the interviewees encounter a supposedly supportive system of policy and programs that at times, ironically, works against them. During this period, an ostensible level of uncertainty about their future over-shadows all their efforts for determining their prosperity – from filling out incredibly unclear application forms to the ever-changing deadlines and eligibility criteria, immigration requirements and, having to go above and beyond one's capacity for finding a proper job. The hassle of settling for a young person is a universal phenomenon and requires little to no pity, as the entirety of the life in limbo for the job seekers cannot be divorced from the difficulty of job hunting in this neoliberal era (Standing, 2014). What immigration commentators call the international graduates' failure in demonstrating the prospected accomplishment of migration (e.g. Grubel, 2016) implies simply, that the international graduates are not the flexible neoliberal subjects that the state hoped they would be (Brooks & Waters, 2013, p. 8).

These former international students provided a valid critique of the economic and the one-dimensional understanding of student mobility; their mobility might be partly due to the allure of world-class education, or a desire for an accumulation of mobility capital by becoming a resident of a country other than that of their birth. But, this does not necessarily make them a part of the transnational elite who are on their individualistic adventure of conquering the world via the prominence and the prestige of their education. Rather, they are the very people who cross the borders and employ their markers of the Global North yearning to fulfil their curiosity

about the mobile world, and those who seek to carve out desired networks of friends and acquaintances in remote places, and to facilitate a reinvigoration of their habitus.

This research criticizes the very sense of temporariness that the PGWPP, a program that is crafted initially to help settlement and economic integration of international graduates brings about. In other words, the issue with the PGWPP in this text is not only the state's fundamental discourse, which seems to be fixated on attracting only the most economically beneficial immigrants, but, the fact that, to an astonishing level, the discourse that revolves around student mobility relegates discussing the refusal cases, or the unsuccessful, unstable and temporary conditions of the eligible candidates that seem to be affected directly by the top down economic outlook shaping the program.

### **What the Numbers Say**

In order to understand the policy implications of the available statistics on the PGWPP, here I briefly discuss the overlooked section of the PGWPP analysis, as presented in the introduction chapter. This can help understanding the potential of the conditions of PGWPP turning international graduates away from staying in Canada.

The number of issued PGWPs has risen steadily since 2009, and 34,375 in 2015, which is almost twice as many as the numbers for 2008 (CBIE, 2016). Simultaneously, the Canadian Employer–Employee Dynamics Database (CEEDD) on Temporary Residents File's illustrated that only 24% to 28% of international students from early the 1990s to the early 2000s actually transitioned to permanent residency status (Lu & Hou, 2015). This data represents international graduates' status over 10 years, and after receiving their first study permit. A more specific look into the transitioning of international graduates to permanent residency status reveals interesting details about the function of PGWPP in this dynamic; in 2008 there were 17,815 international graduates who obtained a PGWP. In that year there were also 11,575 international graduates

who transitioned to permanent residency status. Considering the fact that depending on the program that international graduates use to obtain permanent residency, the process from application to receiving their landed status could take from 6 months to a number of years, and that many PGWPP holders do not apply for permanent residency immediately after they graduate from school. Still, the international graduates' transition rate to permanent residency status does not seem to have risen proportionately (See Figure 1.); in 2015 there were only 8,535 international graduates who transitioned to permanent residency status (*ibid.*).

Existing data (e.g. van Huystee, 2011) provides an estimate of transitions to permanent residency status from PNP, CEC and other categories only. The closest knowledge of their intention for immigration is CBIE's 2009 report (repeated in 2017), which showed that 51% of international students intended to migrate. CBIE's 2016 report, however, shows an 8% decrease in the number of international students who transitioned to permanent residency status from 2014 to 2015. This decrease can be associated with the complexity and ambiguities of the transitioning pathways for international students.

Another notable detail from the available data in CBIE's 2016 report is the proportion of economic versus non-economic immigration among international graduates. This data reveals that only about 2/3 of transitioning international graduates become immigrants through economic immigration categories (see figure 1 and 2). The data does not reveal if these former international students have held a PGWPP; the data traces back their status to entering Canada via a study visa. That being said, it is not clear, at least from the available data, how many issued PGWPs each year lead to a permanent residency status, and what happens to those cases that do not end up being granted permanent resident status.

One more thing about the transitions is the ratio of country of origin in sending incoming students and transitioning graduates; as the CBIE's 2016 report indicates, China has been the top sending country, with India, France, South Korea, United States, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Brazil, Japan, Mexico, Vietnam and Iran to follow. The transitioning, however, does not seem to reflect this ratio proportionately; the top transitioning international graduates by country of origin is as follows: China, Philippines, India, South Korea and Iran. There are two conclusions one can draw from these statistics; one is that Philippines, with only 0.5% of incoming students, has second place standing in transitioning, and Iran that appears in rank 11/12 (%) consistently over the years is the fourth most transitioning to permanent residency among its incoming international students. These two countries may be in fact skewing the data on transitioning from the PGWPP (and generally study visas) given the fact that if we factored out the number of their incoming students, Canada will still remain one of the top destinations for international students. For example, in 2015 when there were overall 353,570 international students in Canada, if we factored out Iranian and Philippine students, there would be 347,075. In the same year the number of permanent residents who entered Canada on a study permit will reduce from 8535 to 7460, a 13.60% decrease if we factored out these two nationalities of students.

Although this project did not focus on country-specific characteristics of post-graduate migration, it would be interesting to have more precise data regarding the retention rates, given the bias that seems to be associated with the country of origin of the international students. This becomes even more crucial knowing that the number of international students from Iran has decreased by 45% in the past couple of years – they still make up 2% of the entire international student population (CBIE, 2017b). In essence, it appears that many international students from major sending countries do not stay in Canada; interestingly, this is despite the fact that the number

of issued PGWPPs seems to be high in proportion to the overall number of international students; 34,375 to 353,570, about 1 in 10 in 2015 (CBIE, 2016). Do many international graduates take up PGWPPs and turn away from transitioning due to the difficulties and the temporariness they face? Or do they simply move to other countries or return home if they fail to establish their new habitus?

### **Policy Implications of the Unsuccessful Cases of the PGWPP**

An incisive deconstructing of the difficulties associated with mobility, especially in relevance to transitioning phase via PGWPP are infrequent in research. Accordingly, the portrayal of international students seems to be dichotomized by two contrasting modes – the transnational elite and the suffering temporary resident. When the very PGWP holder who is originally privileged to access mobility in relation to education (Brooks & Waters, 2013, pp. 133-135), fails to gain economic integration, she becomes an isolated sufferer who is trapped in the position of a temporary resident. The suffering temporary resident is (at least in rhetoric) reflected in the imagery of the inefficient and unaccomplished immigrant who, ‘is expected’ to put behind his flaws – those merely attributes of the culture her homeland - in order to achieve social assimilation and economic success (Hron, 2009).

As the fourth chapter unearths through the presented art work, the mobile person cannot be viewed in isolation from the realities of mobility. Inequalities that make one appear the transnational elite from remote, and the other, a suffering temporary resident from close, root in the conditions of those very technologies of power. The conditions are embedded in mobility policies such as the PGWPP. Issues of transition are organically interwoven into mobility and it is the perceptions of temporary resident in contrast with the capitalist values of industrial societies that make this transitioning to be doubly unpleasant and socially undermining. The impairing impact of temporariness consolidated in terms such as ‘marginalization of immigrant’

has not only resonated in migration studies, such as Brooks & Waters (2013) and, Hron (2009) or in mobility related research (Urry, 2007). The presence of inequalities as a part of social life seems to be one of the fundamental facts of existence in modern sociology; research derived from the theoretical perspectives of each chapter (Foucault's, Bourdieu's and Durkheim's) critique the state for the production of inequalities. In the mentioned perspectives, there is no inherent quality in any nominal social agent that makes her among the incompetent of society until she comes in contact and interacts with contra elements imbedded in the technologies of power.

At stake is the social suffering and the likelihood of psychological deterioration that can result from temporariness. Despite the fact that the ingrained value of powerful expressions of this form of social suffering is now understood, similar in Hage (2008), Hron (2009) or Mitchell (2011), a pressing presence of such expressions in research appears to be limited in cases where people's lives seem to have been in immanent danger. In Mitchell's book, for instance, the participants have been through experiences of sexual violence and vital human encounters. In Hron's book, we do come to know cases of suicide and debilitating depression. And in Hage's 'Cockroach,' the self-loathing of the immigrant writer provides us with a clearly dark text full of contempt and traumatic moments. Durkheim takes us through accounts of homicide and suicide just to show how displeasing the state of anomy – unsettled deregulations due to severing social ties - can be. Yet, the perceived member of the transnational elite who is not expected to speak out against a system that ostensibly benefits them, might experience a similar form of suffering, both materially and discursively, in silence.

Unlike other migratory experiences, international students' experience of social suffering seems to remain hidden under the precious notion of the "best and the brightest" (CIC, 2016;

CIC, 2012b). Exploration of the health and mental health issues among immigrants in Canada shows that they are one of the more vulnerable populations when it comes to suicide (Beiser, 2005; Trovato, 1989). International students were categorized as one of the most susceptible populations to anxiety and depression, as their disorders' rates correlate with variables such as language proficiency, gender and ethnicity (Constantine, Okazaki & Utsey, 2004; Sümer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008). There are recent projects, such as I am not Ok ([iamnotok.ca](http://iamnotok.ca)), that also draw the line between mobility issues and social suffering among international and other students (Niagara News, 2016). These studies point out that what might be contributing to a seemingly higher level of anxiety and depression among international students in comparison to domestic students, is a lack of social support.

The anomy that we encounter throughout the drawings of the researcher validates these moving expressions to be poignant enough to make us think that the existence of any suffering and anomy, as such, requires considerable attention. And, that the PGWPP's future alterations and ultimate goals should be made to serve the student better than it currently does. Mobility programs such as PGWPP are designed to help the host society's economy, but such an objective cannot be separate from the well-being of those who benefit from the program. This project implies that access to satisfying social circles, in spite of occasional under-employment and even the temporariness that the program engenders, can help with the progression of the permit holder in their adventures and objectives, while (most likely) leading into economic success along the way. In contrast, when the restrictions of the permit disregard the person's desired social positioning and enforce marginalization and the person's un-worthiness, the consequent accumulation of immigrant isolation and struggle for recognition manifests in social suffering and anomy. This chapter's research material (the drawings) not only point out the severity of

social suffering, but also provide enough evidence for the need to make improvements in the PGWPP.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This study's three main articles converge by pointing out the implications of PGWPP in constructing the permit holders as temporary subjects of the state who, despite their yearning for habitus, at times come to face anomic and even reclusiveness in their path to mobility.

In chapter Two, with reference to Foucault's governmentality, the PGWPP serves a tool of power and, presents the government's autonomy over the creation of certain [im]mobilities and temporariness. In this section, the text attends to the agency of the individual less as - she falls subject to the state's tools of power. Nonetheless, the authoritative body at large is the one to be addressed by critical analysis of temporariness. The main derivative for implementing governmentality under a Mobilities Paradigm here was that the governmental discourse around the PGWPP has not found a way to discuss the [im]mobilities that it is creating via the program. As the text identifies the consequences of prolonged temporariness seem to be in spite of the stated goal of the PGWPP of encouraging student mobility to Canada.

Later in chapter three, the incorporation of mobilities paradigm and Bourdieu's concept of habitus allows for a broader exploration of the program's impact among international graduates. To investigate the immigration policies and programs that often deprive people of the ease that should accompany an economically tangible move, the text moves from a critical analysis of the subject-hood to the state power, and to a bilateral space where those who are subject to the program, or speak to its impact on their life trajectory, and its shortcomings. Here, the processes that the interviewees go through are contextualized in light of Bourdieu's notions of habitus so that the social space and the interviewees' ways of acquiring a desired positioning

in that social space become a part of our understanding of student migration via the PGWPP. Bourdieu acknowledges the fluidity of the social agent on the social map, in which terminal social situations require the individual to seek their desired habitus and at times, encounter contrasting social positions. This does not make the individual a victim of harsh capitalism, rather it demonstrates one's aspirations, which unfold in one way or another and simultaneously influences the individual and the society at large.

The participants' statements advanced the argument of this chapter that student migration is encouraged by the existence of programs such as the PGWPP, but on an individual basis, the make up of this mobility does not seem to present merely a reminiscent of the homogeneous South to North existing flows of human mobility. The individuals' undertaking of their knowledge plays a significant role in their ability to navigate the system even when it works at odds with the individuals' objectives. This again encloses the conditions of graduate migrants to be an interest of mobilities research as such study allows for not only the immobile experiences, but also the [im]mobile persons' statements about the very essence of their move, policies and bureaucratic struggles associated with immigration.

The dissertation moves even deeper by offering an inner dissection of post-graduate migration narratives and explores incidents that can be seen as relevant to Bourdieu's social suffering in *Weight of the World* (1999). Although, *Weight of the World* is not about a personal account of social suffering. When Bourdieu and his team of ethnographers look into a family of post-war Algerians, for instance, they are researcher; the researched, and the social field remains distant and external from them (Bourdieu & Accardo, 1999). Moving into what Bourdieu refers to as what social displacement 'feels like' first, the study established a connection between a classical sociological imprint and Mobilities paradigm to make the case of social suffering

among graduate migrants. The text declares the present study as a mobilities research to facilitate the use of non-linear forms as research objects. The use of non-linear forms as research object reveal the realities that can make academic discourse more potent, as well, they make its contribution to policy plausible and, even more pressing. The magnifying glass for dissecting a hysteric-like experience through this method is Durkheim's concept of anomy. In Durkheim, social suffering is viewed from an angle that centers around the intensity of deregulations and how an inability to readjust one's position can turn the individual against himself, or even others. Durkheim (1951) considers the deterred mood of the persons living in modern society, anomy, as a result of detachment from social bonding, one that can be present in immigrant and non-immigrants simultaneously.

The use of anomy as a meaning-making attempt grants the conditions referred to as social suffering are partly the result of organic aspects of mobility. Conditions that are resultants of the temporariness induce by PGWPP. Notably, there is convincing evidence that the Canadian government seem to have a preference for increasing the number of temporary residents over permanent residents (Hou & Bonikowska, 2015; Lu & Hou, 2015; Nakache & Dixon-Perera, 2015; Winter, 2014b). So long that these conditions contribute to the marginalization of some international students seeking immigration in Canada, they appear contrary to the objectives of the PGWPP. This might be an abject portion of neoliberal policies that, as explained in chapter one, seek only the most qualified candidates or, encourages labour force that does not derive any services from the state. But in Durkheim's interpretation, the social representation of social detachment and suffering is not specific to immigrants; it is, in fact, a part of industrial societies at large. This brings the discourse back to the very critique in the beginning of chapter one, which argues that screening policies are an extension to the economic-oriented objectives of the

state power and the autonomous national agendas feeding the global competition. This, at least in some cases, weakens the ability of the PGWPP in to stabilize future citizens in Canada.

The critique of this research, as stated, is not only against the state's fundamental discourse, which seems to be fixated on attracting the most economically beneficial immigrants, but the fact that to an astonishing level, the academic discussions, panels and conferences, which revolve around student mobility, do not seem to be interested in discussing the refusal cases, or the unsuccessful, unstable and temporary conditions of those who are presumed to be the best and the brightest.

The mentioned [im]mobilizing characteristic of a government policy is not specific to PGWPP. The discriminatory and differentiating nature of screening and surveillance policies are universal (Urry, 2007; Winter, 2013, 2014). This text responds to this fact by the Mobilities Paradigm, where, there is an acknowledgement that the relative physical movement of people does not necessarily lead into an ease in their social and economic mobility. Mobilities Paradigm does not write off the detrimental effects of temporariness as a conduct of neoliberalism only, or the subjectivity of the permit holders to the government's conduct, but it does count both of the factors as influencing components. The goal here was to draw the contrasting notion of 'the best and the brightest' (CIC, 2012c) and the 'permanently temporary' (Rajkumar et al. 2012) international graduate through looking into PGWPP as an extension of the state power over its subjects. The contra outcomes, when noted, can be viewed via the lens of mobilities. In Mobilities Paradigm Urry points out that for the majority of people who are on the move there exists the relative physical ease and the fetishization of the notion of mobility in today's age, as well as discriminatory documentation and the screening procedures. In other words, the contemporary mobility is in favor of those who stand on the top ranks of human capital. The

fetishized mobility is the same notion that praises people for their potential instrumental role in advancing a state in competition with others, and the notion that lends itself to screening those who pose the least amount of risk to the economic and security of nation-states (Anderson, 2013).

These restrictions that enables such screening are capitalist markers and colonial conduct, or indicators of the perceived supremacy of the Global North (Urry, 2007). This research uses this information for ratifying immobilities as a part of human mobility, a part that should not appear as a separate issue, which is often sought to be eliminated altogether in the discourse. As long as there are nation-states that develop any forms of ‘othering’, correctional approaches may improve the conditions of mobility, but they cannot make up a comprehensive body of knowledge about mobility as it does not provide a complete picture.

### **Methodological Contributions**

The three different methods in this study provide a comprehensive outlook of the PGWPP and help with contextualizing the study within Mobilities Paradigm. The main methodological contribution of this project is the presentation of these methods as synced with Mobilities Paradigm. In other words, Mobilities Paradigm is treated as the umbrella under which the searching, gathering and selection of data has taken place by the employment of different tools, each looking at the subject from various angles. Mobilities paradigm is the most important aspect of this diverse methodological approach as it allows and calls for flexibility in the space within which research is carried out. This has allowed this project to maintain a fluidity that is modeled in Mobilities research (Brooks & Waters, 2013).

The archaeology in chapter two provides a time-depth analysis of the reproduction and legitimation of temporariness, which remains the focal point included and expanded in the

subsequent articles. The opinions of the interviewed international graduates about PGWPP in chapter three fulfill the requirements of Mobilities Paradigm for including the narratives of the mobile person - those not only about the act of mobility itself, but about what influences and accompanies it which, of course, contains documentation and bureaucratic procedures embedded within their stories. The last chapter is the first example of a student migration research that employs an art-based autoethnography to criticize the linear perspective when viewing the experiences of international graduates. Again, acknowledging the influence of Mobilities Paradigm, the methodological contribution of this chapter in displaying art pieces with the aim of revealing the hardships associated with the PGWPP, makes the chapter an example of consistency with the presence and analysis of 'things of mobility' (Urry, 2007) residing and fluctuating within the narrative of migration. In addition, the interpretation of art pieces possesses ingrained symbolic meanings and ponders them in [im]mobilities while discussing and contrasting them with the measurements of success for graduate migrants according to the governmental objectives.

In other words, the project morphs between a variety of sets of information to access the reality of its subject of interest. While the archaeological method examines the structure of the program, interviews view the structural conduct from within, and the art-based autoethnography dissect the discourse from a first-hand site to give an inner view toward the world of graduate migration. This is descriptively similar to viewing the PGWPP as an architectural entity and assessing it from the outside, moving inside and walking its very chambers and then examining its material by sampling from the building blocks. The site of this research is not a comprehensible by a passive reflection on the phenomenon. Rather it serves the purpose of

writing about mobilities with a vision for opening up the space in search of those conditions upon which governance, experience and expressions of student mobility via PGWPP are built.

### **Limitations**

The findings of the last two papers, both of which employed qualitative methods and a non-random form of sampling (chain referral in the interview study, paper two as well as the auto-ethnography in paper three), have limited generalizability. The goals of this research did not include generalizability, nevertheless, the conduct of interviewees at the presented scale made many interesting points about the consequences of transitioning that are not discussed in formal discussions and surveys about PGWPP. Taking advantage of the researcher as researched, gives an introspection to the ever-increasing literature that discusses social suffering but has not allowed for relevant expressions to move beyond showcasing the existence of suffering.

It is acknowledged that some of the concerns discussed by the interviewees didn't make it to the text. This was because of the specified subject of the study revolving around PGWPP as it presents a pathway towards immigration. For example, two of the interviewees indicated their concern with insurance coverage during their transitioning period, as PGWP holders do not qualify for Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP), and that they would have to purchase travel insurance while under the PGWPP if they needed any form of health-care. The study did not elaborate on these issues, even though this concern was brought up by most of the interviewees. This was because, health regulations are province-specific in Canada, which would put this topic beyond the reach of this study. However, this limitation in insurance coverage can be looked at as a part of the systematic lack of access to institutions that persists within the conditions of the PGWPP. Considering the relatively high cost of travel insurance, concern about health coverage is disadvantageous especially for any international post-graduate who might have health issues

and who is not able to pay for the private coverage. This in fact was the case with two of my interviewees; one of them fortunately had been able to negotiate a coverage in her work place, a university.

Throughout the interviews, it appeared to me that those who knew or had learnt French were more successful in finding their desirable social circles and advancing their professional ambitions. But this is a subject that likely needs to be studied in a separate dissertation, and in a context that linguistic construal are factored in carefully. The other impression my participants made was the positive impact that prior (domestic or international) mobility experience had in the construction and persuasion of their habitus in Canada. While we know from prior research that it is possible that those students who appear more independent tend to integrate more easily in countries with individualistic culture such as Canada (Yang, Noels & Saumure, 2006), looking into the positive implications, traveling experience, or prior mobility for international students' migration is most certainly an interesting topic of study.

These latter two points can be employed in settlement programs and especially during the study programs where students have access to international offices; universities might be able to, for instance, draw on international students' experience of mobility to transfer knowledge of mobility and adaptation to other students. International offices could also take a more proactive role in pronouncing the importance of bilingualism in Canada, especially in communities with Anglophone majorities that receive many international students with English proficiency.

### **Policy Recommendations**

The major finding of this research is the suggestion that PGWPP induced temporariness among PGWP-holders, which runs counter to the discourse that revolves around the integration

of international students as immigrants. Certain steps can be taken by the government in order for the program to move past the major temporariness-related hardships:

First, the PGWPP offers up to a three-year residency permit, depending on the length of the program of study. In many cases, the time limit is restrained according to the applicants' validity of passport and regardless of their eligibility. This seems to create an entire unnecessary round of paper work for re-application or extension. It also can cause social and professional mobility constrains for the candidate. This issue can be simply eliminated by granting three-year (or however long one qualifies for) PGWPP to eligible candidates from the beginning regardless of their passport validity, which is in fact irrelevant to staying and working in Canada.

Second, the IRCC (former CIC) seemingly makes too many mistakes while assessing the relevant applications and this is often combined with dodgy communication available for the permit holders, even though they reside in Canada. This issue was brought up multiple times in the interviews and needs to be addressed by recommending better ways to manage and implement the program so that these mistakes can be minimized, and poor communications can be improved upon.

Some of the minor policy recommendations, according to the findings of the interviews, include:

- a) Creating better awareness about the PGWPP among Canadian employers.
- b) Better clarification of the screening and temporary qualities of the PGWPP, which at this point seem to be more rhetorical than factual. For example, the applicants' academic standing, field of study and a realized potential for obtaining a certain level of income appears to influence whether they can obtain the permit or not (personal conversations, interviews, chapter 3). It is common knowledge among permit holders that traveling outside of the country might

lessen their chances of finding work in Canada and, increases the chance of missing out on their immigration application procedures that often take place via snail mail technology.

c) Applicants, specifically those who reside in Ontario, lose their health coverage immediately upon graduation. In case they need coverage, they have to opt for travel insurance that is often far too expensive. It is recommended that PGWP holders should have access to provincial health coverage at a reasonable cost.

The third major policy recommendation draws on the findings of the third paper in which the researcher states her frustration with her inability to enroll in a study program after several months of attempting to find a job. It does not seem that a PGWPP needs to exclude permission to study as one can certainly work and study at the same time. More importantly, an international post-graduate who has not succeeded finding a job and is certainly not contributing to the economy of the host country, is likely to find better social satisfaction by returning to the academic environment.

The fourth major policy recommendation comes from the findings of the last two papers where the applicants' inability to use immigration services deterred them from the advantage of connecting with employers, especially in cases that the applicants' degree was not a sought-after educational qualification. Immigration services seem not to have the budget for serving PGWP holders (CBIE, 2016). Given the fact that PGWP holders are temporary residents, in case that they are not already working and essentially connected to an institution or organization, this inaccessibility can hinder their chances of ever finding immigrant-hiring organization as well as community connections.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Due to the specific goals of this research, which sought in-depth perspectives and opinions about the PGWPP, the number of interviewees and chain referral sampling lead into limited geographical diversity in terms of the place of residence in Canada for the interviewees. This limitation might be revisited in a future suggested study with more participants with a wider geographical reach. A higher number of interviewees with a similar questionnaire and emphasis on the participants' suggestions, could help with the reduction of bureaucratic issues which have been shown to have a negative impact on the mobility of students as a whole. A broader study, by taking into account bilingualism, as well as the interviewees' existing travel experience, would also uncover valuable connotations for improving the experiences of diverse incoming international students in Canada.

This study also only focused on PGWP holders who had immigrated or had an active immigration profile and looked forward to becoming permanent residents of Canada. A study with consideration of the PGWPP cases who intend to leave Canada, or international graduates who do not obtain a PGWP would help shed light on the part of the data regarding failed and rejected cases. As suggested in the policy implication section of this paper, there is an absence of data in the available statistics that can determine the success of the PGWPP at the projected rates.

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## Appendix A: Interview Guide

These themes and questions can be divided in different sessions, depending on the answers and their length.

Introducing myself and the purpose (discuss also ethics and consent form).

1. Coming to Canada:
  - a) Tell me about yourself, who you are, where you are from?
  - b) Why did you choose Canada?
  - c) Describe your journey from when you came to Canada
  - d) Do you think coming to Canada has particularly shaped the way you have made further decisions?
  - e) How do you perceive Canada as your new country of residence?
  - f) Tell me about your journey towards becoming a resident?
  - g) What are the obstacles / challenges in this new life?
  - h) What are the positive stories about you coming to Canada?
2. PGWPP:
  - a) Why did you choose PGWPP (was it your intention to stay in Canada after your degree, why?)
  - b) Do you think choosing PGWPP has influenced your decision of coming to Canada?
  - c) Do you think choosing PGWPP has influenced your experience with the university?
  - d) What do you think about this program? How will you change it if you had the power?
3. University:
  - a) Tell me about your experience in university? (what did you study, the program appreciation, your environment, social life, cultural differences, challenges)
  - b) Did you feel you had political power to do things, change things in the university? (were you involved in any groups/associations)
  - c) How was your learning experience? (was your program good, do you feel it prepared you for living and working in Canada?)
  - d) Did PGWPP influenced your studies experience?
  - e) Would you recommend other international students to come to Canada?
  - f) Would you recommend other international students to study in your university and in your program?
4. Employment:
  - a) How has been your employment experience in Canada (ask for details, stories)?
  - b) How choosing PGWPP has or has not impacted your employment experience?
  - c) How would you qualify your economic experience in Canada?
5. Travel / (im)mobilities:

- a) Tell me about your traveling experience since coming to Canada (traveling abroad, within the country, regionally, everyday life mobilities)
  - b) Do you think PGWPP has influenced your mobility?
  - c) Do you think PGWPP has influenced your views on immigration to Canada?
6. Do you feel happy?
  7. How is your social/family/love situation?
  8. What impact you think you might have made in your university throughout your years in Canada?
  9. Have you made any impact that is meaningful to you in your work space, your co-workers and your community?
  10. Will you make any different choices along the way if you could go back?
  11. Anything you'd like to add?

**Appendix B: Interview Participant List**

Note: Not all participants agreed to share their identity nor did they all agree to share their employers’ name. In the table below their current immigration status, vocation and country of origin has been listed.

| <b>Participant Name</b> | <b>Immigration Status (as described)</b>                             | <b>Role (as described)</b>   |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Anonymous               | Under Post Graduate Work Permit (PGWPP) awaiting permanent residency | Current: Store Manager<br>Previously (in Canada): MBA international student/Restaurant assistant manager<br>Previously (home country): Undergraduate Student |
| Anonymous               | Permanent Resident via PGWPP   | Senior Admin in on and off campus companies  |
| Anonymous               | Under Post Graduate Work Permit                                      | Works at a restaurant<br>Previously (in Canada): International Engineering student<br>Previously (home country): Engineer                                    |
| Anonymous               | Under PGWP and awaiting permanent residency                          | Part time engineer<br>Previously (in Canada): international engineering student<br>Previously (home country): engineering student                            |
| Anonymous               | Citizen of Canada (permanent resident via PGWPP)                     | Master Student<br>Previously (in Canada): International undergraduate student/Pharmacy assistant   |

|           |                              |   |
|-----------|------------------------------|---|
| Anonymous | Under PGWPP                  | Part time professor   |
|           | awaiting Permanent Residency | Previously (in Canada): International PhD student/Research Assistant          |
|           |                              | Previously (home country): Master's student                                   |
| Anonymous | Permanent Resident           | Master's Student  |
|           | Via PGWPP                    | Previously (in Canada): International undergraduate Student/Program assistant |
|           |                              | Previously (home country): University student                                 |

**Appendix C: Ethics Approval Forms**

Note: Copies of approval notices are provided below

**Université d'Ottawa****University of Ottawa**

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

**File Number:** H08-17-19**Date (mm/dd/yyyy):** 09/12/2017

## Ethics Approval Notice

### Health Sciences and Science REB

**Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)**

| <u>First Name</u> | <u>Last Name</u> | <u>Affiliation</u>               | <u>Role</u>        |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Alexandra         | Arellano         | Health Sciences / Human Kinetics | Supervisor         |
| Golbon            | Moltaji          | Health Sciences / Human Kinetics | Student Researcher |

**File Number:** H08-17-19**Type of Project:** PhD Thesis

**Title:** Exploring the Sensory Terrain of Mobilities Among Graduates Who Immigrate to Canada Via Post Graduate Work Permit Program (PGWPP)

| <b>Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b> | <b>Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b> | <b>Approval Type</b> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 09/12/2017                        | 09/11/2018                      | Approval             |

**Special Conditions / Comments:**

N/A

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 1 550 Cumberland Street, room 154  
 Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada  
 (613) 562-5387 • Téléc./Fax (613) 562-5338

**Université d'Ottawa**

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

**University of Ottawa**

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above named research project. Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions / Comments".

During the course of the project, the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the project (e.g., change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, including consent and recruitment documentation, should be submitted to the Ethics Office for approval using the "Modification to research project" form available at: <http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews>.

Please submit an annual report to the Ethics Office four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval. To close the file, a final report must be submitted. These documents can be found at: <http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at: [ethics@uOttawa.ca](mailto:ethics@uOttawa.ca).

**Signature:**

Riana Marcotte  
Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research  
For Daniel Lagarec, Chair of the Health Sciences and Sciences REB