

**The Experiences of Professional Moroccan Women in the Canadian Job  
Market**

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## **Abstract**

In Canada, the non-recognition of foreign credentials remains a considerable policy issue as well as a challenge for skilled immigrants. Many studies have shed light on the difficulties that foreign professionals face when seeking a placement in the Canadian job market. This thesis focused on the experiences of professional women from Morocco on the basis of the premise that every racialized group's immigration experience deserves a space in the literature to voice their realities and inspire policy considerations. As a result, this study focused on examining the experiences of Moroccan women in the Canadian job market and the impact thereof, on their socio-economic status, and as such, health and well-being.

In order to effectively capture the experiences of this particular community, a fieldwork study was conducted in the form of semi-structured individual interviews with twelve women who immigrated to Canada from Morocco with professional qualifications. Based on the participants' accounts, I described that systemic discrimination as manifested in *Othering* and racialization remain major obstacles to the realization of equal access in the Canadian labour market. All in all, this research provides valuable insight into the plight of skilled immigrants in Canada and thus, offers strong policy recommendations to facilitate a more effective integration process for this group into the Canadian Job market.

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**Dedication**

*This thesis is dedicated to*

*Said Kaddouri and Naima Kattat*

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This thesis project investigated the skilled immigration policy based on the stories of Moroccan professional immigrant women. The women's stories revealed their perceptions and interpretations of the realities of their experiences when looking for jobs in the Canadian labour market. The participants in this study migrated to Canada to seek economic prosperity, advantages, and better benefits. The women voiced that, prior to immigration, their credentials and work experiences were assessed and evaluated based on the standards of the Canadian job market. Moreover, in the pre-immigration stage, the women were assured that the skilled immigration is a specific policy whose aim is to attract highly professional immigrants to boost the Canadian economy and cover the labour shortages in many fields. Therefore, these women were confident that access to the job market in the host country would be without major challenges and that they would have a successful future. As claimed by the women in the study, they chose Canada to seek a prosperous life based on the promises of the skilled immigration policy and the country's reputation of multiculturalism that is manifested in the attributes of tolerance and diversity.

Upon their arrival to the host country, the women were shocked by the unexpected realities that changed their perception of Canada as a land of opportunities. Therefore, all the participants in the study emphasized that the Canadian skilled immigration policy is misleading. The women based this judgment on the unexpected reality of discrimination that they experienced upon trying to penetrate the Canadian job market. As Aya put it "c'est la discrimination mais très bien maquillée" and Lamiae further declared:

*"[L'immigration des professionnelles au Canada est] une publicité très mensongère ce qui fait donc j'avais une idée comme quoi c'est trop trop*

*facile d'intégrer le marché de travail plus facile qu'en Europe et plus précisément la France dont j'ai vécu l'expérience et comme quoi on pourra réussir rapidement, il n'y a pas d'obstacles, il n'y a pas de problèmes de racisme, tout est facile"*

In the current era of globalization as seen by the increased growth of developed countries, industrialization, and the increased movement of information, capital, and people's increased mobility has meant that more individuals are circulating globally to seek better economic opportunities (Zaman, 2006). Whilst the immigration of Moroccan professional women can be considered a manifestation of the general global trend of increased international mobility; it is also important to acknowledge its potential as additional human capital for the host country which ultimately can make a substantive contribution to economic growth. Therefore, Moroccan professional women participants in this study are part of the global mobility whose goal of relocation is to fulfill the opportunities portrayed in the skilled immigration category. In order to obtain a thorough understanding of the experiences of skilled immigrants in the Canadian job market, I specifically chose Moroccan professional women as a case study to identify the major challenges this group experienced from their own perspectives. Such a research initiative focused on this unique population may contribute to the development or changes in the existing policies that focus on skilled immigration in the Canadian job market.

Many countries of the *global south* face poverty and employment constraints that further increase poverty rates and precipitate major national challenges such as unemployment (Rudra 2009). In addition, the dismal growth performance of developing countries has resulted in the persistence of social and economic inequities that have continued to impose binding limitations on vulnerable and low-income groups.

Consequently, mobility has become the presumed mechanism through which better opportunities and prosperity can be accessed (Noland & Pack, 2007). As such, the major concern in developing countries is "the extent to which aggregate economic growth is accompanied by large inequality of income limiting the gains from such growth to lower income groups" (Noland & Pack, p. 64). Therefore, poverty has proven to be a serious problem that has impacted the entire structure of developing countries leading to major challenges at different levels of economic, social, and political organization. According to the OECD (2001):

Most poor people in developing countries still live in rural areas. They tend to be more deprived of access to health, education, food and markets than urban households and this gap is not shrinking. The proportion of urban poverty is increasing rapidly. Rural poverty and the greater opportunities in urban areas incite poor people to migrate, increasing urban unemployment and poverty (p. 46).

Whilst countries of the Maghreb are currently grappling with relatively high population growth, which has in turn, resulted in the increased demand for opportunities in the labour market—the situation in Morocco is particularly significant. As noted by Belfkih et al. (2006) "*L'évolution de l'offre de travail a été dictée en premier lieu par les évolutions démographiques. Ainsi, entre 1960 et 2003, le poids de la population âgée de 15 à 59 ans est passé de 48% à 62% de la population totale*" (p. 166). Furthermore, the dilemma of unemployment in Morocco is the result of the inconsistency between a decrease in demand for labour and an increase in the working age population (Agénor & El Aynaoui 2003; Giubilaro 1997 in Haas, 2007). Consequently, the working age population of Morocco is

faced with a predicament wherein the demand for employment is overwhelmingly in excess of the supply. To add further, inefficiencies in the regulatory frameworks governing the labour market within the region, are exacerbating the inability of national markets to absorb the growing number of the active population; which in turn increases the volume of job seekers that the national market cannot serve (Khachani, 2004). As a result, the high level of unemployment in Morocco serves as a push factor for individuals holding professional qualifications to seek opportunities elsewhere through migration.

For a variety of reasons, women are more affected by the challenges of unemployment than men. In particular, women confront gender stereotypes that construct women as subordinates to men. Even though Moroccan women have started to engage in the labour market alongside the general male population, they face huge gender disparities. In fact, Moroccan professional women are faced with a predicament, whereby they have to maintain and respect the boundaries of the traditional masculine model of the job market while simultaneously preserving the expectations of the traditional feminine role that the social norms define (Ennaji & Sadiqi, 2008). These constraints cause women to be subjected to, and limited by, relegation in their country of origin, where men are more privileged than women in terms of having access to job opportunities.

Due to the issues relating to demand and supply, as well as the presence of the aforementioned gender disparities and biases within the Moroccan labour market, and the growing sense of a need amongst the women in the country to build a career, migration is increasingly being considered as a plausible solution to economic problems and the way to a better future. Traditionally, the outflow emigration of Moroccans has been directed towards countries of the European Union (EU) primarily due to the proximity of the European

continent. In addition, the proximity of the European continent to Morocco makes it a possible avenue for both emigration and immigration, which has considerable implications on political, social, and economic levels (Ennaji & Sadiqi, 2008). Thus far, the majority of the literature on the trans-boundary flows of Moroccans has focused on their experiences in European countries. This project, however, attempted to shift the geographical focus by investigating the experiences of Moroccan women within the Canadian context.

Canada has an international reputation for its multiculturalism and tolerant migration policies, especially when looking at the present demographic composition of its population which shows great variety in ethnic groups (Gupta, 1999). Spitzer (2009) explains that "cultural diversity and official multiculturalism are potent symbols of the imaginary of the Canadian nation state and are reinforced by the ongoing influx of immigrants and refugees from around the world" (p.137). Despite the image of multiculturalism, Canadian immigration policy has not always been open to integrating non-European groups. Before the 60's, Canada's immigration policy was restricted to a determined choice of what it perceived as the preferred immigrant. Furthermore, during the two decades after the Second World War, Canada endorsed a specific policy that favoured immigrants coming from the United Kingdom, the United States, and other European Countries (Li, 1992).

In the 1960s, however, major changes occurred in the immigration policy of Canada, whereby there was a *widening of the scope* of acceptable migrants at the global level, as manifested in the opening up of the doors for non-European immigrants – especially skilled and educated immigrants, through point system criteria (Galabuzi, 2006). In the point system, immigration applicants or professional workers are appraised on the basis of "their age, education, training, occupational skills, demand for their occupation in Canada,

existence of prearranged employment, and knowledge of English or French" (Statistics Canada, 2005, p. 214).

As a result, the point system is structured in a way to evaluate human capital by allowing skilled applicants more points on the level of education, the knowledge of the official languages, and job experiences (McLaren & Black, 2005). In this way, potential skilled immigrants are assessed on the basis of Canadian defined occupational standards that should, in turn, work to assure their preparedness for, and as such, ease their integration into, the Canadian job market.

Canada welcomes large numbers of migrants to cover the labour shortages and boost its economy. Citizenship and Immigration Canada reported that economic growth of the Canadian labour force in the first half of the 1990s was the outcome of massive immigration within their country which is also expected to remain a constant source of development by 2011 (Jackson, 2005).

Even though Moroccan immigrants do not represent a large percentage among the skilled migrants entering Canada, they are an example of a racialized group, part of a non-white community, whose integration experiences need to be addressed. Thus, the documentation of their experiences will shed light on the realities of skilled immigrants, particularly women from racialized groups, in the Canadian job market.

I am focusing particularly on women to bring more attention to gender and immigrants' work experiences because of evidence from studies on migrant worker experiences that indicate the fact that women face greater challenges than men (Spitzer, 2009). Compared to foreign-born men and Canadian-born workers of both genders, foreign born women have the lower incomes in the Canadian job market (Preston & D'Addario, 2009).

This study examined the intersections of gender, migration, and work place based on the experiences of professional Moroccan women in the Canadian job market. Also, given that the recognition of credentials is a recognized policy problem, during the course of the fieldwork; professional Moroccan immigrant women in possession of degrees (university and higher or professional diplomas or certificates) from institutions in Morocco were approached and asked to examine their experiences with the Canadian job market.

The twelve respondents in this study have higher education and many years of work experiences at both national and international levels. The focal point of this study was to investigate how the place of origin of these women's credentials impacted their participation in the Canadian labour market. Furthermore, as unemployment has been proven to negatively impact health at both the psychological and the material level (Raphael, 2004), the study also examined how the non-recognition of credentials, as these women's accounts illustrated, has impacted their health, economic, and social status as university educated women seeking a prosperous future and a placement in the Canadian job market.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Migration is often perceived as the best option when it comes to seeking ways of improving one's economic status and boosting one's livelihood. In reality, migration can often prove to have the opposite effect, and instead it is an option that entails another form of exclusion and relegation. Bauder (2006) draws attention to a point raised by Naomi Alboim, at the 2004 Law and Diversity Conference in Toronto, who interpreted Canadian immigration policy as both "seduction" and "abandonment" (p.90). Bauder (2006) went on to explain this statement as follows: on the one hand, the Canadian immigration policy can be attributed to seduction because skilled workers are admitted based on their preparedness to access the Canadian job market at different levels of education and work experience. This makes the skilled applicants confident in their ability to penetrate into the Canadian job market. On the other hand, the immigration policy can be referred to as abandonment in the sense that upon immigrants' arrival to Canada, they do not receive the expected help regarding credentials' accreditation, which prevents them from working in their field of expertise.

The literature regarding the experiences of immigrants on Canadian soil reports that migration poses a variety of different challenges and constraints, especially with regards to the racialized groups, who make up the highest percentage within the flow of immigration (Spitzer, 2007). According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Canada accepts nearly 250,000 immigrants every year (Spitzer, 2007). Additionally, 57% of immigrants who came to Canada in the mid-1990s were born in either the Middle East or Asia. According to Statistics Canada (2006), in 2001, Canada had a total of 2.8 million foreign-born women and, at present, approximately one in five females was born in a foreign country.

As reported by Statistics Canada (2006), immigrant women are in general better educated than their native-born counterparts; compared to 14% of Canadian-born women, 18% of all women born outside Canada had a university degree in 2001. While the statistics show that there is an increase in the number of immigrants coming to Canada, they do not tell us if those immigrants were able to find job opportunities that were in line with their credentials. Regardless of their educational level, immigrant women are more likely to be unemployed and have low earnings compared to their Canadian counterparts. Preston and D'Addario (2009) affirm that migrant women are subject to low income, minimal labour participation, and a high rate of unemployment compared with equally educated and skilled women who were born in Canada in 2001.

Regarding the Canadian immigration process, this study drew the participants from two types of immigration contexts: Economic class and Family class. The reason to choose these two types of immigration categories is that professional immigrant women may either come to Canada as a principal applicant under the skilled category or as a dependent in the family class. Economic class, also known as the skilled worker class, evaluates the principal applicant based on points. The evaluation under the new points system accords a maximum of 100 points based on the following: language proficiency, education, work experience, age, arranged employment and adaptability. Applicants who receive 67 points or higher are eligible for the status of landed immigrant (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010). As is apparent, under this category, the principal applicant can obtain a maximum of 10 points for adaptability. The latter comprises "the education of the Principal Applicant's spouse [referred to husband or wife or common law partner]; previous work or study in Canada by either the principal applicant or the spouse; a family relationship in Canada; and a maximum of 5 points based on those points received under the arranged employment criteria" (Tolley,

2003, p. 4-5). Statistics have shown that the percentage of immigrant women admitted under the family class is higher than under the economic category. In 2000, the percentage of women in the family class was 61.6 percent compared to 46.7 percent in the economic class (Agnew, 2009).

An immigrant woman who is admitted under the family class category is generally sponsored by her male relative, which means that the sponsor commits to helping the sponsored individual financially and with their settlement needs for a specific period of time (Agnew, 2009). The Canadian immigration policy considers the following: a woman can be categorized as a skilled immigrant based on her credentials and qualifications, if she comes as an independent immigrant applicant. Nevertheless, if the principal applicant is the husband, then the woman is considered a dependant and she will be classified in the family class (McLaren & Black, 2005).

Different from the government immigrants' selection, Quebec has its own adjudication criteria for its principal applicants and family class. While the federal government is in charge of the acceptance of immigrants selected by the province, Quebec is responsible for choosing who can enter its labour market (Bourgeois et al., 2006). The selection through Quebec gives more consideration to the French language as an important asset. To be employed in Quebec, applicants have to settle in the province, have a diploma or a certificate that will be evaluated with reference to the Quebec education system, and have the training that would facilitate their access to the job market (Official site of the government of Quebec, 2009). The applicants who are approved under Quebec selection criteria are given a Quebec Selection Certificate, which is an immigration document provided by the government of Quebec. As a result, the federal government can only accept immigrants who were selected by the province (Bourgeois et al., 2006). Regarding

adaptability, Quebec application gives greater importance to spouse/common law partner's qualifications and training as an added value to the application compared to the rest of Canada (Bourgeois et al., 2006).

The results of the studies on immigrant skilled workers in the job market have painted a different picture of migrant life in contrast to the romanticized picture that Canada presents at the international level (Teelucksingh & Galabuzi, 2005). This image is questioned once the qualified immigrants are confronted with the realities of the job market, particularly with the issue of the recognition of credentials. The literature has shown that there are negative consequences for these professional immigrants whose skills are denied or deskilled when they find themselves accepting precarious jobs that impact their dignity and their potential for social inclusion (Khan & Watson, 2005). The indications of different forms of precarious jobs can be attributed to "low pay, no job security, poor and often unsafe working conditions, intensive labour, excessive hours, and low or no benefits" (Galabuzi, 2006). Hence, these jobs are a form of social exclusion and isolation. Even though new arriving immigrants might have the same amount of education and qualifications compared with their Canadian counterparts, they are barred from high-ranking positions in the labour market due to the difference in credentials assessment (Bauder, 2003). As a result, these racialized professionals find themselves with the reality of a reproduced poverty and new forms of unexpected exclusion in a place where they have thought they would find a prosperous future.

The last decade showed that immigrants are in an imbalanced position wherein they are less likely to find jobs, and their credentials and work experiences assessment hinders them from finding the jobs that they predicted (Zaman, 2006). In fact, the admission of skilled labourers represents the starting phase of relegation and rejection, and is

experienced in its worst conditions by women. Women that are included in the labour market undergo all sorts of discrimination and rejection based on the combination of racialization, gender, and class. In addition, some of the factors that contribute to women's alienation in the economy of the host country are sexism, racism, and classism (Zaman, 2006). With reference to the literature, these criteria of judgment have been perceived to be the standard evaluation of labour admission. Galabuzi (2004) avows that: "The Canadian economy and labour market are increasingly stratified along racial lines, as evidenced by the disproportionate representation of racialized group members in low income sectors and low end occupations, and underrepresentation in high income sectors and occupations" (p.244). Hence, foreign professional and qualified immigrants fall under the stigma of the 'Other', which in turn, places them in the lowest echelon of the host society. The non-recognition of credentials means that these qualified women are unable to put into practice their learned knowledge and expertise. Zaman (2006) asserts that:

The absence of regulated agencies to evaluate these women's qualifications relegates them to a sex-segregated, racialized and class-based labour market [which makes] immigrant women ... more frequently concentrated either in low jobs or in the invisible economy that reproduces their secondary and subordinate position in commodified sectors and in society (p.65).

The above quote shows the degree of subordination that racialized women undergo within the labour market. The author suggests that women are regarded as a tool in service of the market, where reaching productivity in the economic system is the ultimate goal. Examining the correlation between gender, race and class have shown the degree of exploitation that

illustrates how women are treated under conditions of globalization. For instance, Zaman (2006) related the situation of women in the market to the concept of commodification. This notion entails that workers are considered objects that can either be bought or sold for economic survival. In other words, instead of the workers being treated as contributors to the economy, they are regarded as part of the material process of production. This ideology contributes to the disempowerment of women in the labour sector making them suffer from different types of alienation.

The different challenges that the literature has presented about the labour market and the non-recognition of foreign credentials show various difficulties that immigrants face when looking for employment, which as a result can impact their dignity and socio-economic class. For instance, studies that have been conducted to investigate the impact of immigration, especially on the socio-economic position of professional immigrants have shown it to have negative implications on health, economic, and social status of these immigrants because of either unemployment or underemployment. The non-recognition of credentials and qualifications obtained in immigrants' countries of origin has a negative repercussion on these skilled immigrants mental health when they find themselves either unemployed or underemployed (Beiser & Hou 2001; Kinnon 1999 in Bierman et al., 2009, p.116). This argument demonstrates that social exclusion and unequal access to resources have negative consequences on immigrants' health. Galabuzi (2006) states that "the demands for labour market flexibility in the urban "globalized" economy have disproportionately exposed racialized groups to precarious employment and higher levels of poverty than other Canadians" (p.179). In fact, their skills are denied which makes them unable to function in their areas of expertise. This, as a result, further marginalized them, especially when professionals find themselves treated as non-skilled persons and tossed to

the edge of society disregarding their professional experiences.

Research regarding health and immigration has shown different challenges that foreigners face in trying to improve their economic well-being. Spitzer (2005) asserts that because these immigrants are categorized as a specific group that can experience social exclusion, they may consequently suffer from marginalization and deterioration of their health where "marginalization refers primarily to the lack of equitable access to social, political, and economic benefits and exclusion from full participation these realms due to one's membership in an identifiable group" (Spitzer, 2005, p. 85). One can argue that de-skilling can have destabilizing impacts on health that is the result of non-recognition of credentials.

### **Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework**

In order to examine the implications of the non-recognition of foreign qualifications on economic and social well-being of Moroccan immigrant women, my research topic drew from different theoretical approaches and conceptual models that were used to explain and interpret immigrants' relegation in the labour market.

I used human capabilities theory to show that the deprivation of human beings from achieving functionality negatively impacts their dignity as human beings. The human capabilities theory places emphasis on a significant concept that determines the quality of life of an individual, namely the ability to act. The focal point of the capability approach is its emphasis on what people are adequately able to achieve, to do, and to be, otherwise known as their capabilities (Robeyns, 2005). In other words this approach asserts that:

The ends of well-being, justice and development should be conceptualized in terms of people's capabilities to function; that is, their effective opportunities to undertake the actions and activities that they want to engage in, and be whom they want to be. These beings and doings, which Sen calls functionings, together constitute what makes a life valuable (Robeyns, 2005, p. 95)

The ability or the capability in and of itself as a concept raises a concern about what people are able to do in order to function and fulfill their needs. Furthermore, individuals' capabilities are attributed in their functionings, which are their 'beings' and 'doings', in other words, having a good health, engaging in community works, having food and shelter, relating to other individuals and caring about them, providing help, and participating in the labour market (Robeyns, 2003). In the context of my research question, this approach sheds light on

the degree of functionality and the opportunities of these skilled immigrant women to work in the area that is relevant to their potential. The human capabilities approach describes the meaning of a dignified life whereby the dignity of human beings is not violated by fear, hunger, or the lack of opportunities (Nussbaum, 1999). Within this framework, the theory helped me explore the women's functionality in the labour market as professionals holding foreign degrees.

In order to examine the health and well-being of these immigrants, I based my analysis on the conceptual framework of social determinants of health. This concept explains how men, women, families, groups, and population in general can be negatively affected by economic and social circumstances (Vissandjée et al., 2007). In order to conduct my analysis of well-being based on the approach of social determinants of health, I focused on the following concepts: migration, ethnicity, sex, and gender, which are viewed in the literature as overlapping and health determinants (Vissandjée, 2007). Exclusion and relegation in the labour market is experienced in its worst condition by immigrant women from non-European countries who suffer from a combination of different alienations—being a woman and being a member of a racialized minority. In addition, newly arrived immigrants from non-European countries have been found to experience low socio-economic status (Spitzer, 2009). This creates another discourse of power relations, which puts these women at the lowest level of the society. Compared to men, immigrant women experience inequalities upon their arrival to the host country on different economic, political, cultural, and social levels, which alternatively result in different settlement and integration outcomes than men's experiences (Tastsoglou & Dobrowolsky, 2006).

Research has proven that there is a correlation between income and health, especially for women. Alcuítas, et al. (1997) aver that "women are ... vulnerable to the effects of de-skilling, the deterioration of skills and resulting loss of self-esteem stemming from working in positions that make little use of one's education or experience" (in Spitzer, 2009, p. 146). Hence, the framework of social determinants of health helped me examine the quality of life of these professional immigrant women, when it comes to the access to resources and to available services and how the intersecting measures of stratification within the population play a role in the labour segregation. The following is the stratification that was used to analyze the health of these professional immigrant women:

**Gender:** This indicator was a crucial variable of assessment as it helped me put into question the gender issue and explain how these professional and racialized women were viewed in the labour market. In this sense, the analysis focused on the dilemma of the double burden. The latter implies that women have to struggle with both sexism and racism which represents a double burden to their integration process (Galabuzi, 2006). This argument sheds light on the evaluation criteria that recruiters use to judge the applicant. According to the literature, women, within the flow of immigration have been perceived as subordinates and not contributors. This framework was crucial for the analysis as it explored the experiences of Moroccan women entering the Canadian job market. Vissandjée et al. (2007) state that:

Gender generally refers to the social norms, perceptions and meanings associated with being a woman or a man. It has been argued, however, that gender has also other impacts, including the distribution of resources and opportunities, power relationships, perceptions of capacities and interests, and ways of knowing and being (p. 35)

Based on the above quote and looking into the question of credentials' recognition, I examined the access to the job market among qualified Moroccan immigrant women and assessed their experiences in the Canadian job market as racialized immigrants.

**Ethnicity:** Ethnicity is an important concept to understanding the dynamics of discrimination that comes as a result of difference and unfamiliarity. Ethnicity is "complicated [concept] by the use of different variables ... [such as] race, birthplace, language, religious affiliation, duration of residence in a given society, and the racial/national/tribal identity (or identities) of one's parents" (Vissandjée et al., 2007, p. 35). The exclusion of racialized professionals from a job market that is relevant to their credentials can be viewed from the lens of difference. The above deconstructed variables of ethnicity constitute a frame of reference to the job market in the *global north*, which judges job seekers from the *global south* as Others—not at equal footing with credentials of the host country. Although "immigrant women are better educated than their Canadian-born counter-parts; they are less likely to work in positions that are commensurate with their education and former occupational status than native-born women or foreign-born men" (Spitzer, 2007, p. 53). Regardless of the fact that they tend to be better educated, immigrant women are less likely than Canadian-born women and immigrant males to find a placement in positions that are reflective of their credentials.

This project focused on the dimension of racism that was linked to immigrants' access to the job market, which has been referred to as systemic racism (Fleras & Elliot, 1999). The latter includes actions and rules that intentionally restrict visible minorities from their full and equal participation in the host country (Fleras & Elliot, 1999). Within this context, discrimination entails exclusion and denial of abilities based on difference, in other words,

"discrimination can be defined as any act, whether deliberate or not, that has the intent or the effect of adversely affecting ("denying" or "excluding") others on grounds other than merit or ability" (Fleras & Elliot, 1999, p. 75). Systemic racism also known as institutional racism is linked to the barriers that racialized groups face when looking for employment. Agocs (2004) highlights a working definition that explains how systemic racism is practiced in the work place:

Systemic or institutional discrimination [...] consists of patterns of behaviour that are part of the social and administrative structures of the workplace, and that create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for some groups and privilege for other groups, or for individuals on account of their group identity. Systemic discrimination is multi-dimensional and may entail separate and cumulative impacts on grounds of race, gender, disability and other identities (p.2).

Using this concept of systemic discrimination, I analyzed the dynamics of discrimination for the case of Moroccan women in the Canadian labour market.

**Migration:** I situated the resettlement experience of Moroccan immigrant women through the lens of migration, as a life decision. This concept helped me examine the impact of relocation by addressing some questions that evaluated the experiences of migration for these university-educated women.

Migration constitutes a major transition, accompanied with both short and long-term effects, which are attributed to the following: adaptation, integration, and assimilation (Vissandjée et al., 2007). When tackling the experiences of Moroccan immigrant women, under the indicator of migration, I referred to the conceptual framework of resettlement stress. The latter was

used as a model to discuss the causes of health disparities among qualified immigrants within the migration experience.

The resettlement stress paradigm provides an explanatory framework for immigrant overshoot ... [this model argues] that unemployment, poverty and lack of access to services have an adverse effect on everyone but immigration and resettlement increase the probability of experiencing these stresses (Beiser, 2005, p. 35).

Regarding pre-migration work related stress, one can acknowledge that unemployment in Morocco has negative consequences on job seekers, namely on their health and dignity, yet the failure of getting a job in the host country exacerbates the degree of stress. Through this argument, I try to explain the reasons that have made these immigrant women select the option of relocation. It is important to shed light on the ideas that immigrants had prior to the act of immigration and how the latter is shaped with their integration in the job market of the host country.

The above-mentioned indicators led to the discussion of another approach, otherwise known as the signaling theory. This approach was used to examine the problematic of gate-keeping in the workplace that is predominant among host countries, and which strongly regulates who can be recruited and who cannot. Reflecting on the hiring inequality, Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky (2006) point out that the signaling theory in this sense allows us to shed light on the notion of the gatekeeper whose evaluation of the applicant is socially constructed. One can argue that the gate-keeping in this context puts constraints on foreign job seekers, allowing only the ones from the same context who portray familiar signals to the recruiters. In this sense, employers do not base their hiring decision on the qualifications that can be relevant to the job position and the abilities of

foreign job seekers. Instead, recruiters base their hiring decisions on what they see as familiar signals to their Canadian context and otherwise pertaining to Canadian degrees; everything else is outside the frame of consideration. In effect, recruiters use their specific platform to dismiss any potential that is not relevant to them and consequently, this is where the aforementioned concept of ethnic based discrimination is rooted.

Along the lines of the signaling theory, every organization has patterns and hiring codes that they categorize as either normal or abnormal. This brings attention to the context of Bourdieu's idea of *habitus* which talks about the classification of individuals in society. Bourdieu (1984) asserts that the idea of *habitus* is related to the principle of class division and the social identity of the group in the structure of the society. Bourdieu further explains that *habitus* is a system of dispositions that produces perceptions, practices, and thoughts. With reference to this concept, the social class structures are defined by their characteristics and positions in the system of class conditions and social practices. Bourdieu (1977) explains that "the habitus is precisely this immanent law, *lex insita*, laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing, which is the precondition not only for the co-ordination of practices but also for practices of co-ordination" (p.81). The notion of *habitus* encompasses the idea that individuals belonging to the same group or class and who share the same *habitus* and practices are better harmonized than individuals belonging to a different group or class. In the context of this study, Bourdieu's notion of habitus is applied as —it asserts that immigrants embody the characteristics of a foreign country, which employers evaluate as abnormal and not corresponding to the norms of the Canadian job market (Bauder, 2005). In other words, the concept of *habitus* can also be defined as "a product of individual life history, socialization, and career trajectory." (Scheuer, 2003, p. 145). The idea of *habitus* was explored to analyze the rejection that participants faced when seeking employment, which

was attributed to their educational and occupational history. I also used institutional racism to explain participants' denial of job opportunities in order to underscore the reproduced legacy of preferred versus non-preferred immigrants – as manifested in the Canadian immigration policy, prior to the 1960s, which gave preference to immigrants coming from Great Britain and Northern Europe (Spitzer 2009). Linked to institutional racism is the concept of racialization that can be explained as a practice "that extends to people in general but also to specific traits and attributes, which are connected in some way to racialized people and are deemed to be "abnormal" and of less worth" (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2009, p. 9). Some of the traits of judgment and prejudice that the commission referred to are accent, place of origin, name, manner of speech, citizenship, etc. Based on this theory, I examined the employment experiences of professionally qualified Moroccan immigrant women and analyzed the degree of their alienation in the workplace.

The above theoretical frameworks are related to each other in the sense that they attempted to explain de-skilling among university educated Moroccan women. As I have mentioned, according to the literature, skilled migration has side effects that impact skilled immigrants. Based on the presented literature, the inclusion of women in the circles of globalization has shown the existence of global inequality where these women's capacities and strengths are dismissed and rejected. Women belonging to racialized groups are described as less qualified and less experienced and in most cases they are viewed as secondary income earners, which goes against the empirical fact that identifies racialized women<sup>1</sup> as better educated than racialized men (Galabuzi, 2006). Hence, the experiences of

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<sup>1</sup> Racialized women experience racialization which "refers to patterns of interaction that reflect perceptions of biological differences to account for differences and similarities" (Ongley 1996 in Fleras & Elliott, 1999, p. 34).

educated professionals unveil the existence of social exclusion and racialization that negatively impact their integration in the labour market.

I used human capital theory to analyze the goal of skilled immigration policy and the situation of professional immigrants in the Canadian labour market. Becker affirms that human capital theory entails that the credentials of the employees, including their capabilities and work experiences, are transferred in the labour market as their human capital (in Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky, 2006). Hence, this theory explored how the human capital of these university-educated women is regarded in the Canadian labour market. In other words, the theory was used to examine how credentials are assessed and whether or not they are valued based on these professionals' abilities to contribute to a specific job. Furthermore, the theory argues that the market is in equilibrium when employee's wages match their productivity as assessed by employers (Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky, 2006). This argument contributed to assessing the level of disparities in the Canadian labour market by tackling the crisis of the brain drain in this current era of globalization. Bauder (2003) examined the devaluation of foreign credentials by stating that the major problem that professionals go through is de-skilling, which hinders them from accessing jobs that are relevant to their credentials. In this sense, Bauder further affirms that the inequality to access the job market creates a division in the human capital, where education is no longer perceived as a paradigm that reproduces national class structure. Based on the stories of these Moroccan immigrant women, I analyzed their version of inclusion in the labour market and the issues they have faced, namely inequalities and discrepancies.

To better understand and interpret participants' experiences of migration, I used Berger's (2004) model to examine the process of their relocation into three stages including: departure, transition, and resettlement. The goal was to understand immigration as a

process, and how an immigrant overcomes the challenges of integrating into the host country. This model is not immutably fixed when referring to the stages of migration; it is, however, a model that is changeable with respect to different migration experiences. Whilst this particular model can change according to one's purpose of migration, it was as an efficient tool for the fieldwork questions as well as a plausible guide that directed the flow of information.

- **Departure:** This phase is the stage that comes before the actual relocation, its process might be longer for some and shorter for others, especially in the case where the process of immigration is affected by external pressures namely political, legal, or family emergency (Berger, 2004). Hence, the departure phase is relative to people's reasons for choosing immigration as an option. In his model, Berger talks about the push and pull factors. On the one hand, the push factors are linked to the reasons that push immigrants to decide to move away from the society of origin, which can be associated for example to social, economic, and political causes. On the other hand, the pull factors are linked to the image that immigrants draw on the host country. In other words, as a country that would help them overcome the problems that they may have had in their home country. The pull factors show the opportunities that the immigrant will find including: personal freedom and economic opportunities (Berger, 2004).

This project, however, did not draw from the push/pull factors model because it is not a holistic framework of looking at immigration experiences. In a sense, it is linked to Kasaba's (2000) view on the models used to understanding immigration. He states that the conceptual models that are used in looking at the immigration experiences have been evaluated as "linear and oversimplifying "(in

Berger, 2004, p.29). Taking into consideration the complexity of the immigration process, this project solely focused on the experiences of the participants in this research and their reasons for departure.

- **Transition:** This period highlights the phase of travelling and the different problems that may be encountered depending on different types of immigration. It highlights that the transition today comes in one stage, in other words taking the plane from place A to place B. As opposed to this example, the refugee's transition phase may require more time. The latter makes the situation of the refugees unstable which may make them start questioning the reasons of their relocation (Berger, 2004). Regarding this study, the transition phase depended on the experiences of the participants. In other words, whether or not they encountered some difficulties or stress entering the host country.
- **Resettlement:** The goal of every immigrant in this phase is to find a place where they can live, as well as an adequate source of income to cover their living expenses. In this phase, immigrants start to acknowledge their differences to the mainstream in the host country. The resettlement phase is linked to the difficulties that immigrants face in order to integrate in the new society (Berger, 2004).

The use of Berger-model was efficient as it helped the women participants in the study recall and articulate the beginning of their experiences by tracing their immigration journey from the starting point of decision making to the integration phase.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

### **Methods and Recruitment**

In order to investigate the research question of this study regarding the experiences of Moroccan professional women in the Canadian job market, I received ethics approval from the University of Ottawa prior to the onset of data collection.

In the goal to attain an extensive understanding of Moroccan professional women's experiences in the Canadian job market, twelve in-depth semi-structured individual interviews were conducted in Montreal as a primary method to explore the realities of these women. The purpose of using semi-structured interviews was to allow the participants to develop their personal accounts and speak freely, while simultaneously enabling the researcher to ask more questions and clarifications on the content of the data—as well as contributing to increasing participants' active involvement in the interview. Using individual interviews as a method, gave the participants in this study the opportunity to talk about their experiences and their perceptions of their decisions to migrate. Interviews are a good fieldwork technique to collect data from participants in a study, it has advantages in the sense that the researcher is present with the participant, providing the opportunity to gather non-verbal data, probe for more information, and clarify questions to participants when necessary (Wood & Ross-Kerr, 2006).

The provinces of British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec are considered as Canada's major immigration gateways hosting approximately 90 % of Canada's immigrants (Lo, 2008). Moreover, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver are the largest metropolitan cities that are home to more than three-fourths of all Canadian immigrants (Lo, 2008). For this study, I selected Montreal for my data collection because it is considered to be among the large gateway

cities characterized by a high number of immigrants including Moroccans. Furthermore, most Moroccans speak French and Montreal is known for receiving more Francophone immigrants than Anglophones. According to Statistics Canada (2001), the total number of Moroccans in Montreal is 18,805 in comparison to Toronto where the total number of the Moroccan population is 2,740. Therefore, the data collection for this study had a particular focus that was limited to a subgroup of the Moroccan community, categorized in this study as professional women holding higher education qualifications. The results of this study are therefore not necessarily generalizable to the entire immigrant community.

Because of the difficulty obtaining a list of Moroccan women who live in Montreal, I used purposive sampling as a method to recruit my individual interviewees.

Purposive sampling also known as:

Judgmental sampling [is used] when researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects who represent this population .... In some instances, purposive samples are selected after field investigations on some group, in order to ensure that certain types of individuals or persons displaying certain attributes are included in the study (Berg, 2001, p.32).

Based on the above quote, I chose this method because I conducted some field investigation in Montreal. As Morocco's second official language is French, the majority of Moroccans, as shown in the statistics above, migrate to Quebec or other parts of Francophone Canada.

Referring to the theme of this research, I approached some Moroccan women whose experiences reflected the issues that have been raised by the dilemma of the non-recognition of qualifications or credentials. I was aiming to use focus groups, however, most of the women that I approached did not like the idea of gathering in a group meeting

because they either worked, or took care of their children, or had other duties that restricted them from having a flexible schedule. Secondly, some women pointed out that they do not prefer talking about their experiences in a group setting. After the fieldwork evaluation, the option of individual interviews was more welcomed, and it was the field investigation method that was used.

The rate of unemployment in the province of Quebec among immigrants aged between 25 and 54 is two times higher than that of immigrants in other provinces. For instance, in 2006, it reached 11.2% compared to 6.2% in Ontario and 5.5% in British Columbia. Boudarbat and Boulet (2010) highlight that immigrants from North Africa are the most disadvantaged group in Quebec and particularly in Montreal "se sont surtout les immigrants originaires de l'Afrique du Nord et d'Asie méridionale qui rencontrent le plus de difficultés à intégrer le marché du travail au Québec. Leur taux de chômage se situait aux alentours de 19% en 2006" (p.6). Therefore, the recruitment criteria of the participants in this study was as follows: I selected individual participants based on country of origin, period of residence in Canada, working age, and educational level. Participants, therefore, needed to be born in Morocco and have resided in Canada between 5 and 15 years in order to be able to talk more about their experiences and to be able to reflect back on their labour participation as professionals holding foreign credentials. Moreover, the working age of the participants was between 25 and 65 years old, and the educational level was university degree and higher, without excluding women who had professional diplomas and certificates such as technicians or engineers. The professions of the twelve women in this study included: engineer, professor, technician, teacher, manager in the garment industry, biologist, manager in the telecommunications sector, dentist, mathematician and director of a school of management and computer science, accountant, and economist.

I disseminated recruitment flyers in a variety of locations that are frequently used by Moroccans including: Mosques, the Moroccan Consulate in Montreal, Moroccan groceries stores, Moroccan coffee shops, and hair dresser salons owned by Moroccan women. I also contacted a network of professional women in Montreal. The method that proved efficient to recruit the participants for this study was the word of mouth or snowballing. For instance, I asked one participant, with whom I did the field investigation to spread the word to other women and asked them if they were interested in participating in the study. With this method, I was able to reach many women from different educational backgrounds and from different networks. I also received an approval of participation from the founder of a Moroccan association of professional women.

Before, I started the recording, I explained to the participants the purpose of the study and the terms of confidentiality; in addition, I gave them a copy of the consent form and read it with them. The participants were informed that the results would be presented in conferences and other public fora and publications, but that I would ensure their anonymity by using pseudonyms avoiding any indication that might identify them. In every interview, after we signed the consent form, I also asked the participants to fill out the demographic questionnaire. When I started recording the interviews, I also asked the women to reconfirm their participation verbally before I started my interviews. In all the interviews, I gave the women the option to respond in the language of their choice either French or English.

For the purpose of my data collection and the accuracy of the collected information, I recorded the interviewees in order to be able to analyze the content of the participants' stories. Recording interview data is very beneficial as it allows listening and engaging more in the interview rather than taking notes, which might be distracting to the interviewee.

Therefore, tape recording interviews is effective in the sense that it removes any potential source of disruption, allowing the interviewer to focus in the interviews, plan for future questions and efficiently guide the interview to make sure the responses are complete and consistent with the objective of the study (Brenner in Gorman et al., 2005). Regarding the location, interviews were held in a comfortable private setting selected by informants. With single exception, participants chose to be interviewed in their homes.

### **Data Collection Methodology and Design**

In order to examine my research question, the interview guide was divided into three sections based on the stages defined by Berger (2004) in order to assist the interviewees in recalling their experiences in sequence, from the beginning of the migration decision to the actual phase of integration in the host country. The stratified stages of Berger's model, namely departure, transition, and resettlement facilitated a thorough deconstruction and analysis of the experiences of these qualified immigrant women in the job market. The data were collected through a fieldwork study that included twelve individual interviews. In order to assess the role of education as an asset that enables qualified people to have access to better job opportunities, I asked these women about their abilities to find a job that they believed was relevant to their background and matched their qualifications in the host country as skilled immigrants.

I found Berger's model to be significant because immigrants' lives cannot only be examined based on their experiences in the host country, but also tracing back the reasons that made them opt for relocation is crucial to understanding their current situation. The first section of the interview guide tackled how they used to live in their country of origin and the reasons that made them choose to migrate. Based on this, I asked them if they were able to work in their area of expertise in Morocco and afford a decent livelihood, and

whether their basic necessities such as accessing health services, food, and clothing were fulfilled. This section also included questions on the Canadian point system and the image these women had about Canada while living in their country of origin.

The second section explored the experiences of these professionally qualified immigrant women in the host country, by focusing particularly on access to the job market and what impact that had on them. The resettlement phase is the stage where these interviewees started the real experience as Moroccan professional degree holders in the Canadian job market. Within this framework, this section raised questions about their experiences in looking for job opportunities that were relevant to their credentials. Referring to Nussbaum's list of human capabilities, which include "having a normal life span, adequate food, shelter, bodily security, and the social basis of self-respect. It includes the opportunities to support oneself through work, to be healthy, and to participate in controlling one's environment" (Okin, 2003, p. 294), the participants were asked about a healthy life and if they were able to live a decent and dignified life as professionals in Canada.

The third section was the part of the assessment, where the participants evaluated their experiences in Canada. In this section, the women were asked to assess their experiences in the Canadian job market and their views about the hiring criteria in the host country. Their assessment was used to shed light on the degree of their satisfaction and whether or not they were able to fulfill their needs as well as that of their dependents. This section enabled the participants to reflect back on their experiences and judge their decision-making.

### **Data Organization and Analysis**

Once I completed transcribing the interviews, I started an in-depth reading of the transcripts and the field notes in order to elicit the key ideas that were relevant to the purpose of the research. The research question and interview guide were taken into consideration at all times when reading over the transcripts and reviewing the field notes. Intensive and subsequent reading of the transcripts enabled me to identify the link between women's accounts and the purpose of the study. This eventually contributed to developing ideas about potential themes and categories in the coding process.

The fact that I organized the interview guide into three main parts, namely the situation prior to immigration, the lived experiences in the host country, and the assessment of the migration experience, helped me in the coding phase to gain thoughts and insights into emerging themes, categories and the structure of the analysis chapter.

In order to answer the research question and analyze the findings of the field investigation, the analysis of the results was done in accordance to the gathered data and the research question of the study. For this, I used the approach of theme and content analysis as a process through which the unstructured data is structured in the form of themes and categories (Wood & Ross-Kerr, 2006). This research is an exploratory study that investigated the problematic of non-recognition of foreign credentials for the case of twelve respondents. Moreover, descriptive and exploratory studies are largely illustrated as unstructured and descriptive (Wood & Ross-Kerr, 2006). After transcribing the interviews, all the unstructured data of the field were organized and grouped thematically with the goals of communicating the meaning of the data and of answering my research questions.

## **Chapter 5: Results**

### **Characteristics of the Sample**

The twelve participants in this study have lived in Canada between five and ten years. One woman was divorced, three were single, and eight were married. Among the married women, two did not have children and six had between one and four children. The participants in this research were highly educated, with many years of training and work experience at both national and international levels. Two women had international education and work experience, while ten had Moroccan education combined with significant experience in a variety of sectors in national and multinational arenas. With respect to current employment status, six women were on social assistance, five were in precarious job positions or relied on relatives for financial assistance, and one received revenue from a school that she established in Morocco. In their country of origin, all the women had lived in urban areas, and indicated that they had a highly respected and stable financial life.

Unlike some skilled immigrants who might have been unemployed in their country of origin, the sample for this study demonstrated that the women enjoyed their status as highly respected individuals. These women stated that they chose immigrating to Canada as skilled immigrants because they were attracted by the promising future that economic migration infers, at the international level. These women sought prosperity for themselves as well as that of their children and family.

## **Part I: Departure and Transition**

### ***Education and work experiences in their home country***

The twelve participants in this study had undergraduate university educations or higher and had worked in their respective disciplines in Morocco. All of the women were in good, stable financial situations. Some of the participants had national and international education and work experiences that opened up more opportunities for them to get good jobs. The table below provides a brief profile of each informant:

| <b>Names of the participants</b> | <b>Biography</b>  |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Lamiae <sup>2</sup>              | Completed all of her university education in France. She took a degree in Industrial Engineering and Production Management. She also earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, along with training certificates in software design. In terms of work experience, she served as a Production Manager for a company producing high voltage products. Lamiae had also previously worked in a position at a cigarette company where she was responsible for logistics. |
| Lina                             | Obtained a degree in Mathematics and Computer Science. She taught computer programming and established her own business in this area. She felt that she lived a valued life as a business-woman and as a director of the company that she founded.  |
| Leila                            | Received a technical degree in Wardrobe Consultancy and worked as a Manager, organizing and assessing production costs. She indicated that she was in an adequate financial position that met all her needs.  |

<sup>2</sup> All the names of the participants cited in this study are their pseudonyms

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Narjis  | Had a Bachelor's degree in Physics and Chemistry, and received a technical degree in Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration. She had ten years of work experience in her discipline, and indicated that she was satisfied with her life.                     |
| Imane   | Obtained a Bachelor's degree in French linguistics. She worked as a primary school French teacher for five years. She also worked in a private school, as a French professor for adults.   |
| Safae   | Received a Bachelor's degree in Economics and worked for six years as an Accountant and a management controller in both public and private sector.   |
| Aya     | Completed a degree in Dentistry, and had worked as a dentist and as a medical delegate in the pharmaceutical industry.   |
| Nora    | Studied Law. In addition, she received a degree in Management from a technology institute. She worked as an administrator in <i>Public Works</i> and in a Telecommunications Company.  |
| Farah   | Had a Bachelor's degree in Geography. She also studied three years at a technology institute, specializing in computer programming. Farah had work experience as a teacher in a private school, in the tourism industry, and as a Manager at an insurance company. |
| Amal    | Had a Bachelor's degree in Commerce and worked for many years in the public sector as well as in a multinational company.  |
| Merieme | Had a Bachelor's degree in Animal Biology. She also studied pedagogy and psychopedagogy and completed a degree in Computer Management. Merieme had worked as a Mathematics professor and as a coordinator for French language classes.                             |

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Fatiha | Completed a Bachelor's degree in French literature. She worked for many years as a French teacher in both the public and private sectors. |
|--------|---|

### ***Reasons for immigrating and choosing Canada as an option***

All the women agreed that their choice of Canada as a destination country for immigration was influenced by the positive international image that Canada created by its immigration policies. They all pointed to Canada's reputation for embracing multiculturalism and for its demographic diversity. The women dreamed of Canada as a destination country for immigration and settlement based on a perception that Canada was a land of paradise and opportunities. Aya described the image that she had about Canada "*C'est le pays qui vend bien son image pour recruter des immigrants ... c'est le petit paradis sur terre*". Furthermore, they believed that their integration would be faster and easier because Canada was a country supportive of immigration and immigrants.

Different from the other women's stories, Lina came to Canada in 2000 as a representative of a women's organization. After her visit, she considered coming back to Canada to get a degree in management and human resources. Most importantly, she sought to build another prosperous professional career internationally and saw immigrating to Canada as an option to realize her vision. Lina and her husband applied for immigration under the skilled immigration category, based on their qualifications in Morocco. Most of the other women's reasons for immigration to Canada were to seek more prosperity and better living conditions. These reasons were based on the positive image that they had of skilled immigration, which they thought would allow them access to Canadian labour market. The evaluation of their competencies by immigration workers, in Morocco, had

given them the hope that their degrees and experiences would be accepted for work in this country.

Lamia, who had successful work experience in France, thought that it would be easier for her to access the job market in Canada than in Europe. Other women had the opportunity to go to Europe and chose Canada instead because of its positive reputation with respect to education, social support, and health care. The majority of the women who immigrated with their children thought that Canada would be a better choice for their children's future and education. The women applied for immigration to Quebec knowing that the official language is French. They believed that accessing the Quebec job market would not be a major problem considering their Francophone backgrounds. Based on the information received prior to immigration, the women thought that they would not face significant challenges in Canada.

### ***Recognition of foreign credentials***

All the participants confirmed that little or no information was given with respect to the question of credential comparison. Some participants stated that this question was not even raised, while others said that it was but no specific details were given on the real challenges that applicants should expect. In Lamia's case, the question of the recognition of credentials was not raised at all. She said:

*"C'est un problème qui n'a pas été soulevé du tout ... c'était toujours une phrase qui se répète la fameuse phrase de publicité tout est facile ... On est donc un pays qui reconnaît tout."*

Some participants were given a code corresponding to an assessment of their credentials by Canadian standards. They were told to present the code once in Canada in

order to evaluate their foreign credentials with respect to Canadian equivalencies. This was clearly illustrated in the case of Narjis who noticed that, once she arrived in Canada, the chances to work in her area of expertise were minimal compared to those in her country of origin. She stated that the immigration consultant informed her that she would not need to re-do her education and that her degree would be accepted. During the immigration application process, all of the women were reassured by immigration consultants in Morocco that they would easily find a job based on their expertise.

### ***The immigration application process***

To prepare for their emigration, the women either hired an immigration consultant or attended immigration information sessions in Morocco, with single exception that of Lamiae who applied from France. These sessions were held to inform interested candidates about immigration to Canada and, particularly, about the skilled immigrant category under which the participants in this study were interested in applying. Lamiae stated that when she lived in Paris, Canadian immigration officials organized information sessions nearly every week to encourage people to immigrate. The information about immigration to Canada that was provided to these women was all positive with respect to the skilled immigrant category; immigration representatives explained that there were no obstacles finding jobs, that there was no discrimination, and that Canada was the land of opportunity for professional immigrants.

All of the participants in this study felt that skilled immigration under the points system was a thorny process: "*Les conditions d'admissibilités ... étaient assez draconiennes*" (Leila). One of the conditions of their admission was that the participants had to have a certain amount of money, and that they should not have any loans that would link them to

their home country. As Leila expressed it "*c'est à dire, de ne pas avoir de credit immobilier, de ne pas avoir une chose qui pourra nous attacher au Maroc. C'est comme s'ils nous ont demandé de se déraciner.*" Other women were invited to attend information sessions by a Canadian immigration lawyer to inform them about immigration to Canada. These sessions outlined all the advantages that Canada could offer them in terms of job opportunities and prosperity.

### ***Immigration consultants***

The women stated that during the immigration application process, they were full of hope and buoyed by the positive image of Canada as a prosperous country. During the application process, the women received more encouragement to persist in the process and to dream about a land of paradise. Leila was told: "*Si jamais on avait des personnes comme vous qui immigraient au Canada, le Canada serait vraiment un beau pays.*" She added that applicants did not receive accurate and precise information about the reality of the job market. The immigration consultant told her that: "*Je serai tranquille de toi au moins pendant dix ans*" which gave her hope that her area of expertise would be well-recognized in the receiving country.

During her immigration interview, Narjis was very concerned about finding employment in her field in the receiving country. She asked the immigration consultant about access to the job market. The consultant assured her that the process of integration was easy and that, based on her credentials, she would be able to work for at least 25 dollars an hour. In the information session that Farah attended for Canadian immigration, she was told: "*Tout est beau, vous allez gagner plus d'argent, vous allez travailler un bon travail, vous allez améliorer votre vie.*"

## **Part II: Resettlement and the Job Market Experiences**

The arrival and the settlement experiences of the participants were varied, as some came with their children and others emigrated as single applicants. Lamiae criticized the fact that, when she first arrived, there was no accompaniment service at the airport for newly-arriving immigrants. She felt such a service could have provided them with information about temporary accommodation while they looked for places where they could settle permanently.

“Quand je suis arrivée, je me suis sentie toute seule, [et] qu’ils ont réalisé leurs objectifs à savoir donc déposer la demande recevoir des immigrants et par la suite il faut se débrouiller.” (Lamiae)

After their arrival in Canada, all of the women felt lost and started to question their immigration decision. None of them could find a job that was relevant to their credentials. The women who came with their families had difficulties in the first year of trying to balance looking for jobs and helping their children to integrate into the new system. Imane, who received partial recognition of her credentials, fought hard to get a job without any success. When she looked for employment as a teacher, she was informed that she had to get a Canadian education degree for her to be able to work as a teacher. However, Imane could not re-do her degree of education because the only place where she could receive a recognized certificate of education was in Ottawa – being a mother of young children, she could not leave Montreal to do so. Therefore, she tried to find any kind of job to support her family and children, and ended up getting a position watching children at lunch time. She indicated that this was not something she expected and that she felt alienated. She pointed

out that: "*J'ai travaillé comme surveillante de diner .... c'est dégradant ... enseignante au Maroc [et] surveillante de diner au Québec ... ce n'est pas la même chose.*"

To add further to the story, Imane was able to find a part time job in the evening replacing a French teacher. She worked for two weeks and had to quit this job because her husband also worked in the evening and it was very hard for them to afford a babysitter for the children. Imane avows that "*j'étais obligé de quitter mon travail pour mes enfants, donc ce n'est pas facile, ça c'est un obstacle, être mère et puis être professionnelle, ce n'est pas évident au Québec.*"

As was the case for Imane, Fatiha was asked to get a Canadian degree of education, yet she could not do that because she had three children. She declared that "*je ne pouvais pas vue que j'ai trois enfants et en plus de ça il n y a pas les moyens donc je n'arrivais pas. Donc, il faut que je travaille pour subvenir à mes besoins donc c'est trop difficile de recommencer à zéro.*" Furthermore, Nora desperately tried to find jobs without success; she could not repeat her schooling nor study another degree because she had children. She said "*j'ai des enfants, il faut qu'ils s'adaptent, il faut qu'ils s'intègrent*"

The women were further confronted with other realities, including the fact that they were required to do volunteer work in order to gain Canadian experience. The participants stated that doing volunteer work was something very important. However, it was very difficult for them to fulfill it considering that they had to work to support their families. The women criticized the fact that they came as professionals under the skilled category and that they had to do volunteer work to gain the Canadian experience. All of the participants were asked similar questions regarding Canadian work experience when looking for jobs. Imane said that all potential employers asked her: "*Est-ce que tu as une attestation, un diplome canadien, quelque chose d'ici, pas de votre pays- pas l'experience de votre pays.*" To get a

Canadian diploma in her area of expertise, Imane would have been required to study for three years. She found this unfair and unfeasible because she had to support her children. Imane opted for another option: she studied for a year to get a certificate to become an educator in schools, while at the same time volunteering to gain as much experience as she could. Even with all the experience that she was able to garner, she could not find a job. She explained that the rejection that she received was based on her cultural background, and not on the lack of Canadian experience, because she did not even have the chance to be called for an interview.

The women recognized an unexpected fact, as once they arrived in Canada, they would have to start from the beginning. Merieme affirmed that it was very difficult to find a job or even an internship in order to integrate "*on demande un diplôme Canadien québécois et une expérience québécoise ce n'ai pas possible de l'avoir si on vient d'un autre pays*". Some women were obliged to go into domains that were not related to their backgrounds or expertise. Fatiha tried very hard to get a job without success, and asked a potential employer if his reason for rejecting her application was related to her Arabic name. The potential employer answered by saying "*this is the way it works*". All the women expressed that there was no point in asking about the recognition certificate, as foreign degrees were not valued when seeking jobs. Fatiha described the challenges that she faced as an absurd reality. She chose to study pastry and received a training certificate in the hopes of finding a job. She said: "*J'ai choisi de faire la pâtisserie même si il n y a aucun rapport entre mon diplôme universitaire et la pâtisserie mais je me suis dit c'est le seul moyen pour travailler.*" After finishing her training, she could not find an internship. In her words: "*ça reste toujours que tu es une étrangère.*" Currently she is working as a cashier in a convenience store.

### ***Recognition of credentials***

Upon arrival, all the participants in this study went through a provincial office of foreign credentials recognition named *Centre d'Expertise sur les Formations Acquisées Hors du Québec (CEFAHQ)*, through which they received a letter demonstrating the equivalency of their degrees according to the Canadian educational system. As illustrated in the above biography table, all the women were highly qualified professionals in their respective fields. With exception of six participants who received partial recognition, the rest of the women received full recognition of their foreign credentials. The women, whose degrees received partial recognition, were informed that they needed to upgrade their diplomas either by repeating their degrees or by studying at least two years in a Canadian context. For instance, Narjis was informed that she had to have at least eight years of work experience in Canada; whereas, Fatiha and Imane were asked to obtain a Canadian degree in teacher education. Aya, a dentist, failed to receive recognition of her degree. Meriem's biology degree was not recognized, and Nora who worked in the telecommunication industry, did not receive full recognition and was asked to advance her degree in order to match Canadian standards.

The rest of women who received full recognition of their degrees, were informed that the Canadian experience is a necessity. This requirement made these women either completely change their career to find jobs, or pursue another Canadian degree not related to their previous education. This was clearly illustrated in two examples of women who embarked in domains that were unrelated to their expertise. For instance, Fatiha studied pastry cooking, and Farah who had a background in teaching and management, studied two years of nursing. Nevertheless, all the women indicated that neither full nor partial recognition of their degrees and experiences helped them in accessing the Canadian job

market. They all felt and agreed that local education and experience was a requirement and a necessity when seeking employment in Canada.

The women stated that this reality put pressure on them to consider getting a Canadian degree. All the women were eventually obliged to get a Canadian degree or a certificate that was not related to their expertise, in the hope of gaining access to jobs. However, they found that, even with local education, they were still not successful in securing a job because the employers asked for Canadian work experience. The women agreed that there is a vicious cycle of Canadian education and Canadian work experience.

The participants in this study highlighted that this issue was not raised during their application for immigration, given that they applied as professional women under the skilled category. For the women who came with their families, going to school was a great challenge. However, they were obliged to consider it given the difficulties of getting a job with only Moroccan experience. Narjis, like the other women, was assured during the application process that her diplomas and years of experience would be recognized and grant her access to jobs. Once in the host country, she was obliged to do training. After the completion of the training, she could not find a job because potential employers asked her about a competence card that acknowledges her expertise in a Canadian context. In order for Narjis to obtain this card, she is required to have had eight years of Canadian experience in her professional domain.

All the women criticized the credentials comparison system that professionals go through as discriminatory. They felt that it made them go through deskilling, which hindered their ability to integrate into the system as professional immigrants. In other cases, some diplomas did not receive their full recognition and their years of education and experience were degraded to lesser years when assessed by Canadian standards. Lamaie stated that

when they see foreigners, even with 40 years of experience, they always perceived them as foreigners who are not qualified. All the women criticized and questioned the existence of the skilled immigration category, by asking why the Canadian immigration system requires diplomas and higher qualifications when skilled immigrants are not then given the chance to work and their qualifications are not recognized? The women felt it was unfair and promoted false promises prior to immigration regarding integration in the job market. These women felt that the Canadian immigration system was not honest in giving them the accurate information about the real challenges of the job market. They stated that they were admitted as qualified professionals, and ended up viewed as unqualified and degraded in status in the receiving country. Lina received recognition for her diplomas, but said: "*Ça sert à quoi de faire l'équivalence de mes diplômes ... tu ne travailles jamais [au Canada] avec l'équivalence de tes diplomes au Maroc.*" According to her, there is always a degradation that professionals coming to Canada encounter. Because Lina did not accept the degradation of her economic and social status, she opted to create her own business. Narjis stated admitting immigrants holders of secondary-level education is enough to access the Canadian job market. The women stated that discrimination started after receiving the recognition letter of their degrees.

### ***Information about the Canadian job market***

Looking for information and gaining access to the Canadian job market were challenges for the participants. They all highlighted the fact that the information sessions organized by different settlement agencies in Montreal did not meet their expectations. The women criticized the structure and the concept of a Canadian CV, "*je n'ai jamais compris la notion d'un CV à la Canadienne .... Parce que pour moi un CV c'est à l'international.*" (Lamiaae)

The participants identified that there exist some local agencies whose mandate was to assist job seekers in their search for employment. The women stated that the problem with these agencies was that there was no coherence or consistency pertaining to job search strategies or to the format of the Canadian CV. Going through the services of different agencies made the women confused about the best model for a Canadian job application, as each organization gave its own version. Furthermore, they reported that the information sessions available for newcomers were not beneficial because they grouped together immigrants from different educational backgrounds and provided them with general information that did not meet their particular needs—knowing that each one has a different case that may require different information and assistance.

Using different job search sites, the women were confronted with unexpected realities. Looking for a job in her discipline, Leila presented the code related to her credentials; she was shocked when employers also required perfect bilingualism and five years of Canadian experience. All respondents reported that the demand for bilingualism was an obstacle. They said that they applied to Quebec, a Francophone province, because of French. The women stressed the contradiction that in a Francophone province, they could not find employment with only French language skills. In some cases, the participants felt that a person, who spoke only English might have greater chances of finding a job than a Francophone.

Most of the participants worked in call centres and found this insulting after many years of studying and working in their professional fields in their home country. For example, Farah felt that with 20 years of study and work experience, ending up at the lowest level in a developed country was not a reality she had considered or expected when she completed her immigration application. Also, Lina, tried to find jobs where she could use her expertise,

while she was preparing her degree in management and accounting, however she was not successful. She affirmed that accepting any type of work just for the purpose of being employed was not an option that she considered. She stressed that she did not accept to be degraded in status when she was looking for jobs knowing her professional status and the fact that she was a director and an employer in her country of origin. She declared that: "*Ce n'est pas facile d'être [un employeur] une femme d'affaire, d'être à la tête d'une grande organisation [pour se retrouver comme une employée].*"

### ***How participants perceived the job-seeking process***

None of the women received a positive answer after applying to positions related to their field of expertise. Leila stated that:

*"Quand je les appelle pour confirmer la réception de mon CV et de ma lettre de motivation, moi je dit âllo, et eux ils disent Hello. Ça veut dire si jamais tu ne parles pas l'anglais, ce n'est même pas la peine de continuer la conversation ... alors leur français c'est difficile et mon anglais c'est hyper difficile."*

Desperately seeking job opportunities, women faced rejection from employers and limited help from job agencies from whom they sought assistance. For instance, when Leila tried asking for more information on how to find a job, the employment assistant told her "*madam, tu es trop anxieuse pour que tu puisses travailler, relaxe-toi.*" Leila admitted that she was anxious, and explained that she used to work in a high-level industry in her country of origin, where the notion of the minute was highly respected. She always pictured the chronometer that turned in her previous job, the passing measurement of time a reminder that she is herself unproductive.

Narjis, who did not accept failure even when she was required to have eight years of experience in a Canadian context, asked for a training placement in a centre that taught in

her area of expertise. She was called for an interview and had to wait an hour past her scheduled time. When she spoke with the secretary, she told her that the director came to see her, but when she noticed her veil she returned to her office because the hijab is prohibited in the training centre. Narjis insisted on seeing the director, who eventually told her that the reason for her refusal was that the training centre was located near a secondary school. The director indicated that if the children saw her wearing the veil, there was a risk they might imitate her. Thus, it was not accepted for security reasons. Narjis explained this by saying that Islam, in the view of the director, is a threat and that a person who wears the hijab will be a threat to her working environment.

The director told Narjis that if she was accepted, she would have to weld machines. Narjis responded that all workers would wear a helmet when welding, which covers the head more than the hijab. Narjis told the director that she would bring the media to see if she has the right to work with the hijab. The director then told Narjis that she would give her access to the training sessions for one week to assess her competencies. The professor, who assessed her acknowledged her professionalism, but told her that in Canada there are only four women who work in the field. A woman who worked in the training centre told Narjis that it would be impossible for her to get the job because of three obstacles: being a Muslim, wearing the veil, and being an immigrant. She told her that, even as a white woman from Quebec, she could not penetrate the field of welding in the industry of refrigeration and heating because the director of the centre does not believe that women are able to do this kind of job. Narjis was shocked and stated that patriarchy exists in Canada and not in Morocco, considering that many women work in the welding industry along with men in her country of origin.

Similar problems happened to Aya who tried to apply for a job in the pharmaceutical industry. She could not get a position because of the bilingualism requirement and because she wore a hijab. She said that in order to integrate into the labour market: *"Il faudrait absolument être bilingue, il faudrait absolument ne pas avoir le voile, hors moi je porte le voile, fait que c'est un handicap qui m'a même été confirmé par l'agent de l'emploi."*

Three participants in this study wore a veil and they have identified it as a major reason for their rejection when seeking employment. Notably, all of the other women also acknowledged that wearing a hijab was an obstacle towards finding a job in the Canadian labour market based on what they have witnessed from their friends' experiences.

### ***The challenge of networking***

Networking, or réseautage, was a challenge that all the participants experienced. According to them, if you did not have contact with people and know somebody who could refer you to a position, it was very hard for newcomers to have opportunities in the job market. *"80 percent du marché de travail au Canada c'est un marché caché. Ça veut dire ... il faut connaître des personnes et ça je l'appelle coup de piston ça veut dire c'est un critère discriminatoire ... les 20 pourcent c'est entre l'internet et les annonces"* (Lamiaie)

Two participants were required to undertake an internship in order to get their diplomas in Canada. They said that all the Quebecois students who were in the same program were able to get internships; the students who were left without placements were the Arabs. Because the internship was a requirement in the program, their professors were obliged to intervene and talk with people in their own networks to organize the placements for them.

Along with the problem of networking, the women identified another obstacle: references. All potential employers required Canadian references, which the women identified as impossible to get as they are always rejected when seeking employment. The women expressed that lack of references is a big challenge for foreign-educated professionals. During her interview experiences, Nora was always asked about the person who referred her or who advised her to apply for the position. When she answered that she either found the posting in the newspaper or on the Internet, they would not consider her application. The same problem was encountered by all the other women.

### ***Job interview experiences***

All the participants had different stories regarding job interviews. All of them said that it was very difficult to even receive a call for an interview. When they went for an interview, they were often refused for being overqualified for the position. Some of the women tried to dismiss their qualifications when applying for positions, but recruiters then told them that they were less qualified with insufficient education and expertise. The women questioned how they would be able to gain local experience if employers did not give them the chance to work. This issue was frequently raised when discussing the topic of job interviews. The women explained that there was a kind of mistrust towards their qualifications. As Lamiae put it: "*Il y a une méfiance.*"

The women identified another issue regarding access to the job market for professionals holding foreign degrees. Lamiae highlighted that the fact of being a foreigner is already an obstacle in and of itself. The participants were asked "*vous venez d'où? Est-ce que vous avez réussi d'intégrer donc le système Canadien*" (Lamiae). The majority of the women were asked the above question, and they perceived it as discrimination against foreign

competencies. The women believed that by holding foreign credentials, employers had the idea that they were incapable of handling managerial positions. They also added that these challenges were related to a stigma created at the institutional level that promoted the idea that foreign professionals are not equally competent to their Canadian counterparts, thus preventing them from penetrating the Canadian system.

Because of the challenges in even receiving an answer after submitting job applications, Leila tried the following experiment. She created a CV that contained all her expertise and education, but which stated that her credentials were obtained *outré-mer*, or overseas, instead of specifying that they were completed in Morocco. She found that the word 'overseas' created a kind of suspense for employers and that she ended up receiving many more calls. However, when employers asked her about her English, she had to begin the cycle of job search again.

Nora also felt that the name of the candidate and country of origin played a role in her admission or rejection when searching for employment. With most jobs that she applied for, employers conducted group interviews to observe how applicants responded to questions and interacted in a group setting. She said that when the group interview was finished, employers always started by first calling applicants who had Quebecois names and Arab candidates were called at the end—this happened to her on many occasions. She said that if one has an Arabic name, it was a big obstacle. Every time she went to an interview, they sent her a letter saying that she was competent but they had hard time choosing between candidates. Farah declared that: "*À chaque moment que je passe une entrevue, je viens à la maison, je pleure.*" Farah was obliged to completely change her career and chose to study for two years in a nursing program. She said that "*il y a des médecins avec moi à l'école ... ils font des cours de soins infirmiers ... ça c'est honteux*".

***Financial situation of the participants in the study***

Half of the participants in this study received benefits from the social welfare system. Others received help from their relatives, or worked in jobs incommensurate to their education level to meet their living needs. All the women questioned their decision to immigrate to achieve a prosperous life. They expressed that they used to have a better life with rewarding jobs, and that their current financial situation was very far from their dream of Canada as a country where they could prosper. All of them indicated that, in the context of their current situation in Canada, a more prosperous life was found in their country of origin.

Lina, who chose to use her entrepreneurial leadership and skills, decided to coordinate partnerships between Canada and Morocco. She said that the school she founded in Morocco was a source of revenue and, added to her husband's contribution, she was able to cover her needs in Canada. Using her business skills, she created an association to help immigrant women in the process of integration in Canada. Knowing the challenges that immigrant professional women go through, and particularly Moroccan women for the purpose of this study, Lina stated that she founded the association to create a network of Moroccan professional women and provide them with support, advice, information, orientation, and assistance.

The women were highly disgruntled with the idea that professional and qualified women with university degrees and many years of experience come to Canada and have to study what they have already studied. They all said that this is a fact that is unacceptable. Lina stated that part of the mission of her association is to give accurate information about the realities of the Canadian job market for women who think of coming to Canada, while at the same time supporting the women who are already in the country with strategies to cope

with their challenges. Her vision is to help these women get into the world of business, be autonomous, and create their own jobs. Lina pointed out that these women already have the knowledge, work experience, and professional expertise to move ahead rather than going back to study what they have already learned. She said that there exist some organizations that can help these women with guidance on how to create their own jobs and projects as a means of being autonomous and overcoming the barriers in the Canadian job market.

### ***Health and well-being***

The women in this study reported low levels of health, combined with the stress of not being able to find jobs related to their educational level. Lamiae defined a healthy life as follows: "*la vie saine [c'est] une vie ou on a intégré bien le marché de travail ou on se sent très à l'aise qu'on est accepté par les autres malgré notre différence.*" The women stressed that they were shocked at the unexpected realities of the Canadian job market. Lamiae went through depression and started questioning her self: "*Qu'est ce que je suis entrain de faire ici ... j'ai laissé une bonne opportunité d'emploi en Irlande, j'ai laissé aussi donc mon travail en France ... je suis toute pleins d'énergie ... et en fin de compte je trouve rien.*"

Six out of twelve women felt unproductive because they are on social welfare. They remarked that their health and well-being was drastically impacted. Leila stated that "*J'avais fait une dépression qui m'avait coûté le charme de mon visage ... j'ai carrément changé de profil ... et quand je regardais les photos avant que j'arrive ici au Canada, je me dis pourquoi je suis venue ici ?*" A healthy life, according to these women, is to have a decent source of revenue that will enable them to regain the level they used to have in their country of origin.

Most of the participants stated that a healthy life is when there is no discrimination and when one is able to work in his/her profession and expertise.

Most of the women stated that moving from a productive life in their country of origin to an unproductive one in the host country made them lose their self-confidence. As was expressed by Nora: "*Je sens que ce n'est plus la même valeur que je me donnais parce que ... avant j'étais cadre commercial ... c'était un prestige ... mais arrivé ici ... je me sens inutile.*" The women who immigrated with their children stated that a healthy life for them is to live a harmonious life with their children. The women felt that they do not live a dignified life in Canada due to the socio-economic degradation they went through that impacted them emotionally and psychologically. Imane expressed her feelings by saying: "*J'étais enseignante dans ma classe, j'enseignais la langue, je faisais la littérature ... maintenant je mouche les nez, je change les couches ce n'est pas évident.*"

One of the aspects of a healthy life identified by the women is to live in a respectful environment. They all felt that one might manage to get a source of revenue; however, succeeding in material life does not necessarily mean that one lives a healthy life. For instance, Aya said: "*Une ... personne peut te lancer ... une grimace par exemple discriminatoire, qui peut te gâcher ta vie, fait que la qualité de vie ce n'est pas forcément le matériel qu'on va te donner.*"

The women confirmed that the unproductive daily routine impacted their health and emotions dramatically. They indicated that they spent all their time thinking about jobs and ways to overcome the challenges, which have made most of the participants suffer from depression and anxiety.

### **Part III: Evaluation of the Immigration Decision**

#### ***Information provided prior immigration***

The participants in the study reported they had little or no information regarding access to Canadian job market prior to arrival. Basic and superficial information was given at information sessions or by immigration consultants on what to do once they arrived, namely getting recognition of their diplomas, how to change their driver license etc. The sessions revealed nothing specific about the expectations and the challenges that the applicants may encounter, such as looking for jobs, were given at these sessions. Lamiae described it as *publicité mensongère*.

Given what she has heard from the women with whom she works, Lina criticized the information given prior immigration as insufficient. She stated that one of the priorities of her association is to focus on providing women who are seeking immigration as professionals with accurate information about the realities of the job market in Canada. This is done with the knowledge that this aspect is lacking in the immigration application process.

All of the women remarked on the reality of bilingualism in a francophone province—a fact that they confirmed was not revealed in the immigration process. The women stated that during their immigration application process, no information was received about the potential need to redo their degrees in the Canadian context. Lina brought attention to the point that professional women should not accept just anything, given that they used to have higher status in their country of origin. According to her, it is unacceptable that professional immigrants should completely change their careers and accept a degradation of their skills for the sake of getting a job in the Canadian labour market. She stated that money can also be made at home; it is not in the host country only, where one can make money.

Imane thought that she would be able to achieve a more prosperous life compared to how she used to live, and indicated that this is a problem related to the image that one draws about the West. Imane elaborated by saying: "*On dit toujours que ... immigrant dans un pays occidental on va être meilleur, on va être mieux ... mais c'est vraiment pas le cas parce que ... au Maroc on vivait mieux qu'ici, on avait un salaire mieux qu'ici, on se procurait la belle vie mieux qu'ici.*"

The participants asked why Canadian immigration policy welcomes professionals through the point system, if they then end up unemployed, on social assistance, or in precarious job positions in the host country. The women stated that they had to wait between five and six years for the immigration process and did nothing once in the host country. All of them expressed that there was not a clear picture of the realities and challenges they would have to face once arrived. The majority of the women stated that they could not understand the reasons for these challenges when they were admitted as economic immigrants. They were given the impression that Canada needs to populate its land. Amal said: "Ça n'a rien à voir avec ce que l'agent nous a parlé, peut être ils veulent des gens pour remplir le Canada et on est là"

The women stated that the information given during the immigration application process did not convey the real picture of the challenges they have experienced. Aya described the information given as containing nuances in meaning. In other words, the information was transmitted in a way to hide any negative representation of the receiving country. She said that "*On peut dire que la vie est belle, mais belle qu'est ce que ça veut dire ... on dit que ... tu as droit à la santé gratuitement, mais on ne dit pas que si tu as une urgence tu vas aller piroter pendant 8 heures ... au risque de ne pas voir un médecin*"

Amal stated that the information she received prior to her immigration did not reflect the challenges that she discovered as a professional woman. She highlighted that she applied under the economic category to find a job, and not to be on the welfare system. All the women agreed that they left their home country not because they were unemployed or had no income, but because they were encouraged to apply to Canada by immigration consultants and information sessions that gave them the idea that Canada is a country of prosperity that could help them live better than their current situation.

### ***Views about job searching in Canada***

The participants in this study reported different struggles and barriers accessing jobs in their areas of expertise that resulted in their alienation from, and difficulty integrating into, the Canadian economic sphere. All the women criticized the quality of the information sessions in Canada as insubstantial and lacking in concrete and practical examples related to job search strategies. Lamiae stated that the information given was not structured, and each agency gave a view of what it perceived as the best job search strategy. She added that this confuses the applicants, who are not familiar with the Canadian system.

All the women opined that the selection of professionals for admission involved a lot of criteria, which gave applicants the illusion that their access to the job market would be easier. Aya stated that:

*"Ils mettent tellement de critères, ils mettent tellement de barres, ils mettent tellement de freins, par rapport aux immigrants qu'on croirait qu'ils veulent vraiment la crème du Maroc ... une fois face au marché de l'emploi, on le ridiculise ... il y a un grand décalage entre ... les informations qui sont transmises aux immigrants ... et la réalité du marché ... de l'emploi."*

All the respondents agreed that if the reality of the challenges was revealed during the process, no professional immigrant would opt for dismissing their career and secure financial situation, and wait for five years in the immigration process, in order to come to Canada and be degraded and alienated.

The women were offended by being repeatedly questioned by employers regarding their reasons for immigrating to Canada given their prosperous life in their country of origin. Farah indicated that she got asked this question many times and that she answered as follow: "Si je viens ici, c'est un pays pour les immigrants, c'est vous qui m'encourageait à venir c'est vous qui m'a sollicité pour une séance de formation pour m'expliquer que votre pays c'est un bon pays, c'est le paradis ... c'est la belle vie." All the participants in the study stated that they barely live a decent life, and have never reached the life they used to have or that they were looking to achieve in the host country.

### ***Women's recommendations***

The women I interviewed had sought integration into the Canadian job market in their respective disciplines. They said that they were admitted to Canada as professional immigrants but were misled and tricked into their current situation by false realities from immigration consultants who painted an overly rosy picture of life in Canada, without disclosing that their human capital will be devalued. The women highlighted that Canada is a country known to have an ageing population and that immigration has been adopted as a strategy to increase the working-age population. The participants stated that because Canada is in need of educated professionals, Canadian immigration policy should consider changes related to the integration of these professionals. "*C'est des gens ... qui sont tous des intellectuels qui ont beaucoup d'argent dans leurs pays d'origine, ... la preuve ils l'ont appelé*

*l'immigration choisie*" (Lamiae). In other words, they are admitted to Canada based on their educational level and job experiences; however, the participants found themselves degraded in social and economic status.

Another important point highlighted by the women is that at the institutional level, employers need to change their mentality and judgment of foreign credentials. They indicated that recruiters are biased in how they view the qualifications of foreign professionals regardless of their skills and years of experience. Furthermore, they all agreed that the socio-economic degradation of professional women has repercussions as to their visions for a prosperous future. As a result, the women undergoing these challenges lose their self-confidence and start to question the future of their children. According to the participants in this study, a woman who is depressed and discouraged will not be able to transmit optimism to her children.

Lina suggested visiting the host country before beginning the process of immigration to see if there is a potential to achieve one's hopes and to gain a sense of the challenges that may occur during the integration process. Leila stated that instead of making professionals re-do their career in a class setting, she wished there was the possibility to engage in a professional environment where they could acquire Canadian experience and prove their expertise. Leila called attention to the need to re-evaluate the quality of the training sessions given to professionals and the legitimacy of the trainers employed for these positions. "*On a l'air que le gouvernement se moque de nous.*" The women challenged the prejudice that dictates that foreign-educated professionals are incapable of working in the Canadian job market. All the participants said that they should be given the chance to demonstrate their capabilities and expertise by allowing them to penetrate the Canadian job market. Only then, can the recruiter judge their competencies.

## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

The results of this study confirmed that the state of non-recognition of foreign credentials did not substantially improve immigrants' occupational integration. This issue remains predominant and persistent when skilled immigrants seek recognition for their degrees —as the results of this study have demonstrated. The data from this research highlight that *Othering* and racialization remains an obstacle towards realizing equal access to the Canadian labour market. This is translated into women being trapped in either unskilled jobs or social assistance. The stories of the women revealed different challenges that they have faced looking for jobs commensurate with their educational and employment experiences. The challenges that these skilled women have experienced are attributed to the following reasons: Lack of recognition of their credentials, bilingualism, systemic discrimination, lack of opportunities to find programs or training placements in their field of expertise, Islamophobia, cultural racism, and family obligations that makes it hard for some women with children to prioritize the future of their career. In order to analyze the dynamics that has negatively influenced these women's experiences, this chapter discusses the fieldwork data using theories and approaches with the goal of deconstructing and understanding the discourse behind skilled women's exclusion with a particular focus on Moroccan women in the Canadian labour market.

### **Denial of Accreditation with Respect to one's Capabilities**

Canadian skilled immigration is an essential platform for the creation of upon which to create a competitive advantage in the global economy. For the purpose of endorsing and ensuring socio-economic development, Canada has been known as a significant rival in immigrants' admission (Pronovost & Laaroussi, 2010). Canada admits professional

immigrants as human capital to boost its economy; this goal is attained through the policy of skilled immigration that emphasizes point system requirements when welcoming professional immigrants by ensuring that applicants under this category are qualified, well educated, and have many years of work experiences in their respective fields (Grant, 2005). The women in this study, as described in the results section, are skilled professionals with many years of experiences both at the national and international levels. With diverse capabilities and higher expertise in their chosen fields, they were accepted as economic immigrants after a waiting period of five to six years. Once in the receiving country, where the women had envisioned a promised prosperity, the women confronted adverse challenges related to accessing jobs in their field of expertise.

The capabilities approach offers the ground to understanding and analysing how respondents' lack of functionality, that they felt impacted their dignity and freedom of choice as professional women, has serious repercussions on their socio-economic status. Choice, agency, liberties, and freedom are central attributes of the capabilities approach that define the quality of life of the person. Inspired by the social justice framework, the capabilities approach emphasizes that human beings are free to achieve their full functioning and flourish in their areas of interests (Pyles & Banerjee, 2010). As the discussion will show, prior emigration to their host country, these women painted a picture of high functionality and economic flourishing in the Canadian labour market based on the information received from people in the immigration industry. However, the realities of these women challenge the purpose of skilled immigration and the idea that immigrants in this category will be positive contributors to the Canadian economy.

The selection of skilled immigrants is not an easy process as was illustrated in the fieldwork of this study. The women underwent a rigorous assessment through Citizenship and Immigration Canada's point system for skilled workers' selection. The points that these women received were given according to their educational level, work experience, income and financial situation, language proficiency, etc. In other words, their capabilities and competencies were evaluated in order to determine their eligibility to become economic immigrants.

As a social justice theory, the human capabilities approach lays emphasis on what people are able to do and to be. The participants in this study, who have professional degrees with many years of work experiences at both national and international levels, were guaranteed by immigration consultants that their access to the labour market would be met with limited challenges. Despite the discourse of multiculturalism, diversity, and the living together spirit, racism and rejection plagues these immigrants who are judged as inferior to mainstream Canadians. One can argue that despite the rhetoric of multiculturalism, human dignity, as emphasized by the human capabilities approach, is not easily realizable in a developed multicultural society. Considering their previous socio-economic positions, the women in this study went through dramatic degradation in status as evidenced by their desperate efforts to prove their competencies and expertise in front of employers. According to Capabilities theory, when human beings have neither freedom of choice nor the opportunity to make use of their capacities, their dignity is impacted and thus they become dysfunctional (Bonvin & Orton, 2009). In other words, the freedom to choose and to perform a job that is related to one's capabilities and one's ability to function is at the core of this approach. The participants in this study found themselves misled by false promises to the prosperous future they longed for. All of the women express the fact that the life they

now lead in Canada is a contrast to that of which they were accustomed in their country of origin.

Bonvin and Orton argue that "reducing material well-being cannot be conducive to the enhancement of capabilities ... it requires promoting adequate social conversion factors with a view to ensuring that valuable opportunities for social and professional integration are available for all" (2009, p. 568). In fact, the opportunities that these women were dreaming to reach become unrealizable because they are considered unequal to the Canadian education and professional experience. Regardless of the job opportunities that might be available for professionals in the labour market, the women could not find a job. The participants' lack of functionality reflects a double standard where, on the one hand, the women were encouraged to emigrate to advance their economic prosperity, and on the other hand they were made to confront alienation and degradation once in the receiving country. In fact, the non-recognition of foreign credentials demonstrates the lack of trust in *global south* credentials—disregarding its legitimacy and hindering its degree holders from reaching equal functioning in the *global north*.

### **Systemic Discrimination: Foreign skilled women faced with barriers**

Based on the results of this research, this section will discuss how the variables of foreign education and job experience, membership in a racialized group and gender are confirmed to be obstacles to accessing Canadian labour market. As the data showed, the women have reported unexpected challenges in the conversion of their skills and experiences into equivalent credentials relevant to the Canadian context. Most importantly, access to employment in the labour market was reported to be discriminatory, which is manifested in the fact that these women's ethnic belonging and educational attainment was

translated into failure and degradation that excluded them from being hired in their field of expertise. As mentioned in the results section, when the women sought the comparison of their degrees some of them received full recognition of their credentials, while others received partial recognition. In fact, the matter does not lie in whether one receives full or partial recognition of their degrees. It is, however, related to the denial of one's skills and competencies when seeking jobs; as the women in both cases have faced the same problems of alienation and rejection in the labour market. The letter of degree recognition, received in the accreditation process, mentions that the letter does not guarantee access to employment opportunities. This declaration suggests that the letter in and of itself presents an ambiguity that questions the women's admission as skilled workers. Furthermore, it propels these women to believe that their dreams of access to opportunities are bleak.

There is, in fact, a paradox that exists when skilled immigrants arrive in Canada. Unlike other immigration categories, skilled immigration is an economic class whose goal is to boost the Canadian economy with strong human capital. Statistics Canada of 2007 indicated that the net of the international immigration added nearly two-thirds of the total Canadian population between 2001 and 2006. Also, it is estimated that it will become the predominant source of growth by 2030 (Grenier & Nadeau, 2010). Skilled immigration is an important asset for Canada; therefore, it is important to know the qualifications and the expertise of the human capital it admits to its land. Teelucksingh and Galabuzi (2005) point out that skilled immigrants are admitted to Canada under a delicate and vigorous process that pledges a number of advantages including the potential to improve one's status in a multicultural and a modern economic atmosphere. Upon their arrival, all the women went through the *Centre d'expertise sur les formations acquises hors du Québec (CEFAHQ)* to determine the Canadian equivalencies of their credentials. As illustrated by the women in

this study, even though they have received either partial or full recognition of their records, it did not help them when seeking employment as they were always confronted to the reality of the Canadian experience. The results of women's efforts were doomed with failure as was reported in all the examples presented in the results section. The dilemma of the non-recognition of foreign credentials is related to the idea that foreign education and job experience is appraised as not equal to the Canadian standards, which devalues skilled immigrants admitted under this category (Li, 2001).

One can explain that there is a dichotomy between the skilled immigration policy and the realities of the job market. The women were accepted as economic immigrants to contribute to the Canadian economy with their diverse human capital; the evaluation of their knowledge prior to emigration was proven to be at the highest level. Signaling theory speaks to the difficulties the women have encountered and the reasons for their alienation when seeking a placement in the labour market, providing a tool with which one can analyze and deconstruct the meanings of the job search. The women reported that the attributes related to their origin, namely cultural background, language, education, and work experience were the reasons for employers' denials. As mentioned in the results section, cultural features such as Arabic names, Moroccan degrees, hijab, and language, are characteristics that were reported as being a cause to their exclusion when seeking employment. According to the signaling theory, employers observe and evaluate applicants based on the image that the job seeker presents, which mainly includes previous education, job experience, racialized status/ethnicity, and gender. In other words, these attributes are related to the person's background and origins, which are facts that are visible, and that the employer evaluates as unfamiliar to the Canadian context. Weiss (2006) explains that the signaling theory emphasizes that the origin of the job applicant has an influence on his or her

admission for employment, which implies that individuals who acquired predictable education transmit signals, which employers use to interpret and predict their credentials in line with their previous employment (in Tastsoglou & Dobrowolsky). Therefore, the evaluation of job seekers is based on a biased judgment and a prejudice that is socially constructed on the competencies of the Other or non-white professionals.

Signaling theory and Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* can be intertwined in the sense that both of them contribute to an understanding of the job market dilemma, they both emphasize the idea that the origins of immigrants play a critical role in making their experiences either positive or negative. Oliver and O'Reilly (2010) write that:

*habitus* describes those internalized structures, dispositions, tendencies, habits, ways of acting, that are both individualistic and yet typical of one's social groups, communities, family, and historical position. [In other words] it is the individual trace of an entire collective history ... [the reality shows that] there remain deep-seated and embodied tendencies both to behave and to see others in distinctive ways (p. 56-57).

The findings of this study show that these women's origins were evaluated from the dominant group's perspective, in other words, they were evaluated based on the employer's observation of their background attributes or *habitus*. They disregarded their capabilities and competencies, dismissing them as not being equal to the Canadian educational standards. For instance, privileges and opportunities are determined by immigrants' origins; which places immigrants coming from non-white countries at a disadvantage compared to the ones coming from either Europe or the United States (Li, 2001).

Achieving Canadian education and job experience does not guarantee that professional immigrants will succeed in getting a job in the Canadian labour market.

Referring to the findings of this study, even though the majority of the women acquired local education and experience, it did not help them access jobs. In relation to the findings of this study, one can deduce that the obstacles of getting jobs is generally related to either the educational background or the visibility of women's religion; particularly for the ones who wear the hijab. The aforementioned job search challenges indicate that the structure of the Canadian labour market makes visible minority skilled professionals experience unfavourable situations and rejection as a result of their background and previous work experiences. These institutional barriers led the women to either turn to social welfare assistance or seek precarious jobs that are insecure, poorly paid, and significantly below their educational and professional levels. The exclusion based on observable attributes can be explained as discrimination in employment, Teelucksingh and Galabuzi (2005) define it as "practices or attitudes that have, whether by design or impact, the effect of limiting an individual or groups' right to opportunities generally available because of attributed rather than actual characteristics" (p. 6).

### **Quebec Province: Francophone human capital faced with systemic challenges**

Canadian immigration policy encourages skilled immigration as it constitutes an economic advantage to increase its human capital and growth in a competitive global market. Citizenship and Immigration Canada declares that:

Skilled workers are preferred to family class immigrants and refugees due to their high human capital (i.e., high levels of education and work experience and good command of English and /or French) and the economic independence expected of them in the Canadian labor market (Buzdugan & Halli, 2009, p. 366-367).

This study gave a particular focus on the skilled immigration in Quebec province through which the women participants have applied, unlike the federal selection; Quebec has adopted its own selection of skilled immigrants to meet its needs as a French speaking province. Quebec immigrants' selection has focused on the following main characteristics of admission: knowledge of the French language, education, work experience, youth, training that is considered in demand among employers in Quebec, and, most importantly, financial self-sufficiency (Lenoir-Achdjian & Arcand, 2010). The women declared that they chose Quebec province over other Canadian provinces because its official language is French. "La langue française est la langue officielle du Québec et enchâssée dans la charte de la langue française, adoptée en 1977 ... des efforts constants et concertés sont investis pour que l'immigration contribue à la sauvegarde de la langue française" (Gagnon et al., 2010, p. 17). The selection grid for skilled immigrants applying to Quebec gives greater importance to the knowledge of French compared to the rest of Canada. For instance, under Quebec's policy selection for independent immigrants, 25 percent is given as passing criteria to applicants who speak French, compared to 12 percent in the rest of Canada (Grenier & Nadeau, 2010).

The women were accorded the Quebec certificate selection based on their knowledge of French and were admitted under the skilled category based on their education and job expertise; that were affirmed would be beneficial for Quebec and Canada. Hence, Quebec has adopted a policy that encourages the immigration of francophone human capital which speaks to the context of this research that has focused on the flow of skilled Moroccan—particularly women to Quebec province. Immigrants from the Maghreb region represent the highest percentage in the Quebec province in comparison to other immigrant groups. The demographics of Quebec province demonstrate an increase in highly professional francophone immigrants coming from non-European sources, especially Africa,

as evidenced in statistics; since the year 2001, Morocco and Algeria have been ranked as the top sources of incoming immigrants (Lenoir-Achdjian & Arcand, 2010).

Even though skilled immigrants were accepted to Quebec by Citizenship and Immigration Canada under the point system for being francophones, they have encountered systemic barriers and their language skills were not given value when seeking employment in the Canadian labour market. Grenier and Nadeau (2010) confirmed after a field investigation in Montreal that both male and female immigrants' French language skills were not always recognized by native-born Canadians. Some of the explanations provided by the authors were that immigrants' quality of French was viewed not as good as that of the native-born Canadians, also for immigrants whose only official language is French, there was the probability that they might get discriminated against by employers in Montreal.

Once in the receiving country the women were shocked about the reality of bilingualism whereby the knowledge of French was not enough to penetrate the job market. They added that even outside the institutional framework, English is largely spoken in Montreal. One can understand that the lack of opportunities with French language in the Francophone province represents a paradox to the identity and the history of Quebec. The women affirmed that they envisioned a living standard as economic immigrants — relative to those of educated mainstream Canadians. In Canada, they were met with unexpected realities — namely alienation and Otherness. The women economic immigrants in this study faced difficulties realizing their migration goals, noting that they were diminished to a new state of poverty. The unemployment rate amongst non-European francophone immigrants is at its highest percentage compared to native-born Canadians, for instance immigrants coming from Northern Africa reached, in 2006, an unemployment rate of 18.8 % (Boudarbat

& Boulet, 2010). Furthermore, statistics show that "the 2001 unemployment rate among Morocco-born Moroccans and Algeria-born Algerians who had lived in Quebec for five years or less was high: 33.6% and 35.4%, respectively, compared with 8.2% for Quebecers as a whole" (Lenoir-Achdjian & Arcand, 2010, p. 67).

All of the women in the study are on social assistance, rely on relatives for financial assistance, or work in precarious jobs for their survival. Moreover, all the women participants were turned down after interviews because they did not speak English. The women criticized the fact that the reality of bilingualism was not revealed in the process of the immigration application. They were accepted in a Francophone province and were affirmed that they possess a compatible working knowledge of the French language and that they are able to work in competitive paying jobs in Quebec province. Garneau (2008) affirms that "la grille de sélection semble induire un message dissonant en laissant penser, d'une part, que le Canada accueille le migrant pour qu'il fasse «profiter ses compétences» à l'essor économique du pays et, d'autre part, que ce dernier n'a finalement pas les qualifications appropriées" (p. 177). The women questioned the acceptance of their degrees prior to the emigration, and the rejections they encountered once seeking to realize the promises of a prosperous life. The false promises of the Canadian economic immigration lead them to question the legitimacy of this policy and its accuracy of the goals that Canada is aiming to realize through the admission of skilled immigrants.

The women participants went from a productive to an unproductive stage where they are either on social assistance or in menial jobs. The major barriers experienced by these women were reported at the institutional level where they have faced discrimination and Otherness. The women found themselves at the lowest echelon in the receiving country,

and as mentioned, the rate of unemployment among Francophone immigrants is very high.

In order to discuss the discourse behind this relegation, the concept of systemic discrimination, reflects the challenges reported by the women at the institutional level. Fong (2008) highlights that:

Systemic discrimination refers to the institutionalization of discrimination through policies and practices, which may appear neutral on the surface, but have an exclusionary impact on particular groups, such that various minority groups are discriminated against, intentionally or unintentionally (p. 10).

Hence, this racism attempts to disregard the qualifications of immigrants within the workforce, and does so by establishing specific criteria and measurements that makes the hiring process highly racialized. Some of the barriers that were reported in relation to the systemic discrimination are the non-recognition of their credentials and expertise, the demand of Canadian work experience, reference, and networking, bilingualism which as shown have hindered these women from integrating in the labour force. Beck, Reitz, and Weiner (2002) highlight that systemic discrimination is a discrimination that happens in the process of recruitment, hiring, or promotion engendering inclusion and exclusion of a group over another, in other words, it gives privilege to the dominant group over immigrants.

Some of the attributes related to this discrimination:

include informal selection based on unnecessary qualifications (the requirement for Canadian experience, for example), informal recruitment systems (through "word of mouth" or networking where the networks do not extend into minority groups), and selection committees consisting only of long- term employees (few of whom happen to be members of minority

groups). Some of these practices may not have been discriminatory when first implemented, but become so with the changing racial composition of the labour force (Beck, Reitz, and Weiner, 2002, p. 76).

Historically, Canadian immigration policy has not always been focused on integration. Before the 60s, Canadian immigration policy had a limited access on what it perceived as admissibles, or the preferred immigrant. Prioritizing the maintenance of a white territory, the immigrants that were considered preferable- were the ones coming from a white source namely Great Britain and northern Europe (Spitzer, 2009). The idea of preferred versus non-preferred immigrant is reproduced and is sustained in 21<sup>st</sup> century at the institutional level, whereby regardless of one's skills and capabilities, the country of origin of the job applicant determines his or her future in the receiving country. The challenges reported by the women participants reveal this reality in the sense that their cultural background, education, and country of origin, were attributed as the cause of their rejection and alienation when seeking opportunities. Bauder (2003) observes that immigrants who are subject to restrictions in access to high-skilled jobs are the ones coming from South and Central Asia, the Middle East and Southern and Eastern Europe.

The potential to improve one's status can be hardly seen in the cases of the participants in this research. They were admitted as economic and Francophone immigrants before stepping into the receiving country, to find themselves of no value under the Canadian standards informing them that the knowledge of French is not enough and that Canadian education and Canadian experience are mandatory requirements. Referring to the case of this study, one can say that education and experience is evaluated according to the position and the economic status of a country at the international level. This brings the

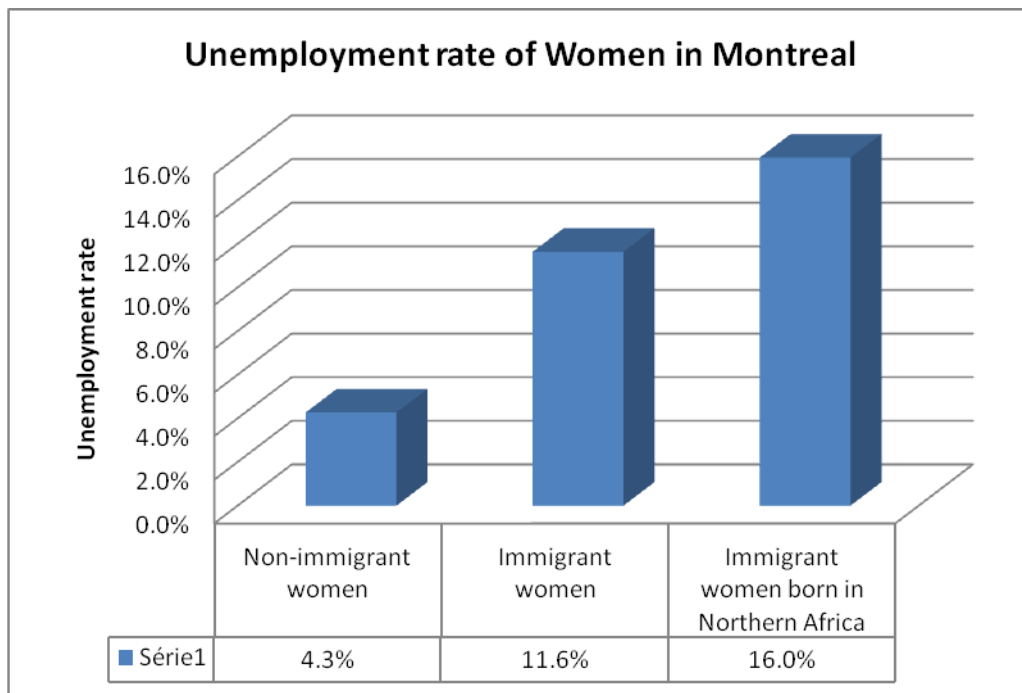
discussion of the *global north/global south* divide, which painted a picture of the *global south* as poor and dependent on the *global north* expertise by disregarding the legitimacy of their quality of education. As evidenced in academic literature, immigrant women coming from the *global south* face a number of disadvantages, including deskilling (Chicha, 2010). The quality of the *global south* education is disregarded once immigrants are at the institutional level seeking to realize the 'truth' they were made to 'believe' prior to their immigration. For example, Oliver and O'Reilly (2010) indicate that, historically, dominant groups have assumed power in defining what they perceive to be the 'right kind' of culture; that is, one that is similar to their own. They use their culture as the norm to differentiate themselves from others.

The ideology of dominance is still predominant in the context of immigration where the immigrant is regarded as poor, vulnerable, unskilled, backward, etc. regardless of the purpose of the immigration. The women who were selected in the study used to have managerial positions in their home country with many years of job experience and a fluent knowledge of French, which they thought was the official language of the Quebec province. The women declared that they were misled with a false 'truth' about the purpose and the need of skilled immigration in Canada. The result of this study show that the supremacy of the West is translated into socially constructed terms of exclusion such as referring to immigrants as Others, placing them at unequal footing with the population of the host country. As a result, these women suffer from embedded interlocking systems of oppression, where they are not only foreign to the receiving country, but also they are treated as invisible and incompetent. The women's situation is further exacerbated after upgrading their education to have the Canadian experience, as they most often than not are unable to gain successful employment. Khan and Watson (2005) write that the Canadian

Task Force's report criticized the inconsistency between the policy of immigration and its recruitment process and described it as "disservice to immigrants and to national interests" (p. 314).

The Canadian immigration system is composed of three main categories of admission: family reunification, refugees, and the economic category. Quebec province gives a high priority to skilled immigrants in order to boost its economy, in 2008, nearly two thirds, 65%, percent of immigrants were admitted as skilled immigrants to contribute to the economic development of the province compared to 60,3% in the rest of Canada (Boudarbat & Boulet, 2010). Nevertheless, there is empirical evidence that immigrants in Quebec province and particularly in Montreal do not perform well in their economic integration compared to the rest of Canada (Grenier & Nadeau, 2010). The immigrants' unemployment rate in Quebec is higher than that of the other provinces. In the province of Quebec particularly, immigrant female participation in the labour force is very low. "Entre 1981 et 2006, leur taux d'emploi est passé de 58,5% à 63,9%, alors que celui des femmes natives résidente du Québec est passé de 50,3 à 79,3% durant la même période" (Boudarbat & Boulet, 2010, p.6). The following chart demonstrates that women from North Africa, in Montreal, have the highest percentage of unemployment compared to other immigrant and non-immigrant women. This shows that accessing the labour market for these women is full of challenges and systemic barriers.

Figure 1: The Unemployment Rates of Women in Montréal



Source: Statistics Canada 2007 (2006 Census)

### **Islamophobia: Encountered when seeking employment**

The women, particularly the ones who wear the veil have faced Islamophobia, which resulted in their rejection and relegation. Three out of 12 women wear the hijab, the other women experienced Islamophobia due to their Arabic names and country of origin.

Islamophobia can be described as stereotypes, bias or acts of hostility towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general. In addition to individual acts of intolerance and racial profiling, Islamophobia leads to viewing Muslims as a greater security threat on an institutional, systemic and societal level. (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2009, p.10)

The women who wear the hijab declared that, as applicants for skilled immigration to Quebec, they were wearing their hijab during their admission interview and this did not

prevent them from being accepted as economic immigrants to Canada. However, upon their arrival, the embodiment of their religious faith became an obstacle that prohibited them from accessing the Canadian labour market. Contrary to these women's lived experiences, the immigration consultant explained that Canada is a multicultural society and that their skills and competencies are in demand in the receiving country. All the women were assured that their integration would be easy. Based on the examples cited in the result section, the employers showed fear and rejection of women wearing the hijab and clearly explained that their access to the job market would not be tolerated because of security reasons. This raises key questions about the reasons of their admission as economic immigrants if their religious faith is the premise upon which they are being rejected from society. Suto (2009) emphasizes that the Canadian government produces immigration laws in order to respond to the following issues: labour scarcity, improvements in human capital, and endorsement of innovation and contribution to facilitating a flow of knowledge, skills and expertise.

One of the main reasons behind the existence of Islamophobia in the West is related to the notion of 'culture clash' and the perception that the non-Muslim world has about Islam (Razack, 2008). In other words, Muslim communities have been judged as barbaric invoking the idea of dangerous misogynist Muslim men and victimized Muslim women who need to be rescued. Moreover, the 'culture clash' has been reinforced by the connection of cultural differences and racism that has triggered a number of negative associations of Third World people, particularly Muslim women. For example, the veil, arranged marriages, and female genital mutilation have stigmatized Muslim women and disadvantaged them in the labour force (Razack, 2008). Furthermore, the use of terrorism discourse in the media has also played a role in representing Muslims as a threat and a global enemy, which has subjected Muslim people to relegation and stigmatization by the Western world (Thobani,

2007). Therefore the rejection experienced by the women in this study when seeking job opportunities can be related to the image employers possess about Islam and the position of women in this religion. The stigma of saving Muslim women from the imperilment and the mistreatment of Muslim men has erased the fact that Muslim women could be independent, competent, and professional. In contrast to the belief that Canada's multiculturalism and diversity will make this country welcoming, these women demonstrated that foreigners are treated as immutably different from the mainstream and denied opportunities due their background, religion, and culture.

One can understand Canada's need for skilled immigrants and the necessity to maintain higher competitiveness at the international level; yet, the way these professionals are treated at the institutional level is contradictory and contributes to the drain of human capital and an increase in the unemployment rate among immigrants. The high rate of unemployment among racialized groups in Canada reveals the reality of inequality and discrimination and questions the legitimacy and the purpose of the Canadian economic immigration policy. The women reported a kind of distance that is being automatically established when they approached employers. These women came from Arabic and Muslim backgrounds, a fact that resulted in them being discriminated against. This can be related to the way Muslims are portrayed in the media as Grenier and Nadeau (2010) note: "In light of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission, the "reasonable accommodation crisis," and the recent burka ban for public employees in Quebec, and the way these issues have sometimes been portrayed in media outside Quebec" (p. 7). Muslim women are portrayed as a threat, as was evident in the case of Narjis who was denied the job position for security reasons.

The women were not given the chance to demonstrate their capabilities and expertise, the employers judged them based on prejudice and based on the bias the media has created about Islam. Bourdieu (2010) affirms that in the event that immigrants' backgrounds are unknown, the mainstream population predicts and infers information about them based on observable attributes depicted in their tastes, dress, and behaviours (in Oliver and O'Reilly, 2010, p57). As a result, the employers falsely evaluate the job applicant based on subjective beliefs and stereotypes that they have about the hijab, which as the women demonstrated underpins a kind of reluctance towards accepting them for jobs. Therefore, there is a distance and a barrier that was created automatically when the veiled women met with employers, and which did not leave room for them to demonstrate their capabilities and expertise.

The women in this study did not leave their country because they lacked opportunities or were fleeing torture to find a safe home in Canada; these women are highly qualified professionals who had outstanding, high status careers. Also, human beings by nature tend to seek better opportunities, therefore, the reason for these women's attraction to Canada was influenced by the opportunities and better future that they were made to believe existed in this country during information sessions held in their home country. Most importantly, Canada's identity of multiculturalism and diversity was a hook that made these women picture Canada as a land of opportunities where they could prosper and be respected. The challenges and the unexpected realities that these women discovered once in the receiving country contradicted the ideal picture they had prior immigration. There is evidence that men and women belonging to minority groups are doubly unprivileged and undergo discrimination due to their background, ethnic practices, colour, and country of origin (Fleras & Elliott, 1999). The results of this research demonstrated that racialized

background, gender, and ethnicity are interlocking systems of oppression that blocked these women from benefiting from equal treatment. For example, Narjis who wears the hijab, her case clearly reveals the process of rejection commonly witnessed in accessing the labour market. Even though she was proven to be competent after insisting she attend the training session, she was unsuccessful in securing a position. As the other women who share the same opinion, Narjis questions "Je ne trouve pas pourquoi ils ont besoin, pourquoi ils demandent des gens avec des diplômes, pourquoi ils ne demandent pas les gens je ne sais pas niveau bac, quatrième année ... secondaire." The other respondents echoed that they do not understand the goal behind the skilled immigration. Regardless of their degrees if they are accredited or rejected they all go through systemic discrimination once looking for jobs.

The examples of these women demonstrated that the variables of gender, race, ethnicity, and class intersect to create protruding levels of 'subdomination,' while simultaneously the subdominated individuals are also situated in a distinct position in relation to white patriarchal society (Fleras & Elliott, 1999). The women's capabilities were gendered in the sense that their access to their area of expertise was not admitted. Employers evaluated these women based on the perspective of the white patriarchy, as they see these women as having a habitus that is not related to the rules or the norms of the Canadian job market, which in consequence causes them to be perceived as embodying a habitus of a foreign land (Bauder, 2005). As shown in the results section, even though some women were given the chance to demonstrate their expertise, the ultimate result is denial convincing them that they should start with menial jobs or re-do their degrees in the Canadian context.

These women's religious and ethnic background shaped their integration negatively. According to a study conducted by Grenier and Nadeau (2010), immigrants coming from either Muslim countries or from countries where Islam is largely practiced are the group that has significant barriers in the labour market. For instance, as shown in the results, Arabic names and country of origin established a barrier to communication and all of the women received the same answer from employers: Lack of Canadian experience, and for the precarious job positions, they were told that they were overqualified.

Ethnicity is also a key variable in shaping unequal outcomes. Ethnicity-based inequities are generated in two ways. First, ethnic groups may be singled out as inferior or irrelevant and dismissed accordingly. Second, ethnic groups may possess cultural values at odds with those of the dominant stream.

(Fleras & Elliott, 1999, p.147).

The non-admission of highly educated women, wearing the hijab, in the Canadian job market contradicts the spirit of coming together, multiculturalism and diversity that Canada is known of at the international level. Miller (2007) defines multiculturalism as "the process whereby a variety of groups within existing states—religious groups, ethnic groups, groups defined by gender or sexual orientation, and so on—increasingly assert their separate cultural identities and demand that those identities be given political recognition" (in Capeheart & Milovanovic, p.78). Miller underscores the notion of social justice when speaking about multiculturalism as according to him every individual has the right to fulfill his or her needs; however, it is very hard to achieve knowing that the idea of needs and desires is individualistic and may not match with the rules of those who put pressure upon those seeking their own needs (Capeheart & Milovanovic, 2007, p. 80). The women's needs

were not fulfilled because of two main reasons. First, the pre-conceived notion that employers have about foreign educated professionals. Second, the essentialist view that employers have about hijabi women and Arabic culture as backward and oppressed. Therefore, the women with these traits are not considered to be part of the dominant group and the employers judge them in a subjective way. Referring to the experiences of these women, Canada no longer portrays the ideal image of tolerance and acceptance of the other, especially when the immigrants are admitted before stepping into the receiving country with their hijabs, cultural/religious background, and their country of origins credentials, and are rejected as well as alienated in their settlement and integration process. One cannot deny the mosaic of Canada's population, yet there exist a fact — that of the lack of solidarity with the cultural distinctions and the diversity of the country.

### **Impact on Health and Well-being**

Before the women's admission as skilled immigrants in Canada, they endured the stress of having to wait between five and six years for their application to be processed and finalized. Furthermore, the women reported deterioration in their health status as a direct result of the degradation in their socio-economic status when they arrived in Canada. The World Health Organization defines health as "a resource for everyday life that was predicated on a host of material and social conditions, including peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable eco-system, sustainable resources, [and] social justice and equity" (Spitzer, 2009, p. 140). The presented results show that the women faced marginalization and a disparate future when seeking an occupation relevant to the level of their education — this has negatively impacted their health and self esteem.

In the initial process of their resettlement, some women had experienced difficulties balancing between their family obligations and career future. Six out of twelve women had children; however, only three women faced difficulties prioritizing their career over taking care of their children. For instance, Fatiha and Imane, as mentioned in the results section, used to work as French teachers. After arriving in Canada, their degrees and teaching experience were not recognized for them to be able to work as teachers. Hence, they were required to get a Canadian degree in Education to practice as teachers. However, these women could not fulfill this condition since family care giving proved problematic because they had fewer kin and as such a weaker social support to rely on for help.

A study conducted by Spitzer et al (2003) found that "lack of kin support and the demands of often inflexible and poorly waged employment created additional stress for immigrant women caring for family members by increasing their time compression and financial strain" (p. 280). Furthermore, there is evidence that women's multiple roles might have the potential to conflict with their home and work duties, which in turn puts their health status at risk (Bierman et al., 2009). The wage gaps between men and women is explained by the fact that women tend to leave full time job opportunities because of family caregiving needs, this situation is experienced to the most extreme degree by immigrant women who face "downward mobility ... economic strain [and] relinquishing paid employment" (Gelfand & McCallum 1994; Slonim-Nevo et al. 1995 in Spitzer et al., 2003). Also, the women who live under the conditions of caregiving duties (with respect to children and the elderly), low income employment, and reduced mobility reported negative health and stress repercussions (Remennick 1999, in Spitzer 2003). As a result, this highlights the importance of social support from family members and friends as a source of resilience

amongst immigrant communities, especially in the first years of their resettlement (Bierman et al., 2009).

With the non-recognition of their credentials and their financial deprivation causing the degradation of their socio-economic status, these women could not afford daycare services and decided to sacrifice their careers to support and take care of their children instead. Therefore, they were compelled to either accept precarious jobs or resort to welfare assistance in order to support their families. The labour market inequities, domestic situations such as motherhood, caregiving, and social welfare can thus be cited among the main causes of these women's poverty and degradation in health and well-being (Reid, 2007).

All the women went through depression and stress due to the loss of their social class and occupational status, as they become vulnerable to the daily challenges without status that values their educational level. Furthermore, "immigrants who are underemployed have to cope with the psychological stress induced by the lack of recognition of their skills and the relatively more unhealthy physical and psychosocial environments that often accompany low-skilled and poorly paid jobs" (Bierman et al., 2009, p. 116). Once in the receiving country, the women's human capital was no longer an indication of higher social status as the women anticipated. Hence, immigrant women confront different alienations in the job market, which result in serious repercussions for their health and social status, especially when discovering that managerial positions are believed to suit only the women who belong to the mainstream (Salaff & Greve, 2006). The results of this study have shown that the actions of Canadian employers demonstrated to these women that they will never have access to managerial positions, and this in turn has had a deleterious effect on their self

esteem and health. Spitzer (2009) affirms that immigrants coming from non-European sources have been documented to report more decline in their health status compared to immigrants from European source countries. The results of this study have shown that gender and other variables such as ethnic and religious discrimination have a negative impact on health. Spitzer further explains that "gender intersects with other determinants, such as ethnicity and socio-economic status, which can enhance vulnerability to stigmatization and marginalization" (p.138).

Women's health and well-being, as shown in these women's experiences, has been negatively shaped by the unexpected systemic discrimination of the Canadian labour force. The invisibility of women's expertise and capabilities in Canadian labour market impacted their self esteem and transformed them from being independent, self confident to being vulnerable and dependent on the social assistance and menial jobs for their survival. Kawar (2004) confirms that:

The gradual loss of health and well-being is related to multidimensional social factors, including isolation and loss of pre-existing support systems, language barriers, unemployment or work in employment ghettos with unsafe or unhealthy work conditions, and prolonged social insecurity and feelings of vulnerability arising through poverty, prejudice, and discrimination (in Vissandjée et al, 2007, p. 226).

The dynamics of inequality in the Canadian job market is embedded in prejudice that is socially constructed about the Other as not as equal as non-immigrants. Because the women are part of the visible minority category, their social status has been dramatically and drastically affected when compared to their situation in their country of origin. Studies have

shown that socio-economic disparities, unemployment, and income inequities negatively affect the health of individuals. The higher one gets in education and work experience, the higher are the expectations of success and a prosperous life. Hence, the exposure to precarious jobs engenders psychosocial conditions including depression, stress, anger, and low self esteem (Brunner et al., in Reid, 2007).

Before relocation to Canada, immigrants go through an exhaustive and expensive medical checkup process to determine whether their health status poses a threat to the receiving country. For the case of this study that solely focuses on the flow of economic immigrants, skilled immigrants do not only go through an extensive and complex credentials evaluation, but also through a health screening process. Analysts have attributed the notable healthier status of immigrants compared to that of Canadian-born residents to the self-selection process and the mandatory intensive medical screening which the immigrants undergo prior to emigration (Dean & Wilson, 2010). As shown in the results, the women came to Canada with healthy bodies full of energy to seek the prosperous life they were waiting to realize between five and six years.

In their country of origin, all the women were actively involved in the job market working in their areas of expertise. As was illustrated in the case of Leila, she was working until the day of her departure. She emphasized that the notion of time and work was a discipline that was highly respected in her work environment. The energy, the excitement, and the higher expectations that the women had prior immigration is converted to anxiety, stress, low self esteem, and a waste of an energetic, competent and diverse human capital that Canada is need of. As reported in the results, the women faced the decline of their occupational and health status based on the unexpected barriers they encountered.

In order to analyze and deconstruct the health status of these women and the reasons for its degradation, the social determinants of health framework sheds light on key elements that were found in this study as the major causes. Among other social determinants of health, the focus in this study is given on the following concepts: gender, ethnicity and migration. The migration experience is gendered in the sense that women have been documented to suffer the most from the challenges encountered in the settlement process. The women have demonstrated a shift in their lives that led to a negative impact on their health and well-being as educated and professional women. Vissandjee et al. (2004) explain that the social construction of the concept of immigrant women has repercussions on immigrant women health outcomes and their experiences in the host country. The authors further claim that the concept of immigrant women is socially constructed and can also refer to women who are ranked in lower positions in the job market hierarchy, including: women of colour, women who either do not speak English or French, or those who do not have an accent—not including British, American, or French accents. The stereotype that is constructed about immigrant women determines in and of itself how these women will be treated when seeking opportunities. The ways the women were regarded explains that employers have a bias and a lack of trust on their expertise and capabilities. Women's experiences in migration have been undervalued contradictory to the purpose of the skilled migration where the women are supposed to be paid equally, have the right to transfer and work with their acquired skills, have access to programs to develop new skills; nonetheless, major economic discrepancies and low levels of social mobility remain a serious battle for immigrant women (Vissandjee, 2007).

As highlighted in the discussion, ethnicity was a cause of women's relegation in the labour market and thus it is one of the main causes of the women's health degradation.

Vissandjee et al (2004) note that people belonging to racialized and ethnic groups go through the implications of discrimination based on their ethnicity and gender. The dominant culture, in other words the one of the mainstream population, prevails to be the norm. Kallen (1999) explains that the ideology of the dominant group subsists whereby their respective culture, social patterns, language, and value is maintained and supported as being the norm, this group takes power by creating institutional actions that suit their own interests (in Fleras & Elliott). Therefore, this leads professional immigrants to flounder through an uneven distribution of opportunities and an inequality accessing employment.

Migration as a variable represents the results of a transition and the outcomes of the post-migration experiences that were thought to be full of opportunities and prosperity. The women regarded the concept of migration and the decision of emigration as a way to seek prosperity and better living conditions, no negative outcomes were associated with Canadian migration. The women stated that the immigration consultants misled them with false promises. Migration as a concept can be defined as a solution to different reasons that cause or influence the person to opt for this decision. Among the main reasons of people's migration are the following: economic, education, socio-political transition, family reunification, and forced relocation (Vissandjee et al., 2007). The women's migration category in this study is considered as the chosen migration or the voluntary migration- Citizenship and Immigration Canada declares that skilled workers, business class, provincial nomination, family class, international adoption, and Quebec-selected immigration are characterized as voluntary immigrants (Vissandjee et al., 2007). The women in this study are economic immigrants who were not only attracted by the reputation of the skilled migration, but also Canada's need for these immigrants, which made these women dream of this country as the land of paradise. Therefore, the women had higher expectations that

have impacted them emotionally, psychologically, once faced with barriers to economic prosperity in the host country. Hence, migration, under the social determinants of health, has been shown a health risk factor when it comes to the decision of migration and the actual experiences in host country (Vissandjee et al., 2007).

Immigrants are perceived to be accepted and welcomed into a multicultural society under the skilled category; yet on the other hand, upon their arrival and during their stay, they face a great many challenges. The point system of Canadian immigration represents a double standard whereby its criteria of admission is limited only to "creme de la creme" of the world, yet when looking at the job distribution of these immigrants, they are found in the lower echelons of the host country's occupational distribution (Seward & McDade in Arat-Koc, 1999, p.209). One can argue in this sense that the migration of skilled professionals illustrates global inequality that strengthens the superiority of the *global north* over the inferiority of the *global south*. This suggests that women escape from a place where they lack opportunities and face poverty to a place where they confront another problem, the one that is linked to racism and discrimination. Regardless of their potential, other factors shape the experiences of these skilled immigrants as when in the host society, they are defined under specific categories. Boyd (1999) highlights that the complexity of the social construction of the 'Other' in the society relate female, visible minority, and immigrants to low-end jobs (in Arat-Koc, 1999, p.209).

As discussed in this thesis, the theoretical frameworks and the conceptual models used helped considerably in analysing, interpreting, and deconstructing the ideas of the data as they were found well-suited to reflect upon these women's stories. This process helped in tracing the linkages between each aspect of the women's challenges to further elucidate the realities of skilled immigrant women particularly, Moroccan women in the Canadian job

market. Based on a good deal of knowledge, the theoretical frameworks significantly helped answer the research question by building explanation and outlining the relationship between the results and evidence from the findings of other research. For instance, Berger model inspired me to write the interview guide that directed the women to tracing their stories from its inception to its actual phase of integration. Moreover, the human capabilities theory exemplifies and presents evidence that shows when human beings are deprived of functioning, their dignity is impacted. This problem was identified in women's accounts whereby they clearly voiced that they went through dramatic degradation in their socio-economic status which hindered them from using their potentials and capabilities for functioning.

The conceptual framework of social determinants of health helped in presenting evidence that stresses the existence of a correlation between the following variables: income, gender, ethnicity, migration, and health. This model was used to explain and analyse the intersection of these variables and the outcomes of the resettlement experience of these women. Moreover, systemic discrimination was also used as a concept to interpret the challenges that the women encountered at the institutional level and the reasons for the rejection of their human capital. Last but not least, signaling theory was an important theoretical framework that helped highlight gate-keeping in the Canadian labour market, as one of the reasons why these women were alienated when seeking employment. That is, employers associated their credentials and qualifications with their background and assessed them as not being qualified to the same level as native-born Canadians.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this study and the evidence presented by the theoretical frameworks and conceptual models used to interpret the data, demonstrated that Quebec skilled immigration policy is characterised by major disparities and inequalities in integrating experienced human capital to boost its economy. The results of this study show systemic barriers that are related to the following reasons: Lack of recognition of credentials, bilingualism, systemic discrimination, lack of programs to develop and learn new skills, Islamophobia, cultural racism, and family obligations that made it hard for some women with children to prioritize the future of their career as was explained in the discussion. All these challenges were not expected to be confronted by the women knowing the purpose of the skilled immigration. Systemic discrimination and the relegation of these women from the labour market make Quebec lose an important asset of human capital for which these individuals were admitted; for the purpose of contributing to the economic prosperity of a province that has the highest percentage of ageing compared to the rest of Canada. As a result, the experiences of the 12 professional Moroccan women, participants in this study, have shown their diverse field of expertise with many years of work experiences at both the national and international levels, full of energy that has been wasted.

The racialization and systemic discrimination of these professional women will not only contribute to the brain drain, but also increase the burden of Quebec province to support these people and spend more money on social welfare assistance. Therefore, this will have an impact on increasing the unemployment rate as well as health risks that hinder active people's productivity, and increase an unhealthy society that is dysfunctional, stressed and without hope. The prejudice that was documented in these women's stories contributes

to the distortion of Canada's multicultural and diverse spirit. There is an urgent need to redefine the purpose of migration in terms of the goals of Canada and; a change in the perception that we still find about the Other in a globalized world. Diversity of human capital should be an asset that is best used for the prosperity of the country and in turn decreases the precarious positions of professional immigrants full of potential. Canada is in a position to be the world leader of a best use of migration if discrimination and prejudice is eliminated.

### **Recommendations**

Immigration to Canada and specifically to Quebec, for the purpose of this study, is one of the pillars of Canada's economic venues to increase the working population and foster its economy. In the age of globalization, human capital is an important asset of countries. Grenier and Nadeau (2010) highlight that:

Quebec's population is aging more rapidly than that of the rest of Canada (ROC), successful integration of immigrants in Quebec is even more important than that in the ROC—it is indeed ironic that the place in Canada where immigration could provide the largest economic benefit is the one where immigrants perform the most poorly (p. 2).

Since economic migration to Quebec is a vital policy for its prosperity, there is a need that the province's immigration policy underpins its efforts to coordinate with the needs of its labour market and ensures that the quantity of human capital sought will realize full functioning including in competitive works. Immigrants go through a complex grid of credentials assessment whereby their skills have been evaluated as eligible for the skilled immigration. Once in the host country, they undergo different challenges and end up either

dependent on the welfare system or in menial jobs. Since Quebec accepted these immigrants for a purpose, there should be a follow up to ensure that the province is getting positive results. Boudarbat and Boulet (2010) affirm that Quebec is at risk to face a shortage in working population "Dés 2010, le Québec sera confronté à une pénurie de main-d'œuvre et sera touché plus rapidement par le vieillissement de la population que le reste des provinces Canadiennes" (p. 9).

One of the solutions that the women suggested for Quebec to consider in order to cope with these difficulties is to make sure its foreign human capital serves the purpose of the skilled immigration. The women suggested the need to have programs or training centers to learn new skills while integrating in the job market. These women can upgrade their skills with consideration to local experience, otherwise, the Canadian experience, while being inserted in the environment of their expertise. These women were managers and head of departments with many years of school and work experiences, the acquisition of a new way of learning or working will not be difficult for them to achieve. The participants highlighted that accepting the degradation of their socio-economic status is something unacceptable, in the sense that the higher the educational attainment, the better are the opportunities. Asking these women to repeat their education degrees in a Canadian institution denies the goal of their immigration and questions the legitimacy of the Canadian skilled migration.

With reference to the challenges internationally educated professionals experience in Canada, Lum (2009) explains that the major reasons behind the tensions experienced by professionals when integrating into the Canadian labour market are linked to the increased demand for skilled workers and the necessity of ensuring that these practitioners respond to the local knowledge and skills standards. Lum further declares that one of the solutions that

has been devised and considered to be potentially effective; is the professional bridging programs that are largely operated in Ontario. These programs' goal is to facilitate the integration and the transition of internationally educated professionals by helping them overcome knowledge and skills gaps to be able to access the Canadian labour market (Lum, 2009). Taking into consideration Quebec's needs in terms of human capital, similar bridging programs for every profession have to be implemented in the province; to contribute to decreasing the perpetuation of the gaps and alleviating the challenges faced by skilled immigrants when integrating into the Canadian job market.

One of the important recommendations is that the Quebec province skilled immigration policy has to structure and determine its needs of human capital in order to reduce the unemployment rate among economic immigrants and decrease the shortage of its skilled workers. Hence, this will contribute to a good management of Quebec's inflow of skilled immigrants and a better use of their expertise to boost its economy and decrease the burden on the social welfare system. Instead of benefiting from the potential of newly admitted immigrants, the province is actually increasing the burden of spending, by its support of social assistance to capable working group who have been disallowed to function. Salaff and Greve (2006) explain that the Canadian immigration policy has to be more structured when evaluating immigrants' credentials; moreover, in order to ease their absorption and integration when seeking employment, the welcoming of skilled immigrants' needs has to be more regulated when defining the gaps of the Canadian job market. Therefore, the government should assess the sectors that lack personnel and hire foreign human capital accordingly, by ensuring follow up after the admission of a number of needed skilled immigrants in order to cover the economic needs of the province and serve well the people it welcomes.

Another important element that is lacking in the economic immigration is accurate information about the realities of the settlement and integration process. The women applied to Quebec because it is a francophone province, the necessity of bilingualism is an aspect they did not expect. All the women were confronted to the challenge of the language where French only is not enough for their integration in the job market. As mentioned in the results section, Lina, a participant, got the idea to create an association based on the various problems and difficulties women skilled workers have faced. As an economic immigrant, she confirmed that there are many gaps in the information provided through the process of the immigration application, which has made the women dream of Canada as a land of prosperity making them completely de-linked from anything that would attach them to their country of origin. The problem that lies under this aspect is that women leave nothing behind them after leaving their country of origin. One of the recommendations that was suggested by Lina is to make a visit to the receiving country before making an immigration decision to explore the job opportunities, and the new style of life, so that the person is psychologically prepared and is accountable for his or her decision better than being misled by false promises. Considering the aforementioned difficulties, it is important that every person, if possible, makes an exploratory visit to assess whether or not there is a match to their credentials. The goal of the association website that Lina created is to give reliable information about what applicants should expect. Lina and her colleagues receive many emails every day from people asking them about the skilled immigration and the opportunities they may be able to get.

Silence has been noticed in some participants after they felt they were trapped in a false experience, they tend to hide the reality of their challenges to save face and to avoid the shame that is culturally embedded in the Moroccan culture. These women were

successful professionals with a stable life in their country of origin, they sold their houses, they quit their jobs, and de-linked from everything that they have built for themselves over the years to realize a dream of a prosperous life in Canada. As shown in the results section, if the women were to tell the reality of their sufferings to their kin, they would be blamed for going from a stable and independent life to a vulnerable life coupled with discrimination. In order to solve this problematic, accuracy in the information given prior immigration is a necessity. Women should not disembled themselves from their country of origin and leave no seed where they can go back and rebuild their lives if they do not succeed in the host country. Another element for consideration is to reduce prejudice that engenders systemic discrimination by educating employers about the importance of the inclusion of these immigrants who the province of Quebec accepted for a determined goal. The bias about the quality of immigrants' education creates a barrier towards accepting the other as competent as they are.

There is a need to encourage more research on other immigrant groups from different countries in order to determine in a holistic manner the challenges and the gaps that the Canadian economic immigration has to consider. Outlining the experiences of different group is an advantage that will facilitate and create the possibility of finding workable solutions that will ultimately transform the socio-economic degradation of these immigrants. The idea of creating a link between the host and the country of origin through a website, that gives information about the opportunities and challenges faced by applicants, should be an asset that migrants can use to decrease deception that they may feel upon their arrival.

### **Study Limitations**

Every study has a limitation and the primary limitation associated with this research is the period of residence that was selected for the women: between 5 and 10 years. The experiences of professional immigrant women recently arrived to Canada might be different from those with longer stay. For future consideration, it would be interesting to compare the experiences of Moroccan professional women who recently arrived with the ones who have lived in Canada for long period of time. Comparing the experiences of Moroccan women in an Anglophone Canada with Quebec will contribute to a thorough and holistic understanding of their experiences. A study conducted by Grenier and Nadeau (2010) to compare immigrants performance in Montreal and Toronto found out that immigrants in Montreal are subject to more discrimination in the labour market than those in Toronto. Comparing the experiences of professional Moroccan immigrant women in Montreal and Toronto was an initial plan of this research, but because of the lack of resources, it was not feasible to realize it and I concentrated solely on their experiences in Montreal. The idea will, however, be considered for future research.

### **Study Strengths**

The period of residence of the women between 5 and 10 years is also a strength to this study, as the women have lived enough to know how the system runs and are, thus, able to evaluate and reflect back on their experiences. Moreover, the researcher in this study is from the same background, it is an asset in the sense that there is low risk of misunderstanding or ambiguity. Knowing that the women are professionals and used to work in a bilingual atmosphere in their country of origin, their knowledge of French is at its highest level. The language in the process of the data collection was not a barrier. I gave the

women the choice to answer either in French or English, but all of them chose French as they felt more comfortable expressing their feelings with this language. Also, the fact that the researcher is coming from the same background was an asset to this study, especially in the process of recruitment. The snowballing was very effective and there was a mutual trust built at the beginning of the recruitment. Also, different networks of other women emerged, facilitating access to the participants and getting their acceptance for participation.

### **Future Research**

Considering that the non-recognition of foreign credentials is a phenomenon that is still persistent in the Canadian job market, there is a need to enlarge the scope of research in this field. This can be done by analysing and deconstructing the experiences of different immigrant groups in the form of case studies in order to understand the gaps in research and to further policy consideration with respect to this problem. More research has to be done on the Quebec province, as mentioned in the literature— it is a province that has a lot of gaps in the job market integration coupled with an increased rate of ageing in its population.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A- Recruitment Text



Université d'Ottawa

Institut d'Études des  
Femmes

University of Ottawa

Institute of Women's  
Studies

**Are you a Moroccan immigrant woman who migrated to  
Canada as a professional degree holder??**

**If so, I would like to speak with you!**

**I am conducting a study to learn more about the lives of  
female Moroccan professionals focusing on their  
experiences in the Canadian job market.**

**Your participation will be of benefit to a better  
understanding of the lives of Moroccan women about  
whose experiences in Canada little has been written**

**Your participation will be confidential and anonymous**

**For further information please contact**

**Kaoutar Kaddouri**

**Etes-vous une femme immigrante d'origine Marocaine qui  
a immigré au Canada avec un diplôme professionnel ??**

**Si vous-êtes concernées, je voudrais vous parler!**

**Je mène une étude pour mieux connaître les expériences  
des femmes Marocaines professionnelles sur le marché**

**d'emploi Canadien**

**Votre participation va être bénéfique car elle contribuera à enrichir le savoir sur les expériences des femmes Marocaines au sujet desquelles les écritures sont minimes.**

**Votre participation sera confidentielle et anonyme**

**Pour plus d'information veuillez contacter**

**Kaoutar Kaddouri**

143 Séraphin-Marion

Ottawa ON K1N 6N5  
Canada

[www.uOttawa.ca](http://www.uOttawa.ca)

**Appendix B- Project Outline- English version**

Université d'Ottawa

Institut d'Études des Femmes

University of Ottawa

Institute of Women's Studies

### Project Outline

#### **The experiences of Moroccan Women in the Canadian job market**

The purpose of this study is to learn about the experiences of professional women holding foreign degrees in the Canadian job market. Specifically, the study will be conducted with professional women from Morocco. The choice to study this community in the Canadian context is important as the majority of the literature on the transboundary flows of Moroccans has focused on their experiences in European countries. Furthermore, the reason to concentrate solely, in this study, on Moroccan women is due to the lack of literature on this community in Canada. Hence, this research will contribute to enriching the literature on newcomers by adding the experiences of Moroccan women to the list of the researched communities.

This research project will examine the intersections of gender, migration, and workplace. I am, therefore, interested in talking to women who immigrated to Canada from Morocco and who are holding university degrees or professional diplomas/certificates from a Moroccan institution, and who live in the Montreal area.

The fieldwork of this study will be conducted in the form of individual interviews. I will ask you questions about your immigration experience, access to the job market, your expectations, and your opinions as women wanting to find a job that corresponds to your credentials. I hope you will share your stories and tell me what is important for you. Your participation in the study will involve about 2-2.5 hours. The individual interview will be held in a location that is convenient and secure for you. The interviews will be recorded and I will take notes for myself.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to sign and record a consent form. Any information you provide us will be confidential and will

respect the criteria of anonymity mentioned in the consent form. I will use fake names when referring to the participants in this research, and in any presentation, written and oral, that I might make about this project in order to avoid any identification of the participants.

At all times, you have the right to: refuse to answer questions; stop the interview, or withdraw from the study. If you decide to abandon the study, I will only use the information you have given us with your permission. If you do not wish us to use the collected information, we will destroy it or return it to you. Please do not hesitate to ask questions about this study.

To participate in this study or to learn more about it, please contact:

Kaoutar Kaddouri

143 Séraphin-Marion

Ottawa ON K1N 6N5  
Canada

[www.uOttawa.ca](http://www.uOttawa.ca)

## Appendix B- Project Outline- French version



Université d'Ottawa

Institut d'Études des Femmes

University of Ottawa

Institute of Women's Studies

### Plan du Projet

#### **Les expériences des femmes immigrantes d'origine Marocaines dans le marché d'emploi Canadien**

Le but de cette étude est d'examiner l'expérience d'accès au marché du travail Canadien par des femmes professionnelles ayant des diplômes étrangers. Plus spécifiquement, cette étude va être menée auprès des femmes professionnelles Marocaines. Le choix d'étudier cette communauté dans le contexte Canadien est important car la majorité des études a été consacrée particulièrement au flux des immigrés Marocains vers l'Europe. Par ailleurs, le but de consacrer cette étude pour les femmes Marocaines est liée au manque de littératures sur cette communauté au Canada. Cette recherche va, en outre, contribuer à enrichir davantage les littératures sur les nouveaux arrivants en ajoutant l'expérience des femmes Marocaines à la liste des communautés étudiées.

Ce projet de recherche examinera l'intersection entre race, migration, et lieu de travail. Je suis, donc, intéressée de parler avec des femmes qui ont immigré du Maroc au Canada, et qui ont obtenu entre autres des diplômes universitaires, professionnels, ou des certificats d'une institution Marocaine, et qui habitent dans la région de Montréal.

L'étude sur le terrain pour ce projet va être sous forme d'entrevues individuelles. Je poserai donc des questions sur votre expérience d'immigration, l'accès au travail, vos attentes et vos opinions en tant que femmes voulant exercer un emploi qui correspond à ses qualifications. J'espère que vous partageriez vos histoires et ce qui est important pour vous. Votre participation à l'entrevue sera d'une durée de 2 heures à 2 heures 30 min. L'entrevue se déroulera dans un endroit convenable et

sécurisé pour vous. Les entrevues vont être enregistrées et je prendrai aussi des notes.

Si vous acceptez de participer à cette étude, on vous demande de signer et d'enregistrer votre consentement. Toute information collectée va respecter l'anonymat des participantes et respecter les critères de confidentialités cités dans le formulaire de consentement. Des noms fictifs vont être utilisés pour référer aux participantes dans cette recherche et dans toute présentation publique (orale ou écrite) du projet afin d'éviter toute sorte d'identification.

A tout moment vous avez le droit de: refuser de répondre aux questions, d'arrêter l'entrevue, ou de quitter l'étude. Si vous décidez d'abandonner l'étude, on va seulement utiliser les informations pour lesquelles nous avons votre autorisation. Si vous refusez que vos informations soient utilisées, celles-ci seront détruites ou, si vous le souhaitez, vous seront rendues. S'il vous plaît n'hésitez pas à poser des questions sur ce projet.

Pour participer à cette recherche ou pour plus d'informations veuillez s'il vous plaît contacter

Kaoutar Kaddouri

143 Séraphin-Marion

Ottawa ON K1N 6N5  
Canada

[www.uOttawa.ca](http://www.uOttawa.ca)

**Appendix C- Consent Form- English version****Consent Form****The experiences of Moroccan women in the Canadian job market**

Student Investigator: Kaoutar Kaddouri, Master's Degree student, Women's Studies, University of Ottawa.

Principal Investigator/Student Supervisor: Dr. Denise Spitzer, Canada Research Chair in Gender, Migration, and Health, Associate Professor, Womens' Studies, University of Ottawa

Université  
d'Ottawa

Institut d'Études  
des Femmes

University of  
Ottawa

Institute of  
Women's  
Studies

I invite you to participate in a study entitled "The experiences of Moroccan women in the Canadian job market". The project is supervised by Denise Spitzer, Canada Research Chair in Gender, Migration and Health. This study will be conducted in the form of individual interviews with professional Moroccan women who have experienced looking for work in the Canadian job market. There are no right or wrong answers; there are only your story and your opinions.

Your participation in the study will involve about 2-2.5 hours. The individual interview will be held in the location that is convenient and secure for you. The interviews will be recorded and I will take notes for myself. Following the question guide, I will ask you about your personal experiences looking for a job with a foreign degree and about your integration in the Canadian job market. Also you will be invited to share your stories about the possibility to find a job related to you credential in the host country

I would like to highlight that the information collected during the interview will remain confidential preserving the anonymity of the participants. The principal investigator and the student researcher are the only persons who will have access to these recordings and read the transcripts of our

discussion. I will also ask you to complete a demographic survey and an address form. The recordings, transcripts and other data will be kept in a locked cabinet in Professor Denise Spitzer's research lab. The field data will be destroyed after a maximum of 20 years.

All information that can identify you will be removed from the collected data. I will use fake names when referring to the participants in this research, and in any presentation, written and oral, that I might make about this project in order to avoid any identification of the participants. The diffusion of the collected information will respect the anonymity of your experiences in order not to proclaim your identity in a public setting such as conferences or in the case of the research publication.

If you are interested to know the results of this study, copies of this project will be available to you. I will either send you a copy of the study by email or post it to your home address.

The advantages of your participation in this study will be to help us better understand the experiences of Moroccan professional women in the Canadian job market, and to contribute to enriching the literature on Moroccan immigrants in Canada. Also, this research will be very beneficial as it presents a dilemma that is confronted by immigrants' newcomers, and more specifically degree holders.

We know that sometimes talking about these issues can be distressing or make you sad; should this occur, we can stop the interview, change topics, continue our conversation or take a break—the decision is yours.

At all times, you have the right to

- Refuse to answer questions.
- Stop the interview at any point.
- Withdraw from the study at any time, in this case we will only use the information you have given us with your permission. If you do not wish us to use this information, we will destroy it or give it to you.

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Marion

Ottawa ON K1N  
6N5 Canada

[www.uOttawa.ca](http://www.uOttawa.ca)

- Ask any questions regarding the study.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact:

Kaoutar Kaddouri

Dr. Denise Spitzer

Canada Research Chair in Gender, Migration and Health

Institute of Women's Studies & Institute of Population Health

30, rue Stewart

Université d'Ottawa

Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 6N5

If you have any questions about the ethical conduct of this study, please contact:

Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research

Tabaret Hall

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 159,

Université d'Ottawa

Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 6N5

I, \_\_\_\_\_, voluntary agree to participate in this study.

(Print Participant's Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Participant's Signature)

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Researcher's Signature)

Date

Please return one copy and retain for yourself

**Appendix C- Consent Form- French version**

Université  
d'Ottawa

Institut d'Études  
des Femmes

University of  
Ottawa

Institute of  
Women's Studies

**Formulaire de Consentement pour Entrevues Individuelles****Titre du projet: Les expériences des femmes immigrantes d'origine  
Marocaines dans le marché d'emploi Canadien**

Etudiant Chercheur: Kaoutar Kaddouri, étudiante en maîtrise d'études des femmes, Institut d'études des femmes-Université d'Ottawa.

Superviseur du Projet: Professeur Denise Spitzer, Chaire de recherche du Canada sur le genre, la migration et la santé.

Je vous invite à participer à une enquête qui fait partie du projet "Les expériences des femmes Marocaines professionnelles dans le marché d'emploi Canadien", supervisée par Professeur Denise Spitzer, Chaire de recherche du Canada sur le genre, la migration, et la santé. Cette étude va être menée sous la forme d'entrevues individuelles afin d'examiner ce sujet auprès des femmes qui ont expérimenté la recherche d'emploi dans le marché du travail Canadien. Il n'y a pas de réponses vraies ou de réponses fausses, il y a seulement votre histoire et vos opinions.

Votre participation à cette recherche sera d'une durée de 2 heures à 2 heures 30 min. L'entrevue se déroulera dans un endroit convenable et sécurisé pour vous. La collecte de vos informations sera enregistrée sur un magnétophone et je prendrai aussi des notes. Suivant le guide des questions, je vous interrogerai sur vos expériences personnelles à la recherche d'emploi avec un diplôme obtenu à l'étranger et sur votre intégration dans le marché du travail canadien. Par ailleurs, vous serez invitée à partager vos opinions sur la possibilité d'exercer votre profession dans le pays accueillant.

J'aimerais souligner que les informations collectées durant cette entrevue resteront confidentielles tout en préservant aussi l'anonymat des participantes. Par ailleurs, le superviseur de cette recherche et l'étudiant chercheur vont être les seules à écouter les enregistrements sur le

magnétophone et lire les transcriptions de notre discussion. Je vous demanderez aussi de remplir le questionnaire démographique avec le formulaire d'adresse. L'enregistrement et les transcriptions de vos données seront conservés dans le laboratoire de recherche du Professeur Denise Spitzer au Maximum 20 ans et seront détruits après la fin de cette durée.

Toute information pouvant vous identifier sera enlevée des données collectées. Des noms fictifs vont être utilisés pour référer aux participantes dans cette recherche et dans toute présentation publique (orale ou écrite) du projet afin d'éviter toute sorte d'identification. La diffusion des informations collectées, respectera l'anonymat de vos expériences afin de ne pas proclamer votre identité dans un cadre public comme dans des conférences ou dans le cas de la publication de la recherche.

Si vous êtes intéressées à savoir les résultats de cette recherche, des copies du projet seront disponibles pour les participantes. Je pourrais soit les envoyer à vos courriels soit les poster à vos domiciles.

Les avantages de votre participation à ce projet seront de nous aider à mieux comprendre les expériences de la femme professionnelle Marocaine dans le marché d'emploi Canadien, et aussi d'enrichir la littérature sur le sujet des immigrantes marocaines au Canada. Ainsi, cette recherche sera très bénéfique car elle présentera un dilemme qui est confronté par les immigrées nouvellement arrivées, et plus spécifiquement les diplômées.

On comprend que parfois parlant de ces problèmes pourrait être stressant ou pourrait vous rendre triste; si ça deviens le cas vous avez le droit d'arrêter l'entrevue, changer de sujet, continuer la conversation ou prendre une pause — la décision est la vôtre.

En tout temps vous avez le droit de:

- Refuser de répondre à certaines questions.
- Arrêter l'entrevue à n'importe quel moment.
- Vous retirer de l'étude à tout moment. Dans ce cas, nous utiliserons seulement les informations pour lesquelles vous avez donné votre permission. Si vous ne souhaitez pas que les informations en question soient utilisées, celles-ci seront détruites ou vous seront retournées.
- Poser des questions sur cette étude.

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6N5 Canada

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Si vous avez des questions ou inquiétudes additionnelles sur cette recherche, s'il vous plait adressez-vous à:

Kaoutar Kaddouri

Dr. Denise Spitzer

Chaire de recherche du Canada sur le genre, la migration et la santé

Institut d'études des femmes, Institut de recherche sur la santé des  
populations

30, rue Stewart

Université d'Ottawa

Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 6N5

Si vous avez des questions sur l'éthique de cette recherche, s'il vous plait adressez-vous au:

Responsable de la déontologie en recherche

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 159,

Université d'Ottawa

Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 6N5

Acceptation : Je, \_\_\_\_\_ accepte de  
participer volontairement dans cette étude (Ecrivez votre nom en lettre  
moulée)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature de la participante

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature du chercheur

Date

Il existe deux copies de ce formulaire de consentement, SVP retourner  
une copie au projet et conserver une copie pour vous.

## **Appendix D- Interview Guide- English version**

### **Situation in the country they lived in**

- 1) Can you tell me about your experiences of education in Morocco? Where and for how long did you go to school?
- 2) What kind of job did you used to have?
- 3) Was this job relevant to your credentials?
- 4) What was your financial situation back home?
- 5) Were you able to live a decent, comfortable life? For example, did you have sufficient money for household expenses and special occasions?
- 6) Did you contribute to your family financially?
- 7) What made you think about the experience of migration?
- 8) Why Canada as an option?
- 9) What kind of image did you have about Canada?
- 10) How did you do your immigration application?
- 11) Can you tell me about that experience?
- 12) What were your expectations about having access to the Canadian job market?
- 13) Did the issue of credential transfer was brought up? How did you deal with it in the application process?
- 14) Did you think about the recognition of your credential?

### **The experience in the Canadian job market**

- 1) Did you choose to move to Montreal or another city? Why?
- 2) Can you tell me about your initial experiences in Montreal? Did you feel welcomed? Do you feel welcomed now?
- 3) Did you find problems when it comes to the language (French or English)?
- 4) Tell me about your first experience looking for a job in Canada?
- 5) In your job search experience, did the employer give you the chance to demonstrate your abilities?
- 6) Were you able to find a job that is relevant to your credential? (If not) did the recruiter give you the reasons of denial?
- 7) What were the obstacles that you have faced when looking for a job? What do you think were the major problems?
- 8) Were you called for an interview? If yes can you tell me how the recruiter treated you?
- 9) Did you encounter discrimination when looking for a job?
- 10) In your opinion, what is a healthy life? Do your expectations of what a healthy life is different between Canada and Morocco?
- 11) Did you have a healthy life in Morocco? Why or why not?
- 12) Do you find yourself living a healthy life in Canada? Why or why not?
- 13) What can you say about your livelihood in Canada? Based on your income, can you afford to live a healthy life?

- 14) What is your opinion about recognizing foreign degrees in Canada with reference to your experience and that of your friends?
- 15) What do you think about the information that you had prior you immigration regarding what to expect in the host country? Were you given accurate information?
- 16) Do you have some responsibilities back home? Does your family expect you to help them financially? (If yes) With your current situation can you afford helping them?
- 17) Have your expectations of life in Canada been met? Why or why not? If she is dissatisfied, was there any particular event or process that made you disillusioned with Canada?

### **Assessment of the experience of migration**

- 1) What helped you find a job in Canada?
- 2) If you are able to compare your experience looking for a job back home and here in Canada, which one would you choose and why?
- 3) If you were to assess your quality of life as a highly-qualified immigrant woman, what would you say?
- 4) Do you find yourself able to live a dignified life when it comes to the following points?
  - Finding a job that is relevant to your experience.
  - Living in a non-judgmental environment.
  - Living a healthy life
- 5) If you are to compare your experience to other Moroccan women that you know, what would you say?
  
- 6) Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

## **Appendix D- Interview Guide- French version**

### **La situation dans le pays ou elles ont vécu**

- 1) Pourriez-vous me raconter votre expérience d'études au Maroc ? Ou et pour combien d'années avez-vous été étudiante?
- 2) Quel genre de travail avez-vous obtenu après votre graduation?
- 3) Est-ce que le type de travail que vous avez eu était lié à votre diplôme d'études?
- 4) Quelle était votre situation financière dans votre pays d'origine?
- 5) Est-ce que vous avez été capable de vivre une vie décente? par exemple, avez-vous eu suffisamment d'argent pour couvrir vos dépenses à la maison, ou pour des occasions particulières?
- 6) Avez-vous contribué financièrement pour subvenir aux besoins de votre famille ?
- 7) Qu'est-ce qui vous a poussé à décider d'immigrer?
- 8) Pourquoi avez-vous choisi le Canada comme option?
- 9) Quel genre d'image avez-vous du Canada ?
- 10) Comment avez-vous fait votre demande d'immigration ?
- 11) Est-ce que vous pouvez me raconter votre expérience sur la demande d'immigration?
- 12) Quelles étaient vos attentes par rapport à l'accès au marché d'emplois Canadien?
- 13) Est-ce que le problème d'accréditation a été soulevé durant le processus de la demande et comment l'aviez-vous traité?
- 14) Avez-vous pensé au dilemme de l'accréditation des diplômes ?

### **L'expérience dans le marché du travail Canadien?**

- 1) Où est ce que vous vous êtes installée à votre arrivée au Canada, Montréal ou une autre ville? Pourquoi?
- 2) Est-ce que vous pouvez me raconter vos premières expériences à Montréal, vous vous êtes sentie bien accueillie? sentez-vous bien accueillie à présent?
- 3) Avez-vous été confrontée à des problèmes de langue (Français ou Anglais) ?
- 4) Pourriez-vous me raconter votre expérience à la recherche d'emploi au Canada?
- 5) Dans votre expérience de recherche d'emploi, l'employeur vous a-t-il donné la chance de démontrer vos capacités ?
- 6) Est-ce que vous étiez capables de trouver un travail dans le domaine de vos études? (Si non) le recruteur vous a-t-il donné les raisons du rejet?
- 7) Quels étaient les obstacles que vous avez affrontés en cherchant un travail ? A votre avis quelles étaient les problèmes majeurs?
- 8) Avez-vous été appelée pour une entrevue? Si oui, Pourriez-vous me raconter comment le recruteur vous a traité?
- 9) Avez-vous rencontré la discrimination en cherchant un travail ?

- 10) D'après vous, comment définissez-vous une vie saine? Est-ce que vos attentes d'une vie saine au Canada sont différentes de celles que vous aviez au Maroc?
- 11) Est-ce que vous avez vécu une vie saine au Maroc ? pourquoi ou pourquoi pas ?
- 12) Est-ce que vous vivez une vie saine au Canada ? pourquoi ou pourquoi pas ?
- 13) Que pouvez-vous dire sur votre situation financière au Canada ? votre revenu est-il suffisant pour vous permettre de vivre sainement?
- 14) Quelle est votre opinion sur l'accréditation des diplômes au Canada en référant à votre expérience personnelle ainsi que celle de vos amis?
- 15) Que pensez-vous des informations obtenues avant l'immigration concernant ce que vous devez prévoir à votre arrivée? Avez-vous reçu des informations précises?
- 16) Avez-vous des obligations dans votre pays d'origine? Est-ce que votre famille présume que vous les aidez financièrement? (Si oui), avec votre situation actuelle, pouvez-vous les aider?
- 17) Est-ce que vos attentes sur l'immigration au Canada ont été réalisées? Si non êtes-vous déçue, avez-vous vécu un événement particulier ou un processus qui vous a désillusionné sur le Canada ?

### **Evaluation de l'expérience de l'immigration**

- 1) Qui est-ce qui vous a aidé à trouver un travail au Canada?
- 2) Si vous devez comparer votre expérience de la recherche d'emploi au Maroc avec celle du Canada, lequel choisiriez-vous et pourquoi?
- 3) Si vous devez évaluer votre qualité de vie autant qu'une femme immigrante professionnelle, que diriez-vous ?
- 4) Est-ce que vous vous trouvez capable de vivre une vie digne par rapport aux points suivants ?
  - Trouver un travail approprié à votre éducation et expérience
  - Vivre dans un environnement sans préjugé
  - Vivre une vie saine
- 5) Si vous devez comparer votre expérience à d'autres femmes marocaines que vous connaissez, que diriez-vous ?
- 6) Souhaitez-vous ajouter quelque chose d'autres?

**Appendix E- Demographic Questionnaire- English version**

Date:

Full name of the participant:

Telephone number:

Email Address:

Would you like to receive a copy of my findings?

> Yes       > No

## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which age range do you belong in?

- 20-29 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-49 years
- 50-59 years
- > 60 years

2. How long have you been in Canada?

3. What is your social status?

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Other:

4. How many children do you have?

5. What is the employment status of your spouse?

6. List all your degrees/Professional diplomas, years and institutions?

7. What is your current employment status?

- Employed
- Unemployed
- With no regular income
- On Social Assistance
- Employed full time
- Employed Part time
- Other:

**Appendix E- Demographic Questionnaire- French version**

Date:

Nom et prénom de la participante:

Téléphone:

Courriel:

Voulez-vous recevoir une copie de mes résultats?

> Oui       > Non

## Information Démographiques

Nom fictif: \_\_\_\_\_

1. A quelle division d'âge appartenez-vous?

- 20-29 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-49 years
- 50-59 years
- > 60 years

2. Combien d'années avez-vous vécu au Canada?

3. Quel est votre statut social ?

- Célibataire
- Mariée
- Divorcée
- Autre:

4. Combien d'enfants avez-vous ?

5. Quel est le statut d'emploi de votre conjoint?

6. Veuillez lister vos diplôme professionnel, certificats, années d'études, et les institutions ou vous avez obtenu ces diplômes?

7. Quelle est votre statut d'employabilité?

- Employée
- Chômage
- Sans revenu régulier
- Sur l'aide social
- Employée à Temps Partiel
- Employée à Temps Plein
- Autre:

**Appendix F- Ethics Approval Notice- Social Science and Humanities Research Grants and Ethics Services**