

LABOUR MARKET EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIMS PRE AND POST 9/11

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Nida Kazmi, Honours BA, York University, 2012

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Ryerson University

ABSTRACT

This study offers an encompassing analysis of labour market experiences of Muslim immigrants in the GTA. A qualitative research method was used to explore whether the events of September 11 has impacted the labour market integration of Muslim immigrants in Canada. The findings are based on the responses of 6 first generation Muslim immigrants who were interviewed for this study. At first the participants reported that their identity as a Muslim did not play a significant role in the labour market, however, their stories suggest some level of racial discrimination as a result of their religious affiliation. The findings suggest intersectionality among Credential recognition, Canadian experience and racism that work together to veil racist activities that Muslim individuals encounter. This study highlights the state and accreditation institutions as key players that keep the immigrants out of the highly desired occupation to reserve these occupations for Canadian born and educated workers.

Key words:

Labour Market, Immigrants, Muslims, September 11, Integration, Employment

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Section 1:

Introduction and Problem Statement

Immigration is a key factor that contributes to Canada's economic success. Particularly, the labour market integration of immigrants is important to Canada's future economic prosperity. Most immigrants in Canada are highly educated and skilled, yet they have a hard time integrating into the Canadian labour market. National and provincial research on immigrants' labour market integration confirms that immigrants face many barriers to employment and as a result have difficulty obtaining employment or employment that is compatible with their skills and experiences (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2002). Some factors that have been identified as barrier to integration for immigrants include devaluation of foreign credentials and work experiences, lack of familiarity with Canadian workplace culture, as well as discrimination experienced by many immigrants due to their phenotypical features in the labour market. The factors listed above play a significant role in creating barriers for immigrants seeking work, which results in their exclusion from the labour market. This problem is important to address because Canada's economic prosperity is highly dependent on the education and skills of the immigrants. Immigrants' failure to integrate into the labour market signifies a loss to the broader society and the economy. In addition to the economic loss to the Canadian society, it is important to address the discriminatory practices that are encountered by immigrants as they try to enter the labour market.

Furthermore, Canada as a multicultural society promises to grant all Canadians, including Muslims, the right to safeguard their tradition and cultural customs. The importance of specifically including Muslims in this research is to offer a more encompassing analysis of their labour market experiences, about which more is said below. The 2001 statistics show that "the

level of post-secondary education of Muslims, both male and female, is [significantly] above the national average” (Diaspora Project, 2005). The problem lies in the irony that although Muslim population has high rankings in education, they also have high levels of unemployment in Canada. Statistics reveal that the unemployment level of Muslim-Canadians is significantly higher than the national levels. While the 2001 national average of unemployment was 7.4 per cent, the Muslim population averaged 14.3 per cent (Diaspora Project, 2005). Furthermore the Muslim population’s unemployment level was also higher than other religious groups. For example, in 2001, the unemployment of Roman Catholics was 7.4 per cent, Baptists 7.2 percent, Buddhist 8.9 per cent, Jews 5.3 per cent, and Hindus and Sikhs were at around 9.5 per cent (Diaspora Project, 2005). “Of the over 411,000 in the Muslim population 15 years and over, about 252,000 or 61.3 per cent, are in the labour force; over 215,000 of them are employed, and the rest, or over 36,000 are unemployed (Rahnema,2006).

As this study examines the labour market experiences of first generation Muslims based on the statistics mentioned above and below, it particularly aims to investigate factors that may contribute to the gap between the education and employability of first generation Muslims in Canada. One of the main objectives of this study is to explore whether the events of September 11, which included series of four coordinated terrorist attacks in the United States launched by the al-Qaeda, has impacted the labour market integration of Muslim immigrants in Canada.

This research paper begins with an exploration of the Critical Race Theory, Social Exclusion Theory in section 2 in order to ascertain what explanations these theories offer for the labour market barriers faced by immigrants in Canada. . Section 3 will discuss the methodology of the research process. It outlines and describes the research design. This section provides a description and justification for the type of sample used. Moreover, the process of coding data

and the administration of instrument for observation will also be discussed in this section. This section will also describe how the data was collected and explain the scope and limitations of the research study, while also providing a description of the participants involved. The findings of the study will be outlined in section 4, pointing out key themes and patterns in participants' responses during interviews. The results outlined in section 4 will be analyzed in section 5 of this research paper. This section will incorporate pre-existing literature and conceptual frameworks to analyze and understand the data. Finally, in section 6, I conclude that racism towards Muslims exists in very subtle ways post-9/11 which makes it harder for Muslim individuals to prove racism in the labour market. At first the participants reported that their identity as a Muslim did not play a significant role in the labour market, when further inquired their stories mentioned throughout the paper suggest some level of racial discrimination as a result of their religious affiliation. The findings suggest intersectionality among Credential Recognition, Canadian experience and racism that work together to veil racist activities that Muslim individuals encounter.

Furthermore, the participants expressed that Muslims who immigrated after the events of 9/11 are more susceptible to racism in the Canadian labour market. This study also highlights the state, accreditation institutes and associations as key players that play a part in keeping the immigrants out of the highly desired occupation to reserve these occupations for Canadian born and Canadian educated workers.

Research Question

This research is primarily concerned with professionally trained Muslim immigrants in the GTA. This study is designed to conduct an analysis of the labour market experiences of Muslim immigrants' pre- and post-9/11. It is important to note that this study focuses on experiences of first generation Muslims in Canada. A qualitative analysis of the experiences of

Muslims in the labour market was conducted to question and examine types of barriers that Muslims in the GTA have identified in trying to integrate into the labour market. This study aims at investigating the following questions: What barriers professionally trained Muslim immigrants encounter in the labour market as a result of their religious affiliations? It is important to note that generally all racialized immigrants encountered common barriers similar to those by Muslim immigrants, however, the analysis is focused on investigating whether the discrimination faced by Muslim immigrants in the labor market have intensified after the events of 9/11. How the experiences of Muslim immigrants have shifted before and after the events of September 11? What factors do Muslim immigrants feel contribute to the disparity between high unemployment level and high education level in the Muslim community?

The term labour market needs to be understood to fully conceptualize the phrase “labour market experience” which will appear extensively throughout the research paper. Labour market refers to the market in which workers compete for jobs and employers compete for workers. Based on this definition the word labour market experience will refer to the different events or situations that individuals encounter in the Canadian labour market.

The concept of “integration” with respect to immigrants can be understood in different meanings. In this paper, the concept of integration will be used as the notion of an economic/social convergence between the immigrant and native population. Convergence in this sense refers to the ability of immigrants to adopt the Canadian values, social and cultural practices to blend into the Canadian culture. One of the main objectives of the multiculturalism policy is to grant all Canadians, including Muslims, the right to safeguard their tradition and cultural customs. Although the multiculturalism policy does allow for such practices, it is contradictory in nature as it has been unsuccessful in removing discriminatory and racist

obstacles to help its Muslim population integrate or provide equal access to Canada's socio-economic order (Rahnema, 2006). An article by Rahnema critically analyzes Canada's multiculturalism policy to argue that it has been unsuccessful in protecting Muslims from discriminatory practices in the labour market (Rahnema, 2006).

At the other end is the much broader notion of integration as “assimilation, i.e. acceptance of, and behaviour in accordance with, host country values and beliefs, including similarity of economic and social outcomes” (Lemaître, 2007:10) This study will limit itself to examining integration into the labour market, which means that gradually immigrants will tend to show similar labour market outcomes as the native population.

The term barrier refers to any obstacle, for example; accreditation of their foreign degrees, English as a second language, cultural or religious practices such as wearing a hijab that prevents movement or access to immigrants in their respective fields of experience and expertise. For the purpose of this study barrier refers to any obstacle that Muslims encounter in the labour market after the events of 9/11.

Greater Toronto Area also referred to as GTA is the largest metropolitan area in Canada. It is defined as the central city of Toronto, and the four regional municipalities that surround it: Durham, Halton, Peel, and York.

Researcher Self-Disclosure

As part of the Muslim community in Canada the impact of September 11 attacks on Muslims in every aspect of life is very important to me. As a graduate student who will be professionally entering the labour market after obtaining the Masters degree I am interested in discovering the experiences of other professionally trained Muslims who have come in contact

with the Canadian labour market. My personal belief in regards to the experiences of Muslims post 9/11 is that they have been victim of racial profiling in different aspects of life ranging from media, to border security, at the work place and in social gatherings. Due to the nature of this study and data collection tools (interviews and detailed survey) based extensively on qualitative methods, it assures that the personal views and bias of the researcher are rejected and that the conclusions made in the study are solely based on the findings from the data collected. In this particular study the analysis of the data will be solely based on the responses of the participants to avoid the personal biases that I may hold as a researcher. To increase trustworthiness of my research, I will rely only on the empirical evidence from the data collection. Also, my supervisor will be monitoring my research along the way.

Section 2:

Literature Review-Labour Market Barriers

It is vital we examine the Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Social Exclusion Theory to gain an understanding on the current knowledge of studying Labour market trends for immigrants. These theories play a critical role in the understanding the labour market experiences of racialized immigrants in the Canadian labour market. This section will explore and discuss the gaps in the literature in relation to the labour market experiences of Muslims in GTA.

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

The Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a radical understanding of race and power expressed by activists including lawyers and scholars interested in studying and advocating for more equitable manifestation of this relationship. Critical theory addresses power and powerlessness, domination and resistance, representation and misrepresentation, normality and abnormality (Tator and Henry, 2006). CRT, therefore, investigates belief beyond the calls for the equal rights and seeks to re-evaluate the notions of equality, which perpetuates the differences of power between groups (Soloom, 2006). Although many CRT theorists come from different backgrounds and have different theories, they all agree on four main points:

(1) racism is endemic to [North] American life; (2) CRT must challenge history and pursue a contextual and historical analysis of social issues; (3) CRT is an interdisciplinary set of research practices that is still evolving and developing; and (4) CRT should incorporate the common experiences and shared experiences of the other side that oppressed people bring into the struggle to reshape knowledge. (Soloom, 2006: 66)

According to critical race theorists, both the procedures and the substance of American law are structured to maintain white privilege. Scholars such as Sherene Razack writing about the Canadian law also agree white privilege continues to be protected in the Canadian society (Razack, 1998). The discussion on policies will be examined later on in the paper in relation to the statement made by the CRT theorists. A lot of the policies that will be examined serve to “protect” the dominant community from the threats posed by the “other”. This paper will explore how the Arabs and Muslims post 9/11 are seen as a threat to the white dominant society. This threat has also manifested as a distinction between “us” and “them” in the labour market, which ultimately results in racial and ethnic profiling of Arab and Muslims. Based on such an understanding, the CRT seeks to transform our present society into a just, rational, humane and reconciled society. According to Rocco and West, power, access, status, credibility and normality are all signs of privilege (Quoted in McLaughlin, 2009: 78). Although much progress has been made since the civil rights movement and the points system for immigrants' admission into Canada, racial biases against minority/immigrant communities continue to exist. Soloom argues that racism is “like a cancer that permeates the body...despite a massive blitzkrieg, racism may persevere, spread and even appear to be in remission for awhile, only to reappear in a more virulent form” (Soloom, 2006: 57).

CRT is very relevant to the work of this research study as its premise is that racism has become an integral part of our society. Additionally, the idea is put forward that there is no need to identify one single individual being racist in order to conclude that many social institutions at large are racist in western culture. CRT recognizes that the unequal distribution of power in our society is the product of white privilege and white supremacy (Soloom, 2006). The notion that simply being born with a white skin color and as a result growing up with white culture, entitles

an individual to a higher position in society in contrast to racialized peoples. There are two major themes that comprise the CRT. The first theme maintains that power distribution is influenced by racial factors that structure the state, namely laws and regulations to aid and maintain unequal distribution. Secondly, as set out by socialist movements, CRT works to transform the relationship between law and racial power to ultimately achieve a society where hierarchy becomes minimal (Romero, 2003).

Social Exclusion Theory

In light of the hurdles faced by immigrants in the employment market, another idea that captures and defines their struggles for equitable treatment is the concept of social exclusion. This is a term used to describe any regulated process that is used to deter life's necessities, common resources, rights and opportunities that are otherwise made available to other members of society, from specific individuals, communities or even races (Barry, 1998). These processes eventually result in alienation of the individual or sometimes even a certain community, resulting in a drop to a lower class and education status as well as living standards. As the CRT mentions, the white male is the ideal citizen, as a result of firm Eurocentric views established since colonization and therefore, anyone who does not fit that image is prone to social exclusion (Barry, 1998). In order to be acknowledged as a viable social member, immigrants must actively pursue inclusion criteria which contradict their culture and values. An example of this phenomenon, is becoming comfortable with professional attire such as skirts which shows native members of society that you are no different and are actively trying to become more like them. The effect of social exclusion is sometimes immeasurable as its effects sometimes lie beyond physical consequences and reach into emotional and mental distress. Social exclusion has been seen to largely attack economic, social and political freedom and snatch it from the targeted

individuals or communities (Shields 2003). Economic freedom tends to have the largest effect for obvious reasons, the lack of economic freedom can result in the individual to come close and sometimes fall below the line of poverty, due to the lack of employment. This causes emotional and psychological trauma on not only the unemployed or poorly employed individual, but all of his/her dependents. Social exclusion causes anxiety, distress, loneliness and depression to families and sometimes even entire communities (Leary, 1990).

The importance of labour markets to social function is due to the fact that they are the means through which immigrants integrate themselves into the new society. Additionally, they are able to contribute positively and constructively to society and their personal lives within the new social structure. (Shields, 2003: 7). Negative consequences have been studied when examining economic productivity, settlement and social cohesion as a result of new immigrants accepting employment positions that fall much below their qualifications. The term that describes the displacement immigrants experience, when required to take on jobs they are much over qualified for, is downward social mobility (Sparks and Wolfson 16). Overall social achievement by immigrants has plummeted since the 1980's and as a result economic integration has become scarce, meanwhile social exclusion has become widespread (Shields 2003). The neoliberal¹ ideology has also been coined as an aggressive form of exclusion, as it has paved the way for exclusionary methods to take form, largely by advocating for decreased social welfare. According to Shield, "neoliberal changes can be seen as a movement from inclusionary politics

¹ "Neo" means we are talking about a new kind of liberalism. So what was the old kind? The liberal school of economics became famous in Europe when Adam Smith, a Scottish economist, published a book in 1776 called *The Wealth of Nations*. He and others advocated the abolition of government intervention in economic matters. No restrictions on manufacturing, no barriers to commerce, no tariffs, he said; free trade was the best way for a nation's economy to develop. Such ideas were "liberal" in the sense of no controls. This application of individualism encouraged "free" enterprise, "free" competition -- which came to mean, free for the capitalists to make huge profits as they wished. See Martinez and Garcia

to the political practice of exclusion” (Shields, 2006: 6). This is done mainly by the structural forces, including institutions and organisations, in the receiving countries that allow some groups to benefit from the market economy while leaving others out. The social exclusion theory was formulated to describe the cause and effects of marginalization on immigrants and their ability to integrate into their new society. It proposes that as a result of exclusionary practices, a certain group of people are benefiting from the market economy (in the neoliberal sense), meanwhile the “undesirable” are suffering. The economic gap between these groups is contributing to the wide social gap we see in Canada today (Shields, 2003). Social exclusion, therefore, is formed by practices and factors which are integral to a society and have their origins within policies, institutions and organizations.

The literature discussing the value of foreign credentials in Canada demonstrates the struggles that professionally trained immigrants encounter when entering the Canadian labour market. With regards to professions that are regulated in Canada, foreign-trained professionals must have their qualifications and work experience assessed by licensing bodies. In most instances the international credentials and work experience of immigrants are not recognized (Bauder, 2003).

Moreover, when immigrants experience a hard time during their recognition process, they often criticize the Canadian immigration policy, which is based on a point system that grants points for their education and profession. According to Baker and Benjamin (1994), the point system attempts to match the skills of immigrant inflows with perceived shortages in the Canadian labour market. The skills and education that grants them the points to enter Canada are no longer valuable once they arrive into the county. A study conducted by Baker and Benjamin, used data from the Public Use Microdata Files of the Canadian censuses in 1971, 1981 and 1989

to measure the integration of the immigrants into the labour force. Although the data analyzed is outdated, it provides an example of a good resource that assisted in setting the base for this study to measure the integration of immigrants into the labour market.

Melchers and Schwartz (2011) in their analysis on improving foreign credentials also point out immigration law and policies as an important factor that impacts the integration of immigrants into the labour market. Their paper speaks to the problems related to the false expectations experienced by immigrants whose credentials are considered relevant for the purposes of immigration, but then not recognized for employment purposes upon arrival (Melchers & Schwartz, 2011). Based on this, one of the weaknesses of the immigration policy is that it fails to outline the “true” value of the foreign credentials in Canadian labour market. The negative impacts of the immigration policies have direct impact on the settlement processes of these immigrants. When immigrants are unable to find work due to the lack of recognition of foreign credentials and experience, they are often seen as an economic burden on the country. A study cited by Melchers & Schwartz contends that “the 2.9 million immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1990 and 2002 received \$18.3 billion more in government services and benefits than they paid in taxes in 2002” (Melchers & Schwartz, 2011: 173). While such a study does not acknowledge the value created in terms of goods and services by these immigrants, it is important to consider that there were many immigrant participants in the study that have high credentials. But because of the lack of recognition of their skills, they are either left unemployed or underemployed, which has a great impact on their incomes. The study by Melchers and Schwartz (2011) focuses primarily on immigration policies as a barrier to integration in the labour market, however they do recognize the fact that other factors such as race and language skill can also create barriers for new immigrants in acquiring a job.

In cases where immigrant's credentials are accepted, having Canadian work experience becomes a barrier to entering the labour force. As a result of the necessary Canadian experience immigrants are forced to look for alternative jobs that do not require experience. The jobs that require minimum or no experience usually include security guards and taxi drivers' jobs, and are consequently low paying jobs. Thus, the social practices of labour market institutions have the effect of excluding many internationally trained immigrants from their foreign profession, and forcing immigrants into low wage, unstable "survival" jobs (Bauder & Girard, 2005). In a study by Bauder (2003), two business owners who employed Yugoslavian immigrants confirmed that Canadian experience is not necessarily a critical component in the hiring process. In their business, they hired employees with and without Canadian experience and report that both groups perform equally well. Based on such findings, Bauder concludes that if Canadian experience is not a valid indicator of performance, then it may be a measure of cultural distinction (Bauder, 2003). Thus, it can be concluded that the main objective of Canadian experience requirement is to exclude racialized immigrants from the labour force. The effects and consequences of requiring Canadian experience are very similar to that of non recognition of foreign credentials.

Moreover, the insistence on Canadian experience does not only exclude immigrants but also provides employers with the opportunity to exploit the immigrants. Since some immigrants do not have Canadian experience, their skills do not necessarily disappear. In cases where immigrants are hired with no Canadian experience, the employers gain access to highly qualified workers for relatively low wages. Bauder presents an example of a Serbian community leader who states that Canadian experience was required for the recognition of his foreign engineering diploma. Therefore, he was forced to work for a fraction of the standard wage for engineers

(Bauder, 2003). In a study by Bauder and Girard that looked at institutional barriers to foreign credentials and work experience, used the profession of engineering as a case study. The Engineering profession is reported to be “single largest group of immigrant professionals awaiting licensure in Canada” (Bauder & Girard, 2005). The study suggests Canadian work experience represents a larger obstacle for immigrant professional in the assessment process. Similarly, in some cases immigrants are eager to volunteer for employers as unpaid workers to gain Canadian experience. The employers exploit these immigrants who have the ambition to continue their foreign profession in Canadian labour market.

A study by Ferrer and Riddell (2004), attempts to measure the income disparities that exist between native born Canadian and immigrants with equal education. This particular study focused on a lot of variables such as, years of completed schooling and degrees, diplomas and certificates received, age, as well as earnings of immigrant and native born workers in Canada. For the purpose of this paper, earnings of the two groups mentioned above will be analyzed to illustrate the value of foreign experience in Canadian labour market. Based on the study the researchers pointed out depreciation of skills as one of the main factor that influences the earning difference between natives and immigrants. Unlike other researchers, Ferrer and Riddell argue in favor of the income gap between the two groups. While it demonstrates the income disparity between native born Canadian and Immigrants, the researchers justify the income disparity by arguing that the larger cultural differences and the lack of information the employers have about the institutions they attended in their home countries, cause their human capital value to depreciate for Canadian employers (Ferrer and Riddell, 2004). Contrary to Ferrer and Riddell’s argument, Guo offers a different perspective on cultural differences and the role of race and language in undervaluing the foreign credentials of new immigrants.

Immigration has played an important role in transforming Canada into a multicultural and diverse society. When immigrants arrive into the country, they bring language, culture, values, educational background and work experiences. Although Canada has been seen as a tolerant society, it has also been criticized for failing to accept difference as valuable expression of human experience (Guo, 2009). One major factor that is under analyzed in many of the studies is concerned with the racialization of immigrant in the labour market. Guo in his study recognizes the fact that when analyzing the processes of non-recognition of foreign credentials and prior work experience, it is important to understand how race, class, and gender intersect to shape immigrant experience in the labour market (Guo, 2009).

A study conducted by Peter Li (2001), examined foreign credentials, gender, racial origin or the immigrant status of the immigrants to understand how the devaluation of the immigrants' credentials operate in the labour market. In Li's study, race was identified as creating a barrier to employment of immigrants, especially those from non-European origins. The employment discrimination was evident against immigrant with identifiable linguistic and racial features. In line with this finding, Scassa (1994) in her article, Language Standards, Ethnicity and Discrimination, has argued that non-native speakers of the dominant language encounter discrimination in employment and in access to services on the basis of their language characteristics. Also, their lack of fluency, their accent in speech, and their deviations from the language standard of the dominant group can be used as basis of unfavorable treatment, and as surrogates of racial discrimination. Scassa and Li's work have similar findings that attributed language skills and accents to be factors that resulted in employment discrimination in the work force.

In another field study by Henry and Ginsberg in Toronto, used matched black and white job seekers to apply for entry positions advertised in a newspaper. Based on this analysis they found that white applicants received job offers three times more than black job seekers. Similar to Li and Scassa, they also found that telephone callers with an Asian or Caribbean accent were screened out when they called about a job vacancy (Henry and Ginsberg 1985). Henry and Ginsberg conducted a follow up study of employers and personnel managers of large business and corporations in Toronto. This study indicated that 28 percent of the respondents felt that racial minorities had less ability than white Canadians to meet performance criteria (Henry and Ginsberg, 1985). The result of this study illustrates the racist ideologies that employers hold with regards to the minority groups (Henry and Ginsberg, 1985). The stereotypes associated with the minority groups become barriers in finding high paying jobs in the labour market. This finding states that “those who hold higher positions may have an interest in defining it in such a way that it cannot be occupied by anyone other than the possessors of properties identical to their own” (Bauder, 2003: 702). This observation raised an important concern that has to do with the power structure in our society. Those who hold the power in our society have the capability to endorse an ideology that continues to keep the racialized minority groups at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. The term glass ceiling can be used here to comprehend how the racialized minorities are kept at the bottom of socio-economic ladder. Glass ceiling can be understood as an unseen barrier that prevents racialized immigrants from obtaining higher positions in the labour market. Similarly, with relation to foreign credentials, the professional associations function as gate keepers of professionalism and define entry qualification according to their own cultural biases (Bauder, 2003). The Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board (CEAB) can be used as an example to examine how these associations function as gate keepers.

The Canadian engineering students who graduated from accredited Canadian engineering schools automatically meet licensing academic requirements by the CEAO. On the other hand, when graduates of international engineering schools immigrate to Canada, they lose the value of their credentials until they demonstrate their academic qualifications are equivalent to Canadian standards. Engineers holding international qualifications encounter several stages of assessments, including written examinations and interviews in order to establish the equivalency of their credentials (Bauder, 2005). The requirement for Canadian Experience was identified as one of the major barrier that engineers encounter when trying to obtain their licence and accreditation. Those who have Canadian credentials have a greater value in the Canadian labour market than foreign credentials because Canadian employers tend to preferentially select Canadian-trained applicants (Bauder, 2005). The way these biases are practiced by the association result in marginalization of immigrants in a systemic way to reserve the upper segment of the labour force for the dominant group.

Muslims in the Canadian Labour Market

Based on the literature that was reviewed for the purpose of this study, it became evident that there is limited literature on the experiences of Muslims in the labour market. Majority of the Muslim populous in Canada is relatively younger than the average Canadian, “22 percent of [Muslims] between 15 years of age and older attend school on a full-time basis, and 7.4 percent attend school part time” (Rahnema, 2006: 24). The level of education of Muslim women in Canada, though lower than Muslim men, is nonetheless high. For example, 2001 statistics indicated that approximately 23 percent of Muslim women, age 25 years and above, have a university education. Remarkably, the level of post-secondary education of Muslim women in Canada is significantly higher than the national average, which was estimated to be only 14.8

percent in 2001 (Rahnema, 2006). The level of education for Muslim women is also higher than other religious groups, for example, in the same year Roman Catholics had only 13.4 percent of women with university degrees. In sum, the 2001 statistics display that “the level of post-secondary education of Muslims, both male and female, is [significantly] above the national average” (Diaspora Project, 2005).

However, the irony is that although the Muslim population has high rankings in education, they also have high levels of unemployment in Canada. Statistics show that the unemployment level of Muslim-Canadians is significantly higher than the national levels. While 2001 national average of unemployment was 7.4, the Muslim population averaged 14.3 percent (Diaspora Project, 2005). Furthermore the Muslim population’s unemployment level was also higher than other religious groups. For example, in 2001, the unemployment of Roman Catholics was 7.4 percent, Baptists 7.2 percent, Buddhist 8.9 percent, Jews 5.3 percent, and Hindus and Sikhs were at around 9.5 percent (Diaspora Project, 2005). “Of the over 411,000 in the Muslim population 15 years and over, about 252,000 or 61.3 percent, are in the labour force; over 215,000 of them are employed, and the rest, or over 36,000 are unemployed (Rahnema, 2006). For instance, only 8 percent of the Muslim population work in professional, scientific, and technical services and yet also have lower income (Rahnema, 2006). In *Muslim Diaspora: Gender, Culture and Identity*, Rahnema (2006) refers to this as the ‘proletarianization of immigrants’, meaning that the Muslims, even if they are more educated, are stuck with low income jobs and are marginalized in those positions further, as it is very hard for them to move up the economic ladder to higher and more established jobs (Rahnema, 2006).

A prime rationale behind this distinctiveness is that because most of the Muslim population has attained their education in their country of origin, their qualifications are not

recognized in Canada. Also, it is argued that most lack ‘Canadian experience’, a term that is meant to exclude. According to the 2001 census, 579,600 or about 2 percent of Canadian inhabitants are of Muslim origin, and from the total Muslim population, approximately 137,800 or about 23 percent are Canadian born, which makes the majority of its’ population, foreign-born (Rahnema, 2006). Due to the nature of the lack of recognition of foreign credentials, it can be argued that those Muslims who have foreign credentials are unable to attain higher positions in the labour force as their credentials are often suspected to be less valued in comparison to the Canadian education standards. For example, of those part of the Iranian Muslim diaspora during the 1990s, an estimated 32 percent of them were in specialized and executive positions prior to leaving Iran, of the 32 percent, only 16 percent were able to attain the same positions after moving to Canada (Janhevich and Ibrahim, 2004). Also, while only less than 1 percent of Iranians were minimum wage workers in Iran, after moving to Canada, the number increased to an estimated 12 percent (Janhevich and Ibrahim, 2004).

Section 3:

Research Method and Procedures

Approach and Strategy

This endeavour looks to analyze the experiences of Muslim immigrants post-9/11 in the GTA and its bordering regions. This research will be based on the qualitative research method: a methodology that allows the researcher to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour, perception and opinions about a particular situation or within specific contexts. The use of qualitative data collection can be used to obtain the details about the issue under analysis. In the case of Muslims' experiences in labour market post 9/11, the qualitative data collection method will be used to obtain in-depth information about particular experiences of the individuals within the target population.

This study used a combination of questionnaire and phenomenological research guidelines to investigate the experiences of Muslim immigrants in the labour market post 9/11. I used two forms of data collection: an informational questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Since this research focuses on the post-9/11 environment, one of the main objectives of this study is to uncover mainstream employers' prejudice or possible racist practices in the GTA. It is important to consider that the racist practices and employers' prejudice is very difficult to identify. Therefore, this study tried to capture the subjective experience of individuals from the Muslim faith who are relatively new in Canada, which is the more practical and the least expensive method of determining the impact of Sept. 11. The questionnaire (see Appendix C) was used to obtain data such as the participant's age, gender, education, profession, etc. Most of the questions were close-ended questions with blank spaces provided for the answers.

The phenomenological research guidelines describe the human experiences as a phenomenon (Groenewald, 2004). This research strategy falls under the qualitative methods of research. Phenomenological strategy will provide detailed information about specific experiences of Muslim individuals in the labour market. The data collected through this strategy does not lend itself to direct generalizations in the same way that is often claimed for survey research. The phenomenological strategy was used as a qualitative research method to gather in-depth data via the lived experiences of Muslims in the labour market or their experiences to obtain employment after the tragic events of September 11.

A phenomenological interview is “one in which a participant is enabled to describe his or her experiences of some phenomenon with as little direction from the interviewer as possible” (Pollio et al., 1997, cited in Davis et al., 2004, p. 112). The semi structured interviews were used as they consist of multiple features that keep the interview structured while providing the researcher with flexibility to conduct interview according to the situation at hand. The semi-structured interview is helpful because it helps to define the areas that are being explored while also allowing the interviewer and the interviewee to slowly delve into additional question to pursue the response in more detail. The flexibility of this tool allows the researcher to ask for an elaboration of information from participants that they may not have thought of while structuring the questions prior to the interview.

A purposive sample which is also known as non random selection of participants was developed to capture the lived experiences of professionally trained immigrant (Trochim, 2006). This sample is one that is selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study. Purposive sampling is very useful for situation where you need to reach a target sample quickly. In addition to purposive sampling, snowball sampling was also used to recruit

participants. In snowball sampling subjects with desired traits or characteristics give names of further appropriate subjects. Despite the limitation of the lack of wide generalizability associated-meaning, there is no way of knowing whether the sample is representative of the population - they were selected to ensure that certain types of individuals displaying certain attributes are included in the study (Berg, 2009).

Participants

According to Statistics Canada 2006, there were 884,000 Muslims in Canada which accounted to 2.7 percent of the Canadian population. From the vast population of Muslims in Canada, 393,000 or 44.5 percent resided in GTA. This statistic shows that amongst all the Canadian provinces and places of residence, Toronto consists of the largest Muslim population in Canada. Based on this statistic, the study was located within the GTA.

All participants recruited for this study are first generation Muslim immigrants. Since this research focuses on the labour market experiences of Muslim immigrants post 9/11, the human participants include immigrants who follow the religion of Islam. The reason why I chose to focus on Muslim immigrants for this study is primarily because this particular group has come under strict scrutiny after the devastating events of 9/11. Muslims around the world have been targeted and discriminated against because of their religion as well as appearance of those who were responsible for the attack of 9/11 (Swiney, 2006). Given the impact of 9/11 on Muslims in different ways, this study was focused on analyzing the impact 9/11 has had on the labour market experiences of Muslims. Furthermore, because the study is directed towards the labour market experiences of professional trained Muslims, the required age of the participants was 25 years or older.

A total of 6 individuals were interviewed for this study, four male and two female internationally trained immigrants were recruited. Prior to conducting a research with a representative sample size on the impact of 9/11 on Muslims seeking employment in the GTA, qualitative research involving a small sample and semi-structured interviews was undertaken to ascertain whether further research with a larger sample would be warranted. Other reasons for choosing a small sample size for this study will be addressed below under Scope and Limitations. All of the individuals had immigrated to Canada prior to the year 2000, a criteria that was used for selection.

Partipants	Country of Origin	Date of Arrival in Canada	Foreign Profession	Current Position/ work
Participant 01	Kenya	1974	High school Teacher	Retired
Participant 02	Pakistan	2000	Medical Doctor	Medical Lab Technician
Participant 03	Pakistan	2000	Chemical Engineer	Chemical Engineer
Participant 04	Pakistan	1997	IT Professional	System Administrator
Participant 05	Saudi Arabia	1998	Graphic Designer	Department Manager at Walmart
Participant 06	Pakistan	1998	Pharmacist	Security Guard

Figure 1: Participant Characteristic Chart

Procedures

Participants were mainly recruited through networks using word-of-mouth and the snowball technique used to locate subjects who fit the criteria. A letter of invitation/recruitment was sent to different members of Muslim communities through social media such as Facebook (See Appendix A). The letter included a brief description of the study and required participant

characteristic. Interested subjects were asked to contact me directly expressing their interest in participating in the study without any compulsion or concern for breach of privacy.

All participants were provided with written informed consent agreement (see Appendix B), and were assured of confidentiality and the voluntary nature of the interviews. To avoid any discomfort and privacy issues, interviews were conducted at a place that was convenient and comfortable for all participants. Majority of the interviews were conducted at local public libraries close to the participant's residents. Meeting rooms were booked in advance to ensure complete privacy and confidentiality of the participants.

Interviews were conducted between July 2013 and August 2013. Four Interviews were conducted in person and two were conducted over the phone. Although both methods of interviews provided important information, however, those who were interviewed in person provided much more detailed responses as opposed to those who were interviewed on the phone. Another disadvantage of telephone interviews is that the researcher is unable to see the expressions of the participants which adds important information for the researcher. On the contrary, face-to-face interview offers the advantage of picking up on visual cues, such as the other person's body language and expressions. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The participants were interviewed using semi-structured questions (see Appendix D) with the aim to gather data focusing on three main conceptual categories: participants' perspectives on foreign credential recognition, Canadian work experience and Racism in relation to their professional experiences in the Canadian labour market pre and post September 11. Questions pertaining to these three categories were derived from the literature review. Questions were structured as open-ended in order to allow participants to freely express their opinions and share

their experiences. Interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. Guided by the research questions, data was arranged into conceptual categories.

According to Iain Hay, coding can be done in two step process- basic and in-depth coding (Price, 2009). In this study open coding was initially conducted manually to organize data into categories. Each category was highlighted in a different color on the interview script. After the basic coding, axial coding was used to further organize the data under each category to generate themes. The axial coding was succeeded by selective coding. During this process the data under each theme was further defined and organized to make connection and identify core concepts for analysis (Price, 2009).

Scope and Limitations

Due to the nature of time sensitivity of the study as well as resources on hand, I had to limit my sample size. While this study attempts to answer the research questions outlined in the literature review through interviews with professionally trained Muslims immigrants; it unquestionably has some limitations that should be taken into consideration. As mentioned earlier in this section, these limitations are mainly related to the generalizability of the study. Since the study interviewed only 6 participants, the results from this study cannot be generalized to the Muslim population in Canada due to small sample size. Because of the small sample size, it is difficult to draw conclusions on the subject matter. This research study is primarily meant to be an exploratory study looking to investigate and explore the labour market experiences of professionally trained Muslim immigrants in the Canadian Labour market. Another limitation of this study is that majority of the participants are male. Although the aim of this study was to interview equal number of male and female participants, the male response rate to the call for

participants was greater than that of female participants as a result of which only 2 female participants were interviewed compared to 4 male participants.

Section 4:

Findings

The findings of this study have captured the participants' professional experiences and perceptions of factors that they feel have impacted their experiences in the Canadian labour market as immigrants and more importantly as Muslims. Three main sections have been developed to describe these experiences, and each section has been further broken down into different themes. The analysis presented here is based on the conceptual categories that were identified in the literature earlier on in this paper.

1. Foreign Credential Recognition:

On the issue of foreign credentials, participants were asked about their experiences with the accreditation process in the Canadian system. This section particularly looks at the role foreign credential recognition has played for immigrants as they try to integrate into the labour market. When asked about their experiences with foreign credential accreditation all participants expressed that their Muslim identity had minimal correlation with the difficulties that they encountered throughout the process. The participants emphasized that their experiences are identical to non-Muslim immigrants.

Theme 1: "The lengthy nature of the accreditation process puts the immigrants one step behind the Native Canadians" (Respondent 05)

All participants of this study reported that the long and lengthy process to get ones credentials evaluated and accredited is one of the first barriers immigrants encounter upon their arrival in the GTA. One participant, who was a chemical engineer with 15 years of experience in his field, states that "when I immigrated to Canada, I started the process to get my engineering degree accredited in Canada, but after going through the process my accreditation was denied

because of insufficient qualifications and experience in my field” (Respondent 02). The respondent described feelings of frustration and depression as a result of this process. The Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board (CEAB) requires engineers to fulfill certain requirement which involves going back to school to take courses or write number of exams (Respondent 02). In addition to the stringent requirements for the accreditation process, the respondent also reports long process time as another barrier that prevents immigrants from continuing the accreditation process. “In some cases, if you display 10 years of experience or more which is somewhat recognized by CEAB, foreign trained engineers are given an opportunity to attend an interview for further assessment which may result in some requirements being waived. However, it can take up to 6-12 months to schedule an appointment for the interview” (Respondent 02). During the waiting period for the accreditation, one of the respondent reports “we are left with no choice but to take up a survival jobs which at the time seem to be a temporary solution but often becomes permanent due to lack of foreign credential recognition in the Canadian labour market (Respondent 06). According to Bauder, the long processing time associated with credential recognition is way through which the professional associations and the state work together to actively exclude immigrant labour from the most highly desired occupations in order to reserve these occupations for Canadian-born and Canadian-educated workers (Bauder, 2003). These professional associations have an interest in defining the entry requirements in such a manner that newly arriving immigrants are excluded. The lack of state intervention in these associations display similar motives of the state to exclude the immigrants from integrating into the labour market and forcing them into low paying survival jobs.

Another respondent encountered similar experiences with the ministry of education as she tried to get her degree in education accredited in Canada. When asked about her experience with the accreditation process she reports, “when I landed in Canada, shortly [there]after I tried to get my degree evaluated by the ministry of education, but obviously they didn’t recognize it because they said that, [...] basically, they didn’t want immigrants” (Respondent 01). First generations of newcomers in Canada are often not aware of the options available to them. Many of the participants stated that they did not have the resources available to help them explore other options. One respondent recalls that it was not until her supervisor suggested that she talk to University of Toronto about getting her degree evaluated since the country she obtained her degree from was a British colony. When asked to summarize her experience with the system she asserts that, “it is racist, very racist in nature” (Respondent 01). The experiences of the participant discussed above emphasize another issue that needs to be highlighted. The age group of immigrants who are coming to Canada with their families are put at a disadvantage. The age group requirement in the Canadian immigration policy is a factor that can be explored in future research.

Theme 2: Economic Strain

In addition to the lengthy process associated with the credential evaluation, this process also places economic strain on those who cannot be employed, in order to support their family while upgrading their foreign degrees. This theme emerged as the participants described the limitations that they encountered when trying to get their credentials evaluated. As one participant puts it “the long process to get one's degrees evaluated comes with extraordinary expenses” (Respondent 03). As a medical doctor, one of the participants reports

A few months after I landed in Canada I applied to get my documents evaluated through World Education Services (WES) [...] when I did get them evaluated I learned that this

process was merely for the institution and universities and in order for me to enter the university here in Canada I actually need my original documents sent directly from the university I went to in Pakistan to the Physician Credentials Registry of Canada (PCRC). (Respondent 03)

Due to long and confusing process, new immigrants often end up spending money on procedural steps that are not useful to them. Another participant also describes the process to upgrade foreign credentials to be expensive. If an immigrant wants to go back to university and upgrade their degree to standards in Canada, they need someone backing them up financially (Respondent 01).

Additionally another respondent reported not completing all of the exams because of lack of funding available to him throughout the process. When immigrants arrive they bring their saving however, the saving does not last them too long and they need to find a job immediately before their savings run out (Respondent 05). One of the participants reports that:

When I first started the accreditation process, the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada evaluated my credentials and asked me to write a 7 hour evaluation exam. Fortunately, I passed the equivalency exam; however, the process to obtain a licence to practice as a pharmacist required number of exams. After calculating the cost and time associated with this process, I realize that I could not write all the exams since I have to support my family. (Respondent 06)

The same respondent further elaborated on how studying for the exams requires one to stay at home and study, which is something not many newcomers are able to do specially those who landed with a family to support. The participant who held an engineering degree expressed frustration when he was asked to enrol in courses that he had already completed from his home country by the accreditation board. “You know the courses that they required me to take are not cheap. I came with children who were about to start universities shortly after we landed in Canada. Given my financial situation I had to choose between advancing my career or my

daughter's future" (Respondent 02). Similar concerns were also shared by other participants whose children were ready to start their post-secondary education.

The struggles that immigrants encounter financially do not only impact the job seeker but also their family. When immigrants are employed in positions much lower than their qualification, they have to make financial compromises that a local Canadian with similar credentials would not have to. An example provided by one of the participants personifies the emotional effect of stringent economical condition.

I remember after being exhausted from job hunting to find anything that came close to my qualification, I took up a job at a video game store which a teenager in high school could do. This job was obviously not well paid and the minimum wage back then was quiet low. I remember buying one chocolate bar for my three children which they shared amongst themselves. As a father I felt I had hit rock bottom for not being able to buy a chocolate bar for each of my children. (Respondent 04)

2. Lack of Canadian Experience as a barrier

This section looks at lack of Canadian experience and the role it played for immigrants as they try to integrate into the Canadian labour market. It is interesting to note that when the participants were asked about barriers they encountered in the labour market, lack of Canadian experience was one factor that was mentioned, even before a question was directed towards this pre-determined category. When the participants were asked how the experiences of Muslims related to Canadian experience, differed from other immigrants, almost all participants stated that the lack of Canadian experience is something that all immigrants encounter. However, at times especially after the events of September 11 it can be used as a justification to extraordinarily scrutinize Muslims in the labour market.

Theme 1: "When I came to Canada things were really bad for immigrants. They demanded that I produce some type of Canadian Experience" (Respondent 01)

When asked about labour market barriers, all participants rated lack of Canadian experience as the most important factor that prevents them from entering the labour market. As one participant puts it “After taking a few crash courses related to my foreign profession, I still had a hard time finding work in my field. Everyone demanded that I produce some type of Canadian experience [...] which is an illogical way of saying that we don’t want you” (Respondent 01). The same participant further stated that there is constant competition between immigrants and native-born Canadians. Another respondent reported that ‘I did not have my credentials accredited in Canada but owing to the internationally renowned status of Punjab University, I was able to get to the interview stage in many of the places I applied to. But I quickly learned that having an educational background from Canada is very crucial to getting the job” (Respondent 04). He also added that having a Canadian education gives the applicant an upper hand over an immigrant who may have years of experience.

One of the participants who came a decade before the events of September 11 noted that during that time no one really knew nor care about who was Muslim. According to one of the respondents who immigrated a decade before the events of September 11, felt that at the time the discrimination was primarily based on your status as an immigrant rather than your religion. However, for the newcomers coming in after the events of September 11, things have definitely changed for them (Respondent 01). “On the phone they are saying, yeah yeah we have a job opening for you. But, as soon as you enter the building, sorry the job is gone. In many cases it’s hard to tell whether it’s because of my identity as an immigrant or that as a Muslim” (Respondent 01). The year of arrival to Canada significantly impacts the experiences of immigrants. According to one of the participants, those who came after the event of September 11 experience somewhat different barriers than those who immigrated to Canada a decade or

more before 9/11. One participant felt that “non Muslims are hired faster regardless of their experience in the field. And wherever you applying and there is a European you don’t have much chances” (Respondent 06). All of the participants felt that having a Canadian degree definitely increases your chances in the labour market which cannot be achieved despite having years of experience in your field because it hold zero value in Canada (Respondent 03).

When asked to reflect on their experiences, one of the participants describes that “the saturation in the market plays a crucial role for immigrants seeking work in their field. I feel that if there is an opening the employers prefer the local graduates as opposed to hiring internationally trained professionals who may have been practicing in their field back home” (Respondent 03). Another participant raised similar feelings of disappointment because “in cases where I did get interview calls based on my qualifications, however, in every job opportunity I had to compete with an individual with Canadian education” (Respondent 05).

Theme 2: “I had many hurdles in my career path which I strongly feel would not have existed if I was a Canadian born. Things like language or a slight accent can play a crucial role in labour market” (Respondent 03)

Language was another barrier described by participants when discussing their perception on Canadian experience. 5 out of 6 participants felt that being able to communicate in English can be an asset but the slight accent that immigrants carry with them puts them at a disadvantage when seeking opportunities to gain Canadian experience. “I feel that language is a huge barrier for immigrants especially during the initial stages” (Respondent 05). Most participants mentioned the importance of the English language as a factor that plays a significant role in their career advancement and development in Canada. One of the participant reports that when immigrants arrive, they are faced with both individual and institutional factors that create barriers

for them. However, “I strongly feel and believe that immigrants who try hard are able to overcome these individual factors as they [stay] longer in Canada” (Respondent 03). The ability to speak the English language was identified as one of the individual factor that immigrants can improve. Unlike the institutional factors such as competition and discretion on the part of the employers, which cannot be controlled by the immigrants, language barrier is something that they can overcome.

Some participants displayed feelings of frustration because they felt that the employers paid more attention to their language rather than their educational background or foreign experience. According to one of the participants:

For me the factor was not the fluency in English but a rather a slight accent that I spoke with when I came to Canada. I pronounced some words differently because English was not my first language. During my first interview I was corrected for my pronunciation in a word of everyday use which was not even any professional jargon. After that I became a bit self-conscious about how I spoke and would avoid using word that would expose my accent. (Respondent 04)

The participant further stated that although he understands and agrees with the importance of speaking fluent English, it is also important that the employers pay more attention to the work experience of immigrants rather than individual factors that will improve over time. The same participant stressed the point that as an IT professional for whom the job involves working more with the technology, the employers need to put more weight on the knowledge of the profession (Respondent 04). In other words, the respondent felt that the employers were more concerned about his ability to speak everyday English than his knowledge of occupation specific language.

You need to be not only fluent, but also proficient in English, to excel in your profession and communicate well, be able to express your point of view, ensure a good compromise and build a constructive argument (Respondent 02). Another participant describes the lack of good

language skills as a "hurdle to employment as well as being able to advance your career" (Respondent 01). Immigrants are always in the struggle to better learn the language in order to get a better job. Most immigrants felt that being able to find opportunities to gain Canadian experience requires good communication skills, which is often something that immigrants encounter as a barrier in the initial stages.

Theme 3: "I feel that lack of recognition of foreign experience results in underemployment for immigrants" (Respondent 03)

All of the participants interviewed for this study felt that they were and in many cases still are underemployed in the Canadian labour market. One of the respondent who immigrated as a high school teacher was unable to find work in her field and took up a job as an administrative assistant at Bell Canada (Respondent 01). The same participant also worked as a seamstress privately where she earned way below the minimum wage when she was unable to find work. Another participant who was a professionally trained engineer reports that, "After doing a few survival jobs I was able to get a position in a chemical engineering firm, however, the position I was hired for was below my qualification and previous positions that I held in Pakistan" (Respondent 02). The same respondent also reported pay differentials between himself and those having Canadian degrees.

Another participant who was a practicing doctor, displayed memories of distress when she had to work odd jobs after failing to get her credentials recognized. "Even when I wanted to volunteer at medical offices I felt the doctors underestimated the level and standard of education that I had received from my home country" (Respondent 03). All of the participants reported immigrating with their families, thus they felt the urgency to find work even if they found positions much below their qualifications. "Since I immigrated with my family, we needed jobs

to survive and be able to pay for our necessities, so my husband and I had to take whatever opportunity came to us” (Respondent 03). The same respondent reported working at Burger King and Tim Hortons for 3 years before she was able to get a volunteer position as a receptionist at a walk-in clinic. Lack of foreign experience recognition in their professions was reported as one of the most prominent barriers that result in underemployment of immigrants in the Canadian labour market.

For all participants working below their qualifications was a very depressing and a demeaning phase. Some of the participants were able to move up the ladder to a certain extent while for others the survival jobs became the permanent jobs that they continue to hold today. One participant who was a graphic designer by profession from Saudi Arabia, was one of the individuals who was not able to find any sort of employment in his area despite taking some crash courses at Seneca college. This participant reported that:

I joined Walmart shortly after I immigrated to Canada as a temporary job while I continued to search for a job related to my field. I have now been employed with Walmart for about 14 years. After a few years of active job search related to my field I eventually gave up and decided to stick with what I thought was a temporary job.
(Respondent 05)

Some immigrants who worked with companies that had locations in Canada were quiet confident that their experience will be recognized in Canada, at the very least by the same company. 3 out of the 6 participants worked in multinational companies that have headquarters in Canada. Despite the fact that the companies operate in the same manner around the world their foreign experiences were not recognized by the same company upon their arrival in Canada. As one participant describes “I was employed at BASF a multinational chemical engineering company which also has operations in Canada as well. Although the operations and the procedure that are followed are the same at all locations, regardless of the country, I was not

even called for an interview when I applied for a position in the same company” (Respondent 02).

Another participant encountered similar experiences, “I worked with Johnson and Johnson Company in Lahore, I was very confident that I would be able to get hired in the company given my 10 year experience with the company” (Respondent 06). The response the participant got was not what he expected. “When I applied to Johnson and Johnson Canada, I didn’t get a positive response [...] uh they told me that we will keep your resume for 6 months and if there are any openings we will contact you. Despite the fact that I worked with the company for years they still said I did not have Canadian experience” (Respondent 06). All participants reported the feeling of distress because they felt that the minute you enter Canada, all the money, time and effort you have put into building your career means nothing.

Although all participants felt that the demand for Canadian experience is a way of filtering out the “culturally and linguistically different” individuals from the labour market, it is hard to say whether it is because of the individual’s race, class, religion or their status as an immigrant. When asked how the situation may have changed for Muslims after the events of September 11, most participant felt that although the struggles in the labour market are not too different for Muslims in comparison to other immigrants, but they do believe that non-Muslims are given more opportunities and get hired a little bit faster than other immigrants (Respondents 01, 02, 05, 06).

3. Racialization of Muslims Post 9/11

Theme 1: Overt vs. Veiled Racism in the Canadian Labour Market. “But again racism is something that cannot be proven” (Respondent 03)

When asked about whether the experiences have changed after the events of September 11, all participants stated that the situation in the labour market has changed for Muslim immigrants. Although many of the participants described instances where they felt their identity as a Muslim played a role in the mistreatment, they also agreed that it is something that cannot be proven. Two participants noted that the companies in which they were employed limited the one on one interaction with their clients. One participant reported that:

My job required me to travel across the border about 30-40 times a year. Like every week I was in and out. After 9/11 things became really difficult. One of our biggest projects was in Texas. My managers were a bit scared that the client may not sign the contract because my headscarf gave away my identity as a Muslim. Because of that fear I was mainly dealing with the clients over conference calls. I did that for about two years. (Respondent 01)

Although the managers at times were concerned about my safety crossing the border, I did feel that they were scared that they might lose contracts if I were to interact with them face to face. The same participant reported a positive relationship with the managers and co-workers. “None of my co-workers or managers threw unpleasant comments at me. They knew me personally long before the events so it did not change how they saw me as an individual. However, I do feel that preventing me from interacting with clients for fear of losing clients can be classified as a form of racism which often goes unnoticed” (Respondent 01).

Another participant felt that he was unable to get a transfer to another location because the population in the area was predominantly white.

A few years ago I moved to Bradford. There is a Walmart 10 minutes away from where I live. I tried to get a transfer to that location since my commute to the current location takes me a bit more than an hour. I spoke to the management and higher authorities who know me personally but I could not get the transfer. I am not sure what the reasons may be. I am aware of the fact that people are easily given transfers but I have been quiet unsuccessful. Again I cannot say for sure this is racism or anything but I feel that they are hesitant to give me the transfer letter because the Bradford population is predominantly white. (Respondent 05)

One of the main findings from this research is that racism in Canada is very subjective in nature but has immense implications because it divides society intentionally and unintentionally. Another participant reported being asked to get the finger printing done twice for a government job because he had a common Muslim name. The experiences reported above provides an example of veiled racism which can be harder to prove.

Other participants felt that Muslims who work in professions and jobs that required daily interaction with customers were affected the most. One participant who worked at the walk-in clinic reported positive relationship between co-workers but provided an example of overt form of racism where the individual was attacked directly because of her headscarf. “I remember this one day a patient who came in and asked a question, because of the busy and loud environment I was unable to hear him. The man responded by saying cant you hear what I said? Are you deaf? Is it because of that cloth covering your ears” (Respondent 03). The participant strongly felt that the media plays a great role in perpetuating the hatred towards Muslims in the minds of the public. This example reflects a social problem that many Muslim women encounter in the Canadian society. The racism encountered by Muslim women is not limited to employers and accreditation board but rather extends to the state. The controversy in Quebec, regarding the hijab, exhibit racist practices on the part of the state which displays low level of tolerance for other religious practices.

For most of the participants, explicit forms of racism were experiences with their clients and customers rather than their fellow workers.

I can recall a few incidents where when I met the clients who I was in contact with over the phone, they saw me with the headscarf they could not believe that I was a Muslim supporting them for past 2 years. In another client meeting, when I entered the Boston offices, I still remember the shock on the vice presidents face when he saw me walk into the board room. (Respondent 01)

Racism is most prominent when you are aiming towards high ranking jobs. You will hit the glass ceiling at an earlier age. “Like my son who was in a Jewish law firm and he wouldn’t go drinking with them so he realized he was losing the battle” (Respondent 01).

When participants were asked how the labour market experiences of Muslim immigrants differ from other immigrants, most participants reported that Muslims do not necessarily experience anything extremely different from other immigrants. After the events of 9/11, “for Muslims it’s an extra thing now, they have to fight more and it is just because we have been labelled as terrorists. That is why we need to be more educated and their work has to be more recognized in order to get a job” (Respondent 02). Another participant felt that as a Muslim he had to prove himself again and again that he did not have the same ideology as extremist groups (Respondent 04).

All of the participants also agreed that the situation is harder for Muslims who immigrated to Canada after the events of 9/11. Muslim immigrants who secured jobs before the events of 9/11 had already established a positive identity in the workplace. As one of the participant reports, “I felt that Muslims who were already in the work force were not heavily discriminated against and were able to keep their job, but those who were seeking new jobs were filtered and if lucky were able to get to the interview stage” (Respondent 04). The situation is harder for new immigrants because when they go in for an interview the employers knows nothing about them personally. At times like these personal biases of the employers may play a role in filtering out new Muslims because of the negative perceptions about Muslims.

Section 5:

Discussion and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to answer three key questions: (1) What barriers professionally trained Muslim immigrants encounter in the labour market? (2) How the experiences of Muslim immigrants have shifted before and after the events of September 11? (3) What factors do Muslims immigrants feel contribute to the disparity between high unemployment level and high education level in the Muslim community? This section will analyze the findings of this research study in an attempt to determine whether and how Muslims have been affected by the events of 9/11.

The first part of this section analyzes the ways in which regulatory bodies and employers in the Canadian labour market play a key role in complicating the integration process for professionally trained immigrants. Additionally, this section looks specifically at the experiences and perceptions of Muslim immigrants in the labour market. Guo raises an important point that Canadian employers and professional bodies are making it difficult for racialized immigrants to access the opportunities through the institutional sanctioning of their foreign credentials and work experience (Guo, 2009). This relates to the concept of social exclusion in which “the non recognition of foreign credentials amount to the systemic exclusion of immigrant workers from the upper segments of the labour market” (Bauder, 2003: 699). The discussion from the two articles raises important concerns of social exclusion which complement the findings from my research project.

The social practices of regulatory bodies and other institutions result in exclusion of foreign educated immigrants from their former occupations, forcing many immigrant workers into low wage jobs, unsuitable to their foreign profession. One of the participants stated that

“when you enter Canada the system creates two walls on both sides for immigrants. They lead to straight to either doing labour work or industrial work. There are barriers put everywhere in Canada, some in forms of language barrier, credentials and work experience” (Respondent 06).

According to Bauder, “the non-recognition of foreign credentials and work experience systematically excludes immigrant workers from the upper segments of the labour market” (Bauder, 2003:699). This finding was based on data from interviews with institutional administrators and employers in Greater Vancouver who employ immigrants from South Asia and former Yugoslavia. Based on the study, Bauder suggested that immigrants whose foreign credentials are not recognized in Canada lose access to the occupations they previously held (Bauder, 2003). The statement above describes what he refers to as “de-skilling”. While the new immigrants obtain the education and experience as the Canadian educated workers, they are excluded from the segment of the labour market which is available for Canadian educated workers. The findings of this study suggest that most of the participant feel that the struggles in the labour market are experienced by all immigrants regardless of their race or religion. However, after the events of 9/11 the participants do feel that the situation has become a bit harder for Muslims primarily due to the negative perceptions of Muslims that are constructed by the media. This perception is more nuanced, and may be difficult to grasp by those who are non-Muslims.

Furthermore, the exclusion of immigrants can be understood through the concept of “glass ceiling”. Glass ceiling is the proposition that there remains an unseen barrier that limits women and minorities from moving up the corporate ladder, despite their qualifications. One of the participants explained the story of her son and his limited success as a lawyer in a well known law firm. “Racism, unless you are in the high ranking jobs, you will hit the glass ceiling

at an earlier age. Like my son, who was in a Jewish law firm and he wouldn't go drinking with them or stuff like that, so he realized he was losing the battle” (Respondent 01). Although many immigrants despite their religious affiliations face this barrier when attempting to advance their career, many participants felt that post 9/11, Muslims were extraordinarily made to face this barrier. However, they identify this barrier as something they have always felt (especially post 9/11), but can never prove with concrete evidence. Four out of six participants claimed that their progress in their company was limited subtly by the fact that they were practicing Muslims. This depicts the notion that there are perceived barriers for Muslims to limit their rank at their place of employment, which hinders their ability to strive for higher positions that non-Muslims are able to attain.

The differences in the social and cultural norms in the Canadian labour market in some ways work to socially exclude Muslim individuals. A common social practice evident in Muslim culture is avoiding skin contact between opposite genders with no blood relation. One of the participant reported being deprived of client interaction because of fear of making the client uncomfortable and as a result jeopardizing the contract (Respondent 03). A possible solution to this hurdle for Muslim immigrants can be overcome by allowing them to deal with clients of the same gender. This solution can ensure that the Muslim employees are given equal opportunity to interact with clients while allowing the company to maintain healthy client relationship. In most cases the participants felt excluded and alienated in such gathering although they described a positive relationship with their management and co-workers.

Immigrants learn another skill set which furthers their ability to easily adapt to a new society, when they move between cultures (two very different ones at that) and how they can meet the demands imposed on them by the new cultural setting (Bhatia and Ram, 2001).

Language barriers that hinder integration of immigrants into the labour market can only be removed when current and future employers are convinced of the applicant's abilities and qualifications (Dustmann and Fabbri 2003: 706). In any institution and among its' members, where the English language is spoken as the first language, the implications of imperialism and colonialism are perpetuated. Regardless of the first language of a newcomer, once they speak with what the listener perceives to be "an accent", they immediately dissociate themselves from the speaker. In certain cases, even though the first language is English, cultural differences related to pronunciation or colloquial differences as well as sentence structure may exist. A study titled *Encounters with 'Strangers'* claims, individuals who are perceived to have a different cultural and linguistic background are looked down upon and not treated as equals (Doecke and Kostogriz, 2007: 3). This idea mirrors one of the experiences described by a participant where he was corrected for his pronunciation in a word of everyday use which was not related to professional terminology (Respondent 04). After this incident the participant reported being self-conscious about how he spoke and would avoid using words that would expose his accent.

Section 6:

Conclusion and Recommendation

Historically, the social construction of immigrants uses phenotypical features. Stereotypes such as low fluency in English, low-socio economic status are attributed to immigrants who are seen as different and incompatible with the culture and society of Canada. Based on these stereotypes immigrants are often considered undesirable and excluded from different aspect of society. The same stereotypes that isolate immigrant from mainstream society also exclude them in the Canadian labour market. Often times immigrants are assumed to lack the skills and education required for high paying jobs based on their race and ethnicity. There is a lack of explicit evidence to suggest that Muslims in the labour market are discriminated against after the events of 9/11. However, the participants in the study provide examples of personal experiences where they strongly felt their identity as Muslim played a role in how they were treated.

The findings in this study also concluded that the inaccessibility to professional occupation for which current immigrants have prior learning and work experience results in downward social mobility, underemployment and reduced earnings. When immigrants stay unemployed or are forced to take on jobs that underutilize their skills it results in waste of valuable human capital. The underemployment in the case of Muslim immigrants is quiet evident in this study. 4 out of 6 participants reported being employed in a position way below their qualification and unrelated to the field. The other two participants who reported being employed in the related field are employed in positions that are below the positions which they held in their home country. This study highlights the state, accreditation institutes and associations as key players that play a part in keeping the immigrants out of the highly desired occupation to reserve

these occupations for Canadian born and Canadian educated workers. This is evident through the experiences of educated and highly qualified Muslim individuals discussed in this paper. Despite high level of qualifications and experiences, majority of the participants felt that lack of credential recognition played a significant role in their inability to obtain high paying jobs in their professions. The pay differential between native born Canadian and immigrants was also pointed out as an important factor that discriminated immigrants from those who obtain Canadian education.

Based on the analysis it can be suggested that the events of September 11 had its impact on Muslims in different ways. However, the participants suggested and strongly felt that those who secured jobs before the events of 9/11 do not encounter racism and discrimination in the labour market as much as new immigrants who landed in the GTA after 9/11. Based on this finding it is important to highlight that the time of landing for immigrants significantly impacts their experiences in the labour market. Initially the participants reported that their identity as a Muslim did not play a significant role in the labour market, when probed deeper their stories suggest some level of racial discrimination as a result of their religious affiliation. Many participants reported incidents of racism in their workplace in which they felt their religious affiliation played an integral role. Since it is extremely difficult to unveil the employers' prejudice and racist practices in the labour market it often becomes complicated to label any incident in the workplace as a racist practice. Based on the finding, this research does not call for further research on the issue with a larger sample. However, a comparative study that looks at labour market experiences of Muslim immigrants and immigrants from other religion would be an interesting area for further research.

Appendix A

Letter of Invitation

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Nida Kazmi and I am a student in the Master of Arts in Immigration and Settlement Studies at Ryerson University. For the M.A. program I am writing a Major Research Paper focusing on the labour market experiences of Muslim immigrants who have been in Canada before the year 2000. My research will explore how the event of September 11 has impacted the labour market experiences of Muslims in GTA. Additionally, this research aims to explore the barriers that Muslim immigrants encounter in the labour market. Sample interview questions include: “Have you ever felt excluded or discriminated against based on your identity as a Muslim in the workforce?” and “What barriers can you identify that you encountered as a professionally trained immigrant in the Canadian labour market?” This research will increase our understanding of the labour market experiences of Muslims pre and post 9/11 in Canada and could serve toward developing larger-scale studies.

For the purpose of my research, I intend to conduct interviews and administer questionnaires with professionally trained Muslim individuals who immigrated to Canada with foreign degrees. The participants must be over the age of twenty-five. Each one-on-one interview will be conducted in person and will be 30 to 45 minutes in length.

I would like to further discuss my research interest with you and your potential participation as an interview participant. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nida Kazmi
MA Candidate
Immigration and Settlement Studies
Ryerson University

nida.kazmi@ryerson.ca

Appendix B

Ryerson University Consent Agreement

Research Project: Labour Market Experiences of Muslims in the GTA Post-9/11

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to take part in this study, it is important that you read the following information carefully, ask questions as necessary, and be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Investigators: This research project is being conducted by Ms. Nida Kazmi in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Ryerson University's MA program in Immigration and Settlement Studies. The name of the faculty supervisor for this research project is Dr. Tariq Amin Khan.

Purpose of the Study: The project aims to gain insight into the labour market experiences of Muslims in the Greater Toronto Area after the event of September 11, 2001.

Description of the Study: If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed for about 30-45 minutes at a location close to you, and be asked open-ended questions about your labour market experiences in Canada.

The interview will mainly focus on your personal experiences and barriers that you encountered in the Canadian labour market. Approximately, 10 male and female immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) will be selected for the study.

The interview questions will very generally be based on the following topics: (a) Barriers to Labour Market; (b) Impact of September 11 on job opportunities for Muslim immigrants. Please be advised that the interview will be audio recorded for research purposes.

Risks or Discomforts: if any personal discomfort arises due the nature of the questions, you are reminded that your participation is completely voluntary and you may choose to end your participation at any time. During the interview process the participants can skip any question for any reason.

Benefits of the Study: By participating in this study, I cannot guarantee that you will receive any direct benefits. However, the information you provide will shed light into important issues and encourage other researchers to conduct further research in this area.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent allowed by law. No personal information about you will be included in the final research paper. Your responses will be coded by the researcher only. Responses will be destroyed immediately after final submission of the research paper.

Would you be interested in reviewing and editing your audio recording?

YES NO

Incentives to Participate: You will not be paid to participate in this study.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with Ryerson University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your participation at any time without penalty. At any particular point in the study, you may refuse to answer any particular question or stop participation altogether.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the research, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact.

Nida Kazmi
nida.kazmi@ryerson.ca

Research Supervisor
Tariq Amin Khan
tkhan@politics.ryerson.ca
416-979-5000, ext. 6169

If you have questions regarding your rights as a human subject and participant in this study, you may contact the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board for information.

Research Ethics Board
c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2K3
416-979-5042
Toni Fletcher, REB Coordinator,
toni.fletcher@ryerson.ca

Agreement:

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You are informed that by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights. You have been given a copy of this agreement.

Name of Participant (please print)

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

Audio Recording Consent

Your signature below indicates that you understand and agree to allow the researcher to audio record the interview in order to ensure accuracy of your responses.

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix C
Questionnaire/Participant Characteristic Form

Participant ID: _____

Gender:

_____ Male _____ Female _____ Other

Age: _____

What year did you arrive in Canada?

Country of Origin: _____

Were you an Immigrant to Canada?

_____ Yes _____ No

Status: _____ Permanent Resident _____ Canadian Citizen

Educational and Professional Background:

Is English your primary Language?

_____ Yes _____ No

If NO, What is your primary language?

Which city do you currently reside in Canada?

Appendix D

Interview Questions

1. What is your educational and professional background in your country of origin?
2. Where were you employed in your country of origin?
3. Where are you currently employed? Can you please provide a brief job description?
4. Did you try to get your foreign credentials accredited in Canada? If so, tell me about your experiences during the accreditation process?
5. If you could go back in your memory since you immigrated to Canada, and tell me briefly how your career path was impacted, if at all, by the fact that you are an immigrant as opposed to native born Canadian?
6. I am interested in knowing how you have advanced your career in Canada. Would you describe some of your experiences that have led to your current position?
7. What barriers can you identify that you encountered as a professionally trained immigrant in the Canadian labour market?
8. What are some factors that you believe play a significant role as a Muslim Immigrant as you enter the Canadian labour market?
9. Do you feel that the event of September 11 has in any way impacted your career?
10. I am interested in knowing, how you feel the experiences of Muslims in the labour market have shifted post 9/11? Can you reflect on your own experiences?
11. Have you ever felt excluded or discriminated against based on your identity as a Muslim at your workplace?
12. Do you feel that your relationship with your co-workers and employer was affected after the event of 9/11? Do you feel that as a Muslim you were extra ordinarily scrutinized?

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