

“Every kid from Brazil is not a soccer star”: Exploring race as a factor in service provision for immigrants in Truro, Nova Scotia

by

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### Abstract

This study reviews the literature on systemic racism in Canada, how it is perpetuated through white privilege and how it influences national immigration policy. Using a qualitative exploratory approach, this study then examines how larger forces of institutionalised racism might influence immigration and services on offer in the small, rural community of Truro, Nova Scotia. Service providers' perspectives on race as a factor in service provision for immigrants in Truro were gathered through a one-on-one interview process. Identified as a successful community, in terms of attraction and retention rates, this study looks at what is unique to Truro's approach to welcoming and supporting that might allow it to deviate from norms born of systemic racism. This study posits that 'social' issues such as systemic racism are inherently linked with sustainability and must be addressed in combination with 'environmental' issues.

*Keywords:* systemic racism, white privilege, immigration, service provision, Canada, Nova Scotia, rural, service provision, sustainability

### Acknowledgements

“As David Bradley warns about studying American history, so it goes for race: you have to be crazy—or willing to go crazy—to seriously mess around with it.”

Bernestine Singley, from *When race becomes real: Black and white writers confront their personal histories*, 2002.

Endless thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Susan Tirone, whose instruction and expertise guided me through the many ups and downs of this project. Thank you to Karen Gallant for her enthusiasm and encouragement. Thanks also to Steven Mannell and my peers in Sustainability for your support and constructive criticism. I am so grateful to you all for sharing your knowledge with me and for your patience with my neophyte fumbling.

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Lastly, I am so grateful to those who participated in this study. Your efforts are shaping your community. I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to hear your stories; so honoured that you trust me to share them. Thank you, thank you.

### **A Note from the Researcher**

I had much difficulty deciding on what terminology to use in this paper to explain the notion of race. In sifting through the literature I found that choice of vocabulary varies widely. For example, to describe people who society says do not fit under ‘white’, I found that researchers used ‘racial or ethnic groups’, people of colour, non-white, non-White, nonWhite, and Not White, among others.

To further complicate matters, researchers could not agree on how to write the word ‘white’. For example, one study explained that ‘White’ is capitalized in their study as other racial groups were capitalized. Another study purposefully avoided capitalizing ‘white’ because they felt that capitalization of the word was reminiscent of white supremacists.

For this study, I chose to use ‘white’ and ‘people of colour’ (and occasionally ‘racial or ethnic’ groups) to describe the limiting binary that exists in our society, despite the problematic nature of doing so. I am aware that my choice of vocabulary serves to reinforce this binary by amalgamating, under either one of two terms, a multitude of diverse identities and groups of people.

Please note that this paper contains a very simplified and therefore incomplete summary of the history of racialization in North America. However, I feel that for the purpose of this study, it provides enough background information for readers to begin to understand race-based privilege as it exists today, institutionally and socially.

Of course, I still have much to learn, still many things I must confront and understand. As such, I feel it necessary to include this disclaimer. I tried to cover an issue with a width and breadth perhaps too large for an undergraduate thesis. Here, I have explained or represented this issue to the best of my ability at this juncture. I can only promise that I will continue to evolve and expand my understanding and subsequent action on this issue.

## I. Introduction

### Overview of the Problem

**Systemic racism.** Race is a socially constructed concept (Arai & Kivel, 2009; Li, 2003; Painter, 2010; Vickers & Isaac, 2012). Although there is no scientific basis for the cultural differences we ascribe to ‘races’, racism remains a very real experience for people of colour in Canadian society (Lund & Carr, 2010; Vickers & Isaac, 2012). Many people are familiar only with the reality of overt racism but a number of studies reveal that there is evidence for the existence of systemic or institutionalised racism in Canada (Li, 2003; Lund & Carr, 2010, Vickers & Isaac, 2012). Systemic racism implies that in a country founded on a race regime, embedded racist attitudes and beliefs remain prevalent and continue to influence social behaviours and policy-making (Vickers & Isaac, 2012). This form of racism, ‘invisible’ to many white people and even to some more privileged minorities (McIntosh, 1990; Vickers & Isaac, 2012), can be just as paralyzing as experiencing overt racism. Because whites are conditioned to normalize white people, a phenomenon of ‘othering’ occurs, whereby people of colour may be seen and treated as having inherent differences that cannot be overcome (McIntosh, 1990; Watson & Scraton, 2001). In spheres where white people dominate (politics, media, etc.), there is often a rhetoric of ‘us’ versus ‘them’. Indeed, throughout this study, I have created—and thus reified—such a binary in order to explain race-based privilege in a way I hope will be more widely understood. This language frequently carries over into discourse around immigration (Li, 2003; Lund & Carr, 2010). The services in place that cater to immigrants—and to Canadian-born whites and people of colour alike—are often designed by white middle-class people with white middle-class needs in mind (Watson & Scraton, 2001).



Although laws exist for the purpose of preventing discrimination based on skin colour, they have not adequately served to undo or change many of the systems in place that explicitly or implicitly undermine the wellbeing of people of colour to the benefit of white people (Li, 2003; McIntosh, 1990; Vickers & Isaac, 2012). Because systemic racism is a reality in Canada, influencing the manner in which our immigration systems operate and our multicultural policy, there may be potential for similar challenges to exist in Truro, a small community that is focusing on attracting and welcoming new immigrants.

**Sustainability.** The field of Sustainability is a wide-reaching one. It spans many disciplines, involves a range of conflicting interests and can be considered a ‘wicked problem’ (Xiang, 2013). Sustainable development is that which “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations Brundtland Report, 1987). The report from which this much contested definition is drawn, focuses heavily on environmental issues. The field of sustainability has been criticized for dividing ‘social’ and ‘environmental’ issues, and for not understanding the causal link between our problematic social and economic systems and pressing ‘environmental’ issues of our time (Gibson-Wood & Wakefield, 2013). Despite the focus on environment in the field of sustainability, it is clear that it is critical to also consider questions of social sustainability, as they are intergrally linked to those pertaining to environmental, political and economic challenges (Ife, 2006; Johnston, Everard, Santillo & Robert, 2007).

Institutionalised racism undermines the potential for those affected to achieve wellbeing by preventing them from meeting certain basic human needs. These needs include access to food, shelter, clean air and water but also to a myriad of needs pertaining to social and psychological

wellbeing. Additional needs include, for example, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, spirituality and identity (Costanza et al., 2006). Arguably, in accordance with these needs, by participating in a system where they act as oppressors, even those at the ‘top’ of the racial hierarchy may be prevented from meeting certain needs and achieving wellbeing.

It can be contended that issues of a ‘social’ nature are fundamentally linked with sustainability and that systemic racism impedes efforts for sustainable development. Unless we can break down outdated and damaging systems that uphold racial, and other forms of privilege, we will be no closer to creating a more sustainable way of life than we are today.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This honours thesis is part of a larger study. The first phase, entitled Understanding the subjective wellbeing of immigrant families in small Canadian communities (Tirone & Gallant, 2011), consisted of internet searches for the various resources that might exist for welcoming new Canadians in rural areas across Atlantic Canada and a review of Census data to determine patterns of immigrant retention in small communities in this region. According to this research, Truro can be considered an example of a small community that has been successful at attracting and retaining a comparatively substantial immigrant population.

Based on this information, it was decided that a second phase of the study would be put into motion, Welcoming immigrants: A case study of social wellbeing and inclusion strategies in Truro, Nova Scotia (Tirone & Gallant, 2012). This second phase of the study has two parts. The first, a survey of the various service providers and the roles they play in welcoming and supporting newcomers in the community. The second, an exploration of the immigrant

experience from the point of view of immigrants themselves, with a focus on their perceptions of what they consider to be welcoming spaces.

Information from the 2006 Census, gathered in the first phase of this study indicated that over half of Truro's immigrant population at that time, consisted of people from the United Kingdom or the United States. This information sparked my curiosity. After accepting a position on the team as a researcher for my senior honours project, I proposed to Dr. Tirone that I explore the effects of race-based privilege and institutionalised racism on our immigration system, with a focus on the small town.

This study takes a critical look at Canada's history and race-based system of privilege. It explores how these realities have shaped our immigration system, the services we have on offer and our approach to multicultural policy. Inclusion strategies for immigrants in Truro are then positioned within this context. The purpose of this thesis is to explore service providers' perspectives on race as a factor for service provision in Truro, Nova Scotia. More specifically, this study questions the nature of service provision to immigrants in Truro and whether service provision might differ in any way based on the race of the immigrant receiving the service. This paper makes suggestions for moving forward with further research.

### **Role of the Researcher**

“It is crucial that we identify ourselves as part of racialised discourse, not so that we can become paralyzed by self-blame, remorse or guilt but so that we can heighten self-awareness and live more conscious and critical lives.”

(Watson & Scraton, 2001, p. 273)

As a white researcher studying the role of race in our society, it is imperative that I understand my position of privilege and its relationship to this project. Confronting my personal history and experience (or lack thereof) with ‘race’ is something that has been crucial for me to do throughout the entire length of this study. It is something I must continue to do, in order to effectively engage in conversing, thinking and writing about privilege and ultimately, in order to act as an agent of change. I must continue to examine the culture that I was conditioned within and to do the work of unlearning or challenging those cultural norms that have been fostered in me. I continue to investigate my position of privilege through doing my own research and through listening to those who share their stories.

I must also understand my motivations for pursuing a project that focuses on immigration. As a child I moved from Calgary to Montreal and for the first time, experienced culture shock. I left my friends, some family and the only life I had known, in order to start a new life in a place that was strange to me. I had to learn a new language and felt pressure to assimilate to a culture that I did not feel instinctively connected to. My experience there has led me to seek out other places or communities where I feel more welcome, more at home. Although I recognize that the experience of moving from one country to another holds different challenges than moving from one province to another, I empathize with the experiences and feelings of unexpectedly having to start one’s life over. As such, I am personally interested in the role that welcoming and supporting plays in wellbeing and connection to place.

Both my privilege and my personal experiences have shaped the lens through which I view the world and will inevitably influence the manner in which I present the issues or themes

that emerge in this study. However, it is my responsibility as a researcher to represent my findings from as fair and objective a vantage point as possible and I strive to do that in this paper.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study will hopefully contribute to the discourse around racial privilege. It adds to the discussion the perspective of a small, rural community, in a field where much work is centered around urban areas. Ideally, this study will be relevant and helpful to service providers aiming to improve the services that are offered to immigrants in Truro and in other small communities.

## II. Literature Review

### What is 'Race'?

In order to effectively begin to study race as it exists in the context of North American society, one must first understand that it is a socially constructed idea that emerged in, perhaps surprisingly, quite recent history (Arai & Kivel, 2009; Li, 2003; Painter, 2010; Vickers & Isaac, 2012). The invention of the concept of 'race' can be traced back to the eighteenth century, right around the time when European colonists were attempting to occupy land that they had just 'discovered' (Painter, 2010). Until it was disproved as legitimate, the assigning of races to people was considered to be a valid science. A few different methods were devised for identifying what racial category people fit into, with an emphasis on skin colour (Painter, 2010). An example of one such method is the cephalic index, whereby heads or skulls were measured and, in conjunction with other physical features, were assigned a racial group (Painter, 2010). It was believed at that time that appearance, personality traits, abilities, intelligence levels, and moreover an individual's intrinsic value, could be attributed to a person's 'race' (Painter, 2010). In North America, racialization became a way for European settlers to justify the systematic oppression or eradication of people they did not feel fit into their idea of an immaculate nation-state (Painter, 2010; Vickers & Isaac, 2012). The establishment of "social boundaries based on phenotypic features" (Li, 2003, p.1) lies at the core of racism or racialism (Li, 1999; Vickers & Isaac, 2012). Put simply, racism maintains that race is real and that some races are superior, while others are inferior (Li, 1999; Painter, 2010; Vickers & Isaac, 2012).

Today, it is understood that, as a social concept and with no scientific basis, race is just another facet of personal identity, that is, it has the potential to be fluid, much like gender

(Watson & Scraton, 2001; Vickers & Isaac, 2012). Kivel, Johnson & Scraton (2009, as quoted in Arai & Kivel, 2009) propose that, as race is merely a social fabrication, its meaning “changes over time in relation to power and processes of struggle in society” (p. 466). Although race may hold different meaning in Canadian society today, it still contributes to the defining of power relations. An archaic notion of race was actively used to create the foundational basis for the ‘democratic’, federalist system currently in place in Canada (Vickers & Isaac, 2012). Despite the changes that have occurred in more recent history, embedded racism continues to influence said system, socially and politically, making race a very tangible and real experience for people of colour.

### **White Privilege**

In considering who has held power for much of North American history, after the ‘discovery of the Americas’, it becomes apparent that many services and institutions (medical, educational, religious) now in place were designed by and for white middle-class people, sometimes out of ignorance, sometimes for blatantly racist reasons (McIntosh, 1999; Painter, 2010; Watson & Scraton, 2001). Today, it is widely accepted that race has no scientific basis (Arai & Kivel, 2009; Li, 2003; Painter, 2010; Vickers & Isaac, 2012), however the sordid racialist histories of colonized countries remain embedded in their societies, privileging white people over those considered ‘other than’ white.

Donnelly, Cook, Van Ausdale & Foley (2005) explain that white privilege “is a system of benefits, advantages, and opportunities experienced by white persons in our society simply because of their skin colour” (p.6). Because many aspects of North American society were designed for white people, they continue to serve mainly white people who are consequently at

an advantage. White people benefit from a host of privileges. In *Unpacking the Knapsack of White Privilege*, Peggy McIntosh (1990) identifies the ways in which she, as a white person, benefits from race-based privilege, some of which include:

1. Her ability to find toys, books and magazines featuring people of her race.
2. Not having to worry that her intelligence, literacy, or other qualities will be attributed to her race.
3. Never being asked to speak for all the people in her racial group.
4. Being able to readily find “flesh” coloured bandages that match the colour of her skin.
5. Her ability to find a publisher for her piece on white privilege.

McIntosh’s (1990) list represents a small fraction of the many “unearned assets” afforded to white people. Whites are taught that racism occurs in individual acts of meanness but are rarely, if ever, exposed to the notion that they live within a system that systematically benefits whites to the detriment of people of colour (McIntosh, 1990). Moreover, white people are taught to understand themselves as ‘raceless’ (Donnelly et al., 2005; Lund & Carr, 2010; McIntosh, 1990). Whiteness is thus seen as neutral or normal, something which ‘others’ should aspire to.

Born of this notion is the idea that colour-blindness is an effective way to counteract and overcome racial discrimination. Colour-blindness implies that ‘not seeing’ race necessarily results in ‘treating everyone equally’; it is the idea that the solution to racism is to simply not acknowledge race. Colour-blindness is often a problem in social service provision, where attempts are made to find a neutral, one-size-fits all approach (Donnelly et al., 2005). However, approaches are generally not, in reality, neutral. “Colour-blind norms are really white norms”



(Donnelly et al., 2005, p. 10), making colour-blindness more about whitewashing than equity. Legitimate inclusion of people of colour requires that race no longer be used as a measure of worth of an individual or group (Li, 2003). However, experiences of racialised people must be acknowledged, as denying the social reality of these experiences only serves to deny the detrimental effects of their existence. Clearly, work needs to be done to understand what it is that might make social service provision truly inclusive.

### **Immigration & Multiculturalism**

A complex combination of colour-blindness and multicultural reasoning carries over into discourse around immigration and the immigration system itself; who we aim to attract and what kinds of services we deem appropriate and helpful. Canada has a history of discriminatory immigration policy (Aguiar & Marten, 2011; Li, 2003; Major & Keil, 2011; Vickers & Isaac, 2012), including blatant ‘white-only’ stipulations (even favouring some white Europeans over others), and more indirect strategies for exclusion through, for example, the exorbitant taxing people in the past from ‘non-traditional’ origins (Aguiar & Marten, 2011; Major & Keil, 2011). Embedded in Canada’s multicultural policy, is the notion that the ‘cultural mosaic’ of Canadian society is made up of a dominant culture punctured by distinct groups of people with irreconcilable differences. This is the philosophy behind some Canadians’ ‘concerns’ that bringing more and more non-white people into Canada is threatening to Canadian identity and traditions (Li, 2003; Lund & Carr, 2010). Discussions around immigration often contain coded language directed at non-white immigrants (Li, 2003). For example, the term ‘diversity’ is used as a proxy to describe immigrants to Canada that are not white (Li, 2003). ‘Diverse’ groups are “cast as different from, if not opposed to, Canadian values and traditions” (Li, 2003, p. 7) and as bringing “with them different values and behaviours that are incompatible with those in

traditional Canada” (Li, 2003, p.7). This kind of subtle discrimination can, for example, affect non-white immigrants seeking to have their credentials recognized in order to find employment, a crucial component in “gaining full privileges and benefits of Canadian citizenship” (Vickers & Isaac, 2012, p. 107).

Canadian society has been shaped and molded by a history of race regimes. Though efforts have been and are being made to create a much needed cultural and political shift, the fact remains that people of colour are still unjustly experiencing racism, both overtly and in a manner ‘invisible’ to members of the dominant, white culture. When immigrants, in particular people of colour, arrive in Canada, they have the potential to encounter “conflicts rooted in new forms of discrimination, prejudice and racism” (Amaya, 2011, p. 178). In denying the existence of race-based privilege, Canada’s entrenched, outdated policy, in concert with harmful dominant social norms, perpetuates the legacy of the ideology of its founding race regime and renders inadequate, efforts to achieve true equity.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability is a multifaceted concept. It spans both temporal and spatial scales; it concerns the present and the future, small communities and the globe as a whole (Basiago, 1995). Sustainability is addressed differently depending on the lens through which it is being applied. Biologists, economists, sociologists, urban planners and environmental ethicists may have divergent approaches to operationalizing sustainability (Basiago, 1995).

The challenge of sustainability is the very definition of a ‘wicked problem’ (Xiang, 2013). This type of problem is difficult to define, involves a variety of potentially conflicting

interests and values, deals with complex systems and inevitably changes over time (Xiang, 2013). Furthermore, there are no definitive solutions and those ‘solutions’ that are applied to a ‘wicked problem’ are guaranteed to have ripples of unforeseen consequences (Xiang, 2013). Accordingly, an exact definition of sustainability cannot be clearly described and the process of ‘solving’ questions of sustainability will change depending on the situation (Basigo, 1995).

Sustainability is concerned with meeting the needs of the present population of Earth while ensuring that the needs of future generations will also be met (United Nations Brundtland Report, 1987). It thus focuses heavily on the health and vitality of the environment. Indeed, as humans cannot survive without the natural world, sustainability cannot move forward without an emphasis on the environment (Basiago, 1995; Johnston et al., 2007; United Nations Brundtland Report, 1987). However, human needs go beyond the necessity for food and ecological services such as clean air and water (Costanza et al., 2006). Humans also need, for example, to feel affection, understanding and a sense of security (Costanza et al., 2006). We need opportunities for making what we feel are meaningful contributions, for leisure experiences and for the freedom to cultivate our own spirituality and identity (Costanza et al., 2006). As systemic racism makes many of these opportunities inaccessible to people considered ‘non-white’, it is fair to question what role anti-racism and the dismantling of systems of privilege might play in achieving goals of sustainability.

The field of sustainability can be exclusionary (Agyeman, 2008; Gibson-Wood & Wakefield, 2013). It has been criticized for being a movement or philosophy that is “predominantly white and middle class in terms of both its membership and issues of concern”

(Gibson-Wood & Wakefield, 2013, p. 644). For example, a study done by Alkon and McCullen (2010), examines the ‘white’ nature of farmers markets and of the movement for creating alternatives to our current food system (issues central to sustainability). The researchers explain that the combination of mainly “pale bodies” that move through these spaces and the “white cultural practices” that shape these movements have the potential to exclude people of colour (Alkon & McCullen, 2010, p. 938). Inhibiting certain people from participating in or contributing to these movements certainly may prevent the fundamental goals of alternative food movements from being achieved (Alkon & McCullen, 2010). Similarly, Clarke & Agyeman (2011) explore how disempowerment or exclusion based on racial or ethnic background might play a role in inhibiting certain ‘pro-environmental’ behaviours or participation in mainstream efforts for sustainability.

Agyeman (2008) argues that there exists an “equity deficit” in the sustainability movement. He posits that in focusing mainly on the ‘environmental’ issues of sustainability we neglect to understand that human issues create and perpetuate ‘problems’ of the environment (Agyeman, 2008; Agyeman, Bullard & Evans, 2002). Many of today’s major environmental sustainability issues such as natural resource depletion and climate change are the result of “the dominant social and economic structures that organize our society” (Gibson-Wood & Wakefield, 2013, p. 642). Furthermore, environmental hazards or ‘problems’ seem to be experienced disproportionately by communities predominantly made up of racialised people (Agyeman, 2008; Agyeman, Bullard & Evans, 2002; Gibson-Wood & Wakefield, 2013). Ultimately, the environmental aspects of sustainability are crucial to address, however “a truly sustainable society is one where wider questions of social needs and welfare, and economic opportunity are

integrally related to environmental limits imposed by supporting ecosystems” (Agyeman, Bullard & Evans, 2002, p. 78).

### **III. Methodology**

#### **Research Design & Data Analysis**

This study was conducted using a qualitative exploratory approach. Qualitative methods allow a researcher to focus on the individual experiences, impressions and feelings of participants and how they might relate to or be affected by broader issues in question (Berg, 2001). An exploratory approach does not begin with a rigidly defined problem but sets about attempting to generate questions related to a particular topic throughout the course of the research (Berg, 2001). This study assembles the perspectives of service providers and questions the nature of service provision to immigrants in Truro, Nova Scotia. A combination of qualitative methods and an exploratory approach thus seemed appropriate for this study.

Participants of this study included service providers, both paid and volunteer representatives from a variety of organizations that cater to immigrants in Truro. Participants were recruited using first purposive sampling and later a snowball sampling method. Initial participants were recruited based on the information collected in Understanding the subjective wellbeing of immigrant families in small Canadian communities (Tirone & Gallant, 2011). This study provided names of existing service providers, while an online search yielded contact information. Participants were contacted by phone or email and were asked to participate in an interview. Some participants suggested contacts which led to the recruitment of additional participants.

Interviews were conducted one-on-one at the participants' place of choice and lasted approximately one hour. With their permission, interviews were recorded and subsequently

transcribed. Once completed, the transcriptions were sent to the participants for their review and approval. Participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

In addition to general questions about their work, participants were asked about their experiences working with immigrants from diverse racial, ethnic or religious backgrounds. Participants were also asked about their perceptions of the challenges experienced by immigrants of diverse racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds and what factors may or may not contribute to their success in the community.

An ideal sample size for this study would have been between 6 and 8 participants. Given the small size of Truro, it quickly became apparent that many service providers shared similar information and had overlapping experiences. Ultimately, only 5 participants were interviewed.

The transcripts were first analyzed using open coding, to establish broad, emergent themes, and later using axial coding, to understand the linkages between themes and transcripts (individual interviews). Data was then compared with information collected from the literature in order to interpret the findings in relation to a larger field of study.

### **Limitations**

There are, of course, limitations to this study that must be acknowledged. This study does not address intersectionality, that is, the many facets of difference, experience and identity and how they might overlap and intertwine (Watson & Scraton, 2001; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Participants were asked questions only pertaining to race, neglecting to speak to the infinite possible intersections of, for example, gender, class, sexuality or religious affiliation and how

they might impact an individual's life trajectory and experience. Consequently, this study potentially positions race as a "distinct and isolated [realm] of experience" (Brah & Phoenix, 2004, p.80), overlooking the vast diversity of potential experiences that new immigrants might encounter upon arriving and settling in Canada.

Triangulation enhances the validity of a study by using multiple methods to investigate a given topic (Berg, 2001). This study is limited by choosing to employ a single method of data collection (in-person interviews). Using multiple methods might have served to produce a wider variety of perspectives and to reinforce the findings of this study.

Finally, my own experience and conditioning as a white person in Canada inevitably limits my interpretation and presentation of the findings of this study, as my own perceptions and understanding of race-based privilege continue to develop. It must also be acknowledged that my whiteness may have influenced both the manner in which I conducted each interview and the information that was shared with me during the interviews, depending on each participants' personal experience with race and comfort-level in discussing such a topic.



## IV. Findings and Discussion

### Truro: Community Profile

“...it’s truly surreal here, unless you live here, you’re not going to believe the kind of connection people have” (Participant 4).

Truro began actively trying to attract immigrants nearly ten years ago in an effort to address the area’s declining population. Initially the town focused on augmenting services that already existed in Truro, making them more specifically appropriate to newcomers. What exists there now is a medley of official services and volunteer-based support that work in tandem to ensure that newcomers are well supported. Truro does the work of attracting, through to welcoming and later, settling.

Despite having a limited range of available services compared with nearby urban areas, Truro’s service providers manage to do incredible things with the resources they do have. A newcomer to Truro can expect to receive help in navigating the labyrinth that is Canada’s immigration system and in finding other programs available to immigrants in Nova Scotia. What is particularly striking about Truro, is their personalized, grass-roots approach to welcoming and supporting immigrants. Service providers and volunteers alike will go out of their way to accommodate newcomers who express a determined desire to move to Truro. This includes a number of things, from driving newcomers to job interviews and offering to babysit or cook meals, to hosting culturally relevant gatherings and providing furniture and bedding to those in need. This also includes an understanding that “a lot of times, knowing that they have someone who will listen” (Participant 1) is an invaluable service to offer.

The people involved in welcoming immigrants in Truro have extensive knowledge of their town. They are well-acquainted with the local economy and the social dynamics of their community. This kind of ‘traditional’ knowledge is a feature of small, rural communities that gives service providers the freedom, and the imperative, to offer a kind of one-on-one service that is rarely, if ever found in large, urban settings. Participant (1) explained, “when you’re small, you’ve got to be willing to help as much as you can”. This knowledge and the scale on which they operate, also allows service providers to understand where services might need to be improved and provides countless opportunities to learn by doing. This is exemplified in their acknowledgment of the fact that there is always room to grow and improve.

The following sections take a look at two key themes that emerged during interviews with service providers. These themes embody Truro’s welcoming and inclusion strategies and make it a unique community that deviates from a conventional one-size-fits-all welcoming approach. The first theme explores the role of education and increasing visibility in successfully supporting immigrants (*Education & Visibility*). The second theme describes a culture that emphasizes both acceptance and assimilation (*Acceptance or Assimilation?*). In addition to these themes, the subsequent sections also examine service providers’ perspectives on occurrences of overt racism (*Overt Racism*) and raises questions about where there may be potential for institutionalised racism to manifest in Truro (*Systemic or Institutionalised Racism*). The final section (*Sustainability*) considers the manner in which of the findings of this study are relevant to the field of Sustainability.

## **Education & Visibility**

In discussing inclusion strategies in Truro, several participants brought up the topic of education. I use the term education to describe a concept much broader than a school program or anti-oppression workshop. ‘Education’ here is used to represent an ongoing process of information sharing, increasing acceptance and learning through experience, occurring among service providers, town residents, immigrants, school-age children, business owners and municipal leaders. In addition to speaking to the significance of education in this broad sense, service providers spoke about the importance of increasing the visibility of immigrants in the community. To simplify this section, I have broken it down into three parts: ‘traditional’ education, learning by doing, and visibility.

**‘Traditional’ Education.** Participants mentioned that education, in a more formal sense, of both Canadian-born residents and immigrants, is necessary for creating an accepting and inclusive community. One participant (4) stressed the importance of educating community members before people immigrate to the area.

“...you just can’t suddenly, especially with rural areas, just can’t bring immigrants right away, you just can’t bring people who are not like the rest of the people. You need several years of educating, educating, educating...so people won’t be shocked, then you need to bring [immigrants]...just letting people know that there are all kinds of different people, all kinds of different races, different religions...”

The kind of shock that this participant described may be something that has the potential to create fear-based reactions to perceived difference that could prevent an agenda of acceptance from moving forward. Is education of residents about difference, prior to being exposed to difference, enough to create acceptance and understanding? Is it enough to simply expose people to different realities? Perhaps it must be taken further than merely acknowledging the existence of other cultures, perhaps it also requires critically examining our own. One participant (4) insisted that education is a crucial component of creating the conditions necessary for achieving equity saying, “education is really good, it really makes a difference.”

According to a couple of participants, some schools in the community are already trying to do the work of educating students about difference. Participant (5) spoke about teachers intervening when students experience discrimination based on their observed religious or cultural differences:

“From what I’ve heard, the teachers are often really good at handling that and they will make a point of explaining it...they’ll maybe have that student or a student with his parent come in and talk a little bit about that and when children understand what’s behind it, they just seem to accept it a lot easier..”

Similarly, participant (3) stated, “most school boards are getting around now to adjusting to the children, rather than imposing and that’s a good thing.”

This is a contrast to one study done in on the experiences of South Asian teenagers in Canada. The South Asian participants of this study spoke of facing acts of racism while teachers

and recreation leaders did nothing to intervene, discouraging them from taking part in programming or leisure opportunities meant to cater to youth (Tirone, 1999).

Also important, is helping community members to understand that they live in a place that provides them with a wide range of opportunities. Participant (1) stated that while introducing immigrants to the area, she had “faced push back...from people that live [in Truro]”. Community members “would say ‘why would you want to move here?’. When people say ‘what do you want to live here for?’...it’s a lack of understanding on the part of the people that live here, about what opportunities they have”. Participant (1) responds to these residents by saying, “you live here for a reason...in the, however many, 7 billion people [on Earth], there’s going to be a couple more that share those values and see what you see”.

Participant (1) also spoke about her experience with how other people “see our life and our lifestyle. People around here just forget that and it’s not just the sense of appreciation, but it’s also the lens that they look at things, like, I don’t know how many new, cool things have been started by a newcomer, whether they came from outside of Canada or from outside of Nova Scotia, because they saw an opportunity that everyone else just walked by for the last two years.” Is it possible that expressing gratitude and appreciation for the place that they live, will create an understanding among community members of why people might be immigrating to Truro?

Participant (2) also stated that many community members do not necessarily understand the process that people are required to go through in order to immigrate to Truro; “people work really hard to try to come here” and community members often do not realize this.

Along with educating community members, participants stressed the necessity of doing their own work to understand how to better welcome and support immigrants, including, for participant (3), “how to get ready for them, how to help them when they’re here, how to go let them develop their own lifestyle here”. Participant (1) stated that she “...needed to understand the immigration system and understand the immigration programs...to be able to [successfully] help [immigrants] navigate”.

**Learning by Doing.** In addition to doing the work of understanding Canada’s immigration system in order to help immigrants before they arrive, participants spoke of continually learning through their experiences with service provision. One example of this is participant (3)’s experience with coming to understand why some immigrant families were uncomfortable entering some of the stores in the community. She spoke with some of the families and they explained that, “the stores they go in at home, they’ve been going to those stores for generations...there was an ownership over the service they received...they say (of the stores in Canada), ‘my father never walked through the door, my mother never walked through the door’”. Stores in Canada might not sell culturally appropriate food or may be laid out differently. The store owner may not be a friend or relative that speaks a familiar language. This could result in hesitation or discomfort for immigrants from certain cultural backgrounds in navigating an unfamiliar space. “So you think, okay so we’ve got some businesses, how do we target them?” or work with them to make the service more accommodating for a particular tradition or comfort level, “so that they can walk through the door and so their kids say ‘my mom walked through the door it’s okay for me to come here too’. Well my good grief I never thought of that! It’s an interesting thought process that we never had to go through before.”

The service providers I interviewed in Truro seemed to approach helping people in this manner. They do the work they can to understand what immigrants' needs are through their own research but also in listening to what people are saying to them. "We don't want them to...pretend everything is lovely, we like to know what is it that's missing, 'what do you need, so we do what we can do?'" (Participant 5). There is an acceptance that service providers do not always know what to expect but are willing to learn as they go along.

Part of this process is learning not to rely exclusively on cultural stereotypes to determine what immigrants' needs are before they arrive. This is exemplified in participant (3)'s observation:

"We've got to [understand that] "every kid from Brazil is not a soccer star, they come up and as soon as they're here, people think 'this kid is going to be really good!', well the poor child walks onto the field and if he's not then...[community members] have expectations according to the culture or where [an immigrant is] from" and through letting go of preconceived cultural notions, "[immigrants] just become a person".

Many of the participants also acknowledged that just because some immigrants in the community might come from a similar background does not mean they will have anything in common. "When you get a group of people...together, it might not always be successful" (Participant 4). "Humans are humans and you can't just go 'this one speaks Spanish and this one speaks Spanish', and put them together because they're going to fight, maybe they'll get along, maybe they won't" (Participant 1).

**Visibility.** In tandem with efforts to educate themselves and the general public, service providers attempt to increase the visibility of the immigrant population in the community. One such effort includes “a diversity day...to help people get curious instead of being afraid. We need [community members] to say, ‘gee what does that taste like?’ or ‘wow that was a lot of work!’...[curiosity] leads to a more friendly approach” (Participant 3). The hope is that a ‘diversity day’ might generate curiosity and later acceptance. However, might curiosity potentially serve to continue to position immigrant cultures as ‘exotic’ or inherently different, in relation to white people as ‘normal’, Canadian culture as ‘neutral’? How can this direction be subverted, these notions transformed for the purpose of advancing equity?

Participant (1) explained that social events are important, “not necessarily only for networking purposes but for bringing [immigrants and community members] together...you walk around and it still looks like a very homogenous community, but there are a lot of different cultures here, there are a lot of different countries represented but it’s not always that visible. Bringing people together in one room and making sure that you bring municipal leaders so they see that we do have a significant newcomers population and [continuing to] remind them and the business community that they’re here and that they warrant attention and resources”.

Another strategy for increasing visibility is to hire immigrants for customer service positions. Truro has a substantial international student population. Participant (1) described how “the development of the off-campus work permits” has been positive for Truro, “in terms of



embracing other cultures”. Various businesses in the community began “hiring international students, which has been great, because it’s a different face that people are interacting with, sometimes their English is not strong, so they’re developing, and other people are having an experience of dealing with someone who, English is not their first language”...before being hired at places in the community, the international students “were a largely invisible population and then when they would graduate and want to stay, they didn’t have English skills to be able to, so it’s great for them to be out in the community and actually interacting with folks, but it’s also made them much more visible.”

Service providers acknowledge that for immigrants, learning English can be crucial to finding employment, but that being able to speak freely their language of choice can be significant to wellbeing. According to participant (3), it is important to have a space “that allows people who speak other languages to relax. So we create more environments, whether it’s a social, at the market or whatever, it’s the ability to be you, right? Even if it’s...a new Canadian you, but it’s the ability to be the person that you...feel comfortable with.”

Ultimately, without addressing issues of inequity and discrimination, visibility could be problematic for people considered ‘other’. “For example, if you’re a Muslim woman, you know, to cover yourself, it would be really visible and you would be really intimidated and uncomfortable but if you’re a Muslim man no one could know the difference...” (Participant 4). A marker of difference may also have the potential to further isolate those who appear to ‘deviate’ from the dominant culture. This is discussed further in the following section.

### **Acceptance or Assimilation?**

A ‘mosaic’ view of Canadian society is one that entails many people from different cultural backgrounds living under one system (Breton, 1999). This view does not necessarily allow for people to move through or beyond those cultural boundaries ascribed to them and does not guarantee equality. A ‘melting pot’ view is one that imagines thorough assimilation of all people into the dominant culture, also failing to address questions of equity (Breton, 1999). Canada tends toward the ‘mosaic’ view, as exemplified in its multicultural policy (Breton, 1999).

When asked what factors contribute to the ‘success’ of immigrants in their community, service providers spoke of acceptance, friendship and a sense of self and of belonging. Participant (5) stated, “if you don’t have that basic feeling of belonging somewhere, I don’t think it’s easy to go on to those other steps, so I think that’s the first thing, to feel accepted, to feel that they’re a part of things”. Service providers acknowledged that “obviously you have to make a living and support your family” (Participant 1), but that having a support network and feeling acceptance within the community are equally as important for creating quality of life. Participant (3) proposed that a feeling of belonging can come from something as simple as community members learning a person’s name:

“If they walk through the door and somebody knows their name and pronounces it correctly, it is huge. I’ve had a number of people tell me, ‘well my name is this but just call me that’, [and I say], ‘no I will not, what is your name, I will learn it’! Because that’s yours and that makes you, you. That’s a part of you.”

Participant (4) explained that “it’s just extremely important to just accept people for who they are, and what they are and respect them, and also not to blame them for something that their government did or you know, some other thing”.

Service providers’ responses to this question painted an interesting picture of a community that may fall somewhere between the potential ‘mosaic’ or ‘melting pot’ in Canadian society. The culture that is being cultivated by service providers in Truro is one that is unusual in contrast to literature on multiculturalism in Canada. Participants explained that such a culture requires that immigrants be free to retain those aspects of their culture and identity that are important to them, but that they take steps to understand and adapt to ‘Canadian culture’. Efforts on the part of Canadian-born people must also be made to accept those aspects of ‘foreign cultures’ that are deemed divergent from ‘Canadian culture’.

Participant (4) explained that she believes “it’s a two-way street...we can’t expect all these efforts to come from Canadian-borns, we as an immigrant, equally need to try to blend in...but also keep [our] culture”. Participant (3) communicated a similar idea in stating that “the other thing that makes [immigrants] successful is when they get to a point that they’re not afraid of their culture and they’re not afraid of ours.” She explained that the community has been successful in welcoming someone when they are able to openly celebrate religious holidays or share cultural customs within the community, and pass those things onto their children, and when community members are receptive to and respectful of that.

According to service providers there is a sensitivity involved in exposing immigrants to ‘Canadian culture’. It requires a process of learning to respect boundaries, and of developing an

understanding of when it is appropriate to attempt to ‘teach’ someone about the dominant culture. It is necessary to ensure that people don’t feel disrespected if they decline to participate in something they’re not comfortable doing. For example, in reference to attempting to include immigrants in recreational activities, participant (3) said:

“We want to take them with us when we do things and it’s not in their culture, so we have to understand that it’s okay when they say no, it’s not personal but we also have to realize that maybe they need to get out a little bit so they become part of the community and not stay inside their house. It’s always a delicate balance but we’re only people, I mean we’re not professionals, we’re just people, so it’s a matter of figuring that out.”

The underlying philosophy around welcoming and inclusion that service providers seem to share in Truro is reminiscent of the manner in which Bhabha (1996) describes the truly complex nature of ‘culture’. Bhabha (1996) explains that the way in which we define and understand ‘culture’ is limiting and discounts groups not widely understood as well-established, groups not based on obvious “signifying practices and social formations” (p. 53).

Multiculturalism understands ‘other’ cultures as concepts that can be fairly clearly defined, it negates the complex ways in which cultures combine, clash and intersect in different ways over time, creating interstitial, ‘in-between’ cultures that are not easily classified or understood. In a globalized world, cultures are posed to interact in ways that are not easily predicted, particularly when immigration is part of the equation. Intensifying this complexity is the fact that ‘Canadian culture’ is more easily defined by what it thinks it is not than by what it is or does (Bhabha, 1996). The dominant culture (that is, the one people are identifying when they speak of assimilation) can be inferred by positioning itself in opposition to what it does not consider

inherently 'Canadian', a difficult-to-define set of "behaviours and values that ethnic groups can acquire and thereby become similar to the dominant group" (Li, 1999, p.14).

What complicates matters is when these assumed differences are used as a basis for discrimination or for perpetuating systems of privilege. Despite the praise that multiculturalism receives, "for many racial and ethnic minorities, the idealism of the multicultural society is hard to reconcile with the reality of inequality" as it "encourages cultural uniqueness but it is precisely on those minorities' alleged distinctiveness (in terms of foreign credentials, racial appearances, and linguistic accents) that puts them in a disadvantaged position" (Li, 1999, p.15). Participant (4) captured this sentiment perfectly when she said that "we all know who we are and we all are very proud of our heritage" but that this not be used as justification to "be treated as a second class citizen".

### **Overt Racism**

For the purpose of this section, overt racism refers to any act of discrimination that can be directly observed. This tends to be the manner in which white people comprehend racism (McIntosh, 1990). Despite the fact that this paper focuses on systemic, 'invisible' racism, I thought it equally important to include a short analysis of service providers' perspectives on incidents of overt racism. Participants were not asked questions directly pertaining to overt racism, however, it did come up during the interview process.

In reading the literature, I came across several studies that contained accounts of immigrants to Canada reporting their experiences with overt racism, as exemplified in a study

done by Tirone (1999), where young participants relayed their encounters with hurtful, racist incidents in spaces meant for leisure and recreation. Some of the studies I came across took place in Nova Scotia specifically. For example, in a study done in Nova Scotia high schools, racism was mentioned by a substantial number of participants who “reported rude comments and indifference” and violence (Amaya, 2011, p. 190). However, nearly all the participants that I interviewed for this study stated that they had not heard of or observed many incidents of people experiencing racism. Some statements included, “I’ve not seen a lot of negative things in my experience”, “I haven’t heard that it’s been a problem”, and that if something happens, “usually it seems to be well-handled”.

Why were these the responses I encountered? Is it because I did not explicitly ask about overt racism? Is it because I interviewed mainly white, Canadian-born service providers? Is racism simply more difficult to understand and articulate when it occurs in ways that go widely unseen by the dominant culture because they “have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence” (McIntosh, 1990)?

One participant (1) did openly acknowledge that it is generally “a much easier transition, (for immigrants)...[when] you’re white, you’re English-speaking”. This observation is consistent with the sentiment of a participant in a study done in Halifax by Tirone & Sweatman (2011), who stated, “the darker your skin you are, the harder jobs are to get” (p. 345).

Another participant questioned aloud whether “after living so many years in Canada, do [immigrants] still feel that sometimes [they are] being prejudiced against? My answer is yes”.

This participant then said, “Can we change it? I would say no, because there are people that, they might pretend, but it’s not something that you really can change”.

### **Systemic or Institutionalised Racism**

As established in the review of the literature, systemic racism remains prevalent in Canadian society and continues to influence both immigration and multicultural policy. There are thus questions around the potential for this force to manifest itself in Truro.

Despite Truro’s ability to customize, to a degree, the services they offer, they have little control over where they are able to do the work of recruitment. For example, the first time that anyone from Truro went to a recruitment fair outside of Canada, they did not choose where they would go; “it wasn’t a conscious decision...that was where the Nova Scotia office of immigration was going to a recruitment fair so [someone] went and then it just kind of grew exponentially” (Participant 1). Similarly, there have “been a lot of people coming in from the Philippines to work in food service...all of them have come in as temporary workers...they were all recruited from the Philippines based on getting management positions” by a Canadian government agent (Participant 1). The demographics of Truro’s immigrant population has inevitably been influenced by Canada’s federal immigration policy as they have been forced to work within the confines of a system already laid out for them, one that is potentially problematic in terms of systemic racism.

As expressed in Vickers & Isaac (2012), entrenched racism can prevent some credentials from being accepted, particularly those of immigrants who are non-white, which can hamper an

individual's ability to find work and thus prosperity. Participant (2) mentioned that "for instance, in Toronto you see a lot of individuals driving cabs who are physicians, who are scientists and pharmacists and whatnot because...a lot of times they have that education but it may not translate". However, it seemed to be agreed-upon that jobs such as driving a taxi or working in food service are simply "a foot in the door for" (Participant 1) many immigrants. The question remains whether this foot in the door will actually eventually provide them with opportunities to find work in their field or work they consider meaningful, if that is important to them.

One participant explained that "the demographic of the family or individual for whom this place works" is "typically someone with resources, it's somebody that's established enough in their career that they've got some savings, they've got a house, they've got a little bit of a cushion...to be able to hold off for 3-6 months while they're looking for jobs and connecting with people...because it's going to, when they move here, it's going to take time. It's always much more expensive than you anticipate just to settle". Do systems of race-based privilege, similar to that in Canada, exist in other countries? If so, who is more likely to have this 'cushion'? As mentioned in the previous section, a participant did recognize that it can be "a much easier transition, (for immigrants)...[when] you're white, you're English-speaking".

An interesting aspect of service provision in Truro is that the small scale on which service providers operate. Their one-on-one, community-centered approach, allows them to deviate from the 'necessity' of striving for one-size-fits-all, 'colour-blind' strategies. Service providers, instead of attempting to find the most 'neutral' approach, tend to create "services that are for everyone" (Participant 3) by asking people what they need and by learning through experience what aspects of their service provision may or may not work for certain individuals.



In contrast, in a study done by Tirone and Sweatman (2011), immigrants in Halifax "explained that many service providers had little understanding of the values and needs of people of diverse ethnicities. Agencies were perceived as part of a system that aims to perpetuate dominant Euro-Caucasian values and behaviours that often conflicted with the views of the people they intend to support" (p. 343). Does the fact that the majority of service providers that I interviewed are white, necessarily mean that they might unknowingly (or knowingly) perpetuate dominant norms if they fail to acknowledge their own racial privilege?

Participant (2) stated, "it's a different culture here, we're in North America where we're all equal, where we all have the same opportunities or should have the same opportunities to get work, to get educated and everything else". Other participants wondered about the conditions in countries where people relocate from. For many, Canada is a place with potential, despite its problems. One participant insisted that '[people] all immigrate for a reason'. Is it productive or damaging to maintain a view that 'everyone is equal' and that immigrants come to Canada because 'other places might have problems'? Are these views related to some service providers' whiteness? Might these sentiments prevent us from understanding and thus addressing problems associated with race-based privilege?

### **Sustainability**

It became apparent during interviews with participants that the decision to transform Truro into a welcoming community was part of a basic need to sustain the population of the town. Participant (1) explained, that although they "weren't declining...it was enough to be worrisome and know that we had to take action" so, "we looked at immigration as one of the many solutions to addressing the population challenge". As rural population decline continues to

be a real problem for small Nova Scotian communities (Bollman & Clemenson, 2008), attracting and retaining a reasonable population is crucial to the sustainability of small, rural communities.

For Truro, immigration both plays a role in sustaining a substantial population and in serving to create a more resilient community going into the future. As participant (3) stated, “part of our community sustainability is to make a vibrant community strong” and explained that this strength must develop on a social level by increasing awareness and acceptance as newcomers continue to immigrate to the area. Part of creating a resilient community may also lie in strengthening the local economy. The following statements are examples of the manner in which newcomers could also play an important role in the economic stability of the region. As mentioned previously, participant (1) explained that many “new, cool things have been started by a newcomer...because they saw an opportunity that everyone else just walked by for the last two years”. Participant (2) also frequently mentioned that many immigrants come to the community and begin “opening up businesses”.

Additionally, as discussed in the section ‘Acceptance or Assimilation?’, the town’s approach to welcoming and supporting immigrants focuses both on necessary life building blocks (employment, housing, access to food) but also on personal and social wellbeing. In other words, service providers are attempting to create a holistic approach to supporting immigrants that addresses a wide spectrum of human needs. This is accomplished through, for example, creating space for immigrants to “develop their own lifestyle” and to experience a sense of acceptance, understanding and belonging. Participants mentioned that it is important that immigrants be able to retain those aspects of their own culture that they feel are essential to their

identity. Participants also spoke to the importance of ensuring that immigrants be afforded opportunities for practicing different religions and celebrating cultural holidays openly and without judgment. The ‘needs’ that service providers spoke of in Truro are synonymous with many of those additional human needs addressed in the article by Costanza et al. (2006), discussed in the review of the literature.

A critical component of sustainability is ensuring that the needs of humans on Earth today can be met without compromising the ability of subsequent generations of humans to meet their needs. Service providers in Truro are putting effort into addressing the many needs of this lifetime of the community’s residents. How will these efforts to serve immigrants today also ensure that the needs of future residents of Truro will be met?

One critique of the environmental sustainability movement is the tendency of those involved to attempt to tackle separately, ‘social’ and ‘environmental’ problems (Gibson-Wood & Wakefield, 2013). Is it possible that an agenda around social sustainability similarly segregates these two ‘categories’ of issues? Is there a manner in which to address sustainability through the integration of both an ‘environmental’ and a ‘social’ approach? How might the efforts of service providers in Truro relate to the health and vitality of the environment? Can truro somehow address issues of environmental concern while simultaneously addressing human social wellbeing?

## V. Conclusion & Recommendations for Further Research

Canada's foundations are based around racist ideology. This philosophy has changed over time but nonetheless continues to manifest itself in political and social behaviour and values, maintaining a culture of race-based privilege. It influences Canada's immigration system and multicultural policy.

This study sought to explore how this reality affects the small, rural community of Truro, Nova Scotia. Questions were asked pertaining to the role that race might play in service provision for immigrants. It was found that Truro's approach to welcoming and supporting occurs at a very personal, human-centered level.

Service providers spoke about the importance of education but also of visibility and how, in tandem, they could serve to increase acceptance and understanding around perceived difference among town residents. Similarly, service providers seem to be helping to create a culture in Truro that falls somewhere between the 'mosaic' and the 'melting pot', one that surpasses 'tolerance' and moves toward more authentic acceptance and inclusion. Are education and visibility, even in combination, sufficient means for shifting cultural norms that suggest certain differences cannot be overcome? I would argue that, in addition to exposure to and appreciation of the idea and tangible reality of 'difference', it is also crucial to turn a critical lens on Canadian culture and society.

Incidents of overt racism were sparsely reported, however service providers were not explicitly asked to share their experiences with outward acts of racism. This does not guarantee,

however, that this type of discrimination is not felt or experienced by people of colour in Truro. A more ‘subtle’ form of racism has the potential to appear with Truro’s inevitable interactions with a larger system of privilege and oppression. For example, the town has little control over the forces that determine where immigrants will be recruited from and for what reasons. At this moment, however, Truro does have the flexibility and opportunity on a community level to offer forms of support that can be tailored to individual needs. Welcoming and supporting in Truro frequently occurs on a human-to-human level, at a pace characteristic of small-town life. This approach allows for a connection with community that might be more difficult to nurture in more densely populated areas. Is this scale conducive to the breaking down of prejudice, of embedded racism? Is it possible to recreate this level of care and attention on a larger scale, in an urban setting?

It is difficult to fathom what the catalyst for change could be. This seems to be a question continuously asked in the field of sustainability; where and when does change occur? Is it at an individual or community level? Does it originate with changes in legislation or leadership? I would argue that systemic racism is yet another ‘wicked’ problem of sustainability.

In moving forward, it is important to explore the perspectives of people who have immigrated to Truro. Their experiences may differ significantly from those of service providers. It may also be interesting to speak with Canadian-born members of the community, to understand their impressions of how immigration has transformed Truro in the last decade.

Much of Canada’s history remains tucked away, omitted in favour of a more dominant narrative. I recommend that Truro examine its own history, in particular, those stories that tend

to go unheard. Looking backwards through time, from the perspectives of those ‘other than’ the dominant culture, can spark critical thought and discussion about the current state of our world. Doing so may provide insight on if and why certain problematic attitudes or behaviours might persist, and if so, how they might evolve and progress.

Why it is that ‘difference’ holds so much weight? How can we go beyond ‘tolerance’ and begin transcending the social and cultural barriers that we have created and thoroughly believe in? Differences are real, tangible and affect our lives, but the value we assign to them is malleable, changeable and must change if we are genuinely dedicated to moving forward with a goal of sustainability.

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## Appendix A: Stakeholder Interview Guide

### Introduction

This study is designed to help us understand how immigrants are supported when they move to Truro. It is part of a larger study focusing on the well-being of immigrants in Atlantic Canada. We recognize that well-being is complex and therefore we will be asking you about a variety of supports you provide or that you know are provided in Truro to help immigrants settle and become members of the community. We also want to know about gaps or deficits in services that you're are aware of.

1. Please tell me about the work you do that helps immigrants to settle in Truro?
2. What do you see as the challenges that immigrants encounter when they first arrive in your community? Probes: Employment? Language? Emotional aspects associated with leaving their country of origin? Developing friendships or networks with others within the community?

**Probe: What are the challenges experienced by immigrants from diverse racial, ethnic and religious groups in settling and living in Truro? In what way does your service/agency address these challenges? How do other agencies address these challenges? Explain the supports or services that immigrants from diverse groups need but are not yet available to them in Truro?**

3. What supports do you believe immigrants need when they first arrive? Probes: Securing employment? Developing friendships within the community? Learning English? Support in getting their children settled in school? Involving themselves and/or children in recreation and sport opportunities within the community?

**Probe: What type of training or briefing have you had to assist you in meeting the needs of diverse groups of immigrants? What kind of training would you like to receive to be better equipped to meet these needs?**

4. What supports do you believe newcomers need once they have set up their household and are able to begin working, and being part of the community?

**Probe: What factors contribute to the success of immigrants in finding work, and in becoming part of the community in Truro? Are race, religion and ethnicity factors in this success? Are immigrants from some racial, ethnic or religious groups more likely to succeed than others? Please explain your answer.**

5. In what way does your organization/agency provide support? For how long are various forms of support or resources offered by your organization? What role do you play in supporting immigrants in Truro?
6. In what way do other agencies in the community provide resources or supports?

7. Does your organization/agency work with other organizations or agencies within your community to coordinate resources or support offered to newcomers? Please explain.
8. Are there agencies outside the community that provide resources or support to newcomers when they first arrive or after they have initially settled? What do they provide? Do those agencies or organizations work in conjunction with you in your efforts to help newcomers settle?
9. What role do you believe community recreation or sport opportunities (e.g., programs or services) play in a newcomer's initial adjustment (e.g., first few months)? What role do such opportunities play over the long term – beyond the initial settlement period?
10. Are there organizations within the community that support newcomers in becoming involved in community recreation and sport opportunities? Are there organizations that provide social support and opportunities for developing friendships? How important are these for new immigrants?
11. Given what you know to be provided in assisting newcomers to settle in your community, what do you see as the gaps in services, resources, or supports that would: 1) help their settlement process and 2) encourage them to remain residents in your community over the long term?

**Probe: Are there any additional questions you think we should ask to learn about new immigrants in Truro and their ability to settle here and to live here successfully?**

**Appendix B: Ethics Form**

**APPLICATION FOR SUBMISSION TO  
THE DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD**

**THIS FORM SHOULD BE COMPLETED USING THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT:  
'GUIDANCE FOR SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW'**

**SECTION 1. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Welcoming new immigrants: A case study of social well being and inclusion strategies in Truro, Nova Scotia</b>
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<b>1.1 Local Principal Investigator [Lead researcher affiliated with Dalhousie University]</b>			
<b>Name</b>	Dr. Susan Tirone		
<b>Department</b>	College of Sustainability		
		<b>Phone</b>	494-4031
<b>Email</b>	Susan.tirone@dal.ca	<b>Fax</b>	
<b>For student submissions</b>	<b>Supervisor's Name/Department</b>		
	<b>Supervisor e-mail &amp; phone #</b>		
	<b>Degree Program</b>		

<b>Co-investigator(s) Names and affiliations</b>	Karen Gallant, School of Health and Human Performance

<b>1.2 Signature of Local PI attesting that:</b>	
a. All co-investigators have reviewed the ethics submission and are in agreement with it. b. All investigators have read the Tri-Council Policy Statement <i>Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans</i> and agree to abide by these guidelines	
<b>Signature</b> _____	<b>Date</b> _____

<b>Other ethics reviews (if any)</b>	<b>Where</b>	
	<b>Status</b>	
<b>Funding (if any)</b>	<b>Agency</b>	College of Sustainability, internal research funding
	<b>Award Number</b>	

Peer review (if any)				
Planned start date	October 15 2012	Planned end date	June 30, 2013	
Contact person for this submission (if not PI)	Name			
	Email		Phone	

## SECTION 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

[Complete all parts, referring to the Guidance Document corresponding to this form]

### 2.1 INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY

[250 words max]

2.1.1 briefly describe the rationale, purpose, study population and methods

While new immigrants who arrive and settle in Atlantic Canada are significant contributors to the development of the region, their potential contributions to economic vitality are typically prioritized, while little effort appears to be invested in supporting their social wellbeing. This study is part of a larger initiative that focuses on the subjective wellbeing of immigrants in Atlantic Canada, and particularly how their wellbeing is supported in the communities where they have settled. An earlier stage of this study profiled community supports available to immigrants in small Atlantic Canadian communities through online searches for such resources. This phase of the study is a case studies of a community, Truro, Nova Scotia that has some notable programs and services in place to support immigrants' well-being.

We plan to select and interview six to eight stakeholders who are actively involved in providing supports to immigrants in Truro, such as: church leaders, educators, recreation officials, and staff of newcomer centres. Further, three to five immigrant families who have settled in Truro will be recruited to participate in open-ended interviews as well as a *Photovoice* exercise, where they will photograph places and spaces in their communities that are meaningful to them. During a second interview with the researcher the immigrant participants will be asked about their photos and why the places they photographed are meaningful to them.

### 2.2 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE - In this section discuss [3 pages max, not including references]

2.2.1 why there is a need to undertake the study (including a brief literature review)

2.2.2 what new knowledge is anticipated as an outcome of the study

2.2.3. if this is intended to be a pilot study, or a fully developed project

#### 2.2.1 Why there is a need to undertake this study

The social and economic wellbeing of immigrants is a concern especially since many immigrants experience poverty rates that are disproportionate to the poverty rates of other Canadians (Kazemipur & Halli, 2001). This study will focus on social and economic wellbeing from the perspective of immigrant families living in small communities. Recognizing that the concept of social and economic wellbeing is very complex, our intention is to provide new research into how immigrants who live in small communities perceive their own personal and family wellbeing, including their perspectives of their relative wealth/poverty, their inclusion in the community in which they live, and how their communities support their social and economic wellbeing. We aim to develop a deeper understanding of the concept of subjective wellbeing based on the meaning and priority immigrants place on the various aspects of their wellbeing.

Small communities in Canada's Atlantic region consider immigration from outside of Canada to be

a viable solution to problems associated with their aging populations, out migration, and population decline. However immigrants who settle in this region often remain for only a short time before moving on to larger metropolitan locations (Akbari, Lynch, Rankaduwa, & McDonald, 2008; Akbari, & Sun, 2006; Bruce, 2007; Wilkinson & Kalischuk, 2009). The factors that motivate immigrants to move from small communities to larger urban areas may be related to poverty and economic insecurity and to a lack of social supports. Economic security and social supports are aspects of subjective wellbeing, defined as positive sense of autonomy and control over several aspects of one's life including: family, work and economic security, friendships and leisure, and how people reconcile their lives with what is portrayed in the media (Maninni et al., 2010). However, we know little about the meaning of wellbeing from the perspective of immigrants living in small communities, the priority they place on family, work, and social wellbeing, and how their perceptions of wellbeing are shaped by the images they see in the media portraying the wellbeing of other people. This study seeks to investigate how immigrants living in a small community in Atlantic Canada experience a sense of subjective wellbeing.

The notion of wellbeing is very complex. We argue that single aspects of wellbeing, such as economic wellbeing and social wellbeing, cannot be explored in isolation from others. Thus, we are interested in the meaning and priority immigrants place on family life, work and economic security, friends and leisure, and how their perceptions of wellbeing are shaped by the media. We recognize that experiences will differ for each immigrant and immigrant family in our study because perceptions of wellbeing will be derived from memories of their country of origin and from their aspirations for their future lives in Canada.

### **Family wellbeing**

The wellbeing of families is a priority for immigrants and achieving wellbeing in a community that is unlike one's country of origin is challenging for many immigrant families (Tirone & Shaw, 1997; Wolf, 1997). Social supports from other immigrant families, the proximity of relatives and friends from one's country of origin, and the availability of ethnic goods often contribute significantly to immigrant families' sense of wellbeing (Sandercock, 2004). Immigrants arriving to live in small communities often do not have access to the familiar ethnic goods and services they knew prior to immigration (Chiswick & Miller, 2002). As well, in small communities culturally relevant health, education, religious, and social services may not be available making it difficult for immigrants from diverse cultures to settle and adjust, unless they can access services in a nearby urban area. Families may find it difficult to establish themselves in small communities without access to the familiar goods and services they need in order to have healthy lives that allow them to sustain the traditional cultural practices that they find meaningful. We will explore the challenges faced by families in small communities as they attempt to reconcile the wellbeing of their families with the new culture of Canadian communities. We will focus on the priority of sustaining traditional cultural practices and values from the perspectives of the various family members and how families reconcile tensions they encounter as they interact with community members who are non-immigrants.

### **Work and economic wellbeing**

People often immigrate to places where they have the promise of work, but work is not necessarily an indicator of subjective wellbeing (Maninni, et al., 2010). While employment may mean economic security for those who are able to find well paid jobs, some immigrants are forced into less meaningful work that does not capitalize on their training and experience prior to immigration. This situation is especially problematic for racial minority immigrants, among whom poverty is increasing (Kazemipur & Halli, 2001; Statistics Canada, 2005). Failure to recognize foreign credentials, lack of English or French language proficiency, and a lack of relevant Canadian work experience are often reported by immigrants as barriers preventing them from securing work in the field for which they

trained prior to immigration. We will explore the priority and meaning of work and economic security for individual members of immigrant families in small communities.

### **Friends, social wellbeing and leisure**

Social wellbeing is about being able to access and enjoy social relationships and usually implies the presence of friends beyond the immediate family unit. Many immigrants achieve a sense of social wellbeing when they are able to develop supportive social networks and friendships and when they are able to access relevant services and resources (Spicer, 2008; Walseth, 2006). Social networks are known to contribute to improved personal wellbeing and may assist immigrants in resolving issues and problems that affect personal as well as community wellbeing such as poverty, poor health, unemployment, and crime (Heinonen et al., 2005; Putnam, 1995). Participation in public civic events such as concerts, festivals, sporting events, and clubs is known to facilitate the development of social networks and friendships, find places or “information grounds” where they may gain and share information, and enhance personal social and economic wellbeing (Fisher, Durrance, & Hinton, 2004). We are particularly interested in leisure as a vehicle to facilitate social engagement and inclusion for dominant group Canadians and which may play a key role in the welcoming of immigrants to smaller communities. Studies of the leisure, recreation, and sport experiences of immigrants in Canada and elsewhere identify the benefits of these experiences (See for example: Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Stodolska & Jackson, 1998; Stodolska & Livengood, 2006; Taylor, 2001; Walseth, 2006). Studies have also raised our awareness of some of the challenges immigrants encounter as they attempt to participate in community activities and in leisure due to poverty, discrimination, language barriers and the absence of activities they prefer (Frisby, Alexander, & Taylor, 2010; Tirone, 1999-2000). Other challenges are related to service providers’ lack of knowledge and understanding of the interest new Canadians may have in joining in local activities, and how to inform and shape the activities in ways that make it possible for newcomers to enjoy them. As well, new Canadians may be disadvantaged by not understanding how to access information networks with which dominant groups are readily familiar (Livingston, Tirone, Smith & Miller, 2008). We will explore what it means for immigrants families to be included and/or excluded from the community activities and friendships in small communities and their sense of inclusion/exclusion will affect their interest in remaining in the small communities for extended periods of time.

### **How the media portrays wellbeing**

The media has a significant effect on immigrants’ perceptions of what their lives should be like in the communities where they settle. When people compare their own lives to those of people in the media, who are often living in urban centres and who are often portrayed as affluent, immigrants tend to develop a sense of wellbeing relative those mediated images (Maninni et al, 2010). For example, portrayals of violence, sexually explicit behaviour, affluence, and social relationships that reflect North American values about individualism affect the way immigrant parents view the world and what they believe their children will experience outside of the family home. Immigrant parents may impose strict guidelines on their children’s leisure experiences based on television and other popular media images which they view as reflecting the reality of life in Canada (Stodolska & Livengood, 2006; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000). Such restrictions result in tension between the children and their parents. We are interested in how individual family members construct ideas about individual and family wellbeing based on media images of Canadian and North American families and how those ideas affect immigrants’ subjective wellbeing.

### **Understanding provision of services**

Communities that provide a welcoming environment for new immigrants may contribute to immigrants’ interest and ability to remain in the community long term. We are interested in ways in which communities welcome immigrants, and how a welcoming community may enhance social



engagement, and one's sense of inclusion in the host community which may in turn lead to long term residency. We will focus on the nature of the social supports offered by community organizations when immigrants arrive and in the years following their initial settlement, and how these contribute to their sense of feeling welcome and included in the community. We will explore organizations that provide social support such as local sport and recreation providers, community centres, YMCAs, social service providers, churches, and immigrant serving agencies and their own experience of this phenomenon. Social engagement is defined here as "relationships or involvements – both positive and negative – with family members, peers, community members, local institutions, and at the broadest level, with society" (Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD), 2006). The term inclusion refers to the ability of immigrants to form supportive social networks and friendships and to access relevant services and resources (Spicer, 2008; Walseth, 2006).

### **Understanding generational differences in subjective wellbeing**

Several studies point to the notion that immigrants and their children who are born in Canada differ in how they perceive wellbeing. For example as mentioned above, some parents restrict the television and movies their children are able to view and prefer if their children do not engage in leisure outside of the home or with friends who are not part of their own ethnic group (Tirone & Pedlar, 2000; Tirone & Shaw, 1997; Wolf, 1997). Such restrictions are known to be the source of tremendous family tensions.

Other research suggests that there are generational and gender differences between the children of immigrants and their parents in terms of how they perceive economic wellbeing. Tirone and Sweatman's (2011) study in Halifax indicates that the male children of immigrants in that city prioritized their individualism as indicated by their interest in leaving the family home and moving to larger urban centers to pursue their education and to secure high paying jobs. Female children were more likely to want to remain near their parents as they pursued post- secondary education and shared their parents' views about the social and economic wellbeing of the family, prioritizing communalism and intergenerational interdependence. We will explore parents' and children's ideas about family and individual wellbeing and the way perspectives differ between generations.

References: See Appendix A

### **2.2.2 What new knowledge is anticipated as a result of this study**

This study will add a new dimension to the study of immigrants because of its focus on immigrants living in a small community, factors that may or may not be related to economic indicators, and because it will focus on the perceptions immigrants have of their wellbeing.

This study may also provide examples of good practice in terms of helpful initiatives that immigrants recognize as having contributed to their ability to settle and be welcomed in the community. Examples of good practice will assist other small communities to develop policy, programs, and their own approaches to welcoming and supporting.

### **2.2.3 Whether this is intended to be a pilot study or a fully-developed project**

This study represents a portion of a fully-developed project.

### **2.3 STUDY DESIGN – In this section**

- 2.3.1 state the hypotheses or the research questions or research objectives
- 2.3.2 describe the general study design and how it will address the hypotheses / questions / objectives
- 2.3.3 describe how many participants are needed and how this was determined
- 2.3.4 describe the plan for data analysis in relation to the hypotheses/questions/objectives
- 2.3.5 if a phased review is being requested, describe why this is needed for this study and which phases are contained in this application

#### **2.3.1 State the hypotheses or the research questions or research objectives**

The objectives of the proposed research are:

1. To understand the meaning and priority of subjective wellbeing in the lives of immigrant families in Truro, Nova Scotia, in terms of work and economic security, friendships and leisure, and as they compare their lives to media portrayals of wellbeing.
2. To explore the ways in which subjective well being of immigrant families in Truro, Nova Scotia has been supported and/or inhibited by community groups such as: churches, service clubs, recreation and sport providers, social service agencies, non-profit agencies such as YMCAs, and commercial enterprises.
3. To explore the generational differences that may exist between parents and their children in defining subjective wellbeing and how these differences affect families and their interest and ability to remain in small communities.

#### **2.3.2 Describe the general study design and how it will address the hypotheses / questions/ objectives**

We will use a variety of data collection methods to gain as complete an understanding as possible of the complexity of the cases (Patton, 2002). First, we will use semi-structured interviews to learn about immigrant families' sense of wellbeing. The family participants will be asked about their experiences of settling in the community, the opportunities they have had to meet other residents in the community, to work in jobs they enjoy and for which they were trained, to become involved in community activities such as recreation, social groups, church activities, volunteer work, and other community activities. They will be asked to comment on the extent to which they use the same spaces as do dominant group residents of the community and if other places and spaces are meaningful to them. They will be asked about the media they enjoy and how it affects their sense of wellbeing. Our intention is not to generalize our findings to other communities, but to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of immigrants in Truro (Patton, 2002).

Second, we will also select and interview stakeholders who are actively involved in providing supports to immigrants in Truro in their roles as church leaders, community volunteers, neighbours, educators, recreation officials, and staff of newcomer centres. In our interviews with families and stakeholders, participants will also be asked to describe their experiences with community supports provided to immigrants. They will be asked to elaborate on the quality of those supports, gaps in services, and their sense of how successful the services are in assisting the civic participation and social inclusion of newcomers. They will also be asked to identify community places that they find to be welcoming for immigrants, such as malls, recreation areas, parks, restaurants, churches, private homes, and others; they will be asked to explain what it is about those places that they find welcoming, and how they came to know about the

welcoming places. They will also be asked to identify places that they do not find welcoming and to explain what creates that feeling of not being welcome in those places.

We will also engage the family participants in this phase of the study through a *Photovoice* exercise. Photovoice has been used a method of data collection in a variety of disciplines including health and leisure studies, for documenting community assets, and for developing policy. It is a process where people take pictures to record aspects of a concept under investigation. The resulting images (data) are used to promote the dialogue necessary for collective exploration of key concepts central to the research, and they facilitate the involvement of research participants in defining issues (Wang & Stern, 2004). The families in our study will be given disposable cameras and asked to participate in the Photovoice part of our study by photographing places and spaces in their communities that are meaningful to them. During a second interview, the immigrants will be asked about their photos and why the places they photographed are meaningful to them.

### **2.3.3 Describe how many participants are needed and how this was determined**

For this case study, we plan to interview 6 to 8 stakeholders and 3 to 5 immigrant families. Our sampling method is purposive (Patton, 2002), aiming to recruit participants who will provide rich descriptions and a depth of detail about the experiences of immigrating to Truro from the perspectives of support agencies and from immigrants' personal experiences. We expect this sample size will provide the rich information that will illuminate our understanding of the settlement and experiences of immigrants in Truro.

### **2.3.4 Describe the plan for data analysis in relation to the hypotheses/ questions/ objectives**

With the permission of participants, all interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. Analysis will begin immediately after the first interview. This approach allows for initial adjustments to be made to the interview guide. The analysis of the data will include several readings of each transcript. An initial review of the transcripts will involve identifying preliminary themes and assigning descriptive codes to the data. Glaser and Strauss' (1967) constant comparison method will be used to compare the data from one phase of the data collection process with data from other phases, the data with the emerging concepts, and the data with my ideas about the developing conceptualizations.

### **2.3.5 If a phased review is being requested, describe why this is needed for this study and which phases are contained in this application**

The proposed project is part of a larger study, the first phase of which did not require ethics review, as it involved internet searches for publically available information. Later phases of this project (i.e. case studies in other communities) will undergo ethics consideration at a later date.

**2.4 RECRUITMENT** – In this section, for each type of participant to be recruited, describe

- 2.4.1 the study population
- 2.4.2 any social / cultural / safety considerations
- 2.4.3 and justify all specific inclusion / exclusion criteria of participants
- 2.4.4 any recruitment instruments (attach copies)
- 2.4.5 who will be doing the recruitment and what actions they will take
- 2.4.6 any screening measures, and how they will be used (attach copies)
- 2.4.7 any permissions that are needed and attach letters

**2.4.1 The study population**

The study population includes stakeholders (18+) who are current employees of immigrant-serving organizations and who have provided supports to immigrants for at least one year. We will also recruit immigrant families who are currently residing in Truro and who have lived in Truro for at least 3 years. **We will ensure that all family members wishing to participate will be fluent in English.** We aim to interview one parent, one child who is at least 14 years of age, and one extended family member (if relevant) in each family. We will seek diversity in our sample of immigrant families in terms of their racial, ethnic, religious backgrounds and countries of origin. In both cases we expect these criteria will facilitate our ability to recruit people who have a good first hand understanding of the services in the Town and how effective they are in supporting the social well being of immigrants.

**2.4.2 Any social / cultural / safety considerations**

Researchers will take care to respect participants' cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds. For example, the team will ask participants to indicate if the proposed interview date has the potential to interfere with holidays that are of significance for religious, cultural or family reasons. In that event the interview date will be changed to a more suitable time. We expect that **people who are interested in this study will be fluent in English since most migration to Truro is from countries that are primarily English speaking and we are seeking participants who have lived in Truro for at least five years.**

**2.4.3 And justify all specific inclusion / exclusion criteria of participants**

**To be eligible to participate in this study, immigrant families must be fluent in oral and written English.** The children in the immigrant families who are interviewed must be at least 14 years of age as this is an age at which they will be able to speak about their experiences at school, in the community and in their families. These criteria ensures that the family will be able to communicate with the researcher, and will be able to read interview transcripts and research reports. The stakeholder participants must also be fluent in English.

**2.4.4 Any recruitment instruments (attach copies)**

Please see the attached Stakeholders recruitment script and follow-up letter and Immigrant families recruitment flyer. Appendix B.1, B.2 and B.3.

**2.4.5 Who will be doing the recruitment and what actions they will take**

Organizations involved in providing supports to immigrants in Truro, such as church leaders, educators, recreation officials, and staff of newcomer centres, will be identified and contacted by phone, by the Research Assistant, in order to recruit stakeholder participants (see attached recruitment script Appendix B.1). To recruit immigrant families, recruitment flyers (see Appendix B.2) will be posted at the relevant locations such as churches, recreation centres and libraries. Recruitment will be conducted by the research assistant who will also conduct the interviews.

**2.4.6 any screening measures, and how they will be used (attach copies)**

NA

**2.4.7 any permissions that are needed and attach letters**

NA

**2.5 INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS – In this section**

- 2.5.1 describe the informed consent process (attach a copy of all consent forms)
- 2.5.2 if oral consent is desired, describe why it is necessary and how it will be done (attach a copy of the script)
- 2.5.3 if a waiver of informed consent is sought, explain why and describe how the four criteria needed for this are met
- 2.5.4 for third party consent (with or without assent), describe how this will be done
- 2.5.5 describe plans (if any) for on-going consent
- 2.5.6 if community consent is needed, describe how it will be obtained

**2.5.1 Describe the informed consent process (attach a copy of all consent forms)**

At the beginning of the interview, research participants will be given a copy of the information and consent form (see attached consent forms for stakeholder participants Appendix C and immigrant family participants Appendix D) and the researcher will also provide a brief introduction to the research (see attached interview guides). The research participants will have an opportunity to ask questions about the research. They may choose not to continue with the interview, to continue with the interview but not have it recorded, and/or to continue with the interview but not have their responses quoted word for word in publications. Further, immigrant families will have the option of participating in the interview without completing the Photovoice activity and the second interview, and will be able to decide which family members will participate in interviews. After reading the consent form and asking questions, the research participants will be asked to sign the consent form before the interview begins.

**In the case of family participants; each member of the family who is interested in participating will be asked to complete a separate consent form.**

**The RA who will interview the participants will be alerted to the potential for a family member to unduly influence others in the family to participate, or to abstain from participating, in the study. If the RA perceives a power imbalance, he or she will keep**

**detailed notes regarding the dynamics of the family members. The interviews will be conducted with members of the family who agree to participate and who are fluent in English.**

**In the event that family members choose to be interviewed together, the family will be offered an opportunity to collectively review the transcript with the interviewer or to receive individual copies of the transcript.**

**2.5.2 If oral consent is desired, describe why it is necessary and how it will be done (attach a copy of the script)**

NA

**2.5.3 If a waiver of informed consent is sought, explain why and describe how the four criteria needed for this are met**

NA

**2.5.4 For third party consent (with or without assent), describe how this will be done**

NA

**2.5.5 Describe plans (if any) for on-going consent**

NA

**2.5.6 If community consent is needed, describe how it will be obtained**

NA

## **2.6 DETAILED METHODOLOGY** - In this section describe

- 2.6.1 where the research will be conducted
- 2.6.2 what participants will be asked to do and the time each task will take (plus total time)
- 2.6.3 what data will be recorded and what research instruments will be used (attach copies)
- 2.6.4 the roles and qualifications of the study investigators / research staff
- 2.6.5 how long the participants will be involved in each part of the study

### **2.6.1 Where the research will be conducted**

Interviews with stakeholders will be conducted at the offices of the organizations with which they are affiliated. Interviews with immigrant family participants will be conducted at places selected by the research participants themselves. Anticipated locations include research participants' homes or workplaces and public places such as the local library.

### **2.6.2 What participants will be asked to do and the time each task will take (plus total time)**

Stakeholder and immigrant participants will be asked to participate in one hour-long interviews. Immigrant families will have the option of participating in an interview together, or having interested family members (one parent, one child, and one extended family member) interviewed individually. If a participant agrees to have his/her interview audio-recorded, he/she will be offered a copy of the interview transcript after the interview and will be asked to review the transcript and to make any changes, additions, or deletions that they deem necessary. The transcript will be sent and returned by email or mail, depending on the preferences of the participant. In addition to this interview, immigrant families will be invited to take photos of places and spaces that are meaningful to them, using a camera provided by the researcher. They will also participate in a second interview (again about an hour long) where they will discuss their photos. See Appendix G for transcript of interview for discussion of photographs.

Participants will be offered the opportunity to keep their photos. Photos will not be kept by the research team.

### **2.6.3 what data will be recorded and what research instruments will be used (attach copies)**

The interview will be open-ended and conversational, guided by the interview guides (Appendix E – Stakeholder; Appendix F – immigrants; attached). With participants' consent, the interviews will be audio-recorded so that the participants' verbatim responses can be recorded. If participants choose not to have their interview recorded, detailed notes will be taken during the interview. Data will also be collected in the form of photographs taken by the immigrant participants using disposable cameras provided by the researcher.

### **2.6.4 The roles and qualifications of the study investigators / research staff**

The interviews will be conducted by a research assistant who is a current honours or graduate student at Dalhousie University and has received training on qualitative interviewing. Interviews will be analyzed by the principal researcher and co-investigator. The principal researcher has a strong record of conducting research with immigrant populations, and both the principal researcher and co-investigator have previous experience conducting qualitative research.

### **2.6.5 How long the participants will be involved in each part of the study**

Interviews with stakeholder participants are expected to last approximately one hour, while

immigrant family members will participate in two interviews totaling approximately two hours. Immigrant families will also participate by taking photos. However, this portion of their involvement is expected to take little time, as they will likely take pictures of places and spaces that are very familiar to them and part of their everyday activities.

In addition, all participants will be asked to review and comment on the transcript from their interview(s). This task will take an additional 30 minutes to one hour.

**Participants will be provided with a disposable camera and they will be offered two weeks following the first interview to take the photos and to return them to the research team for developing and printing. Participants will be provided with a stamped, mailing envelope so they will not incur any cost for sending the disposable cameras to the team once the photos have been taken.**

**2.7 DECEPTION / INCOMPLETE DISCLOSURE (if applicable) -** In this section describe

- 2.7.1 what misdirection will be used (if any) and discuss its justification
- 2.7.2 what information will not be disclosed to participants and discuss its justification
- 2.7.3 how participants will be debriefed and given the opportunity to withdraw

No deception or misdirection will be used in this study



## **2.8 RISK ANALYSIS** – In this section describe

- 2.8.1 what risks or discomforts are anticipated for participants
- 2.8.2 the estimated probability of these risks (e.g., low, medium, high or more precisely if possible)
- 2.8.3 what steps will be taken to mitigate the risks
- 2.8.4 what risks might exist for communities that are involved in the study

### **2.8.1 What risks or discomforts are anticipated for participants**

Minimal risk is anticipated for participants involved in this research. There is potential that immigrant participants may experience some discomfort during the interview if they have had negative experiences or experiences that are personal in nature related to accessing community supports, since they will be asked about these experiences during the interview. However, because this research focuses on a community that is known to have programs and services in place to support immigrants, this risk is expected to be minimal. There is also minimal risk to stakeholders involved in this research, as these participants will not be relating personal experiences, but rather will be providing information about services and supports offered by their organizations and the broader community.

### **2.8.2 The estimated probability of these risks**

This research is assessed as posing low risk to participants. Participants may experience stress if they are able to identify instances of race based privilege in the community and in the work force that inhibit some immigrants from finding work or becoming embedded as community members. However, the participants will be assured that their identity will not be disclosed and the agencies with which they are affiliated will not be named in any reports resulting from this study.

### **2.8.3 What steps will be taken to mitigate the risks**

To mitigate any potential risks or discomfort associated with this research, the researcher will attempt to help participants' feel comfortable by encouraging them to select an interview location that is familiar and comfortable to them. Further, during the informed consent process, the researcher will inform the participant that they may choose to end the interview at any time, and that they may choose not to answer an interview question and can still continue to participate in the research. Finally, the researcher will inform the participant that they will receive a written copy of the transcript of the interview and will have the opportunity at that time to remove, add to, or clarify their statements or the information they provided.

### **2.8.4 What risks might exist for communities that are involved in the study**

Participants will be asked questions about the dynamics of race, religion and ethnic identity and about the likelihood of immigrants from different racial, ethnic and religious groups to succeed in finding work and in becoming part of the community. We do not expect these questions will create any undo amount of risk for communities.

Our interest is in whether certain groups experience more difficulties than others, and not in identifying or focusing on particular groups who may be disadvantaged. We do not intend to disclose the racial, religious, or ethnic characteristics of groups who may be disadvantaged, but to determine the nature of supports that would benefit the community and to focus our discussions on how to nurture a welcoming culture.

As a result of demographic data obtained from Statistics Canada we know that Truro is a community of diverse racial, ethnic and religious groups and is far more successful in recruiting and retaining immigrants over a long period of time than many other small cities in Atlantic Canada. We also know that this community has succeeded in providing supports to immigrants from a variety of racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds. We believe these questions will help us to understand the nature of the supports available to immigrants in Truro that may not be available in other communities and to identify new supports that may be developed in Truro.

## **2.9 BENEFITS** - In this section describe

- 2.9.1 the direct benefits (if any) of participation to participants (not compensation)
- 2.9.2 the indirect benefits of the study (i.e., contribution to new knowledge)

### **2.9.1 The direct benefits (if any) of participation to participants (not compensation)**

Participation in this research offers immigrant participants the opportunity to reflect on their own perceptions of well-being and their experiences accessing community supports. For stakeholder participants, participation provides the opportunity to reflect on the role of their organization in welcoming and supporting immigrants.

### **2.9.2 The indirect benefits of the study (i.e., contribution to new knowledge)**

Participation in this research offers participants the opportunity to contribute to new knowledge about immigrants' perceptions of well-being and how it can be supported in small Canadian communities. Further, this research will assist other small communities to develop policy, programs, and their own approaches to welcoming and supporting immigrants.

## **2.10 CONFIDENTIALITY and ANONYMITY** - In this section describe

- 2.10.1 whether the data to be collected is of a personal or sensitive nature
- 2.10.2 how the data will be collected, stored and handled in a confidential manner
- 2.10.3 how long the data will be retained, and what the plans are for its destruction
- 2.10.4 if it is possible for participants to remain anonymous, and how it will be achieved
- 2.10.5 how a 'duty to disclose' abuse or neglect of a child, or adult in need of protection, will be handled
- 2.10.6 if a waiver of confidentiality is to be sought from participants, and why

### **2.10.1 Whether the data to be collected is of a personal or sensitive nature**

The data collected in this study is not likely to be of a personal or sensitive nature. The exception may be if immigrant participants' have had sensitive or negative experiences accessing supports in the community.

**2.10.2 How the data will be collected, stored and handled in a confidential manner**

With interview participants' written consent, the interview data will be audiotaped, transcribed, and imported into a software program for analysis. Immigrant participants will be assigned pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of the data, and stakeholders' organizations will be described in a general sense (church, social service organization, etc.) rather than named. However, because of the small number of participants in this research, it is possible that individuals may be identifiable to readers of the study, and participants will be informed of this possibility during the informed consent process. **Printed transcripts and consent forms will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office, while electronic files will be stored on the researcher's password-protected computer and backed up using a password protected USB key.**

**2.10.3 How long the data will be retained, and what the plans are for its destruction**

**Printed transcripts and consent forms will be kept for five years, after which they will be confidentially destroyed. Electronic data files (with pseudonyms assigned to each interview participant) will be stored indefinitely on the researcher's password protected computer and backed up using a password protected USB key that will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the Principal Researcher.**

**2.10.4 If it is possible for participants to remain anonymous, and how it will be achieved**

Participants will not be able to remain anonymous to the researcher, since interviews will be conducted in person. However, pseudonyms will be assigned to each interview participant to ensure their anonymity to research assistants and in transcripts and stored data.

**2.10.5 how a 'duty to disclose' abuse or neglect of a child, or adult in need of protection, will be handled**

Participants who are children in the immigrant families will be at least 14 years of age. In the unlikely event that a participant should disclose any kind of abuse or indicate that they are at risk in any way, the Researcher Assistant will report the abuse to the PI who will in turn report instances to the local child welfare authorities in Truro.

**2.10.6 If a waiver of confidentiality is to be sought from participants, and why**

No waiver of confidentiality will be sought from participants.

**2.11 USE OF QUOTATIONS – In this section describe**

2.11.1 whether participants will be quoted in the final report, and if so

2.11.2 describe how permission will be obtained for this

2.11.3 describe whether the quotes be attributed, how permission for this will be obtained and how participants will be given the chance to see how the quotes are used

**2.11.1 Whether participants will be quoted in the final report**

Participants will be quoted in publications on this research.

**2.11.2 Describe how permission will be obtained**

Permission to quote directly from participants will be sought during the informed consent process. If research participants choose not to give consent to be quoted in publications, they may still participate in the interview, and the data they share will be analyzed but not directly quoted in

research reports.

**2.11.3 Describe whether the quotes will be attributed, how permission for this will be obtained and how participants will be given the chance to see how the quotes were used**

Direct quotations will be attributed to research participants using pseudonyms assigned by the researcher. Permission for this will be obtained when participants give informed written consent prior to the interview. After transcription of an interview, the transcript will be shared with the research participant so that they have an opportunity to add to, remove, or clarify any of their statements. Upon request, research reports will be shared with participants so that they can see how the data they provided, including direct quotations, were analyzed and reported.

**2.12 COMPENSATION** - In this section describe

- 2.12.1 what compensation will be offered to participants (if any), how it will be done and how it will be handled for participants who do not complete the study
- 2.12.2 whether participants are likely to incur any additional expenses

**2.12.1 Compensation offered to participants**

No compensation will be offered to participants.

**2.12.2 Whether participants are likely to incur any additional expenses**

Participants are not likely to incur any additional expenses, with the exception of transportation expenses. To minimize these expenses, research participants will be able to select an interview location that is convenient to them. **The expenses for developing and printing of photographs will be the responsibility of the PI who has funding for this project from a research account in the College of Sustainability.**

**2.13 PROVISION OF RESULTS TO PARTICIPANTS** - In this section, describe

- 2.13.1 plans to provide results of the study to participants
- 2.13.2 whether individual results will be provided to study participants, and how
- 2.13.3 how participants will be informed of results that may indicate they may be at risk

**2.13.1**

Upon request, research reports will be shared with participants, either electronically or in hard copy. At the end of the interview (after the audio recorder has been turned off if the interview is being recorded), the researcher will ask participants whether they would like to receive a copy of the research report. If a participant would like to receive a research report, the researcher will ask the participant to provide either email or postal address information. This information will be stored in an electronic file distinct from the interview transcripts, and destroyed once research reports have been sent to interested participants.

Translation of research reports will not be necessary, as one of the inclusion criteria for immigrant families is that at least one family member is fluent in English.

**2.13.2**

After transcription of an interview, the transcript will be shared with the research participant so that they have a record of their individual involvement. However, results of the study will focus on common themes and are not “individual” in nature.

**2.13.3**

It is not anticipated that the results of this study will indicate any risk to participants.

**2.14 COMPLIANCE WITH PRIVACY LEGISLATION** – In this section,

- 2.14.1 state what software (if any) you will use to collect (e.g. survey software), store (e.g., database software) or analyze your data.
- 2.14.2 state whether a survey company will be used to assist in data collection, management storage or analysis
- 2.14.3 describe what provisions (if any) of the University policy on the *Protection of Personal Information from Access Outside Canada* apply and how they have been met.

**2.14.1**

The software NVivo will be used to store and analyze interview data.

**2.14.2**

No company will be used to assist in data collection, management, storage, or analysis.

**2.14.3**

University policy on the *Protection of Personal Information from Access Outside Canada* is not applicable to this research.

**2.15 CONFLICT OF INTEREST** – In this section

- 2.15.1 whether any conflict of interest exists for any member of the research team in relation to the sponsor of the study
- 2.15.2 whether any conflict of interest exists for any member of the research team with respect to their relationship to the potential research participants (e.g., teacher / student)

No conflict of interest exists for the researcher with respect to the sponsor of this study or its research participants.

**SECTION 3. INFORMED CONSENT**

**Consult Section 3 of GUIDANCE FOR SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW**

**3.1 CONSENT FORM CHECKLIST**

Please complete this checklist and submit with the application.

YES	N/A	Have you included the following in your consent form / process?
		Identification of document as CONSENT FORM
		Title of study
		Identity and affiliation of researchers
		Contact information of individual conducting the study
		Invitation to participate in <u>research</u>
		Assurance of voluntariness and right to withdraw without repercussions
		Short description of the purpose of the study
		Short description of the study design and how many participants are involved
		Inclusion and exclusion criteria
		Description of what the participant is being asked to do
		Estimate of the participant's time commitment
		Description of where the research will take place
		Description of special clothing or other preparations required of the participant
		Description of how anonymity will be handled
		Description of how confidentiality of the data will be assured
		Description of any necessary limitations of confidentiality protections
		Description of the nature and probability of risks for participants
		Description of the benefits for participants
		Declaration of any researcher conflict of interest
		Description of any possible commercial outcomes of the research
		Description of how participants will review transcripts of interviews
		Description of how study results will be provided to participants
		Permissions requested for audio/video taping
		Permissions requested for use of quotations
		Permission for future use of data in specified studies
		Permission to recontact participant for participation in future studies
		Permissions related to transportation/use of data outside of Nova Scotia
		How assent of participant will be sought when 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties give consent
		Signature statement indicating that information has been provided
		Signatures of participant and person obtaining consent
YES	N/A	Have you addressed the following in your Consent Form / Process?
		Appropriate Reading comprehension level (Grade 8)
		Avoidance of technical language
		Formatting: font size (min 12 pt), headings, page numbering
		Clear distinction between clinical care / research procedures
		No waiver of rights is sought