Resilient Cartographies

A Systems Analysis of Resilience Among Indian Women Immigrants in Canada

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Abstract

Most of Canada's population growth is driven by immigration. In 2020, over 80% of Canada's population growth came from immigration, with more than half of this number being economic immigrants admitted primarily to meet labour-market shortages. Among these, the incoming numbers from India have been the highest. This number is likely to grow in the coming years as the government calibrates immigration policies to meet its economic (labour-market), political (nation-building), and social (demographic) objectives. Moreover, from an individual perspective, it is clear that many are choosing Canada as their choice of immigration destination over other countries.

Given this context, the study looks at individual immigration journeys of women and acts of resilience within them through a human-centered systems focus. Immigration is a journey of change and uncertainty. Immigrant women from India adapt to vast amounts of changes, losses, and unpredictabilities throughout their journeys across both internal and external realms. The research examines how women immigrants from India adapt to these ambivalences and remain resilient.

The report traces an individual journey through stages including planning, moving, arriving, settling, integrating, and thriving and examines the cycles of change and resilience while unpacking the invisible systemic factors that influence each stage. Additionally, the research contests the policy gaze, which adopts a simplistic and prototypical view of the immigration journey by uncovering five immigration patterns or pathways that frame individual journeys. These include linear, serial, circular, onward, and return migration. Individuals who move in these patterns possess unique mental models and behaviours and relate differently to their immigration experience.

This understanding of fragmented and nonlinear journeys presents novel individual and systemic intervention opportunities. The study concludes with sixteen thought-starters for innovation. The purpose is to engage multi-stakeholder dialogue and co-creation to design an ecosystem of support that promotes immigrant communities' capacities for resilience.

Glossary

Immigrant, newcomer, migrant

According to the Government of Canada, an immigrant is a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Immigrants are granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Individuals who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group (Statistics Canada, n.d.). In this report, the word immigrant, migrant and newcomer are used interchangeably.

Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada

The Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is the department of the Government of Canada that is responsible for admitting immigrants, providing protection to refugees, offering programs and services to help newcomers settle in Canada, granting citizenship and issuing travel documents to Canadians (Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, n.d.).

Eligibility points

Eligibility points refer to the number of points in a scoring system that determines if a candidate has the minimum threshold of economic or social fit within Canada based on several factors such as education level, wealth, connection with the country, language fluency, existing job offer, or others (Donald, 2016).

Express Entry

Express Entry is an online system used by the IRCC to manage immigration applications in the economic stream. Candidates who possess requisite eligibility points enter the Express Entry pool, where they will be ranked through a Comprehensive Ranking System based on which they are selected. Three federal immigration programs are managed through Express Entry, including the Canadian Experience Class, Federal Skilled Worker Program, and Federal Skilled Trades Program (How Express Entry works, n.d.).

Provincial Nominee Program

Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) is a pathway to Canadian permanent residency for individuals interested in immigrating to specific Canadian provinces or territories. PNP is operated independently by provinces to meet their specific economic and demographic needs. A candidate may also be nominated through PNP once they enter the Express Entry pool (Provincial Nominee Programs, n.d.).

Permanent Resident

A Permanent Resident (PR) is someone that is granted the right to live, work and study anywhere in Canada. PRs are not citizens of Canada, but they get access to most social benefits that Canadian citizens receive (Understand permanent resident status, n.d.). A PR may apply to become a Canadian citizen after fulfilling set eligibility criteria. In the economic stream, PR applications are managed through Express Entry, PNP and other programs.

Service Provider Organization

Service Provider Organizations (SPOs), are immigrant-serving agencies and social service organizations that are funded by the IRCC to deliver settlement services, which help newcomers to acquire knowledge about living and working in Canada, improve their official language skills, prepare for labour market entry, and form meaningful connections in their communities (Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada, 2020a).

Acknowledgements

To the Lands

This project was conceived, conducted, and published on the traditional and enduring territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Huron-Wendat peoples, and is the current and future home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

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Chapter 1 /
Introduction

over and over again
it becomes known
the peace we seek
is seeking us

— a complex movement, adrienne maree brown

Welcome to my Major Research Project (MRP), and thank you for being here! This project is a critical and strategic exploration of a deeply personal experience—immigration. In 2014, I immigrated to Canada from India when I was 25 years old. Moving halfway across the world sounded like an exciting life adventure to me. And it was! Just not the kind I had expected.

The genesis of this project was a curiosity to examine my immigration experience through tools that I learned at the Strategic Foresight and Innovation (SFI) program at OCAD University. It was important for me to use this opportunity to critically reflect on my experience to find patterns in it. People write novels, poetry, make movies, and create art about the discovery and discomfort of the migration experience. But I am writing an MRP. The contents of this work are perhaps slightly different, but the exercise is nevertheless the same – an exercise in meaning-making.

Background

In 2020, over 80% of Canada's population growth came from permanent and non-permanent immigration, of which 58% were economic immigrants (Immigrant, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, 2020a). The Government announced its plans to invite 1.2 million new immigrants, at the rate of 3% of its total population between 2021 and 2023 (Immigrant, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, 2020a). The year 2021 was a landmark year for Canadian immigration. The country welcomed the most number of immigrants in a single year in its history, surpassing the previous record from 1913 (Government of Canada, Immigrant, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada, 2021b).

Women accounted for nearly half the economic immigrants admitted to Canada in 2020, with India as the top source country at 23% (Immigrant, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, 2021). These numbers are said to grow based on the IRCC actively prioritizing economic immigration to meet labour-market (economic), nation-building (political), and demographic (social) objectives. To promote immigrant womens' success, in 2021, the Immigration, Refugee, Citizenship Canada (IRCC) launched the Racialized Newcomer Women Pilot with $15 million in funding to support employment outcomes and career advancement for racialized newcomers through specialized settlement programs (Government of Canada, Immigrant, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada, 2021a). However, the question remains: is an employment-first settlement program sufficient to ensure the ongoing thriving of racialized women newcomers to Canada?

The premise of this MRP is that meaningful immigrant settlement initiatives can only be designed when there is an intimate understanding of what individual journeys look like. As a result, it studies women immigrants' evolving needs and resilient tendencies within the context of the Canadian immigration system. It traces their journey through stages including planning, moving, arriving, settling, integrating, and thriving and examines the systemic context at each stage.

The research contests the policy gaze of a strictly linear and prototypical immigration journey and presents the complex realities of an immigrant's lived experience. It shows how immigrant journeys unfold as a rhythmic dance between order and chaos, and stability and transformation. This new understanding of fragmented and nonlinear journeys presents new individual and systemic intervention opportunities. The MRP concludes not with recommendations or innovative solutions but with an opportunity landscape/ map that calls for co-creation, dialogue, and a deeper examination.

Purpose & Goals

This project aims to understand how immigrant women between the ages of 25 and 35 adapted to emerging uncertainties at every phase of their immigration journey while analyzing the role of micro and macro systemic forces that enable and impede them.

My own subjective experience was the primary driver of this research undertaking. I wanted to use this project to critically unpack my journey using the tools and frameworks from the SFI toolkit while also attempting to add value to the existing understanding of the individual experiences in the immigration system.

Potential implications for the individual: Immigrants face vast amounts of internal and external ambivalence. While going through this experience, people lose sight of their journeys and it's recursive patterns. This project aims to validate those experiences and place them in context. By showing people how the invisible system forces shape their experiences, this project hopes to help them find their own way in their journeys and take back control of it. Furthermore, the study also aims to help future immigrants better prepare for their own immigration journeys.

Potential implications for the Immigration system: Understanding the conditions of immigrant journeys and resilience might enable policymakers to imagine and co-create innovative systemic interventions that support the unique, layered, and complex immigrant journey.

Research Question & Methodology

The research began with open-ended inquiry seeking to gather stories and experiences of women immigrants of Indian origin who now live in Canada.

After conducting approximately 20 hours of interviews and gathering an archive of over 70 years of combined lived immigrant experience (not including mine) between the ten research participants, I was inundated with data and stories. I felt both a sense of excitement and responsibility to represent these experiences accurately and make sense of them in a productive way that honours the individuals. There was a lot of complexity and nuance to sort through and dissect.

I wasn't sure how to proceed to the next steps until I found an anchoring concept, a theoretical frame, through which to slice and dice the data. I was looking for patterns during my initial synthesis. A common insight revealed itself:

Women regularly adapt to change, loss, uncertainty, and unpredictability throughout their journeys across both internal and external realms. Most of this adaptation happens automatically, without an active, concerted effort to do so.

External changes included revisions to the immigration laws and uncertainties about housing and employment. Internal changes included making sense of novelty, loss, anticipation, loneliness, homesickness, and negotiating identities.

After eight years as an immigrant in Canada, I still find myself constantly having to adapt to situations that marginalize me. Yet, I never actively paid attention to this until I heard it echo in every woman's story. This raised many questions for me. How exactly do people adapt? How does this resilience unfold during the immigration journey? Is this a natural tendency, or is it automatic? What is the cost of emotional labour that underlies this kind of 'adaptation'? Is the resilient quality of first-generation immigrants different from second- or third-generation immigrants? If so, how? How does the immigration system support or impede this innate capacity for change? If resilience helps individual change-journeys (through migration), how can it aid societal change?

After untangling these preliminary lines of inquiry, I decided to focus the scope of this project to the following primary research question:

Research Question

How does resilience unfold throughout an immigrant woman's journey from India to Canada as she plans, moves, arrives, settles, integrates, and thrives in Canadian society?

Secondary Questions

Along with this primary question, the following secondary questions were also considered throughout the research.

- What systemic forces enable immigrant resilience? What systemic forces pose barriers to immigrant resilience?

- How does understanding immigrant resilience help policymakers design more inclusive policies?

- What micro, meso, and macro interventions can support women immigrants from India to amplify their resilience throughout their journey?

Data Gathering Methods

Ethnography - To gather human stories

To explore the immigration journeys of women from India to Canada, I chose to use primarily qualitative methods. Qualitative research provides a "deeper sense of the complexity of human experience, and makes it possible to avoid forcing predetermined categories onto the phenomena we are studying" (BenEzer, 2019, pp. 20). Therefore, hinged on their life narratives, I conducted 60-minute-long semi-structured interviews with ten women, intending to understand their immigration journeys. These interviews were conducted via online video conferencing.

The interview framework was designed to give participants utmost control and agency as they reflect and tell the stories of their immigration experiences. This was a deliberate design choice to contrast it with formal immigration interviews (when obtaining visas and citizenship) that are confusing and daunting, and the power dynamic skewed against the individual. The autonomy in the interview conversation was also meant to honour immigrants with nonlinear journeys.

Visual and verbal prompts were used as tools to help interviewees take control of the conversational flow. Visual prompts were cue cards on an online whiteboard that provided a degree of autonomy to the participant to control and direct the flow of the conversation. These cards were organized based on themes. Respondents chose a theme to begin the discussion and then moved to the next theme. Verbal prompts were meant for the researcher as cues to dig deeper into the respondents' experiences. Verbal prompts functioned to eliminate the cognitive load on the immigrants as some of their journeys have been ongoing for decades.

The interviews gave them the power to tell their stories by choosing and controlling the flow between the various themes. There were six main themes for reflection, under which prompts and thought-starters were used to guide the reflection (see Appendix D / Interview Guide). Quotes from the interviews are used throughout the report anonymously.

Secondary research - To learn about the systemic context

Secondary research helped me to understand the current discourse on immigration in the context of Canada and existing theories on the migratory phenomenon. Literature sources included books, academic articles, policy documents, podcasts, poetry, and social media posts.

Data Analysis Methods

Systemic Design - To model system structures, and dynamics

The study used the Systemic Design Toolkit tools to synthesize research findings (Systemic Design Toolkit, 2020). Systems thinking tools feature prominently in Chapter 2 on the immigration system. The Iterative Inquiry tool was used to map the stages through which the immigration system, represented through the IRCC, carries out its functions, processes, and structures. Causal Loop Diagrams were employed to surface hidden behaviours and dynamics that hold the system in place.

Verge Domains - Analysis and storytelling

Developed by Michele Bowman and Richard Lum (2014), this framework is a tool that foregrounds a human-centered approach to analysis. The framework consists of six domains of human experience: Define, Relate, Connect, Create, Consume, and Destroy. The framework is meant to "generate much richer and more vivid details of actual life as lived by real people" (Lum, 2014). Though originally designed as a framework for an alternative environmental scanning taxonomy, I use it differently as a clustering, analysis, and storytelling tool in this project. Please refer to Appendix A for a detailed description of the Verge framework, and Appendix B for detailed interview analysis using the Verge domains.

Journey/ Expereince Mapping - To synthesize system effects and human experiences

Journey or Experience Mapping is a human-centered design tool that synthesizes and visualizes human experiences through a product, service, or system either as it exists (current-state journeys) or as it is planned (future-state journeys) (Stickdorn et al, 2018, pp. 44). A typical journey map consists of at least the following three elements. First, the different stages or steps a person may undertake through a system. Second, it shows their physical, emotional, mental, and personal narratives embedded within such a journey (Panzera et al., 2017). Third, the map denotes touchpoints, including platforms and channels through which users interact with the system to exchange value. Experience mapping aims to identify gaps and friction points in the experience, and creates a shared synthesis that brings alignment and inspires new opportunities for innovation (Bridgeable, 2022).
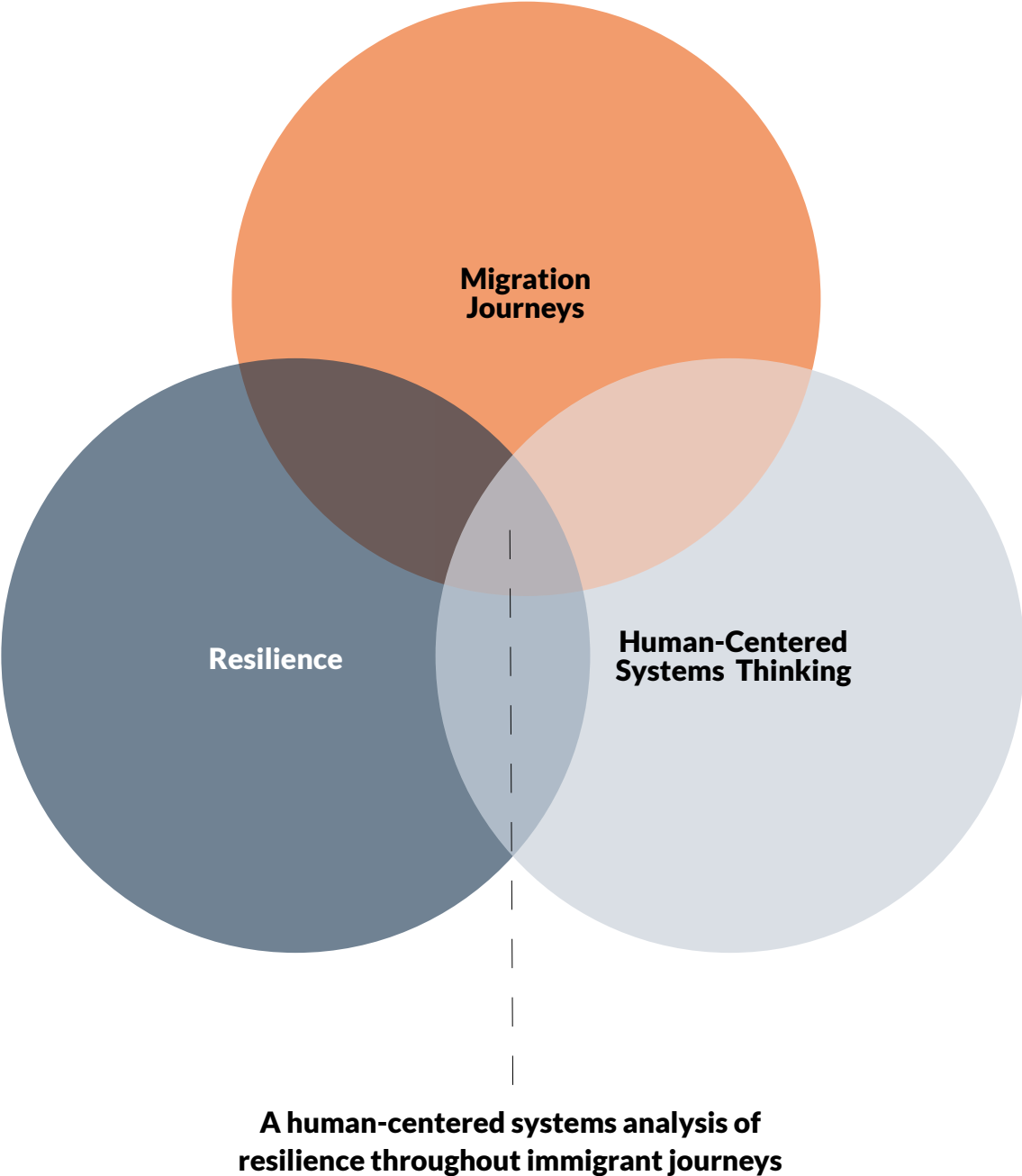
Areas of Inquiry

**A human-centered systems analysis of
resilience throughout immigrant journeys**

Figure 1 / Areas of Inquiry

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Migration Journeys

The first area of inquiry is migration journeys. Immigration is a journey. A journey, by definition, is a state of movement across place and time (BenEzer & Zetter, 2014). Like any journey, it begins with a mission, and as it unfurls, people experience transformations, barriers, and learnings. Although the physical movement from one place to another is the most obvious kind of movement that immigrants undertake, we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the emotional, psychological, and personal journey that layers onto the physical journey. So why did I choose to study journeys? Firstly, understanding them helps us understand the human experience and understand that every journey is different. Secondly, closely studying immigrant journeys can better inform immigration policy that aligns with the complex realities of the lived experiences of immigrants (BenEzer & Zetter, 2014). And finally, stories of journeys can be an effective tool to give voice to an immigrant's experience, which is often overshadowed by macro-structural discourses on the topic (BenEzer & Zetter, 2014).

At the outset, it is essential to clarify what constitutes a journey. As a conceptual framework, a journey has a beginning and end. But in the case of an immigration journey, these points are not absolute. A journey can begin even before it physically starts by anticipating events, listening to stories of those who have already journeyed, planning, and preparing (BenEzer & Zetter, 2014). Similarly, the moment of arrival on a journey is not clearly defined. The journey continues even after the end of the physical event (BenEzer & Zetter, 2014). The end can only be constructed in the minds of the people journeying.

There is an implicit and explicit passage through space and time underlining an immigrant journey. As a movement across geographical places, migration typically commences from a home country to a host country (in this case, Canada). In addition, during the movement, immigrants also journey through in-between places, whether they are transit locations or just in motion, flying above familiar and unfamiliar landscapes that become part of their journeys. Likewise, time and temporalities also shape these journey experiences. The most noticeable passage of time is the travel time between destinations. But every immigrant journey is composed of other temporalities such as "waiting, accelerating, queuing, being still, stopping, repeating" (Griffiths, Rogers & Anderson, 2013). These subjective experiences of time and its passage significantly temper an immigrant's journey.

Resilience

The second area of inquiry is resilience. After interviewing ten immigrants for this project, it became apparent that immigration is a journey of change. People experience many types of change, sometimes simultaneously, throughout their journeys. Emotional change, social and economic status change, and change in place are all layered and can be an overwhelming experience. An individual's capacity to maintain "their core purpose and integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances" is what resilience is. It is one of the factors that determines their success in the short and long term (Zolli & Healy, 2013).

To study the interplay between change and resilience, I use C.S. Holling and Lance Gunderson's Theory of Adaptive Cycles which explains the natural patterns of change from a micro to a macro scale in natural and socio-ecological systems (2002). The model maps a process of change in a complex dynamic system through a periodic rhythmic dance between order and chaos and stability and transformation. The adaptive cycle maps onto X-Y axes. The Y-axis measures individual potential to change - stored social, human, and cultural capital employed to determine the possible alternatives for the future. The X-axis measures the degree of connectedness between internal processes of the system. High connectedness indicates high internal rigidity, thus rising vulnerability to external and internal threats. Low connectedness depicts low internal rigidity and high dynamism. The invisible Z-axis denotes resilience or adaptive capacity. It is the quality of the system to grow, sustain, shift, and reorganize across the entire cycle. It is a measure of system continuity in the face of abundance, unpredictability, and shock. Together, potential, connectedness, and resilience are the three characteristics of adaptive cycles (Gunderson & Holling, 2002).

The adaptive cycle comprises four stages:

Growth / This stage is characterized by rapid growth and accumulation of resources and information to establish a new trajectory. Since the primary aim is growth, the system builds nimble and entrepreneurial configurations for such expansion. The system forms network connections, trust, and dependencies during this phase (Gunderson & Holling, 2002).

Conservation / This phase is "characterized by stable, rigid structures and processes that conserve energy and emphasize production (passel, n.d.)." This phase is about controlled development as the aim here is to optimally store and deploy the resources and capital accumulated during the growth phase. Networks and flows are created within the system to maintain effective organization and structure. However, this organization eventually leads the system to become over-connected and rigid.

Release / This stage is where creative destruction takes place. Following "some kind of disturbance to the system and is characterized by a collapse of system structure and process (passel, n.d.)" internal or external agents of disturbance trigger the collapse. Of course, a system needs to maintain its core functions to survive this. But if done right, it also offers the opportunity for creative and emergent solutions to surface.

Reorganization / This phase is characterized by the "recombination of system components to create similar or novel structures and processes (passel, n.d.)." During this phase, the system aims to reorient these new adaptive pathways. Renewal, regeneration, and reorientation are prioritized over recovery. And the system develops new rules, structures, functions, and flows through novel recombinations. This stage fosters transformative growth.

Most immigrant's journeys traverse through the four stages of change that resemble an adaptive cycle. First, they go through slow cycles of accumulation, and stability, followed by faster cycles of collapse and reorganization. Drawing on this theory of Adaptive Cycles, Chapter 3 shows how resilience emerges during immigration journey phases.
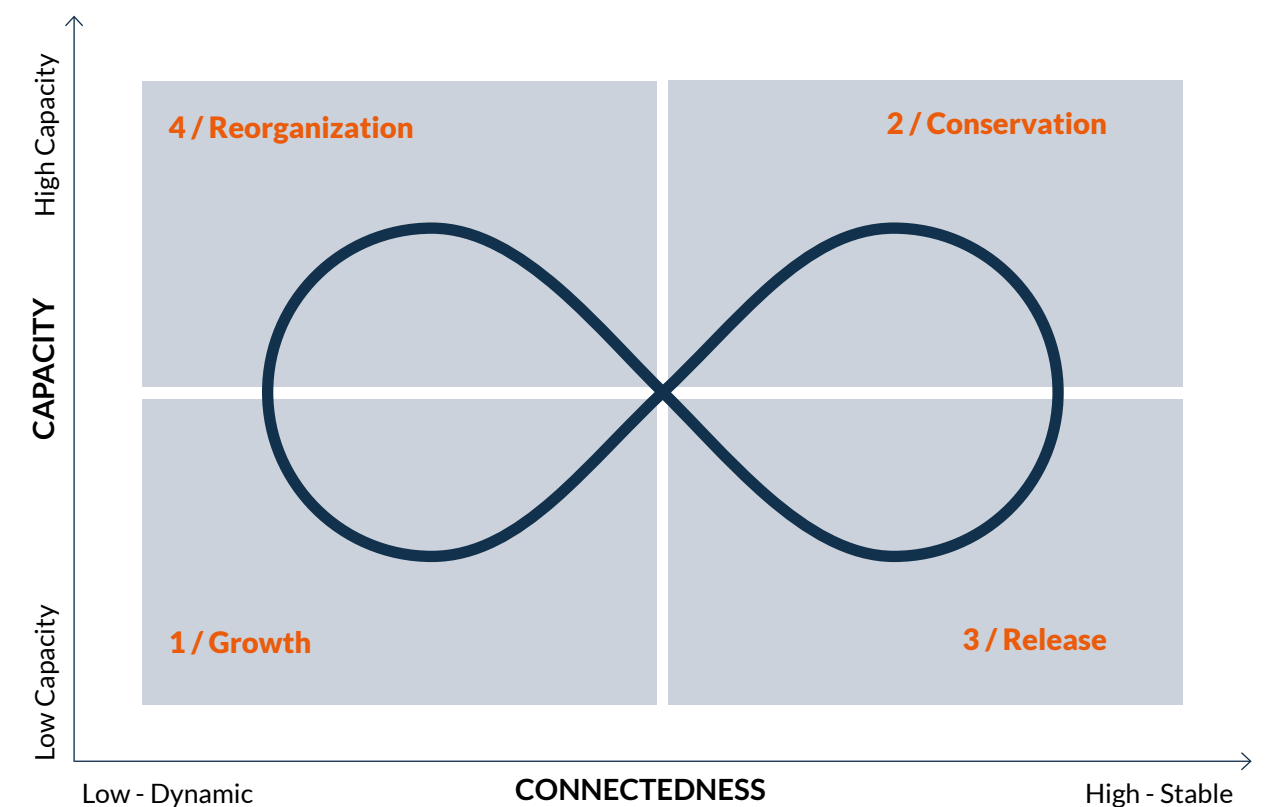

Figure 2 / Adaptation of the Adaptive Cycles Model (Gunderson & Holling, 2002)

Capacities for Resilience

Resilience can be constructed at three scales: individual, collective, and transformative (Bhuyan, Chime & Bobadilla, 2021). **Individual resilience** refers to independently adapting and responding to incremental changes; navigating personal uncertainties. **Collective resilience** draws on collective resources to "respond to and influence change, sustain and renew the community and develop new trajectories for the future, so they can thrive in a changing environment" (Rippon et al., 2020). Finally, **transformative resilience** is the capacity not only to anticipate future events and map out the implications of an unexpected disruption but also the capacity to bounce forward. Implied in this notion is the ability to influence large systems, re-structure processes at various levels, and resist systemic equalities for the benefit of society (Bhuyan, Chime & Bobadilla, 2021).

Exercising resilience at these levels requires cultivating resilience capacities: absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities (OECD, 2014).

Absorptive capacity is the ability of an individual or system to absorb the impact of a danger through pre-existing coping techniques and resources. The outcome of this capacity is persistence, or the ability to preserve normal functioning through moderating or buffering the impacts of shocks on their livelihoods and basic needs. When absorptive capacity is exceeded, individuals or systems exercise their adaptive capacity (Béné et al, 2012).

Adaptive capacity is the ability of an individual or system to make incremental changes to its characteristics and actions to mitigate potential, future damage and to take advantage of opportunities, all in order to continue functioning without major qualitative changes in function or structural identity. In most cases, people are adapting to a combination of stressors, not just a single source of threat. When the need for adaptive capacity is exceeded, transformative capacity is exercised (Béné et al, 2012).

Transformative capacity is a deliberate process that is either initiated by individuals involved or even forced upon them by environmental or socio-economic conditions. This type of capacity often involves critically examining systemic values, challenging the status quo, and redesigning a fundamentally new system. These shifts can take the form of social and technological innovations, behavioural and attitudinal shifts, and institutional reforms (Béné et al, 2012).

Human-centered Systems Thinking

The third area of inquiry is human-centered systems thinking; an approach to solving complex systemic problems emphasizing the needs of humans (IDEO U, 2022). It combines the analytical approaches of systems thinking and creative and empathy-driven approaches of human-centered design (IDEO U, 2022). The resulting outcome is a solution that considers the needs of system functions and human stakeholders. This work uses human-centered design and systemic design (Systemic Design Toolkit, 2020) tools to examine the impacts of the immigration system on individuals. Chapter 2 of the report probes the functions, processes, and systems stories (common behaviours of the system). Chapter 3 uses tools from human-centered design to gather and synthesize human stories.

Study Limitations

- The participants were recruited from my extended social networks who live in Toronto, Vancouver, and Ottawa. As a result, the study is missing perspectives of women who migrate to rural or semi-urban Canada.

- The purview of this research is limited to economic immigrants. Insights and recommendations are based only on the study of the economic immigration system.

- The research scope was limited to understanding macro-structural influences of the immigration system in Canada, and did not cover the causes for immigration arising from the home country, i.e., India.

- The systemic examination of the economic immigration system in Canada was conducted through secondary sources.

- My own biases informed the choice and framing of the topic. I acknowledge that there may be multiple ways to study and represent the immigrant journey. This is just one of them.

- The study was conceived, conducted, synthesized, and published during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The physical, mental, emotional, and social ramifications of the pandemic, particularly on women of colour, have most certainly influenced the stories and analysis, and thus, the whole direction of this research (Luna K.C., 2021).

Chapter 2 /
Where the Journey Unfolds

it appears nothing is new
never was
and nothing is truly massive
when seen in its wholeness

— Love is an Emergent Process, adrienne maree brown

This research is a story of individual immigrants. But, by placing it within the context of the invisible systemic forces that shape it, the study hopes to deliver a nuanced understanding of those individual narratives. The following chapter explores the evolution and the current state of economic immigration in Canada. First, three eras of economic immigration are discussed, along with the underlying economic models that animated them. Next, the chapter moves into a current-state systems analysis of economic immigration streams of the IRCC, uncovering its structures and system stories. The chapter overlays individual voices onto system dynamics to demonstrate the consequences it generates for the individual.

A System Within Systems

To begin with, it is necessary to specify that the IRCC does not exist in a vacuum, nor does its specific economic immigration stream. A nested system hierarchy map shows the different nested levels of the immigration system.

At **level one**, we have the Government of Canada. This level sets the priorities, policies, and targets for immigration. The IRCC, along with other Federal departments, occupies this level.

The **second level** zooms into the IRCC, the body responsible for selecting, issuing visas, and granting citizenship (Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, n.d.). The goals of the Canadian immigration system are primarily two-fold—economic goals to meet the labor-market shortage; and nation-building to select new immigrants who have the potential to build the future of Canada. The IRCC meets these goals through immigration programs broadly categorized into the Economic Class, Family Reunification Class, Protected Persons & Refugees, and Humanitarian Class (Zahid, 2021).

The **third level** further zooms into Economic Class immigration, which admits the largest share of new immigrants, at 62% in 2021 (El-Assal & Thevenot, 2022). Immigrants are admitted into the country through this category because, at a fundamental level, they help fulfill economic needs and contribute to the country's economic progress. The Economic Class immigration program can be further classified into two main streams— permanent immigration and temporary immigration.

Permanent immigration streams refer to the immigration programs that admit people either as Permanent Residents or offer a direct pathway to permanent residency. The Economic Class represents more than half of the permanent immigration streams. The largest share of economic immigrants comes through Express Entry. The second-largest economic immigration pathway is the Provincial Nominee Program, which accounted for one-fourth of all immigrants in 2019 (Cheatham, 2022).

Temporary immigration streams refer to immigration programs that provide temporary entry of foreign nationals under the authority of a valid permit (e.g., a work permit, study permit, Minister's permit, etc.). Such temporary residents include foreign workers and international students (Zahid, 2021).

This project's scope is to examine the economic immigration system, focusing specifically on permanent immigration. The rationale for choosing this scope is because permanent economic immigration streams account for the largest share of incoming immigrant populations. And from the immigrant perspective, the popularity of Canada as a destination over other countries.
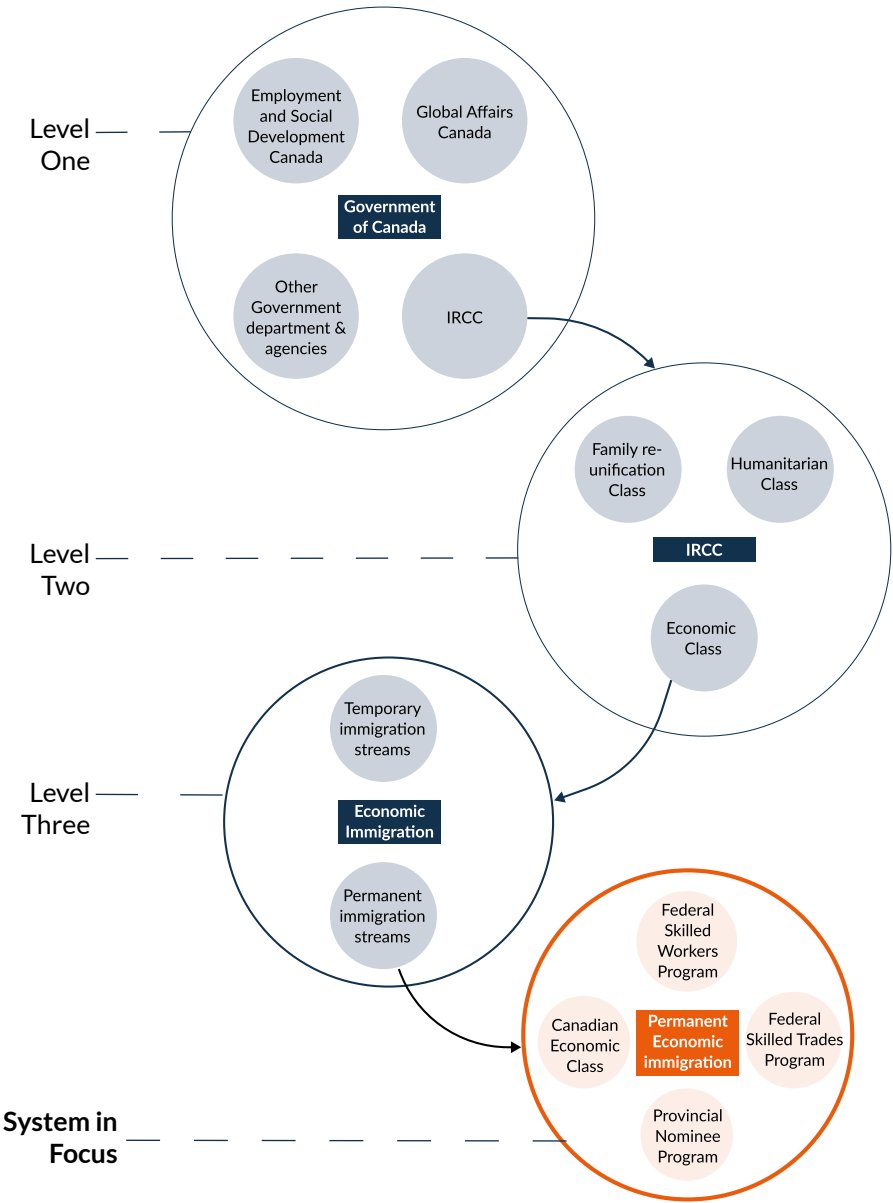

Figure 3 / Nested Systems Diagram

Who Are Economic Immigrants?

The Government of Canada defines economic immigrants as:

"Immigrants who have been selected for their ability to contribute to Canada's economy through their ability to meet labour market needs, to own and manage or to build a business, to make a substantial investment, to create their own employment or to meet specific provincial or territorial labour market needs" (Statistics Canada, 2019).

A combination of complex systemic constraints and personal agency interact before an immigrant decides to migrate to Canada. De Haas attributes migrants to be rational and free actors who make cost-benefit calculations prior to deciding if immigrating to Canada would be a worthwhile undertaking for them (2021).

Many migration scholars view economic immigrants as 'voluntary' immigrants. Although this group is considered to have more agency and fewer systemic barriers, de Haas proposes that migrants in this category also face considerable systemic constraints that factor into their decision-making. In fact, he proposes that the "dichotomous divide between the study of voluntary and that of forced migration" is more of a "continuum running from low to high constraints under which migration occurs" (2021).

Given the number of temporary and permanent economic immigration programs in Canada, it contributes to a broad range of immigrants coming in every year. There is considerable diversity of individuals based on their intersectional identities and the varying degrees of social, cultural, political, financial, and human capital they possess.

This research focuses on the groups with the most visible power relative to the other economic immigrants. I primarily focus on immigrants whose pathways have been Canadian Experience Class, Provincial Nomination Program, and Federal Skilled Worker Program. The rationale for choosing this group within the larger Economic Class is the significantly large size of this cohort.

The Evolution of Economic Immigration

The following section briefly discusses the evolution of economic immigration in Canada. It shows the underlying economic model that governs it, and its role in serving economic development and nation-building objectives.

Era 1: Early Years of Economic Immigration

Since its conception with the Canadian Pacific Railway agreement in 1880, Canada's economic migration has evolved significantly. In the early days, industrialists promoted immigration as a source of cheap labour from developing countries. Despite xenophobic sentiments towards racialized workers, particularly the Chinese, business interests continued to determine the trajectory of immigration laws (Kaushal, 2019).

Economic model: Demand-driven Model

The primary economic model that governed this era of immigration was demand-driven (Kaushal, 2019). A demand-driven immigration model is primarily an employer-led model where employers select immigrants to fill their immediate labour needs, provided they meet the government's legal criteria. This type of immigration chooses individuals who fill temporary, low-skilled job gaps in the market. The power to admit them lies with businesses. However, the government withholds the final say on admission by screening potential candidates mainly to meet security protocols. By choosing candidates who can directly fulfill labour demands, the host country minimizes the risk of immigrant unemployment and under-employment (Papademetriou & Hooper, 2019).

- **Role in the economy** / While this type of immigration is well-suited to meet temporary labour needs, it does not translate well for long-term labour and economic priorities. Hired to fulfill immediate needs, this group of immigrants finds it harder to remain competitive based on the evolving needs of the economy (Papademetriou & Hooper, 2019).

- **Role in nation-building** / This type of immigration is targeted toward temporary workers. The model offers few pathways to transition migrant workers to Permanent Residents and citizens of Canada, forcing them to rely on their temporary status to remain in the country (Omidvar, 2022).

Era 2: A Shift Away from Economic Priorities

In the years leading up to World War II, the focus shifted from economic needs to building and maintaining a homogenous society aligned with Canada's racial and national origins. To drive this, long-term integration was prioritized. During the postwar years, the focus shifted towards sponsored family immigrants and refugees, and others that fled Europe (Cheatham, 2022).

Era 3: The Points System of Economic Immigration

Since the 1960s, Canada has adopted expansionist and largely non-discriminatory immigration policies. In 1967, the Canadian government formally ended racial discrimination in admitting new immigrants (Dirks, 2021). And the emphasis shifted once again to economic growth. The Canadian government launched the Points System for economic immigration the same year (Dirks, 2021). This system encouraged a spike in immigration from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America (Cheatham, 2022).

Economic model: Human Capital Model

The Points System is based on the human capital economic model. It evaluates immigrants on a set of human capital points that measure their long-term employability and potential for societal integration rather than their ability to meet immediate, temporary labour-market gaps. This system functioned to supply skilled immigrants who demonstrate strong economic and social potential for long-term integration into Canadian society. Human capital is "the aggregation of the innate abilities and the knowledge and skills that individuals acquire and develop throughout their lifetime." In the immigration context, the concept emphasizes the intergenerational transferability of these abilities and knowledge (Kaushal, 2019).

- **Role in the economy** / With its focus on employability, this system contributes significantly to the perception of immigrants as an economic boon (Reitz, 2012). It also assesses individuals for their adaptability and long-term fit, thus boosting their individual economic productivity.

- **Role in nation-building** / While meant to assess labour-market integration primarily, this model does not ignore the overall societal integration of immigrants, which is essential to foster a sense of membership and belonging among immigrants (Kaushal, 2019).

Era 4: Representing Market Needs in Immigration

In 2015, the government launched the Express Entry system as a "new active recruitment model" that will lead to a "faster and more flexible economic immigration system that will address Canada's economic and labour market needs" (Government of Canada, 2014). Express Entry created a pool of eligible candidates for businesses, provinces, and the IRCC to select from, and admit. It focuses on meeting rapid and emerging needs, rather than long-term objectives.

Economic model: Neo-corporatist Model

The Express Entry system of Canada is based on the Neo-corporatist model. It combines some elements of the demand-driven and human capital models (Kaushal, 2019). The term Neo-corporatism was coined by Rey Koslowski, who defines it as the government selection of immigrants using a points system with extensive business and labour participation (Koslowski, 2014). The Express Entry system uses a points-based scoring system and layers a secondary scoring system called the Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS), which factors human capital points while also prioritizing applications selected by employers and provinces (through provincial nominations) (Kaushal, 2019).

- **Role in the economy** / Since Express Entry is designed to admit immigrants who, first and foremost, demonstrate the likelihood to "become economically established in Canada", it inherently prioritizes economic growth and highlights economic fit (Kaushal, 2019).

- **Role in nation-building** / Permitting employers and provinces to choose immigrants based on set criteria "loosens the knot between immigration and nation-building" (Kaushal, 2019). By decentralizing immigration decisions, the Federal Government forfeits its power to select based on the goal of nation-building.

Timeline/ The Evolution of Economic Immigration in Canada

1988: Canadian Multiculturalism Act passed

1999: Pronvinces given authority over immigration - PNP launched

1962: Racial discriminatory criteria for economic immigration removed

2008: Launched Ministerial Instructions

The Immigration Act of 1906: Restrictions on racialized immigrants

1967: Points-System launched

2015: Express Entry launched

1980: Canadian Pacific Railway Agreement

1920s: courting British nationals to migrate to Canada

| 1880 | 1900 | 1910 | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 |

| Era 1 | Era 2 | Era 3 | Era 4 |

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Demand-driven Model

Immigration well-suited to meet temporary labour needs, it does not translate well for long-term labour and economic priorities. Focused on raciliazed workers, primarily from China.

Economic immigration de-prioritized

Human Capital Model

Focuses on employability. Assesses individuals for their adaptability and long-term fit, thus boosting their individual economic productivity.

Neo-corporatist Model

Combines demand-driven and human capital models. Prioritizes economic growth and highlights economic fit.

NATION-BUILDNG

Selective nation-building

It was difficult for racialized workers to settle in canada, even though they were the ones that were recruited to build the railway network. Instead, there was an policy push towards attracting settlers from Britain to maintain the Canada's British heritage.

Urban migrants & Refugees

Immigrants were a heterogenous group with a greater diversity of skills occupations, which were more urban than rural.

Multiculturalist paradigm

Nation-building efforts focused on celebrating multiculturalism and encouraging ethnic diversity in Canada.

Market influence de-prioritizing nation-building

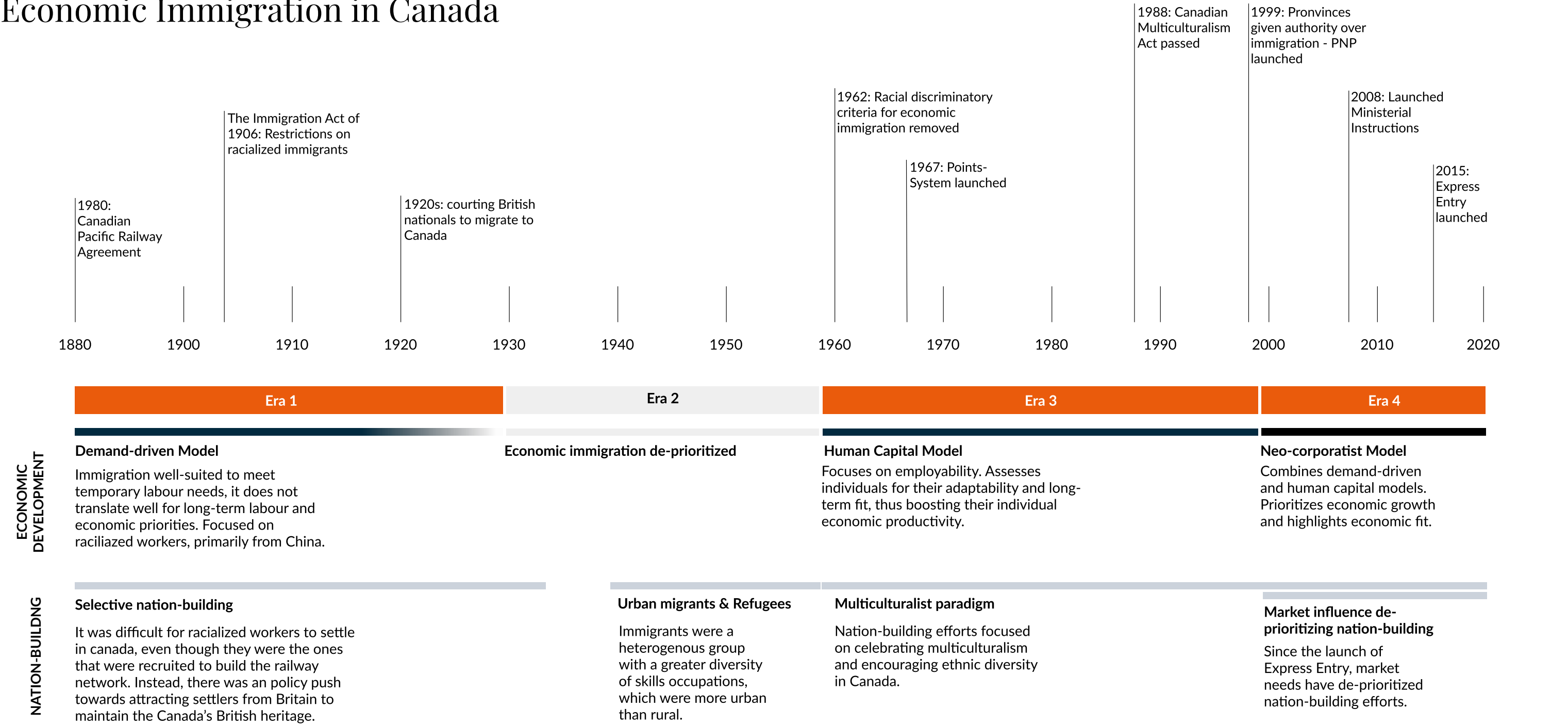Since the launch of Express Entry, market needs have de-prioritized nation-building efforts.

Figure 4 / Timeline of The Evolution of Economic Immigration in Canada

How the System Functions Today

The following section is a systemic analysis of the current immigration system. It aims to map out the structure, stakeholders, and dynamics that hold the system intact and enable its purpose to be achieved.

First, uncovering system structure through Iterative Inquiry

Using the Iterative Inquiry tool, this section identifies structure, process, function, and context at each system level as it perpetuates throughout the immigration process. Gharajedaghi proposed the iterative inquiry tool as an "iterative process of inquiry for understanding complexity" (Gharajedaghi, 2011).

The four areas of inquiry of this tool include:

- **Function /** Refers to the initiating action that triggers a system sequence
- **Structure /** Refers to the places, people, roles, organizations, and their relationships
- **Process /** Refers to the activities, sequence of tasks, know-how required to produce the outcome
- **Purpose /** Refers to the purpose of the entire cycle

The purpose of using this tool is to frame up the immigration system based on its core functions of selecting immigrants, issuing visas, and granting citizenship (Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, n.d.). They are placed within nested levels, where the function, structure, process, and context are understood. In the sequential order, the IRCC attracts, selects, invites, and retains immigrants.

The Iterative Inquiry tool is typically used to examine different system levels from micro, meso and exo, to macro. But for this investigation, I use this tool to analyze the different stages of the immigration process from attracting, selecting, inviting to retaining. These main functions take place in nested, concentric circles. Each of the stages has its own structure, process, and context, and that is what I unpack using the Iterative Inquiry tool.

Next, identifying system dynamics through Causal Loops

System dynamics is an approach to learning about complex systems and their underlying structures and behaviors through Causal Loop Diagrams. How do elements in the system interact and what are the outcomes of such interactions? Uncovering these behaviors reveals high-leverage intervention points (Sterman, 2002).

Causal Loop Diagrams describe how one element in a system influences another in either a positive or negative direction. Based on the nature of this influence, feedback loops are noted between elements (Peters, 2014). Two types of feedback loops exist: **Reinforcing loops**, which are positive feedback loops, "where A produces more B, which produces more A". **Balancing loops** are negative feedback loops "where a positive change in one leads to a push back in the opposite direction" (Haque, 2021, pp. 47). The project also uses System Archetypes to depict the causes and effects of the system. System Archetypes are feedback loops that describe commonly anticipated problems across diverse systems. They are valuable in diagnosis of common system patterns (Braun, 2002).
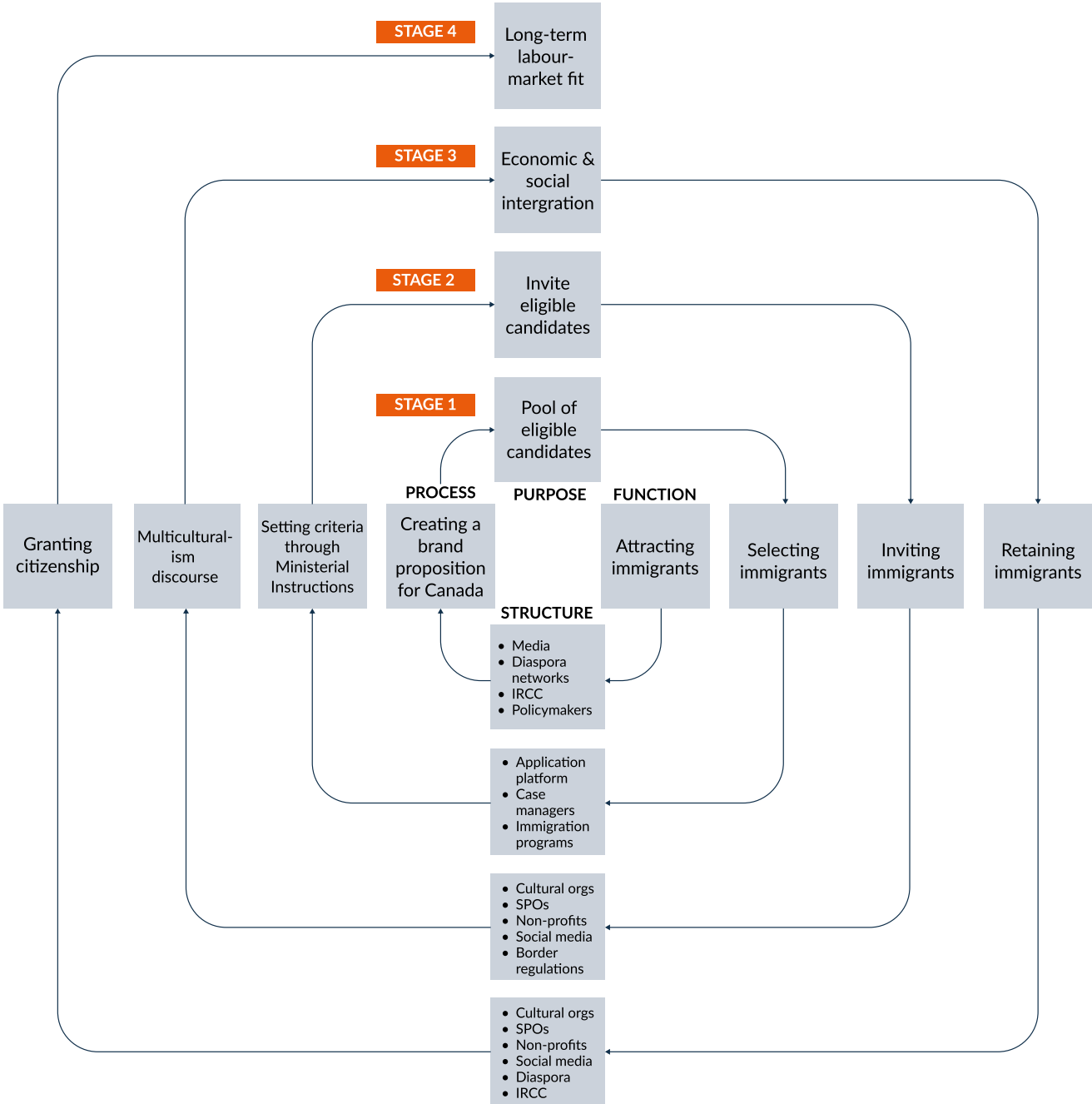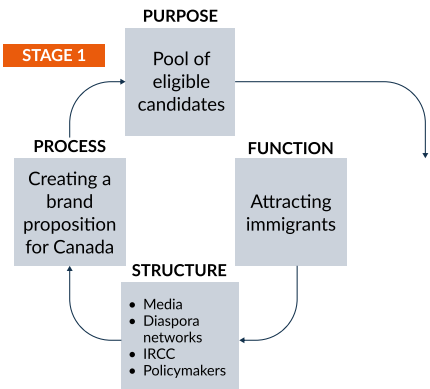

Figure 5 / Iterative Inquiry Map of the Economic Immigration System

Stage 1 /
Attracting
Immigrants

The first stage of the system structure is attracting immigrants. It maps onto the pre-arrival phase of the individual journey.

Function / The initiating action that triggers the system sequence is to attract eligible immigrants to consider immigrating to Canada for better opportunities.

Structure /

- Media
- Formal and informal peer and diaspora networks
- Universities/ employers
- Policymakers

Process / The process includes creating and disseminating a compelling value proposition that generates interest and appeal for potential immigrants to Canada.

Purpose / The system is working to build a pool of interested and eligible candidates at this stage.

System Dynamic / Calibrating demand and supply of eligible and qualified immigrants

A Demand and Supply See-saw loops (loops 1 and 2) show how the immigration system calibrates immigrant inflow into the country. This generic structure resembles a see-saw with supply on one side, demand on the other, and an adjusting variable in the middle that balances both sides (Goodman & Lannon, n.d.). In this case, the supply side is indicated by the number of applicants (loop 2), and the demand side is indicated via the number of applicants admitted (loop 1). The adjusting variable, i.e. the eligibility points, governs the balance between these elements.

A policy instrument called the Ministerial Instructions is used to modify eligibility criteria on an ongoing basis. Ministerial Instructions are "statutory and regulatory instruments without the usual baggage of democratic lawmaking. They immediately have the force of law, but they do not require advance notice, consultation, or analysis" (Kaushal, 2019, pp. 109). By employing Ministerial Instructions to tune the immigration system finely, policymakers resort to a typical system behavior called Shifting the Burden. The archetype describes how implementing short-sighted interventions to complex problems perpetuates the problem and worsens it over time (Braun, 2002).

Policymakers prioritize applicants that demonstrate rapid economic integration by rewarding more points to a job offer or a Provincial Nominee - indicating an immediate economic fit (as seen in loop 3). However, by doing so, they lose sight of criteria that reflect longer-term

integration and settlement of immigrants, which only takes place in a delayed fashion (as seen in loop 4). By shifting the burden to a temporary intervention, the problem of economic integration is symptomatically addressed but, over time, causes challenges in long-term social and economic settlement (as seen in loop 5) (Kaushal, 2019).

Demand-Supply See-saw balanced through adjustable variable (Eligibility Points)

Shifting the Burden - Prioritizing a symptomatic solution (rapid economic integration) over a fundamental solution (steady economic integration), resulting in a compromise over the long-term
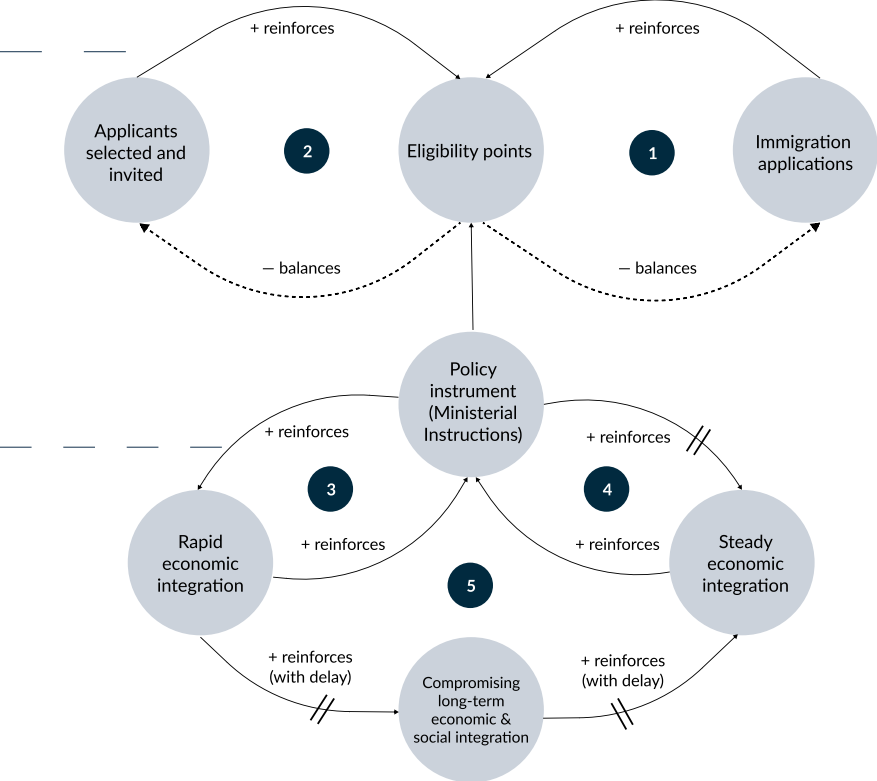

Figure 6 / Calibrating Demand and Supply of Eligible Immigrants

Impact on the Individual

The quote below describes a conversation with an interviewee who recalls how she had to manage an overwhelming amount of stress caused by the uncertainty of whether the system would process her visa. The system does not prioritize informing individuals about immigration decisions, as it gives them leverage to continue finely calibrating the supply and demand of the immigration pipeline. But, what is important here is that the opaqueness impacts humans within the system.

> And it was not that easy for me to get my visitor's visa. Unlike many people who applied before they got married, I only applied after I got married. So, the chances of my rejection were super high. The stress of not getting it and not being able to join my partner for one and a half years until my PR would be processed. It weighed on my mind until I actually landed in Canada. I had to pinch myself to ensure that I actually got through immigration."

Stage 2 / Selecting Qualified Immigrants
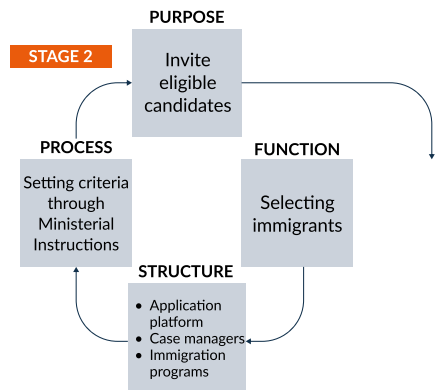
The second stage of the system structure is selecting qualified immigrants. It maps onto the pre-arrival phase of the individual journey.

Function / The interest generated in the previous stage is the prerequisite for this stage of the system. Here, the function is to select, from the existing pool, immigrants that meet Canada's economic and nation-building needs.

Structure /

- Digital application platform
- Case managers
- Ministerial Instructions
- Employers/ universities
- Selection criteria
- Immigration programs
- The IRCC

Process/ The processes at this stage include setting pre-selection criteria through policy instruments, applying them on the immigration applications, selecting and communicating with successful applicants.

Purpose / The system works to invite eligible candidates to immigrate to Canada based on the regulations of the immigration programs through which they were selected.

System dynamic / Selecting successful applicants

In this phase, a common system dynamic occurs while selecting successful candidates. The immigration system rewards applicants with high skills, good education, and high human capital. The archetype, Success to the Successful is used to discuss this behaviour. The archetype describes the common practice of rewarding the successful with more resources with an expectation that performance will continue to improve. This behavior rewards the winner and penalizes the loser in each interaction (Braun, 2002).

This system archetype is used to examine the selection process of successful applicants. In this case, success refers to quickly filling specific labour market demands of the country or region. Loop 2 highlights how conventionally successful applicants (high-skilled knowledge workers) get assigned more eligibility points, ensuring their success in the immigration process. This diminishes points (resources) allocated to non-eligible candidates, reinforcing a specific type of individual as an immigrant.

Success to the Successful - Selecting only candidates who demonstrate immediate labour-market success. Thus, eliminating applicants who display poor short-term, labour-market fit.
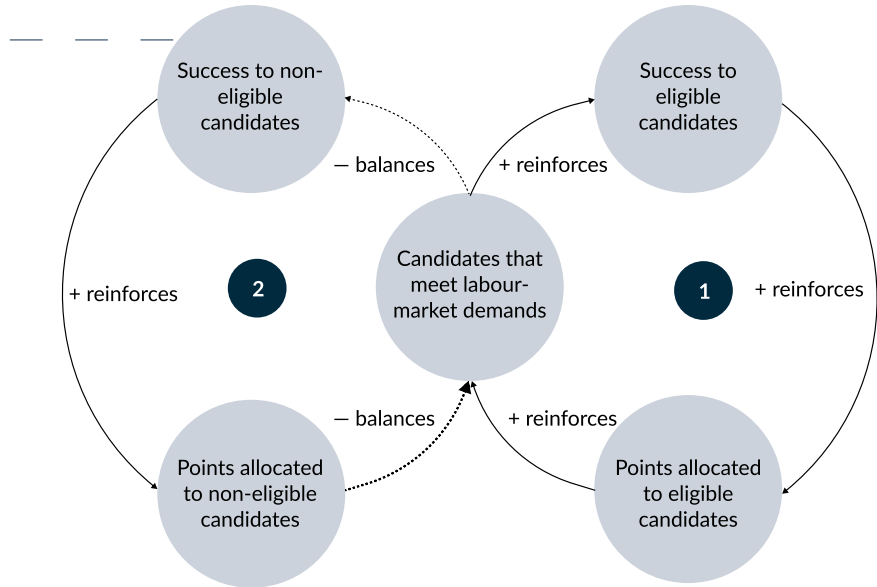

Figure 7 / Perpetuating Success to Candidates Displaying Immediate Labour-market Fit (Success to the Successful Archetype)

Impact on the Individual

The story below is from a respondent that talks about not being able to find suitable and desirable employment opportunities in Canada after completing her graduate studies, which prompted her to move back to India. The decision was not easy to make since there were so many hopes and dreams attached to building a life in Canada. The Success to the Successful archetype explains how individuals who are unwilling to settle for the needs of the labour market lose out within the system.

> "When I came to Toronto the first time, I was so in love with this city. I decided this was the place I wanted to be. This is where I want to settle. I looked for employment opportunities (after graduating), but it was either just not something I was getting or something that I was not particularly liking. The Canadian market is a bit risk averse. What I feel is broken about the system is that Canada doesn't have the jobs to support new immigrants."

Stage 3 / Inviting Selected Applicants

The third stage of the system structure is inviting selected immigrants. It maps onto the arrival phase of the individual journey.

Function / When eligible candidates are invited to become immigrants of Canada, the system's function is to welcome them upon landing.

Structure /

- Cultural organizations
- Service Provider Organizations (SPOs)
- Non-profits
- Social media
- Diaspora
- Border regulations

Process / A host of settlement services, such as webinars and workshops, help immigrants when they arrive. In addition, immigrants are introduced to the inclusiveness and multiculturalism discourses during this stage.

Purpose / During this stage, the system works to help newcomers integrate as best as they can within the labour-market, and Canadian society.

System dynamic / Failures of multiculturalism

The idea of multiculturalism is over-emphasized as both a policy and ideology of life in Canada. It has become the most common trope associated with Canadian culture and values and successfully differentiates the Canadian experience from the US immigration experience. Canada made multiculturalism an official law, enshrined in the Constitution in 1988. Multiculturalism was later exported to other immigration-heavy countries such as Australia and Europe. When Pierre Trudeau, the former Canadian Prime Minister, introduced this policy, he clearly stated its function in promoting the integration of immigrants into Canadian society (Reitz, 2012).

While multiculturalism has had some political and social benefits, it also brings severe misgivings. The rise in anti-racist movements post-pandemic has revealed that multiculturalism has been a superficial policy and has "sustained an unequal society with racism entrenched in its history and ingrained in every aspect of its social structure" (Lei & Guo, 2022). Furthermore, the prevalence of multiculturalism in the mainstream flattens and minimizes the experiences of marginalized communities. This negates the inherent power and privileges some cultures enjoy over others and reduces overall sensitivity to racism in society (Plaut et al, 2018).
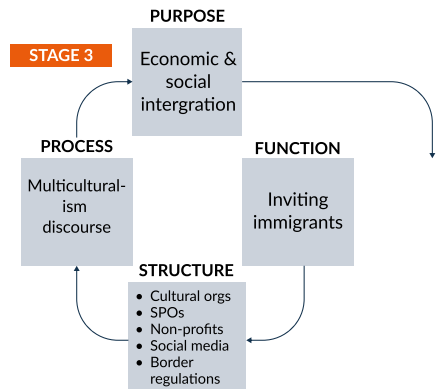
The Fixes that Fail archetype explain the failures of multiculturalism in Canada. The archetype reflects the perils of "reductionist thinking" when solving complex problems. In this case, fixes often fail to address problem symptoms adequately, and the problem persists in different forms (Braun, 2002). For example, loop 1 highlights how to solve the problem of racism and xenophobia among immigrants; the Canadian government addressed this by passing an official multicultural policy. Though this was meant to address the original problem, it reinforces a different type of problem (as seen in loop 2) which flattens communities of colour to a singular narrative of multiculturalism. Instead of solving racism and xenophobia, it exacerbates the issue.

Fixes That Fail - Canada's Multiculturalism policy creates unintended consequences for individuals, worsening the issue it sought to solve in the first place.
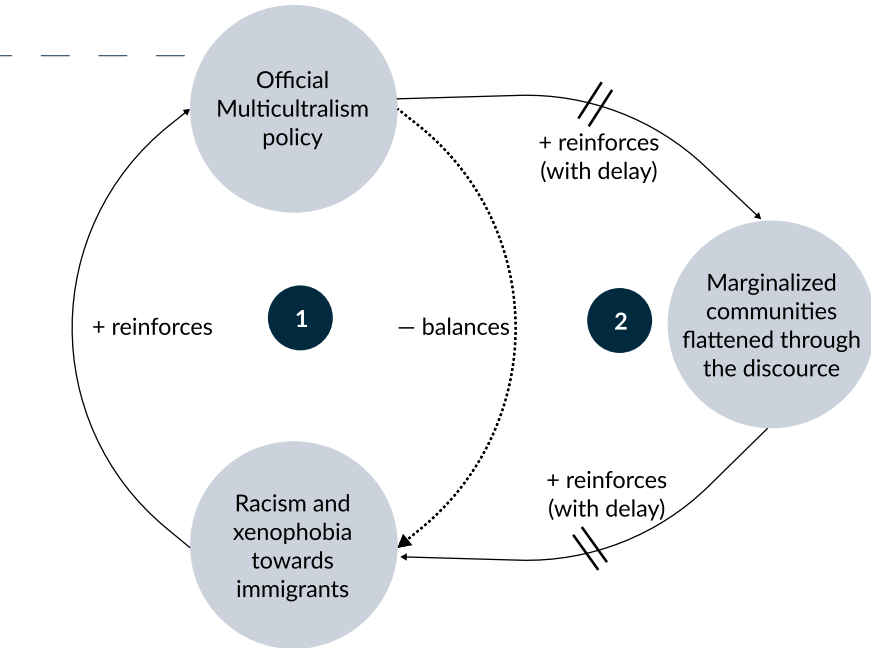
Figure 8 / The Failures of mMulticulturalism (Fixes that Fail Archetype)

Impact on the Individual

Although multiculturalism creates a compelling pull toward Canada, individuals realize the tokenism of that sentiment shortly after they arrive. For example, in the respondent's case below, she chose Canada as her immigration destination based on what she had heard about the country's Multiculturalism policy. In the years following, she noted how a friend, who was also a woman of colour, was marginalized by the mental health care system based on race and gender.

"Multiculturalism was always very important to me. When I was scouting for different countries to go to, I based it on how much racism and how much acceptance you get in a country. That all really mattered to me. Which is why I had decided not to go to countries like the UK and Australia. And came to Canada instead. But Canada is not perfect. For instance, I have seen the racism there is in the mental health system for women of colour."

Stage 4 /
Retaining
Immigrants
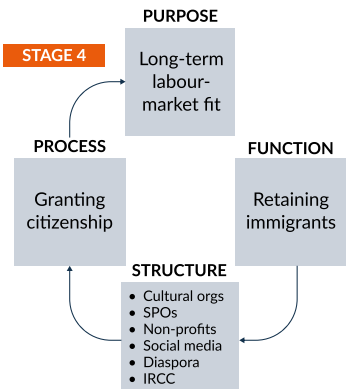
The fourth stage of the system structure is retaining immigrants. It maps onto the post-arrival and the gaining PR or citizenship phases of the individual journey.

Function / This stage's function is to ensure successful immigrants are retained in the country.

Structure /

- Cultural organizations
- Service Provider Organizations (SPOs)
- Non-profits
- Social media
- Diaspora
- The IRCC

Process / Here, the processes include granting citizenship and funding cultural organizations to help create strong diaspora communities that promote immigrant assimilation.

Purpose / The system works to create its ultimate purpose of establishing a strong immigrant community that fulfills long-term labour needs and nation-building goals and continues to perpetuate the immigration enterprise.

System dynamic / Social inclusion for immigrant retention

Ensuring social inclusion gives rise to a sense of belonging and contributes to immigrant retention over the long term. The system archetype, Shifting the Burden, explains how the government applies a symptomatic solution for inclusion, diverting away from the fundamental solution. Thus, giving rise to a side effect that intensifies the original problem (Braun, 2002). Using this causal archetype, I explain how the system tackles the issue of immigrant exclusion.

The naturalization process (the process of earning Canadian citizenship) is one of the ways the system ensures social inclusion—a sense of becoming "one of us." The Shifting the Burden archetype explains how the naturalization process of immigrants attempts to solve the problem of immigrant exclusion by giving citizenship status to people who have "earned" it. According to Loop 1, social inclusion must be "earned" by immigrants by first qualifying for citizenship and then learning for and passing the citizenship test. However, this institutional process artificially constructs immigrants as culturally different and inferior compared to "real Canadians" (Winter, 2018).

Although naturalization can be seen as the "ultimate institutional expression" of social inclusion and "presumably final step of boundary-crossing," it does not deliver on the promise of placing "Canadians by

choice" on par with "Canadians by birth" (Winter, 2018). Loop 2, on the other hand, identifies what the fundamental solution of immigrant inclusion would look like. The focus must be to create systemic conditions for equal opportunities to thrive by eliminating systemic bias. The investment in eliminating discrimination has a delayed effect on creating fair conditions for immigrants. This gives rise to a stable sense of inclusion, not just a tokenistic promise. By focusing on a symptomatic solution, the system creates a dangerous side effect.

Systems dynamic showing how the immigration system emphasizes naturalization as a means to immigrant inclusion, instead of creating systemic conditions for equal thriving.
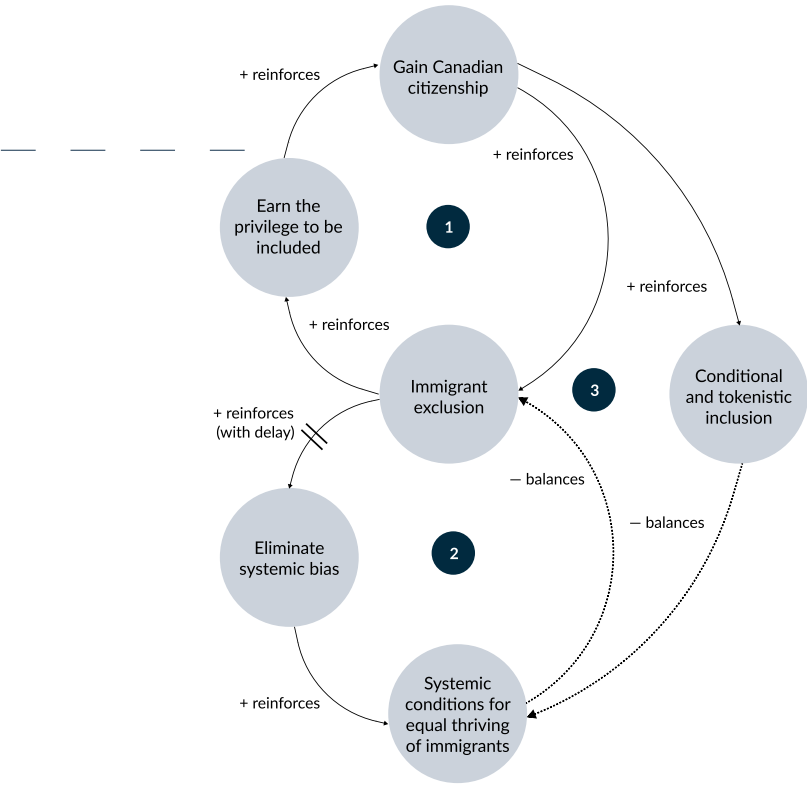
Figure 9 / Emphasizing Naturalization as a Means to Immigrant Inclusion (Shifting the Burden Archetype)

Impact on the Individual

The story below is from a respondent who describes the Canadian Citizenship test as stressful despite having the capabilities and resources to prepare and pass the test. This indicates how having to 'earn' the privilege of inclusion in Canada is a one-sided effort, with the burden on the immigrant individual. She points out that both sides have to put in the effort towards inclusion. It is clear, however, she had to put in the effort to 'earn' a Canadian identity, but it is unclear how the system supported her in making her feel included.

> The Citizenship test was a bit stressful. But we have good qualifications thanks to our Indian education and then putting hours of hard work trying to qualify yourself to be where you are. It should be a mutual relationship. We respect Canada. We are lucky to be here, and it should be the same back as well. Canada should also be happy about welcoming us. It's like any healthy relationship. Both partners need to put in the effort. So, on both sides, there should be a feeling of happiness."

Summary

Before moving to the next chapter of the report, here is a summary of insights from the systemic analysis.

- Today, the focus of the immigration system is based on the Neo-corporatist Model, which balances a human capital approach with equal (or more) weight attributed to market demands. Giving control to market forces disrupts immigrant adaptation over the long term as human capital measures are replaced by immediate economic needs.

- The functions of the system at each phase facilitate each phase of the individual journeys.

  Attracting and selecting immigrants (system stage) -->
  Pre-arrival (individual journey phase)

  Inviting selected immigrants (system stage) -->
  Arrival (individual journey phase)

  Retaining immigrants (system stage) -->
  Post-arrival & Gaining PR or Citizenship) (individual journey phase)

- At each phase of the journey, system dynamics produce multiple unintended consequences that pose barriers and obstruct the natural capacity of immigrants to adapt and be resilient.

- The system is designed primarily for a linear immigration experience; it ignores the individuals' experiences that deter from the linear movement from home to the host country.

With this context framing, the the next chapter covers the human journey. It takes readers through each phase and shows how change and resilience play out by grounding it in the Adaptive Cycles model.

Chapter 3 /
Immigration Journeys

I am not afraid . . . of rough spots . . . or lonely times . . . I don't fear . . . the success of this endeavor . . . I am Ra . . . in a space . . . not to be discovered . . . but invented . . .

I promise you nothing... I accept your promise... of the same we are simply riding... a wave... that may carry... or crash...
It's a journey... and I want... to go...

— A Journey, Nikki Giovani

The immigration journey is conceptualized by scholars and policymakers as a linear journey that begins from the home country to the host country. However, not all individuals experience immigration linearly. The interviews I conducted revealed that people travel through five movement patterns or pathways, including, linear, serial, onward, circular and return migration. This section defines these different movement pathways and discusses the main journey phases throughout immigration.

Journey Phases

The immigration journey is studied through the following phases: pre-arrival, arrival, post-arrival and gaining PR or citizenship. The interviews revealed a central theme, a primary pre-occupation of these journey phases. In my conversations with ten immigrant women, five broad movement pathways emerged—**linear migration, serial migration, onward migration, circular migration, and return migration**. Journeys that follow different pathways, experience these phases differently.

Linear

The linear pathway is where people move from their home country (India) to their host country (Canada). They go through the following journey phases linearly, commencing their journey at phase one, pre-arrival, to gaining PR or citizenship.

Pre-arrival

The pre-arrival phase is when an individual begins to contemplate a life in Canada and takes the necessary steps to plan and organize their immigration journeys. The pre-arrival stage comes before the actual physical relocation, and its duration can last between a few days to a few years. The main efforts that go into this stage during this phase include researching and decision-making after factoring in micro (individual), meso (family and immediate social circle), and macro (systemic) realities. **Decision-making is the primary motive in the pre-arrival phase.**

Arrival

Arrival is when the individual establishes the first physical touchpoint with Canada as an immigrant. For this project, the arrival phase is defined as the moment of touchdown and the first few days spent in Canada. Upon arrival, immigrants try to understand and navigate the novelty of their new surroundings, which is both overwhelming and exciting. As a result, people rely on micro, meso, and macro support systems. **Sensemaking is the primary quest in the arrival phase.**

Post-arrival

For this study, I define the post-arrival phase as the time spent in Canada between year one to year five. During this phase, the immigrant establishes themselves in the country and finds ease and familiarity with their life here. Often, the experiences that immigrants have during this phase starkly contrast with their lives during the arrival phase. Individuals have spent enough time in the country to understand how the basic systems function and their role within these systems. **In this phase, the motive is finding belonging.**

Visiting India / People make visits back to India during the post-arrival phase. These visits are a pivotal part of their journey as their visit enables them to put their own experiences into context. For most participants, they are prompted by a voluntary decision to see friends and family and return to the life they had left behind when they departed for Canada. Therefore, the emotions they experience during this phase both influence their lives in Canada and vice versa. However, returning to India was forced upon some participants due to a lack of settlement and employment opportunities in Canada. For them, visiting or moving back to India was less of a choice.

Gaining PR or citizenship

Gaining official status as a Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident is a crucial milestone of the journey. A person only becomes an immigrant when they have earned a Permanent Residency or Canadian citizenship. During this phase, people have ambivalent emotions—on the one hand, relief and celebration, and on the other hand, a sense of loss of their Indian identity. These emotions influence how they view their own journey and how it impacts loved ones in their life. **In this phase, the motive is forging identity.**

Other Movement Pathways

Apart from the linear pathway, the immigration journey is experienced through multiple non-linear and fragmented ways, i.e., serial, onward, circular, and return migration pathways. Immigrants that move in these different trajectories have different mental models. However, there are significant overlaps and interconnections between these pathways. In other words, a migrant can begin their journey with an intention to return to India, but shifting familial and economic priorities may drive them to consider staying back in Canada over the long haul. Immigration journeys are complex and multi-layered, yet, migration scholars and policymakers focus most of their analyses and policies on just the places people depart from and their final destinations. Below are the definitions of non-linear patterns and pathways through which people immigrate to Canada.

Serial

A serial migrant is a person who has lived in several countries throughout their lives. **Three out of ten respondents I interviewed were serial migrants.**

According to Susan Ossman, serial migration goes beyond the repetition of migration, as each time, the migrant's identity and capabilities change, rendering a different immigration experience each time (2013). For those who have experienced serial migration in their life, perhaps as children, the reality is starkly different. Their experience is underscored by a longing for home and togetherness of "all their friends and relations" in a "single place and time" (Ossman, 2013, pp. 6). Consequently, the needs of serial migrants are more conventional settlement support, as they are looking to settle in Canada for the long term.

Onward

An onward migrant is a person who moves or desires to move from one host country to another. **Four out of ten people discussed their aspirations for onward migration.**

Onward migration denotes an exit from one host country and a further move to a third host country. Aspiring serial migrants fall into this category. For them, onward migration is either a corrective move because of a decision miscalculation or can even extend beyond rational economic analysis into the terrain of seeking meaning in their life (Constant, 2021). Motivations for onward migrants could range from economic, and livelihood needs to wanderlust and exploration.

Circular

A circular migrant is someone who lives or desires to live between home and host countries through either seasonal or repetitive movement. **One of ten respondents lives between India and Canada and wishes to have the choice to live transnationally.**

Repeated sequential moves between home and host countries in a dynamic framework that can be either seasonal or non-seasonal. This migratory pattern is chosen by the migrant strategically, as they wish to share their lives between two locations. They exercise an enormous degree of agency as they choose to live transnationally across two geographies (Constant, 2021).

Return

A return migrant is someone who moves or desires to move back to their home country after living in a host country for either a short- or long term. **Two out of ten respondents desired to return to India or somewhere in Asia to be closer to home.**

Return migration is a movement back to the home country after a short or long-term stay in Canada. Immigrants' motivations to return range from nostalgia about the homeland to family and society situations that exert a pull back. It mainly pertains to first-generation immigrants and includes a plan to stay in the home country for at least a year (Constant, 2021).

The following sections discuss each journey phase using the Adaptive Cycle framework (see Chapter 1, Areas of Inquiry for a description of the Adaptive Cycles framework), supported using quotes from the interviews. It highlights how experiences might differ for people who move through non-linear pathways.

Each section also includes the several macro and meso stakeholders that shape the journey. These stakeholders are shown on a knowledge versus power matrix. Finally, the section discusses how systemic enablers and barriers impact immigrant experiences in every journey phase.

Journey Phase /
Pre-arrival

The pre-arrival phase marks the beginning of an individuals' mental journey to Canada through anticipation and hope. It is a crucial time in their journeys when they make critical decisions that would significantly alter their life path. While immigrants continue leading a 'normal' life in their home country during this phase, their primary goal is reaching an appropriate migratory decision.

A woman's access to economic, social, cultural, and physical resources influences her abilities and aspirations to move. Functionalist and historical-structural migration theories portray an individual migrant as merely a "utility-optimizer" or "passive victim of global capitalist forces" (de Haas, 2021). According to migration scholar de Haas (2021), these models embed an "implicit assumption that people are motivated by individual cost-benefit calculations aimed at income or utility maximization and will therefore react in automatic, universal and predictable ways to external stimuli or 'push' and 'pull' factors." According to de Haas, these same assumptions pose inherent limitations of said migration theories (2021).

De Haas considers existing migration theories' limitations and proposes a new Aspirations-Capabilities model that places agency (individual-micro) and structure (systemic-macro) as equally determining forces in migration decisions (2021). He states more intrinsic motivations drive human behaviour around migration, such as "wanderlust, curiosity, and an innate desire to break free and discover new horizons" (2021). Thus, no one all-encompassing migration theory provides a rationale for an individuals' decision-making. The individual decision-making process is messy and complex.

Therefore, as immigrants move through this phase of their journey, they inquire: Why should I move to Canada? What would I lose or gain if I undertook this journey? Who will accompany me, and whom am I accompanying? Do I have the resources I need for this journey? The mission in this phase is seemingly simple, but it is its own journey, with its own trials and tribulations.
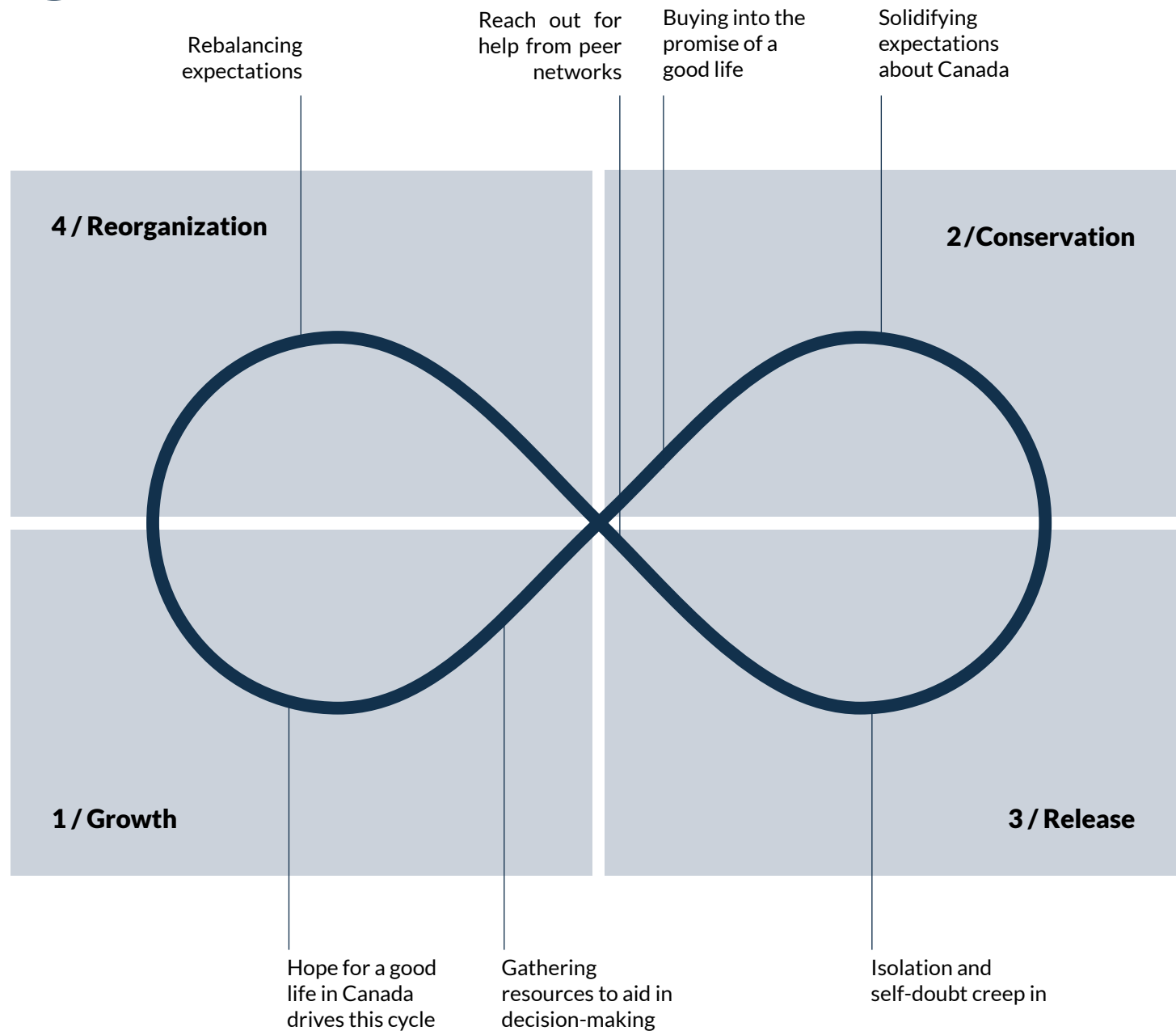
Pre-arrival Adaptive Cycle /
Decision-making

| Rebalancing expectations | Reach out for help from peer networks | Buying into the promise of a good life | Solidifying expectations about Canada |

4 / Reorganization

2 /Conservation

1 / Growth

3 / Release

Hope for a good life in Canada drives this cycle

Gathering resources to aid in decision-making

Isolation and self-doubt creep in

Growth / A land of milk and honey

The growth stage of the pre-arrival adaptive cycle begins with hope. Individuals hope for a better quality of life and better opportunities in Canada, which kickstarts their immigration dream and, thereby, their journey toward Canada. During this stage, the accumulation of resources happens by gathering information about life in Canada. Individuals' research avenues include official sources, YouTube, LinkedIn, social media groups, and the diaspora community. People display tremendous resourcefulness in this stage, trying to gather information from as many sources to create a map for themselves about what life in Canada might look like. Most media representations of Canada portray it as a land of milk and honey, where opportunities are abundant, and people are polite and inclusive (Brand Canada, 2017). Thus, expectations and beliefs about a good life in Canada begin to form within individuals. For example, the quote here talks about one of the respondents' expectations for life in Canada were formed by common generalizations and misconceptions about Canada.

1 / Growth
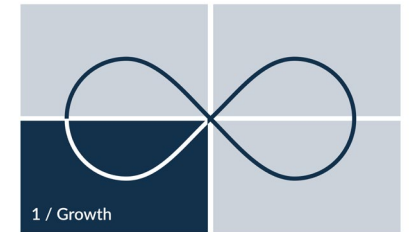
> The two things I knew about Canada at that point were Canada has a lot of snow and it has the Niagara Falls. And then I came to Vancouver expecting snow and Niagara Falls."

2 / Conservation
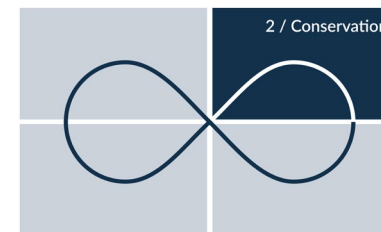
> I'm grateful for the fact that I was given a scholarship to study (in Europe), do research, make new friends, live on my own, discover a lot of things. Those are very special and precious moments. But ultimately, I felt that moving to Canada would just be a healthier risk."

Conservation / Solidifying positive expectations about Canada

With more information in hand, people begin solidifying their beliefs and expectations about their future lives in Canada. From a mindset of learning, they move into the mindset of rigidity. Most people buy into the promise of a good life in Canada, the image of Canada being a land of milk and honey. That pushes them to mobilize resources to plan for their move. During this period, people start their formal immigration process, which requires keen attention to detail, and unfolds in a relatively slow and long change cycle. Finally, individuals feel triumphant about completing their immigration application at the highest point of the adaptive cycle. Expectations grow with every passing day, and people are impatient to hear back, and their vulnerability in the system is exposed. The transition into the release phase is triggered by unpredictable wait times and seeming arbitrariness of the immigration selection process that elicits an emotional release from people. For example, the respondent here talks about how her experience living in other countries was memorable and formative, but ultimately Canada was the place she could imagine settling in because she believed it was a socially and financially healthier risk.

Release / Waiting builds anxiety

The long and unpredictable wait times wreak havoc on people's emotions, especially as most are eager and impatient to leave behind a life they are convinced is not what they are seeking. As a result, individuals experience self-doubt and fear caused by rejections (potential rejections), uncertainties, and delays. Women who embark on this journey solo withhold their decision from their families, fearing that they may dissuade them from pursuing the move. As a result, isolation and self-doubt creep into their waiting experience.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the immigration system calibrates intake by regularly adjusting its pre-selection criteria. However, the individual never hears about these changes. Given this systemic context, people's expectations that have been built up until this point sometimes go unmet or are met in a delayed fashion. Hopes come crashing down. After this period, people rebuild their hope either when they receive unanticipated feedback or communication from the IRCC or when they connect with other individuals going through the same process. After this experience, people are more cautiously optimistic about what to expect. They activate their resources and capacities to access help and support from meso and macro-level actors to facilitate the rebuilding of hope. One of the respondents mentioned that she did not inform anyone about her decision to migrate, fearing they would dissuade her from doing so. Moreover, she was not sure what the outcome of her Canadian Dream would be, how long it would take, and if she would be successful at all.

3 / Release
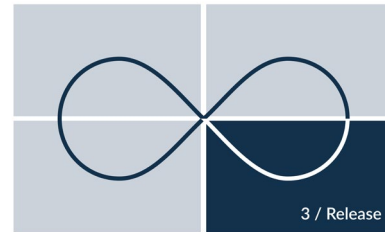
"I didn't tell any of my family members except my parents about my PR decision. Once I landed here, I told my parents that now they could declare outside if anyone wanted to know where I was, and then I started getting calls from all my relatives, and that's what made me realize that I really took a very big step."

"I decided to move in 2019. I was 24 back then. It's been three years now, and I'm just about to move. The wait really taught me to be patient. I think 2020 was really tough – constant anticipation, the anxiety, and on top of that, COVID. In 2021, I decided when I would hear back is when I would think about actually moving to Canada."

Reorganization / Resetting expectations

4 / Reorganization

Moving from release to reorganization is spent resetting hopes and re-balancing expectations, but this time with a dash of realism. After experiencing challenges and uncertainties of the immigration system, individuals define new goals, values, and expectations for the remainder of their immigration journeys. People recognize that there is no such thing as an ideal immigration journey and that systemic stresses will persist. Transformational learning takes place for people during this stage, while people reset expectations. As they build back their capacity, a surge of resilience takes over. Like the story of one of the respondents indicates how high resilience during this phase ("nothing to lose"), leads to innovative and novel solutions such as reaching out to Members of Parliament to expedite her immigration application.

"The only reason my case got expedited was because I reached out to some MPs in Toronto. I don't know why I did that; I guess I had nothing to lose. There was one particular MP's office that was very proactive. They reached out to me and said they would help me find the details about my application provided I gave them a reference of a person I knew in Toronto. So I gave my friend's reference. They were very quick in giving me an update and following up on my behalf with the IRCC."
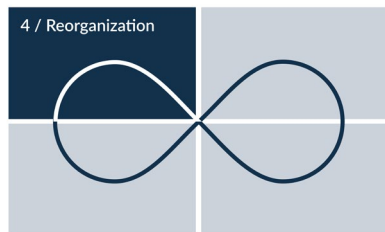
Stakeholders

The following map organizes the stakeholders of the pre-arrival phase based on their relative level of knowledge and power in influencing the immigrant experience. A detailed description of the stakeholders can be found in Appendix C of this report.
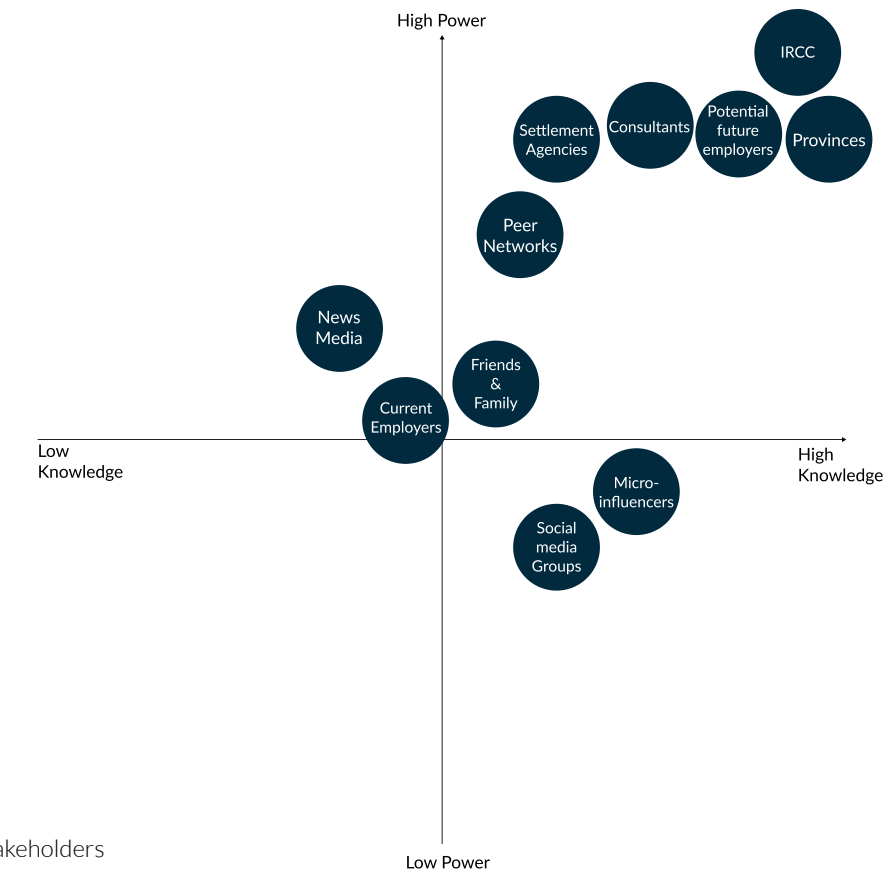
Figure 11 / Pre-arrival Stakeholders

High Knowledge-High Power

Stakeholders in this quadrant have a high degree of knowledge about the immigration system, and high power in influencing people's decision-making abilities. Some of the stakeholders here include:

- The IRCC
- Provinces
- Potential future employers
- Peer networks
- Settlement agencies
- Immigration consultants

High Knowledge-Low Power

Stakeholders in this quadrant have high knowledge about the immigration system, and the immigration experience. However, they do not hold direct power to influence an individual's decision-making process during pre-arrival. Stakeholders in the quadrant include:

- Micro-influencers
- Social media groups (including online ethnic community groups)

Low Knowledge-High Power

Stakeholders in this quadrant have low knowledge about the immigration system, but weild relatively high power in influencing people's decision-making abilities. Stakeholders in the quadrant include:

- Family and friends in the home country
- News media

Movement Pathways Through Pre–arrival

Serial migrants / People who have been serially migrating before moving to Canada may have prior experience with uncertainties that prevail during the pre-arrival phase. This experience provides more accumulated capacity, making the growth phase shorter and more rapid.

Onward migrants / For this group, the first two stages of the adaptive cycle are longer. They may take longer to research prospects in Canada and make their decision. Ultimately, they want to ensure that immigrating to Canada would enable them to continue their onward mobility.

Circular migrants / Migrants whose objectives are to move circularly between Canada and India may wish to assess the benefits Canada would offer them and how it might balance their life in India. They would make their immigration decision based on this understanding.

Return migrants / In the case of return migrants, the pre-arrival phase is an opportunity to assess the type of lifestyle and opportunities available in Canada. Ultimately, this group intends to move back to India, so short and mid-term objectives prompt their decision-making.

Systemic Enablers

- Digital and social media channels enable the growth stage of the adaptive cycle. It creates more potential and connectedness among individuals.

- Peer networks also perform similarly to digital and social media channels. However, they carry more leverage and support the incremental learning during this stage. This group supports rebuilding of hope during the reorganization phase as cautious optimism.

- External immigration consultants support during the conservation stage, as they bring specific expertise about the complex immigration policies. Reliance on immigration experts leads to more rigidity in personal expectations.

- Government websites and collateral are also enablers during the conservation stage. They provide technical guidance and support needed for individuals to move forward with their application process.

- The role of personal agency cannot be discounted during the reorganization phase. Individuals who are proactive show more resilience, build back their potential, gain more clarity about their immigration decision, and reset expectations. They emerge in a transformed way during reorganization.

Systemic Barriers

- Overly positive and celebratory media images of Canada cause barriers for immigrants during the growth stage. People form opinions based on these images and develop unreasonable and unrealistic expectations. The value proposition of Brand Canada can be misleading and cloud people's perceptions (Brand Canada, 2017).

- Changing eligibility criteria is undoubtedly a barrier for immigrants. If pre-selection criteria are constantly modified, it causes confusion and mistrust in the immigration system. People should be able to predict if they will meet pre-selection criteria accurately.

- Lack of communication from the IRCC poses barriers at the conservation and release stages. External (e.g. rejection) and internal (e.g. doubt, fear) uncertainties amplify in the absence of proper communication and official information. Receiving information depends on individual case managers, and there are no standard policies around them.

Journey Phase /
Arrival

The arrival phase typically commences when the immigrant makes her first contact with Canada. Upon arrival, people feel mixed emotions of excitement, tiredness, relief, and nervousness, among others, as they carefully navigate their first task as immigrants - interacting with border control and immigration officers.

On their first day and during their first week as newly-immigrated people, novelty abounds around them in their interior and exterior landscape. While they are processing this newness, they also experience a 'pinch-me moment' when it dawns on them that they have finally made it to Canada after months of waiting and building anticipation. They feel the enthusiasm to explore and finally begin their lives in the country. While other pragmatic goals start crystallizing towards the end of this phase, this period is about celebration and predominantly about situational sensemaking.

Sensemaking is a subjective process through which people interpret, learn and give meaning to their emerging or ongoing experiences. Brenda Dervin's Sensemaking theory focuses on the individual, who, as they are constantly moving through time and space (situations), encounter information gaps. To bridge these gaps, they have to make sense of it through iterative questioning. Iterative questioning involves understanding a gap to move through it physically, cognitively, emotionally, or spiritually. Dervin's sensemaking process comprises three elements. The 'situation' or the context; the 'gap,' which inhibits movement through the context; and the 'uses,' which are the instances where the outcome of sensemaking benefits the individual (Dervin, 1992).

Therefore, as immigrants wander through this phase of their journey, they encounter multiple situational gaps, and their journey is a process of bridging those gaps through iterative questioning.

Arrival Adaptive Cycle /
Sensemaking

4 / Reorganization

Investing in
oneself and ones'
community

Finding
individual
preferences

Seeking normalcy
instead of novelty

2/Conservation

1 / Growth

3 / Release

Anticipation and
accumulated hope

Rapid learning and
experimentation
amid the novelty

Recognize the
need for a
community
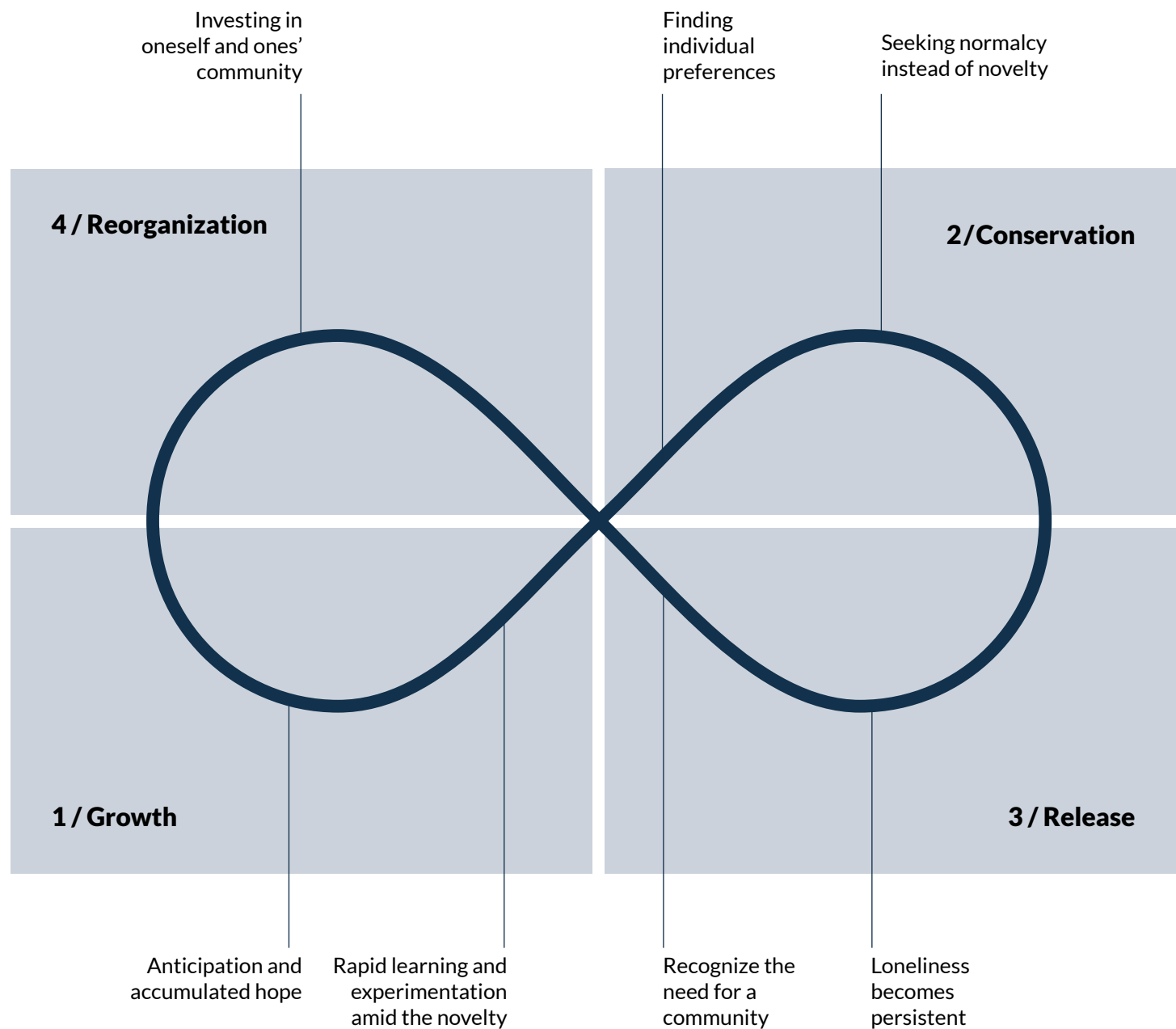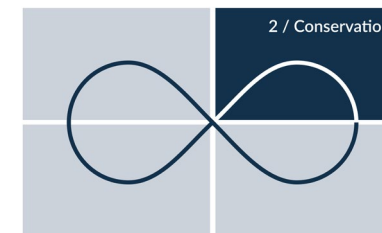
Loneliness
becomes
persistent

Figure 12 / Arrival Adaptive Cycle

Growth / All things new

Landing in Canada kick-starts the arrival adaptive cycle. Although actions and emotions of this phase can be overwhelming or daunting for some women, particularly those who immigrate alone, the overarching sentiment is excitement and hope. All the efforts and anticipation, and accumulated hope drive this stage. After overcoming what seemed like insurmountable challenges while processing their visa paperwork, it is pretty unbelievable to people that they have made it to Canada. The growth stage is a period of rapid experimentation and learning (sensemaking). People have new experiences and learn the ways of Canadian life. Adapting on the go is a common mindset during this stage, as everything is new and exciting. While also immersing themselves in the novelty and enjoying this phase, people learn new ways to engage with their family and friends in India. For example, one of the interviewees expressed the free-spiritedness and curiosity inherent in the arrival sensemaking journey. Though it appears there may be functional benefits to her observations, she ultimately used walking in and out of stores to gather reference points as she built situational maps about Canadian life.
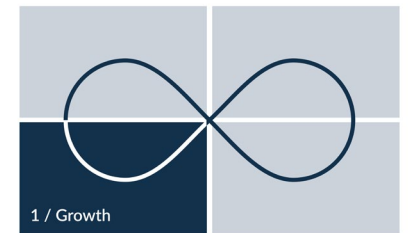
"I had that fascination to go out and explore. For every item that I had to buy, I started exploring different stores, and once I understood what was available where and what it cost, I could compare things, and then I could make a better decision."

## Conservation / Charting new beginnings

Learning gradually slows down as stability increases. Following a period of rapid experimentation and incremental learning (in the previous stage), immigrants find a sense of stability in their daily lives. People have found versions of what is a good life in Canada and ways that work for them to navigate their day-to-day. They have also found new and innovative ways to stay in touch with their families in India through social media and technology. The initial few weeks are mostly about trying to understand the lay of the land. And the weather during newcomers' arrival frames a lot of the early experience. People are thrilled and enthusiastic about these new beginnings.

"Those first few days, I found it very challenging. I missed the little things that made me settle down to normalcy, for example, not having my morning cup of coffee or not having a newspaper to read, but just looking at a bunch of coupons landing on my doorstep. That sort of made me feel a little out of place constantly."

The novelty of the first few days fades into overwhelm when people begin interacting with Canada's social and financial systems, such as banking, housing, and setting up social services. Individuals who have support from spouses or student bodies or a close network of peers experience fewer challenges. When every day seems like a struggle to learn and adjust, people acknowledge that they desire moments of everyday normalcy, instead of novelty, during this setup phase.

"Staying in touch with my family was very difficult in the beginning. I had to learn how to talk to my parents over the phone."

This absence leads to feelings of fear, isolation, loneliness, and discomfort. Progressing through this stage becomes less about excitement and more about practicality. In th absence of stable employment, financial struggles also begin to surface at this time. The experience of one of the interviewees describes how she recognized a need to stabilize her journey so that she could start building new forms of connection with her family in India.

Release / Rock-bottom isolation

After people's initial days of excitement have dried up, loneliness and isolation become more persistent. Immigrants start to miss their family and the protective sense of home where all kinds of support they need are accessible. Financial struggles reach their peak as well at this point. Around this time, immigrants start their career journeys in Canada, where they frequently encounter setbacks, confusion about the professional culture in Canada, rejections from job interviews, and other challenges. When these challenges compound, immigrants hit rock-bottom.
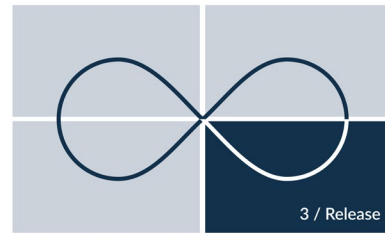
> "I've lost close relationships – but it is different for people like my husband, who went to school here (North America) and has friends. I wasn't expecting how lonely it would be in Canada before moving."

Reorganization / Investing in oneself and community

After this collapse, people build their peer and social networks to support their sensemaking. For example, the story here communicates the value of collective sensemaking during those early days in Canada. Just having another person "on the same path" is comforting and reassuring for newcomers.

People now have a reason to strengthen their social networks and build their own adaptive capacity. Instead of being carried away by novelty, people use practicality as a guiding principle for all decisions and recreate and curate moments of everyday normalcy. Food is a commonly used ritual for grounding and connecting with oneself, culture, and community.

The experience of rebuilding from a low point teaches them to slow down, be patient and reset expectations and priorities for the remainder of their journeys. People carve out a space for their capacity building in this new awakening, thereby amplifying their potential to take on more.

> "A few days before I got here, I was able to connect with somebody who agreed to share a place with me. She was from British Columbia. Toronto was a new city for her. So, I think we were both able to navigate together. There was some level of familiarity or at least having someone else be on the same path as you."

> "I knew if I wanted to feel at home here, the first thing I had to tackle was to try and cook or recreate recipes that would make me feel like I was back home, which itself was very challenging because I realized the kind of ingredients that you get here are quite different from what you get back home."

Stakeholders

The following map organizes the stakeholders of the arrival phase based on their relative level of knowledge and power in influencing the immigrant experience. A detailed description of the stakeholders can be found in Appendix C of this report.
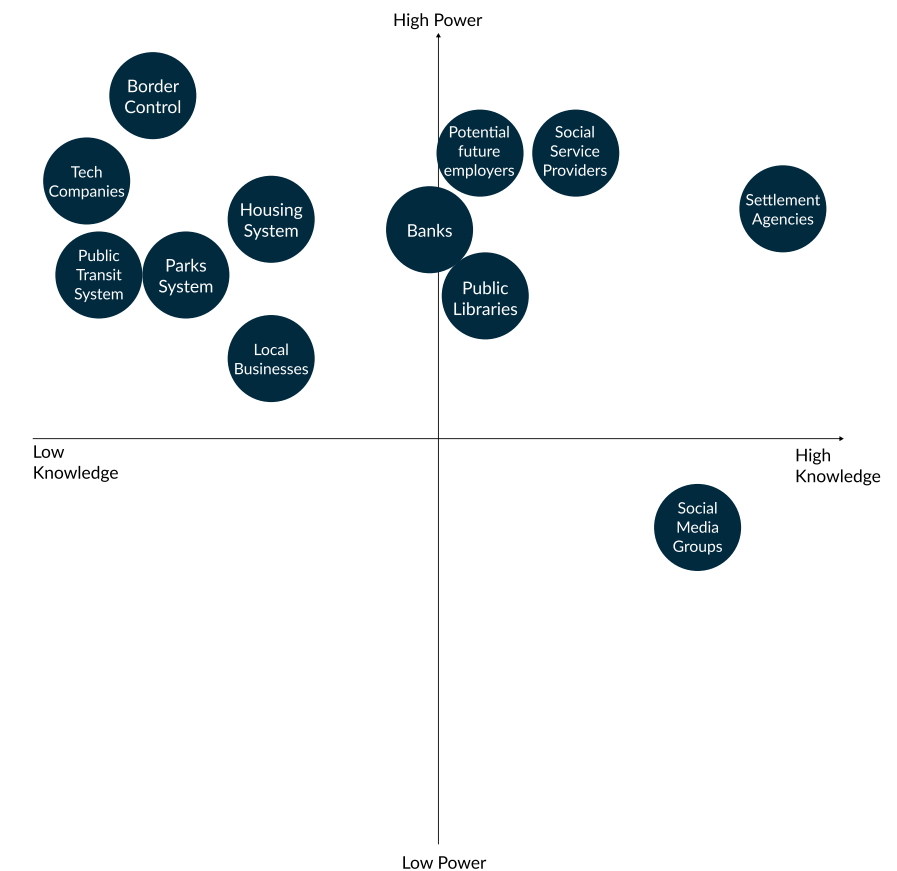
Figure 13 / Arrival Stakeholders

High Knowledge-High Power

Stakeholders in this quadrant have a high knowledge about the immigration system, and the immigrant experience, coupled with high power to influence the sensemaking activity of this phase. Stakeholders in the quadrant include:

- Settlement Agencies
- Social Services providers
- Potential future employers
- Public libraries

High Knowledge-Low Power

Stakeholders in this quadrant have high knowledge about the immigration experience. However, they hold relatively low power to influence an individual's sensemaking activities during arrival. Stakeholders in the quadrant include:

- Social Media groups

Low Knowledge-High Power

Stakeholders in this quadrant have low knowledge about the immigration system but hold relatively high power in influencing a newcomers' sensemaking. Some of the stakeholders in the quadrant are:

- Border control
- Tech companies
- Transit system
- Housing system
- Local businesses
- Banks

Movement Pathways Through Arrival

Serial migrants / Serial immigrants are familiar with the emotions associated with arriving in a new country to make it home. They have more confidence and skill to navigate the newness of their life in Canada. Although, they too have to learn to navigate the unfamiliar socio-economic systems.

Onward migrants / Aspiring onward immigrants expand their capacity to adapt and learn how to navigate the early days of being a newly-landed immigrant. What they discover during this period is what they will carry forward into their other immigration experiences. Individuals whose goal is to continue their immigration journeys might have specific priorities to meet during this phase. These might include learning a language, getting a particular job in an industry, etc.

Circular migrants / The arrival period is crucial for migrants who travel back and forth from India to Canada. During this stage, they form the perceptions about Canada and evaluate it as a place for them to move back and forth from. This perception informs their choice of Canada as one of the destinations where they would build a life.

Return migrants / People who already know that their stay in Canada would be short-lived may wish to experiment more during this phase. No setback is permanent. There is a lightness with which they navigate this phase.

Systemic Enablers

- Google Maps is immigrants' most used tech product, and local food delivery apps are a close second. These products ground and situate people, especially since they are inundated with new experiences upon arrival to Canada.

- Public transit is a reliable, safe, and accessible means for immigrants to understand their city, access opportunities and critical social services. It promotes the movement across this sensemaking phase.

- Social media groups fulfill the core information needs for timely, need-based information about employment, housing, and other essential services. While this enables their sensemaking effort, it exposes their vulnerability to bad actors on these platforms (Shuva, 2021).

- Weather plays a huge role in framing the experience during the early days. When people land during warmer months, it enables their entire exploration. It contributes to their emotional well-being and considerably shapes their perception of the country.

- Public libraries enable the immigrants during the arrival phase. Immigrants do not use the library as an information-gathering place. Instead, they view it as a place to combat loneliness (Mabi, 2018).

Systemic Barriers

- Finding stable housing and establishing critical social services such as banking, social insurance, and health insurance poses multiple friction points for immigrants. A lack of streamlined and reliable information makes this series of critical activities confusing and daunting.

- The lack of platforms for immigrant-specific financial literacy poses barriers as people set up their lives in Canada. Topics such as understanding the currency, learning the banking system, etc., would help immigrants, particularly women.

- Not all people have access to a community upon arrival. Individuals without a pre-existing social network struggle to get their feet off the ground. Ad-hoc social networks do not have the same impact as a steady and reliable social network.

- Newcomers struggle to keep in touch with their families in India during their early days. For many, the barrier to a dwindling connection to family results from not comprehending time zone differences and relying on unnatural means such as video calls.

- During colder months, it takes longer for people to adjust to and learn about their environment. It also hinders emotional well-being.

Journey Phase /
Post-arrival

In the post-arrival phase, people have predominantly settled and achieved material well-being that instills a sense of pride and stability. Thus, their preoccupations surround feelings of belonging and constructing a 'sense of home.'

In a recent paper, Mastoureh Fathi explores the connections between belonging and home in the context of migrant men in Ireland. In the article, Fathi examines the home-belonging dynamic through three components helpful in understanding how women immigrants from this study experience this link. Belonging is influenced by the following factors (2021).

First, the presence of a physical space called home, where practices and emotional bonds are shared and performed (Fathi, 2021). Women immigrants use specific objects of cultural significance to establish their emotional and spiritual connections, such as lighting a lamp within the physical space of their home.

Second, a set of practices that help reinforce (or defy) identity markers, such as gender. Post-arrival, women are actively looking for ways to expand how they relate to their gender roles by taking on activities previously not permitted because of societal gender biases (Fathi, 2021). For example, one of the respondents discussed their urgent need to obtain a driver's license upon arrival to Canada to be more mobile as she navigates her everyday life. The respondent noted that she specifically waited to immigrate to Canada to gain this mobility privilege. It was denied to her as a woman growing up in a family of male siblings who were the caretakers of her mobility needs. For this respondent, a post-arrival home is where she can reconstruct her identity and defy common gender objections she faced all her life, thereby carving a new identity for herself.

Third, broader socio-political factors of racism, xenophobia, etc., prevent or enable people's ability to make a home (Fathi, 2021). For example, securing stable and safe housing for single immigrant women remains a challenge in large cities such as Toronto. One of the respondents shared a story about her inability to find accommodation due to systemic setbacks arising from her gender. As a result, she had to rely on her married friends, who offered her a place in their home until she found something of her own. This indicates how wider socio-political factors weaken immigrant belonging in Canada.

The post-arrival experience is predominantly about forging the link between home and belonging. But the journey is not a linear one.

Post–arrival Adaptive Cycle /
Belonging

4 / Reorganization

Curating a life on
ones' own terms

Capacity and
confidence grows

Self-reliance gives
a sense of power

2/Conservation

1 / Growth

3 / Release

The drive to be a
good immigrant

Develop life skills,
build independence

Questioning
one's beliefs
and values
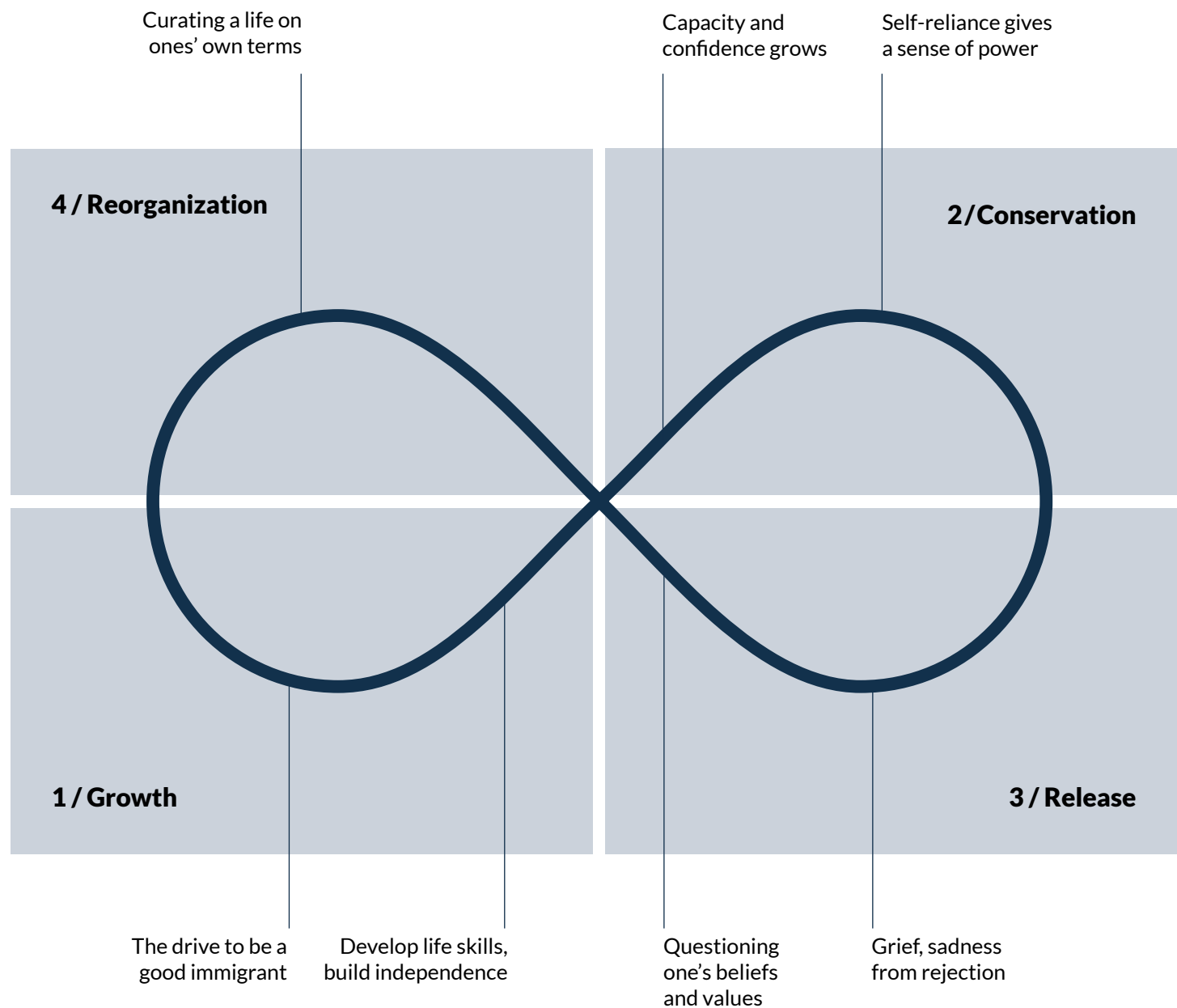
Grief, sadness
from rejection

Figure 14 / Post-arrival Adaptive Cycle

Growth / To be a 'good' daughter, wife, woman and immigrant

The belief that Canada offers opportunities that align with individual aspirations fuels this period of the post-arrival journey phase. Immigrants work hard to earn professional, personal, and social leverage in Canada. This period of incremental change results in rapid learning and exponential growth for individuals on the professional and personal fronts. As skilled immigrants, women's professional contributions create enormous value for the Canadian economy. Along with this, individuals learn and absorb from diverse Indian and global cultures. Having adapted to Canadian life, people have grown to become more independent and develop essential life skills. The quote summarizes how a young, single woman from India moved to Canada to seek better career opportunities. During the height of the pandemic, she moved to Canada, proving to herself and her family members the degree of capability, independence, and confidence she had to exercise agency about her own future.
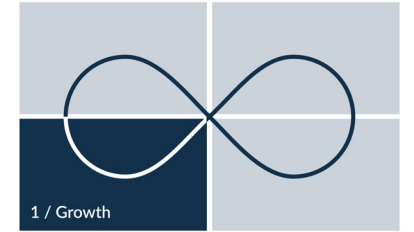
"The perception of people around me started changing when they got to know that I've moved by myself and during such tough times. I'd say they started caring more. They also thought I was more confident. I started gaining some kind of a spotlight with my family and friends."
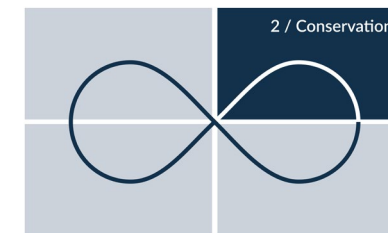
Conservation / Fierce independence

Over time, people set new systems, processes, and routines. Immigrants realize that day-to-day life in Canada is different from that in India. Self-reliance is an essential value of Canadian life. When immigrants embrace and live by this value, they feel a sense of accomplishment for imbibing Canadian (in particular) and western (in general) values. Self-reliance looks different for different people, but it takes the form of personal mobility and personal finance for most women. Cultivating independence is linked to gaining power and having autonomy over one's life. The rising internal reliance and connectedness indicate that people get comfortable in their familiar routines and accumulate rigidity. They reach their tipping point in their adaptive cycle when over-reliance on oneself intensifies emotions of loneliness and isolation. Immigrants commonly question if the gains of the immigration journey justify the intense feelings of isolation, worry, and guilt of being away from close friends and family.

Release / Questioning beliefs and decisions

The morale of immigrants comes crumbling down during release. Ultimately, values of individualism do not serve immigrants in the long run, mainly because of the complex challenges (rejection, lack of awareness, and otherness) they experience daily. These challenges compound and impact every aspect of life—finding community, finding livelihood, and finding a sense of home. Individuals begin noticing how fragile they feel within the system. As a result, code switching becomes a coping mechanism. Unfortunately, this only reinforces the isolation and grief.

Over time, they realize that a combination of their own faulty expectations has led them to this point. And to overcome these feelings, many are open to examining and unpacking their own beliefs and values.


3 / Release
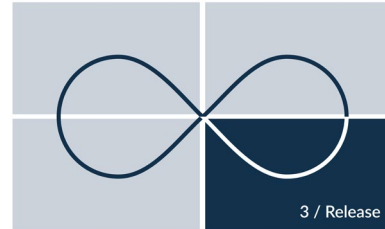
"It was something I started when I was in grade one, and that probably stopped only when I was in university, but there was always this need to fit in. How do I change myself to fit in it? What parts of me should I hide myself to fit in?"

"Around the end of my fourth or fifth year in Canada, I started noticing that I wasn't paying as much attention to certain cultural beliefs that I held very close to my heart. Then I remember at one point waking up, and thinking is what I'm doing right? I felt like I was at the crossroads, and at that point – should I let go of those cultural beliefs or hold them back to share with my daughter."

4 / Reorganization
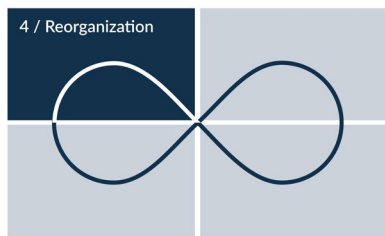
"Over the years, being in and out of Canada has given me a chance to step away from my perspective of wanting it so badly and taking a step back and saying what do I really want when I'm here (in Canada)... is it the quality of life, the friends, safety, career growth. I think the distance has given me the space to curate a life where I can have the best of both. And it's taken me a long time to get here."

Reorganization / Curating a life on one's terms

Unraveling their beliefs and values leaves space for new values to take hold, leading to a gradual shift in the immigrants' approach to their lives in Canada. While people acknowledge their independence as an essential skill, they are open to building a circle of trust on whom they can also rely. Along with their chosen family, people develop shared experiences and rituals. On the other hand, women see unpacking their beliefs as an opportunity to build anew. They make sense of their immigration experience and gain transformative insights about themselves. They invest in rituals and habits that help them stay grounded and balanced. People appreciate the benefits and upside of life in Canada while simultaneously negotiating the profound losses that come with it. Immigrant identities reshape and become more hybrid and fluid. One of interviewees shares her desire to curate a life that involves living in India and Canada.

Despite her goals to build a life in Toronto, she had to leave for India because of the lack of employment opportunities. She returned to Canada following a few years of living and working in India. After seven years of experiencing what life could be in both countries, she seeks a balance, a curated life with the best from both worlds.

For immigrants, finding a sense of belonging or constructing a sense of home in Canada does not come without an ongoing engagement with their relationship with India. During the post-arrival phase, women make visits back to their homeland for multiple personal and social motivations and obligations. A synergistic link is forged between their post-arrival experience in Canada and their visits, albeit short ones, back to India. The following section examines their journey of visiting home through the adaptive cycle and describes the ongoing connection between these two spatio-temporal zones.

Post–arrival Adaptive Cycle /
Visiting Home

| Two kinds of home | Recognize hybrid identities and preferences | The warm embrace of comfort and nostalgia | Noticing imperfections of life in India |

4 / Reorganization

2/Conservation

1 / Growth

3 / Release

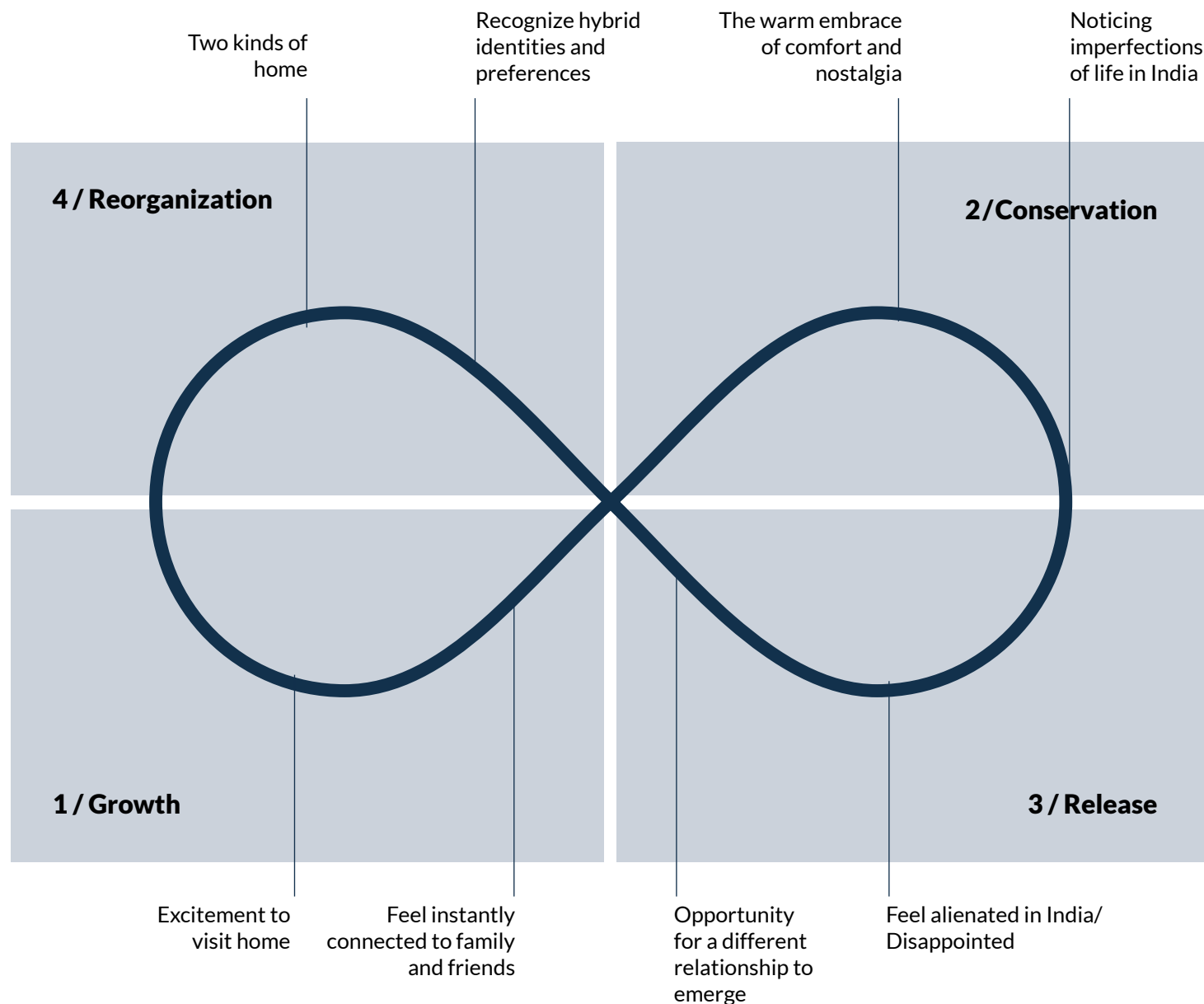| Excitement to visit home | Feel instantly connected to family and friends | Opportunity for a different relationship to emerge | Feel alienated in India/ Disappointed |

Figure 15 / Visiting Home Adaptive Cycle

Visits back to India constitute a pivotal moment in the journey. The distance and time away from India have allowed people to examine its impact on them. Their only connection with India has been through conversations with friends and family, social media, and news. But when they land, they realize how much things have changed around them and within them. The only thing that has remained unchanged is their yearning for this moment of visiting home.

Growth / Anticipation and excitement

The adaptive cycle launches when people begin planning a visit to India. There is a sense of joy and excitement, especially the first time. The activity in this phase consists of planning – what to do, where to eat, whom to meet, and what gifts to bring back. There is a hope that people will pick up exactly where they left off with their friends and family and are excited to reconnect and share their lives with their loved ones. During this time, people are also thinking about what part of their lives in Canada they want to share with their loved ones in India. For example, one of the respondents shares how excited she is to visit her hometown and speak in her mother tongue, something she doesn't get to experience living in Canada.
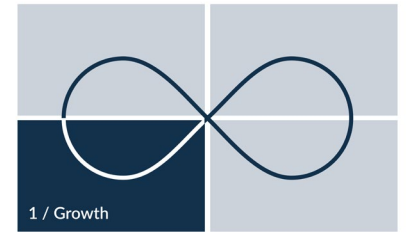
I am always excited to go home. I value India and my hometown more after coming to Canada. I never really gave it so much importance because I felt like I would be there my whole life. When I visit, I'm most excited to speak to people in Malayalam (my mother tongue)."
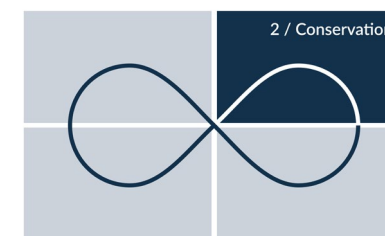
Conservation / The warm embrace of comfort and nostalgia

People have reached India and reconnected with their loved ones there in this period. They experience the warmth and comfort of being home. They did not realize how much they missed India until their visit. As a result, they want to do everything that brings them joy and reconnects them to their roots. They are prepared with lists of things they want to do, eat, buy and experience.

When we visited India, my daughter discovered the joy of Indian snacks. She was one and a half, and thanks to her grandparents, she only ate Indian snacks, no food. So, I think she now will associate India not just with her grand–parents but the food too. I am very, very glad for that."

Release / Alienation and disappointment

However, in a few days, they realize that life in India isn't all that romantic. People soon realize they feel isolated and alienated from daily life in India. When this realization dawns, a sense of grief takes over. There is a lot they don't understand about India's everyday reality, which causes a sense of alienation. This is the height of their conservation phase and triggers the movement into release.

People are not expecting to feel this, making it harder for them to accept and come to terms with their changed relationship with India. Their complicated relationship to life in India leads to grief and disappointment and later opens the opportunity for a different kind of relationship to emerge. For example, for one interviewee who was stuck in India during early COVID-19 lockdowns, a longer stay revealed the imperfections of life in India.

3 / Release
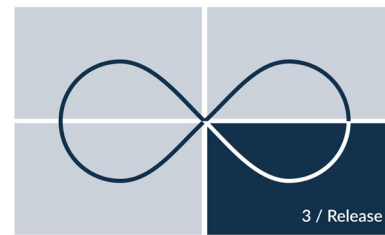
" I think when you go back home once every one and a half or two years, you are visiting for a short time. You know you're making memories, and you want to make the best of it. But when you're stuck there for six months, and you're dealing with the day-to-day stuff, that's when it hits you. What you thought were the wonderful things are not all that wonderful."

Reorganization / Two kinds of home

4 / Reorganization
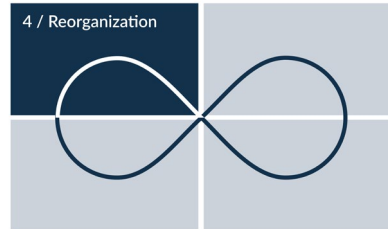
In this period, people recognize their hybrid identities and preferences. They acknowledge the benefits and drawbacks of life in both countries. It offers them the chance to rebuild a relationship and find new meaning to their life in India. Their expectations from subsequent trips to India also evolve and change to accommodate this new connection they have built. For one of the respondents, bringing back objects of significance from her Indian home was one way she contributed to creating a sense of home in Canada.

" We tried to do annual visits to India. And every time, I tried to bring back a little something that I could add to the house here (in Canada) to make it feel more like home. I think until I started bringing back things from India, my house in Canada was like a hotel room. I don't think doing that changed my relationship with India. The emotional bonds are still strong."

Stakeholders

The following map organizes the stakeholders of the post-arrival phase, including visiting home, based on their relative level of knowledge and power. A detailed description of the stakeholders can be found in Appendix C of this report.
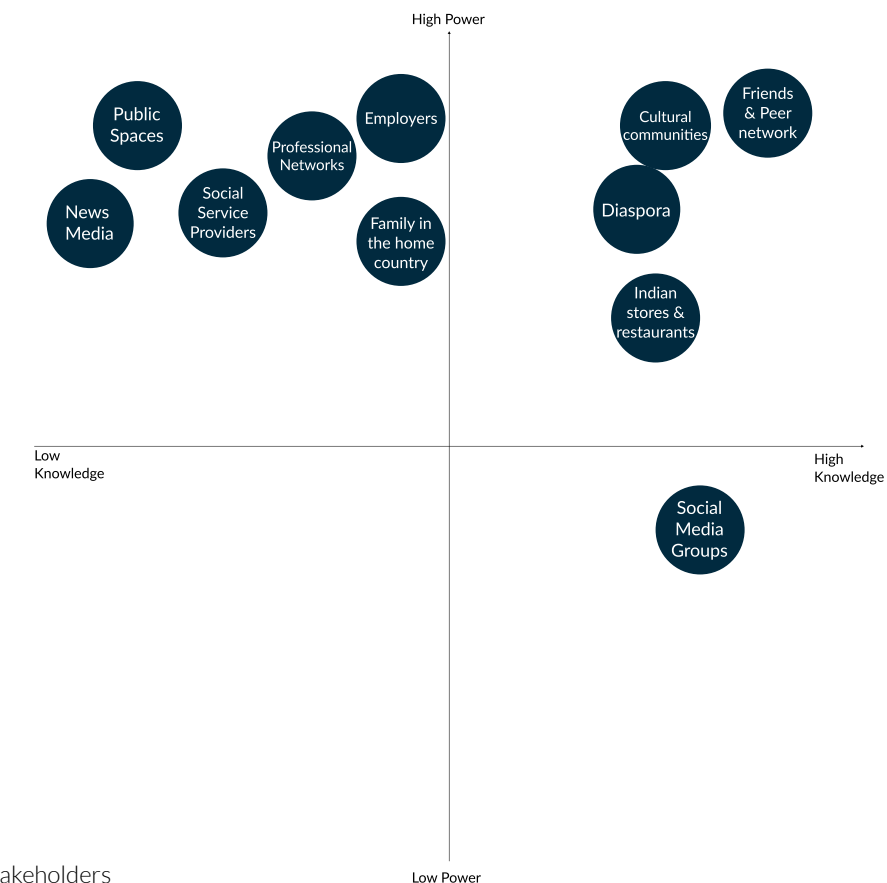
Figure 16 / Post-arrival Stakeholders

High Knowledge-High Power

Stakeholders in this quadrant have a high knowledge about the immigrant experience, coupled with high power to influence their level of belonging. Stakeholders in the quadrant include:

- Friends and peer network
- Cultural communities
- Diaspora
- Local Indian stores and restaurants

High Knowledge-Low Power

Stakeholders in this quadrant have high knowledge about the immigration experience, and relatively low power to influence a sense of belonging. Stakeholders in the quadrant include:

- Social Media groups

Low Knowledge-High Power

Stakeholders in this quadrant have low knowledge about the immigrant experience but hold high power in influencing their sense of belonging. Stakeholders in the quadrant include:

- Employers
- Professional networks
- Public spaces
- Social Service providers
- Family in the home country
- News media

Movement Pathways Through Post–arrival

Serial migrants / Although serial migrants have experienced a version of the post-arrival journey in their lives, their experience in Canada is still vastly different. Serial migrants who want to find a home in Canada view post-arrival as a long-term journey and are willing to invest time and resources to create the safety, comfort, and familiarity that make them feel at home.

Onward migrants / For onward migrants, post-immigration is a crucial journey phase. They consider, plan, and work towards an onward immigration journey during this journey phase. For many onward immigrants, traveling the world is highly important, especially after their experience in Canada and the joys of exploring and learning new cultures.

Circular migrants / For this group, the post-arrival phase is critical. The connections and opportunities they build during this phase keep them coming back to Canada, although they have an established life in India as well.

Return migrants / For migrants who wish to return to India, the post-arrival phase presents opportunities for growth and learning. However, many immigrants who plan to return often change their minds during this phase of their journey.

Systemic Enablers

- Local Indian stores and small businesses keep immigrants connected to their culture. It enables the construction of a feeling of home in a foreign country.

- Strong English language skills enable access to education, economic, and social opportunities. These skills help newcomers accelerate their learning and integration.

- A stable livelihood creates security for immigrants. Employment opportunities commensurate with an individual's education and experience are vital to ensure they thrive in economies. However, systemic barriers to economic mobility persist.

- A circle of trust is vital in enabling social capital and an immigrant's sense of social security in Canada. Isolation is a strong immigrant experience, and the only antidote to it is community bond and shared rituals with a closely-knit group of friends.

- Self-confidence denotes individuals' stored capacity to adapt to the various uncertainties post-arrival.

Systemic Barriers

- Employer prejudice connected to race and international credentials creates unequal access to livelihood opportunities. Many immigrants feel professionally unsatisfied during this phase due to skill underutilization.

- Immigrants are vulnerable to systemic inequities, not just in the workplace. Many experience discrimination in the healthcare system as brown immigrant women.

- Loss and grief, along with loneliness, are familiar immigrant experiences. Moving away from home feels exciting at first, but people start recognizing the grief that accompanies this experience during this stage. This impacts emotional well-being.

- The absence of community is still a pervasive immigrant experience, hindering their ability to integrate smoothly into Canadian society.

Journey Phase /
Gaining PR or Citizenship

Receiving formal immigrant status in Canada as a Permanent Resident or citizen serves as a measure of inclusion and access to several rights such as political participation, ease of travel, and ease of restrictions living abroad (Aptekar, 2015). Once immigrants have begun their project of constructing a sense of home in Canada, they move on to forging an official identity as a Canadian.

How do they make sense of this new identity? How do they relate to it? Identity refers to how we define ourselves. But it does not stop there. It goes beyond personal qualities and positions to include an individuals' membership with social groups. Consequently, as people evolve and their social memberships evolve, their identities change. Therefore identities are not static; they are "constructed, multiple, dynamic, relational and negotiated, and vary in their salience" (Gilkinson & Sauvé, 2010).

So, as people migrate and settle in Canada, their understanding of themselves changes due to several contributing factors, such as time spent in Canada, acquisition of formal citizenship, degree of compatibility with the culture, and overall experiences in the country (Gilkinson & Sauvé, 2010).

Among South Asian women and other people belonging to a visible minority, many develop hybrid Canadian and ethnic identities. And one of the ways they do this is through constructing and holding both formal (nationality, citizenship, etc.) and felt identities (Indian identity) (Malhi, et al, 2009). This group of women immigrants places significance on forging hybrid and fluid identities. Doing so helps immigrant women appropriate more power and accumulate "more tools in their toolbox than unicultural individuals", enabling them to "engage in 'cultural frame switching' depending on the demands of the particular situation" (Lehman, Chiu & Schaller, 2004, p.702).

But how do people reach this position? The adaptive cycle traces the path that women immigrants follow to forge their new identities.

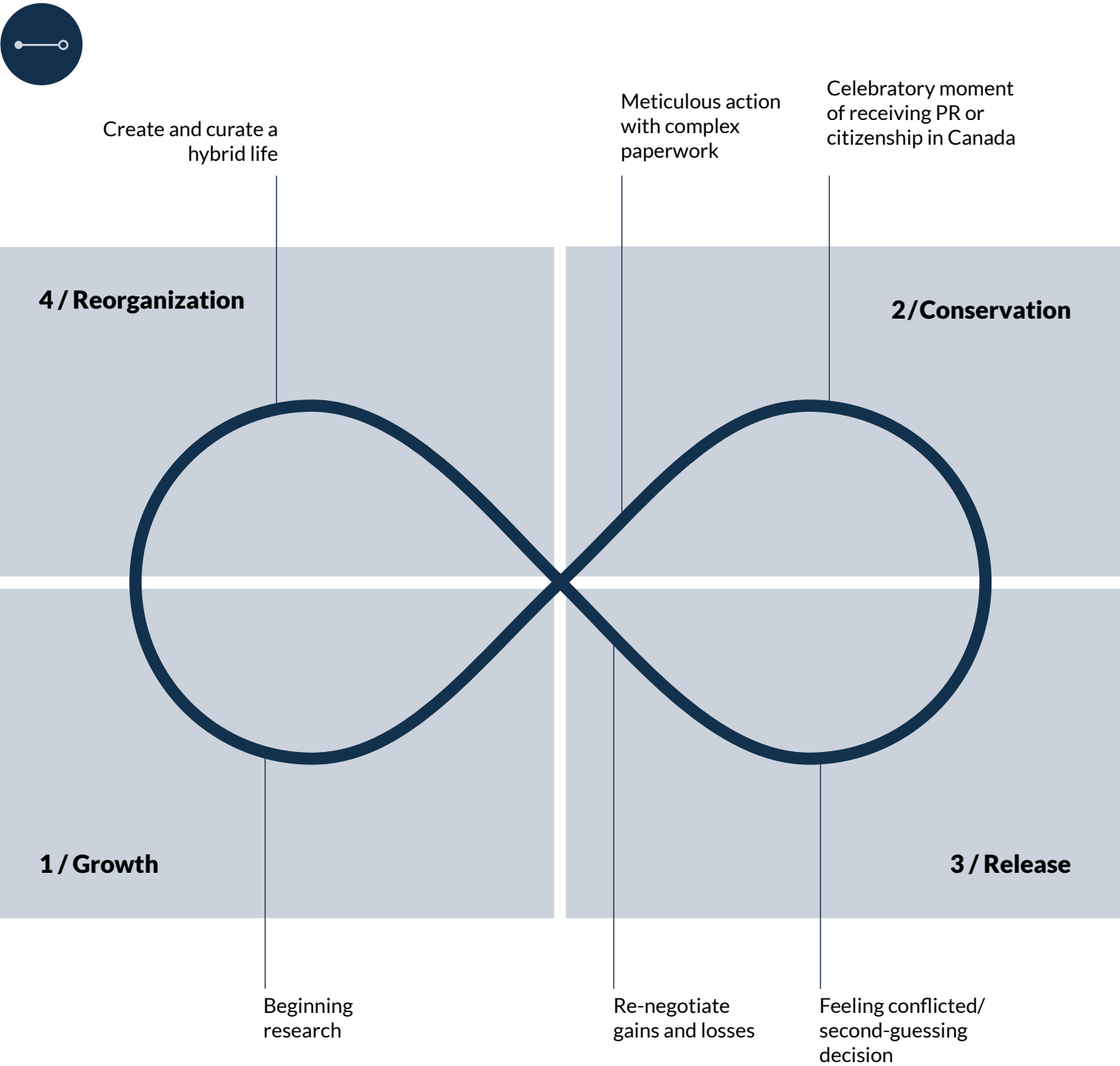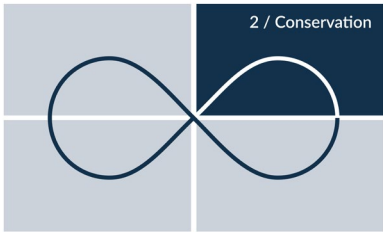# Gaining PR or Citizenship Adaptive Cycle / Forging Identity

Create and curate a hybrid life

Meticulous action with complex paperwork

Celebratory moment of receiving PR or citizenship in Canada

4 / Reorganization

2 / Conservation

1 / Growth

3 / Release

Beginning research

Re-negotiate gains and losses

Feeling conflicted/ second-guessing decision

Figure 17 / Gaining PR or Citizenship Adaptive Cycle

Growth / Weighing the pros and cons of applying for a PR or citizenship

The growth period of this journey begins with the plan to apply for citizenship or Permanent Residency in Canada. People have different goals that catalyze this process, such as career advancement, traveling, working in other countries, building a family in Canada, and receiving the social and economic benefits of being citizens or Permanent Residents. These goals differ for people based on their life priorities. The planning phase requires people to research and understand the complex processes of receiving PR or citizenship in Canada. They talk to other people in their networks, read online forums, and consult with immigration lawyers to get a lay of the land. During this phase, the learning is incremental, and through scrappy means, people gain knowledge and understanding of the processes involved. For many women, gaining citizenship became a relatively easy decision when their families grew in size. Having children prompted them to settle in Canada.

1 / Growth
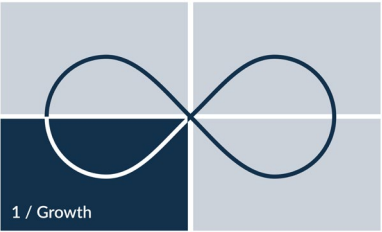
" I was on the fence for quite some time. I waited for about a year after I became eligible to apply for my citizenship simply because we as a family were considering whether we had to move back to India, and I felt like applying for our citizenship would just make things more complicated for me to live in India. But after we had our daughter, somehow, we felt that she would be better off in this system, and so we decided not to go back to India permanently, and I think that's when it became clear I was ready to apply for my citizenship."

Conservation / Beginning the formal process

In this stage, the accumulated knowledge is put to use. People begin their formal paperwork, which requires them to be meticulous and organized. As a result, connectedness increases, and internal systems crystallize to ensure all details are covered. Resiliency is low in this stage because people are creating rigid systems to help them achieve their goals. The completion of the application process is a moment of celebration. And receiving official status in Canada is a moment of even greater celebration for immigrants. Additionally, a sense of relief and safety arises from achieving Canadian citizenship or PR status. For instance, one of the respondents describes how receiving her PR was a clear indicator of calling Canada home. Especially since her entire life, she had lived in several different countries and was glad to find a long-term base she could call her own.


2 / Conservation

" After I received my PR, I had a sense of relief. PR made me feel like, okay, this is home. This is my base, where I'm going to stay."

Release / Feeling conflicted

The moment of celebration is coloured by a sense of loss that accompanies becoming a naturalized citizen. People renounce their Indian passport and identity in exchange for a Canadian passport. Indeed, this has emotional consequences for immigrants. It invokes fear and grief, resulting in immigrants second-guessing their decision. The same applies to PRs as well. For instance, the respondent here talks about how her decision to acquire a PR, while in India through Express Entry, was something she had to do in isolation because she anticipated her family's worries. This certainly caused some emotions of doubt and fear within her, but her resolve proved stronger.

3 / Release
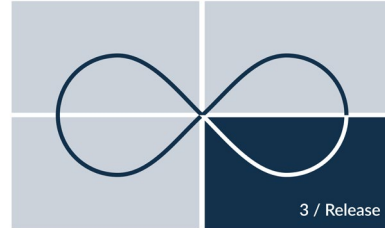
" My family did not know I was applying for my PR. If I told them I got a PR, they would assume I'm not coming back to India. So, nobody in my family knew I was applying, only close friends of mine knew. It is only after I moved here that I had to gradually break it to them I have a PR and that there are benefits of holding a PR status."

4 / Reorganization

" All in all, I feel more balanced about my life now. If I want to go back to India, it is because I would want to, not because I couldn't make it in Canada. I feel more balanced now to think about what I need and what my family needs. The place has stopped mattering in that sense."
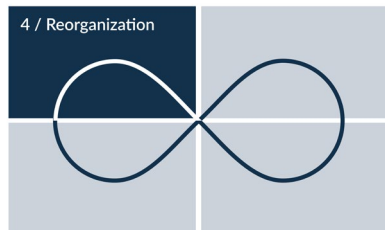
Reorganization / Reclaiming identity and true autonomy

The release is not quite as intense. Even though people give up their official Indian identity, they still feel a strong emotional connection with India. They tend to weigh it alongside the benefits they receive in their daily lives in Canada. During this stage, they renegotiate the gains and losses of receiving PR or citizenship in Canada. They recognize that they have the ability and power to create and curate a deeply personalized hybrid life and identity that speaks to their Indianness and Canadianness simultaneously. As the respondent says here, the place stops mattering, and life intentions are more significant.

Stakeholders

The following map organizes the stakeholders of this phase based on their relative level of knowledge and power. A detailed description of the stakeholders can be found in Appendix C of this report.
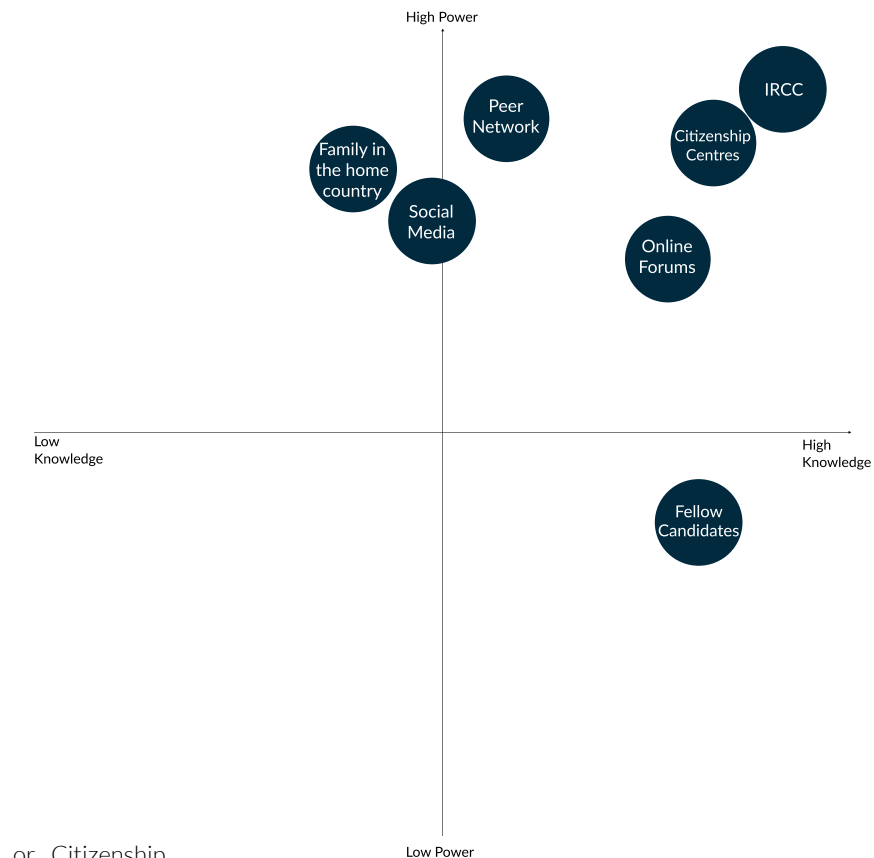
Figure 18 / Gaining PR or Citizenship Stakeholders

High Knowledge-High Power

Stakeholders in this quadrant have high knowledge about the individual experience during this phase, and high power in influencing immigrants' primary preoccupations in this phase. Stakeholders in the quadrant include:

- The IRCC
- Citizenship Centres
- Peer network

High Knowledge-Low Power

Stakeholders in this quadrant have high knowledge but relatively low power to support individuals during the phase. Stakeholders in the quadrant include:

- Other fellow candidates that people engage with during Citizenship ceremonies
- Social media

Low Knowledge-High Power

Stakeholders in this quadrant have low knowledge but hold relatively high power. Stakeholders in the quadrant include:

- Family in the home country

Movement Pathways Through Gaining PR or Citizenship

Serial migrants / Serial immigrants typically seek to settle and find themselves a permanent home in Canada. After spending many years in transit, this group is keenly interested in gaining Canadian citizenship.

Onward migrants / For onward migrants, gaining Canadian citizenship is undoubtedly an essential step in unlocking more opportunities for migration. Unlike an Indian passport, the Canadian passport gives them the power to be more mobile and access employment and exploratory possibilities worldwide.

Circular migrants / People who wish to keep their options open for a life in India and Canada are ordinarily satisfied with possessing a valid visa for both countries that allows them to work, live and access social services. For them, securing a PR visa and retaining Indian nationality is sufficient to have a life in both countries.

Return migrants / Since a return migrant wishes to move back to India after a short stay in Canada, they rarely venture into seeking Canadian citizenship.

Systemic Enablers

- Immigration consultants help navigate the complex and ever-changing terrain of immigration laws and policies.

Systemic Barriers

- As the demand for immigration consulting services is high, several bad actors in the ecosystem exploit the vulnerability of applicants who are trying to meet a particular timeline or alleviate their stress about rejections and wait times. There is an opportunity for more immigration consultants who are pre-vetted, financially accessible, and sensitive to immigrants' needs.

- Lack of clarity on requirements and eligibility is the number one deterrent for immigrants. Streamlined, helpful, and timely information about changing laws and details about the immigration process is missing. People rely on information they find on online forums, but there is no way to determine the legitimacy of such information. There is an opportunity to create streamlined information flows that bridge the system's goals and needs of the individual.

Chapter 4 /
Resilience Journey Map

I wish
maps would be without
borders & that we belonged
to no one & to everyone
at once, what a world that
would be. Or not a world
maybe we would call it
something more intrinsic
like forgiving or something
simplistic like river or dirt.

— Maps, Yesenia Montilla

This section combines and shows the evolving nature of immigration adaptive cycles—an immigration panarchy. The term panarchy is used to describe the evolving nature of complex adaptive systems, where they are interlinked through nested cycles of growth, conservation, release, and renewal. These change-cycles represent scales ranging from micro to macro over a period of days to years. Although a panarchy emphasizes hierarchical structuring through time and space, they are different from traditional hierarchies that are fixed static structures with top-down processes (Gunderson & Holling, 2002).

In a panarchy, there is a connection between adaptive cycles at various levels. Two types of connections – 'revolt' and 'remember' – are particularly important ones to note. The 'revolt' connection can cause a critical change in one cycle to cascade up to a vulnerable stage in a larger and slower one, especially if those levels have accumulated rigidities and vulnerabilities. The 'remember' connection facilitates renewal by tapping into potential that has been accumulated and stored in the larger and slower cycles. The connection draws on the accumulated wisdom and experiences of maturity. The time and capacity it takes to adapt at each phase are not constant and depend on multiple factors.

Revolt / The 'revolt' connection, links the release phase of the shorter adaptive cycle to the conservation phase of the larger, slower adaptive cycle. It triggers the vulnerability of the larger cycle.

Remember / The 'remember' link connects the conservation phase of a longer cycle to the reorganization phase of shorter cycle. It facilitates renewal by tapping into the potential that has already been accumulated.

Immigration Panarchy

The resilience journey map is a series of nested adaptive cycles, i.e., an immigration panarchy. Figure 19 shows how these adaptive cycles from pre-arrival to gaining PR or citizenship share connections through the two links: 'remember' and 'revolt'.

Time taken in the cycles / Every person's journey through these adaptive cycles looks different, and the time spent in each stage determines how short and long their adaptive cycles are. Generally speaking, the length and pace of adaptation expand and slow down as people progress through the stages. In other words, sensemaking (an arrival phase pursuit) is a shorter and faster adaptive cycle than forging an identity (a purpose during the gaining PR or citizenship phase), which is slow and long.

Capacities for adaptation / Through the interviews it became clear that resilience is primarily constructed at the individual scale by employing absorptive and adaptive capacity to bounce back from setbacks during their journey. Occasionally stories of collective resilience came through, and transformative resilience was rarely practiced.

At pre-arrival, the primary mission is decision-making. Setbacks around selection uncertainties and information gaps are prominent. Most people feel they do not have much agency in the face of systemic processes, but, some navigate by exercising innovative strategies. The length of this cycle depends on multiple factors.

At the arrival phase, the main quest is sensemaking. Challenges around isolation creep up as sensemaking takes place as a solitary process. An exciting proposition at first, individual sensemaking later triggers loneliness. Immigrants adapt by investing in their own capacities and building a community around them. This phase connects with the pre-arrival phase through the 'remember' link. People tend to remember and recall the experiences gained in the previous phase to help navigate.

At the post-arrival phase, belonging is the central objective of the journey. Emotional needs come to the forefront after individuals attain a degree of material comfort and stability in Canada. Here, the challenges present are those around constructing a sense of home, building a circle of trust, and reconciling individual and cultural losses. Visiting India during these years contributes to individuals realizing they have a unique opportunity to have two homes that serve two emotional and functional needs. The feelings of isolation caused by fierce independence are familiar, and immigrants 'remember' the importance of community from their experiences during arrival. The 'revolt' link triggers the vulnerability in the next loop, i.e. gaining PR or citizenship.

A shorter loop of visiting home occurs during post-arrival. It is shorter because people typically spend less time visiting India. The adaptive cycle of this phase shares links with the post-arrival adaptive cycle. The 'remember' link reassures people of having a connection to two places they can call home. Alternatively, self-doubt from the previous cycle triggers 'revolt'.

When individuals gain PR or citizenship in Canada, their pursuit shifts to forging an identity as deeper questions and personal and social identity conflicts emerge. This cycle is relatively slow and long. It links to the preceeding adaptive cycles through both the 'remember' and 'revolt' links.

The resilience journey map applies the concept of a panarchy onto the idea of a journey map. It depicts the resilience journey, focusing on the linear movement pathway. Figure 19 is the visual representation of the map, and Table 1 lists touchpoints, stakeholders, gaps and opportunities within each journey phase.

Pre-arrival
Decision-making

Arrival
Sensemaking

Post-arrival
Belonging

Visiting Home

Gaining PR or Citizenship
Forging Identity

High Capacity

Low Capacity

CAPACITY

Two kinds of home

Curating a life on ones' own terms

Self-reliance gives a sense of power

Celebratory moment of receiving official immigrant status in Canada

The warm embrace of comfort and nostalgia

Grief, sadness from rejection

Seeking normalcy instead of novelty

Solidifying expectations about Canada

Investing in oneself and ones' community

MAP LEGEND

→ Revolt link

⋯► Remember link

Phases happening outside Canada

●—○ *Linear movement pathway*

Low Connectedness (Dynamic)

CONNECTEDNESS

High Connectedness (Stable)

Figure 19 / Resilience Journey Map

| | Pre-arrival | | Arrival | | Post-arrival | | Gaining PR or Citizenship |
	Decision-making		*Sensemaking*		*Belonging*	*Visiting Home*	*Forging Identity*
STAKEHOLDERS *Systemic actors and touchpoints that immigrants interact with*	• IRCC • Provinces • Potential future employers • Consultants • Settlement agencies • Peer networks • Family & friends • News media • Current employers • Social media • Micro-influencers		• Settlement agencies • Social Service providers • Potential future employers • Public libraries • Banks • Border control • Tech companies • Housing system • Public transit system • Local businesses • Social media groups		• Friends & peer networks • Cultural communities • Diaspora • Local Indian stores & restaurants • Employers • Professional networks • Public spaces • News media • Social Service providers • Family in the home country • Social media groups	• Friends & family • Local businesses	• IRCC • Citizenship Centres • Online forums • Peer network • Social media • Family in the home country • Fellow applicants
GAPS *Friction points*	• Too much time spent waiting • Monolithic narratives of immigrant life in Canada • Disrupted information flows • A lack of trusted peer networks		• Inability to find stable, safe housing • Steady or reliable social network • A lack of financial literacy • Weather-related issues		• Resources and ability to build community • An over-reliance on self (individualism) • Unequal access to employment	• Bad actors (scammers) that exploit vulnerability of individuals • Unfamiliarity/ alienation from life in india • A lack of emotional well-being	• Stress associated with Citizenship tests • Bureaucracy throughout the Citizenship process • Limited information flows from official sources • Bad actors taking advantage of individual's vulnerabilities
INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES *Intervention opportunities throughout the immigrant journey*	• Create/ encourage new narratives of a successful life in Canada • Transform an individual's time spent waiting to be more generative • Transparency in selection criteria and decision-making • Opportunities to connect with other immigrants • Cater to information needs of immigrants on different pathways		• Immigrant-specific financial literacy • Tap into walking as a mode of sensemaking • Encourage building routines and habits for improved well-being • Create functional paths to gain access to essential services • Ways to mitigate isolation and loneliness		• Create opportunities for collective well-being and collective resilience • A DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) based career education module		• Opportunities for immigrants to learn about Indigenous Peoples' histories, cultures and lived experiences • To contribute to decolonization, truth and reconciliation in Canada • Establish networks outside of cultural and language groups to solidify their identity as migrants in Canada • Use their hybrid and liminal identities to collectively transform large systems of oppression and discrimination both in Canada and India • Engage with notions of identity through creativity and curiosity

Table 1 / Gaps and Opportunities Across the Journey Phases

Chapter 5 /
Concluding Remarks

they have no idea what it's like
to lose home at the risk of
never finding home again
to have your entire life
split between two lands and
become the bridge between two countries

— immigrant, Rupi Kaur

My hope is that this project does not end here; it is just a pause in the research journey. In this section, I summarize the work done so far, and propose next steps.

Through this work, I attempted to synthesize of how women of Indian origin travel through their individual journeys of immigration. For this project, I tapped into the lived experiences of women immigrants of Indian origin in Canada. Though the project intended to focus on the lived experiences of this group, the findings have a broader appeal and may apply to economic immigrants that arrive in Canada from other parts of the world as well. Below, I revisit the research question and summarize the three main takeaways from the study.

Revisiting the Research Question

How does resilience unfold throughout an immigrant woman's journey from India to Canada as she <u>plans</u>, <u>moves</u>, <u>arrives</u>, <u>settles</u>, <u>integrates</u>, and <u>thrives</u> in Canadian society?

Key Takeaways

1 / Adapting to uncertainties is not a deliberate or calculated action

The research reveals that immigrant resilience is both the process and capacity "to renew and reorganize after disturbance." Every stage of their journey brings particular setbacks that call for specific acts of resilience. As explained in the system dynamics section in Chapter 2, these challenges are a cause of systemic failures and unintended consequences. What I learned from the research indicates that resilience emerges without much deliberation or calculation on the part of the individual. It is something people perform automatically and naturally to fulfill their missions at every stage, meet the qualifications of a 'good immigrant' at all phases and

earn their place in Canadian society (Suleyman & Shukla, 2019). Despite the unintended consequences and systemic failures that stack against the immigrant, they continue to work harder to achieve success.

2 / There is no prototypical or linear immigrant journey; thus no singular way to remain resilient

Every immigration journey is unique. The study expands on five types of movement pathways common among immigrants. These pathways are: linear, serial, onward, circular, and return migratory pathways. People on each pathway face distinct challenges and possess unique mental models, capabilities, and aspirations for their immigration journeys. There is no singular journey, as is often conceptualized by policymakers. These pathways, though distinct, are not rigid segments or categories. They may overlap in complex ways, thus fragmenting the journey. For example, a person may start their journey wanting to be a return migrant, but mid-way change their trajectories to an onward migrant. Further research needs to be conducted into these movement patterns to get a deeper understanding of human experiences.

3 / Individual resilience is over-emphasized throughout the journey

It was also evident that people primarily rely on their individual capacity for resilience (instead of collective or transformative capacity) through absorptive and adaptive capacity. Collective and transformative resilience is rarely demonstrated. Adapting to the complexities and unpredictabilities of immigration is looked at as an individual act, and people feel a sense of accomplishment when they independently tackle challenging experiences. This raises further questions: what is the role of collective and transformative resilience among immigrants, and what currently inhibits such acts? The research shows that the onus is on the individual to remain resilient despite the massive invisible forces they are fighting against. When people take it upon themselves to be resilient to systemic pressures, we have to ask - who is the resilience benefiting, and what are the hidden costs associated with it? What if the system is accountable and responsible for ensuring individuals thrive?

What's Next

Based on the above insights, I present some opportunity spaces where systemic actors can add value to immigrant journeys. These opportunities are offered as thought-starters for what an ecosystem of support might look like that promotes individual capacities for resilience and ameliorates systemic consequences. The questions are organized by journey phase.

Pre-arrival

- What if we created new narratives for a successful life in Canada which represents diverse and authentic perspectives and lived experiences of Indigenous and immigrant communities to help rebalance expectations?

- How might we transform an individual's time spent waiting to be more generative?

- What systemic interventions would contribute to the IRCC becoming transparent about selection criteria and decision-making to mitigate anxiety during this stage?

- How might we help immigrant women connect with other immigrants and diaspora communities before their arrival to prepare them for life in Canada better?

- What are immigrants' information needs while making an immigration decision? What types of information flows would help fulfill these needs?

Arrival

- How might we support women immigrants to gain relevant financial literacy to feel financially empowered in Canada?

- How might the act of walking be used to enhance the connection immigrants feel with their immediate environment during their first few days in Canada?

- What kinds of support might help newcomers create better routines and habits for improved well-being?

- How might we cut the information clutter to provide functional and inspirational knowledge so that immigrant women can better navigate their first few days in Canada?

- How might we mitigate isolation and loneliness among newcomers?

Post-arrival

- What if newcomers transform their individual resilience to support collective well-being and collective resilience?

- How might we design a DEI-based (diversity, equity and inclusion) career education module that caters to the intersectional needs of women immigrants so that they receive opportunities that help them be more valuable in society?

Gaining PR or Citizenship

- How might immigrants of colour contribute to decolonization, truth and reconciliation in Canada?

- How might immigrants learn about Indigenous Peoples' histories, cultures and lived experiences so that they understand their position in relation to these communities?

- What if immigrant women use their hybrid and liminal identities to collectively transform large systems of oppression and discrimination both in Canada and India?

- What if newcomers were able to build networks outside of their cultural and language groups to solidify their identity as migrants in Canada?
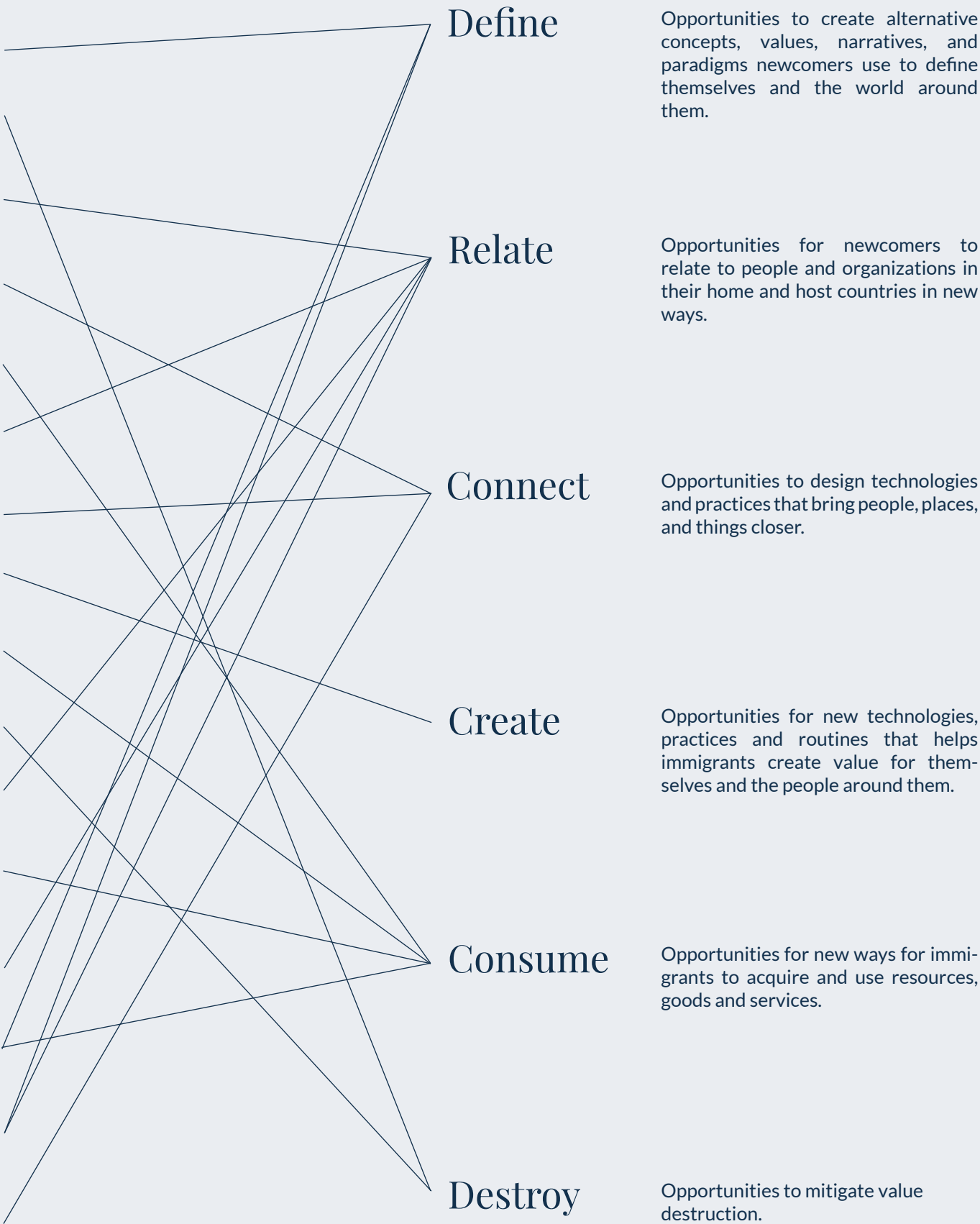
Innovation Opportunity Landscape

The opportunity landscape maps these questions and thought-starters to the the Verge domains to indicate the type of innovation they might be, and which aspects (define, relate, connect, create, consume, and destroy) of the immigrant experience would they impact (Lum, 2014). Appendix A contains a detailed description of the Verge categories.

Thought-starters

- What if we created new narratives for a successful life in Canada which represents diverse and authentic perspectives and lived experiences of Indigenous and immigrant communities to help rebalance expectations?

- How might we transform an individual's time spent waiting to be more generative?

- What systemic interventions would contribute to the IRCC becoming transparent about selection criteria and decision-making to mitigate anxiety during pre-arrival?

- How might we help immigrant women connect with other immigrants and diaspora communities before their arrival to prepare them for life in Canada better?

- What are immigrants' information needs while making an immigration decision? What types of information flows would help fulfill these needs?

- How might we support women immigrants to gain relevant financial literacy to feel financially empowered in Canada?

- How might the act of walking be used to enhance the connection immigrants feel with their immediate environment during their first few days in Canada?

- What kinds of support might help newcomers create better routines and habits for improved well-being?

- How might we cut the information clutter to provide functional and inspirational knowledge so that immigrant women can better navigate their first few days in Canada?

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- What if newcomers were able to build networks outside of their cultural and language groups to solidify their identity as migrants in Canada?

Type of Innovation

Define
Opportunities to create alternative concepts, values, narratives, and paradigms newcomers use to define themselves and the world around them.

Relate
Opportunities for newcomers to relate to people and organizations in their home and host countries in new ways.

Connect
Opportunities to design technologies and practices that bring people, places, and things closer.

Create
Opportunities for new technologies, practices and routines that helps immigrants create value for themselves and the people around them.

Consume
Opportunities for new ways for immigrants to acquire and use resources, goods and services.

Destroy
Opportunities to mitigate value destruction.

Reflections

This project has been a series of multiple, simultaneous adaptive cycles! Over the past few months, I experienced periods of incredible growth, shorter stretches of stability, and moments of utter chaos and renewal. Going through these has taught me a lot about myself, my practice, and the quality of resilience. So, as a concluding note, I share a few of my learnings about resilience, especially as it pertains to individual resilience.

Resilience at what cost, and for whose benefit?

When I began this project, my purpose was to understand how immigrants adapted to various setbacks throughout their journey. Understanding this was important to me because I wanted to see how, just like me, other women immigrants had also demonstrated fierce resilience to 'make it' in Canada. I intended to show immigrants, and myself, the patterns of their resilient actions to reassure them and make them feel seen in their journeys. But what I thought would be a cathartic experience turned out to be a pretty crushing one.

By pairing human-centered and systemic research and juxtaposing the two analyses, I saw how the macro system dynamics of the immigration system produce unintended and dangerous consequences for individuals. And despite these, people bounce back. My project was about celebrating individual stories of resilience, but I did not ask the inevitable questions: resilience at what hidden costs and for whose benefit?

Structural inequalities cannot be resolved with individual resilience.

I believe it should not be an individual's job to overcome systemic barriers through individual acts of resilience. Truthfully, I feel resilience is a dangerous idea when applied to individuals in isolation. It is both tiring and gaslighting to place the responsibility on the individuals to work harder to overcome what is systemically hindering them. I believe it is an individual's job to be real, not resilient. And it is the job of the systems to nurture conditions for thriving. But how? I hope my MRP starts a conversation about how systems can be held accountable to ensure that newcomers in Canada have what it takes to make a life here and be successful for their own sake, for their communities, and the benefit of Canadian society.

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Appendices

Appendix A / Verge Framework

The Verge Framework proposes a human-centred approach to analysis. It is composed on six elements, and a short descrtiption of each of the elements are presented here (Lum & Bowman, 2004).

Define

The Define domain speaks to the concepts, ideas, and paradigms we use to define ourselves and the world around us. This includes things like worldview, paradigms, and social values and attitudes.

Relate

Deals with the social structures and relationships that organize people and create organizations. Here we look at things like family structures, business models, and governance structures.

Connect

Encompasses the technologies and practices used to connect people, places, and things. Connect looks for things like information technology, urban design, and language.

Create

Concerned with the technology and processes through which we produce goods and services. This is all about things like manufacturing, efficiency, and rule- making.

Consume

About the ways in which we acquire and use the goods and services we create. This domain is about issues like modes of exchange, consumer preferences, and marketing.

Destroy

About the ways in which we destroy value and the reasons for doing so. Here we are concerned with phenomena like violence and killing, waste, and attempts to undermine rules and norms.

Appendix B / Interview Analysis Using the Verge Framework

Pre-arrival Immigrant Experience

Define / As immigrants navigate through this phase, they use several paradigms and worldviews to justify their decision to immigrate to Canada. These ideas help crystalize their decision-making process. Some of these ideas are based on the perception of high inclusion and openness in Canadian society. People believe life in Canada would be a breeze, but not without some initial setbacks in the early days. Nonetheless, compared to other countries, Canada is perceived as a 'healthier risk.'

Relate / Moving to Canada is a tough decision to make. However, when social systems and relationships guide people's moves, they appear less daunting. Some of the social and economic systems that pave the way for new women immigrants to Canada include the higher education system, marriage, and family. During this phase, decision-making and planning are guided through the processes and structures of these systems.

Connect / Although immigrants are located in their home countries, they begin to establish connections with professional and personal networks in Canada during this phase. As a result, most of the information they gather is through these networks. Digital and social media also play a role in creating a connection between immigrants and Canada.

Consume / People conduct research before, during, and after deciding to immigrate. Consuming information about a potential future life in Canada makes that decision more vivid and tangible for people. Immigrants rely on YouTube videos, blogs, social media posts, and online forums to conduct this research. Furthermore, in the days leading up to their travels, individuals' consumption revolves around gathering and packing essential items readily available in India that they fear might be hard to find in Canada.

Destroy / Moving to Canada is a risk that people take, and there is a trade-off associated with it. To attain the benefits of a better life in Canada, immigrants put on the line their families, comfort, and familiarity with life in India. Many are concerned about moving far away from family and friends. Other significant concerns include missing having access to their favorite foods, as it is something that comforts them and brings them joy. Some people also have legitimate fears about finding employment in the Canadian job market. Women who choose to immigrate to Canada come from backgrounds that have systemically oppressed and excluded them and are hoping to find acceptance in Canada.

Arrival Immigrant Experience

Define / When people land in Canada, it is a surreal experience. Finally, all the waiting has ended, and they can begin the life they have been looking forward to. People have mixed emotions - excitement and joy on the one hand and homesickness and nervousness on the other hand. Boundaries between these emotions are blurred, fluctuating based on context and time of day. Single women who undertake the immigration journey feel invincible, brimming with confidence and agency for being able to complete a significant journey on their own.

Relate / People's main priority is finding and establishing support structures that help them navigate the complexity and novelty of daily life in Canada. They turn to their direct or indirect existing networks such as friends and family, extended friends circle, university student bodies, etc. In addition, people are also accessing essential services that enable them better relate to social, economic, and political structures in the country.

Connect / Immigrants spend a considerable amount of time connecting with their new physical and built environment and the people around them. People use wayfinding technologies like Google Maps to explore their neighborhoods and assist them in getting from one place to another. Other aspects of the physical environment, such as the library, the school, the transit system, the mall, and even the forest, instill stability, security, and safety. Communicating with friends and family back in India is also very important. Communication tech helps fulfill this need.

Create / The primary goal is to settle in. While creating connections and situating oneself within social systems are critical, another objective is to develop a sense of normalcy when everything feels foreign. People do this by creating routines and rituals that help them feel settled. When immigrants understand their own needs during this phase, it is easier to forge grounding practices.

Consume / Immigrants consume information about navigating critical systems in Canada. They are also consuming a lot of new experiences, ways of life, and cultures, especially during this journey stage.

Destroy / There are prevailing feelings of isolation, exclusion, boredom, homesickness, and fear. These emotions stem from the financial and social instability that people experience during their first few days in Canada.

Post-arrival Immigrant Experience

Define / Immigrants feel a sense of independence and freedom to explore their identities and interests. Their independence gives rise to self-reliance and a 'let's figure it out' mentality, making them feel powerful. People notice the culture of individualism and imbibe it fully. This contrasts with their experience in India, where they have an extensive support system to get through day-to-day life. The constraints of daily experiences force them to confront their beliefs and biases (especially cultural beliefs) and do the hard work of reframing them. Women realize the extent of internalized patriarchy and hegemony they carry. Distance from their families and the reclamation of power help them take charge of their transformation journey. As a result, people are more open to defining themselves through more fluid and hybrid identities.

Connect / For women immigrants, personal mobility holds enormous significance. People believe their mobility allows them to access more professional and financial opportunities and improve their quality of life through travel and exploration. Immigrants also spend a considerable amount of time connecting and building a chosen family in Canada. This certainly includes other Indian immigrants but also individuals from different nationalities and socio-cultural backgrounds. Celebrating Indian festivals and holidays gain renewed significance as they are a reason to connect with other people and Indian culture. During this time, people are also finding ways to connect with themselves and establish self-care practices to help tackle crippling moments of loneliness and sadness, which are lingering feelings associated with migration.

Create / Immigrants create economic, intellectual, and social value as highly skilled professionals in Canadian society. They also spend time creating a sense of home and familiarity in Canada. This includes creating personal and communal rituals and memories with people in their close group of friends and family that gives rise to a sense of stability and meaning.

Consume / Consumption patterns continue to denote immigrants' preoccupations with wanting to create a sense of home in Canada. They rely on local businesses run by Indians to consume food, groceries, and supplies that help them bring a sense of familiarity to their lives. In addition, with self-care taking precedence in people's lives, they consume mental health services for the first time (something they never considered while living in India). Personal finance services are also something women immigrants access for the first time in Canada. They recognize the importance of financial freedom and take responsibility to learn and keep track of their financial health.

Destroy / Experiences of worry, loneliness, systemic discrimination, and compromise on all fronts are a constant in the lives of immigrant women. Even essential services such as housing stability are an issue for single women, causing stress and erosion of safety and security. Moreover, newcomers trying to find a place in Canadian society are more vulnerable to bad actors like scammers and negative peer influence, and systemic injustices like discriminatory practices in the healthcare system. Despite highly respected qualifications, they experience many challenges to break into the workforce resulting in self-doubt and low confidence. As a result, people believe they have to settle for opportunities that do not match their credentials. On the personal front, too, women feel guilt and worry for living far from their families in India. They struggle to justify trading off strong emotional bonds with friends and family in India for the loneliness of Canadian life. Above all, they believe if they change aspects of themselves and codeswitch, they will have a better chance of succeeding in Canada. The insecurities that result from this cause severe detriments to their mental health.

Gaining PR or Citizenship Immigrant Experience

Define / A person officially becomes an immigrant when she receives a Permanent Residency status or Canadian citizenship. For many, getting their PR is one of the most significant milestones of their journey. People perceive the PR status as more challenging (higher wait times, and more opportunities are at stake) to receive but a practical choice to feel secure in the country and begin building their lives here. Citizenship, however, is an emotional decision. Indian immigrants would need to forfeit their Indian official identity to get Canadian citizenship, which comes at an emotional cost. There is, however, a belief that receiving official status in Canada expands opportunities and contributes to feeling included in the country.

Relate / One of the main motivations to apply for official immigrant status is to access better employment opportunities and social security. But for these reasons, a PR status is sufficient. But processing this visa is time-consuming. So, while some accepted the time it would take for their paperwork to process, others took matters into their own hands by reaching out to the higher authorities in the system to expedite their PR process and receive more transparency with updates. On the other hand, people consider becoming citizens when they realize there is more to gain for them and their families if they choose to stay in Canada.

Connect / A person's decision to apply for their PR or citizenship impacts their interpersonal connections. They experience reactions ranging from support to surprise and outright sadness from their family and friends. To avoid these reactions, people refrain from disclosing their decisions to their loved ones in India or take the time needed to convince them.

Create / Ultimately, getting a PR or Canadian citizenship is about creating more choices for oneself. Some want to build a life in Canada, some want to travel and explore other countries, and some want to move back closer to India.

Destroy / Securing PR or citizenship status in Canada is a cause of fear and stress among people. It also implies they have to be willing to put their connections and Indian identity at stake. This puts an additional burden on the individuals who are already experiencing the uncertainties of the official processes.

Appendix C / Stakeholder Maps

Pre-arrival
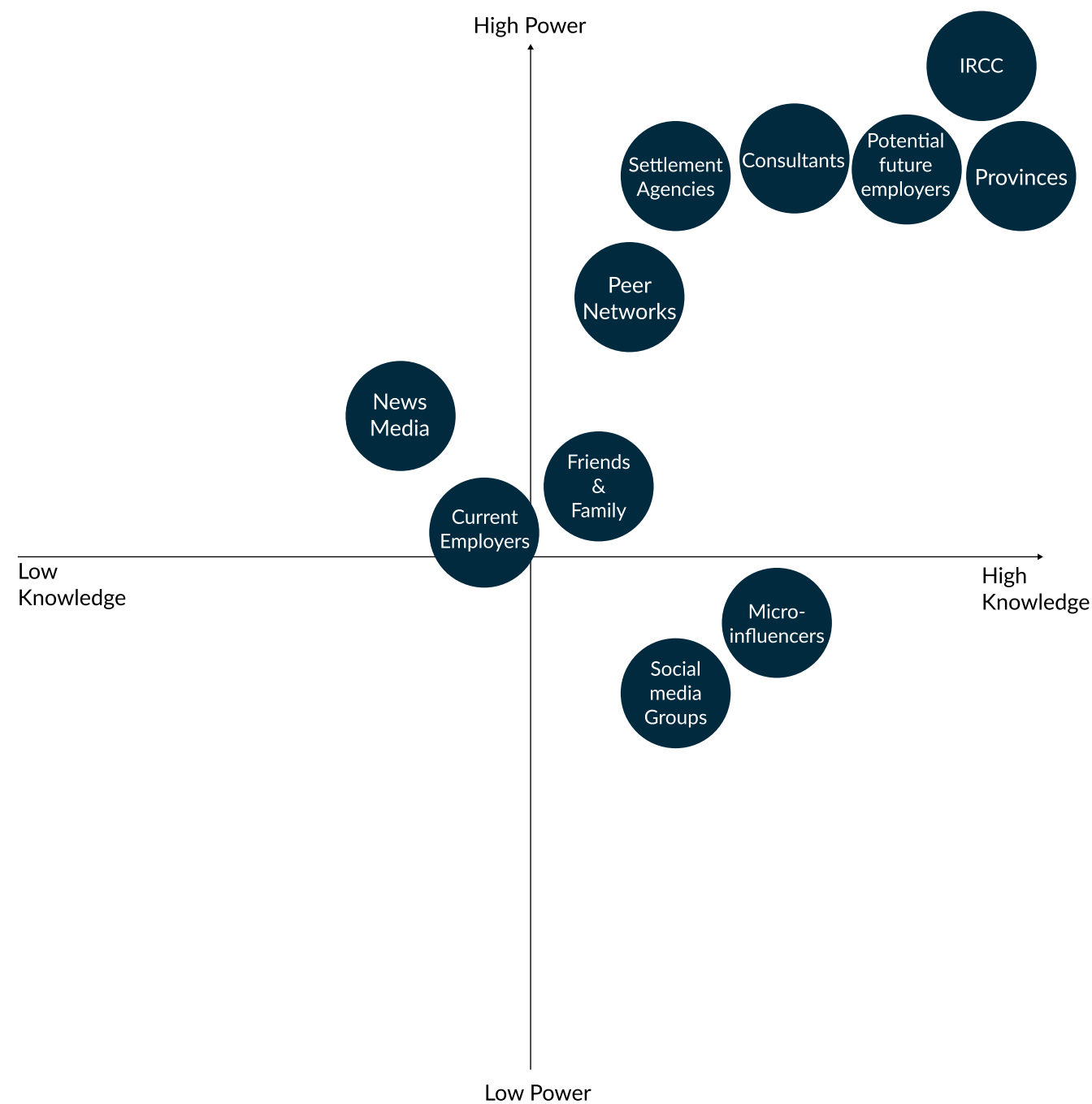
The IRCC, Provinces, Future Employers / Through the current Express Entry system for immigrant intake, the IRCC, the Provinces and future employers form the main stakeholder group that has decision-making authority on immigration selection and invitation. Though not directly, individuals engage with them throughout this stage.

Value exchange is Relate

Immigration consultants / The rise in the trend towards immigrating to Canada has created a booming market for immigrant consultants. The services of these consultants include legal advice and support with immigration paperwork. This service adds value in navigating the complex landscape of the immigration system. However, there is a growing number of frauds and scams that are taking advantage of the individual's vulnerability in the system.

Value exchange is Relate, Destroy

Peer network in Canada / When immigration interest in stimulated within an individual, they are likely to reach out to or activate their peer networks in Canada. Most people know someone, either directly or indirectly, who have already immigrated to Canada. The reason to establish connection is to research about life in Canada. Unlike sources such

as social media or the news, this relationship offers a human connection in the process.

Value exchange is Consume, Connect

Settlement Agencies / In the absence of peer social networks, a relationship with settlement agencies provides the same value exchange. Non-profits and settlement agencies offer free information sessions through synchronous and asynchronous means that meet similar needs of immigrants.

Value exchange is Consume

Media / The stakeholders in media have an instrumental role to play in generating interest and educating people about the prospects of immigrating to Canada. Several types of actors fall within this category. One of them are social media micro-influencers who show people through engaging content what the life of an immigrant is in Canada. They provide a more intimate and nuanced understanding of the day-to-day of an immigrant's life. The news, on the other hand, also exerts tremendous influence on individual decision-making. However, their influence is more impersonal and indirect.

Value exchange is Define, Consume, Connect

Family and friends in India / People's immediate family and friends in India are impacted and directly impact immigration decisions.

Value exchange is Connect, Destroy

Social Media groups and micro-influencers / Social media groups and micro-influencers, such as YouTubers and Instagrammers have an important role to play during the pre-arrival phase. They are a human-centered source of information for individuals who are considering immigrating to Canada.

Value exchange is Consume

Arrival
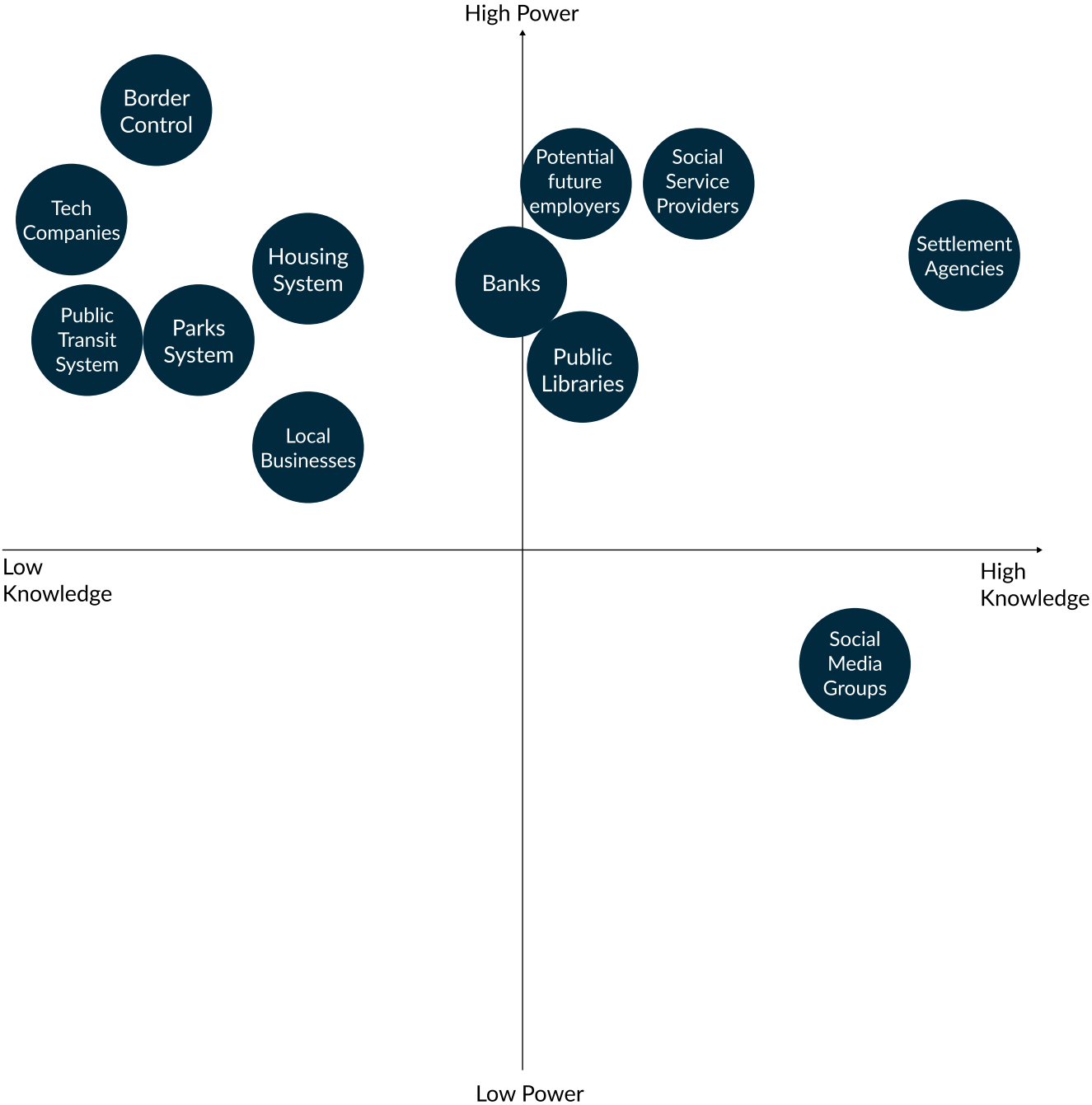
IRCC and the Border Control /
The first touchpoint with Canada is the immigration and border control officials at the airport. An individual's experience during that interaction deeply influences their initial reactions. Stories of smiling border officers welcoming people to Canada influence people's expectations and realities on the ground. Fear is a dominant emotion during this interaction, as there is a lot at stake for individuals who have reached Canada after several hours in transit.

Value exchange is Relate

Essential services / The first week after landing is also about consuming and connecting with essential services needed for life in Canada. These include housing, social services (healthcare, SIN, etc), and banking. This journey to attain basic services has several friction points, that causes confusion and fear among immigrants. Often, members from the peer network provide support in navigating this journey.

Value exchange is Relate, Consume, Destroy

Secondary services / Secondary services such as the library, the transit system, parks and museums play a key role in alleviating the anxiety, boredom, and isolation of the early days. During this time as people have

not found jobs or have not established deep social connections yet. They turn to these secondary services to experience and explore their surroundings.

Value exchange is Define, Consume, Create

Peer networks, social media /
The peer network that was formed and activated during the pre-arrival phase becomes the person's primary support system upon arrival. Newcomers also turn to social media groups and forums, particularly on Facebook or Meetup, to make new friends and grow their social networks in the new country. In these early days, people tend to trust others who share something in common with them (origin country/ city, workplace, mutual friend, etc).

Value exchange is Connect, Create

Potential future employers / This is an important stakeholder group that immigrants interact with when they arrive, sometimes even before their arrival. It is an important value exchange, particularly for economic immigrants. The economic stability that immigrants get dictates their level of integration during these days. The relationship also carries a highly imbalanced power dynamic, with employers exerting an imbalanced amount of power on immigrants.

Value exchange is Relate, Create, Destroy

Tech Companies / Everyday technology products play a huge role in wayfinding and sensemaking. For example, Google Maps and food delivery apps are the among the first few apps people use when they land. Social networking sites like LinkedIn, Facebook (Groups, Marketplace), help with important tasks during this time such as, networking, purchasing essential items.

Value exchange is Define, Consume

Social Media groups / Social media groups offer opportunities for connection and information gathering during the arrival phase.

Value exchange is Connect, Consume

Post-arrival
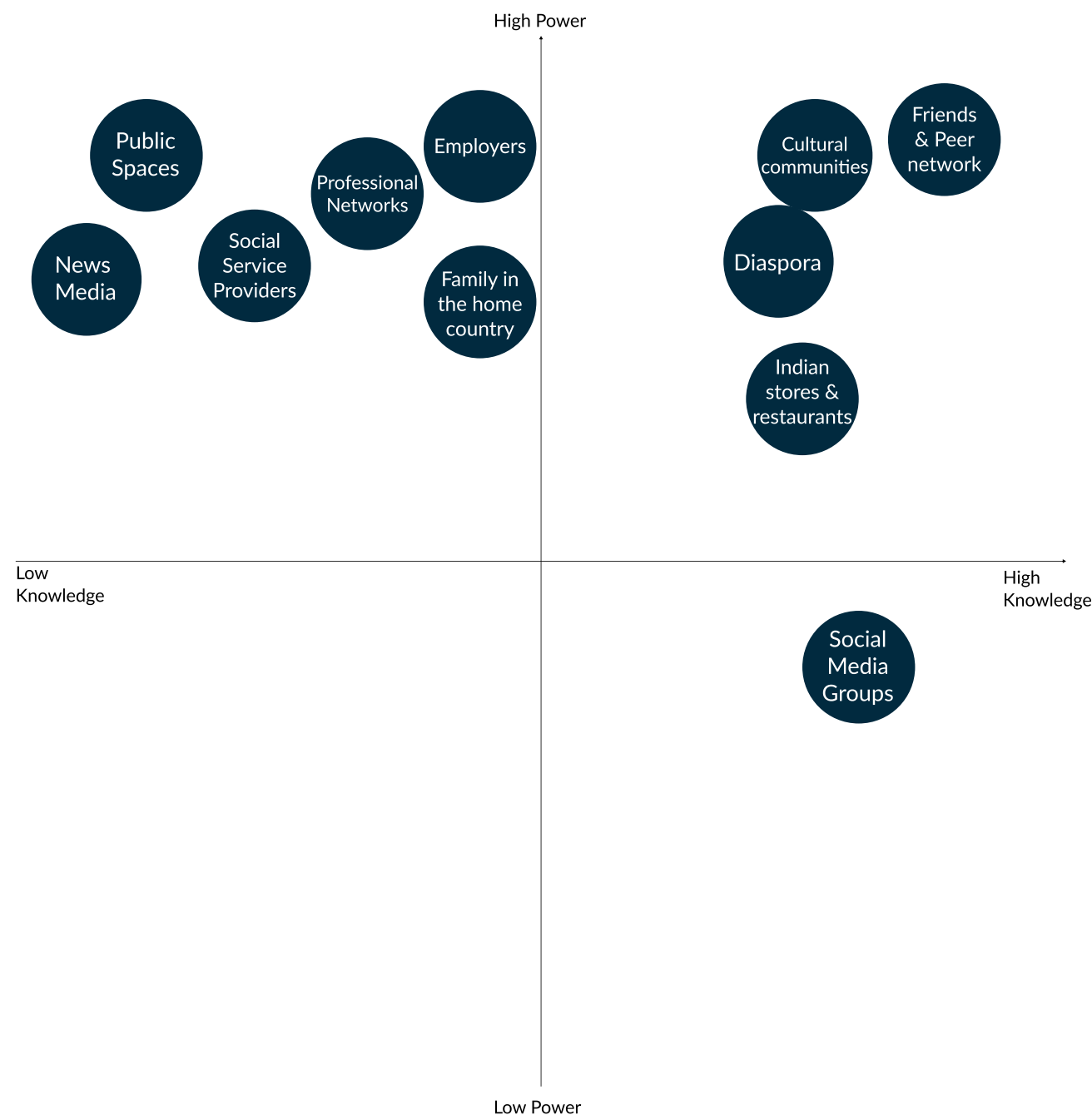
The IRCC / Until an immigrant becomes a naturalized citizen of Canada, they are always interacting with the IRCC, for either visa extensions, or applying for their PR or citizenship. People are more aware of the immigration system at this stage and engage with more confidence and power with the IRCC.

Value exchange is Relate, Consume

Professional networks and employers / Employers and professional networks help immigrants earn a living, build connections, and create value in the economy.

Value exchange is Create, Consume, Connect, Define

Indian cultural communities and Diaspora / By this time, people have found an Indian cultural community they closely associate with, either through cultural societies and non-profits, or the larger diaspora community, or even through local Indian businesses. This community keeps them in touch with their life in India, provides comfort and sense of familiarity.

Value exchange is Consume, Create

Diverse friend and peer networks / People's peers have developed into friends. Through meeting people from their workplace, or universities, or extended circles, immigrants' networks become more diverse in this stage. Through their friends, they learn about and connect with cultures other than their own.

Value exchange is Consume, Create, Connect

News media / People engage with Indian news and influencer ecosystem more. This is their way of still staying connected and deeply rooted in socio-political and cultural issues happening in India. Nostalgia about India is also an important reason people seek out these channels of entertainment and information.

Value exchange is Consume, Define

Public spaces / People engage with public spaces with more ease, familiarity, safety, and confidence. The actors in this group include the transit system, built environment, etc. These are non-human actors but significantly shape immigrants' experiences during this stage.

Value exchange is Relate, Consume, Connect

Local businesses / Interactions with local businesses in Canada happen regularly. However, interactions with local businesses in India also take place during this period, particularly when people are visiting India.

Value exchange is Consume

Family and Friends in India / It goes without saying that this group is an important one for immigrants. Although people's links and relationships to this group begin to whittle away over time, and are revived during every visit to India.

Value exchange is Connect, Destroy

Gaining PR or Citizenship

High Power

```
                    IRCC
        Peer
       Network   Citizenship
                  Centres
 Family in
 the home
 country    Social
            Media
                   Online
                   Forums
```

Low Knowledge ———————————————— High Knowledge

Fellow Candidates

Low Power

The IRCC / The IRCC approves the official status of immigrants. They hold highest decision-making authority and thus also wield immense power in the interaction. People do not directly engage with the IRCC, but instead with representatives in the system who are responsible for them receiving PR or citizenship in Canada. Citizenship Centers, run by IRCC, is where eligible candidates go to give their Citizenship test and interview.

Value exchange is Relate

Citizenship Centres / Citizenship Centres are where Citizenship tests and oath ceremonies take place. They are an important touchpoint during this phase of the journey.

Value exchange is Relate

Family members / Family and friends from India are emotionally invested in the decision of immigrants to become citizens or Permanent Residents of Canada. Immigrants find themselves managing familial expectations and emotions when they inform them about their plans to apply for Canadian citizenship.

Value exchange is Connect, Destroy

Peer networks / Peer networks play a role in facilitating and supporting with official paperwork that accompanies this journey phase.

Value exchange is Connect, Consume

Appendix D / Interview Guide

Discussion Guide

The discussion guide offers only a set of possible conversational directions. The goal is to remain open to exploring multiple trajectories that emerge during the course of the conversation. Visual and verbal prompts help to facilitate a rich discussion with participants.

Verbal prompts / Verbal prompts are meant for the researcher to dig deeper into the experience of the respondents.

Visual promots / Visual prompts are meant for the interviewee to control and direct the flow of the conversation. Prompt cards are shared with the participant through a virtual collaborative space. Respondents may choose a theme to begin the discussion, and then move to the next theme. The aim is to provide a degree of autonomy to the participant.

The researcher recommends that all questions within a theme be covered before moving on to the next theme. The respondent may pause or skip at any question.

Note: The discussion guide with verbal prompts is only be visible to the researcher. The interview will take place in a collaborative virtual space (mimicking a dinner table), where they can see prompt cards to begin their reflection.

Interview Questions & Verbal Prompts

1 / Identity and community

The goal is to get to know the respondent, and make them comfortable. Questions include those of identify, core values, beliefs, and practices. The researcher is trying to understand the respondents' perception of self, value system, and their relationship to others and their environment. This will provide the basis for a detailed and in-depth interpretation of the lived experiences of participants.

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
  Verbal prompt: profession, location, place of origin

- When did you move to Canada?
  Verbal prompt: where did you first land, how many years back

- What would you say were the main milestones about your journey to Canada?
  Verbal prompt: material, mental, emotional, community

- Would you say you feel at home in Canada?
  Verbal prompt: community affiliations, role in community, sense of belonging, can you describe how it feels like to be at home in Canada?

- What role did the community play in this journey?
  Verbal prompt: which community, how did you reach them, what is your relationship with them today

2 / Pre-arrival

The goal is to understand what decisions and values prompted their move to Canada. How did they make the decision and what parameters did they consider? The researcher is trying to understand what anticipations, fears and hopes were playing on the minds of participants when they decided to immigrate to Canada.

- What prompted your decision to move to Canada?
  Verbal prompt: were there other people you knew in Canada, how long did it take for you to reach the decision? what kinds of research did you conduct to make your final decision?

- What were your hopes and anticipations for your life in Canada?
  Verbal prompt: excitement, hopes

- What were your fears about making the decision?
  Verbal Probe: fear about life in Canada, fears about leaving home

- What did you think you were going to miss the most?
  Verbal prompt: objects, relationships, emotions

3 / Arrival

The goal is to understand what respondents' experiences were within the first week of their arrival to Canada. How did they adjust, where did they seek initial support, what are their main emotions and how did they make sense of the unfamiliarity of a new country?

- Could you describe your first day or even week in Canada? Where were you, what was on your mind, what were you most surprised to learn?
  Verbal prompt: places you visited, people you met, the first few things you learned about the country, how were you making sense of the newness? what main physical, emotional, mental, environmental supports did you rely on in those initial days?

- What emotions were you experiencing while navigating your new life in Canada?
  Verbal prompt: physical, emotional, mental, environmental? Who did you share those emotions with? How did you share it?

4 / Post-arrival

The goal is to understand what the main experiences and emotions were after respondents felt settled into the physical environment of Canada. The goal of this set of questions is to unpack the journey towards settlement in Canada.

- How would you describe your experience in the first year to five years?
  Verbal prompt: What risks, challenges and benefits did you encounter in relation to your immigration decision? What do you feel is something you have gained from this experience? What is something you think you might have lost from this experience? How would you say your anticipations and hopes translated?

- How often have you visited India since you moved to Canada, what stood out most for you during those visits?
  Verbal prompt: What do you like and dislike the most about your visits to India? Did you observe a change in the way you related to India? Did you gain a different perspective about your life in Canada? What emotions did you experience?

- How did your perception about yourself change in those years?
  Verbal prompt: How did your habits, practices and values change? Did you think of yourself as having more agency or less? Did you stay connected to 'Indian' culture (however you define it) – if so, how?

5 / Gaining PR or Citizenship

The goal is to understand what an official change in respondents' identity does to their perception of themselves. Additionally, what sorts of emotions surfaced because of applying and receiving Canadian citizenship or PR and how has their relationship changed with India and their community there.

- What would you describe your process to citizenship/ PR was?
  Verbal prompt: what prompted you to apply for citizenship? What emotions did you experience during the process?

- How did your perceptions about yourself change after you received your Canadian citizenship/ PR?
  Verbal prompt: Did you begin relating to yourself differently – if so, how? Did you notice if others' perceptions to yourself change after this official change?

- How would you say others' perceptions to you changed after you received your Canadian citizenship/ PR?
  Verbal prompt: community in Canada, work, community in India

6 / Future

The goal is to understand the dreams and hopes for the future and respondents' visions of their individual role in the community.

- Imagine yourself 10 years in the future, where do you see yourself?
  Verbal prompt: professional, physical, social, personal (spiritual)

- What are you looking forward to the most about your life in Canada and your continued relationship to India?
  Verbal prompt: professional, physical, social, personal (spiritual)

- With all this wisdom you have gained about yourself through immigration, where do you see yourself being the most useful in society?
  Verbal prompt: professional, physical, social, personal (spiritual)

Visual Prompt Cards & Instructions

Instructions

- A set of introductory questions will be covered first.

- Then, you can choose the order in which you would like to respond to the following themes.

- Each theme has a set of questions (between 2-4).

- If possible, start with a theme and complete all the questions within it to maintain ease of conversation. However, we can skip around between themes if that is more convenient.

- If needed, we can revisit questions.

- You may pause, skip or take a break at any point through our conversation.

Pre-arrival	What prompted your decision to move to Canada?	What were your hopes and anticipations for your life in Canada?	What were your fears about making the decision?	What did you think you were going to miss the most?
Arrival	Could you describe your first day or even week in Canada?	What emotions were you experiencing while navigating your new life in Canada?		
Post-arrival	How would you describe your experience in the first year to five years?	How often have you visited India since you moved to Canada, what stood out most for you during those visits?	How did your perception about yourself change in those years?	
Gaining PR or Citizenship	What would you describe your process to citizenship or PR was?	How did your perceptions about yourself change after you received your Canadian citizenship or PR?	How would you say others' perceptions to you changed after you received your Canadian citizenship or PR?	
Future	Imagine yourself 10 years in the future, where do you see yourself?	What are you looking forward to the most about your life in Canada and your continued relationship to India?	With all this wisdom you have gained about yourself through immigration, where do you see yourself being the most useful in society?	

Resilient Cartographies

Puja Prakash / 2022