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Racialized Immigrants In Canada's Changing Labour Market: An Investigation Of The Effects Of Precarious Work On Black Caribbean Women

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RACIALIZED IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA'S CHANGING LABOUR MARKET
An investigation of the effects of precarious work on
black Caribbean women

by

Maqueita Hibbert, BA, York University, 2006

A Major Research Paper
presented to Ryerson University

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Master of Arts
in the Program of
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ABSTRACT

This research undertakes an examination of the employment opportunities and experiences of black Caribbean women in Canada, particularly within the context of the growing trend towards precarious jobs—casual, part-time and low paying—in the restructured Canadian labour market. The specific purview of this study is the labour history and employment experience of a representative group of black Caribbean women who work as Personal Support Workers in nursing homes across the Greater Toronto Area. A main concern of the study is to understand the ways in which precarious work affects these women's settlement and integration experiences, particularly their ability to gain economic independence; this, in turn, affects a number of variables related to their, and others, perception regarding their status and place in Canada. By focusing on the case of Personal Support Workers, the study aims to shed light not only on the employment experiences of black Caribbean women in this sector but also to examine more closely the policies and employment practices that create labour market “niches” or labour “segregation” along racial and gender lines.

Key words: Socio Economic Position; Racialized Immigrants; Black Caribbean Women; Precarious Work; Personal Support Workers

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Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Section 1: Introduction	1
Section 2: Literature Review	12
• The Historical Context	12
• Present Labour Market Conditions	16
• Reasons for Changes in Labour Market Conditions: The Role of International Trade Agreements	19
• Effects of International Trade Agreements on the Canadian Labour Market	22
• Gendered Labour Market	26
• Racialized Women in the Labour Market	28
• Economic Position of Canada's Racialized Immigrants	34
Section 3:	38
• Research Methodology	38
• The Health Care Sector and Personal Support Work	40
• Is Personal Support Work Precarious?	42
• Findings	43
• Discussion	50
• Conclusion and Recommendations	59
• Limitations of the Study	64
• Bibliography	66

SECTION 1: Introduction

Labour market attachment is critical to the livelihood and identity formation of individuals and groups, but also their ability to claim a sense of belonging and full citizenship. This is especially true of historically socially excluded groups such as racialized groups.

(Galabuzi and Teelucksingh, 2005)

Globalization has amplified the movement of people across geographic borders. The push and pull factors generating movement are ever increasing, and through the experience of immigration, people of different ethnic, social and religious backgrounds are having more opportunities to interact. Some of the push factors that have prompted individuals to leave their homelands include economic decline resulting in lack of work in home countries, unstable governmental structures, and political upheaval. Others have left their countries of origin because of the belief that there is a wealth of possibilities, such as greater opportunities for financial growth and the prospects of secure and desirable employment, in other geographic regions. Canada is a country that has always attracted immigrants. Immigrants are attracted to Canada's stable economy and political system. In turn, Canada often lures immigrants to meet labour needs that Canadians are reluctant to fill.

In the early 1900s, and even decades before, many immigrants came to Canada to meet the demand for workers in the developing Canadian economy. Economic development was a key interest in promoting Canada for early settlement. Immigrants were needed to support economic growth, supply cheap labour, and occupy the Canadian West to prevent American invasion (Kelley and Trebilcock, 2000). In later years, the Industrial Revolution led to a greater need for immigrants; during this period the number of immigrants that entered Canada increased substantially. Added to this, various targeted labour immigration policies and, more recently, the

points system introduced in the late 1960s further increased the number of immigrants entering Canada. This great influx of immigrants led to significant changes in the demographic breakdown and ethnic composition of the country. Areas such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal became highly populated as more immigrants from once undesirable ethnic groups were admitted (Cheung, 2005; Kelley and Trebilcock, 2000).

Today, there is still a reliance on immigrants to supplement the Canadian labour pool. This continuing dependence has been linked to an aging population and a low fertility rate. According to Statistics Canada (2005), by 2015 seniors in Canada will far outnumber children. It is projected that by the year 2031, the number of children in the Canadian population will range from 4.8 million and 6.6 million, while the number of seniors will range from 8.9 million and 9.4 million due to low fertility rate. An expected consequence of the low fertility rate is that labour force participation rates will fall rapidly as millions of baby boomers retire (Statistics Canada, 2007a). This decline in labour force participation does not bode well for Canada; hence, solutions are needed to address this issue of population aging. One solution to address the expected labour market participation shortage is immigration. Beaujet and Kerr (2004) estimate that immigration of about 225,000 annually would be needed to prevent population decline and hence replenish the loss in labour market participants.

As many immigrants come to Canada looking for work, their work experience plays an integral role in their immigration and settlement experience. The ability to find work, and more so work that is meaningful, provides the individual an opportunity to advance in the new society. How established newcomers become in their work and how happy and content they are with their jobs help to determine how well they settle into their new country. Some immigrants are

fortunate to obtain jobs that utilize their internationally gained credentials and work experience and jobs which they find rewarding financially and emotionally. However, there are those immigrants who end up unemployed, underemployed, or in precarious jobs because they cannot access employment that utilizes their skills, education and work experience.

In addition to the fact that immigrants occupy jobs based upon access and availability, Canada's labour market reflects to some extent various forms of occupational divide (Das Gupta, 1996). Early immigrants were assigned different jobs based on the ethno-racial group to which they belonged. For instance, Chinese who immigrated to Canada during the 1800s were relegated to work on railway construction and were prevented from finding employment in other industries. Like the Chinese, blacks faced similar forms of job segregation as they were relegated to employment in poor paying jobs, at rates below what was paid to Anglo-Saxon Canadians (Krahn and Lowe, 2002). What is obvious about the present day labour market is that there is still differential assignment of work. Immigrant groups continue to experience occupational segregation along racial lines. The alarming thing about the occupational segregation of immigrant groups is that racialized immigrants are highly concentrated in precarious work while non-racialized immigrants have full access to "good" jobs (Kunz, Milan and Schetagne, 2000; Krahn and Lowe, 2002).

Apart from occupational segregation, immigrants also face segregation within the workplace. Das Gupta (1996) believes that in instances where a workplace encompasses all ethno-racial groups, the workplace is segregated in homogenous segments. Workers are assigned tasks and work locations based on their ethnic group, and compensation is distributed based on the ethnic group to which the worker belongs. In these highly segregated workplaces, different

managerial practices are employed to manage the groups and as such management is able to exploit the labour of various groups in the workplace and treat them as cheap labourers (Das Gupta, 1996). In the Canadian labour market, occupational segregation is further amplified along gender lines. There exists a gendered division of labour and visible minority women are more likely to feel the brunt of this segregation as they tend to be over-represented in precarious jobs (Phillips and Phillips, 1993). Upcoming chapters will elaborate more on the division of labour along gender lines in the Canadian labour market.

Since Canada's labour market is becoming highly concentrated by racialized immigrants it is important to examine their position in the labour market. For the purposes of this paper, racialized immigrants are:

Persons other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or not-white in colour – Includes: Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab/West Asian, South East Asian, Filipino, Latin American, Japanese, Korean and Pacific Islanders (based on the Federal Employment Equity Act definition of visible minorities) (Grace- Edward Galabuzi, 2001, p.10).

Three central reasons dictate the need for scholarly attention to racialized immigrants in Canada's labour market, in particular how women of colour are integrated into the labour force. Firstly, changes to immigration policies (introduction of the point system) and changing immigration goals have created a need to attract and accept increasing numbers of immigrants from across the globe. Today, more immigrants are coming to Canada from source countries dominated by people of colour (Galabuzi, 2001).

In 1967, the point system was developed to focus less on source country and race as the basis for admissions and more so on targeting specific skills to meet Canada's new economic needs (Li, 2003). Past deterrents such as refusal based on discriminatory grounds were removed

and more focus was placed on an immigrant's ability to contribute to the Canadian economy. With the introduction of the point system, Canada's racialized population has rapidly expanded (Cheung, 2005; Galabuzi, 2001). As the population changes and subsequently the composition of the labour market, it is necessary to examine how non-white immigrants are faring in Canada's labour market. Many have come to Canada because of promising job prospects but have they found what they expected to find?

Previous studies (Galabuzi, 2001; 2005; Galabuzi and Teelucksingh, 2005; Hou and Picot, 2003; Jackson and Smith, 2002) indicate that visible minority immigrants across socio-economic categories and skill levels, upon entering Canada, encounter high levels of underemployment, unemployment and significantly lower income levels than their non-visible immigrant counterparts. Visible minority immigrants are also far more likely to be employed in jobs that are casual, temporary and part-time (Cheung, 2005). While this fact has been clearly established in the existing literature, very little, if any, attention has been paid to separating out and investigating the specific histories and employment experience of different groups of visible minority immigrants in relation to the labour market. The tendency has been to treat all non-white immigrants as a homogenous category, discounting the ways in which visible minority immigrants are differentially racialized and the specific consequences this has for each group's employment opportunities and experience. But as Cranford et al. (2003a) argues, "Breaking down the category 'visible minority' into groups reveals important differences among people of colour" (p. 16). Hence, it is necessary and important to examine each group as a separate entity as only then will their individual experiences be apparent in order that specific steps can be taken to address existing problems and barriers.

The second important aspect that cannot be ignored when assessing the case of racialized immigrants in the labour market is the present state of the Canadian labour market. According to Vosko (2006), throughout the late 20th and early 21th centuries, precarious employment in Canada increased, resulting in an insecure labour market in which more immigrants were precariously employed. Some of the factors that have led to an insecure labour market are increased part-time work, moonlighting and casual employment and, in many cases, unemployment (Duffy et al., 1997; Vosko, 2000). This labour market insecurity has led to negative economic impacts for Canada's visible minority immigrants and, in particular, racialized immigrant women.

Studies on developing trends in the Canadian labour market, particularly the increase in precarious employment and labour market insecurity (Broad, 1997; Duffy et al., 1997; Vosko 2006) have been slow to apply such analysis to the various employment sectors and specifically to the kinds of jobs in which visible minority immigrants are over-represented. In light of this, it is important then to ask: What are the reasons behind the growth in precarious work, and why it is that racialized immigrants are increasingly precariously employed? Upcoming sections will highlight that the implementation of free trade agreements such as the Canada United States Free Trade Agreement have played a significant role in creating a precarious labour market. As the precarious nature of the labour market continued, this precariousness has had immense impact on specific labour market participants, such as racialized immigrants and in particular women. Racialized immigrants have endured, and are still enduring, economic difficulties and many have ended up in poverty due to the types of employment situation in which they have had to engage.

Studies have been slow in addressing how labour market trends have been impacted by issues of race and gender in ways that affect the employment opportunities and labour market

experience of specific immigrant groups, hence a third important reason to study the effects of precarious work on Canada's racialized immigrant women. Because of the intersection of two identity categories—i.e. race and gender—that significantly impact on immigrants' employment possibilities when they enter Canada, visible minority immigrant women often suffer from the “double negative” effect and so often find themselves in even more precarious work conditions (Galabuzi, 2001). Consequently, these precarious work conditions result in negative consequences for visible minority women and their families'/dependants' economic and general well being in their new country. With this in mind, my study is proposed as an initial attempt at filling the existing gaps in knowledge. Much of the literature on racialized immigrants identifies race as a factor affecting access to jobs and the types of jobs accessed (Cheung, 2005; Das Gupta, 1996; Galabuzi and Teelucksingh, 2005); however, further analysis will more fully reveal how precarious employment in Canada is both gendered and racialized.

Zietsma (2007) points out that immigrant women tend to face more difficulties finding employment in Canada's labour market than immigrant men. Galabuzi (2001) also argues that although race is a factor that contributes to women occupying certain jobs in the labour market, gender also has a significant impact on the types of jobs women occupy; thus, race and gender create for women the “double negative effect” (p. 68). To this end, much attention needs to be paid to the place of racialized women in the labour market. Why is gender a factor in determining the types of jobs racialized women occupy? More specifically, where do black Caribbean women fall along the occupational line? What jobs do they occupy in today's labour market?

Although the existing literature that examines race and gender in the migration process (Arat-Koc, 1999; 1990; Cohen, 2000; Stasiulis and Bakan, 2005) has attempted to link an

understanding of larger labour market developments, concerns and practices with the precarious employment of contributors to the Canadian economy who hail from elsewhere, much of this examination has focused on the history of domestic workers in Canada, the Live-In care giver program and the migrant/seasonal—predominantly male—workers from Mexico and the Caribbean who spend upwards of 10 months in Canada working on farms or in factories (Binford and Preibisch, 2007; Gibb, 2006; Smith, 2005). Further analysis is required that reveals more fully how precarious employment in Canada is gendered and racialized. As Cranford et al. (2003a) have indicated, “Mapping precarious employment across multiple dimensions, social locations and social contexts would add considerably to our understanding of labour market insecurity in Canada” (p.19). As well, our understanding of the role-played by individual employers and employment sectors in creating and entrenching precarious work for visible minority immigrants would greatly improve.

Following on this directive, my study focuses specifically on black women immigrants from the Caribbean and examines the labour market context and related factors that have contributed to a very high proportion of such women being employed in casual, temporary, low-paying and in other ways precarious work as Personal Support Workers in the health care sector. The health care sector is one of the major employers of black Caribbean female immigrants in Ontario, and the greater portion of these jobs is precarious in a number of ways. The study incorporates information gathered through one-on-one interviews with 8 black women who are from the Caribbean and work as Personal Support Workers in nursing homes and through health care employment agencies across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The following questions drive the study: a) Are visible minority immigrants, in particular black Caribbean women, marginalized into precarious jobs more than other groups? b) How do the social locations of

“race,” and gender intersect to shape black Caribbean women’s employment experience in the health care sector in Ontario?; c) How do employment possibilities and experience of these women impact on their settlement experience, particularly their economic (in)security?

As the labour market changes and precarious work increases, it cannot be denied that newcomers will face more difficulties than do their Canadian born counterparts in finding and holding a good job. Apart from barriers such as race and country of origin, racialized immigrants will face further obstacles that Canadian-born labour market entrants do not face, such as not possessing credentials and work experience gained in Canada. For these reasons, racialized immigrants are at a disadvantage in the labour market. Racialized women are at a greater disadvantage because they have to deal with the “double negative effect.” Therefore, it is important to consider the impact that the state of the current labour market will have on racialized immigrants in Canada, and more specifically on black women who are from the Caribbean.

In order to address the issues discussed above and provide answers to the questions identified, this research paper will provide an historical background of the presence of racialized immigrants in Canada. This history is necessary to show the transformation in immigration legislations from prohibiting the entrance of non-white immigrants into Canada to being more open and accepting of them. A more accepting immigration policy has resulted in an increase in the number of racialized immigrants who are making Canada their home. However, despite the increasing number of racialized immigrants who are migrating to Canada, this section will show that the relaxing of immigration laws to allow for the migration of non-preferred groups has historically happened to allow for such migrants to fill labour needs that could not be met by preferred groups. In many instances non-white labour has often been viewed as secondary and

therefore not as legitimate as “real” Canadian labour, making it easier for the government to withhold rights of citizenship from groups of minority labourers.

Following this discussion, the current state of the labour market will be presented. The standard employment relationship is being steadily replaced by the non-standard employment relationship; thus, there is an increase in precarious work. Racialized immigrants are the ones who then end up in these precarious types of work, which in turn affects their socio-economic status. This part of the study will point to the connection between the increase in the number of racialized immigrants in the Canadian labour force and the tendency towards more precarious jobs.

As the labour market changes it is necessary to establish why these changes are occurring. Thus, the next section of the discussion will attempt to explain the reasons for the changes in the labour market. In particular, a restructured Canadian economy will be identified as the main cause for labour market changes. Several international trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement have been implemented in Canada and, as a result, the Canadian economy has become restructured due to the pressure to compete in a competitive global market. The restructured labour market has created jobs of a precarious nature. Part-time work has increased and jobs once considered “good” jobs have disappeared due to restructuring and outsourcing, leaving workers in and outside of Canada scrambling to secure employment that can provide for them the economic benefits they desire.

The gendered division of labour which is the main focus of this research will then be explored. This portion of the study will present pre-existing information on women in the labour market, information which shows that a sexual division of labour exists and women are more

precariously employed than men. More specifically, this section will highlight that although a gendered division of labour is evident in the labour market, there also exist additional divisions as labour market outcomes for racialized and non-racialized women are noticeably different. Racialized women tend to face more difficulties in accessing non-precarious jobs than non-racialized women. This can be attributed to the fact that apart from their gender, racialized immigrant women have to deal with the “double negative” effect of being a minority and being a woman. This has not bode well for their economic security.

The role of immigration policies in the types of jobs Caribbean immigrant women have historically occupied in Canada will also be highlighted in this section of the study. Many Caribbean women were recruited to Canada through formal labour schemes such as the domestic worker scheme; since then, certain attitudes and labour practices have become entrenched in the way “native” Canadian look at and what they believe about the place of black women, which in turn has consequences for the employment possibilities open to these women.

To provide a clearer understanding of the effects of precarious work on racialized immigrant women, an assessment of the economic position of racialized immigrants in Canada will then be undertaken. This assessment will show that racialized immigrants are not progressing well economically and this is because many racialized immigrants are employed in precarious work where they earn low incomes; consequently, many are living in poverty.

Finally, to fully answer the research questions of this study, interview responses provided by a number of black Caribbean women who are employed as Personal Support Workers by health care organizations across the Greater Toronto Area will be presented. Through my analysis of the interview responses, the underlying causes why these women have turned to

precarious work and how precarious work has affected their socio economic position in Canada will become evident.

SECTION 2: A review of the pertinent literature

The Historical Context

As mentioned earlier, one reason that attention needs to be paid to racialized immigrants in the Canadian labour market is that the changing face of the population indicates that more racialized immigrants make Canada their home. Decades ago, this was not the case as racialized immigrants were not welcomed to Canada. Hence, it is necessary to establish the historical context that will outline how, over time, Canadian attitudes, and consequently immigration policies, have changed leading to the growth in the number of racialized immigrants in Canada.

Immigration policies implemented in the early 1900s greatly restricted black immigration to Canada (Kelly and Trebilcock, 2000). Despite deterrents against blacks, groups of Caribbean blacks entered Canada to fill labor shortages. The workers were distributed among several gender specific jobs. Male immigrants worked in coal mines and steel mills and women worked as domestic workers (Kelly and Trebilcock, 2000; Krahn and Lowe, 2002). The first Caribbean domestic Scheme of 1910-11 brought 100 women from Guadalupe to work in Canada as domestic workers. The second wave of domestic workers from the Caribbean came in the mid 1950s due to a shortage of domestics in Canada; at this time many Canadian women were entering the workforce and needed domestics to carry out duties they once performed at home such as child rearing and house-keeping (Kelly and Trebilcock, 2000; Vorst et al., 1991). Only a

small quota of Caribbean domestics was allowed as Canada's immigration policy was still very discriminatory.

Chinese immigrants did not fare better than blacks in their access to Canada. As immigration policies were influenced by labour market needs, like blacks, Chinese immigrants were recruited to fill occupational gaps and supply cheap labour. The labour of Chinese immigrants was focal to the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. At the time, railway construction work was not desired by white Canadians and the Chinese were often subjected to atrocious working conditions (Cheung, 2005). Once the society had extracted from these undesired "guests" the labour that was needed, they were expected to return home. In the case of the Chinese, a head tax was imposed to restrict their entry into Canada (Cheung, 2005; Kelley and Trebilcock, 2000).

It is important to highlight the fact that minority immigrants were welcomed to Canada because of the need to fill jobs after the preferred group had settled enough and gained a certain degree of economic sufficiency to move beyond having to take those jobs now considered menial although essential to the economy. As the study will later discuss, these historical job assignments would create a stigma that racialized immigrants are suited for specific types of jobs and this stigma still exists today.

In the mid 1960s, Canada's once racist and discriminatory immigration policies were changed and Canada became more accepting of non-white immigrants. As a result of the new immigration policies, more immigrants began coming to Canada from source countries dominated by people of colour (Galabuzi, 2001). Prior to the mid 1960s, the desired classes of immigrants were white Western Europeans and Americans. Laws were passed to control the

entrance of Asians while blacks were unwelcomed (Kelley and Trebilcock, 2000). As Europe and America became more economically stable, fewer immigrants from these traditionally desired source countries were making Canada their final destination. In 1962 and 1967 changes to the immigration act led to the formal acceptance of immigrants from previously non-preferred groups who could demonstrate a certain level of educational, professional and technical attainment (Kelley and Trebilcock, 2000; Li, 2003). Canada had moved away from a discriminatory selection system to a more open selection policy that was focused on meeting the economic needs of the country by attracting skilled immigrants (Li, 2003). In 1967, the point system was developed and focused on targeting specific skills to meet Canada's new economic needs; as a result, less emphasis was placed on source country and focus was now on educational and occupational qualifications, in other words on "working-age immigrants with substantial human capital" (Li, 2003, p. 40).

With the introduction of the point system, Canada's racialized population has rapidly expanded experiencing growth from 4 percent in 1971 to 11.2 percent in 1996 and is still expanding with a projected increase of 20 percent by 2016 (Galabuzi, 2001). According to a study by Galabuzi and Teelucksingh (2005), 75 percent of Canada's new labour market entrants are from racialized groups, and the growth of the racialized population is quickly outpacing the Canadian average. It is expected that by 2011, 100 percent of labour market growth will be through racialized immigrants. It is evident that Canada's racialized immigrant population is growing. Galabuzi and Teelucksingh (2005) indicate that between 1996 and 2001, the number of racialized immigrants entering the labour market was significantly higher than that of the Canadian population. While the racialized labour force grew by 28.7 percent for females and

32.3 percent for males, the labour force for the Canadian population grew to only 5.5 percent and 9 percent respectively.

As the forgone discussion demonstrates, more labour market entrants are originating from racialized groups, which lead one to question the reason for the growth in labour market entrants from this group. On one hand, as was mentioned earlier, Canada has always relied on immigrants to fill labour market shortages. This is still the case today and additional work schemes have been implemented beyond the domestic workers schemes such as the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) which brings approximately 20, 000 foreign workers to work in the horticultural sector (Binford and Preibisch, 2007), the Live-In- Caregiver program, and more recently the recruitment of workers to staff the hospitality, construction and health care sectors, among others (Taylor, 2007). Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2008) reports that on an annual basis, Canada accepts over 90, 000 foreign workers to fill employment shortages, with many workers working as live-in-caregivers. Through such schemes, workers are permitted temporary stays in Canada and are required to return home at the end of their assignments. Cheung (2006) believes that such programs promote an institutional form of racism as they channel immigrants of colour into certain (read “undesirable”) types of work that white Canadians are not willing to do.

On the other hand, as the Canadian birthrate declines, the labour market has become increasingly reliant on immigrant workers to fill jobs of all genres—from unskilled jobs in hotels and on farms to highly skilled jobs in trades and health care. Hence, immigrants—and particularly racialized immigrants—continue to come to Canada and in high numbers. As more racialized immigrants are coming to Canada, many for the sole purpose to find work, it is of dire

importance to take a close look at Canada's labour market to see if it is ready to meet the growing supply of labour. The following section will shed some light on the current state of the labour market, which will aid in assessing its readiness for the growing supply of new labourers.

Present Labour Market Conditions

Following the Second World War, Canada's economy experienced unprecedented growth. Canada's Gross Domestic Product increased beyond 300 percent and the population grew exponentially. From 1951-1981 the population increased from 14 million to 29 million and industries such as mining and oil grew (Glenday, 1997). A direct result of the economic boom was a strong labour market where workers experienced high levels of employment (Krahn and Lowe, 2002). The standard employment relationship (SER) was in effect. This relationship was attributed to the growing presence of trade unions which were beginning to arrive at compromises with the state and with employers (Cranford et al., 2003a). Trade unions were beginning to achieve modest gains for workers, such as the SER which provided workers with jobs that were full time, permanent, in one location, and with statutory benefits and entitlements (Cranford et al., 2003a; Krahn and Lowe, 2002; Vosko, 2000). However, over the last two decades, this has not continued. The high employment rates of the post-war years have been replaced by a period of underemployment and unemployment.

Over the past 20 years, the nature of employment in Canada has changed from the standard employment relationship to the non-standard employment relationship (NSER) (Cranford et al., 2003; Duffy et al., 1997; Krahn and Lowe, 2002; Vosko, 2000). The NSER refers to a situation where work is offered on a temporary basis which can be casual, through

temporary agencies, seasonal, contract, part time, self employment, and multiple job holding (Cranford et al, 2003a). Many individuals have experienced job losses, and available jobs have increasingly become casual, non- standard and flexible types of work. Casual employment, which covers part-time, temporary, contract and self-employed work, has grown tremendously since 1990 (Duffy et al., 1997; Vosko, 2000).

This increase in casual work has been referred to as the casualization of labour (Broad, 1997). The good jobs generated by the post-war boom have been replaced by bad jobs of a precarious nature, or have been totally lost leading to high levels of unemployment in some sectors, such as the manufacturing sector. According to Krahn and Lowe (2002), in 2000 the number of Canadians unemployed was extremely high to the point that the number of unemployed was higher than the total population of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island combined.

Good jobs refer to jobs that provide above average wage or salary, some form of job security, intrinsic rewards, good hours (mainly full time), require a high level of education or training, are permanent, and have the likely prospect of advancement (Duffy et al., 1997).

Precarious jobs are jobs that offer limited social benefits and statutory entitlements, lack job security, offers low wages, and high risks of ill-health (Vosko, 2006). Holders of precarious work are often self-employed or work in temporary and/or part-time jobs. Bad jobs, or precarious work, are low paying, offer little or no job security, little or no benefits, require minimal qualifications and provide limited opportunities for advancement (Duffy et al., 1997).

The non-standard employment relationship has slowly dominated the labour market. Part-time work, the holding of multiple jobs, self-employment and temporary or contract work

have increased over the past two decades (Broad, 1997; Krahn and Lowe, 2002). In 1989, 28 percent of all employed Canadians between 15 and 64 were in non-standard work. By 1998 this number had grown to 33 percent, representing one third of the labour market (Krahn and Lowe, 2002). Part-time work, which is the most common form of non-standard work, has experienced more growth than any other form of non-standard work. Krahn and Lowe (2002) argue that in 1953 the number of Canadians employed on a part-time basis was below 4 percent. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s more Canadians were working part-time. The change to non-standard work continued strongly into the 1990s so that in 1996, Human Resources and Development Canada reported that in 1995 more Canadians were working in non-standard work than in jobs that were full time, full year and offered benefits (Vosko, 2000). In 2001, the Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey reported that in November of that year alone, part-time employment grew while full-time employment decreased. The gain in part-time employment was 57,000 while full-time employment experienced a loss of 43, 000 (Statistics Canada, 2001). Workers have had to take on part-time work because of the lack of availability of full time jobs (Broad, 1997).

Moonlighting has also increased among Canadian workers (Broad, 1997; Vosko, 2000). Moonlighting is the act of taking on more than one job. In most cases, individuals are moonlighting because of the lack of economic security that one job provides and thus they need more than one job to make ends meet. According to Statistics Canada (2006) in 2005, 5.2 percent (848, 000) of all Canadian workers were moonlighting. As the labour market becomes more casual, workers are becoming more flexible. Employers are hiring workers on a flexible basis, that is, workers work on call and are not given permanent shifts but are called into work only when needed by the employer (Pupo and White, 1994). In essence, employers have created a

reserve army of labour that can be called upon at any time when needed, rather than providing workers with regular hours of work. Workers only work to meet the employers' needs while their need for a steady job with steady work hours and a steady income is ignored. With this irregular work schedule, the need to work more than one job is ever present.

These labour market changes are a direct result of changes in the Canadian economy. As the Canadian economy undergoes restructuring, Canada's labour market has been affected, leading to the above-mentioned changes in the employment relationship. At this point, the paper will elaborate on the causes for labour market changes that have led to the present labour market conditions.

Reasons for Changes in Labour Market Conditions: The Role of International Trade Agreements

As discussed above, Canada's labour market has changed significantly over the past two decades. Jobs have become precarious in nature and non-standard employment has increased. Changing state policies resulting from neoliberal restructuring have brought about this current casualization of work (Duffy et al., 1997; Krahn and Lowe, 2002). Global restructuring has led to deregulated economies and the privatization of public organizations.

State restructuring has been greatly influenced by global forces such as the implementation of international trade agreements. Throughout the past two decades, many international economic agreements have been implemented with a goal to make trade freer and improve trade relations between countries (McBride, 2001). As economic restructuring continued throughout the 1990s, trade agreements were having a stronger foothold in Canada's

economy. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was introduced in 1994 and opened up Canadian markets to further international competition.

Before NAFTA, the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) implemented in 1989 was in place (Grant and Townsend, 2003; Merrett, 1996). As Merrett (1996) indicates, advocates for free trade argued that the FTA would create access to larger markets, which would serve Canadian industries well. FTA supporters argued that by implementing the FTA the Canadian economy would be restructured allowing for better corporate profitability. It was believed that institutions operating at the level of the nation state such as national unions, the Welfare State, national restrictions on investments, and state monopolies, to name a few, did not allow for the effective circulation and profitability of multinational capital (Merrett, 1996). Thus, it was necessary to decrease such market restrictions and allow for a more open market.

FTA's successor NAFTA was developed to eliminate barriers to trade and allow the free passage of goods and services between the participants: Canada, United States and Mexico. NAFTA was hailed as a means to increase investment opportunities, protect intellectual property rights, and allow for a more effective means to resolve disputes (Weston, 1994; McBride, 2001). NAFTA requires that its signatories operate under certain obligations such as a national treatment to trade in goods, government procurement, investment, cross-border trade in services, financial services, and intellectual property rights (McBride, 2001).

The Canadian government welcomed NAFTA as an opportunity to pursue investment and trade opportunities outside of Canada (Weston, 1994; Merrett, 1996). Free trade agreements such as the FTA, NAFTA and subsequently other agreements through the World Trade Organization were embraced as necessary to allow for the movement of commodities as tariffs and non-tariff barriers were removed. The expected outcome was the lowering of prices on

certain goods and services by eliminating the import tax on goods and services and allowing firms greater ability to achieve economies of scales as productivity increased. Faster economic growth, low unemployment rates and slower inflation rates were also expected outcomes (Grant and Townsend, 2003).

Despite all the positive arguments that were given for free trade agreements such as the FTA and the NAFTA, these agreements were not met with approval by all. Free trade critics argued that such agreements were not “free” or about trade (McNally, 2002; Merrett, 1996; Nader et al., 1993) Some scholars in voicing their discontent about the implementation of these agreements argued that free trade opened up the Canadian economy to takeover by external competitors mainly from the United States (Merrett, 1996). Others argued that free trade would only lead to market monopoly by multinational corporations (Nader, 1993) and that free trade agreements would have a deleterious effect on health, safety, and environmental laws (Wallach, 1993). One scholar shared his discontent about free trade in the following way:

Citizens beware...Operating under the deceptive banner of free trade, multinational corporations are working hard to expand their control over the international economy and to undo vital health, safety and environmental protections won by citizen movement across the globe in recent decades (Nader, p.1 qtd in Nader et al, 1993).

One of the principal concerns with free trade agreements was that free trade would disrupt the Canadian economy and lead to unemployment (Grayson, 1987). Would free trade criticisms prove to be true or were free trade critics simply pessimists reluctant to change?

Growth and development through free trade and free markets may have been the original intent of free trade agreements. However, trade has not become freer but more restrictive. McNally (2002) argues that despite the reduction in tariffs, quotas and other non-tariff barriers have risen. World trade has become managed as various subsidies, protections,

rules and agreements are being used to monitor trade. Goods are no longer distributed on the market by individual companies but are being passed within companies, thus reducing the need for a freer market.

Effects of International Trade Agreements on the Canadian Labour Market

Free trade has had a great impact on the Canadian Economy. The implementation of free trade agreements has resulted in the rise of Multinational Corporations (MNCs) that are not restricted to labour laws, and have thus expanded low paying jobs at the cost of workers. Free trade has amplified the casualization of labour in Canada and has also led to a labour market divided across gender lines. The increase in unemployment and non-standard work relations has been directly linked to the implementation of free trade agreements. After the implementation of the FTA, unemployment levels rose from 7.5 percent in 1989 to 10.3 percent in 1991 and to 11.5 percent in 1992 (Weston, 1994). The manufacturing industry experienced drastic decline while the service economy grew (Broad, 2000; Duffy et al., 1997; Fudge and Vosko, 2003; Weston, 1994). Unemployment in the manufacturing sector increased. Weston (1994) argues that in 1990 alone almost 200, 000 manufacturing jobs were lost.

The restructuring of the Canadian labour market has affected female labour market participants in a way that raises a number of concerns. The industries most affected by free trade agreements namely clothing, textiles, food processing, electrical and electronic products and leather products have traditionally accounted for over 60 percent of female manufacturing jobs (Phillips and Phillips, 1993). Hence, as these industries experienced job losses, more women were becoming unemployed. According to Unite Here Canada, a major trade union that represents clothing and textile workers in Canada and the United States, labour market

restructuring has resulted in enormous job losses in the apparel and textile industry (Unite Here, 2006). Unite Here has reported that as of 2006, 25 percent of apparel industry jobs in Canada have disappeared. During the period of 1980 to 1992, the clothing industry experienced dramatic changes in the geographic pattern of employment resulting in job losses of over 850, 000 in the developed world (Mandle, 2000), consequently affecting the employment possibilities of the women employed in this sector.

Due to neoliberal restructuring and increased free trade, labour markets have become highly competitive (Broad, 2000). Businesses are constantly transforming and are cutting labour costs to increase productivity. In essence, businesses organize around the theory that the fewer the number of workers in the workplace at any given time, being paid at the cheapest possible rate, labour costs will decrease and profits will increase. Another cost cutting, profit maximizing factor that has been a by product of free trade and has contributed to the growth in non-standard work is labour market flexibility. Market flexibility allows a company to outsource components of its production process to suppliers with the intent of lowering overhead costs. Core companies outsource or contract out work that was previously done in house. This has reduced the need for permanent full-time workers in these core firms (Duffy et al., 1997). This has led to a flexible labour force to staff the restructured workplace and core firms now hire many workers on a contract basis. A flexible labour force is one in which the firm divides the labour force into a small number of permanent full time employees and a large number of part-time, casual, on call, temporary and subcontracted workers (Krahn and Lowe, 2002).

As free trade continued in the 1990s and more companies outsourced components of their production to the South, fewer good jobs became available in the North. Due to subcontracting

and outsourcing of jobs, MNCs are not accountable to the workers that work for them. North/South trade relations have created precarious jobs in and outside of Canada while corporations from the North benefit greatly with high profits as goods and services produced in the South at a cheap cost are then sold at high costs in the North. Burman (2002) describes this relationship as “differential access to opportunity,” a relationship typical of North-South trade relations.

Investment flows to the South, labour travels to the North or is offered cheaply at home with the help of government labour legislation that are supposedly to help Northern companies stay competitive in the global market. The relationship is unequal as it benefits one but not the other. Worker exploitation then becomes an outcome of this unequal trade relationship. The types of jobs that are created in the South are poor jobs, offering little wages with bad working conditions. Workers are mistreated and abused and the income they earn is so minimal it is practically impossible to survive from it. Although the South receives investments through jobs from Multinationals from the North, the economy of the South benefits minimally and so deteriorates as more people fall into poverty and other deleterious situations (Klein, 2000; Yates, 2003).

Workers in the North are also left at a disadvantage as they are faced with the option of unemployment as jobs are outsourced to the South; thus, they occupy jobs despite the fact that they may have to deal with deplorable working conditions. Their labour is acquired cheaply and with rising levels of unemployment workers are left to scuffle for jobs. Many workers end up unemployed unable to provide for themselves and their families. As Karl Marx rightly said, “labour produces marvels for the wealthy but it produces deprivation for the worker... It produces palaces, but hovels for the worker” (Marx, 1994, p.61). McNally (2002) argues that more workers are becoming homeless, living in poverty and suffering from malnutrition. He

writes, “Those who are poor get locked into a poverty trap...to accumulate at their expense” (p. 91).

A global market has increased social inequality and this social inequality is occurring as massive amounts of wealth are being transferred from the working class to the owning class McNally (2002). Castles and Miller (2003) notes that migration has increased across North and South due to growing inequalities in wealth between both regions. Businesses in the North amass wealth while the position of their workers decrease and poverty increases. As many workers leave the South heading to the North looking for work with the intent to improve their economic position, the growing insecurities of labour markets in the North have not led to the realization of economic prosperity. Das Gupta (1996) comments that although many immigrants are not benefiting economically in Canada, they continue to come because of the poor economic, social and political development of their economies caused by colonization, imperialism and globalization by the North.

Apart from the direct effects of restructuring on the types of jobs available in the labour market, neoliberal restructuring in the 1980s undermined wages, particularly male wages so that the participation of males in the labour force plummeted. As a result of outsourcing, wages have been undermined in both the North and South. Although unemployment levels in the North are already high due to restructuring, immigrants from the South are willing to work for minimal wages and, as a result, there has been increased competition for work in the labour markets of the North. With the increase in unemployment due to a loss of jobs in the North, Northern workers have no other option but to work for lower wages or face the risk of unemployment as companies use Southern immigrants to fill positions. Another indicator of the downward pressure on wages

is the increased occurrence of men occupying jobs traditionally held by women (Cranford et al, 2003b). As mentioned earlier, jobs in the North are changing. Jobs are becoming more casual due to restructuring; thus, the vast number of male jobs that were present in the post-war period are no longer available and as a result men, like women, are increasingly accepting jobs of a precarious nature.

As the foregoing arguments indicate, free trade has led to a changing labour market. Sectors such as the manufacturing sector have experienced job losses while other sectors such as the service sector have grown. As the types of job being created in the labour market changes, so has the demography of the labour market. Thus it is essential to examine the larger political context in which labour market changes have occurred and are occurring. Much of the literature on racialized immigrants identifies race as a factor in workers' access to jobs and the types of jobs accessed. However, as the following section will show, employment and labour market concerns are impacted by gender as much as they are by race.

Gendered Labour Market

The previous section discussed the negative effects of restructuring on the labour market and indicated that sectors once dominated by female labourers are becoming extinct through plant closures and job losses. As this section will show, labour market changes are affecting women in other important ways as well. With the growing increase of part-time and temporary work, the demography of the labour force has changed. The number of female workers, many of whom are racialized immigrant women, entering the labour force has increased, especially in service sector jobs. In 2001, 6.9 million women were employed with 1.9 million working part time and 46.2 percent of all jobs in Canada were occupied by women (Townson, 2003).

As service sector jobs are mainly of a precarious nature, that is, they offer an atypical employment contract, limited social benefits and statutory entitlements, job insecurity, low job tenure, low wages and high risks of ill health (Fudge and Vosko, 2003), women are becoming more precariously employed. Cranford et al. (2003a) point out that “the spread of more precarious forms of employment is gendered” (p.12). Precarious work is on the increase as more women settle into part-time, temporary, contract and on-call work.

As Canada’s labour market becomes more casual, the relationship between the casual labour market, gendered work and the precarious nature of the temporary employment relationship is more evident (Vosko, 2000). The changing nature of the Canadian labour market from the standard employment relationship to the non- standard employment relationship has led to gender segregation and income and occupational polarization. Women have become relegated to the bad jobs in the labour market which tend to have low rates of unionization (Vosko, 2000). Krahn and Lowe (2002) highlight that in 1994, 40 percent of employed women were in non-standard work while only 27 percent of men were in non-standard work. Cranford et al. (2003a) argues that although men are also in temporary work, a higher percentage of men compared to women, tend to occupy more permanent part time work. According to Cranford et al. (2003a) while only 60 percent of women are in full time permanent work, 72 percent of men are in full time permanent work.

Part-time work is a common form of non-standard work that women tend to concentrate in. Moody (1997) points out that across industrial nations, women comprise 70-90 percent of the part-time work force. In 2000, 69 percent of Canadian women were employed on a part-time basis (Krahn and Lowe, 2002). Women have not only concentrated in part-time work but also many have resorted to moonlighting, that is, working at two or more jobs. Statistics Canada

(2006) points out that the number of women moonlighting is increasing. In 2005 while only 4.5 percent of working men were moonlighting, 6.1 percent of working women were moonlighting. Fudge and Vosko (2003) have argued that the growth of precarious forms of work is outpacing the growth of full-time work. Evidently, Canada's working women are not occupying the best jobs. Their presence in precarious work is on the increase and this does not bode well for their economic security.

Racialized Women in the Labour Market

We recognize that relations among women are hierarchical: in a white dominated social order, white women enjoy positions of privilege as part of the dominant culture, and women of colour exist in positions of subordination because of their race.

Qtd in *The Pursuit of Division: Race, Gender, and Preferential Hiring in Canada* (Loney, 1998, p. 107)

As the focus of this research is mainly on racialized immigrant women, attention needs to be given to their position in the labour market. Where do they tend to concentrate and what are the underlying reasons for their position in certain areas in the labour market? The anti-racist theory posits that within society there is an unequal power relation and race influences access to resources, power and opportunities. In light of an anti-racist perspective, workers in Canada's labour market are positioned by their race and not their productive capacity (Galabuzi and Teelucksingh, 2005). Galabuzi and Teelucksingh (2005) maintain that due to race, racialized group members are highly concentrated in low paying precarious jobs and under-represented in good jobs.

Like Galabuzi and Teelucksingh, Cranford et al. (2003a) believe that race plays a role in assigning individuals to certain types of work, and racialized women are concentrated in

precarious work because of their race. She points out that visible minority women, because of their social location (race and gender), are positioned into precarious wage work, while non-visible minority men are more likely to be employed in non- precarious forms of work. The percentage of racialized women who are in precarious work (10 percent in part time and 17 percent in part time permanent) is much higher than the percentage of white men (7 percent) who are precariously employed (Cranford et al, 2003a). This goes to show that race does play a role in determining where racialized women are located in the labour market.

The racial categorizing of groups as different and unequal creates the process of racialization that leads to social, economic and political impacts for the groups involved (Bolaria and Li, 1988; Galabuzi, 2001; Henry and Tator, 2000). Pendakur (2000) argues that categorizing individuals according to race leads to blatant acts of racism and discrimination. According to the anti-racist theory, and the arguments of Galabuzi and Cranford et al, racialized women are in particular jobs due to their race and not their productive capacity.

Similarly, the rise of global capital and neoliberal restructuring have played enormous roles in establishing highly segmented labour markets. Labour market segmentation theory proposes that Canada's labour market is not a single, open labour market but good jobs and bad jobs are found in different sectors of the labour market (Krahn and Lowe, 2002). The dual labour market notion of labour market segmentation theory proposes that the labour market is divided into two sectors: the primary and the secondary sector. The primary sector consists of desirable jobs that offer good wages with benefits, job security, reasonable working conditions and other benefits of a good job while the secondary sector is comprised of jobs that are low paying, unsecured, with poor working conditions and other elements of a bad job (Phillips and Phillips, 1993). The segmented labour market also rests on a segmented workforce where white male

workers tend to dominate in the primary sector while labour force participants such as racialized immigrants are concentrated in bad jobs (Krahn and Lowe, 2002; Phillips and Phillips, 1993).

When assessing the labour market through the eyes of segmentation theorists it is evident that women are concentrated in the secondary labour market. Phillips and Phillips (1993) argue that female concentration in the secondary labour market is a result of the sexual division of labour that existed in pre-industrial times. While the woman was responsible for the reproduction and nurturing of the family, the man was the breadwinner. The role of the woman in the family was viewed as more subordinate while the role of the man was viewed as more dominant. Such views have continued through time and in many regard influence the place and treatment of women in today's labour market.

Immigrant women have been greatly affected by the restructured labour market and have become highly concentrated in service sector and temporary jobs (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003). Service sector jobs are gendered types of work mainly retail, food service, housekeeping and home-care. Post World War II, the service sector has grown immensely. Between 1941 and 1986, women's participation rate in the service sector increased by 27 percent (Vosko, 2000). Racialized immigrant women have to deal with the double negative effect of being a woman and being a minority (Galabuzi, 2001); hence it has proven difficult for them to access good jobs and escape becoming trapped in service sector jobs.

Muteshi and Zeytinoglu (2000) believe that race and gender play an important role in driving racialized immigrants to the restructured labour market. Due to barriers to other forms of employment and the absence of unionization, racialized individuals, women in particular, are

over-represented in the restructured labour market (Muteshi and Zeytinoglu, 2000). Muteshi and Zeytinoglu (2000) describe the situation as follows:

...workers [are] bifurcated into the less privileged, non-unionized, racially and ethnically divided, subcontracted, female office cleaners... work at night and are all immigrants, and the more privileged male carpet cleaners who are unionized,...are rarely immigrants or racial minorities (p. 97).

Immigrant women settle in low paying jobs that are tedious and physically straining, jobs that provide them with no benefits and job security. For many racialized immigrant women, accepting a bad job is seen as a temporary plan, a stepping stone to the dream job; however, many become trapped and never leave the service sector (Vosko, 2000). With each passing day, the prospects of upward mobility get smaller and after years of being in one field, immigrant women are often reluctant to venture out. There is often a lack of pre-requisites for upward mobility such as education and experience; thus the prospect of upward mobility diminishes. The ability to return to school after years in the labour market is often bypassed for the immediate financial demands to care for a family.

Apart from the above reasons as to why racialized immigrant women are concentrated in bad jobs, Canada's immigration policies historically played a role in the type of jobs racialized immigrants and in particular racialized immigrant women held in the labour market. In the past, established immigration legislations facilitated the segregation of immigrants into specific jobs. For instance, the introduction of the Domestic Worker Schemes (1910-11 and mid 1950s) brought numerous black women to Canada to perform domestic services (Cohen, 2000; Kelly and Trebilcock, 2000; Vorst et al., 1991). Although the domestic scheme could be taken as a progression in Canada's immigration policies because it provided a means for blacks to come to Canada, it was not progressive as it only demonstrated that Canada's immigration policies were

racial, patriarchal and class and gender biased (Vosrt et al., 1991). Simmons (1999) agrees with this point of view and argues that such immigration policies reinforced gender and racist stereotypes that have led to exploitative situations for these women.

It could be argued that the black Caribbean women who came to Canada through the domestic worker schemes were only given entrance because there was a need for their labour, labour that could be cheaply acquired and exploited. However, if the need for cheap labour had not existed, the possibility is that black women would not have been given the chance to immigrate to Canada. Loney (1998) asserts that upper income Canadians were the ones who benefited from programs such as the domestic worker schemes as they were able to pay workers at rates well below those that prevailed in the Canadian market. Simmons (1999) also believes that immigration policies that facilitated programs like the domestic worker scheme created a disadvantaged pool of labourers that benefited Canadians looking for workers who would work hard for low pay. Caribbean domestics became a desired group of employees because they could easily be exploited and as Vorst et al., (1991) argue, they were an easy group of workers to address the lack of European domestics who were no longer meeting the domestic needs of Canadians. The domestic worker schemes served to increase the racism and sexism that already existed in the patriarchal capitalist society (Vosrt, et al., 1991). The domestic schemes normalized and gave legal credence to the belief that black women were suited for the type of jobs that white women and men did not want to do.

The domestic schemes helped entrenched the notion that racialized immigrants are suitable for specific kinds of work and the live-in-care giver program has further established this notion. The current Live-In Caregiver program (implemented in 1992) (Cohen, 2000) attracts many Filipina women, and because of this, enforces the stigma that minority women are suited to

provide certain services. Work arrangements offered through the domestic and Live-In Caregiver program trap women into these forms of work. As Cohen (2000) argues, live-in caregivers are required to work in the field for at least two years before they can begin applying for permanent residence. Because of the live-in component of the program, women have to rely on their employers for more than their wages. Live-in caregivers have to rely on their employers for shelter. In cases where the caregivers would want to leave, they cannot because they have to fulfill their required time of service before permanent residence can be granted and they fear deportation if they leave; thus, their employment mobility is restricted and many women endure physical and emotional abuse and exploitation by the hand of their employers (Cohen, 2000).

Beyond the domestic sphere, immigration policies have also played a role in the position women hold in the service sector, including health care. Based upon past immigration legislations and rules, women of colour have been historically relegated to the lower levels of health care. Systematic practices endorsed through the educational and immigration system has created and maintained a place for women of colour at the bottom of the health care sector. Women of colour have been historically exempt from the positions that are secure, high paying and more desirable, and targeted to fill positions of a lesser nature (Das Gupta, 1996).

Past immigration legislations permitted only a limited number of nurses from the Caribbean entry into Canada and those who were permitted entry had to meet higher professional expectations than white nurses. Black nurses were required to undergo additional training which was very intensive. Many black nurses who came to Canada during the period ended up working as nursing assistants (today called Personal Support Workers) as they awaited entry into nursing programs and the profession (Das Gupta, 1996). These historic practices still resonate in today's health sector as women of colour continue to occupy in large numbers positions at the lower

level of the industry while white workers fill the higher level positions. The chapter which presents the interview findings will more clearly illustrate this point and the present reasons for this state of affairs.

Das Gupta (1996) indicates that due to the capitalistic nature of society, a divided labour market based on the position of race will continue. Racism allows for the maintenance of cheap labour provided by racialized individuals in order for employers to maximize on profits for capital. She further argues that the historical stigma that work done by people of colour offers no value to society is still present today, and that the labour of racialized women is viewed negatively because of their race and gender.

Economic Position of Canada's Racialized Immigrants

Thus far the paper has argued that Canada's labour market has changed and that international trade agreements have played a significant role in bringing about these labour market changes. The forgone discussion has also highlighted that the labour market is divided along gender lines and that women, and more so racialized immigrant women, are the ones mainly affected by the restructuring of the labour market. The position of racialized immigrants in the restructured labour market has had some bearing on their economic position. At this point, the economic position of Canada's racialized immigrants will be explored in order to show that they are the most vulnerable in Canada's changing labour market.

Newcomers in Canada are not doing well economically. This has become more evident during the last two decades as there has been an increase in individual and family poverty for newcomers (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003). The increasing numbers of racialized immigrants in the restructured labour market is leading to worsening effects on their economic status. For

racialized immigrants, working in the restructured sector means working in precarious jobs with unsteady hours, low pay, no job security and damaging health effects, low economic status, all of which ultimately lead to poverty (Galabuzi, 2005). Hou and Picot (2003) argue that racialized neighbourhoods experience higher rates of unemployment and low income in comparison to other groups in society despite the fact that racialized immigrants tend to be highly educated. Even in cases where the number of degree holders is constant across all groups, racialized individuals still tend to have higher rates of unemployment. The fact that many immigrants enter Canada through the economy class does not result in lower unemployment and higher incomes (Jackson and Smith, 2002; Picot, 2004).

Due to underemployment and unemployment immigrants are not doing well economically. According to Picot (2004) immigrant earnings have been substantially low compared to non-immigrants even in cases where the immigrant is highly educated. In 2006 it was found that immigrants in the working age (25-54) were more likely to have a university degree than Canadian-born workers, yet the unemployment rate for recent immigrants was 11.4 percent, four times the rate of only 2.9 percent for Canadian born workers with the same level of education (Statistics Canada, 2007b). While the across-the-board unemployment rate is given as 5.5 percent, racialized immigrants experience an unemployment rate of 9.1 percent (Cheung, 2006). Statistics Canada (2008) has reported that immigrants in Canada are experiencing earnings inequality and earnings instability and this earning inequality has risen over the past two decades. Galabuzi and Teelucksingh (2005) also reveal that racialized immigrants are experiencing higher rates of unemployment and continuously maintain a double digit income gap.

The earning gap between racialized immigrants and non-racialized immigrants is increasing and more racialized immigrants are living in poverty (Galabuzi, 2001; Jackson and Smith, 2002). Jackson (2002) defines poverty as “falling below Statistics Canada’s Low Income Cut off or LICO line, which is set by size of family and the size of the community in which a family lives” (p.9). Between 1992 and 2000, 19 percent of immigrants entering Canada were experiencing chronically low income (Picot and Sweetman, 2005). This rate was 2.5 times higher than the Canadian-born population. Omidvar and Richmond (2003) argues that between 1991 and 2001, poverty levels increased for all immigrants but more so for visible minority immigrants who experienced the largest increase from 20.9 percent to 32.5 percent (p. 2). Visible minority immigrants living in Toronto were mostly affected.

The 1996 Census revealed a strikingly high rate of poverty for racialized people: 36 percent of all racialized persons in Canada lived in poverty. The percentage of children living in poverty was even higher with 45 percent of children from racialized families living in poverty compared to only 26 percent of all children (Jackson, 2002). The evidence of poverty based upon race demands that we recognize that Canada’s racialized immigrants are in fact in a precarious position in the labour market and this position needs to be addressed.

The income gap between men and women in Canada’s labour market also demands some attention. While it is understandable that this trend existed in the past mainly because society was extremely patriarchal, this historical trend still continues in today’s “more progressive” labour market. Phillips and Phillips (1993) points out that in 1911 employed women were earning on average only 53 percent of the wages of employed men. Although there were improvements over the next decades, the improvement was meagre as by 1990 women’s average yearly earnings had increased by only 6.9 percent to 59.9 percent of male average earnings.

According to Phillips and Phillips (1993) there are a number of factors that could attribute to this earnings differential such as job discrimination that segregates women into low paying jobs, and a shortage of required education, training, work experience and unionization. Despite the reasons, women are earning lower incomes than men and as a result of low income for women, many women are living in poverty

As discussed earlier, neoliberal changes have led to the changes in the labour market. However, neoliberal changes have not only changed the nature of the labour market but has also changed the services available for the most vulnerable, many of whom are women. With the current precarious state of the labour market, one would think that immigrants would have some form of aid in preventing their socio-economic situations from worsening. The Keynesian Welfare State (KWS) was one avenue that provided a safety net for individuals in need. The welfare state had introduced social programs such as unemployment insurance, pension plans, and most importantly for workers, a significant increase in full-time employment. However, neoliberal restructuring has severely retracted many benefits gained under the KWS.

Phillips and Phillips (1993) believe that the negative pressure of free trade agreements on Canada will continue to affect women more than men. They point out that government cut backs for programs such as unemployment insurance, abolition of the family allowance and affordable reliable daycare will significantly impact the economic position of women in Canada. Such programs greatly provided a supplementary income for women especially those who were unemployed or earned low wages.

Evans and Shields (2002) have also argued that cuts in government support for many programs have left many non-profit organizations and individuals in a bind to cover their ever increasing costs. Programs such as child care, public housing, language training, employment

training, job training, and funding for settlement services have been cut. Apart from the loss of aid that immigrant communities are facing due to cuts in these areas, Evans and Shields (2002) point out that important services such as employment equity and anti-racist initiatives have also been cut. These services are very important in helping racialized immigrants overcome some of the obstacles they face to effective settlement in Canada, and as Evans and Shields (2002) highlight, these cuts can impede the successful integration of immigrants and have dire impacts on community development.

SECTION 3:

Research Methodology

The forgone literature has been instrumental in highlighting the importance of studying the employment (and by extension the economic) situation of “visible minority” immigrants in Canada’s labour market. However, as mentioned earlier, the focus of this research is to examine the employment experiences of black Caribbean women in one particular sector, Personal Support Workers who care for the elderly in nursing homes and through community care programs. This section of the study will now incorporate the primary data that was collected. This data will evidence the arguments presented earlier and will more effectively answer the research questions posed in this study.

The study was undertaken using a qualitative approach. A qualitative researcher “begins with a self assessment and reflections about themselves as situated in a socio-historical context” (Newman, 2006, pp.14-15). My motivation for this study began with a self-assessment of my position as a black female immigrant from the Caribbean. My self- assessment was to determine

where I fit into the socio-historical context and how issues that affect black Caribbean women affect me. After the assessment, I could not deny the fact that issues affecting racialized immigrants do not only affect the particular individuals involved but the community in general. My own mother and other family friends work as personal support workers. I often hear their concerns about their work situations and particularly how dissatisfied they are with certain elements of their work, for example, unsteady work hours, health effects, multiple job holding but more so the effects their busy work schedule has on their family life. Through my own experience, I would see my mother go off for work at 11pm one night and not return home until 12pm the other night only to be gone by 7am the following morning. With this intimate understanding of the group, I had several unanswered questions about the employment sector and reasons for certain occurrences. I started out with questions such as whether black women were more greatly concentrated in this sector other than other groups and if so, what reasons existed for this.

Qualitative research examines social life and social processes by collecting stories, narratives, and descriptions of others' experiences to explain how identities are constructed (Morse, 2005; Newman, 2006). The research is based on individual interviews with women who work as personal support workers. By taking a qualitative approach, I was able to gain a better understanding of the participants' experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge. This approach was instrumental in answering the what, how and why questions related to the experiences of black Caribbean immigrant women in Canada's labour market.

Interviews were a useful tool because interviews are more interactive and allowed me to ask pre-arranged questions and probe the interviewees when answers were not clear (Newman, 2006). Interviewees were asked both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended

questions allowed parts of the interview to proceed more quickly as questions were general in nature and answers were easily, quickly and accurately recorded. Closed-ended questions were also used as they allowed for easier comparison of answers. It was also necessary to use open-ended questions as this allowed me to probe the interviewees for more detailed answers in cases where I believed the given answer was ambiguous and did not fully answer my question.

A snowball sampling approach was used to gather interviewees. Snowball sampling or network chain referral is used to sample cases in a network (Newman, 2006). Using a snowball sampling I relied on interviewees to connect me with other individuals in similar situations who could add to the research by sharing their experience. I was grateful that the individuals were willing to refer another and eventually a network of individuals was created. The study consisted of 8 face-to-face interviews with women who work as personal support workers caring for the elderly in nursing homes and in private homes across the greater Toronto Area. All individuals who participated in the study did so voluntarily. Each interview lasted approximately 25-30 minutes and was held at a location mutually decided upon by myself and the interviewee.

The Health Care Sector and Personal Support Work

Personal Support Workers (PSWs) are unregulated health care providers who provide personal care for individuals who need assistance with day-to-day activities such as grooming and feeding or with housework, such as light housecleaning and laundry. Personal Support Workers work under the supervision of a regulated health professional or supervisor, such as a registered nurse (RN). Often services are provided in a long-term care facility, for instance in a nursing home or hospital. In other instances PSWs work under the direction of the person receiving care. In this case, care would be offered in an independent living environment like the

individual's home. PSWs who work outside a nursing home or a hospital are often employed by Community Care Access Centres (Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, 2008a).

In the past, most nursing homes or long-term care facilities have been operated by non-profit entities, which receive government funding for the delivery of care. Over time, however, this organizational structure has shifted so that now most nursing homes are run by for-profit organizations (Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, 2008b). In the case of retirement/assisted living homes, the majority have for-profit ownership. The shift from operation by non-profit to privatization occurred as a result of decreased government spending on health care. In 1995, the Harris government (Progressive Conservatives) reduced health care spending by \$132- million in an attempt to reduce the deficit. This reduction has impacted who operates many health care organizations and there has been a steady increase in private ownership (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2000). Between 1995 and 1999, health care restructuring led to job restructuring and cuts. Approximately 26, 000 health care workers were laid off (Ontario Health Coalition, 2008). A competitive bidding system now determines who is responsible for the distribution of health care. The competitive bidding system has proved detrimental for some long standing health care providers, such as the Victorian Order of Nurses and The Red Cross as they have had to withdraw homecare services from many communities across the province, and they have been replaced by for-profit corporations (Ontario Health Coalition, 2008). Although the homecare sector has gone through changes, particularly at the management and ownership level, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (2000) indicates that homecare is the fourth fastest- growing job category in Ontario.

Is Personal Support Work Precarious?

Before presenting the interviewees responses, it is necessary to establish if working in the health care field as a Personal Support Worker is a form of precarious work as some may argue it is not. In light of the definition of precarious work, there are certain elements of precariousness associated with personal support work; hence it being categorized as precarious work. For instance, precarious work is an atypical work relation that offers limited social benefits and statutory entitlements, poor job security, low job tenure, low wages and high risks of ill health (Fudge and Vosko, 2003). Although within some work environments, such as in some nursing homes, jobs are full time, with benefits and unionized, within the same nursing homes many jobs are more often than not part-time or casual, low paying, lacking job security and in all cases of personal support work, have a very high risk of ill health. For PSWs employed by health care agencies, employment is casual, hours are inconsistent as hours are based on client availability, workplaces are non unionized, low paying, and also has a very high risk of ill health. The research findings will further illustrate the point that personal support work is in fact precarious. Findings will be presented in relation to the research questions of this paper. The findings will firstly be categorized under three headings and later in the discussion, more insights will be given as to the interviewee's responses.

Findings

The following section presents the findings of eight interviews conducted with women who work as Personal Support Workers in the Greater Toronto Area. These women are of a black descent and are immigrants from English-speaking Caribbean countries who are employed by a long-term care facility or by health care agencies who deploys them to private homes where they provide care for clients.

- 1) Are visible minority immigrants and in particular black Caribbean women marginalized into precarious jobs more than other groups?

What became evident through discussions with the interviewees is that the sector is dominated by female and particularly visible minority women who are black or Filipinas. When asked about the origin of the black women, respondents indicated that the majority are from several Caribbean countries such as Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Guyana. It was highlighted by a few respondents that the number of women originating from Africa is slowly increasing and so is the presence of Filipina women in the field. However, based on the length of time that some women have been in the field, 15 years and above, the observation has been that black women from the Caribbean have always been the predominant group. When asked about the presence of white women in the field, all but one interviewee expressed that white women were practically non-existent based on the observation in their respective workplaces. One interviewee, who works through an agency, commented that there are white women but not that many. Interviewees, although not asked, were quick to highlight that while the majority of PSWs were minorities the Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) and mainly the RNs were white women. Some interviewees commented on the racial division in the positions and expressed that they felt it would be difficult for black women to get to high levels in nursing such as RNs. When

discussing the ethnic breakdown of the workplace, one interviewee commented as follows:

“They [the women] are all black. And you know what, we really work hard you know and... I would say the white race, they put us down. You must do that you must do the dirty part of the work. I do the clean part that’s how they behave.”

- 2) How do the social locations of gender and race, intersect to shape black Caribbean women’s employment experience in the health care sector in Ontario?

Gender

Based upon the interviews, it was very evident that race and gender play a fundamental role in the type of employment experiences these women have in the health care sector. From the interviews it was safe to conclude that the health care sector is a prime example of the extent of the division of labour in the labour market. The interviews revealed that the sector is about 99 percent dominated by women. When asked about the gender breakdown in the workplace, the majority of the women commented that there were more women than men. One unanticipated but important observation made by one interviewee was that based upon the employer, more men will be employed in the workplace. Her comment to the question of whether there were a lot of men in the field is as follows: *“Yes, which surprised me a lot as I thought more women would be in it but when you go into the hospitals too and in some of those March of Dime and some of those homes they basically use men.”* Based upon her answer and my unfamiliarity with the mentioned employer I probed further into her comment by asking if these places of employment had higher statuses than nursing homes. She commented:

“They are not really nursing homes. They are more homes for the physically challenged. Maybe they [the clients] have cerebral palsy. They live in a complex by themselves then somebody has to go in and do the same for them as you do in a nursing home, but then they live by themselves in private homes.”

Based upon her comment, it appears that due to the types of employers and the services that are being provided, these jobs have higher rates of pay and provide more job status and possible benefits. This reinforces the point that men tend to get the better jobs than women. This goes to show that even in such jobs a sexual division of labour still exists.

Another interesting thing to highlight about how gender affects the employment experiences of these women is their treatment in the workplace. As a result of the lack of men in the field, it was revealed that clients tend to physically abuse the female caretakers because they see them as “weak” and “manageable” based on their gender. In the words of one interviewee: *“I think they need more men to be in the field because some of the clients they seem to respect men more than women. They feel that our strength is less so they try to hit us while men they will cooperate with.”*

Race

Throughout all the interviews, race and racism was a reoccurring issue of concern. Through the interviews I was able to see the negative effects of race on these individuals work experience. Racist comments and behaviours was one of the top reasons why individuals did not like their work and was a continuous reason for discomfort in the workplace. Some feelings expressed by individual PSWs:

“The only thing I don’t like about it is that, some of them are very, I don’t know if I should say they are still racist... The elderly, they still have that thing about them, their behaviour towards black is different even from the Filipinas. From their colour is different their attitude is different.”

“... They are old and back in their days they probably did not integrate with blacks at all or they see black as the lesser to them. I think that being a black person around them in their old age they strike out.”

This interviewee commented on how she felt she was treated by the families of the white patients and the patients themselves:

“As a matter of fact they don’t respect us ‘cause when they [the families] enter the floor they don’t say good afternoon, they don’t greet us. You know the clients too even though they are sick mentally they know that we are different colours and they will say that we are niggers. So yeah that’s how it is. Yes, because the other day I was looking after a lady and I took her clothes off and she said to me, “And now I’m gonna be naked like a nigger.” So auhm that’s how it is, they still have some sense of who they are in terms of colour difference, ‘cause they can tell that I’m not the colour they are, they can say I’m a nigger.”

Women who worked outside the nursing homes and worked through health care agencies also expressed incidents of racism. This interviewee experienced racism in the clients’ home. She indicated her experience as follows:

“...but when I actually go into it [PSW work] and I had to go into certain private homes, that’s where I could see the racism and I can give an incident. I can give many incidents. I have been going to this couple for a while and the husband was suppose to have a brain tumour so I went to take care of him and his wife but I notice they were prejudiced, they didn’t like black people but not only blacks, they didn’t like Asians, if your eyes were not blue and your skin white, they didn’t like you so in that case I had problems...one day I remember I opened the front door to take the garbage...I took up the box of garbage and I was taking them through the front door and he said to me “Why you walking through my front door, don’t walk through my front door, walk through the back” and slammed the door... “and get back on the boat, you’re yellow” and then he doubled up his fist and he came up to me to hit me and I said if you ever dare hit me, I’ll put my lawyer on you and he back down.”

It is important to highlight that although the majority of caretakers in the sector are minorities, the clients for whom they provide care are mainly white. Consequently, they are constantly faced with the stigma of blacks being inferior to whites and blacks doing the “dirty work” for whites. Such stigmas have been created from periods of colonization when slavery

was in existence and blacks were employed by whites as maids and caretakers of their families and properties. However, due to the nature of the work that PSWs are performing, personal care for whites such as bathing, feeding, grooming and so on, PSWs feel that they are looked down upon by their white clients and their families, although the work they do is necessary for the clients' well being.

- 3) How do employment possibilities and experience of these women impact on their settlement experience, particularly their economic (in)security?

Most of the women interviewed love their job and would not change it for another. However, what they love about the job is not the pay or the benefits but the opportunity to care for individuals in need of their care. This was the reason the majority cited for their decision for going into the field in the first place. When asked if other areas in the health care sector such as being an RN would not provide them with similar intrinsic benefits, almost all the women said yes but cited reasons why they were PSWs and not RNs. The main reasons cited for their being PSWs and not RNs are the educational requirements and the financial cost it requires. Most women mentioned that they do not have the time or finances to take upgrading courses and it is impossible for them to stop working and attend school full time due to the financial restraints. Many cited this as their original reason for becoming a PSW as opposed to a nurse. One individual mentioned that the PSW course was much shorter than the RN and hence she would be able to start working much faster. Another individual expressed that she believes racism towards black women would make it difficult for her to pass the courses and get into the field so she does not have the time to waste if that should happen.

Despite their continuing work as PSWs, these women do not feel the career provides economic security. Some respondents worked full-time hours in one location, while others worked casual or part time in multiple locations. Seven of the 8 women interviewed said the income was too small and thus they did not feel economically secure. All the women mentioned they earned between \$20,000 and \$40,000 per year. While some earned this from one job, for others it was an accumulation from multiple jobs. Some expressed that one job alone would not allow them to meet their expenses and thus it was necessary to work multiple jobs. Individuals who worked through agencies said in any year their salary could be below \$20,000 or within the \$20-40,000 range. The annual salary depended on how many hours they were able to accumulate throughout the year. One individual said that one year she earned only \$26,000 because she was not given many hours. Many women stated that by the time they receive their pay cheque a good portion was already taken out through taxes and what was left could barely meet their day-to-day expenses: housing, food, travelling, bills, and for those with a family, additional expenses to care for their children. Some of the additional comments shared when asked if they believed their job provided the economic security they would want are noted here. These comments are from employees who work full time: *“There is so much to do and tax takes it all. Most of the pay goes to tax, so you can never hold your pay check and look at it ‘cause most of goes to tax. It’s not much.”* Another commented: *“NO. It does not. When I pay my bills I have no money to save.”* And another mentioned: *“... the pay is not enough. You would have to work two jobs, a part time and a full time to see something; it’s just not good, too hectic and hard.”*

Apart from the income disadvantage with working part time or casual, another drawback to non- full-time work that was cited was the lack of benefits. Employers who worked

part time or casual were not eligible for benefits and many found this to be a concern.

Individuals cited that along with better pay, they would prefer a job that afforded them benefits or full- time hours. For instance, two interviewees commented:

“The importance of the full time hours is I would like to have benefits. You work the hours, there you work the money but you still don’t come home with the money, you get benefits but is not all benefits you use, but it is good to have a full time job with benefits.”

“Well it’s important if I work full- time hours ‘cause then I would be able to make more money. I would have more hours, then I get more pay and there are more benefits when you are full time. When you are part time there are no benefits other than vacation which is not accumulated any more...”

When asked about the importance of working full-time hours, all the women said it is very important. When asked about the hours they observe their fellow black women worked, the answer was predominantly, many hours, many extra shifts and some commented that most women even worked multiple jobs. One woman commented, *“[they work] lots of hours, some people do double everyday. They work full time here and they go elsewhere to do another full time job. I don’t know how they do it.”* Another commented, *“They work all hours. Some of them work two jobs they work night evening and day. I don’t know how they do it, but they do it.”*

One individual commented that the lack of full time hours would be a factor in leaving the field:

“Full time positions were becoming a little bit tedious even though they were opening up a lot of nursing homes there. [It] is very difficult to get a full- time position in a nursing home or a hospital and then I decided that maybe it was time for change.”

Discussion

The literature reviewed and the research findings indicate that: 1) Black Caribbean women are overrepresented in the Personal Support Worker profession more than other groups; 2) The social locations of “race,” and gender, clearly intersect to shape black Caribbean women’s employment experience in the health care sector in Ontario; and 3) The employment possibilities and experience of these women as Personal Support Workers impacts on their settlement experience, specifically their economic security. As the findings illustrate, there is a high percentage of black women in the Personal Support Worker field, with a significant representation from the Caribbean. What are the reasons for the high representation from this group? The eight women interviewed achieved legal status in Canada through family sponsorship. None of them came to Canada through any work related schemes such as the point system or the domestic worker scheme. None of the women intended to become a PSW when they immigrated to Canada. Six of the eight came to Canada as adults and two came as teenagers in high school. This is significant because many made individual decisions to migrate to Canada and were in the position to enter the labour market. Interviewees cited the possibilities of better economic conditions as the reason behind their immigration to Canada. As to where they would end up in the labour market they were not sure, but they had definite hopes that they would be able to secure a good job to place them in a better economic position than when they were in their home countries. However, as the findings have shown, economic security has not been realized. Many women express that their job does not provide for the economic security that they crave.

Cheung (2005) points out that an individual can achieve a sense of economic security based on the type of job the individual holds. Permanent and full-time jobs provide a greater

sense of economic security than temporary and part-time jobs. Although the women cited that they came to Canada to improve their economic positions, the findings of this study do not indicate that the individuals chose the PSW profession because they believed it would provide them the economic security they desired. For some women, going into the PSW field was the fastest way to get a job. This was the case because they lacked the educational pre-requisites needed to get into higher level courses for higher level professions.

According to Ho (1999) the lack of educational pre-requisites has historically played a role in determining the employment outcomes of black Caribbean women in the labour market. Ho (1999) argues that due to industrialization which created a shift from agricultural forms of production in the post-World War II era, female labour became displaced forcing many women into domestic work because alternative forms of work did not exist. She believes that many women turned to domestic work because they lacked high levels of education which could be used to access other jobs. According to Ho (1999), approximately 88 percent of Caribbean women have acquired up to a primary school level education and this level of education does not allow them to be competitive in the labour market. Hence, many have turned to domestic work in homes or in the hotel industry.

The majority of the women interviewed for this study had only primary level education before acquiring their PSW certification. Their level of education severely limited their employment options once in Canada. The PSW course was seen as an excellent option towards a career because the course was shorter, less expensive and required less educational requirements. Some interviewees expressed: *“Before becoming a PSW I tried the daycare. It was a bit challenging so I didn’t bother and I think the study was too much and I have to work, I have a*

family, so the PSW course was the shorter course.” Individuals with the desire of becoming a Registered Nurse (RN) had similar comments as to why they settled for PSW:

“I was looking forward to working with people so I know it would take me a while to be an RN. So I realized the PSW course was six months and after 6 months I would be able to start working with people touching the lives of other people with my caring skills. So I went for PSW...”

Although cost and length of course were the determining factors for some individuals, for others, getting a PSW certificate was only a process to legitimize and give a formal title to the work that they were already doing. Fifty percent of the women were doing some form of care work before officially gaining the designation of PSW. They were privately caring for clients and providing the same duties as a PSW without the title:

“Because I always do elderly care and I always work with people, and they have nurses coming in and sometimes people come in to do different jobs from agencies, then I realize that they were doing the personal support work. So by working with other people that was doing it and then I realize that it’s not that hard to get into it, and instead of just doing it without a title I just went and get the title ‘cause I use to do the work before.”

Another commented:

“My cousin’s wife she is a nurse and sometimes I would go if they had private clients, and say that they had some event that would take them away from the client and they wouldn’t be able to do it, I would go and do it for them. Then I found out that I wanted, for me, I like to know what I’m doing and I like to be more experienced. I didn’t want to just get into it like that and I wanted to be certified too, so that’s where I went and got my certification as a PSW. At that time it was health care aide.”

I found it interesting that these women seemed to naturally gravitate to the forms of employment that historically targeted black women—care work. Based upon this observed natural inclination I saw how the historical stereotyping and expectation of black women as suited for certain types of work had unconsciously settled into their expectations for themselves. One interviewee commented: *“Well the person that introduce me [to PSW work]), she use to work 2 jobs and she*

said you know what, when they see how hard we work, we black women we work hard, they will pay us little more.”

This particular individual was ready to present herself as the hard working black woman that society has come to know, even though such images are stereotypes established during slavery.

Vorst et al. (1991) argue that “the legacy of slavery has produced a low status for blacks” (p. 138). The colour stratification of colonialism that associated blackness with powerlessness has to an extent affected labour migration, race relations and gender relations, and has presented black female immigrants as suited for specific types of jobs, particularly those that white women do not want. According to Vorst et al., (1991) the idea of racism that was used to justify slavery is still present today and such ideologies have presented blacks as suited for jobs that require heavy physical labour and such attributes are what make blacks suited for particular jobs.

In *Racism and Paid Work*, Das Gupta’s discussion of women in the garment industry highlights the preferential hiring of women from specific ethnic groups as opposed to others for specific jobs. In Das Gupta’s study, the observation was made that Black women had a low presence in the garment industry. This observation was attributed to the historical stereotyping of black women throughout slavery as suited for labour that was physically demanding while such work was unsuited for whites or Europeans. The conclusion was that garment factory work was not viewed as physically demanding, hence the lack of black women in the sector. Das Gupta (1996) points out that historically black women were segregated into certain professions as opposed to others based upon the view that they were more intuitively nurturing. As is evident in the case of PSWs these views are still dominant in today’s society and are not only projected by non- blacks but accepted, and promoted by blacks based upon the professions they gravitate towards.

While it has been noted that women went into this field by their own choice, or through encouragement of another friend or relative, job availability plays a key role in their turn to PSW work. With the changing labour market and the growth in service sector jobs, the PSW profession has grown rapidly; so also has the number of nursing homes and health care agencies employing these workers. According to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (2008c), 611 long-term care homes exist in Ontario and these homes are staffed by PSWs, up from 1998 when government statistics showed that there were only 498 nursing homes and homes for the aged in Ontario (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2000). There are also retirement homes/assisted living homes that employ PSWs. These homes can range from high-end apartment complexes to affordable housing type residences where seniors may require some assistance to live independently, but not enough to require placement in a traditional nursing home. There are approximately 780 of these kinds of homes in Ontario. As the evidence shows, the personal support sector is growing through the growth in nursing homes and other retirement and assisted living homes. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, the sector is becoming more and more unregulated which makes the sector vulnerable. As a result of black women's inclination to provide care and the lack of other types of jobs in the labour market, black women naturally gravitate towards this vulnerable sector.

Some of the women interviewed for this study have observed this growing trend towards personal support work and the increasing number of nursing homes that are being built. When one interviewee was asked if she believes a lot of black women were in this field, she commented: *“Yes, because that’s basically the one job they can get into. They go into those jobs because in this kind of country they have a lot of seniors so that’s the job. You find more of these jobs then.”* Despite the growth in this sector, the jobs are not good jobs; instead, they are

precarious jobs. As noted above, this employment sector is now mostly privately operated. Government restructuring has led to more private ownership of nursing homes. The non-profit vs. for-profit divide is very acute in home care. Until the early 2000s, home care was delivered by long-standing community organizations like the Red Cross, Victoria Order of Nursing, St Josephs and others. When competitive bidding for home care contracts took hold, for profit organizations entered the scene and have been gobbling up market share ever since.

According to a study conducted by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (2000), for profit firms are geared to private enterprises whose main goal is to maximize profits, and the competitive model favours the for-profit firm. Because of their goal to maximize profits, shareholders are the ones who benefit as money that should go towards services goes to the shareholders. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) (2000) believes that private contractors provide inferior wages and benefits for their employees. The competitive bidding model has also impacted non-profit organizations who, in order to compete with for-profit organizations, have opted for efficiency over quality of service and employee morale and have cut costs and employee wages and degraded working conditions. In the homecare sector, women work part-time, and are paid poor wages and given few fringe benefits (CCPA, 2000). The CCPA (2000) reports that PSWs who work in the home care sector are paid on average \$5-\$8 an hour less than their counterparts who work in hospitals and long-term care facilities. As noted earlier, PSWs who work in the community have irregular work schedules, which make it difficult to balance work and family.

Apart from the lack of benefits and low salary for some employee groups such as part-timers and agency workers, these privately run enterprises are not providing workers with the types of physical assistance they need to make their work easier, such as appropriate equipment

to perform certain tasks; hence, the workload is affecting workers' health. Participants described their workload as hectic, exhausting and physically demanding. Many have commented that the workload is too much for one individual, which is leading to damaging effects on their health.

One woman said she would leave the field: *"For health reasons. A lot of stress and I think my health is going down."* Another expressed: *"It's very hard and I find now that it's damaging my joints, my knees hurt, my back and it's just too hard. Too much work load for one person, 10 people or more."* Some workers expounded on the physical demands and stresses of the work:

"Because sometimes for instance you go into the nursing homes, they have a lot of seniors in there. 95% can't help themselves so it's total care. And you're looking at like around, some people weigh anywhere from 170 -300 pounds and they're expecting you to move those people around and some of these facilities they don't have the means to auhm, they don't have Hoyer lifts to assist you, they don't have the tools to assist you to bring this person from point A to point B. So if you have to be transferring all day and you're doing 6 to 8 people, in nursing home [you] can be doing 15 people, can you imagine moving and lifting 15 people all day without the proper equipment? You could hurt yourself really bad, strain your back.... and most times people don't want to help you especially if you're from the agency."

Others commented: *"Well I don't see myself becoming a PSW for the rest of my life because when I get old it's going to be too hard because the people that are coming in they are so heavy."* Two other women shared:

"The only thing I don't like is that sometimes the employer and management can offer better setting and working conditions and so, but other than that there isn't really anything that I don't like. They should make it better by making all the nursing homes have electric beds that you don't have to wind nothing because you are wearing down your body, because you are at risk of getting the carpal tunnel in your hand, too much pressure on your hand. So if they put electric beds, then you press the button and it goes up and down. And also in most nursing homes they should have ceiling lift for people weighing over 200 pounds. Like you know if you have to look after them during the night you have that lift to rise them up instead of people trying to push their shoulder out and all those stuff. It's hard on people shoulder when the people are, you know, over a certain amount of weight."

"I would say working as a PSW you learn a lot, but also after a while it shouldn't be a job that one should work for the rest of their life because it's a high pressure job and the workload is very heavy. So after a certain time I think you should move on to something less stressful and the workload is much lighter, 'cause as you get older it takes a lot of

effect on your body. I think after certain years everyone should aim for something..., but for me I don't think I could continue being a PSW. I need to come off some of the heavy workload, because it takes a toll upon your body, especially your arms, neck and shoulder and back. And because there is not enough staff to do the work, sometimes you're doing 2 person's job; it's too much. I'm just giving myself like maybe within another 3 years I'm suppose to be going on to something else."

The discomforts workers are feeling with their job are not limited to the workplace.

Workers are finding that their hectic workload and work schedules are also affecting their personal lives because they are not able to spend much time at home with their families or engage in leisure activities. When asked about what they did after work one responded:

"Nothing really because by the time I finish work I am dead." Another worker described her experience:

"No I don't have the time [to engage in leisure activities]. By the time you get home from work you can't do nothing. Even if you get a day off you have to use it to look after your home, the laundry, you may have an appointment, by the time you get back, you're so dead beat you can't even go towards any recreation."

Another said: *"Sometimes I remember where I've worked back to back 12 hours and sometimes I have a job from Sunday night to Tuesday and then Wednesday and Thursday I go find myself something else to do. So basically sometimes I'm not home for a week."*

As the previous discussion highlights, the lack of government ownership in the sector has left the sector unregulated and workers have to endure the negative impact on their physical health and other areas of their lives. With such work loads and work schedules, benefits gained through employment legislations like the Employment Standards Act (ESA) such as statutory holidays would benefit employees in this sector a great deal. However, recent changes in the ESA have left personal support workers at a disadvantage. The ESA has introduced some special rules for certain employees, one being the Elect-to-Work rule which exempt some employees from public holiday entitlements (Ontario Ministry of Labour, 2008). The rule

provides that some employees may elect to work or not to work when requested to do so, and as such are exempt from public holiday entitlements. Elect-to-work employees are not entitled to take a public holiday off. If the employee works on the public holiday he or she will be paid at least one and one-half times the regular rate of pay for all hours worked. However, employees who do not fall in the elect-to-work category would receive similar compensation plus public holiday pay for the day or their regular rate of pay plus a substitute day off with public holiday pay (Ontario Ministry of Labour, 2008). Personal Support Workers, particularly those who work through agencies, are categorized as elect-to-work employees and are inclined to the elect-to-work rules, rules which work to their disadvantage.

It is very clear that working in the health care sector is impacting women in a significant way. A study conducted by Stinson, Pollak and Cohen (2005) found that some health care jobs are quietly being degraded because it is service sector work that mainly employs women and more so women of colour. Due to the extensive privatization that is occurring, the study highlights that poverty is increasing among the individuals in this sector who are mainly immigrants of colour. However, the economic conditions that have arisen in Canada due to an insecure labour market, a result of restructuring, has created a pool of workers who are willing to endure the physical strains of personal support work and the lack of economic security it offers, and are willing to work under hectic conditions and with irregular schedules, accept low wages and moonlight in order to make ends meet.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has shown that Canada's racialized immigrants, despite the racialized group to which they belong and the type of employment sector in which they are employed, continue to face difficulties in Canada's labour market, which has resulted in a lack of economic security among other things. Labour market insecurity coupled with the social locations of race and gender leave racialized immigrant women at a disadvantage as they strive to establish themselves as workers who contribute in an important way to Canadian society. More specifically, the case of personal support workers highlights the effects of race and gender on racialized immigrant women in Canada. The historical role of immigration policies in assigning racialized immigrants, specifically racialized women, to certain jobs have crippled their progress in today's labour market. The historical connotations associated with certain pools of immigrant labour, such as the notion that black women are suited for domestic or care work because they can handle labour that is physically demanding and they are by nature caring continues to negatively shape the employment experiences of black women from the Caribbean.

As the study revealed, it appears that black Caribbean women have been mentally "brainwashed" to believe that they are in fact suited for certain types of jobs and as such tend to gravitate to work in which they provide care, even though such jobs are precarious in a number of ways. Though the type of service these women provide is essential to society, this type of work is not treated with a sense of importance but instead is devalued. The devaluation of this work is seen by the way in which workers are treated by those for whom they provide care, and it is also devalued by their employers as seen by the poor employment environment which they provide. With this in mind, it is evident that more needs to be done to improve the position of personal support workers. Improving the work conditions for PSWs will in turn improve their

employment experience and by extension the economic position of a large group of racialized immigrants in Canada.

Canada needs to carefully take stock of the present dilemma with black Caribbean women and the precarious nature of PSW work. As the study reveals, there is a continuing need for immigrants to come to Canada to combat the declining birth rate and consequent fall off in the labour force that is occurring in Canada. Also, the retiring baby boomers have led to a growth in the personal care sector, thus PSWs will continue to be needed to care for the large percentage of our aging population reliant on personal care. In the case where immigrants are already present and available for work in the country, steps should be taken to make their employment experience as equitable, enjoyable and rewarding as possible. With an aging population, it would be advantageous to ensure that those caring for the aged are sufficiently remunerated and appreciated for the work that they do. The negative health effects on personal support workers, if it continues, will lead to greater costs for the health care system. Also, if PSWs are sick who will provide assisted living for retiring baby boomers?

One recommendation that may correct this issue is to address the cause for declining health. As the research findings indicate, workplaces, especially nursing homes, are lacking the appropriate equipment that is necessary to ease the physical pressure on workers. The government should make it mandatory that all nursing homes are equipped with appropriate lifts to prevent workers from lifting clients. Also, it should be mandated that in cases where transfers need to be done, a specific number of workers are required to undertake such transfers and no worker is required to make a transfer on her own. Trade unions should seek such redress through collective bargaining, and make it a bargaining goal to have such requirements to meet the needs of their members in these settings. Also it is the responsibility of the worker to ensure that they

do not carry out work that is unsafe; thus, workers should educate themselves on employment legislations that cover issues such as health and safety, then they will know that they have the right to refuse unsafe work.

With respect to economic security for PSW's, the review of the literature and the research findings clearly show that workers are not economically secure. Part-time, casual and temporary workers face greater occurrences of being economically insecure as they are faced with poor wages based upon their irregular work hours. If steps are not taken to address the problem of economic insecurity of racialized immigrants in the labour market, there will be deleterious effects on their ability to live decent lives and maintain a good socio-economic position. Although this situation impacts racialized immigrants directly, if it continues, then the wider society will also be negatively impacted; poverty and homelessness will increase when workers cannot afford rent, or to buy their own homes. Frustration and depression can also lead to social unrest and increases in crime. Unless steps are taken to address this issue and assist racialized immigrants in finding better jobs, racialized immigrants will continue to be marginalized in the labour market and consequently their socio-economic position will only worsen.

As was brought to light by the interview findings, many workers have settled for the PSW profession because they do not have the time or financial resources to upgrade their skills and educational qualifications to find better or other employment in health care. With this in mind, my next recommendation is that some kind of financial assistance be provided for immigrant women particularly PSWs who would like to do upgrading in the health care field. I am not suggesting loans, as many of these women are middle aged women who would prefer not to incur additional debts, but full, non-repayable grants or grants that require partial repayment,

to provide these women the financial resources to work less hours so that they can return to school; or, financial resources to care for their families while they are in school or other kinds of incentives that will make significant inroads in helping these women acquire the level of professional attainment they desire and, in so doing, make some headway into dismantling the race/colour professional divides that currently exist in the health care sector.

As to the current state of the labour market, government needs to be more active in assisting workers. Currently, the government seeks to profit from capital while the state of the worker declines in an insecure labour market. It is quite probable that labour market restructuring is impacting racialized immigrants in a way that should call for concern. Plant closures and the casualization of labour are leaving workers in a volatile situation. Part-time, temporary, casual, on call work and moonlighting have prevented workers from accessing jobs that provide them with good benefits. Hence, there is no job security but increased risks of poor health and also low worker morale. This does not bode well for Canada, a country of the developed world. The Canadian government should be encouraged to find strategies to combat the negative effects of restructuring and help workers. Adjustments need to be made to address the current trend towards privatizing long-term care facilities. The study reveals private organizations only seek to benefit financially while the condition of the worker deteriorates. Also, employment legislations with clauses such as the elect-to-work clause need to be rescinded as these clauses only serve to weaken the workers' position in relation to the employer instead of empowering the worker.

The role that race and gender play in affecting the employment experiences of racialized immigrant women from the Caribbean is an issue that has to be addressed on a broad spectrum.

Equity and inclusion needs to be greatly emphasized in order to transform organizations. In today's "progressive" society there should be less gendered divisions of labour, and the labour market should be more equitable. Anti-oppressive training within organizations needs to be emphasized and mandated. Organizations need to be more pro-active in anti-oppressive training to ensure that their organization is sensitive to the structures of domination and privilege that actively or inadvertently negatively impact on racialized minorities.

While it is good to hope that all organizations will become more anti-oppressive, it cannot be denied that although not always overt, racism is still evident in Canadian society, and individuals within organizations still have the mentality of white supremacy and minority domination. Anti-racist training is an area that needs to be emphasized. As well as being taught in the workplace, anti-racist training needs to begin from within the school system while minds are still being prepared to venture into the world of work. A more anti-racist society would certainly eliminate many of the oppressive attitudes that are encountered by racialized immigrants. Due to the fact that the clients cared for by PSW's are often older and predominantly white, many are from the old school where acts of racism were accepted and promoted. This makes it difficult to break some of the views clients have towards black women. As the old proverb says, "It's hard to bend a tree when it's old"; thus, the necessity to begin anti-racist training at a young age. Whether steps towards early training will eventually change society's views and attitudes, only time will tell.

Limitations of the Study

Among the challenges faced in doing research on a group of workers within a sector that has so much room for exploration was the lack of available literature on the PSW employment sector itself. While there is an abundance of literature on the health care field, much of this information is about nurses. Thus, it was difficult establishing a history of PSWs in Canada. Such a history would have been helpful to the study, as it would provide information that could be used to better understand the history of black women in this field. One of the important questions the history would have helped to answer is: Have black Caribbean women historically been directed/selected (whether self-selected or otherwise) at a greater percentage than other ethnic/racial groups of women for employment as PSWs? Due to the lack of information on the sector it was also difficult to pin down the number of PSWs in the province and the number of agencies that provide them. Gathering correct statistical information on the ethnic breakdown in the field was also difficult to do.

Due to the lack of available information on the sector most of the data presented was based on the interviewee's responses. This limits the study in that the interviewees are from the group under investigation and biases may exist on their part in the information they provide. The number of interviews conducted can also be viewed as a limitation of the study. As the sector is very wide and growing, it can be argued that the number of interviews conducted was not truly representative of the population. A wider sample size would provide more accurate information; and also interviewing women outside the investigated group who are in the sector would have possibly eliminated any biases in the answers. An outside group could possibly provide answers from a different perspective, which upon comparison, would help determine if the findings amongst Caribbean PSWs are unique to them.

This research has only scratched the surface of the work experience of racialized immigrant women from the Caribbean. Further research on the negative effects of race within this sector, and the health effects of the work on workers, would surely provide a substantial contribution to scholarship on the impact of precarious work on black women from the Caribbean.

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