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# Barriers To Immigration Using The Quebec Skilled Workers Immigration Program (QSWP) : A Study Of The Online Exchanges Among Romanian Immigrants And Prospective Immigrants

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**BARRIERS TO IMMIGRATION USING THE QUEBEC SKILLED WORKERS  
IMMIGRATION PROGRAM (QSWP)**

**A STUDY OF THE ONLINE EXCHANGES AMONG ROMANIAN IMMIGRANTS AND  
PROSPECTIVE IMMIGRANTS**

By

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A Major Research Paper  
Presented to Ryerson University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
In the Program of  
Immigration and Settlement Studies

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2010

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**A STUDY OF THE ONLINE EXCHANGES AMONG ROMANIAN IMMIGRANTS AND  
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Master of Arts 2010  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Many immigrants face obstacles as they navigate through the lengthy and stressful immigration process and its procedures. This project is based on an investigation of an online discussion forum through which successful immigrants and prospective immigrants exchange information regarding their immigration proceedings. The target groups that were chosen for my inquiry are prospective immigrants from Romania and the Republic of Moldova. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data this paper generates valuable knowledge about the first-hand experiences of individuals applying to come to Canada through Quebec's Skilled Workers immigration program. The findings show that although there is plenty of official information offered to prospective immigrants, they still encounter difficulties as they navigate through the immigration process.

**Keywords:** immigrants, online discussion forums, Quebec's Skilled Workers Program, Romanian immigration to Canada, transnational networks.

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## **DEDICATIONS**

To Mom & Dad: I will be forever grateful for your educational goals.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to explore the immigration process and procedures of the Quebec Skilled Workers immigration program (QSWP) from a client perspective. Although this study examines the requirements for the selection of immigrants in the QSWP and the difficulties prospective immigrants face during this lengthy process, I am *not* interested in a policy analysis. Rather, my focus is on the challenges experienced by prospective immigrants during immigration proceedings. The study was conducted on a specific target group: potential immigrants from Romania and the Republic of Moldova who engaged in online discussions regarding their immigration process. The two countries share the same Romanian language as in the past throughout the period between the World Wars the Republic of Moldova was part of Romania.

While there are several studies that focus on immigration policies (Alboim & McIsaac, 2007; Beach et al, 2003; Dalglish, 2009; DeVoretz, 2004; Guillemette & Robson 2006; HRSDC, 2006; Ng 1999; Richmond, 1998; RBC Financial Group, 2005), there is a lack of studies describing the immigration process and procedures from an immigrant's or prospective immigrant's perspective.

The literature review will provide an overview of the following issues that are essential in understanding the process of immigration and how this process is experienced by immigrants: Canadian immigration policies and procedures, Romanian immigration to Canada, immigration and settlement online resources and transnational communities of immigrants.

Furthermore, I will provide a conceptual framework that will allow me to analyze the requirements of the QSWP. For the purpose of my research I will examine data collected from prospective immigrants who were in various stages of their immigration proceedings.

The overall purpose of this paper is to provide insight into the difficulties immigrants face during their immigration proceedings (QSWP only). I am hoping that my findings will serve to improve the guidelines for the QSWP offered on Quebec's Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities (MICC) website and on the application forms and guides. This paper deals with prospective immigrants discussing the best strategies to overcome obstacles encountered during a lengthy immigration process. My overall goal is to provide an understanding of how the official guidelines regarding the immigration process have failed to address the obstacles of individuals with hopes of immigrating to Canada for a better future. Describing the personal experiences of prospective immigrants — as they surface on the online forum — will contribute to the knowledge of how individuals manage to navigate through a long and stressful immigration process; particularly how prospective immigrants are finding solutions to overcome the various obstacles they encounter.

## **Chapter 2: Literature review**

### *2.1 Canadian Immigration Policies and Procedures*

Immigration is considered to be an important factor in Canada's economic prosperity and competitiveness. In the *2008-2009 Reports on Plans and Priorities* released by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Diane Finley, stated that "the success of Canada's immigration plan depends on attracting the right people to where they are needed and where they and their families will find opportunity" (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2008, p.3). An interesting aspect relating to the *2008-2009 Reports on Plan and Priorities* was the department's focus on a "responsive immigration system that recruits and selects immigrants who best meet labour market and economic objectives, while improving outcomes for new immigrants and maintaining the integrity of the Immigration Program" (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2008, p.27).

The Federal Government has established clear targets for the number of immigrants accepted to settle in Canada, hence for 2009 Canada's immigration targets were set at 240,000 - 265,000. While the majority of them are part of the skilled workers class, the target also includes family class immigrants (70,000), refugees (26,000) and provincial nominee immigrants (20,000) (CIC, 2008a).

There are various ways in which individuals can choose to migrate to Canada. Once prospective immigrants have decided which immigration program will offer higher chances of approval they can submit their immigration application for processing. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) website informs prospective immigrants that "there are a few different ways to apply" (CIC, 2009a), and also that "prospective immigrants need to decide which immigration program will work best for them" (CIC, 2009a). The Immigration and

Refugee Protection Act defines three basic classes of immigration: economic class, family class, and protected persons (CIC, 2009b). The economic class consists of independent immigrants who are selected on the basis of their age, skills, education, work experience, and language ability. Immigrants from this class are expected to settle in Canada without the assistance of government programs and to contribute to Canada's prosperity by joining the Canadian labour market (CIC, 2008b; CIC, 2009b). Prospective immigrants who consider immigrating independently to Canada through the economic class have to choose from five options.

The first option is the *Skilled Workers and Professional Class*, which is used by the largest number of immigrants coming to settle and work in Canada with the exclusion of Quebec. Another category is the *Canadian Experience Class*, which targets prospective immigrants who have recent Canadian work experience or have graduated from a Canadian educational institution and recently worked in Canada. A third option is presented by the *Investors, Entrepreneurs and Self-Employed Class*, created for individuals who want to start a business in Canada and to invest their money in Canada (CIC, 2009b).

Another important class is the *Provincial Nominees Program* through which provinces and territories can select immigrants according to labour market trends. It is important to mention that although selection is done by the provinces or territories, the admission process is administered by the Federal Government. A specific class is represented by the *Quebec Skilled Worker Program* (QSWP) aimed at prospective immigrants who wish to settle and work in Quebec (CIC, 2009b). Because the subjects of my study are immigrants and prospective immigrants who came or are planning to come to Canada as permanent residents through the *Quebec Skilled Workers Program* my study focuses specifically on this class. I will start with a short description of *the Skilled Workers and Professionals Class* employed by the Federal

Government. Immigrants in the skilled worker category are selected on the basis of the following six factors: education, work experience, age, English and/or French proficiency, arranged employment in Canada and adaptability. The immigration process also requires paying fees for the file processing and also for issuing the immigration visa. Other fees are required to be paid to third parties for medical examination, police clearance certificate and language testing if proof of language proficiency is requested by immigration officers. The prospective immigrants are also required to have a sufficient amount of money in order to be able to pay for their living expenses upon arrival in Canada (CIC, 2009c). Initially the proof of funds must be included in the application submitted to the visa office and must be shown at arrival in Canada. The amount of money is determined by the size of the family and is updated every year. For example, in 2009, a family of three had to present \$16,580; a family of two had to show \$13,486, while for a single individual the required amount was \$10,833 (CIC, 2009c).

Quebec was the first province that started its own immigration program, the Quebec Skilled Workers Program (QSWP), through which it selects immigrants according to the demands of the labour market and their proficiency in the French language. Quebec's involvement in immigration matters began in the late 1960s as a need to preserve its linguistic and cultural identity. First, the province of Quebec established its own immigration department in 1968 which was followed in 1971 by the first Canada - Quebec immigration agreement (Lang/Cloutier) through which Quebec was allowed to send representatives to Canadian embassies with the objectives of conducting counselling work for prospective immigrants who wished to immigrate to Canada and in particular to Quebec. A major step was achieved by Quebec in 1975 with the Andras/Bienvenue agreement through which Quebec gained an active role in the immigrant selection process as it was given the responsibilities of conducting the

interviews and offering recommendations to federal immigration visa officers. A new agreement (the Cullen/Couture agreement) signed in 1978 gave Quebec more independence in the selection process as the province was allowed to have a say in defining the selection criteria. More changes were brought in 1991 through the Canada - Quebec accord through which Quebec was granted selection powers and was allowed to receive a percentage of the total immigrants equal to the percentage of Quebec's population compared with the population of Canada (Joyal, 1994).

While Quebec is responsible for the selection process (presenting the prospective immigrant with the Certificate of Selection for the province of Quebec) the Federal Government is responsible for the admission process which is carried out by the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). The prospective immigrant has to pass a medical test, pass the required security checks and present a police clearance certificate. The immigration process is finalized by issuing the immigration visa only if the admission requirements are met (MICC, 2009a).

Selected immigrants also have to sign a financial self sufficiency contract, committing to have sufficient financial means to meet their needs and those of their entire family for the first three months after arriving in Quebec. The amount of money that needs to be at the disposal of the immigrants is determined by the size of the family; for the year of 2009, a single person had to show \$2,748, a family of two adults required \$4,030, and a family of a two adults with one child had to present \$4,514 in order to meet the selection criteria (MICC, 2009b).

## *2.2 Immigration and Settlement Online Resources*

While prospective immigrants receive a complete guide with their application package, the information offered is not always sufficient as many prospective immigrants turn to other sources in order to proceed with their application. The proliferation of immigration consultants and of online resources is a clear sign that the guide that is offered by both CIC and Quebec's

Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities are lacking important information.

For the purpose of my study I consider that it is important to review the online resources available for prospective immigrants regarding the immigration and settlement proceedings. The online portal run by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) offers plenty of information on how to immigrate, however it lacks an interactive aspect through which prospective immigrants could ask questions in regards to the immigration process and its proceedings. It also has a section titled “Success Stories” where successful immigrant stories are presented to the public (CIC, 2009d).

Similarly, Quebec’s immigration selection program is coordinated through the Provincial Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities (MICC) that has an online immigration portal divided into two separate websites. The immigration website, “Immigration Quebec” offers immigration information to prospective immigrants who wish to immigrate to Quebec. In contrast with the federal portal of CIC which is offered only in the official languages (English and French), the Quebecois portal also offers information in Spanish (MICC, 2009c). The settlement portal, “Quebec intercultural” is focused on offering information and links to a various settlement agencies and it is offered only in French (MICC, 2009d). While both websites offer information on immigration and settlement issues, they lack an interactive platform through which prospective immigrants and immigrants could exchange information about the immigration process and its proceedings.

Other online portals worth mentioning that offer immigration and settlement information are: [www.settlement.org](http://www.settlement.org) and [www.loonlounge.com](http://www.loonlounge.com). Both have an interactive platform in the form of a discussion forum where questions can be posted by prospective immigrants and be answered by immigrants that have already settled in Canada or by website moderators. Striking

about [www.settlement.org](http://www.settlement.org), is its design to help both newcomers and settlement workers; soon after accessing this webpage visitors are asked to identify themselves either as a newcomer or a settlement worker. Thus separate resources are available depending on the type of user. For a newcomer, the portal is organized into several sections by a series of links such as: Community & Recreation, Consumer Information, Education, Employment, Health, Housing, Immigration & Citizenship, and Legal Services. The portal also has a “First Days” section offered in 24 different languages and an interactive discussion forum where settlement workers moderate, answer questions, and intervene in discussions between users. Statistics from this forum shows that 7,565 of 15,204 members have made 44,187 postings as of July 01, 2009 (OCASI, 2009).

Another recent online portal for immigrants and prospective immigrants is [www.loonlounge.com](http://www.loonlounge.com). It was launched in January 2009 by immigration lawyer David Cohen as a social networking platform for immigrants to Canada and prospective immigrants to Canada. More than 15,000 members from 191 countries are connected through this online forum and exchange information on immigration and settlement issues (Taylor, 2009). There were 40 Romanian members on “Loon Lounge” as of July, 01, 2009. Loon Lounge categorizes members by their country of origin, profession and visa office. Thus, it is easier for members of a particular ethnicity or a professional group to connect with other members who share the same interests or may have other commonality (Loon Lounge, 2009).

The discussion forum that is the focus of my research, [www.toronto.ro](http://www.toronto.ro), was started in 2003 and became a successful forum of the Romanian diaspora in Canada with 52,253 registered members and with over 163,889 messages posted as of July, 01, 2009; in order to be able to read and post messages a visitor must register and provide a valid email address (Emigrare.CA, 2009). The forum it is organized in three main sections:



The “*Emigration*” section offers a space where forum users can discuss the steps of the immigration process. Once individuals or families decide to immigrate to Canada, they must undergo a lengthy and costly process which consists of several steps: gathering the supporting documents, submitting an application, paying the fees, passing the interview, medical exam, and security check. In this forum section prospective immigrants discuss the obstacles they faced during their immigration process and receive valuable advice from other forum users that have previously applied and received the immigration visa.

Another section is “*Global Canada*” where forum users discuss settlement issues such as how to obtain a bank account, insurance, investments, bank loans, pensions, social assistance, medical coverage, school systems and universities. The third section is called “*Local*” where there are discussions about jobs, leisure, real estate, apartments for rent, classified and dating (Emigrare.CA, 2009).

While the first two sections *Emigration* and *Global Canada* refer to Canada widely the third one is specific to four cities: Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal, and Toronto. A characteristic of the forum is that it can be accessed from three other web domains: [www.montreal.ro](http://www.montreal.ro), [www.calgary.ro](http://www.calgary.ro), [www.vancouver.ro](http://www.vancouver.ro) with the same user name and password (Emigrare.CA, 2009).

To participate in the discussion forums a user must first create a username, a password and provide a valid email address. Once his/her forum account is activated, the forum user has access to all the topics and messages posted on the discussion forums. S/he also receives a virtual mailbox through which s/he can communicate privately with other forum users. In order to post a message the forum users must choose the proper category for it. The forum is divided into three main sections “*Emigration*”, “*Global Canada*”, “*Local*” with each category containing several

subcategories where the forum user can open a discussion topic. Once a topic is opened, other forum users can respond and discuss the subject and the initiator of the topic is able to reply if he desires to do so.

Finally, after the category is chosen, the forum user has the option to create a new topic of discussion or to post a message in an existing topic. It is also important to mention that the forum is supervised by a group of moderators who will move a posting to the proper section if it was opened in the wrong category in order to help other users to locate the topics of discussion according to their interest. The forum also has a search engine through which users can locate discussion topics by using keywords that could locate the specific topics.

### *2.3 Romanian Immigration to Canada*

The 2006 Canadian Census reported that the total number of Romanian immigrants was 82,645, or 1.3% of the total immigrant population. According to the 2006 Census, the breakdown of Romanian immigrants to Canada is as follows: 22,560 immigrated before 1991, 15,400 immigrated between 1991 and 1995, 16,605 immigrated between 1996 and 2000, and 28,080 immigrated between 2001 and 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2006a). These figures suggest that the numbers of Romanian immigrants to Canada are increasing. However, more recent statistics from CIC suggests a different pattern. For example, from 2001 until 2004 there were over 5,000 Romanian immigrants coming to Canada each year, but since 2005 their numbers began to decline and reached a low 3,770 in 2007 (CIC, 2008a).

Comparing Romania with other European countries, it is very clear that along with the UK, Romania is the top European country of origin for newcomers to Canada during the 2001 - 2006 time frame. For this period, UK immigrants to Canada represented 2.3% of the total immigrant population vs. 2.5% from Romania (Statistics Canada, 2006b). According to Magocsi

(1999) the first cohort of Romanian immigrants to Canada was represented by “Jews from Austrian-occupied Bukovina, Russian-controlled Bessarabia, or Romanian Moldavia” (Magocsi, 1999, p.1093). They came to Canada in order to escape poverty and religious persecution and often settled in Saskatchewan around 1870-1895. Shortly thereafter, at the turn of the century a significant number of Romanian Orthodox Christians from Transylvania (at that time under Austro-Hungarian ruling) made its way to North America and having mostly settled in the Canadian Prairie provinces. By 1914 there were 8,301 Romanians living in Canada and by 1921, their numbers increased to 29,056 (Magocsi, 1999). A second cohort of Romanian immigrants came to Canada soon after World War II and was represented by a group called the “Forty-Eighters” (a reference to the year of 1948) who settled in Central Canada. These Romanian immigrants were mostly victims of the war and were opposed to the new oppressive communist regime that was ruling Romania. Until 1989, the year when the Communist regime collapsed in Romania, only a small number of the people who managed to flee the country came to Canada. In the 1991 Census, the numbers of Romanians in Canada was 74,060 (Magocsi, 1999).

#### *2.4 Transnational Communities of Immigrants*

The last section of my literature review serves as a theoretical framework for my research and emphasizes the importance of *virtual transnational communities of immigrants* and their role in developing communication channels between the newly arriving and prospective immigrants.

The concept of Transnationalism is important to my research. In 1979, well before the concept of transnationalism received such popularity, Elsa Chaney, quoted by Blanc and Schiller in the book *Nations Unbound* mentioned: “that immigrants circulating between the host and the origin country can be defined as people with feet in two societies” (Blanc & Schiller, 1994, p.7). This definition applies to the members of the online forum that was the source of my data, as

members of the forum who posted messages seemed to be with their feet in two societies; many of the new immigrants whose postings I have read seemed still connected through their discussions with their home country, while the prospective immigrants tried to gain knowledge about Canadian society.

Since 1979, the concept of transnationalism received greater attention and became intensely researched. As defined by Blanc and Schiller (1994 , p.7 ), transnationalism is “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. Immigrants build social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders as they develop and maintain multiple relationships- familial, economic, social, organizational, religious and political- that span borders.”

This quote describes the forum users, although it has to be mention that the connection is realized with the help of the internet. With the advancement of the information and communication technologies, today’s migrants maintain cultural, political, and social links with their homeland. Using the internet eliminates time and distance barriers and enhances communication. In the past, these immigrants were using the telegraph, telephone, fax, and radio for the same purposes while today the video/audio/text communication is achieved in real time through the internet (Navarrete & Huerta, 2006). As the distance is eliminated by the internet, there are other boundaries that might be transcended such as geography, class, sexuality and gender, which can lead to the creation of new forms of social relations such as cyber-friendships, cyber-romance and cyber-communities (Wilding, 2006).

The final decade of the last century witnessed the evolution of global interactive technologies, specifically the internet which had a tremendous impact on the nature and role of communication media. The dominance of the traditional broadcast forms of media such as

newspapers, radio and television was fading away while interactive media using online platforms gained terrain, leading to the birth of “second media age” ( Holmes, 2005).

Holmes (2005, p.2) argues that “people who live in information societies not only encounter and use information and communication technologies; rather increasingly, their modes of action are enframed by these technologies. They are not so much tools as environments”. The same author also claims that “face to face relations are replaced by interface with technological terminals of communication” (Holmes 2005, p.2) and that “the computer mediated communication extends and facilitates face-to face models of communication, and it is enhanced with the help of the internet (Holmes, 2005, p.54).

Tyner and Kuhlke (2000) study (as cited in Benitez, 2006) presents four categories of diasporic internet communication: (1) intra-diasporic – websites and internet communication by immigrants within the contexts of their local communities, (2) inter-diasporic – websites and internet communication among immigrant communities within the same or in different receiving countries, (3) diaspora-receiving – referring to internet communications between diasporic communities and other ethnic or cultural groups within the receiving country, and (4) diaspora-homeland – including internet communications and other transnational communicative practices between the diasporic community and the hometown or home country.

Moreover, Appadurai (1996), (as cited in Nagel & Staeheli, 2006), describes the concept of “diasporic public sphere” that gathers the sphere of social interaction, discourse and identity that define living as a part of a diaspora. Transnational migrants are able to stay in touch with their friends and family from the home country and they can also express political and religious views anonymously through the decentralized structure of the internet (Panagakos & Horst, 2006).

Migrants from a specific nation have a tendency to group together as *transnational community of immigrants* that are defined “as a dispersed group of individuals from the same nation who maintains a sense of togetherness across geographical borders” (Navarrete & Huerta, 2006, p.2). There are also *virtual transnational community of immigrants* defined as a “hybrid community of interest where participants use off-line and online channels of communication to nurture their social ties and their interests concerning life abroad, and their home country or geographical region” (Navarrete & Huerta, 2006, p.2). Holmes (2005, p.76) argues that the internet promotes “differentiation instead of homogenization” as it generates communication structures through which simple individuals discuss their particular interests.

Data from Statistic Canada cited by Hamel (Hamel, 2009) showed that 75% of the immigrants vs. 62.1% native born use the internet to access news. The same report showed that immigrants have used the internet when they choose their country of destination and also the city where to settle.

Ros et al. (2007 p.5) consider the inclusion of interconnection as an important issue in the process of migration as it “refers to the mechanisms which facilitate communication between people regardless of where they are, and acts as an element of social change which affects society as whole”. Nowadays we live in an interconnected society that was created by globalization. During the migratory process there are new migration agents — part of the interconnection — that contribute by reinforcing communication and information flows through online tools such as emails, chat rooms, discussion forums, instant messaging, etc. As examples of new type of actors involved in helping migrants the authors mentioned: webmasters; formal and informal immigration information providers; and technology providers. The expansion of the internet technology has a tremendous impact on the flow of information regarding immigration.

Basically, prospective immigrants are linked through the internet with immigrants who have experienced different stages of immigration. This gives prospective immigrants a chance to assess whether their assumptions and expectations regarding Canada and the immigration process are realistic (Tudoroiu, 2007). The flow of information is exchanged transnationally, as groups straddle a fence between both societies, interested in what's happening in the other country's backyard. While prospective immigrants are looking to gain as much information on the immigration and settlement proceedings from the members of the diaspora, the members of the diaspora strengthen their ties virtually with the country of origin through online discussions. They discuss political, economical and cultural issues with the prospective immigrants (Emigrare.CA, 2009).

Visan (2008) claims that enthusiastic members of the Romanian community in Canada are very active within transnational virtual communities (i.e. internet forums) as they engage in various discussion covering a large array of topics. It seems that these internet forums perform an important role in bringing together the Romanian diaspora. When recently landed immigrants from Romania were asked what their main source of information regarding settlement facts was, a significant number mentioned the internet as their main tool (Tudoroiu, 2007). The same author suggests that: "many potential migrants make internet contact with Romanians in Canada. They get involved in forum discussions, use email, chat or voice communication. They make new friends whose advice they can trust. Consequently, those who persist in their decision to migrate to Canada are better prepared to confront the harsh realities of immigrant life" (Tudoroiu, 2007, p.37).

In conclusion, technological advancements in communication have in many ways changed the channels through which people interact with each other, especially when they are

separated by oceans and borders. As a result, virtual transnational workers are established and they are forging a strong sense of community within diasporas.



## Chapter 3: Research Design

### 3.1 Research Questions

The main source of the literature review that guided me during data collection is based on the eight steps required for a successful completion of the QSWP (see Table 1). On the official website of the MICC potential immigrants are advised that they “can complete their immigration process successfully if they follow eight important steps” (MICC, 2009e).

**Table 1** The eight steps required for a successfully completion of the QSWP (MICC, 2009e):

Step 1	Prospective immigrants must find out about the conditions required for practising their profession or trade.
Step 2	Prospective immigrants must know how to overcome the major obstacles encountered while looking for a job.
Step 3	Evaluating the cost of immigrating to Quebec, including the cost of settlement.
Step 4	Understanding the difference between the selection and the admission of workers—the respective roles of the Government of Quebec (responsible for selection ) and the Government of Canada (responsible for admission).
Step 5	Understanding the requirements of the QSWP.
Step 6	Understanding the selection process (including the interview and application processing).
Step 7	Filling out and submitting the official application for QSWP.
Step 8	Filling out and submitting an official application for permanent residence.

As specified in the literature review prospective immigrants using the QSWP must first submit an application to the Provincial Government of Quebec requesting a Certificate of Selection from the province of Quebec and secondly submit an application to the Federal

Government of Canada requesting permanent residency status. Once an individual or a family decides to immigrate to Canada using the QSWP, they must complete a lengthy and costly process which consists of several steps: finding information regarding the requirements needed to practice their profession in Quebec, acquire knowledge of the Quebecois job market, learn about the amount of money necessary for immigration and settlement, gather the supporting documents, submit the official application, pay the fees, undergo an interview, complete a medical exam, and undergo a security check (MICC, 2009a).

Since my research aim was to provide insight into the difficulties faced by prospective immigrants using the QSWP as they navigate through the eight steps, I have developed three research questions. While the first research question's goal is to discover what steps in the immigration proceedings through the QSWP are the most significant and challenging based on evidence from the online discussion forum, the last two aim to explore the contents of discussions from the online forum:

1. What steps in the immigration and settlement proceedings through the QSWP are the most significant? What issues surface with high frequency on the online discussion forum?
2. What are the problems, obstacles, and opportunities, associated with these significant steps?
3. What are the solutions offered by the online community?

### *3.2 Research methods*

My investigation of the online exchange of information among Romanian immigrants and prospective immigrants uses a quantitative approach involving content analysis (Neuman, 2006); I present an overview of the general discussion, measuring how often certain topics come

up in these discussions, and then infer on the importance of these topics. My study also involves a qualitative approach involving exploratory analysis (Neuman, 2006) through which I examine the contents of discussion, extracting narratives, and interpret them in the light of the literature review. I look into the issues faced by prospective immigrants and also at the solutions offered by immigrants who have already completed the immigration process.

The qualitative approach allowed me to identify the paths taken by Romanian immigrants in order to overcome the difficulties of the immigration process. My study can be described as both exploratory and descriptive. Because there is very little information on how the immigration process is experienced by Romanian immigrants, my study adopted an “investigative stance” where I could “explore all sources of information” (Neuman, 2006, p.34). This is a main characteristic of an exploratory research but it is also descriptive as my aim is to present specific details of situations (Neuman, 2006, p.35) which in my research are represented by particular cases of immigrants facing difficulties and obstacles while trying to complete the QSWP requirements.

As I mentioned above in the literature review the discussion forum [www.toronto.ro](http://www.toronto.ro) consists of three main sections. Only one of the three sections, “*Emigration*”, deals with the immigration procedures where forum users ask question and address the difficulties of their immigration process. During the preliminary research of the forum I encountered a variety of questions covering all the eight steps described in the chapter that explain the conceptual framework of my research. The literature review reveals an interesting aspect of the Romanian community in Canada. Both Visan (2008) and Tudoroiu (2007) describe the members of the Romanian diaspora from Canada as being very active with online communication tools (i.e. internet forums) where they act as advisers for the prospective immigrants who are preparing

their immigration application.

The data for this research was gathered from an online forum and the basic unit of analysis consisted of individual postings made by the forum users. As the forum is used by Romanians and Moldavians, the language in which the postings were made was Romanian. For the purpose of the presentation below, I have translated several quotes from Romanian to English that are cited throughout the paper to highlight the difficulties faced by the prospective immigrants.

The data enabled me to look into the exchange of information among forum users as prospective immigrants and immigrants that already succeeded with their application discuss their immigration proceedings. The nature of the information was in the form of personal reports of their own immigration process offered on the discussion forum. Moreover the forum can be defined as a “how to” emigrate to Canada tool. Although the information posted on the forum does not come from official sources (i.e. CIC or from Quebec’s Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities) it is trusted by the prospective immigrants who are using it during their immigration process.

### *3.3 Sample*

Because my study is mainly exploratory, I was not aiming towards a representative sample. For my research I used a purposive sampling technique which is typical for exploratory research and also used to select unique cases (in my case thematic labels) which allowed a deeper understanding of the themes that surface on the discussion forum (Neuman, 2006). The criteria I used for selecting the postings were the following: first, they had to fit into the eight steps of QSWP outlined in Table 1; second, they had to be posted either by forum users who asked question regarding their immigration process, or by forum users offering information

regarding their own immigration process.

My initial research intention had focused on a sampling frame which contained postings made on the forum during the first 6 months of the year 2008. Eventually, the sampling frame was reduced to three months (January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008-March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008) due to the high volume of postings encountered. Overall, there were 888 postings included in the final sample of which 846 were from the desired time frame (January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008-March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008). Because some of these postings offered links to other postings offered on the forum prior to January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008, I decided to follow the links and include another 42 postings that were posted prior to January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 as they prove to be relevant to my study. The strategy of choosing to collect data from 2008 aimed at protecting the subjects of my study from prospective harm to their immigration proceedings. My research was to be completed in the spring of 2010; the forum users whose messages were researched should have completed their immigration process by that time, as forum users claimed that it usually takes approximately between 10 to 18 months to receive the immigration visa (Emigrare.CA, 2009).

### *3.4 Ethical Considerations*

All the data were collected immediately after receiving the approval from Research Ethics Board at Ryerson University. The anonymity and confidentiality of the individuals whose messages were included in the sample was fully protected. For the data collection each internet user was tagged (ex: forum user 1, forum user 2, forum user 3, etc.) and their online identity (nickname) was not used or revealed in the study. Also permission from the forum owner was received in written form, as required by the Research Ethics Board. Overall, my research is non-reactive and unobtrusive as there was no interaction between the researcher and the forum users (Neuman, 2006).

### *3.5 Data*

In order to address my first research question I conducted a quantitative content analysis which enabled me to identify the steps that caused difficulties (as indicated by the frequency of occurrences) for immigrants using the QSWP. Through the content analysis, each data fragment was assigned a code based on which of the eight steps it referred to. After measuring the frequency distribution of the codes I reviewed the relative importance of each of the eight steps in the discussion.

The next stage was represented by a qualitative exploratory analysis which allowed me to examine the data for nature of the contents. I began this analysis by examining the steps that were most frequent based on the content analysis. This analysis enabled me to assess the nature of the discussion, the problems and obstacles encountered by immigrants, the solutions offered by other forum users. In this qualitative analysis I applied open coding through which data was “condensed into preliminary analytic categories” and sub-codes “were brought to the surface from deep inside the data” (Neuman, 2006, p.461).

I also applied axial coding as a second stage of passing through the postings through which the codes were “organized and linked in order to discover key analytic categories” (Neuman, 2006, p.462). Through axial coding I was able to “ask about causes and consequences, conditions and interactions, strategies and processes and look for categories and concepts that cluster together” (Neuman, 2006, p.463). The master coding sheet containing 35 sub-codes (themes) is depicted in Table 2.

**Table 2** Description of thematic sub-codes

Step/Code	Sub-code
1	1.1 Credential evaluation
1	1.2 Professionals order/ Regulatory body
1	1.3 Credentials to start a business
2	2.1 Information about the Quebecois job market
2	2.2 Accepting a job (other than his/her qualification)
3	3.1 Total cost of the immigration process
3	3.2 Total cost of the settlement process
4	4.1 Understanding the difference between selection and admission
4	4.2 Land/Settle in a different province, other than Quebec
5	5.1 Self-sufficiency funds/Contract respecting financial self-sufficiency
5	5.2 Selection factors
6	6.1 Interview
6	6.2 Acknowledgment of receipt (file accepted for processing)
6	6.3 Application rejected
6	6.4 Proof of French language proficiency
6	6.5 Applying for a second time
7	7.1 Submitting the application (selection only)
7	7.2 Processing fees (selection only)
7	7.3 Processing time (selection only)
7	7.4 Contacting/Communicating with the embassy (selection only)
7	7.5 Applying from a different country where applicants have residency status
7	7.6 Applying with the help of immigration consultants
7	7.7 Self- evaluation online tool
7	7.8 Change of family status: marriage, divorce, newborn during this stage
7	7.9 Embassy info (selection only)
8	8.1 Contacting/Communicating with the embassy (admission only)
8	8.2 Processing time (admission only)
8	8.3 Embassy info (admission only)
8	8.4 Medical exam (admission only)
8	8.5 Submitting the application (admission only)
8	8.6 Sending passport to embassy for VISA
8	8.7 Processing time (admission only)
8	8.8 Providing police clearance certificate (admission only)
8	8.9 Change of family status: marriage, divorce, newborn during this stage
8	8.10 Interview (admission only)

In addition, certain themes were divided further in sub-themes to allow a deeper understanding of specific issues as they surface on the online discussions'. Table 3 presents the sub-themes that were discussed within the medical exam theme while Table 4 presents the sub-themes that were part of the police clearance certificate.

**Table 3** Description of the sub-themes belonging to *medical exam* sub-code

Step	Sub-code	Sub-theme
8	8.4 Medical Exam	8.4.1 Piercing/Tattoo
		8.4.2 Eye glasses
		8.4.3 Specific sicknesses
		8.4.4 Providing medical records
		8.4.5 Medical exam fees
		8.4.6 Medical exam for children
		8.4.7 General info about medical exam
		8.4.8 Contact doctor after medical exam
		8.4.9 Repeating medical exam

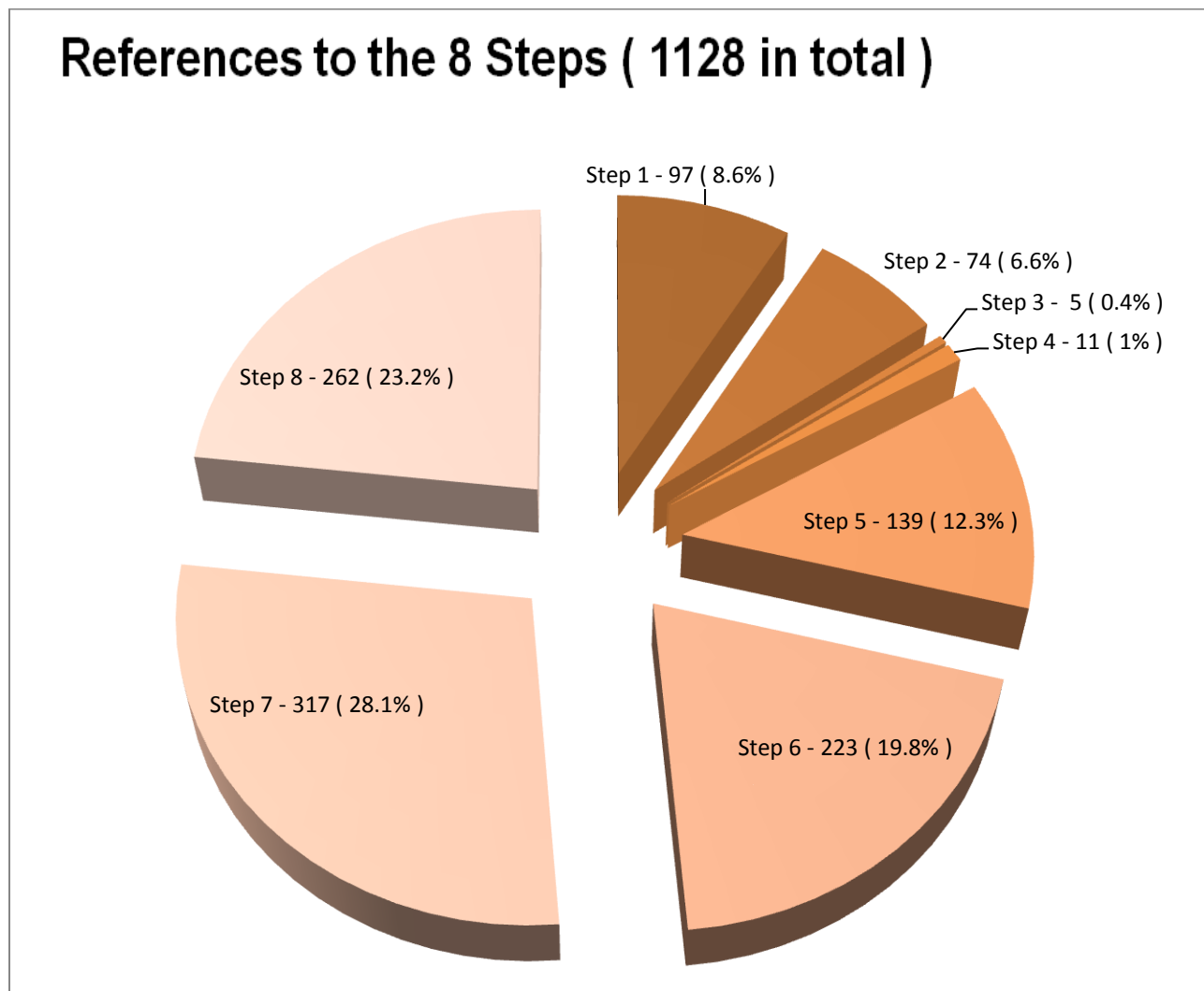
**Table 4** Description of the sub-themes belonging to *police clearance certificate* sub-code

Step	Sub-code	Sub-theme
8	8.8 Providing police clearance certificate	8.8.1 From the home country
		8.8.2 From other countries where the applicant lived for six consecutive months or longer



## Chapter 4: Quantitative Results

The quantitative analysis of the 888 postings that were part of my sample revealed a word count of 81,454 words which translates into a mean of 91.72 words per posting. The quantitative analysis revealed that the 888 postings contained 1128 references to the eight steps. The distribution of references towards the eight steps can be viewed in Figure 1 in nominal and percentage form and also in Table 5 in nominal form.



**Figure 1.** Step by step distribution of references. Note: Percentages are not adding up to 100% as in many messages refer to more than one single STEP or theme.

**Table 5** Frequency of thematic sub-codes within the steps.

Theme	Frequency
1.1 Credential evaluation	75
1.2 Professionals order/ Regulatory body	29
1.3 Credentials to start a business	5
2.1 Information about the Quebecois job market	67
2.2 Accepting a job (other than his/her qualification)	17
3.1 Total cost of the immigration process	5
3.2 Total cost of the settlement process	1
4.1 Understanding the difference between selection and admission	4
4.2 Land/Settle in a different province, other than Quebec	7
5.1 Self -sufficiency funds/Contract respecting financial self-sufficiency	43
5.2 Selection factors	112
6.1 Interview	208
6.2 Acknowledgment of receipt (file accepted for processing)	23
6.3 Application rejected	3
6.4 Proof of French language proficiency	16
6.5 Applying for a second time	11
7.1 Submitting the application (selection only)	144
7.2 Processing fees (selection only)	23
7.3 Processing time (selection only)	76
7.4 Contacting/Communicating with the embassy (selection only)	40
7.5 Applying from a different country where applicants have residency status	16
7.6 Applying with the help of immigration consultants	28
7.7 Self- evaluation online tool	23
7.8 Change of family status: marriage, divorce, newborn during this stage	20
7.9 Embassy info (selection only)	4
8.1 Contacting/Communicating with the embassy (admission only)	28
8.2 Processing time (admission only)	43
8.3 Embassy info (admission only)	6
8.4 Medical exam	90
8.5 Submitting the application (admission only)	48
8.6 Sending passport to embassy for VISA	21
8.7 Processing time (admission only)	28
8.8 Providing police clearance certificate	26
8.9 Change of family status: marriage, divorce, newborn during this stage	30
8.10 Interview (admission only)	7

The quantitative analysis (Table 5) revealed that certain steps appeared more frequently in the online discussions. From a total of 1128 references that were made towards the eight steps there are 802 references made to Steps 6, 7 and 8, which translates into 71 % of the total references. The most references were made in regards to the last three steps (Step 6, Step 7 and Step 8), as they received 802 references which translates into 71 % of the total references.

Step 6 - *understanding the selection process* (including the interview and application process processing) received 223 references representing 18.8%. The step that received the highest number of references, 317 representing 28.1%, is Step 7, *filling out and submitting the official immigration application*, which contains information regarding the submission of the immigration application for selection. Ranking second with 262 references, representing 23.3%, is Step 8, *submitting an application for permanent residence to the Government of Canada*, which contains information about submitting an application for admission. Step 5, *understanding the requirements of the QSWP*, received 139 references, representing 12.3% of the total references.

Information about the required conditions for practicing a specific profession and information about how to overcome the major obstacles encountered during the job search process are covered by Step 1, *ascertaining the conditions for practising a specific profession or trade*, and Step 2, *knowing how to overcome the major obstacles encountered by immigrants looking for a job*, which received 97 and respectively 74 references which translates into 8.6%, and respectively 6.6 %. The least amount of references were made in regards to Step 3 and Step 4 which deal with obtaining information about the cost of immigrating and settling in Quebec, respectively understanding the difference between the selection and admission process. Out of 1128 references Steps 3, *evaluating the cost of immigrating to Québec, including the cost of*

*settling in*, received only five references, while and Step 4, *understanding the difference between the selection and the admission of immigrant, the respective roles of the Provincial Government of Quebec and of the Federal Government of Canada* , received 11 references.

A close analysis of the sub-codes from the first five steps revealed that during Step 1 through Step 5 forum users are not yet actively engaged in the immigration process. During the first five steps prospective immigrants are gathering information on how to immigrate to Canada without engaging actively in the immigration process. They are gathering information about their chances to practice their professions in Quebec and also information related to the Quebecois job market (Step 1 and Step 2). Prospective immigrants are curious about the cost of the immigration process and settlement cost to Quebec (Step 3). How the immigration process is structured (Step 4) was also an area of interest, while with Step 5, prospective immigrants are able to understand the selection factors used by the Province of Quebec in selecting immigrants and also if they meet the selection requirements.

However, until Step 5, prospective immigrants are passively gathering information in regards to the immigration process while they are on the verge of making a decision that could change their life for better or worst. The next steps, Step 6, 7, and 8, allow prospective immigrants to become actively involved by preparing their supporting documents, obtaining certified true copies of the documents, filling in forms, paying processing fees, mailing application, receiving letters from the MICC, preparing for the interview, going to the interview, preparing his supporting documents for the admission application, obtaining police clearance certificate, going for the medical exam. With the completion of each step they get closer to the end of the immigration process which culminates with the issuing of the immigration visa. In conclusion, the higher frequencies of later steps relate to the fact that when prospective

immigrants reached these steps they become more serious about immigration to Quebec, are actively engaged and have already invested in the process by submitting the application, paying the fees and planning their relocation to a new country.

The quantitative analysis also revealed that certain sub-codes have a higher distribution in the online discussion, as displayed in Table 5. By looking at the frequencies of the thematic sub-codes it appears that there are five sub-codes from a total of 35 that received 630 references, representing 55.85% of all references. For instance, the forum users are frequently discussing *the interview*. The corresponding sub-code 6.1 received the highest number of references, 208, representing 18.34% of the total numbers of references. Ranking second with 144 references, representing 12.76% of the total references is sub-code 7.1, *submitting the application*, followed by sub-code 5.2, *selection factors*, with 112 references, representing 9.93% of the total references. Two other important thematic sub-codes that received considerable attention are 8.4, *medical exam*, ranking 4<sup>th</sup> with 90 references representing 7.98%, followed by sub-code 7.3, *processing times*, with 76 references representing 6.73%.

Through the quantitative analysis it becomes clear that the discussion focused on specific themes that imply an active engagement of the prospective immigrant in the immigration process. At this stage the prospective immigrants have already made their decision on immigrating to Quebec and invested financially in preparing and submitting the immigration application, hence the need to search for accurate information produced by individuals who already had navigated through the same process. The information posted online provides answers to the questions asked about how to submit the immigration application and what to include in the application (sub-code 7.1) and helps the prospective immigrants to prepare for the interview with the immigration officer (sub-code 6.1).

By contrast, examining the sub-codes that received the least amount of references include sub-code 3.2, *total cost of the settlement process*, which received only one reference, sub-code 4.1, *understanding the difference between selection and admission*, which received four references, and sub-codes 1.3, *credentials to start a business* and 3.1, *total cost of the immigration process*, which received five references. In this context, it is noticeable that during the early steps of their immigration process, prospective immigrants are passively gathering information about general information on immigrating to Quebec, specifically about the cost of the immigration proceedings and the costs of settling in Quebec. Moreover they are still trying to understand the differences between the selection process that is managed by the MICC and the admission process that is done by the CIC. During these steps, the prospective immigrants have yet to make a final decision about their immigration plan and also to become actively engaged in the immigration proceedings.

In regards to sub-codes 8.4, *medical exam sub-code*, and 8.8, *providing police clearance certificate*, the analysis revealed that the discussion stretched out into various sub-themes (Table 6). The most frequently discussed sub-theme dealing with the medical exam was sub-code 8.4.7, *general information about the medical exam*, which received 34 references representing 37.78 % of the references pertaining to the medical exam sub-code, followed closely by sub-theme 8.4.3, *specific sicknesses*, which received 33 references representing 36.67% of the medical-exam sub-code references. Other sub-themes within the medical exam sub-codes are: eye glass, medical exam for children, medical exam fees, repeating the medical exam, providing medical records, piercings and tattoos, contacting the doctor after the medical exam.

In regards to sub-code 8.8, *providing police clearance certificate*, the analysis showed that the discussion was divided between two sub-themes 8.8.2, *providing a police clearance*

*certificate from other countries where the applicant lived for six months*, receiving 19 references and sub-theme 8.8.1, *providing police clearance certificate from the home country*, receiving 8 references. Apparently some potential immigrants need more information on how to obtain a police clearance certificate from other countries where they lived for more than six months.

**Table 6** Frequency of sub-thematic codes from “medical exam” and “providing police clearance certificate themes”

Sub-Theme	Frequency
8.4.1 Piercings/Tattoos	6
8.4.2 Eye glasses	12
8.4.3 Specific sicknesses	33
8.4.4 Providing medical records	8
8.4.5 Exam fees	9
8.4.6 Exam for children1	11
8.4.7 General info about the medical exam	34
8.4.8 Contact doctor after exam	4
8.4.9 Repeating medical exam	6
8.8.1 Police clearance certificate from the home country	8
8.8.2 Police clearance certificate from other countries where the applicant lived for six consecutive months or longer	19

## Chapter 5: Qualitative Results

The qualitative analysis revealed the significance of this online forum as a primary source for obtaining pertinent information to forum users on how to immigrate to Quebec. Rather than using the official websites of MICC and CIC, forum users heavily relied on online discussions to obtain information. For example, forum user No.1 asked:

*We would like to prepare our immigration application for Quebec but we have a few questions: Where can we find useful information about what to include in our application? Is the financial self-sufficiency contract still in place?*

Similar questions were spotted frequently during the analysis and many answers were offered by other forum users in the form of web links to previously posted messages or as web links to the official websites of MICC and CIC. While this was a general question, asking information on how to prepare and submit the immigration application, the following accounts of personal dealings with the immigration process are theme-centered.

### *Submitting the Application (Step 7, sub-code 7.1)*

Further data analysis revealed that Step 7 was discussed more frequently than all other steps. Within this step, the most frequent theme revolved around how to apply and what to enclose in the immigration application, particularly the supporting documents that must be included in the application through which immigrants must prove that they meet the selection requirements: certified true copies of diplomas, transcripts, employment records, and employment contracts. The supporting documents category also includes certified copies of identification documents such as identity cards, birth certificates, and marriage certificates.

A close examination of the online discussions revealed that many forum users asked for help because they were not sure which supporting documents should have been included with the application. Forum user No.2, a trade school graduate asked if it was necessary to submit his/her



trade school transcripts. This forum user mentioned that after graduation s/he had only received the trade school diploma and s/he was wondering if s/he should contact the school and request a copy of his/her transcripts. S/he received mixed feedback from other forum users who already submitted their application. Forum user No.3 replied by emphasizing the importance of the qualification given by the diploma and also the importance of having experience in that specific field:

*Normally the transcripts are not important; it is important to have the qualification written on your diploma. Also highly important are: your language proficiency level, the length of service and how skilled you are.*

Forum user No.4 shared his/her personal example explaining that by failing to submit the transcript s/he could delay the immigration process:

*I submitted the school transcripts (translated certified true copies). ...they might or might not ask for it (in case you don't submit it). If they ask for it you might regret that you did not submit it because it will make you waste a lot of time. It is your choice if you submit it or not.*

Another issue discussed by forum users was in regards to submitting the immigration application prior to graduation. Forum user No.5 mentioned that s/he completed all his/her university courses and received his/her transcripts but has not graduated yet, as in Romania a final licensing exam is required in order to graduate from university. S/he wondered if his/her application would be taken into consideration as university graduate or as a high school graduate. His/her question was answered by a several forum users who clearly stated that his/her application will be processed as a high school graduate. Forum user No.6 wrote:

*Unfortunately without a diploma your university education will not be taken into consideration for scoring points.*

Similarly, Forum user No.7 added:

*As far as I know you need to pass the licensing exam in order to have your university considered.*

Different aspects of the same issue were brought forward by forum user No.8 who mentioned that in his/her particular case, although the graduation exam was passed s/he was still waiting for his/her diploma. Usually in Romanian universities diplomas are issued between six to twelve months after passing the licensing exam. Forum user No.8 posted:

*What do you think about my situation? I've graduated and also passed the licensing exam but I did not receive the diploma yet, as it takes one year to receive it from the University. I want to submit my application next week. What should I do? Should I send in my application and enclose the attestation of graduation? Will they consider it instead of the diploma?*

His/her question received several answers, all indicating that it is acceptable to enclose the attestation of graduation which serves as a graduation and licensing proof until the diploma is received. However at the interview the applicant would need to provide the diploma. In a similar response forum user No. 9 continued:

*I've graduated from a Masters program and my application enclosed an attestation of graduation with my immigration application as at that time I hadn't received my diploma. They were ok with that but by the time of my interview I had my diploma.*

Furthermore, forum user No.10 shared his/her personal experience at the interview:

*At the interview I only had a translated certified true copy of attestation of graduation. The interviewer accepted it as I explained that my university will release the diploma one year after graduation. In conclusion you can attend the interview presenting only a certified true copy of the attestation of graduation document and everything will be all right.*

Another frequent question that surfaced on the online discussions was in regards to which language should be used for translation of supporting documents. The immigration application to Quebec is offered in both official languages thus forum users wondered if the English

translation of their supporting documents would be accepted. Forum user No.11 answered stressing the importance of using the French language:

*How will the immigration officer interpret the fact that you provide English translations? You have to prove to them that you are Francophone and it does not look good if you show up at the interview with your supporting documents translated in English.*

One issue that surfaced in regards to submitting the immigration application was forwarded by forum users who were living and working in foreign countries. While this issue is also included in Step 7, sub-code 7.5 (applying from a different country where applicants have residency status), it is important to discuss it is at this stage because several forum users had difficulties providing supporting documents from the other country where they obtained residency status. Forum user No. 12 asked the following question:

*I live in England and I want to submit an application to immigrate to Quebec. Should I submit from here or should I return to Romania and submit the immigration application from there?*

His/her question received several answers through which he was informed that s/he must send his/her application to Paris, France, as the MICC office serving England is located in the French capital, while the MICC office serving Romania and the Republic of Moldova is located in Vienna, Austria. Other forum users advised him/her to contact the MICC office from Vienna and inquire about where to submit his/her application. The same answer was offered to a different forum user who lived in Portugal that posted a similar question.

While in the cases described above the solutions offered were straight forward, other discussions dealt with complicated issues which led to exchanges of information that sometimes reached a desperate tone. In the following case, a family spent several years in Italy where they had residency status. Although they moved back to Romania and submitted their immigration application a few years later, they received a letter from the MICC in which they were asked to

provide a translated certified true copy of their employment records from Italy and also a translated certified true copy of their work permit for the time spent in Italy. They were also given a 90 days deadline to submit the requested documents otherwise their application would be rejected. As they presented their case on the discussion forum they were hoping to find other forum users in the same situation. It was not long until solutions to their problems started to pour into the online forum. While the discussions were focused on the channels through which employment records from Italy should be requested they were also informed by one forum users that in Italy it is not mandatory to keep track of employees through employment records and he recommended them to submit a certified true copy of the contract of employment.

The discussions among forum users revealed the difficulties faced by the prospective immigrants who were trying to obtain the requested supporting documents from their former country of residence. Although different countries employ different types of work record documents— as the case presented above —the immigration procedures from Quebec required proof of residency status and employment records to be submitted with the immigration application. The difficulties encountered by the forum users were aggravated for those individuals that had moved back to Romania and thus were not in contact with their former employers.

Another aspect of the most discussed theme from Step 7 referred to second-time applicants. Several forum users reported that their application had been rejected; others reported that they had failed the interview. Both groups discussed strategies for applying the second time, as they were not abandoning the immigration process. One forum user (No.13) mentioned that although he failed at his first attempt, s/he was ready to apply for a second time. However for

his/her second application, his/her intention was to include his/her partner. The question of forum user No.13 was:

*I failed at my first attempt as my application was rejected. I would like to reapply with my partner as a couple. Will the processing fee that I have paid for my first application cover my second application if we apply as a couple (with me as principal applicant) or do we have to pay another processing fee for both of us?*

A discussion followed, as many other forum users were in the same situation applying for a second time. User No.14 said:

*Everything starts from zero: fees, application, supporting documents and the level of your French competency.*

A more complete answer came from forum user No.15 who had the same experience and was applying for the second time after having failed the interview:

*If you submit your application again it is possible that they will ask you to submit a certificate of linguistic competency for level B in 30 days. This is what happened to us, although we were lucky because after being rejected we enrolled for French classes and we were able pass the level B exam and we received the required document.*

Forum user No.16 advised them to get married before submitting the immigration application to avoid further complications. S/he stated:

*If during the immigration process your marital status changes you will have to communicate this with the MICC office, which will result in delaying your processing time.*

The above discussions reveal that forum users relied heavily on the online forum when they applied for the second time. The answers offered by fellow forum users informed others that second-time applicants must be resubmit starting from the beginning. Fees must be paid again, the supporting documents must be translated and enclosed with the application and the same forms must be completed.

### *Processing Times (Step 7, sub-code 7.3)*

The second most discussed theme relating to Step 7 addressed issues with the time-frame in which the immigration applications are processed. Forum users were asking each other questions about when they submitted their application and when they were scheduled for the interview. For example, forum user No.17 wanted to know how long it would take to receive the invitation letter for the interview as s/he already submitted his application. S/he was also asking other forum users about the possibility to learn French through one of the local (*French Alliance*) language schools. S/he concluded:

*Is it possible to learn French between the submission of the application and the interview?*

S/he received a concise response from forum user (No.18), who had knowledge about the structure of French courses within the (*French Alliance*) language schools:

*The interview is scheduled approximately 5 - 7 months after submitting your application, so if you will try hard you can learn French. The French Alliance has different proficiency levels, each level lasting 3 months.*

Many of the forum users who inquired about the processing time considered the wait time too stressful. The situation seemed to be accentuated in the case of several forum users that were required to submit more supporting documents a few months after submitting the application.

Forum No.19 asked the fellows forum users the following questions:

*Can we find out in which stage of processing our file is? We submitted it last year in March and after a while we were asked to submit a proof of our language proficiency. We submitted them last month and we are waiting for an answer from the immigration office. Has anybody experienced these kinds of problems?*

An answer was offered by forum user No.20:

*You need to have more patience as it is a long and stressful process. There is no possibility to track down the progress of this file. Only when you submit your file for*

*admission to Canada (CIC) you will be able to follow the progress of your immigration application.*

Another forum user mentioned that in his/her case it took ten months to receive the official invitation to the interview.

Discussions about processing times revolved around how long it would take until the interview. Some forum users planned to improve their French language proficiency while waiting for the interview, others were asked by the MICC representatives to provide more supporting documents.

Overall, the relevance of Step 7, *filling out and submitting the official immigration application*, as it surfaced in the quantitative analysis had much to do with the fact that at this stage the prospective immigrants have become actively involved in the immigration proceedings, as they are gathering all the required supporting documents that must be included with the immigration application and also are committing themselves financially by paying the processing fees. At this stage it is crucial for individuals to have accurate information about what to include in the application because any missing documents could postpone the immigration process.

#### *Medical Exam (Step 8, sub-code 8.4)*

The second most discussed step was Step 8 - *submitting an application for permanent residence to the Government of Canada*. Within Step 8, the highest number of references (90) was recorded by the sub-code 8.4, *medical exam*. Within this specific sub-code, the majority of the discussions were focused on two particular sub-themes: sub-theme 8.8.7, *general info about the medical exam* (37.7%), and sub-theme 8.8.3, *specific sicknesses* (36.3%). A closer examination of these two sub-themes revealed that in the case of the *general info about the medical exam* sub-theme, forum users were discussing the best option for their medical exam as they have the liberty to choose from a large list of designated medical practitioners contracted by

CIC to perform the exam. The medical exam can be taken with any designated medical practitioner in any country regardless of residency status. A significant number of forum users mentioned in their messages that they travelled from Romania to Hungary's capital, Budapest, for their medical exam. Comparing the processing times of their medical assessments, forum users claimed that medical exams were processed faster in Hungary than in Romania.

The discussions from the *general info about the medical exam* sub-theme revealed that several forum users were relying on the forum as a primary source for obtaining information regarding the medical exam. Forum user No.21 asked:

*We've received the medical forms for the medical exam and we don't know how this works? Are they making an appointment for us at the doctor or it is up to us to make an appointment? Which city should we go to for the medical exam?*

One of his/her fellow forum users informed him/her about the procedure to set up an appointment and also about the choices. Forum user No.22 concluded:

*You have to call the doctor and make the appointment yourself. It is up to you to choose the city. Some of the forum users went to Timisoara others to Bucharest and also there were plenty who went to Budapest, Hungary. Some were disappointed in Timisoara and Bucharest [Romanian cities] although there were some fellows who were happy with the service they received in those two cities. It is like a lottery.*

Topics within the *general info about the medical exam* sub-theme also included discussions about required fees for the medical exam, required fees for blood work (supplementary HIV tests and Hepatitis B and C tests must be paid separately), required documents, required photos, and direction to the various medical offices. In regards to the *specific sicknesses* sub-theme, several forum users discussed the impact of their health issues on the immigration process. One forum user mentioned that one of his/her family members was diagnosed with Hepatitis C, following the medical exam and although they had consulted a



specialist and repeated the medical exam several times, s/he was still anxiously waiting for a response from the embassy. Forum user No.23 said:

*We had our medical exam five months ago and since then we are still waiting because my spouse was diagnosed with Hepatitis C. Since then s/he repeated his/her medical exam and also had seen 3 different specialists and we submitted their medical reports to the Canadian Embassy. We contacted the Quebecois immigration office but they told us that this is an issue we have to take to the Canadian Embassy. At the embassy we were told that it has not been 9 months yet since we took the first medical test and we should be patient.*

The discussions about Hepatitis B and C informed the prospective immigrants what to expect while they were having the medical exam done. Forum users who already had their medical exam revealed that supplementary blood tests for Hepatitis B and C were required only if the recipients acknowledge on the official medical form that they had Hepatitis A or B earlier in their life or if they had had a skin transplant. Also, the supplementary tests were required for individuals with tattoos and piercings. Forum users mentioned that the immigrant is responsible for covering all the extra costs of any supplementary tests that may be required.

Another health issue that was mentioned within this specific sub-theme was psoriasis. One forum user that had already submitted his/her immigration application asked if s/he could make it through the medical exam as his/her psoriasis was clearly visible on his/her body. S/he asked other forum users who had the same health problems to share their experiences at the medical exam. Forum user No.24 said:

*I would like to know if anyone with psoriasis had experienced problems at the medical exam. I am really worried and afraid that I won't pass the medical exam and I am asking myself: Should I continue or quit the immigration process?*

The answers to his/her health issues were quickly answered by two fellow forum users who encouraged him/her to go ahead with the immigration process. They claimed that they had the same medical condition but managed to pass the medical exam as the doctor was not

concerned about this specific health issue.

A different user mentioned that s/he was anxiously waiting for the results of the second medical exam as after his/her first medical exam, s/he was suspected of having pulmonary tuberculosis (TB). The length of his/her immigration process was extended significantly as more medical tests were required. As the discussion gathered momentum, another forum user mentioned that s/he experienced the same problem which put a hold on his/her immigration plans. Forum user No.25 said:

*I am opening this discussion thread for all of us who went through the medical exam and had to repeat it after medical problems were found. In our case they found three small nodules on my spouse's lungs but after repeating the exam three months later everything was fine but we are still waiting. Is anybody else still waiting a long time after repeating the medical exam?*

Other forum users joined the discussion and advised both of them to contact the embassy and inquire about their medical file. Forum user No.26 answered:

*Yes I had the same health problem and we repeated the medical exams a while ago. We contacted the Canadian Embassy; actually we sent four emails (three in Romanian Language and one in French language). We received only one answer to the email we wrote in French. We were told that they have not received the medical exam results from the doctor's office. We contacted the doctor and s/he said that our medical tests came out good.*

The discussions regarding Step 8 were clearly concentrated on the mandatory medical exam that must be passed by prospective immigrants. At this stage, although they were already selected by the Province of Quebec, they must meet the federal standards regarding their health and police clearance certificate. It is important to mention that by failing to meet those standards their immigration process ends with a refusal of admission letter. Therefore, it is understandable that there would be a high frequency of references made to the medical exam sub-code as prospective immigrants fear for a negative outcome, especially if they are aware of underlying

health conditions.

*The interview ( Step 6, sub-code 6.1)*

Step 6 - *Understanding the selection process*, including the interview and application processing, was the third most discussed step as it deals with information explaining how the selection process works and also the way immigration applications are processed by the MICC.

The most frequently discussed item in regards to Step 6 revolved around the interview with the immigration officer. Discussions about the interview scored the highest number of references, 208 from a total of 1128, which represents 18.4%. The exploratory analysis revealed that prospective immigrants were concerned about what is happening at the interview and about how their language proficiency will be evaluated by the interviewer. Forum user No. 27 describes his/her experience at the interview:

*I was invited into the room and asked to take a seat. The interviewer told me from the start that we are going to have a discussion and also that if I'll meet the points requirement I'll pass the interview: she went through all my supporting documents, passport, diplomas, employment records while she asked me questions about each document. She also asked me where I learnt French; what kinds of difficulties I expected to face in Quebec; why I've chosen Quebec and what my career plan was.*

In addition forum user No.28 said:

*The interviewer explained to us that the purpose of the interview is to evaluate our language proficiency and also to verify the authenticity of the supporting documents. As for our language proficiency, we have purposely underestimated ourselves for both languages (French 7/7 comprehension/speaking, English 5/5) because we thought that this way we will score extra points at the interview. The interviewer went through all our supporting documents very carefully making sure that the school transcripts were matching the information from the diploma. For questions she asked us the classic "Why Quebec?" and also how are we going to benefit from immigrating to Quebec? While she was reading our file she also asked us if we signed the financial self-sufficiency contract. After that we kept talking for 10 minutes and then she told us the good news, we had been accepted.*

For some forum users the interview turned out to be an extremely stressful event as they encountered several challenges as the interviewer doubted the truthfulness of their diplomas and other documents. Forum user No.29 described their ordeal:

*We had problems at the interview. Let me start by saying that I worked full time while being enrolled in university. The interviewer could not understand how it was possible to study and hold a full time job at the same time. She suggested I admit that either I was a part-time student and worked full-time (by doing so our diplomas would not be considered) or that I wasn't really working full-time (she implied that our employment records were falsified in order to complete the immigration requirements) while I was in university. I did not agree with the interviewer as I know the sacrifices I made all those years when I was working full time while studying. She got angry and raised her voice which stressed me out and in the end she postponed her decision until I could prove to her that I've worked during my student years. Now I have to send her copies of work contracts from all of my workplaces and I hope we will be accepted once she receives them.*

Another forum user explained how s/he encountered difficulties at the interview when s/he was asked if s/he was a dentist. S/he responded affirmatively but the interviewer asked why s/he studied only five years as it was shown in his university transcripts. The interviewer doubted his credentials concluding that in Quebec it takes 6 years of medical school to become a dentist.

Forum user No.30 concluded:

*I've told her that this is how our school system is in Moldova. Then she pointed at my diploma and asked me why it is written that I was in school for 6 years. I've told her that I took one year off. She asked me why there are so many blank spaces in my employment record and then she asked me other questions I did not understand as I was very tired after a sleepless night. In the end she told us that my wife accumulated the necessary points but my language proficiency is not at the desired level of acceptance. She said that she is postponing her decision and that she will call us soon as she will have a decision on our file.*

A similar situation was encountered by another forum user who had a hard time explaining how s/he managed to obtain his university diploma as s/he totalled only 15 years of schooling. In the end the interviewer postponed the decision until further investigation of the

diploma. In this particular case, the immigration officer made it clear that if the diploma was to be found fake s/he will not be able to submit another immigration application for the next three years.

The same problem was encountered by other forum users who were told by the immigration officer that the educational requirements for the province of Quebec asked for 16 years of schooling in order to obtain a university diploma. In the same situation the immigration officer postponed the decision to grant the Certificate of Selection as she decided to investigate the legitimacy of the diplomas.

Another relevant issue that surfaced during discussion about the interview was brought up by a forum user who asked if it was necessary to bring their original work record book to the interview. This is a record of employment that is kept at all times by the employer. Forum user No.31 answered by using his personal example:

*You need to take the original work record book with you at the interview. We were in the same situation and we had to lie to our employers, telling them that we needed our work record book for other reasons as they had no idea about our immigration plans.*

The language proficiency issue opened new discussion topics in regards to postponing the interview. Some forum users mentioned that the interview was scheduled too soon and they felt that they needed more time to prepare for it, specifically to improve their French. For example, forum user No.32 said:

*I've submitted my application at the end of January and I've received the invitation to attend the interview at the beginning of May. I feel that it came too early and I consider that I don't have enough time to prepare myself. Should I postpone my interview?*

This particular question generated a total of 11 answers, all suggesting that s/he should go to the interview as scheduled. One of the forum users suggested that the postponement of the

interview could raise some questions for the interviewer, thus diminishing his/her chances of being selected. Forum user No.33 answered:

*You could postpone it but you need a serious reason for it. I advise you to focus on learning French and go to the interview on the day you were scheduled.*

A valid reason for postponing the interview, revealed by other forum users, was a scheduling conflict. For example, one forum user mentioned that s/he was not able to attend the interview as s/he was scheduled to start a three month internship in Paris, France, which was part of his/her Masters Degree requirements. S/he asked the fellow forum members if the postponement of the interview would negatively impact his/her chances of being selected and also how to communicate the postponement to the embassy. His/her question was quickly answered by two different forum users who mentioned that they were in the same situation, unable to attend the interview at the date set by the embassy, and their interview was rescheduled. One of the forum users, No.34, said:

*It is fine to postpone your interview as long as you have some paper work to prove the reasons. We were in the same situation. My spouse had to take a training course during the time of the interview and we contacted the Quebecois immigration office and sent them the paper work for my spouse's course. They were very flexible and rescheduled our interview.*

Overall the sub-code 6.1 *the interview* was the most discussed sub-code from the 35 sub-codes, including all steps. The qualitative analysis of the online discussions regarding the interview revealed that prospective immigrants were concerned about what happens at the interview. According to the forum users the interview's goal was to evaluate the language proficiency and also to verify the authenticity of the supporting documents that were submitted with the application. During this stage the prospective immigrants can be selected, rejected or

have their immigration proceedings postponed for further evaluation which explains why the interview stage is very significant and why it is the most discussed theme (sub-code).

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

The exploratory analysis revealed several obstacles faced by prospective immigrants during their immigration process. The obstacles that were reported varied from requesting information about which supporting documents should be included in the application, to advice about whether to postpone the interview. Similarly, they were attempting to obtain information about the medical exam and about the processing time frame of their application. Overall, forum users sought help from individuals who had already completed the immigration process or were in a later stage of the process.

Going back to the narratives that were quoted earlier, specifically to forum users No.1 and No.21, that were addressing general questions about how to apply, respectively how to get through the medical exam, I conclude that the forum also serves as a primary source for obtaining pertinent information on how to immigrate to Quebec. Requests like the ones mentioned above received quick answers from other forum users which usually came in the form of web links to previously posted messages on the same forum or as web links to the official websites of MICC and CIC. Some members of the forum became extremely involved in building a useful “how to” informational online tool to help individuals who wished to immigrate to Canada. For this reason, they translated the immigration guides from the official websites of MICC and CIC which are available in Romanian language on the discussion forum. Thus topics containing official information regarding self-evaluation, supporting documents, completing and sending the application for selection, fees payment, the interview, completing and sending application for admission, supporting documents, medical exam, medical exam fees, medical exam supporting documents, and sending passports to the embassy are translated and updated frequently whenever MICC and CIC makes changes to the immigration process.



In order to reach a better understanding of the difficulties experienced by the forum users it is important to find out if the information offered on the official websites of MICC and CIC is addressing the issues discussed by the forum users. An examination of the list of forms and documents that must be enclosed with the immigration application revealed that all of the issues (about supporting documents) brought forward by forum users are actually addressed on the MICC website. This suggests that the forum users either forgot to read the official information or they did not understand the requirements. The official information posted on the MICC website clearly states that immigrants must enclose the following documents with the immigration application: photocopies of birth and marriage, and the birth certificates of each person included in the application, divorce certificates, certified true copies and official translations in French or English of diplomas, certificates, academic transcripts, work record books for the last five years, stapled photocopies of identity pages from the passport with valid residence permits if applicable (MICC, 2009g).

The official website also provides information for prospective immigrants who wish to apply while residing in a country where they do not hold citizenship, but have obtained residency status. It shows that they are entitled to submit to the immigration office serving that particular country if they have legal status (visitors or asylum seekers do not count) for a period of at least one year and reside in that specific country when they intend to submit an application (MICC, 2009h). While most of the answers offered by the forum users were following the lines of the official guide, there was one exception as the answers from forum user No.12 was erroneous. This particular post stated that the translation of the supporting documents must be in French which contradicts the official information.

In regards to the processing times, the official information from MICC's website states that the time-frame that immigration applications are to be processed depends on the number of applications received and also on the country of residence. MICC has developed a system through which information about the location and dates of subsequent interviews sessions are offered in accordance with the date when the applicant submitted the immigration application. This information does not offer the prospective immigrants the certainty that they will be included in that specific session and as a result the forum users engaged in a guessing game as they tried to figure out the duration of the processing time (MICC, 2009i).

The most frequently discussed theme in regards to Step 6 revolved around the interview with the immigration officer. Clearly the discussions about the interview, especially about what actually happens during the interview, whether prospective immigrant faced the rejection of their application and the termination of their immigration process, were intensely debated. The information posted on the MICC website states that the interviewer will review the information provided through the immigration application, specifically information that concerns schooling, work experience, and language proficiency. It also states that in the case of missing documentation, prospective immigrants will have a 60 day time frame to provide proof of the requested documents. If they fail to provide the documents requested within this time frame, their application will be rejected. The interviewer also evaluates the applicant's capacity to integrate successfully in Quebec and discusses their possible career paths (MICC, 2009a). Several narratives described the interview as an inquisition where their truthfulness was doubted by the interviewer which ultimately put a hold on their immigration plans until the legitimacy of the documents in question could be proved.

Thus, the forum provides important and relevant information about what could go wrong

at the interview as it presents real stories of prospective immigrants whose immigration applications were either rejected or postponed until further documentation was provided. By contrast, on the MICC website there is very little information about the suitability of prospective immigrants and their supporting documents.

The analysis also revealed that prospective immigrants were concerned about what is happening at the interview and about how their language proficiency will be evaluated by the interviewer. Forum users revealed that the evaluation of language proficiency is in fact a flexible process which is actually started when the immigration application is completed by the applicants. The immigration application form requires individuals to self-evaluate their level of language proficiency (comprehension and speaking of both official languages) on a scale from 0 to 12, where 0 represents no knowledge at all, 1-4 represents beginner, 5-8 represents intermediate, and 9-12 is advanced (MICC, 2009f). The language proficiency is being evaluated during the interview and points are awarded accordingly. Often the forum users are anxiously discussing their declared level of language proficiency and how this level was lowered or raised by the immigration officer at the interview. Similarly, many questions are asked about how fast a beginner can achieve a satisfactory language proficiency level that will allow him to pass the interview.

Another major issue that surfaced during discussions about the interview was in regards to the interview postponement. While in some cases the need to postpone the interview was caused by a busy schedule, in other cases it was the result of not being prepared for it, particularly in regards to the language proficiency requirement. The MICC website has no information at all about this specific issues, thus prospective immigrants must use different sources of information for this matter especially when they are facing the possibility of having

their immigration application rejected.

The last theme analyzed in the qualitative analysis was the medical exam. There is little information offered on the CIC website in regards to the requirements that are needed to pass the medical exam. The CIC website states: “Applications for permanent residence will not be accepted if that person’s health is a danger to public health or safety or if it would cause excessive demand on health or social services in Canada”. It is also specified that “The doctor will not tell you the results of the medical examination. The doctor will let you know if you have a health-related problem” (CIC, 2009e).

The above information does not offer much knowledge on whether specific sicknesses — hepatitis, psoriasis or TB — present either a danger to the public health or bring excessive demand to health or social services in Canada. Again, the forum users were left alone to discuss whether their health issues would impact the immigration proceedings as there are information gaps in regards to the medical assessment of the prospective immigrants. The official websites of MICC, and CIC respectively, do not offer much information on which health problem will bring excessive demand on the health system or could be a danger to public health and as a result prospective immigrants who are aware of their own health conditions have no access to official sources of information explaining if their specific health issue could negatively affect or end their immigration proceedings.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

As the narratives of the forum users show, navigating through the lengthy and stressful process of immigration requires a lot of patience and access to trustworthy sources of information. MICC asserts that by completing the eight specific steps immigrants will accomplish their goal. Each of the eight steps generated questions, discussions and requests for information, although certain steps and certain themes generated a greater amount of attention from the forum users.

The complexity of the process is reflected in the personal experiences that were posted by forum users. After examining the official guidelines of MICC and CIC that were designed to help the prospective immigrants go through the process, I conclude that some of the difficulties experienced by the forum users could have been avoided if the forum users had carefully researched the official websites. Information about supporting documents and how to apply if residing in a country without holding a citizenship, addressed the requests and questions of the forum users. Conversely, the MICC website lacks in offering clear information on processing times and describing the outcomes of the interview if the immigration officer has doubts about the veracity of the supporting documents. There is also a lack of information for applicants who wish to apply for a second time after they have been rejected.

Similarly, the CIC website lacks in providing in-depth information about specific sicknesses that are perceived as a danger to public health or safety, or that can cause excessive demand on health or social services in Canada. The lack of information has generated unofficial sources of information through which individuals who are planning to immigrate to Canada are exchanging information about the immigration process and its requirements. However, these sources are neither validated nor endorsed by the provincial or Federal Government which makes

their accuracy questionable. This research intends to offer valuable knowledge about the first-hand experiences of immigrants using the QSWP, which could lead to improvements of the official immigration guidelines offered through MICC and CIC.

The qualitative analysis revealed that the online forum provides prospective immigrants with information that is not offered on the official websites of MICC and CIC. For example the forum users were able to find out that during the interview the validity of their diplomas might be challenged by the MICC officers. While it is understandable that each interview and each immigration application is unique, my sample proved that forum users experienced common obstacles, not only at the interview but also during the entire immigration proceedings. Forum users who already completed the immigration proceedings revealed important information about who is considered suitable for immigrating to Quebec from a different perspective. As knowledge about the immigration process is passed around through the online forum, prospective immigrants learn how navigate through the eight steps and how to meet the expectations and standards imposed by the MICC and their officers, respectively the CIC. It is important to mention that these expectation and standards of what is considered suitable for Quebec are not presented to prospective immigrants on the official websites thus prospective immigrants must look for alternative sources of information. It would be interesting to find out from official sources if these obstacles described above play an active role in the selection process . Human capital theory offers an insight to the selection process of immigrants through the QSWP. This theoretical approach that was used to design immigration policies stresses the equilibrium through which workers are allocated to jobs based on their worth evaluated by education, skills, age, experience and past economic performance (Hiebert, 1999, Reitz, 2005). The qualitative analysis clearly revealed that during the immigration process prospective

immigrants must present proof of their education, work experience and language abilities, initially as they submit their immigration application and also at a later stage during the interview. The description of the interviews with the immigration officers clearly indicates that the interview has the role of evaluating the prospective immigrants' work and educational background and language proficiency. The immigration officers can postpone or end their immigration process if they consider that human capital requirements are not met by the prospective immigrants. For certain forum users the task of presenting required proof seemed overwhelming, especially for those who had to provide copies of their employment records and work permit from Italy or in the case when university diplomas were questioned by the immigration officer.

Going back to the Diane Finley's quote that states that: "the success of Canada's immigration plan depends on attracting the right people to where they are needed and where they and their families will find opportunity" (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2008, p.3) I wonder if "attracting the right people" could have a cynical meaning, one referring to people who can navigate and overcome barriers of the immigration process on their own without being intimidated by obstacles that might arise. Perhaps the lack of information and the lack of interactive online assistance from both CIC and MICC is part of the strategy to get the "right people", the ones who are able to make their way through the lengthy and stressful immigration proceedings.

As stated in the introductory chapter, my overall goal was to provide an understanding of how the official guidelines regarding the immigration process are lacking important information that could ease the prospective immigrants' immigration proceedings. The official immigration guidelines offered through MICC and CIC must be revised to incorporate information that

addresses the obstacles revealed through this paper. MICC should provide clear information about supporting documents, applying from different countries where the prospective immigrants reside legally, applying for a second time, processing times of immigration applications and the possible outcome of the interview with the immigration officer. Similarly, the CIC should regularly update the guidelines regarding the medical exam that must be undertaken by prospective immigrants. The guidelines should include detailed information on which sicknesses represent a danger to public health or safety or can cause excessive demand on health or social services in Canada. The official websites of MICC and CIC should also offer an extensive “Frequently Asked Question” section through which all the above issues could be addressed by immigration officials, thus offering valid information for prospective immigrants.



## **Abbreviations and Glossary**

**CIC** - Citizenship and Immigration Canada is a federal department responsible for issues dealing with immigration and citizenship.

**MICC** - Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities Quebec is a provincial government department in the province of Quebec. It is responsible for recruiting immigrants that meet the needs of the labour market and contribute to the growth and development of a Quebecois society. It also provides a variety of settlement programs for immigrants and immigrant communities in the province.

**QSWP** - Quebec Skilled Workers Program is an immigration program through which the province of Quebec selects immigrants according to their proficiency in the French language and also according to the demands of the job market.

**Certified true copy** - is a photocopy of an original document attested to by an authorized person.

**Forum users** - individuals that post messages on online forums.

**Online forum** - referring to the online discussion forum [www.emigrare.ca](http://www.emigrare.ca) and its branches accessible through [www.toronto.ro](http://www.toronto.ro), [www.montreal.ro](http://www.montreal.ro), [www.calgary.ro](http://www.calgary.ro), and [www.vancouver.ro](http://www.vancouver.ro)

**Prospective immigrants** - individuals with intentions to immigrate to Canada that gather relevant information (about the process and proceedings) and have submitted or wish to submit their immigration applications.

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