



Settling in Québec: Exploring Latin Americans' Skilled Worker's Personal Projects

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Every year, close to 63% of immigrants settling Québec are skilled workers. Québec's migration policies select skilled workers based on their academic level, language skills, professional experience, and other qualifications. However, the goals, activities, and actions skilled immigrants must undertake to settle in Québec have not been adequately researched. Using the Personal Projects Approach, we recruited 230 skilled immigrant workers from Latin American countries to develop a better understanding of key aspects of skilled workers' priorities after settling in Québec. Inspired by the settlement framework, an analysis of the participants' personal projects revealed three main spheres of life: economic, social, and political. According to the Everyday Racism Model, particularly the structural component, our findings reflect the limitations of Québec's migration policies in terms of access to jobs, education, and proper housing. Lastly, this paper outlines the subcategories according to the participants' gender and migration period. Our findings indicate that participants prioritized the social and economic spheres overall—more importantly, they uncovered a paradox faced by recent skilled immigrants. Even though they are targeted by Québec's immigration policies, these policies do not necessarily guarantee full access to the job market.

Introduction

In Québec, there is a shortage of labour in various fields, which is in part caused by the ageing population and the declining birth rate (Demers and Rabemananjara, 2018). If this demographic trend continues, there will be a labour shortage of nearly 363,000 workers in Québec by 2030 (Conference Board of Canada, 2007). One solution to cope with this problem is to target and attract skilled immigrants to come and settle in Québec, which in fact is one of the province's migration policies. Officially, skilled immigrant workers are defined as: "immigrants whose skills respond to particular market needs and make it easier for them to find work" (*Gouvernement du Québec*, 2016). Québec follows the integration model, shaped by interculturalism that promotes integration, interactions, and a common culture according to the interests of the majority (Bouchard, 2015). Québec has put in place numerous settlement policies to ensure that skilled workers have access to all services (Shields et al., 2014; Shields, Drolet and Valenzuela, 2016). According to the Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and

Integration of Québec, immigrants should come to Québec because they will find good job opportunities and enjoy a great quality of life. The ministry also states that the province helps immigrants "push your limits and expand your horizons.... Québec allows you to lead a full life" (*Gouvernement du Québec*, 2018). The strategy appears to work since every year as nearly 63% of immigrants arriving in Québec are skilled workers. Québec's migration policies select skilled workers based on the applicant's score on the selection grid, where they must score at least 50 out of a maximum of 59 points. This selection grid measures the following: 1) level of education and area of training; 2) work experience; 3) age; 4) knowledge of French and English; 5) capacity for financial self-sufficiency, among other family criteria. Although Québec's migration policies seem to be attracting their targeted audience, immigrants often find themselves in less than ideal circumstances—especially in terms of accessing resources such as jobs and housing in Québec. Moreover, despite the fact that more than half of recent migrants are overqualified, their unemployment rate is

double that of Canadian-born citizens (Fields and Yssaad, 2018).

Latin American Skilled Workers in Québec

Latin Americans comprise a significant proportion of skilled workers who have settled in Québec—in fact, close to 25% are Latin Americans (*Gouvernement du Québec*, 2016) and the Latin American community is a sizeable demographic group that is growing rapidly. Between 2006 and 2015, new arrivals from Latin America who settled in Québec accounted for half of all Latin American immigrants admitted to Canada overall. In that same timeframe, 17% of all immigrants in Québec were born in Latin America (Armony, 2018). According to Statistics Canada (2019), they are classified as a visible minority, defined as: “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour,”—thus highlighting the fact that one must take into consideration the role discrimination may play, if at all, in the migration process.

Latin American skilled workers are at the confluence of two interesting processes: on the one hand, one of Québec’s skilled workers immigration policies gives priority to highly qualified applicants, and on the other hand, skilled workers often begin the migration process to achieve specific goals such as seeking a better life for themselves and their families or pursuing career opportunities (Böhme, Persian and Stöhr, 2015; Cai, Esipova, Oppenheimer and Feng, 2014; Vervliet, Vanobbergen, Broekaert and Derluyn, 2014). It is therefore important to understand whether these two processes work in concert toward providing a meaningful migration and settlement process or whether other external factors hinder or undermine the migration goals of skilled workers coming to Québec.

The Goals of Migrant Workers

To better understand the settlement experiences of Latin American skilled

workers in Québec, we propose a mixed method study of their goals and actions using the Personal Projects analysis (PPA) (Little, 2017; Little and Gee, 2017). Personal projects are defined as “the kinds of activities and concerns that people have over the course of their lives” (Little, 1983, p. 1). They are projected actions that allow the person to give meaning to his or her experience and embody their most significant aspirations (Omodei and Wearing, 1990). These personal projects can range from chores and routine activities (e.g., taking the garbage out) to specific goals (e.g., Finish my dissertation; have a child) and to more profound lifetime pursuits (e.g., identify the meaning of my life) (Little, 2020). According to Little (1983), depending on the aims of the research, personal projects can be analysed according to several different categories. Some examples may include categories such as: academic, cultural, interpersonal, and vocational, among others. Consequently, these categories are indicative of the life spheres prioritized by the participants at certain times in their lives.

Personal projects are interdependent planned actions within a particular context, whether it is physical, cultural, social, or historical (Little, 2017; Little and Gee, 2017). Research on personal projects has demonstrated the importance of certain factors in a specific environment and how these factors may affect the launch, continuation, and realization of these pursuits. For example, Frost and Leblanc (2014) have documented how stigma surrounding lesbian, gay, and bisexual people may negatively affect their family plans, harm their well-being, and impede the pursuit of their plans.

In the current study, we have opted to highlight and examine the categories of the participants’ personal projects and the context in which they are pursued. By using the personal projects methodology, we can also investigate how the demographic

characteristics of the participants may influence their goals and priorities.

We also intention to focus our investigation on how the gender and settlement stage of our participants (early or late) can influence the choice of personal projects and the characteristics of these projects. In this sense, the idiographic data shared by the participants will help us gain a better understanding of the types of goals that are prioritized by Latin American skilled workers who settle in Québec. The projects of the migrants who participated in this study reflect specific anticipated actions they plan to carry out as part of their immigration process as well as the categories that encompass these projects. Analyzing skilled migrant workers' personal projects is useful for this research because it gives us access to detailed and qualitative, information, which will deepen our understanding of their goals, and consequently, their settlement process.

The Settlement Process for Immigrants to Québec

Settlement is defined as process, specifically "a continuum of activities that a new immigrant/refugee goes through upon arrival in a new country" (Shields, Türegün and Lowe, 2014). The complexity of the personal projects and the processual nature of migration have led us to utilize the settlement framework to explore the experiences of Latin American skilled workers in Québec, particularly in terms of the Government's assertions when depicting and promoting Québec as a better place. The settlement framework is an emerging framework that provides a better understanding of the early stages of the immigration process (Bauder, 2012; Fletcher, 1999; Root, Gates-Gasse, Shields et al., 2014). This framework sees immigration as a process with multiple dimensions and levels that encompasses all aspects of the newcomer's and family's lives (Fletcher, 1999). This process is bidirectional: individual and societal adjustments are

necessary for the newcomer and the host society to attain a certain sense of well-being. Newcomers must undertake so many steps in their settlements process such as finding housing and employment, learning the language, or understanding the new cultural codes (Fletcher, 1999; Government of Canada, 2017; Valtonen, 2016). This framework emphasizes the fact that immigrants initiate various actions to meet their needs in multiple spheres of their lives (Nayar, 2014) and it also supports the study of the migratory process as a path unfolding over time (Bauder, 2012; Noh, Kim and Noh, 2012; Root et al., 2014).

Shields et al., 2014, propose a series of indicators to understand the adjustment of migrants in several spheres of life: social, economic, cultural, and political. For example, indicators of the social sphere include language acquisition, access to education, membership in a social network, the degree of social network diversity, and social inclusion. Indicators in the economic sphere refer to access to housing, access to the labour market, and economic independence. Indicators of the cultural sphere reflect the degree of adaptation to the lifestyle in the host society and the understanding of values and patterns of interpersonal relationships in the host society. Indicators of the political sphere correspond to formal aspects such as the acquisition of permanent residency and citizenship status as well as civic participation (Bauder, 2012; Fletcher, 2009; Shields et al., 2014). Thus, this framework highlights the active role of the individual in the early migration stages as well as their access to the resources available in the receiving society.

Access to Resources for Immigrants

At the intersection between the goals of the immigrant and the available resources within the receiving society, the notion of *access* to these resources comes into play. In the light of the Everyday racism model (Essed, 1991)

we will try to discern the interaction between the participant's goals and the notion of access to resources. The everyday racism model proposes to analyse how a receiving society conjugates interactional, cultural, structural factors in order to provide or limit access to available resources. This interdisciplinary model proposes to analyse situations of implicit discrimination in concrete social situations (Essed, 1985). According to this model, lack of access or restricted access to resources that are widely available to some people, but denied to others, is a form of discrimination. The model of everyday racism provides a better understanding of the discrimination that specific marginalized groups (such as individuals labeled as a visible minority) face in various spheres of life: employment, housing, education, social life, and access to services. This model affirms that discrimination is built into and embedded in the structures of society—it is perpetuated by socialized beliefs and values, expressed, and lived on daily bases, and it is expressed through intentional and reflexive actions and practices. Acts of discrimination occur in people's daily lives and constantly reinforce inequalities between different ethnic groups (Berman and Paradies, 2010, Essed, 1991).

Essed's model is grounded in specific sociocultural forces that underpin and maintain discrimination. This model proposes to understand the phenomenon of discrimination through three societal components: the *interactional* component, the *structural* component, and the *cultural* component. The interactional component of the everyday racism model is related to the interactions between individuals. This component of the model explains how discrimination is expressed unfairly in daily behaviours and practices (Priest, Perry, Ferdinand, Paradies and Kelaher, 2014). Discrimination is found in unjust and aggressive interactions such as threats, insults, and micro-aggressions between marginalized groups and members of the

dominant group, (Berman and Paradies 2010). These practices and actions have the effect of perpetuating the relations of domination and power, resulting in negative impacts on marginalized groups (Feagin and Eckberg, 1980). The structural component of the everyday racism model discusses factors such as restriction of access to resources, in particular, employment, education, and housing (Essed, 1991). In general, visible minorities and other marginalized groups do not enjoy the same access to these resources valued by the host society. For example, individuals who belong to a marginalized group tend to have limited access to housing in privileged areas compared to those belonging to the dominant society. As a result, marginalized groups are more likely to live in deprived areas, thus affecting and possibly hindering access to education and employment (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Essed, 1991). Access to employment is also limited by the stereotypes that prevail in certain societies. For example, when there are stereotypes of certain people not having a strong work ethic, or having limited skills and capacity, this could influence employers in a negative way. As a result, they may be less inclined to hire new arrivals from certain backgrounds (Oreopoulos and Dechief, 2011).

The cultural component of the everyday racism model includes values, beliefs, and norms advocated by the dominant society (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Essed, 1991). Discrimination is forged by the stereotypes about marginalized groups that exist in the mainstream society. It is a manifestation of a racist ideology inherent in a social system that serves to maintain pre-established social order (Berman and Paradies, 2010). Discrimination is one of the elements of a system of oppression manifested in social structures: the media, literature, political discourse, and education. This system of oppression reproduces the inequalities that exist and lends them legitimacy. Discrimination becomes a common affair, invisible, and tolerated by society (Essed,

2018). Individuals are socialized in this system of oppression and thus, consciously or not, maintain inequalities and injustices (Essed, 1991; 2018). There are numerous adverse effects on the health and well-being of individuals who must endure discrimination. It perpetuates oppression, domination, and power relations that have negative impacts on marginalized groups (Feagin and Eckberg, 1980).

Consequently, considering the aforementioned frameworks, personal projects are the projected actions that the participants expect to carry out to settle in Québec. Personal projects include several categories which characterize the priorities of the participants of the participants at a specific time in their lives. The categories of the personal projects are a reflection certain societal components—and are often an indication of the sociocultural forces at play that perpetuate discrimination. Therefore, we propose to study the personal projects of Latin American skilled workers recently arrived in Québec in order to better understand the actions that constitute their personal projects as well as the categories that encompass these personal projects. This study involves investigating the priorities of the immigrants' life spheres and examine to which settlement sphere their personal projects correspond, in order to better comprehend which societal component comprises their personal projects. This study also seeks to explore the differences and similarities in the personal projects according to gender and settlement stage (year of migration). We also seek to better understand how some goals are a reflection of participant's aspirations, yet also a depiction of the access to certain opportunities available to them (or lack thereof) in their new context.

Method

Participants

This study took place in the province of Québec. Participation in the study was voluntary, and the participants did not receive any remuneration and we ensured the confidentiality of data. To recruit participants and ensure that Latin Americans located everywhere in Québec had access to the survey, we combined different strategies to obtain a more representative sample. We recruited participants via social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) and via a radio show interview. A total of 230 Latin Americans (60.4% women, 39.6% men) who migrated between 2011 and 2017 as skilled workers participated in the study. Age distribution was as follows: 10.9% are aged 18 to 30 years; 69.3% aged 31 to 40 years; and 20.9% are over 41 years of age. Approximately 38% of the participants migrated between 2015 and early 2017, while 62% migrated between 2011 and 2014.

Measures

The Personal Projects Approach (PPA)

This approach has been widely used to explore the goals of individuals (Omodei and Wearing 1990, Lui and Rollock, 2012; Yiu 2013). Drawing from idiographic and nomothetic data, the personal project analysis is a modular and flexible instrument that allows researchers to adapt it to their specific fields. Personal projects methodology is useful in terms of integrating information about the person's projected actions, his or her context, and their adaptations over time. This method invites participants to report their projects in three stages. First, after reading a list of examples, participants generated a list of up to ten personal projects in which they are currently engaged. Secondly, participants rated each project (using a 5-point Likert scale; 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) on the following 10 dimensions: "This project is important for me" (*importance*); "Working on this project contributes to making my life satisfying" (*contributes to life satisfaction*);

this project is stressful for me (*stress*); this project is difficult for me (*difficulty*); I am in control of this project (*control*); I am satisfied with my progress on this project (*progress*); this project is short-term rather than long-term (*short/long term*); I believe that I will eventually be successful with this project (*outcome*); and people who are close to me support me in my efforts to accomplish this project (*social support*); "My ability to pursue this project is hindered by discrimination" (*discrimination in project*). Finally, participants classified their projects according to one of the following pre-established categories: participation in civic life; language learning; education; the sense of belonging; work; participation in cultural activities; participation in community groups, social and sports associations; family life; other. These categories were derived from the settlement process literature (Bauder 2012, Fletcher 2009, Shields et al., 2014).

Brief Inventory of Thriving (Su, Tay and Diener, 2014)

This scale measures psychosocial well-being by integrating the notions of the sense of belonging and accomplishment. Ten items compose this inventory, covering various aspects such as the sense of belonging and accomplishment, meaning of life and interpersonal relationships. These items are scored using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). We used the Spanish version that the authors made available on their official website.

Everyday Discrimination Scale (Williams, Yu, Jackson and Anderson (1997)

This scale is constructed from the everyday racism model of Essed (1990), it measures the discrimination that individuals experience on daily bases (De Vogli, Ferrie, Chandola, Kivimäki and Marmot, 2007, Lewis, Yang, Jacobs and Fitchett, 2012, Williams et al., 1999). Researchers on discrimination in the Latino community often use this scale (Araújo

and Borrell, 2006, Dawson and Panchanadeswaran, 2010, Reeve et al., 2011, Benjamins, 2012, Molina et al., 2013, LeBron et al., 2014, Halim et al., 2015). The scale has 10 items that will be scored using a 4-point Likert scale (1 = never, 4 = very often). Higher scores on the scale indicate that participants experience more discrimination in their daily lives (Reeve et al., 2011). We used the Spanish version used by Dawson and Panchanadeswaran (2010) in their study.

Procedure

We developed an online version of the PPA and administered it via SurveyGizmo's platform. We posted and shared the link to access the PPA on SurveyGizmo on several Facebook groups. We identified these groups by running searches on Facebook using the demonym of each Latin American country followed by the keywords: "in Québec." These Facebook groups are administered by Latin Americans in Québec and most of the participants of these groups are also Latin Americans in Québec. We posted the PPA link on daily bases until we surpassed the targeted sample size (n=200). Once on the SurveyGizmo platform, participants had access to the description of the study, its goals, and its purpose. After providing their consent, participants first completed a short sociodemographic questionnaire (age, gender, and year of immigration). Participants then completed the PPA procedure, and then completed self-report measures of Brief Inventory of Thriving (Su, Tay and Diener, 2014), and we used the Spanish version that the authors made available on their official website. We also administered the Everyday Discrimination Scale (Williams, Yu, Jackson and Anderson (1997) and we used the Spanish version used by Dawson and Panchanadeswaran (2010) in their study. We then asked participants if they would like to provide their email address to be contacted for any follow-up studies.

Results

*Data Preparation and Analysis Strategy:
Identifying Primary Categories*

Prior to running our analyses on pre-established categories, we calculated the distribution of all the personal projects in all pre-established categories. To avoid losing statistical power for the analyses, the analysis was conducted on the five highest categories of projects. The five most prominent categories are, in decreasing order: a) Work-related projects (77.4%). The work category includes examples such as: *Encontrar un empleo que me haga sentir realizada* [To find a job that makes me feel fulfilled]; *Encontrar un trabajo mejor remunerado* [To find a better paying job]; *encontrar un trabajo acorde a mi formación* [To find a job according to my degree]; b) Family-related projects (70.4%). Some examples of family-related projects are: *tener un hijo* [Have a child]; *casarme* [To get married]; *comprar una casa* [buy a house]; c) Education-related projects (56.1%) Some of the education-related projects that the participants mentioned are: *hacer una maestría* [get a master's degree]; *hacer un doctorado* [get a PhD degree]; *terminar la especialización en la UQAM* [finish my post-graduate qualification at UQAM]. d) Belonging-related projects (44.3%); this category includes examples such as: *hacer nuevos amigos* [make new friends]; *ciudadanía* [citizenship]; *integración completa a la sociedad quebeca* [fully integrate the Quebecker society]; e) Language learning-related projects (34.8%). Some examples of language learning-related projects are: *perfeccionar el francés* [to perfect my French skills]; *mejorar el inglés* [better my English skills]

The pre-established categories that did not meet the distribution threshold (and subsequently excluded from the analyses) were: participation in civic life (26.1%), participation in cultural activities (18.7%); participation in community groups, social and sports associations (11.3%). The final sample

consists of 230 participants with a total of 651 personal projects.

Thematic Analysis of Primary Categories

We first conducted a thematic analysis of the personal projects, using the following steps: identification of themes that correspond to each sub-category, and classification of all the personal projects according to the pre-established categories. As shown in Table 1, we identified 22 subcategories within the pre-established categories. We asked independent coders (a senior graduate psychology student and a researcher holding a Ph.D. in community psychology) to review the list of the projects and assign each project to a subcategory. The inter-coder agreement between these content categorizations was 78%, with a Cohen's kappa of .76 (substantial agreement). The categories *work* and *family* were denser, and each consisted of six subcategories. The category *belonging* consisted of four subcategories. Lastly, the categories of *language learning* and *education* consisted each of three subcategories (See Table 2 for list of primary and their subcategories). We then calculated the distribution of the personal projects in all 22 subcategories and again found that some subcategories did not meet the distribution threshold for statistical power. To avoid losing statistical power for the analyses, the analysis was conducted on the two subcategories with the highest distribution of each primary category (10 subcategories in total).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Analytic Sample of Latin American Skilled Workers

Categorical variables	n	%
Sex		
Female	139	60.4
Male	91	39.6
Migration Year		
2011 to 2014	143	62.2
2015 to 2017	87	37.8
Age		

	18 to 30	25	10.9
	31 to 40	157	69.3
	41 and over	48	20.9
Number of projects			
Language learning	80	34.8	
Education	129	56.1	
Belonging	102	44.3	
Work	178	77.4	
Family	162	70.4	

Classifying Subcategories Within the Settlement Sphere Model

We followed a thematic categorization procedure to classify all the subcategories according to the spheres specified by the settlement approach (Bauder, 2012; Fletcher, 1999; Root et al., 2014). Personal projects were categorized as follows: 1) economic; 2) social; 3) political (see the Settlement Sphere column in Table 2). Eleven subcategories (out of twenty-two) belong to the social sphere, eight subcategories fit within the economic sphere, and two other subcategories are part of the political sphere.

Table 2
Personal projects categories and examples

Project Category	Project Subcategory	Settlement sphere	Example
Language learning	Learn French	Social	<i>Improve my French skills</i>
	Learn English	Social	<i>Take English classes</i>
	Learn both	Social	<i>Learn French and English</i>
Education	Get another degree	Social	<i>Finish my MBA</i>
	Education for my children	Social	<i>Think of my children's education</i>
	Study	Social	<i>Go back to school</i>
Belonging	Social interaction	Social	<i>Make new friends</i>
	Citizenship	Political	<i>Pass the citizenship exam</i>
	Improve my living space	Economic	<i>Move to another apartment</i>
	Drivers licence	Political	<i>Get my driver's license</i>
Work	Find a better job	Economic	<i>Find a job in my field of training</i>
	Have my own business	Economic	<i>Have my own business</i>
	Find a job	Economic	<i>Find a job</i>
	Retirement	Economic	<i>Save for my retirement</i>
	Degree equivalency	Economic	<i>Be part of the professional order of engineers</i>
Family	Economic stability	Economic	<i>Get rid of my debts</i>
	Buy a house	Economic	<i>Buy a house</i>
	To travel	Social	<i>Travel to Europe</i>
	Family reunification	Social	<i>Bring my mother to Canada</i>
	Have my own family	Social	<i>Get married</i>
	Buy a car	Economic	<i>Buy a car</i>
	Improve my relationship with my family	Social	<i>Talk more often with my brother</i>

Thematic Analysis of Personal Projects According to the Everyday Racism Model

We conducted a thematic analysis of all the personal projects and identified the Everyday racism model component that corresponds to the participant's personal projects. Our

analysis showed that the vast majority of personal projects mentioned by the participants corresponded to the structural component of the everyday racism model. Most of the participants reported personal projects that accounted for their willingness to find a better job and to attain the same economic status that they had in their country of origin. For example: *Llegar a una libertad financiera real* [Achieve real financial freedom]; *Encontrar un trabajo relacionado a mi formación* [find a job in my field]; *Volver a tener el estatus económico que tenía en mi país de origen* [Attain the economic status that I had in my home country]; *Encontrar empleo decente* [find a decent job].

In general, participants also listed projects that indicate their motivation to access the education system in order to obtain their degree equivalency, or to go back to school. Some examples are: *Solicitar la equivalencia de estudios* [apply for the degree equivalency]; *Volver a estudiar* [Go back to school]; *Realizar un curso de teología* [complete a theology class].

Participants also identified a desire to improve their present housing conditions: *Comprar mi casa propia* [buy my own house]; *Encontrar un buen lugar para vivir* [Find a good place to live]; *Vivir en un departamento mejor* [To live in a better apartment].

Main Analyses

All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS 24 statistical software. Univariate statistics were generated to explore all variables. Multi-level analyses and repeated measures logistic regressions were used to analyse the data. For post-hoc tests, a Bonferroni correction was applied to adjust for type 1 error inflation.

Participants' Personal Projects

We used a Cochran's Q test to compare, for all main categories, the percentage of

participants that mentioned at least one project of that category. The results show significant differences between some of the project categories, $Q(4) = 121.34, p < .001$. As seen in Table 1, work-related (77.4%) and family projects (70.4%) are similar and figure more prominently than education (56.1%), belonging projects (44.3%), and language learning (34.8%).

Personal Projects Within the Settlement Spheres

We created three between-project variables that consisted of the subcategories of projects that represent each settlement sphere (economic, social, and political). To investigate the similarities and differences between life spheres, we compared the mean number of projects of each sphere using a multilevel analysis in which the projects are the units at level 1 and the participants are the units of level 2. The most prominent spheres correspond to the economic ($M = 2.42, SD = .87$) and the social ($M = 2.38, SD = .87$), and these two spheres are significantly more prominent ($p < .05$) than the political sphere ($M = 0.22, SD = .87$).

Distribution of Personal Projects According to the Settlement Approach

We ran multilevel analyses to compare the number of projects in each life sphere. For this, we created two between-subject variables: gender and settlement stage (earlier settlement with migration during 2011-2014 vs. recent settlement with migration during 2015-2017). Separate analyses were performed for each gender and each settlement stage. For both women and men, there were significant differences in the number of projects in each life sphere: women, $F(2,278) = 181.02, p < .001$; men: $F(2,181) = 75.58, p < .001$. More specifically, the most prominent spheres were the economic (women: $M = 2.51, SD = 1.44$; men: $M = 2.29, SD = 1.42$) and the social (women: $M = 2.61, SD = 1.65$; men: $M = 2.02, SD =$

1.79). The two latter spheres were significantly more prominent than the political sphere (women: $M = 0.19$, $SD = 0.41$; men: $M = 0.26$, $SD = 0.44$). Settlement stage (earlier vs. recent) showed the same tendency, earlier settlement 2011-2014: $F(2,286) = 149.93$, $p < .001$; vs. recent settlement 2015-2017: $F(2,174) = 98.76$, $p < .001$). More specifically, the most prominent spheres were the economic (2011-2014: $M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.41$; 2015-2017: $M = 2.58$, $SD = 1.46$) and the social (2011-2014: $M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.78$; 2015-2017: $M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.65$), and these two spheres were significantly more prominent than the political sphere (2011-2014: $M = 0.20$, $SD = 1.65$; 2015-2017: $M = 0.24$, $SD = 0.43$).

Comparing Personal Projects According to Gender and Settlement Stage

We conducted Cochran’s Q tests with repeated measures logistic regression analyses to investigate the distribution of

subcategories for women and men separately, and for early and recent migrants separately. Figures 1 through 4 show the proportional distribution of subcategories, where an overlap of circles between two subcategories indicates a non-significant difference between the percentages of each subcategory. Some projects, such as “to get a better job,” “to buy a house,” and “get another degree,” are equally relevant personal projects for both women and men as well as for participants that immigrated before 2014 and after 2015. In a similar manner, projects such as “having my own business,” “making new friends,” and “citizenship” are equally relevant for all participants. Our findings also indicate that travel-related projects are significantly more prominent for women than for men, $\chi^2(1) = 12.33$, $p < .001$. Our data also suggest that projects related to the subcategory of learning French are more prominent for participants who migrated more recently than for those who migrated before 2014, $\chi^2(1) = 11.38$, $p < .001$.

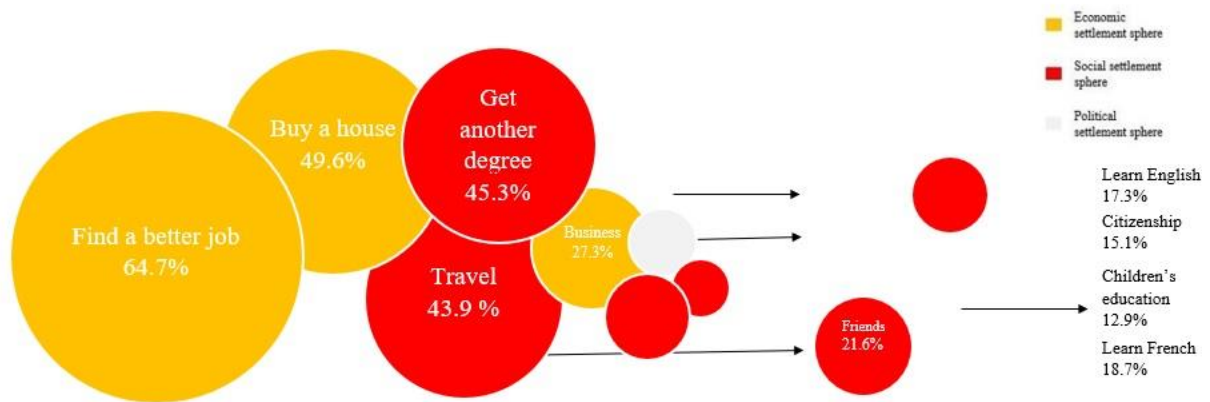


Figure 1. Euler diagram of the percentages of the most prominent personal projects outlined by women participants

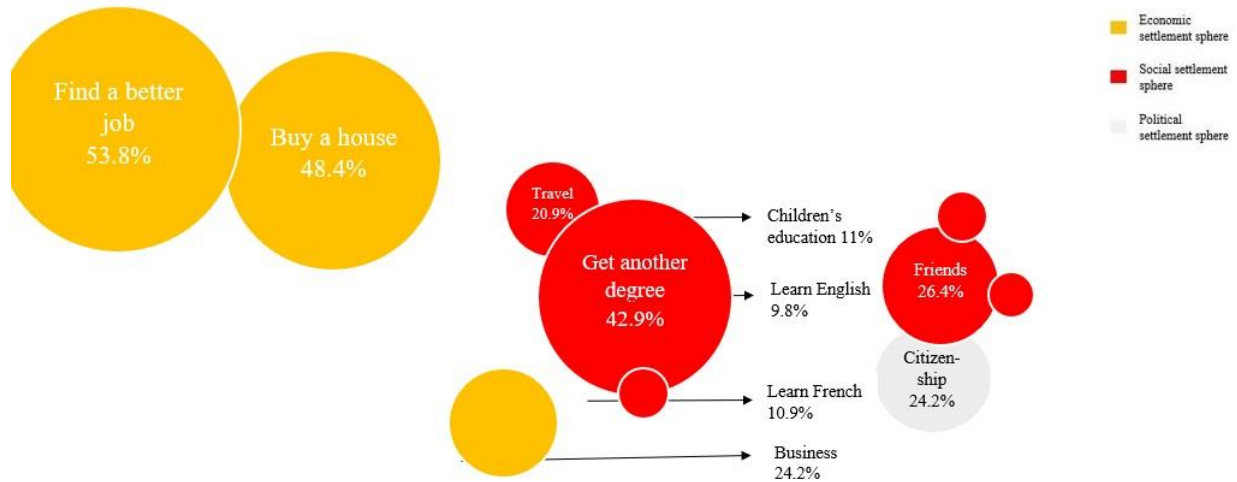


Figure 2. Euler diagram of the percentages of the most prominent personal projects outlined by men participants



Figure 3. Euler diagram of the percentages of the most prominent personal projects outlined by participants who migrated between 2011 and 2014

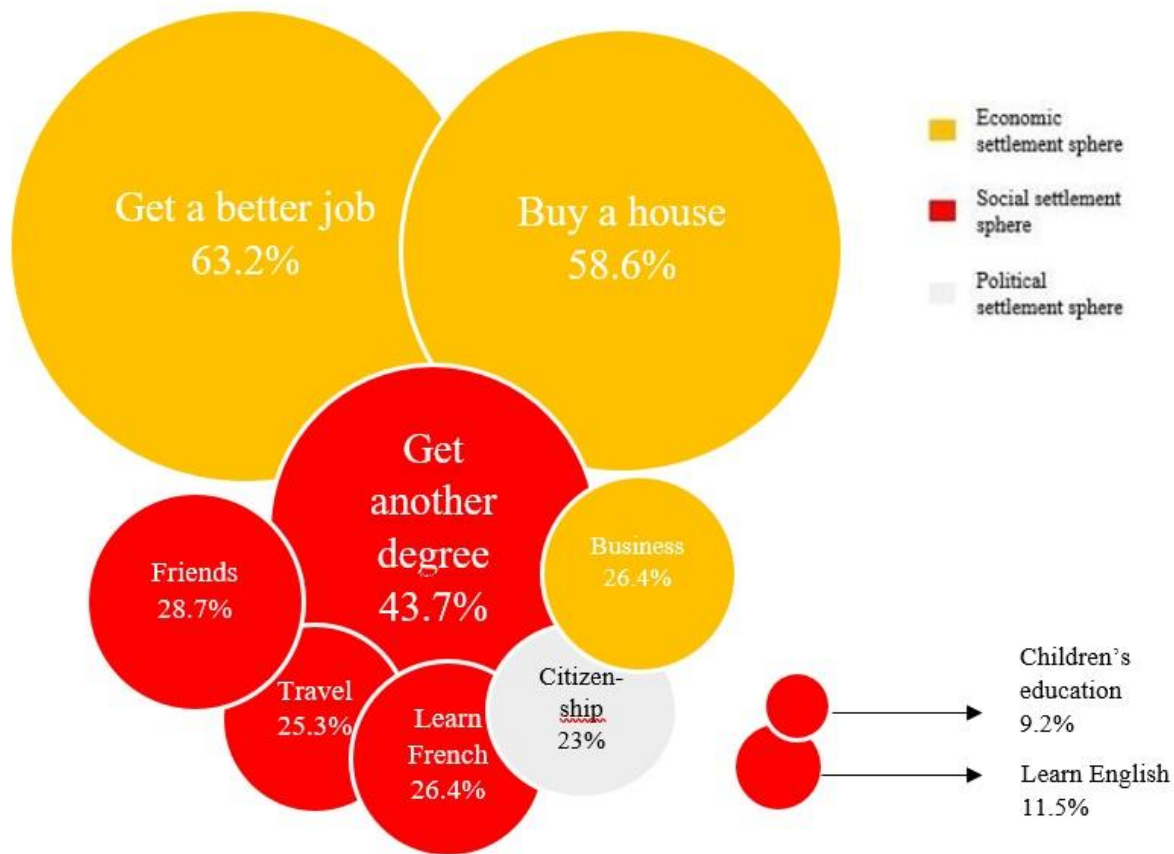


Figure 4. Euler diagram of the percentages of the most prominent personal projects outlined by participants who migrated between 2015 and 2017

Discussion

Work, Education, and Language

Our analyses of primary and sub-categories of participants' personal projects and shows that *work, education, and language* are the most prominent priorities for our participants. The five main categories are consistent with research on the goals of individuals that migrated as skilled workers (Berry, 1997; Cai et al., 2014; Porter, 2013). Specifically, three of these categories of personal projects (work, education, and language learning) reflect the life spheres (social and economic) in which the participants act upon to settle in Québec. These categories are also a reflection of the efforts that the participants have to make in order settle in Québec and to fulfill their goals

and aspirations. Interestingly, women *and* men, as well as recent *and* earlier immigrants all share these same priorities—another indication supporting the fact that these aspects are at the core of the settlement process for Latin American skilled workers across gender and time of settlement.

Encontrar un trabajo relacionado a mi formación (Personal projects related to work). These projects fall in line with the claim that skilled immigrants seek better economic conditions (Berry, 1997; Böhme et al., 2015; Vervliet et al., 2014). It also concurs with the aims of Québec's immigration policies to achieve economic growth by attracting skilled workers (Cameron, 2016). However, most skilled immigrants with university degrees end up getting jobs that only require a high school diploma or less, resulting in a lower

income (Blain, Fortin, and Alvarez, 2017; Li, Gervais and Duval, 2006; Hawthorne, 2015). Furthermore, immigrants have higher rates of unemployment and underemployment than non-immigrants (Premji and Shakya, 2017; Wassermann, Fujishiro and Hoppe, 2017). These work-related personal projects demonstrate that the participant's pursuits within a certain context may not be aligned with the aims of Québec's immigration policies. The need to promote skilled migration is a priority at the government and policy level; however, unemployment rates reveal that employers may not necessarily hire skilled immigrant workers (Eid, 2012). The lack of effective professional recognition by employers and professional orders also impedes immigrants in terms of gaining access to the job market (Arcand, Lenoir and Helly 2009; Béji and Pellerin, 2010; Chicha and Charest, 2008). Migration and settlement policies do not appear to have enough impact on the membership procedures of some professional orders. As a result, Québec's immigration policies might not translate into effective work policies that can guarantee skilled immigrants will have equal access to the job market.

Volver a estudiar (Personal projects related to education). Research on economic migration indicates that skilled workers often seek better academic opportunities for themselves and their families (Böhme et al., 2015; Vervliet et al., 2014). Our data shows that participants identified projects such as getting another degree and ensuring a good education for their children. This subcategory of projects focuses on the importance of formal education projects for the participants and their families, a trend that will undoubtedly counteract the underrepresentation of first generation and recent immigrants in higher education (Chassels, 2017; Michalski, Cunningham and Henry, 2017). Québec attracts and chooses skilled workers to migrate, in part, because of their professional training and diplomas. However, it seems that Québec's strategies to

attract "the best and the brightest" (Blain et al., 2017) do not necessarily translate into increased or better education opportunities for those who are recruited. These immigration policies rely on the idea that migration will bring a better quality of life (Blain et al., 2017; Hercog and Sandoz, 2018). Skilled immigrant workers then expect to migrate into a context that will offer equal opportunities for all members of the society, no matter their place of birth. Having to get another degree in order to find work reflects the discordance between the initial reasons why the participants were chosen (migration policies) and the context (settlement policies) that in turn may hinder their full participation in public life (Cameron, 2016).

Aprender el idioma (Personal projects related to language learning). Our data suggest that participants seek to improve their French and English skills. Before becoming a Québec resident, skilled workers must demonstrate language proficiency, yet these language skills are often not deemed sufficient for employment (Kaushik and Drolet, 2018; Murphy, 2010). According to research on immigration and settlement, language skills are an essential factor to achieving social and economic integration (Bousmah, Grenier and Gray, 2018; Lacroix, Gagnon and Lortie, 2017). To be able to access the job market, immigrants must have full command of French and English (Béji, 2014). In addition, reaching a high level of proficiency in *both* English and French languages can pose an additional challenge and is time-consuming as well. Becoming fully trilingual (since the participant's mother tongue is Spanish) not only becomes a necessary condition to access education, but more importantly, to be able to play an active role in social spheres and to secure a meaningful career.

Accessing Resources in Québec

Analyses of the sub-categories of the "work" primary category show some of the difficulties when trying to access resources.

Once in Québec, skilled workers face the consequences of the incongruities between the government's discourses of integration and the reality of the demands and difficulties of entering the workforce. Skilled Latin American workers are often caught between migration policies and a reality that does not necessarily translate these policies into adequate settlement practices.

Settlement practices are guided by the immigration model promoted in each social context. Interculturalism in Québec aims to implement accommodations, maintain a collective language, and build a provincial culture strengthened by migrant's cultures (Bouchard, 2015; Tremblay, 2010). Our findings suggest that across all participants, the social and economic settlement spheres are the most prominent. These findings also suggest that participants still do not have access to a suitable job, nor do they have access to education or services to perfect their language skills, which would facilitate their access to fully participate in and contribute to the new host society. When examining our findings with the Everyday racism model (Essed, 1991), in particular, the structural component, our research reveals certain limitations, especially in terms of access to adequate jobs, the education system, as well as access to proper housing. Participants also spoke about their desire to live in a nice place and find a better apartment—personal projects related to structural practices of exclusion that reproduce discrimination. In Essed's terms, the lack of access to the resources of a society is a pattern of discrimination. Participants identified their personal projects which reflect the fact that they do not have adequate access to the resources available in Québec. These personal projects exemplify the social conditions linked to oppression and exclusion that end up maintaining hierarchical relations (Moan, 2003). According to the participant's projects, they are subject to a type of discrimination grounded in the practices set by social institutions. This type of

discrimination is also based on social conventions that involve patterns and procedures aimed at maintaining economic exploitation and social exclusion. Economic exploitation accounts for low-paid labour and underemployment, and social exclusion ensures that social institutions are not a representation of cultural diversity (Moan, 2003). Although all of the participants of this study hold an undergraduate degree at minimum, they do not have a "decent job," and are looking for a better place to live, and are hoping to become more qualified by going back to school. Therefore, the personal projects of the participants reflect the mechanisms of oppression of economic exploitation and social exclusion.

The Paradox of Skilled Migration

Québec prioritizes skilled workers because their characteristics should, practically speaking, facilitate their full participation in society (Armony, 2018; *Gouvernement du Québec*, 2018). However, recent migrants (5 years or less) have lower employment rates than other groups of immigrants; in 2017 the unemployment rate of Québec's recent immigrants was 9.6% compared to 5% for Québec-born citizens (Fields and Yssaad, 2018). Recent skilled immigrant workers face a paradox: they are targeted by Québec's immigration policies, yet these policies do not necessarily translate into full access to the job market. Migration policies do not seem to result in effective public and private hiring policies—what's more, there are not synchronized requirements to gain recognition of diplomas obtained abroad (Fields and Yssaad, 2018). Therefore, Québec might not be able to benefit from the skills of the chosen immigrants. Consequently, skilled immigrants are not able to realize their full potential as suggested by the province's official statement.

In sum, personal projects reflect the goals and activities that individuals undertake to adapt and settle in the new society. Research based

on the settlement approach suggests that the goals of recent immigrants reflect their needs and the pursuit of fulfilling specific life domains (Kaushik and Drolet, 2018; Thomson, 2010). A large body of research shows that immigrants prioritize needs related to employment, education, and a sense of belonging (Arcand et al., 2009; Béji and Pellerin, 2010; Chicha and Charest, 2008), our findings suggest that language proficiency is an additional priority—and additional challenge in the Québec context.

Québec has specific sociodemographic needs and its immigration selection practices are designed to fill those needs. These selection practices aim to attract only qualified immigrants with a specific level of skills and training. These immigrants are expected to settle in a context where they are required to accept inferior jobs and lower salaries and they must adapt to a socioeconomic status that is not proportional to their education and work experience (Blain et al., 2017; Hawthorne, 2015; Li et al., 2006). This is an indication that settlement policies might not translate into adequate settlement services, especially since some of the needs and goals of the participants may turn out to be more difficult to achieve (Béji and Pellerin, 2010, Gauthier, 2016). If skilled workers find it challenging to achieve their goals of having a job commensurate with their skills, to have a better education, and to perfect their language proficiencies, then the migration policies of economic growth for Québec might not be achieved either.

Methodological Strengths and Limitations

The use of an anonymous online survey is one of this paper's methodological strengths. By using the online version of the PPA on SurveyGizmo's platform, the survey was accessible from cell phones, tablets, and computers. Another methodological strength of this study is the sampling procedure. To ensure that Latin Americans living all over in Québec had access to the survey, we

combined different sampling strategies. As a result, this sampling procedure allowed for a more representative sample than other studies that rely on single procedures. Another strong point in terms of our methodology is that this is the first investigation of Latin American skilled workers with a PPA approach that has been conducted thus far, to our knowledge. Nevertheless, this strength could also be a limitation as the online version of the PPA has not been culturally validated yet. Furthermore the measures that we use were translated by other researchers. Therefore, taking in consideration that the Spanish language presents variations from country to country, we cannot assert that the vocabulary in the measures was standard enough for all participants. Another limitation is that we worked with a convenience sample that is not representative of the Latin American population in Quebec.

Practice implications

There are diverse implications for practice that stem from our study respecting services for disenfranchised populations. First, our study communicates for the first time the current state of the settle process of Latin American skilled workers in Quebec. Therefore, our findings provide with first had data that could endorse the creation of advocacy and empowerment projects. Second, our data could also provide with core subjects to address when counselling migrant groups for social justice. Third, the personal projects methodology proved to be an efficacious approach to better understand the projected actions of our participants. This methodology could then become and intervention tool to access the goals as well as the hopes of migrants visible minority populations.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that Québec does invest in the success of skilled workers, the paradox persists between the official discourse that is

supposed to aim for greater economic immigration and the difficult economic challenges faced by recent immigrants (Béji, 2014). These results raise questions about this inconsistency in terms of Québec's need for skilled workers and how they attract skilled workers—especially in terms of encouraging immigrants to come to Québec to find a good job and achieve their personal goals. Nevertheless, future research could examine how this paradox affects immigrants and how it influences their settlement experience and overall well-being. Focusing on one specific category of the personal project goals could also provide a deeper understanding of the people's ambitions, struggles, or impediments to these achieving these goals—and thus provide strategies for overcoming these obstacles. We believe such research could help decision-makers frame immigration policies with a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the goals, aspirations and needs of immigrants who are selected through economic programs.

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