Framing Migrant Resilience as a Civic Responsibility: A Case Study of Municipal and Provincial Immigrant Integration Policies in Toronto, Ontario

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Abstract

This article presents a case study of how regional and municipal governments in Toronto, Ontario, use the concept of resilience to *frame* the challenges faced by immigrants and the steps governments are taking to promote immigrant integration. In the past decade, resilience has emerged as a policy framework to encourage positive adaptation of people and institutions that are facing social, economic and environmental challenges associated with population growth and economic globalisation. As a policy discourse, the concept of resilience is used to identify which immigrants need social and psychological support to better cope with pre- and post-migration stressors. Although government discourse acknowledges some of the structural inequities migrants face that require resilience (e.g. poverty, systemic racism, precarious employment), the discourse on migrant resilience notably omits government responsibility to enact structural solutions. Even the City of Toronto's anti-racism campaign, which seeks to reduce racial bias and discrimination against immigrants, frames 'civic resilience' as an individual responsibility. Despite the promise of resilience to emphasise immigrants' capabilities, we argue that resilience discourse operates as a type of diversity management strategy to identify which immigrants warrant government support to maximise their economic contributions to the region.

Keywords: framing analysis, immigrant integration, migration, neo-liberalism, social inclusion, social resilience

In October 2017, the City of Toronto adopted the *Toronto for All* public education campaign, which promotes 'civic resilience' amongst city staff and the public as a strategy to reduce prejudice against racialised immigrants and other 'equity-seeking groups' (City of Toronto, 2017). The *Toronto for All* campaign is part of a larger policy trend where governments mobilise the concept of resilience to encourage positive adaptation of people and institutions who are facing social, economic and environmental challenges associated with population growth and economic globalisation (Bottrell, 2009). Considering that immigration and population diversity are cited as underlying social conditions that require 'resilient cities' (Campbell, 1996; Thomas, 2014), in this article, we examine how regional governments mobilise the concept of resilience to promote both immigrant well-being and the region's economic goals (Fitzgibbons and Mitchell, 2019).

Resilience theory has commonly drawn on psychological conceptualisations of individual, group and community capacity to adapt to adversity amongst 'at risk' populations, particularly racialised children and youth living in poverty; mothers who struggle to maintain security at home; or Indigenous communities contending with intergenerational trauma (Park *et al.*, 2020; Ungar, 2012). Within social work, however, there is emerging consensus that 'resilience results from an *interaction* between individual abilities and a social environment that allows for the use of those abilities in response to adversity' (Suarez, 2015, p. 6, emphasis added). The 'social approach' of resilience is defined as 'the capacity of groups of people bound together in an organisation, class, racial group, community or nation to sustain and advance their well-being in the face of challenges to it' (Hall and Lamont, 2013, p. 2, cited in Akbar 2017, p. 8). Social resilience recognises the role social institutions play in addressing systemic challenges through encouraging groups, especially marginalised populations, to build up capacities and engage in the removal of structural barriers. For Preston *et al.* (2020), social resilience amongst migrants enables transformative change within individuals, but also requires changes in institutional structures and societal arrangements to promote equity.

Unger (2012) argues that the conceptual ambiguity in how resilience is defined enables cultural biases to inform what 'desired outcomes' are attached to the resilience subject (Unger, 2012). Whilst social resilience scholarship acknowledges structural inequalities, including receding welfare provisioning, employment insecurity and growing income inequality (Garrett, 2015), resilience discourse is embedded within neo-liberal systems of governance (Joseph, 2013). As a result, resilience discourse idealises the self-sufficient, responsible and autonomous individual as

fundamental to advancing prosperity and freedom in advanced liberal societies (Joseph, 2013; Park *et al.*, 2020).

In this article, we employ a governmentality lens to consider how provincial and municipal policy documents in Toronto, Ontario, mobilise the concept of resilience to advance equity amongst immigrants. We first provide an overview of interdisciplinary conceptualisations of resilience in migration and immigrant settlement scholarship. We then discuss the federal and regional policy contexts that govern immigrant integration in Toronto, where multicultural diversity is constructed as an asset for the region's economic growth. After reviewing our framing methodology, we present analysis of how policy documents in this region frame (i) specific groups who are recognised as already possessing or who are in need of resilience, (ii) adversities that are identified as the precursor to resilience, (iii) beneficiaries of migrant resilience and (iv) policy responses and activities that promote resilience. Our analysis suggests that whilst the concept of social resilience may promote pluralistic values of migrant well-being as a collective responsibility, this policy discourse enables regional governments to sort and manage migrant 'others'. Through the discourse of resilience, regional governments identify which immigrants represent a resource for the region's economic growth, which may require additional support to fulfil their economic potential, whilst emphasising individual responsibility to overcome adversities associated with immigrant integration.

As a brief note on terminology, we use the term 'migrant' to encompass the broad range of foreign nationals who have moved to Canada from another country. We also use the terms 'immigrant,' 'newcomer' and 'refugee' as they appear in Canadian policy documents. The terms immigrant and newcomer broadly refer to migrants who have settled permanently in Canada and have permanent resident or citizenship status. The term refugee typically refers to people who have resettled in Canada as UN convention refugees, whereas refugee claimants refer to people who have submitted a claim within Canada that is pending review. Our analysis will also attend to groups of migrants who have a temporary or precarious immigration status in Canada, including temporary foreign workers, international students, refugee claimants (i.e. asylum seekers whose refugee claim is pending review within Canada) or people who are unauthorised to remain in Canada (i.e. nonstatus immigrants).

Literature review

Research on migrant resilience

Empirical studies on migrant resilience employ socio-ecological theories to examine migrants' inner capability to adapt to adversities associated with migration and resettlement (Kim *et al.*, 2015; Wu *et al.*, 2014),

including the resources provided by social networks and the broader so-cial environment (Lenette *et al.*, 2013; Anleu Hernández and García-Moreno, 2014; Li *et al.*, 2018; Nashwan *et al.*, 2019). These studies con-struct migrant subjects as either requiring or demonstrating resilience within the context of resettlement, such as unaccompanied refugee youth (Carlson *et al.*, 2012), older female Iraqi refugees (Nashwan *et al.*, 2019) and Chinese migrant children (Wu *et al.*, 2014). Resilience research fo-cuses on the coping strategies of migrants who have traumatic experien-ces related to war, family separation, language difficulties and cultural adaptation after resettlement (Carlson *et al.*, 2012; Anleu Hernández and García-Moreno, 2014; Dubus, 2018). As a result, the resilience dis-course in migration scholarship emphasises migrants' capacity to thrive despite structural challenges related to migration and settlement, rein-forcing individual responsibility to adapt to adversities and inequalities.

Managing diversity within multicultural Canada

We draw upon Vertovec's (2012) analysis of diversity in public policy, to consider in what ways resilience discourse functions in public policy as a mechanism for managing immigrant 'others'. Vertovec traces the origins of 'diversity' in public discourse to the struggle for civil rights in the USA and policy instruments designed to redress historic and on-going discrimination faced by African Americans and other minoritised groups. In the Canadian context, attention to cultural diversity was adopted as state policy through the Multiculturalism Act of 1971, which seeks to protect ethnic minorities and Indigenous communities, whilst encouraging their participation in social and political institutions (Abu-Laban, 1998). From the outset, multiculturalism in Canada evoked lib-eral values of equity and human rights, whilst maintaining the domi-nance of English and French language and cultural heritage. Whilst multiculturalism remains a beholden aspect of Canadian identity and is attributed to tolerance for cultural differences (Reitz, 2012), multicul-tural policies are critiqued for essentialising racialised difference, depo-liticising resistance to racism and perpetuating colonial hierarchies through differential treatment of Indigenous and racialised 'others' (Bannerji, 2000; Ku, 2009).

The rise of multiculturalism in public policy took place alongside the neo-liberalisation of Canadian immigrant policies, where human capital indicators replaced racial preferences in how immigrants were selected. Since the 1970s, immigrants have been screened for their education, age, economic self-sufficiency and labour market participation (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002). The majority of immigrants today originate in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean and are officially recognised as 'visible minori-ties' within Canada's multicultural mosaic. As Abu-Laban and Gabriel

(2002) argue, immigrant 'others' are only granted substantive citizenship (i.e. protection of social, economic and political rights) if they can successfully contribute to Canada's 'competitive advantage' in the global marketplace (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002, p. 436).

Several facets of diversity discourse outlined by Vertovec (2012) operate through Canadian multiculturalism policies including the following: redistribution, recognition, representation, provision, competition and organisation. At a national level, multicultural discourse promotes tolerance for ethnic, religious and racial diversity amongst immigrants who Canada relies on to maintain the country's population growth and economic productivity. As Wingard (2013) argues, Canada represents multicultural diversity as an asset that is good for business in the global economy, with local governments marketing their region's diversity to attract both immigrant workers and investors. Through invoking a positive image of the state as liberal, just and good, multicultural discourse 'redirects the anxieties that accompany neo-liberalisation including the material conditions of unemployment, economic disenfranchisement and changing demographics' (Wingard, 2013, p. ix).

Regional policies also reflect divergent strategies for managing multicultural diversity. Poirer (2004) categorised municipal policies in Ontario and Quebec as either: (i) assimilationist, where group differences are actively discouraged in the public sphere; (ii) universalist, where expressions of difference are tolerated, but only in the private sphere, and (iii) multiculturalist, where cultural differences in the private sphere are encouraged in the public sphere. Toronto represents the most 'proactive' and 'multiculturalist' city in Canada, dedicating resources to collect information and organise services to promote immigrant integration and cultural diversity (Frisken and Wallace, 2003). Consistent with Wingard's (2013) analysis of multiculturalism as a national brand, the City of Toronto's motto 'Diversity Our Strength' positions Toronto as an attractive investment for global finance. Considering the disproportionate levels of poverty amongst racialised immigrants in the City, however, Ahmadi (2018) argues that the celebration of Toronto's hyperdiversity occurs alongside negative stereotypes of spatially and racially segregated residents who face poverty, low employment and community violence (Boudreau *et al.*, 2009; Hulchanski, 2010).

Policy context

Toronto, Ontario, is a top destination for immigrants to Canada who are attracted by the region's economic opportunities and cultural diversity (Ahmadi, 2018). In 2019, over 47 per cent of all new immigrants to Canada settled in Ontario (Ontario Office of Economic Policy, 2019). An estimated 29 per cent of Ontario's population and 46 per cent of

Toronto's population were born outside of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2018). Whilst immigrants are one of the key drivers of Ontario's economic prosperity, rising income and racial inequality negatively impact many immigrants' economic opportunities and social integration (Galabuzi *et al.*, 2012). A growing proportion of migrants today are admitted on temporary resident permits as temporary foreign workers, international students or refugee claimants, which further magnifies differential rights and social inclusion (Sharma, 2006; Goldring and Landolt, 2011). Though immigrants have higher levels of education, as compared with the Canadian-born population, they face higher rates of poverty, lower wages and precarious employment. Income and racial inequality, furthermore, are tied to spatial segregation in Canadian cities such that low-income racialised immigrants are concentrated in 'priority' neighbourhoods that were identified by the municipal government in 2004 as regions that had higher rates of violence and fewer support services (Walks *et al.*, 2016).

Research design and methods

In this case study, we examine how the Ontario provincial and City of Toronto governments use the discourse of resilience to *frame* the challenges faced by immigrants and refugees and the steps governments are taking to promote resilience in support of immigrant integration. Rooted in symbolic interactionism and social movement theory (Rein and Schön, 1996), framing analysis explores how 'participants perceive their social realities and (re)present these to themselves and to others' (van Hulst and Yanow, 2016, p. 94). We consider how language operates within social systems to represent the values, ideologies and power relations associated with the discourse of resilience in public policy (Sandoval, 2000; Oktar, 2001).

We follow van Hulst and Yanow's (2016) approach for analysing policy fram*ing* through attention to the following dynamic processes: (i) *naming:* identifying policy stakeholders' language use and how this language reflects their understanding of the policy problem; (ii) *selecting:* examining how policy actors' use of language makes some aspects of the policy issue more or less visible and (iii) *storytelling*: tracing how language use binds elements of a policy issue together in a coherent fashion. Framing analysis is especially useful for identifying what 'worries' or concerns are foregrounded by policy actors to undergird 'the normative leap from what *is* to what *ought to be'* (van Hulst and Yanow, p. 98, emphasis in original). Examining the use of resilience in relation to newcomers provides an avenue for understanding how regional and local governments recognise social and economic challenges associated with

immigrant integration and growing diversity in their region, including proposals for 'what ought to be'.

Data sources: Ontario and City of Toronto

Our initial scan of policy documents on the Ontario government and City of Toronto websites confirmed the popularity of the term 'resilience', 'resilient' or 'resiliency'. We identified 115 reports and strategic plans from the Ontario government (2010–2017), related to environment and energy (46 per cent), rural and northern community development (20 per cent), and community and social services (10 per cent). For Toronto, this broad scan identified 114 documents (2005–2017) related to resources and environment (31 per cent), urban planning and infrastructure (22 per cent) and health (13 per cent). Whilst the broad scan confirmed the popularity of the term 'resilience', below we outline methods we used to identify documents related to immigrants and refugees.

Ontario policy documents

We used a two-step sampling strategy to retrieve Ontario policy documents. We first retrieved all available publications from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (retrieved in June 2018, same for all searches below), followed by a keyword search to identify documents containing 'resilience' keywords (i.e. 'resilience', 'resilient' and 'resiliency'). This search identified two progress reports of the Ontario's Immigration Strategy (ON1-2 in Table 1).

The second step involved keyword searches on the websites of two ministries which work closely with immigrants: Child and Youth Services and Education. We identified twenty and twenty-four documents respectively using a combination of resilience-related and immigrant-related terms (i.e. newcomer, immigrant, refugee). We excluded documents where the keywords appeared only in the reference lists or appendices, or where resilience-related keywords did not appear with newcomer-related keywords. It resulted in two documents from the Ministry of Child and Youth Services (ON3-4) and three documents from the Ministry of Education (ON5-7).

The final sample included seven policy documents from Ontario: two progress reports, two strategic plans and three guides published between 2008 and 2017 (see Table 1).

City of Toronto policy documents

We developed a two-step sampling strategy to identify municipal policy documents related to migrant resilience. We first searched for

Table 1. Provincial and municipal documents in the study sample.

ID	Document title	Year	Document type	Instances of 'resilience'
ONTARIO				
ON1	Our Foundation for Tomorrow: Ontario's Immigration Strategy 2017 Progress Report	2017	Progress report	1
ON2	A New Direction: Ontario's Immigration Strategy 2016 Progress Report	2016	Progress report	1
ON3	Growing Together. Ministry of Children and Youth Services 2013–2018 Strategic Plan	2014	Strategic plan	25
ON4	Stepping Up: A Strategic Framework to Help Ontario's Youth Succeed	2014	Strategic plan	5
ON5	Supporting English Language Learners with Limited Prior Schooling: A practical guide for Ontario educators (Grades 3–12)	2008	Guide	2
ON6	Capacity Building K-12: Supporting Students with Refugee Backgrounds, A Framework for Responsive Practice	2016	Guide	3
ON7	Tips for Settlement Workers and Employment Specialists Working with Newcomers	2016	Guide	5
TORONTO				
TO1	Toronto Newcomer Strategy: Helping Newcomers Thrive and Prosper	2013	Strategic plan	2
TO2	Toronto Newcomer Strategy, 2014–2016 Implementation	2014	Staff report	1
TO3	Regularising Toronto For All: A Public Education Initiative to Support Civic Resiliency	2017	Staff report	11
TO4	Toronto Newcomer Initiative: Program Report 2012	2012	Program report	4
TO5	Toronto Public Health Newcomer Pilot Projects	2011	Staff report	2
TO6	Toronto Youth Equity Strategy	2014	Staff report	7
TO7	Toronto for All	2018	Campaign Poster	6

documents from the Toronto Newcomer Strategy section of the City's website (City of Toronto, 2018) and the City of Toronto Council's minutes that contain resilience and immigrant-related keywords, resulting in five documents (TO1-4, TO7). We then used domain-specific Boolean searches on Google using the same keywords as the Ontario document search. The Google search produced 118 results, with most documents related to health ($n = 33$), community and social services

($n = 23$) and urban planning ($n = 15$). We excluded funding proposals and documents where resilience keywords were not used in relation to immigrants. The final sample for Toronto contained seven documents, including four staff reports, one strategic plan, one programme report and a poster from the *Toronto for All* campaign (see Table 1).

There are notable limitations to our approach to sampling provincial and municipal policy documents using online websites and databases. Our sample only consists of publicly available documents where one of our search terms appears in the document including 'resilience' or 'resilient' AND 'newcomers', 'refugee', 'migrant' and 'immigrant'. As a result, any policy documents that discuss specific groups of temporary immigrants (e.g. international students or temporary foreign workers) or specific groups by ethnicity or national origin (e.g. Syrian or Chinese) may have been excluded from this sample. In addition, the Ontario government dissolved the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration in 2019, following the election of Conversative Leader Doug Ford. As a result, the Ontario website has been significantly restructured and many of the documents we retrieved in mid-2018 are no longer available online. Consistent with our interpretive analysis approach, we take into account the dynamic conditions of our sampling approach when considering how municipal and provincial governments during this time period frame resilience in relation to immigrant settlement and integration.

Data analysis

After reviewing all of the retrieved documents, the co-authors developed a codebook to assist with data analysis and organisation . A total of eleven codes were developed through repeated reading of the data and research objectives. Some codes reflected literature on psycho-social and social resilience, which define resilience as an 'attribute', 'skill' or 'value'. Some codes reflected our framing analysis to understand resilience as a 'policy agenda', 'beneficiaries' of resilience discourse or 'targets of change' associated with the use of resilience. All data were hand-coded independently by each of the co-authors, and then verified through discussion and further analysis.

Results

Constructing resilience as a desired attribute for immigrants and refugees

Ontario and City of Toronto policy documents employ psycho-social and socio-ecological definitions of resilience to *name* positive attributes amongst immigrant and refugees in relation to an 'array of challenges

and opportunities' that result from 'increasing diversity' (ON5) and 'fierce global competition' (ON1). As a social process, some groups of immigrants and refugees are recognised as already possessing resilience as a result their 'successful navigation through significant threat[s]' [ON3] associated with pre- and post-migration stressors. Similar to Vertovec's (2012) analysis of diversity discourse in public policy, resilience invokes 'positive acceptance' of immigrants and refugees who have the capacity to 'adapt to change, take on challenges and embrace new opportunities' (ON3). Framing immigrants, who embody the positive attribute of resilience, shifts the focus from their deficits to their strengths, as reflected in the Ontario's Ministry of Education instructions for supporting language learners,

> International organizations report that significant numbers of refugees come from situations involving conflict and trauma. As well, issues such as unresolved asylum claims, financial hardships, limited facility with English, outstanding health issues, and the isolation and the newness of their lives in Ontario present daily challenges … At the same time, they are survivors. They often display incredible resilience and adaptability (ON5, emphasis added).

By referring to language learners as 'survivors', the Ministry of Education directs public educators to employ a strengths-based approach. Immigrants and refugees are not only capable of adapting to their new environment but are exemplary students who 'model perseverance and resilience, gratitude and a desire for education' [ON6]. This practice guide positions immigrant and refugee resilience as a strength that educators should leverage for the benefit of all learners.

Resilience is also framed as a desired attribute that job-seeking newcomers contribute to the region's prosperity. In the 2017 Progress Report on Ontario's Immigration strategy, the Minister of Immigration frames newcomers as vital economic agents for the region's economy,

> Our work continues to make Ontario an attractive and welcoming place for prospective immigrants. In times of rapid technological change and fierce global competition, we need a skilled and *resilient* workforce to give us a competitive advantage over other jurisdictions (ON1, emphasis added).

The Minister's remarks bind together (i.e. framing as storytelling) newcomers' contributions to the region's 'skilled and resilient workforce', which in turn contributes to the region's economic strength. The desire for resilient immigrants is echoed by employers in the Ontario Skills Passport—a job guide for newcomers—where the capacity for 'adapting to change and challenging situations' is listed as an 'essential skill' (ON7). In this guide, the President of ABC Literacy, another immigrant employer, highlights the need for resilient employees in the

global economy. Referring to increased global competition this employer writes,

> What we're left with in the 21st century and 21st century economies are relatively complex jobs that are constantly changing. Because of that you need resilient, adaptable employees that have these foundational skills so that when the demand is there for something new and different, you have employees who can rise to it (ON7 p. 2).

Whilst immigrants are framed as essential for a 'resilient workforce', the City of Toronto staff report links newcomer resilience to the City's commitment to integration by emphasising 'effective practices that build on the strength and *resilience* of newcomers... to support newcomers in their journey of making Toronto home' (TO2). The presence of resilient immigrants is a sign of the region's success at immigrant integration.

Constructing subjects in need of resilience

As noted above, immigrant and refugee subjectivity are constructed as both already resilient and in need of support to be more resilient, due to notions of trauma associated with family separation and forced migration. Various social and geographic contexts are also linked with the process of recognising resilience (see Table 2). Immigrants and refugees who are identified as 'East Asian, South Asian, Caribbean, African and Latin American' are often referred to as *in need* of resilience, therefor reinforcing whiteness as a *de facto* norm. Whilst systemic racism is mentioned as a concern facing many immigrants, this sample of policy documents lack any mention of the history of racial exclusion in Canadian immigration policy nor structural interventions needed to address racism faced by immigrants today.

In contrast to constructing some 'racialised' immigrants and refugees as inherently in need of support (in order to be more resilient), the Ontario government uses a de-racialised discourse (i.e. devoid of overt racial markers) to construct international students and workers as the 'best and brightest' who 'contribute to' the resilience of the whole society (ON1). Ontario's immigration strategy includes the recruitment of 'skilled workers' through the Provincial Nominee Program, where the province can sponsor the immigration of international students and skilled workers after one year of work with a Canadian employer. Ontario's immigration strategy illustrates the province's neo-liberal orientation; migrants with high levels of education and marketable skills are prioritised in the immigration system due to their economic potential. Although the vast majority of international students and skilled workers are also racialised as 'visible minorities' by the federal government, neither are mentioned as having resilience nor are they

Table 2. Subjects associated with resilience.

Immigrant subjects framed as:
Having resilience
Refugee youth who have experienced trauma and war (ON2, ON6)
Vulnerable and in need
In need due to individual/systemic challenges
Immigrant families who experience family separation (TO4); Newcomer youth with the highest
  needs (ON2); Newcomer families experiencing inter-generational conflicts (ON2); Youth who
  are exposed to social and economic marginalisation (TO6); Youth who are vulnerable to
  experiencing multiple barriers (ON4); Youth who are most vulnerable to involvement in serious
  violence (TO6)
In need due to country of origin:
Newcomers within the East Asian, South Asian, Caribbean, African and Latin American communi-
  ties (TO4); Refugees from all over the world—Afghanistan, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Colombia, Haiti
  and Syria (ON6)
Subjects who contribute to the resilience of workforce:
Best and brightest international students and workers (ON1)
Non-Immigrant subjects in need of resilience:
All Toronto residents (TO3, TO7); City staff (TO3)

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represented as in need of resilience. Rather, they are constructed as resources that enhance the resilience of Canadian society in the context of economic globalisation.

Constructing adversities that require resilience

As a process of recognition, resilient subjects are constructed in relation to specific challenges and adversities that the identified beneficiaries (i.e. newcomers and the broader public) face. Challenges identified by the policy documents can be divided into three categories: (i) challenges that newcomers face due to individual circumstances; (ii) systemic challenges faced by newcomers and (iii) challenges faced by the society.

Challenges newcomers face due to individual circumstances

In our sample of policy documents, adversities that migrants faced *pre-migration* (e.g. war, trauma, family separation) were framed as individual issues (See Table 3). Whilst forced migration is considered as a collective experience driven by larger processes of war or environmental disaster (Castles, 2003), migrant resilience signifies an individual's capacity to cope with trauma. Transnational family separation is similarly framed as a circumstance to which migrants demonstrate resilience or may require resilience in order to cope and adapt. Our sample of documents does not discuss the role that immigration policy plays in producing family separation (e.g., many temporary foreign workers are prohibited from entering Canada with their family). By individualising these adversities,

Table 3. Challenges associated with resilience

Individual/family circumstances faced by newcomers		Systemic challenges faced by newcomers	Systemic challenges faced by society
Pre-migration	*Post-migration*		
War and violence	Adaptation to a new culture, political system, civic institutions	Discrimination	Evolving complexity and diversity of social environment
Trauma		Racism	
Family separation		Stigma	Changing job market, technological change
	Family separation	Social isolation	
	Family reunification	Limited access to public services	Fierce global competition
	Intergenerational conflict	Lack of affordable housing	
	Limited language and literacy skills	Poverty	Ageing population with fewer young workers
	Limited prior schooling	Unemployment/precarious employment	

policy documents focus on what migrants need to overcome individual issues towards fulfilling their full potential in Canada.

Several challenges that *migrants face post-migration* are also constructed as individual problems including cultural adaptation, learning how to navigate Canadian political systems and civic institutions, unemployment and limited literacy in English or French. In the background section of the City of Toronto's newcomer strategy, the city acknowledges,

> Even in a city as diverse and welcoming as Toronto, immigration can be a challenging experience. Newcomers may be coming from difficult circumstances such as war and violence. Others may arrive from countries with very different political systems, civic institutions and services.

In this excerpt, the City's Newcomer Strategy invokes Toronto's self-image as 'diverse and welcoming' to position the municipal government as proactively supporting immigrants' settlement. The challenges that migrants face, however, are dissociated from the city's reputation. This statement implies that the city is doing what it can to accommodate newcomers whose challenges are the result of 'difficult circumstances' that they bring with them. Positioning certain migrant challenges as external to Toronto, or even Canada, reinforces the neocolonial erasure of global inequities that produce migration to Canada in the first place (Hackett, 2017). In contrast, the city government positions their role as providing support to these migrants to cope with *their* adversities.

Systemic challenges faced by newcomers

Policy documents that recognise the systemic challenges faced by migrants after they arrived in Canada refer to racism and discrimination, social isolation, low public service accessibility, poverty, lack of

affordable housing and social and economic marginalisation. In a staff report about Toronto's newcomer public health projects, the downward trajectory of newcomer health is noted as a key concern,

> Although newcomers generally arrive healthy and resilient, their health often deteriorates the longer they live in Canada. This is largely due to a broad range of social factors including: high rates of unemployment and precarious employment, income insecurity, discrimination, social isolation and exclusion, housing insecurity, and barriers to services [TO5].

In this excerpt, City of Toronto staff describes the need for newcomer-specific health initiatives to address systemic inequities including racism, stigma and discrimination which contribute to newcomer's poor health. This staff report outlines a wide range of initiatives to improve newcomer health including the following: a conference that facilitated intellectual exchanges of the social determinants of health [TO2], partnerships between health and settlement service providers, and programmes that aim to improve newcomers' health [TO1]. None of the policy responses, however, directly address systemic issues, rather, they focus on improving the quality of individualised services that target newcomers.

Framing resilience, as an individualised response to systemic challenges, resonates with Park *et al.* (2020) critiques of resilience in social work literature where systemic issues were only mentioned briefly but not tackled, and interventions focus on service users' ability to cope with these challenges. Similarly, the policy documents do not address structural problems, instead focusing on migrants' capacity to cope with systemic inequalities through demonstrating resilience. The concept of transformative resilience is not apparent in these documents: migrants' capacities to create changes or challenge systemic inequalities were not mentioned; instead, they were framed as passive individuals who could only cope with the structural challenges.

Constructing 'civic resiliency' as a remedy for systemic challenges

Whilst the Ontario government encourages educators, city staff and job seekers to promote resilience amongst immigrants and refugees—as an expression of socio-ecological resilience—the City of Toronto's *Toronto for All* campaign employs the concept of 'civic resilience' to address 'issues related to Islamophobia, xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment'. Through *Toronto for All*, a series of public education programmes were launched in partnership with community organisations to combat public resistance to the resettlement of up to 7,000 Syrian refugees in Toronto in 2016 (TO3). This campaign encourages civil servants and the public at large to 'better understand their own biases or

stereotypes that may prevent them from providing the best service to Torontonians from equity-seeking groups' (TO7), including trans youth of colour, Black Canadians, Indigenous people, people seeking safety from gender-based violence and Muslim residents. In contrast to other policy documents in our sample, *Toronto for All* identifies 'all residents' as the subjects who need resilience,

> Civic resiliency is the capacity of a group of residents or community to adapt to the evolving complexity and diversity of their social environment by building good relationships and viewing these changes as a strength [TO3].

As shown in this quote, the growing diversity and complexity of the city is constructed as a challenge to residents and equity-seeking communities. Residents are expected to adapt in the face of these challenges by reducing their prejudicial attitudes and behaviours towards racialised immigrants, as a means of fulfilling Toronto's promise of being a 'welcoming' city.

Toronto for All invokes collective responsibility by placing the onus on the general public to address internalised biases so that all residents may prosper. Despite framing all residents as responsible for immigrant integration, the notion of civic resilience maintains individual responsibility for solving structural inequalities. In other words, residents who express discriminatory attitudes are not 'resilient' and thus responsible for the difficulties faced by Black and Muslim residents. As Park *et al.* (2020) suggested, the use of resilience constructs a norm that reinforces the image of an 'ideal individual'. Here, when 'resilience' is put under a 'civic' framework, the values adhere to the city's branding, 'Diversity Our Strength' and residents who are not 'resilient' are constructed as 'bad citizens'.

Discussion

In this case study of the City of Toronto and Ontario policy documents, policy discourse constructs resilience as an attribute that newcomers embody, something they bring to the region, but also the whole of a newcomer's story. Similar to previous studies on diversity discourse, the discourse of resilience carries a positive affect that reinforces public values of multiculturalism and tolerance for diversity. Resilience discourse also differentiates amongst those whose deficits are tolerated (i.e. they are deserving of additional support) versus those with innate ability to serve as resources for the province. Refugees, for example, who have endured trauma associated with war and forced migration are admired for their resilience yet are expected to cope with the structural inequalities they encounter in Canada. Skilled migrants, on the other hand, represent

the 'best and brightest' immigrants who are valued for their economic contributions, which represent a resource for the region's capacity to withstand economic shocks associated with fluctuations in the global market. In all cases, migrant resilience is framed as integral to the region's capacity to adapt to challenges that stem from economic globalisation and related social and environmental threats.

Following Ahmed's (2012) attention to how diversity discourse produces knowledge about the subject that is in need of transforming, we argue that the discourse of resilience highlights which immigrant subjects have the potential to transform, to be integrated, thereby reproducing boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. When resilience is associated with individual circumstances—pre-or post-migration—policy discourse constructs migrants as either already resilient, due to these circumstances, or in need of support. In contrast, when society's resilience is the primary concern, the strengths of the migrants are stressed, as well as how these strengths can be used by society to achieve prosperity. The contrast in terms of who the 'migrants' are in the two different scales delivers a message: the vulnerable migrants are expected to cope with *their challenges* by themselves; however, the province/city needs the skilled migrants to cope with *our challenges*.

Across provincial and municipal policy documents, economic prosperity remains a key concern for identifying and promoting migrant resilience. In Ontario documents, economic prosperity of the society (i.e. the province) was repeatedly stressed as an outcome of migrants' resilience. Migrants' well-being was also expected to be enhanced as a result of their resilience (such as health, happy and productive life; positive social skills and relationships). Whilst the novel concept of 'civic resilience' employed by the City of Toronto suggests a shift towards collective responsibility of immigrant well-being, economic interests remain a central motivation for reducing bias against equity-seeking group. Whilst this policy discourse recognises Toronto residents' responsibility to adapt to an increasingly diverse population, the government itself is not constructed as an agent of structural change. For example, the policy discourse around migrant resilience does not discuss systemic challenges related to unaffordable housing, access to public benefits or precarious work.

Conclusion

Whilst conceptualisations of social resilience carry the potential for more transformative social policy and practice, as van Breda (2019) outlines, resilience theory in social work and public policy remains vulnerable to a neo-liberal agenda. The underlying vulnerabilities associated with structural inequality have been laid bare during the global public

health and economic emergencies associated with theCOVID-19 global pandemic (i.e. the world-wide epidemic of the novel coronovirus (COVID 19) caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).. That racialised immigrant communities in Toronto have been some of the hardest hit, in terms of loss of life and economic distress, is a symptom of long-standing inequities. Though our research took place prior to the pandemic, social work practitioners, policy makers and researchers working in the area of community development and public policy can draw lessons from how municipal and provincial governments employ resilience discourse to signal their commitment to marginalised groups. Whilst the discourse of 'civic resilience' carries the promise of collective responsibility to address structural inequalities that fuel racial and economic inequality amongst immigrants and other minoritised groups, governments must commit to transformative structural changes that ensure affordable housing, decent work and access to health and social services, as fundamental to enabling individual and social resilience.

Funding

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