

**Conceptualising “economic inclusion” for migrant professionals as Structural Conflict:
Lessons learned from the interdisciplinary field of PACS (Peace and Conflict Studies)**

My doctoral research in the field of migration-transition relates to economic inclusion for visible minority skilled newcomers in Winnipeg, and the study is situated in an interdisciplinary PACS framework. This paper, a work in progress, presents some findings that emerge from my study, to make an argument that aligning these two fields, Migration and PACS, enhances the potential to create new and insightful integration solutions in the context of migration. One of the most compelling issues confronting our world today, it is important that we think about migration in multi-perspectival ways; and that its “management” take into account interests of all population groups.

In this working paper, intersectional and integrative approaches are discussed with the objective of exploring solutions. For example, (a) how can individuals be better supported to build capacity so that their employability, agency, and resiliency may be enhanced; (b) how can settlement services and community-based agencies be better enabled to develop more targeted and measurable services that are informed by robust research; and (c) how can structural gaps be addressed by using person-centred approaches and developing policies that are better co-ordinated, more responsive and inclusive.

The paper hopes to provide the rationale for a comprehensive and holistic approach based in principles of Multi-Track diplomacy, and other theories and strategies from PACS. Further, constructivist career counselling models are presented as solutions in the changing economy when careers must be constructed as flexible.

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Brief Bio: Alka Kumar, PhD, Peace and Conflict Studies:

After a meaningful first career as an educator and Associate Professor in English at the University of Delhi, in India, more recently, Alka Kumar has been exploring through research and practice, migration and economic integration related issues as applicable in the case of racialized skilled migrants in Canada.

Alka is currently supporting one of the CERC projects in a research role while also working on other short term consulting and teaching projects in the area of labour market inclusion for racialized skilled migrants. Describing herself as a researcher-practitioner, in the last few years Alka has worked with new Canadians in a service provision role, developing and delivering programs, supporting individuals through career transition counseling, employment pathways planning, and skills training. She views 'lived experience' and 'practitioner positionality' as critical lenses to better understand economic and social inclusion challenges arising from migration, seeing them also as important tools for solution-building.

As a member of the York Region Community Partnership Council, she is part of a Local Immigration Partnership team that is developing policy driven initiatives to enhance social and economic integration for newcomers in the York Region.