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Speaking Welcome: A Discursive Analysis of an Immigrant Mentorship Event in Atlantic Canada

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Speaking welcome: A discursive analysis of an immigrant mentorship event in Atlantic Canada

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journals.sagepub.com/home/etn**Kristi A Allain**

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Abstract

This article offers an analysis of a business mentorship event in Fredericton, NB, which targeted immigrants sponsored through the New Brunswick Provincial Nominee Program (NBPNP)—an economic revitalization program designed to attract foreign business people and skilled workers to settle in the province. Applying Derrida’s concept of hospitality as a technology of whiteness, we examine the stated and implicitly understood expectations for the NBPNP, including the mechanisms at play for regulating newcomer’s behavior and comportment. We locate our analysis in the context of a regionally expressed Canadian multiculturalism, extending the relevance of our findings beyond Fredericton to Atlantic Canada. We ask: how do associated discourses of whiteness, multiculturalism and hospitality come into play to shape dynamics of power existing between hosts (settlement workers, various shadow state actors and mentor volunteers) and racialized newcomer guests? As a racialized threshold event, the Sip, Greet and Meet facilitated an exchange of hospitality such that the New Brunswick native hosts marked newcomers as perpetual arrivants, while holding the immigrants responsible for the success of their settlement in the Fredericton region. We show how the discourses regarding newcomers’ duties cleared nativist inhabitants of any accountability for the success of

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immigrant settlement. We also show how the process of welcoming conveyed a message that the future success of the local community, the province and even Atlantic Canada depended on the business class immigrants' ability to serve as dutiful and grateful guests.

Keywords

Participant observation, Derrida, hospitality, whiteness, multiculturalism, Atlantic Canada, New Brunswick, immigration, Provincial Nominee Program

Prologue: "Most importantly, where are you from?"

The flyer for the regular Sip, Greet and Meet¹ advertised a business mentorship initiative to connect established business professionals with new business-class immigrants in the Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada area. Sponsored by the provincial Chamber of Commerce and its award-winning Business Immigrant Mentorship Program (BIMP), the event took place at an entrepreneurial hub for various social service initiatives devoted to business development in Fredericton. Similar meet-up events were held several times throughout the year, and played a central role in the BIMP's programming.

We arrived at the meeting room, complete with plush leather rolling desk chairs and a white boardroom table. Beverages and snacks were laid out for the participants. There were approximately 25 people in attendance, including non-newcomers, local business mentors and new immigrant mentees (all were racialized minorities) and staff from several social service agencies. The director of the entrepreneurial hub, a white woman well known in the greater business community, arrived as the meeting was set to begin. She took a seat towards the head of the table, between a provincial population growth specialist and a mentor in marketing. After a few minutes of casual chatting, the director took hold of a large white coffee mug with a silver bike-bell affixed to its handle. She enthusiastically rang the group to order, silencing the boisterous conversations and bringing all eyes to the hosts.

After providing some background information about the program and reporting its awards for mentoring immigrants, the director called for introductions. She selected a racialized woman at the far end of the table to start. The selected woman explained that she worked as an employment counselor at a local agency, assisting new immigrants with job searches and other employment issues in the city. As the woman finished her explanation, the director interjected, "Now, most importantly, where are you from?" The employment counselor laughed awkwardly.

Integration at the threshold

Multicultural citizenship has been extensively analyzed as a system of accommodation and ranking of citizens through categories of racialization on the basis of

white settler superiority (Dhamoon, 2009). However, little research has been done on how extensions of welcoming, as expressed in events like Sip, Greet and Meet or other immigrant settlement programs, can be understood in relation to technologies of settler whiteness and multicultural tolerance.² Moreover, much of the literature on Canadian multiculturalism tends to treat multiculturalism as an issue primarily affecting communities receiving the greatest numbers of immigrants—i.e. large urban centers and mid-sized communities in central Canada. The literature also tends to overlook regional differences in how public agencies or state officials understand and practice accommodation of racial and ethnic difference. Such literature, therefore, fails to examine the ways that multiculturalism operates differently or locally in regional centers like New Brunswick (cf. Wilson-Forsberg, 2012). Attending to how diverse practices of hospitality—as articulated through the frame of multiculturalism—become entwined with the logics of whiteness allows for a more nuanced comprehension of how such logics impact the lives and social positions of local inhabitants.

In this article, we examine the techniques of welcoming Sip, Greet and Meet hosts drew upon to navigate understandings of the place of racialized newcomers in a city and province that have historically created little social or political space for racial and ethnic diversity, but now espouse multiculturalism and welcoming of immigrants as regional aspiration (Passaris, 2012). Building upon critical scholarship addressing power dynamics between nativist hosts and racialized newcomers, we bring Derrida's reading on the aporia of hospitality (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000) into dialogue with selected writings from critical whiteness and multicultural studies. We offer a close, discursive examination of the Sip, Greet and Meet event, affording new insight into the tensions between the principles of hospitality that frame the policies of state-led multiculturalism, and the common-sense practices of hospitality that non-state, or state, actors bring to the work of settling immigrants. We explore the ways in which an official "welcoming" event functions as a type of racialized threshold (Chueh, 2012), exposing the limits of what welcoming and tolerance can bear. In this specific event, hospitality, Canadian/New Brunswick identity, dreams of brighter futures, and investments in whiteness, became elements of a discursive exchange between the event's hosts and the new immigrants in attendance.

In writing this assessment, we are mindful of the level of commitment, time, enthusiasm, and care the BIMP coordinators exercise in their outreach and mentorship programs. It is with respect that we offer the critical findings of our research to our interlocutors in the province's settlement sector.

Methodology

Our analysis is based on our ethnographic notes taken during one Sip, Greet and Meet session. Our attendance was part of a larger pilot project exploring how operations of the New Brunswick Provincial Nominee Program (NBPNP) (2018) have been experienced by differently placed stakeholders, namely municipal- and

provincial-level bureaucrats, business people, settlement service workers, and recent immigrants settled through the program. As we interviewed prominent community leaders and government officials associated with the NBPNP, we heard about the award-winning BIMP and its “unique” newcomer greeting events. After an initial conversation with the director, we received an invitation to attend one such event as researchers.

During the course of the event, we conducted unstructured observation (cf. Mulhall, 2003; Silverman, 1993). Although our observations were “limited, partial and interpretive” (Mulhall, 2003: 307), they provided insights into the socially complex, interactional setting. The participants’ comportments, gestures, words, and appearances provided clues as to how power was circulating among them (cf. McNaughton-Nicholls et al., 2014; Mulhall, 2003).

In our analysis, we triangulated our collective field notes with city and provincial documents on immigration and interviews with officials connected to the NBPNP, as we sought to untangle the discursive frames that guided the Sip, Greet and Meet hosts. As this event offered mentorship to mostly racialized newcomers, we targeted our analysis on the participants and hosts who authorized, welcomed and positioned the newcomers through their statements, questions, and intended or unintended behaviors. Through this targeted focus on the discourses at play in this event, we were able to hone in on the numerous, specific ways that power operates and becomes tangible through the performance of hospitality.

In undertaking this research, we were conscious that all three researchers had recently come to New Brunswick from Ontario, and that we fit the local categorization of “come from aways” (CFAs). Also, Çalışkan has racialized immigrant experience, and Crath is of mixed racial heritage (European/Indigenous) but white presenting. We understood these differential positionings as presenting an ethical challenge requiring deep reflection regarding how our own subjectivities were implicated in power differentials playing out in this research process. To do this work, we drew on our respective histories of being engaged personally, professionally and academically with different racialized communities, where we were considered at times insiders and, at other times, outsiders.

“The most valuable resource for development”

State-sanctioned accounts of multiculturalism in Canada (nationally and regionally) have been well rehearsed by liberal scholars (cf. Kymlicka, 2003; Taylor, 1992). We offer this version here to familiarize readers to operative assumptions grounding the state’s promotion of ethnic diversity and inclusion. However, in introducing our theoretical frame in the following section (see later), we offer a sustained critique of these working assumptions. According to Banting and Kymlicka (2010), the early 1970s marked the formal repudiation of two historically established practices for governing racialized difference in Canada: (i) techniques of containment and forced assimilation of Indigenous peoples and immigrants designed to cement Anglo-Celtic sensibilities as the basis for an emerging

Canadian nationalist imaginary; and (ii) racist, exclusionary immigration practices favoring immigrants from the British Isles and Northern Europe to the exclusion of Asian and African diasporic immigrants. If the adoption of more “race-neutral admissions” criteria in the early 1970s opened up citizenship pathways to non-European and non-Christian immigrants, the Multicultural Act of 1971 was thought to pave the way for a more pluralistic understanding of nationalist integration. As these authors argue, state-led multiculturalism adheres to several guiding principles. First, the policy is designed to recognize the multiple dimensions of Canadian ethnic difference. It officially acknowledges the historical founding of Canada on two settler national “cultures” (French and English), while simultaneously citing Indigenous peoples as original founders, and an essential dimension of Canada’s ethnic diversity. In addition, various “immigrant groups” (other than Anglo-Franco colonizers or Indigenous peoples) are understood to constitute the third dimension of Canadian diversity. Second, the policy allows for the institutionalized celebration, accommodation and integration of diverse ideas, identities, values, and religious or other cultural expressions. Apart from the Act’s intention to “promote cultural exchange in the interest of National unity” (Kymlicka, 2003: 47), there is acknowledgment of the contributions diverse cultural expressions make to the nation’s economic well-being (Grillo, 2007). Cultural pluralism and integration are thus presented as integral to the ongoing project of liberal nation-building. The policy’s second arm recognizes the role the state needs to play in supporting “cultural retention” and fostering “immigrant integration”.

New Brunswick’s practices of multicultural accommodation are currently being negotiated within the context of a region experiencing what O’Connor (2015) deemed a “demographic death spiral”. Rising public fears over population decline (Fraser, 2017), patterns of out-migration, aging populations, shrinking provincial revenues and an uncertain socio-economic future have been widely debated in New Brunswick. Academic publications (Passaris, 2012), local and national print media (Conrad, 2006; Ibbitson, 2015; O’Connor, 2015), provincial reports (New Brunswick, 2013), and state-level political exchanges (McKenna, 2016) have contributed to building a now-dominant consensus, that an infusion of new people is essential for New Brunswick’s future. In response, the province has leveraged various policy tools, including the NBNP, to entice and welcome business immigrants to the province. As the *New Brunswick Population Growth Strategy 2013–2018* claims: “The welcoming nature of New Brunswick’s communities is one of our greatest assets . . . Ensuring we protect and celebrate our multicultural heritage also remains a priority for this government” (New Brunswick, 2013: 6).

Although the immigrant-welcoming strategy invokes language paralleling a broader Canadian liberal multicultural discourse, New Brunswick has its own localized understandings of Canada as a tolerant harbor of multiculturalism. As we explore below, much of the state’s work for encouraging and enabling settlement in the Atlantic region involves a balancing act. Immigrant invitation programs must respond to the region’s demographic crises while managing tensions between recently arrived racialized immigrants and the long-established

(white Anglophone or Francophone) regional residents (New Brunswick, 2013), who have claimed ownership of the region.

Researchers addressing immigration in New Brunswick have found that the province's unique history and particular understandings of racialized difference raise significant challenges to immigrant inclusion and retention. Multiculturalism in New Brunswick has mainly meant the accommodation of Acadian (French) cultural heritage by an Anglo majority. Indigenous or other non-Anglo-Franco ethnic difference is a secondary consideration to official state practices of bilingualism and recognition of the province's two founding settler nations. Historian Margaret Conrad (2006), writing in the *Telegraph-Journal*, argues that, since 1912, the province has a protracted history of policies favoring white British and Northern European immigrants, to the exclusion of racialized immigrants from other parts of the globe. The Statistics Canada (2017) census profiles of "mother tongue" languages attested to the province's lack of racial/ethnic diversity, with only 2.89% of the province's population speaking a non-European language as of 2016.

Given these historically entrenched exclusionary practices, writers like Conrad (2006: A5) have questioned the province's capacity to successfully welcome racialized newcomers and aid in their settlement. Ramos and Yoshida (2011: 14–15), in their examination of reasons motivating new immigrants' secondary migration out of Atlantic Canada, found that Conrad's observations were on the mark. Although issues associated with employment were important "push factors" for newcomers leaving the region, a significant number (29%) reported experiencing discrimination while living in the area. As Ramos and Yoshida explained, "This rather high rate contradicts the emphasis on generating 'welcoming communities', not to mention reported openness to people 'from away'" (2011: 2016).

Hospitality as a technology of settler whiteness

We contend that Jacques Derrida and Dufourmantelle's work on hospitality (2000), if reconceptualized through a critical whiteness and multicultural lens, is useful for teasing apart the very racialized contradictions inhering in how state/non-state actors in New Brunswick aspire to, and practice, immigrant welcoming and tolerance of ethnic difference. According to Derrida's reading, hospitality is characterized by an internal tension between an unmediated, unconditional "absolute hospitality", and a pragmatic "conditional hospitality" tethered to the practices of law and local ethics. "Absolute hospitality", as an ethical ideal, requires the host to allow guests full access to the home (or in this case the province/nation) without questions or reservations. In fact, absolute hospitality calls into question the very right of the host to claim sole ownership of the home/place in which guests are being welcomed (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000: 25).

However, as Derrida suggests, the enactment of absolute hospitality as a universal ideal is "inconceivable and incomprehensible" (cited in Westmoreland, 2008: 3), because there is a contradiction at the heart of hospitality.

Absolute hospitality's ethics demands a surrender of power and control to an outsider or guest—in the very home space (region/nation) that one legally possesses, and in which local governance policies and cultural values are operative (Yegenoglu, 2003: 10–11). For Derrida, this very restricting of hospitality calls into place claims of ownership, entitlements, and obligations. In other words, particularized practices of law and culture (Yegenoglu, 2003) mobilized in the name of hospitality (and welcoming) enact dynamics of power and control (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000: 5).

Recent studies on critical multiculturalism and whiteness provide insights into how conditioned hospitality is operationalized in the context of state-sanctioned multiculturalism. Critics of liberal multiculturalism argue that, despite its claims to fostering cultural pluralism, Canadian state-led multicultural policy, in actuality, functions as a regulatory mechanism for both depoliticizing and containing the diversity of non-Anglo-Franco cultures within the existing frame of an “imagined” (Anderson, 1983) “secularist nationalist community” (Dhamoon, 2005: 15; 2009; Mackey, 2002). As sociologist Sunera Thobani (2007) explains, a certain Canadian nationalist subjectivity has been created based on a prescribed set of Anglo-Protestant, liberal ethics and characteristics. During successive phases of settler expansion and state formation, techniques of governance were employed to call forth certain subjects to embody these dispositions. Specifically, these subjects were understood to belong to the racial/social category of “white Canadian”. The fantasy of whiteness, as a historically produced nationalist ideal, a category of identity (Galabuzi, 2011; Sharma, 2011), and as social mechanism of power (Lee and Bhuyan, 2013: 99) initially included only those of Anglo-Celtic heritage, but was expanded—albeit reluctantly so—throughout the earlier to mid-20th century to include northern, southern and eastern Europeans. By a discursive sleight of hand, these characteristics and values were then deemed to be intrinsic to white nationalist subjects' moral and physical constitution and simultaneously declared to be an essential component of the spirit and identity of the emerging national body politic. The ability to claim Canadian “exalted” subjectivity (Thobani, 2007)—as “law abiding, enterprising, polite, compassionate, caring”—continues to hinge on the right to embody these normativized, national traits (2007: 9). As Thobani clarifies, to garner a sense of unquestioned belonging and associated symbolic and material entitlements³ in an ever-evolving Canadian nationalist project, whiteness permits not only the right to express a proper nationalist ontology, but also the freedom to identify these characteristics in others (Harris, 1993). Privileged subjects, in other words, recognize themselves in, and are affirmed by, their performativity of shared “Canadian” sensibilities and traditions (Thobani, 2007: 9).

Canadian settler whiteness can thus be thought of as instantiating racialized privileges along multiple dimensions. Whiteness confers entitlement via a socially produced visual register of recognition for proper personhood (Harris, 1993)—perceived in terms of epidermal hue/phenotype, bodily comportment, dress, attitude, and sentiment. This historically and institutionally inscribed bundle of embodied dispositions have become naturalized to such an extent that they are

presumed to constitute a universal set of standards by which all of the nations' various residents are measured and hierarchically positioned (Dhamoon, 2005, 2009; Mackey, 2002; Thobani, 2007). Within the context of a state-sanctioned liberal multiculturalism, whiteness also operates as an epistemological criterion (Harris, 1993) for determining the legitimacy of rights claims, or the reasonableness of expectations for entitlement and privilege. Whiteness can also be thought of as operating spatially, to demarcate experiences of either belonging or out-of-placedness.

Mackey (2002) argues the culturalist project of Canadian nation-building creates a primarily white Western hegemony, while constructing itself as a country that incorporates cultural diversity in ways that are both advantageous to itself and to its diverse communities. As she explains, "If Canada is the very house of difference, it contains a family with a distinct household head" (2002: 12). In the practices of multicultural integration, non-Anglo-Franco difference qua "culture" (most often associated with racialized subjects) is a social problem that can be expressly welcomed if necessary, and tolerated so long as it remains non-disruptive to the naturalized social order (Bannerji, 2000; Walcott, 2011). According to this calculus, tolerance and hospitality function as parallel governance mechanisms drawn upon to manage integrationist politics.

According to Wendy Brown (2008), the very discourse of tolerance short-circuits understanding of how configurations of power shape and produce racial marginalization or other socio-economic inequalities. Being tolerant of other "cultures", including Indigenous peoples, allows those staking claims to "Canadian Canadian" (Mackey, 2002: 89) identity an assumed position of neutrality outside the historical and contemporary workings of power. If, through the exercise of tolerance, exalted subjects are rendered innocent of the means by which their investments and practices are implicated in instantiating epistemological and socio-economic hierarchies, tolerance's corollary, conditional hospitality, can also be thought of as implicated in the technology of settler whiteness. Conditional hospitality, as understood through a critical multiculturalism lens, is a mechanism through which racialized immigrants become spatially, symbolically and materially relegated to their places in Canadian white settler society. Conditional hospitality makes the guest "visible" (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000: 57, 121) through questioning at the threshold. Questions become a regulatory technique for imposing limits and maintaining the entitlements of whiteness. Newcomers are asked "What is your name?"; "What are your intentions?"; "Where was your prior home?" (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000: 135). Derrida also reminds us that, when hosts enact hospitality as a series of conditional rules and responsibilities, then this practice not only "prescribes the other" (2000: 147), but also reinvigorates the hosts' claim to ownership of the domain (nation, region or city). If it is "the master of the house who lays down the laws of hospitality" (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000: 149), then the very nature of "conditional welcoming" defines the place from which one welcomes (Yegenoglu, 2003). "The law", in other words, as reconceptualized within the framework of liberal multiculturalism

and its associated logics of whiteness, stages “the conditions for appropriating for oneself a place to welcome the [racialized] other” (Derrida, cited in Yegenoglu, 2003: 6).

Analysis: “Sip, Greet and Meet”

An examination of the Sip, Meet and Greet event suggests lines of continuity between our rereading of Derrida’s conceptualization of the aporia of hospitality as an articulation of the technologies of whiteness at play in practices of Canadian multiculturalism and discursive practices that were deployed to orient hosts’ welcoming of racialized immigrants. Three discursive themes emerged in our analysis, namely interrogating and conditioning foreignness, retaining the city as a property of unmarked settler whiteness and using hospitality as a disciplinary or regulating force.

Interrogating and conditioning foreignness

The electronic poster advertising Sip, Greet and Meet asked the participants to come ready with ideas, questions or concerns. By highlighting the words “coffee mentor” in several languages, and by promising conversation, networking and snacks, the poster suggested an unstructured gathering to facilitate newcomer belonging and foster entrepreneurial ties. True to the poster’s promise, there was an informal quality to the initial staging of the event. The director greeted the participants individually as they talked and assembled around the meeting table. The ringing of the director’s bell signaled the displacement of one mode of interaction for another, as unstructured modes of inter-relating gave way to a hierarchicalized format that would frame the rest of the event. The positioning of the director at the head of the table and her use of the bell, voice, and authorial gesturing appeared to offer few acceptable openings for participants to disrupt the proceedings or challenge their agenda. After welcoming the participants and providing an overview of the agency’s work, the director set the order for introductions. She began by pointing at and calling on a racialized woman to introduce herself. After this participant had tried to describe her own contributions to the city’s immigration process, the director, with seeming disregard for this self-definition, interjected, “Now, most importantly, where are you from?”. The visibly surprised employment counsellor laughed in what was perhaps an affectively charged gesture of challenge. Notwithstanding intentions lying behind it, the counsellor’s emotional response had the effect of temporarily forestalling the interpellation of her foreignness and seemingly opened up the possibility of questioning the director’s entitlement to claim belonging, and its corollary, to demand the foreignness of others. Laid bare, for a moment at least, was the aporia of hospitality and its associated entanglements with the logics of settler whiteness. Despite this momentary respite, the employment counsellor followed her laugh with a statement about her country of origin. The participant’s reluctant acquiescence to the director’s

interjection performatively inscribed her “foreigner” status as a site of inquiry while simultaneously confirming the host’s epistemic entitlement to solicit the most salient feature of business-class immigrants—not the bundle of skills that they offered but their status as outsider guests.

Over the next hour, the director proceeded with this line of questioning, calling on one newcomer after the other to name “where they were from”. The power of this question lay in its repetition (Hall, 2000). As each person responded appropriately to this citation of strangeness, the interrogation became a declarative re-inscription of the newcomers’ position as racialized arrivants at the threshold of a *Canadian* home. Although the director, the mentors and the settlement workers framed their introductions as benevolent expressions of welcome, they simultaneously conveyed the expectations and requirements of a greater governmental authority to which the guests were subject and vulnerable. Given that this gathering was sponsored by a provincial population growth program, the director’s compulsion to know the foreign, racially inscribed identities of participants indicated more than her own personal interest. It also reflected the prevailing context of official multiculturalism, as manifest in the provincial government’s population growth strategies.

As indicated in our interviews with other officials in the population growth program, these strategies assumed an aim of protecting the city’s Anglo-Acadian heritage via the management of immigrant difference. For the guests to challenge the director’s words and actions, even when they clearly conveyed normative whiteness at work, would have involved a socio-political risk (DiAngelo, 2018) of publicly questioning the provincial and federal governments’ racialized immigration practices, and the role of the BIMP in carrying out its mandate. Not only did the inquiry serve to instantiate the newcomers’ foreignness, it also silenced their ability to voice dissent. The social stakes for doing so appeared to be too high.

Retaining the city as property of unmarked settler whiteness

Apart from determining the place of the guest, the performativity of naming the foreignness of the guests seemingly served two purposes. In one sense, the query could serve as a means of emphasizing the province’s and city’s capacity to be multicultural, or to display the hosts’ investment in gathering the range of ethnicities and cultures now assembled at the table. We would argue, however, that this more invitational performative was undercut by the way that repetitive questioning underscored that Fredericton—as home—belonged to *Canadian* Canadians. As Derrida reminds us (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000: 53), the calling out of the stranger “retains” the subject “as a self in one’s own home”, shoring up a home from which to impose the conditions of a lactified hospitality. Indeed, as the director and nativist mentors guided the conversations, they projected an understanding of the city as a place of entitlement, where whiteness operates as historical legacy and preferred sensibility. The rhetorical asking of “Where are you from?” was blatantly about country of origin, and exclusively targeted at the visibly

non-white participants in the room, including a co-host of the event (herself a naturalized citizen) and one of the researchers present. Importantly, the host excluded those attendees who appeared to be white from this line of query. The director's questioning had a clear effect: it explicitly marked race on the body, raising questions associated with nationality and foreignness. It also worked to make whiteness into a marker of indelible, visible difference between Canadianness and foreignness, hosts and guests.

The power of unmarked whiteness as a normalizing device was further inscribed in the director's introduction of herself. She stated she was born and raised in Fredericton, although everyone she knew was "from here". She then explained that her work had forced her to "shift thinking", and to realize that, in the city's future, "there might be more newcomers than people like me". These phrases such as "from here" and "people like me" betrayed a conditioned form of hospitality, which allowed her to manage the racial diversity she "saw before her". She seemed vigilant in not saying "*white* people like me", perhaps in recognition that the welcome being extended implicitly presumed the proprietous place for white settler heritage in the region. Yet even not saying "white", reflected the region's history of racialized immigration practices, which had de facto discouraged non-white settlement in the region. For the director, "*people* like me" required no racial designation, and no social or historical context (Dyer, 1997).

As the director and the mentors shepherded the conversation with the NBNP attendees, they showed careful attention to the characteristics of this particular Canadian community as a place of hospitality to others. As the guests introduced themselves, the director proudly asked several of them, "Why here?" After some hesitation, one newly arrived guest responded, "I don't know, we felt it was a nice city, healthy environment for kids to go to school." Another participant echoed this sentiment, suggesting that this city was "neat and clean", unlike other competitive cities, which he described as "too grey". Other participants cited the size of the city as a deciding factor. One stated, "If I chose to live somewhere else, [I'd] pick a city of this size". The Sip, Greet and Meet hosts were visibly pleased by these responses. It was clear their city was the best option; racialized immigrants' choice confirmed for them their city's ability to confer—through the aesthetics of cleanliness, orderliness, containment and classed sensibilities—an abiding place of bourgeois Anglo-whiteness in determining the futurity for New Brunswick. How this seemingly shared and imagined portrayal of the community, which also silently spoke to historical legacies of exclusion, could accommodate the presence of racialized others was not on the agenda for conversation.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the hosts' links to local businesses and municipal/provincial government agencies, the director's and mentors' promotions of the community as a globalized, destination city echoed the sentiments and aspirations of a frequently cited City of Fredericton publication entitled *Fredericton, NB: Smart People Smart Ideas. An Even Smarter Environment* (2012). This publication, promoting Fredericton as a preferred place of resettlement and entrepreneurship, emphasizes the city's ambitions to compete on the global stage as a place for

investment and international business. This line of welcoming seemed to offer an inherent promise—that localized investment could be a means for racialized newcomers to gain access to nationalist rights of belonging and citizenship, and thus to *Canadian* Canadianness. And yet, how this might be accomplished given the drag that the logics of whiteness placed on the actualisation of racialized belonging, was bracketed from conversation. Indeed, as indicative of the epistemic privileges of whiteness being discursively exercised, the promotional plan failed to mention anything about the city's commitment to multiculturalism, cultural diversity or even more importantly, a need to assess and provide services to aid nativist Frederictonians in understanding the process of settlement for immigrants and the importance of anti-racism training. In this regard, like the hosts of the Sip, Greet and Meet event, the city planners simply assumed that their city was already "smart". The investments in placing limits on what inclusion might entail beyond financial contribution, and preserving the city's Anglo heritage and identity operated as an unstated given.

The disciplinary/regulating function of hospitality

The hosts' extension of conditional hospitality also involved educating the newcomers about the rules and laws of the house. As Capdevila and Callaghan (2008: 9) explain (drawing on Derrida's analysis of the "gift" of hospitality), immigrants are "welcomed by the host, as long as they behave in an appropriate manner, as long as they are judged to be a suitable guest". Accordingly, the hosts deployed a series of monitoring and disciplinary strategies to define the constitutive qualities of their home city, to establish their positions as legitimate heirs to that place, to take roles as gatekeepers for the properties of *Canadian* Canadianness and to set the guests' positions as perpetual arrivants. These disciplinary strategies demarcated the differences in responsibility between the hosts and guests, and underlined the conditions under which the guests were supposed to participate in the NBNP process. Through their targeted conversations and bodily gestures, the director and the nativist mentors, engaged in a ritualized recitation of these disciplinary codes. These codes involved three inter-linking tenets: (1) the population growth strategy of immigrant retention and avoidance of attrition; (2) the generosity and hospitality of the NBNP, the city and the entrepreneur hub; and (3) the proper comportment of newcomers.

a. *"We have no way to secure our airspace!" Retention and the threat of attrition.* After describing the city as an ideal place for newcomer settlement, the agency's director introduced the problem of immigrant retention. In a disapproving tone, she noted that not all immigrants took advantage of what the city had to offer, exercising their rights as landed residents to move to other parts of the country. "We have no way to secure our airspace!" the director exclaimed. During the meeting, mentors and facilitators intervened to confront the problems of immigrants "not staying" in, or "not committing to the community". As Bell argues, following Derrida's

thoughts on the nature of conditional hospitality, “the initial welcome is only sustained for those new arrivals who demonstrate their desire and ability to fully integrate into the existing culture, embracing ‘all our values’” (2010: 242). For the hosts, integration in this context meant unqualified commitment to financial and entrepreneurial contribution for saving the province’s ailing economy.

The last NBPNP participant to introduce himself was an entrepreneur who had worked for 30 years as an import/exporter. After describing the role that provincial/national regulatory policies and the city’s geographically problematic position played in his failed business attempt, this participant noted that his recent purchase of a convenience store was his solution for escaping a place of “having given up”. The others at the meeting reacted to his decision to invest in Fredericton with enthusiastic nods of approval. In another exchange, the director reframed a participant’s immigration story as an example of various risks factors: his retention of a business in the country of origin, his frequent travel between Fredericton and his prior country to attend to the business there, and his resistance to prioritizing his new community as the place where his business should be conducted. The group responded to the director’s interpretation and re-narration with sounds of disapproval and shaking of heads. One nativist mentor and local business owner informed this participant, “You better stay, because I have just employed your wife.” By referencing the issue of retention, and showing disapproval of those who dare to leave, or perhaps worse, refuse to commit to stay, the director, official agents, and mentors discursively positioned newcomers as probable (or at least potentially) ungrateful or undutiful guests (Capdevila and Callaghan, 2008) at risk of violating the conditions set by provincial welcoming.

In several other instances, the director and mentors broached the problem of immigrant non-compliance. For example, one nativist mentor pointed out the province’s current competitive advantage in a globalized race for attracting immigrants. That edge, he noted, was under siege (due to the risk of immigrant flight). This business mentor wanted the government to institute regulatory procedures to adjudicate immigrant suitability and monitor the behaviors of newly landed immigrants. The director also suggested that the “criteria” for immigration selection was “being raised” by provincial officials—a reference to calls for stricter criteria to help ensure good results from the NBPNP process. In their efforts to lay down the laws of the house, the hosts sought to emphasize a link between the province’s economic security, the problem of transgressive guest behaviors, and the looming threat of a provincial decision to restrict immigrant flows to the province (due to issues with retention). In delivering this argument, the director suggested increased mechanisms of surveillance as a rational means for staving off an impending capital flight crisis and assuring an economic future for the province.

b. The etiquettes and ethics of gratitude. The mentors and official agents of Sip, Greet and Meet made targeted comments, seeking to systematically highlight the benefits of immigration to the community, while also designating appropriate modes of reciprocating the government’s acts of hospitality. In Derrida’s framework,

conditional hospitality sets limits on the horizon of expectation. Rather than breaking from an economy in which the gift of immigration comes without expectation, in the logic of the NBNP and indeed, as rearticulated by the event hosts, an a priori ethical relationship is established whereby reciprocity from the newcomer—a return of the gift in another form—is expected (Chueh, 2012; Derrida, 1999). Indeed, the event’s mentors and hosts reminded the attendees several times that their attributes as selected immigrants (i.e. immigrants who were innovative, educated, creative and capable of appropriate capital investment) were precisely what the province needed for shoring up its economic future. Because mentors and hosts positioned immigrants as simultaneously pivotal to the success of the province and deeply indebted to the conditional hospitality of their hosts (Capdevila and Callaghan, 2008), the program organizers were able to carefully prescribe their guests’ duties and obligations.

Towards the end of the meeting, the topic of conversation turned to a population growth department sponsored evaluation survey that the director had been asked to promote. The director suggested this survey would generate statistical information about the experiences of NBNP participants, particularly concerning newcomer retention in the province. Interestingly, a population growth specialist from a provincially sponsored community economic development association (herself a racialized, naturalized citizen) took a different approach. This specialist addressed what she understood to be the root cause of NBNP participants’ reluctance to respond to these types of surveys—a “fear of being watched”. This population growth specialist first acknowledged that she too had been asked to participate in a similar survey when she arrived in Fredericton. Pleading with the participants, she urged, “Please don’t be afraid ... It’s ok”. Her assuring and comforting tone bracketed the fundamental differences in citizenship status that stood between her and the NBNP participants. Her comments emphasized that the guests’ need to ignore their personal concerns for the sake of the provincial good. She also deployed a strategy of equivalence to establish trust between host and guest. She began by carefully assuring the participants, “Here the government is here to help you. Everything is to help”. She continued, “It’s hard to trust because of the background we have [i.e. experiences with governments from countries of origin], but this can impact your relationship in business”. This kind of assurance operated in two registers. First, it involved an attempt to deflect scrutiny away from the mechanisms of surveillance operative in the survey. That the participant’s distrust suggested their understanding of the conditions set by provincial hospitality as evidencing the epistemic powers of whiteness to know and thus control the racialized other was simply not entertained in her explanation. Second, in drawing attention to her own and the guests’ immigration experience to build affinity, the population growth specialist implored newcomers to leave behind their problematic caution and extra-regional business affiliations in order to move effectively toward future business success. For the population growth specialist, as with the director, participation in the survey was a responsibility

that the newcomer bore for being present in the city regardless of their ties to the past or the competing demands of another nation/region.

The population growth specialist's use of the phrase "impact your relationship in business" held an interesting tension between the collective provincial/municipal good and a more individualized utility. The phrase suggested that the immigrant's own level of prosperity and possible future mobility as a motivating factor was at least as important as population growth. Despite this seeming discursive disruption, the overall conversation lacked any mention of the intention behind the survey—the use of newcomers' experiential evidence of their ability to enculturate to the region's Anglo-protestant sensibilities to hone future selection criteria and define and implement more regulated mechanisms for securing immigrant retention (in conversation, Officer, New Brunswick Population Growth Division, June 2015). The participants' fears of being racially scrutinized and judged as potentially violating, ungrateful recipients of hospitality were evidently on point.

c. The works of gratitude. The last hour of the meeting specifically addressed the behavioral modifications expected of newcomers as grateful guests. This conversation circulated around several themes. Specifically, program organizers instructed NBPNP newcomers to regulate expressions of emotion, to be visible, as racialized others in the community and to express gratitude for their newfound social position as provincial inhabitants. This insistence on racialized visibility bathed in the affect of gratitude works to instantiate racialized immigrants as compliant and dutiful guests in the white imaginary and effectively re-inscribes white Frederictonians' power to render immigrant bodies inferior (Westmoreland, 2010; Yancy, 2008).

Later conversation at the Sip, Greet and Meet event turned to the importance of immigrant visibility. The nativist hosts asserted newcomers needed to be seen and to show visible compliance as a means to secure the ties that would bind them to this city. Those in authority understood visibility as an ethical duty with consequences for the future of the city and the province. Towards the close of the event, the director enthusiastically encouraged the NBPNP immigrants to attend two events: one where the premier would be presenting the provincial budget, and the other a province-sponsored immigration settlement council attended by provincial and federal bureaucrats and elected officials. Although the cost for these events was expensive, the director extolled the virtues of attending these types of meetings, arguing it was important for politicians to "see the face of immigrants . . . and see [the] changing face of the community". The director reminded the participants that "politicians liked to have their pictures taken". Newcomer presence, they proclaimed, "brings the dialogue of immigration up in a positive way". The director continued, "We need to get a positive message out . . . [the event] need[s] immigrant audiences".

This call for immigrant visibility involved a disciplinary technique, namely asking newcomers to comport their bodies in line with a multiculturalism policy instrumental to the needs of the economy. In one sense, the visibility of immigrants in the community and their interactions with nativist politicians would not only signal

provincial success in courting immigrants in a highly competitive global market, but also demarcate racialized immigrants' investments in the politics of their new home. Politicians and other locals could read newcomer attendance as an intention to stay in the region. However, we suggest that the director was also describing an optics of compliant guests to be registered in the newcomers' smiling faces and in the photographically captured gestures of hand-shaking and of differently marked bodies—racialized immigrants and nativist (white) politicians—pressing up against one another. This attention to the role that newcomers were expected to play in performatively demonstrating their (literal) proximity to whiteness, their proper reciprocity for the hospitality extended to them, and a restriction of affect to that of contentment (or perhaps pride), was certainly in line with Population Growth's expectations for a managed ethnic (and racialized) difference.

In addition to expecting newcomers to be visible and present themselves appropriately, the hosts also encouraged the guests to solidify their relational ties for two expressed purposes: (a) to garner the trust of local inhabitants; and (b) to break cultural or ethnic stereotypes. Following the director's announcement of the premier's event, a nativist mentor advised the guests that "in a small city, networking is important". He then clarified that it was by networking that newcomers could challenge stereotypes about immigrants, such as "He's a Chinese. He's probably a millionaire." Unless newcomers worked to change such stereotypes, some nativist residents might try to "take advantage of newcomers". "To get a fair deal in this town", the mentor continued, "[newcomers] need to know people. They need to build relationships."

These statements embodied a particular understanding of settlement specific to Canadian multiculturalism, which justifies ignoring fundamental questions about the ways in which logics of whiteness were central to how hospitality was locally understood and practiced. No consideration was given to the role of stereotyping as a strategic technique for establishing racialized hierarchies and relatedly, conferring white epistemic privilege's ability to "confiscate" racialized bodies and subjects according to racist schemas (Westmoreland, 2010; Yancy, 2008: 4). Moreover, no consideration was given to what the local community needed to do to ensure that new immigrants could successfully settle in the region. Newcomers were presumed to bear sole responsibility for their own success in the immigration process. With this operative assumption at work, hosts gave the participants particular instructions for how to orchestrate their success, emphasizing that their ability to enculturate and make peace with racialized stereotyping was the linchpin of the region's collective future. Hosts understood success in the settlement process as an ethical imperative—as a credit to be repaid for receiving the gift of hospitality.

Conclusions

In this article, we document the various ways the Sip, Greet and Meet event served to reinforce dynamics of power existing between nativist Frederictonian hosts and newcomer guests. Through an ethnographic analysis of one NBPNP business

mentorship event, we apply Derrida's concept of conditional hospitality through a lens of critical whiteness and multiculturalism studies, to examine the ways in which the event hosts conveyed presumptions regarding the proper place of racialized guests in a home claimed by *Canadian* Canadians. We examined the tacit and often unplanned ways that conditional hospitality works for directing sanctioned, racialized ideals of citizenship and belonging. Although this study is small in scale, we suspect that the Sip, Greet and Meet event represents a snapshot of widespread practices of racialized immigrant reception in Fredericton and in other regions of Atlantic Canada.

Our analysis of Fredericton's practices of welcoming as technologies of whiteness supports the findings of a study by Wilson-Forsberg (2012) on immigrant youth experiences in two New Brunswick communities (Florenceville and Fredericton). Her findings suggested discrepancies between New Brunswick's celebrated image as a welcoming place and the actual experiences of new immigrants. Research participants found Fredericton a challenging place to build a social community, reporting that their immigrant status, or their status as "come from aways" (2012: 36), followed them no matter how long they lived in the city. Wilson-Forsberg found that the feelings of Fredericton's long-time residents toward new immigrants fluctuated between "indifference" and "ambivalence" (39). Likewise in our own study, the meeting hosts' expressions of ambivalence, their coded forms of discrimination, their displacement of responsibility for integration, and their rendering of racialized subjects as "perpetual arrivants" (cf. Çalışkan, 2014: 458–459), point to a restlessness with which racialized newcomers are treated and managed. These practices of conditional hospitality suggest a level of retrenchment in upholding the privileges of Anglo-Franco whiteness, and a refusal to avow the ways in which cultural pluralism might possibly be transforming of the province's futurity (cf. Hage, 2000).

We argue it is imperative to examine the implications of such insidious and often-unnoticed regulations of newcomer identities in the name of welcoming. This project is all the more important given the prevailing discourses circulating in the province regarding the significance of young tax-payers for the future success of the city, the province and the region.

We argue that, as nativists interrogate NBPNP immigrants at the threshold of the provincial door (through meet-and-greets like the event we described), hosts mark newcomers as perpetual arrivants, while divesting themselves of any responsibility for the successful settlement of immigrants. The discourses about newcomers' duties as guests—to embody gratitude and align their goals with those of the government—serve to absolve nativist inhabitants of any accountability for the success of the NBPNP. This attitude lays the future of the community, the province and even of Atlantic Canada, solely on the shoulders of business class immigrants. Moreover, after receiving their right to reside in New Brunswick, the immigrant guests, under the logic of conditional welcoming, forfeit a right to make claims for assistance in establishing a business, or the right to raise issues and call for a more thoughtful, non-racialized, truly pluralistic settlement system.

Despite a widely accepted understanding that foreign investment and immigration are the region's last solution for an ailing economy, the racialized-ethnic difference that immigration would bring to the city's professed cosmopolitanism was oddly bracketed from consideration in the meeting, and within the city at large. The welcoming process conveyed the city's preferred understanding of itself as an already "smart" city, whose investment in maintaining an Anglo-Franco heritage was an unstated given. In this regard, events like the Sip, Greet and Meet and the city's campaign work to implicitly silence the needs of newcomers (both materially and culturally), presenting their community as already welcoming, with little or no need for critical self-assessment.

Postscript: "We have learned the lessons the hard way"

In March 2018, a group of "immigrant investors" founded the New Brunswick Business Immigrants Association. The CBC reported (Ibrahim, 2018), that founders of this association hoped to build on the settlement experiences of immigrants and their efforts to forge business ties in the city. They aimed to help immigrant business people share their "real experiences" of confronting "the cultural and business challenges" of operating in Fredericton and developing strategies for success with other immigrants. These objectives set their association apart from programs such as the BIMP (Ibrahim, 2018). In addition to this seeming inversion of who should hold the role of host, the Immigrants Association also contested the conditions of hospitality that encourage racialized guests to invest in a place where their full participation and sense of belonging are curtailed. In contrast to nativist dictates, the new immigrant-run Immigrants Association offers more flexible support for "smaller-scale investors who want to live here, as well as big money investors who invest in the province but live elsewhere" (Ibrahim, 2018: para. 17).

We mention the emergence of this immigrant-led service as a reminder that, while the codes of conditional hospitality attempt to interrogate and condition newcomers to sanctioned, racialized ideals of citizenship and belonging, there is uncertainty and fragility in holding these socially sanctioned positions of guest and host indefinitely (Bell, 2010). As this postscript illustrates, dynamics of power shape the ways that hospitality is practiced to racialized newcomers, but these dynamics are forever transforming of historical circumstances, and acts of resistance can challenge and change the community. We suspect that this new Immigrants Association, with its reworked claims and aspirations for immigrant settlement is presenting a necessary challenge for Fredericton and perhaps the Province of New Brunswick to re-envision how an ethics of hospitality might be practiced differently.

Author Contribution

The names of the authors appear in alphabetical order. We engaged in a collaborative process in which all phases of the research and writing were shared equitably amongst the three authors. The finished work is a result of our shared labours.


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Notes

1. The name of the event has since been changed.
2. In the section entitled “Hospitality as a technology of settler whiteness” we define how we are engaging these concepts.
3. As Hage (2000) suggests (in the Australian context, but we would argue, transferable to a Canadian context) whiteness confers a level of symbolic possession which does not necessarily materialize politically or economically for all white subjects. In other words, the operations of capital and other social forces, such as ablism and sexism, threaten what promises and expectations of whiteness can be realized and in what ways.

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