SKILLED MIGRANTS, CITY INTEGRATION AND MIGRANT RESILIENCE

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**Hong Kong
vs. Montreal, 1970**

Old vs. New Urban Setting

**Rome
vs. Toronto, 2000**

The Canadian Context: Toronto as a Gateway City

◦ Main gateway city; largest international, financial and business center; destination for SMs seeking employment (WMR, 2018).

◦ SMs start to share multiple memberships in various communities that collaborate and need to communicate through boundaries.

◦ Almost 30% (**106,000**) of all migrants that came to Canada in 2018 settled in Toronto.

Skilled migrants: Challenges in new Cities

- SMs experience sense of disorientation, unfamiliarity, and incomplete perception of novel physical environment

- SMs experience challenges in incompatibility between new and old physical settings (Trabka, 2019)   as social and cognitive links established with previous physical environment (i.e., home city) are now discontinued (Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010).

- SMs need to build new careers in new cities that have different rules, rituals, norms and scripts (Zikic & Richardson, 2016)

Skilled Migrants, Career Resilience, and City Artefacts

○ Skilled Migrants need to generate career resilience in the new city

○ The research shows that city and its physical objects play a great role in how migrants bounce back after all the challenges they face

○ **The role of city and its objects in the process of building migrants' resilience has not been clearly stated so far.**

○ Thus, the aim of this research is to explore the role of the urban "physical context" or city artefacts guide migrants' resilience

City Artefacts: Boundary Objects

◦ Boundary objects, that is "material artefacts of practices shared between communities" (Dar, 2018: 567) are used by different groups to create and facilitate interactions, learning, and collaboration across multidisciplinary boundaries (Hawkins et al., 2017).

◦ BOs maintain integration, mutual learning, collaboration, communication, and create common understanding between actors that belong to diverse domains.

◦ Concrete vs. abstract boundary objects

Method

- 47 in depth semi-structured interviews.

- Each interview recorded & transcribed.

- First and second order codes are conceptualized through open and axial coding. Nvivo program was used for consistency of the coding process.
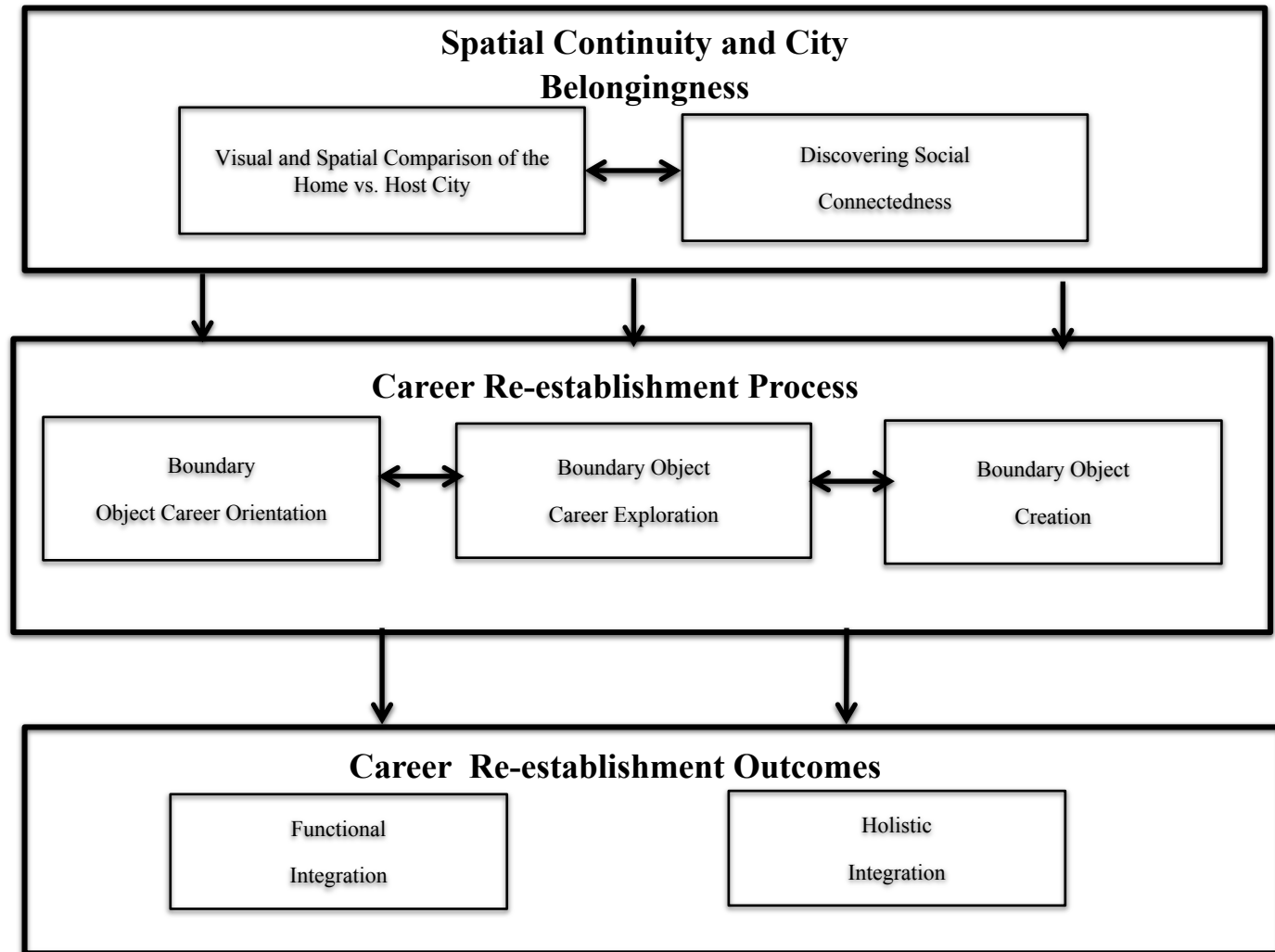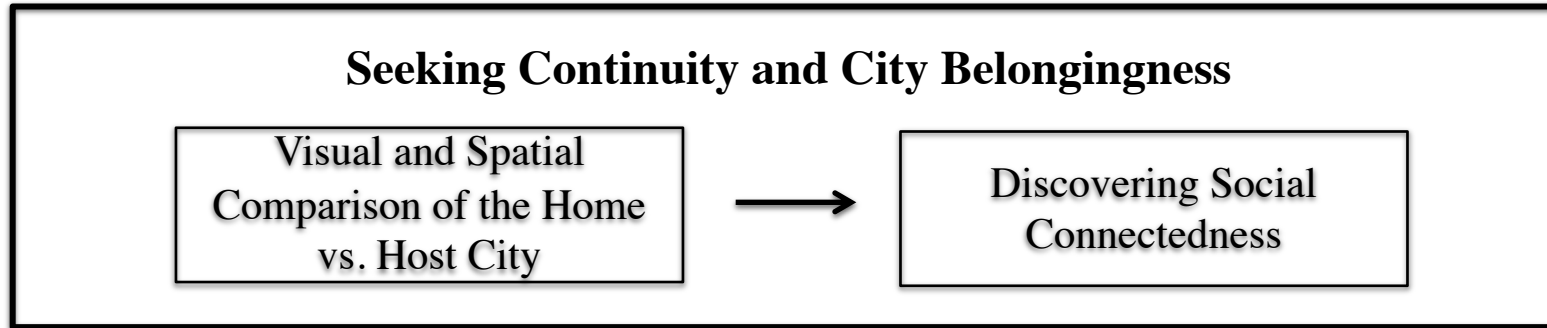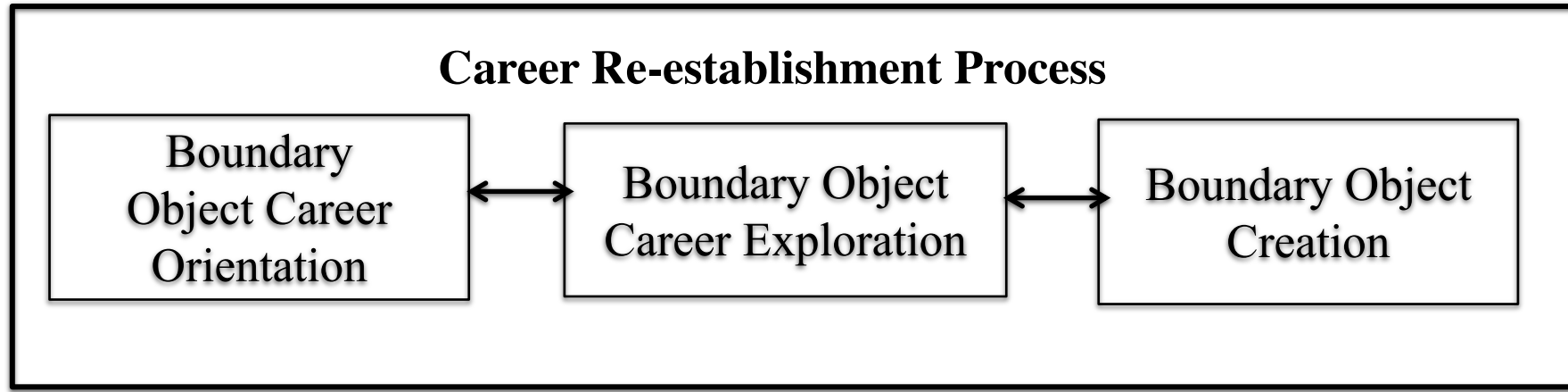
Career re-establishment in the host city

Spatial Continuity and City Belongingness

Visual and Spatial Comparison of the Home vs. Host City ↔ Discovering Social Connectedness

Career Re-establishment Process

Boundary Object Career Orientation ↔ Boundary Object Career Exploration ↔ Boundary Object Creation

Career Re-establishment Outcomes

Functional Integration   Holistic Integration

Figure 4. Career re-establishment in the host city

Spatial continuity and city belongingness

Seeking Continuity and City Belongingness

Visual and Spatial Comparison of the Home vs. Host City	→	Discovering Social Connectedness

○ Migrants evaluated and compared experiences of their new cities to memories they had of cities they had previously lived in.

○ Migrants sought to establish social connectedness and a sense of belongingness through making new relationships in the host city.

Career Re-establishment Process

Career Re-establishment Process

Boundary Object Career Orientation	⟷	Boundary Object Career Exploration	⟷	Boundary Object Creation

- Migrants used city objects such as brochures, newspapers, and magazines to orient themselves in the new city.

- Migrants sought to use the city artefacts to translate their social capital: search for local educational institutions, overcoming competition and various barriers around local BO.

- Some of the migrants were engaged in city artefacts creation to boost the resilience of other migrants (creation of social connections, helping others to achieve the certain degree of familiarity with the city)

Career Re-establishment Process: Examples

Orientation

- We were going around every employment centre… we went by foot to explore the Reference Library, because we did not have a computer at home… We saw that the reality is different… we walked left and right, up and down… Lakeshore and Steeles and everything in between… (Violet)
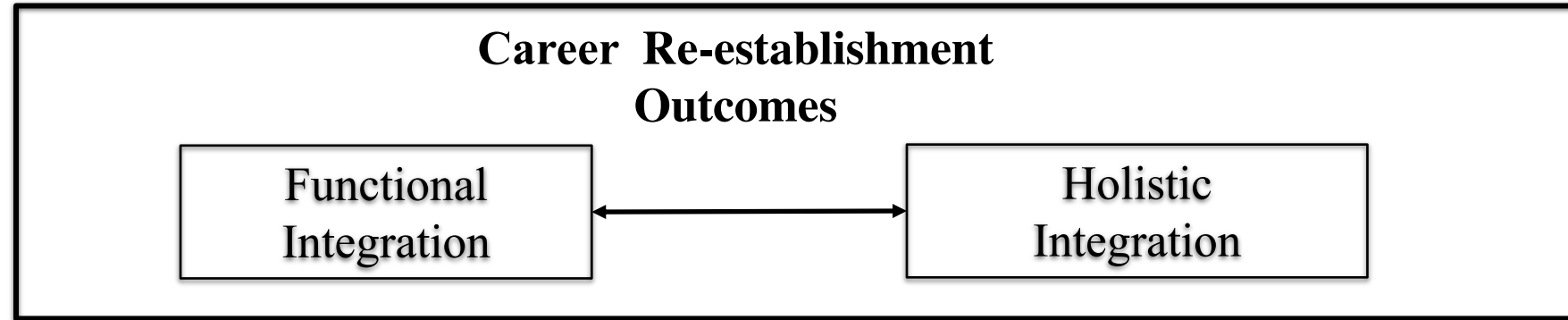
Exploration

- I attended an open house in a huge pharmaceutical company. There were, like, 500 people from many countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and all wanted to work there. I had a biology degree, not a chemistry degree. I understood that I had no chances, I had to go back to school… but there was a woman who said to us all that 'the game was over'. (Anna)

Creation

○ I published a telephone directory of Bangladeshi in Toronto. I was phoning everyone and asking , "You know anybody else from our country?" This way I contacted lot of people helping others to get in touch and connect. There was little communication at that time, this helped I think…(Henry)

Career Re-establishment Outcomes

Career Re-establishment Outcomes

| Functional Integration | ←→ | Holistic Integration |

◦ Functionally oriented: Internally focused on achieving personal career resilience and goals

◦ Holistically oriented: Inclusive and externally focused

Career Re-establishment Outcomes: Examples

Functional Integration

- I was so proud of myself for everything… Yes, I was very poor at that time but I believed that, you know, one day I will have a castle and if it is, you know, on a sand base, it's not my life. (Ethan)

Holistic Integration

- After a while you dissolve, you know? I start dissolving. I integrated. I want this world to become one. I believe more and more that all world is the one. I belong to Canada, but I belong to my country too. I'm saying integration, integration, and integration. So integration is a way of thinking. Whether it was politics, whether it was charity, whether it for disabled, whether it was for blind, whoever ask help, I did it. That's what I can - and that's my legacy. (Rose)

Main contributions of the study

○ Continuity and belongingness to the city increased migrants' resilience: *Through active and direct perceptual and spatial learning migrants achieved feelings of safety and security locally.*

○ Role of city artefacts in migrant career re-establishment: *The desire for self-continuity and belongingness, were the necessary for more direct engagement with local city artefacts.*

○ Functional vs. Holistic Integration: *How migrants interacted and learned about city physical objects in the context influenced their social and contextual integration and increased their resilience. Migrant engagement with city artefacts served to mediate the relationships between the host city, skilled migrant careers, and more broadly city inhabitants and its communities.*

THANK YOU!