"We don't know where to start!"

An Ethnography of a Refugee Family Adjusting to Life through Leisure in Montréal

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Abstract

This critical ethnography explored how a new refugee family from Chad adjusted to life through sport and leisure in the City of Montréal between 2019 and 2021. My analysis was theoretically honed by Edouard Glissant's (1990) 'chaos monde', and yielded the following three prominent themes: 1) 'fundamental barriers to sport and leisure activities,' in which I highlighted the multitude of social and cultural factors that impeded engagement in sport, recreation, and leisure physical activities for my participants; 2) 'conflicting definitions of leisure', in which I explored the contrasting experiences of relocation and resettlement among my participants and their children; and 3) 'the exacerbation of inequality during the pandemic', in which I explored how the COVID-19 pandemic that hit during the middle of my fieldwork enhanced the challenges and difficulties of resettlement for my participants and their children. The thesis sheds light upon the complex roles that sport, physical activity, and leisure play in the resettlement process.

Résumé

Cette étude explore comment une nouvelle famille de réfugiés Tchadiens s'est adaptée au quotidien montréalais à travers les loisirs et les sports entre les années 2019 et 2021. L'étude de ce processus d'adaptation est pertinente, puisque de nombreuses familles d'immigrants et de réfugiés ont déclaré avoir vécu une détérioration importante de leur état de santé physique et mentale au cours des deux premières années suivant leur arrivée au Canada (Fuller-Thomson, Noack et George, 2011). Bien que ces détériorations aient largement été attribuées aux difficultés d'accès aux services de soins de santé (Robert et Gilkinson, 2010), l'impact des autres ressources disponibles dans le domaine de la santé et du bien-être et le mode de vie de ces familles est peu connu et étudié. Ainsi, la présente étude ethnographique, réalisée sur une période d'un an dans un arrondissement ouvrier de Montréal, a pour but d'explorer comment une famille de réfugiés a conçu et négocié différentes opportunités dans les loisirs et les sports dans un contexte d'inégalités sociales grandissantes lors de la pandémie de COVID-19. L'analyse de cette thèse est liée, de façon théorique, au concept de «chaos-monde» d'Édouard Glissant (1990), et met en évidence les rôles complexes du sport, de l'activité physique et des loisirs lors du processus d'adaptation des nouveaux arrivants.

Contribution of Authors

Chapters I, II and III were written entirely by Shoaib-Hasan Shaikh with editorial review provided by Dr. Jordan Koch. The study's design and methodology were reviewed by committee members, Dr. Gordon Bloom and Dr. William Harvey, during the colloquium in December 2020. Minor editorial changes were then made based on their recommendations. Chapters IV and V were also written entirely by Shoaib-Hasan Shaikh with editorial review provided by Dr. Jordan Koch. Dr. Jordan Koch assisted with the interpretation and development of the results. Finally, an external review was conducted by Dr. Lindsay Duncan.

Chapter I:
Introduction

"It's not easy to leave your country, to go and suffer in a different country."

Cameroonian refugee Rachel Agah, 2019

In 2019, nearly 80 million people across the world were displaced from their home country for reasons such as fleeing religious and political persecution, escaping extreme violence, and because of severe climate collapse and economic instability (International Organization for Migration, 2020; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNCHR], 2020). Approximately 26 million people among this displaced population were classified as refugees—defined by the United Nations as individuals who are unable to return to their country of origin due to threats of racial, religious, social, or political persecution (UNHCR, 2019). Consequently, refugees are often forced to relocate with little to no financial resources (Dharod et al., 2013), a lack of knowledge about local services, and few other community resources (Kohlenberger et al., 2019). They also face significant distress adjusting to their new country due to inadequate social support and multiple other barriers to social inclusion (Simich et al., 2005; Wieland et al., 2015) that collectively compound the risks of mental health disorders stemming from having witnessed and/or endured trauma (Hameed, Sadiq & Din, 2018).

Numerous Immigrant and Refugee Studies scholars have drawn attention to the importance of social inclusion and integration to the resettlement process (Cheung & Phillimore, 2014; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013; UNHCR, 2002). Ignacio Correa-Velez et al. (2010) found that the degree of social inclusion experienced among refugees to Australia was the strongest predictor of their health and wellbeing. Similarly, the degree of social integration experienced among migrants to Finland was also shown to have a net-positive impact on their quality of life (Valtonen, 1998). John Berry (1997) described successful integration as an outcome that is

achieved when migrant groups can maintain their personal identity and cultural autonomy, as well as secure the resources necessary to become economically self-sufficient and to fully-participate in the social life of their new country. Social inclusion and integration are, in this sense, a two-way street: they require sustained commitments from both refugees and from their host communities to ensure the formation of positive social identities and strong emotional bonds with others (Spaaij, 2015; Walseth & Fasting, 2004).

Researchers across numerous academic disciplines have long credited sport, recreation, and leisure as potentially fruitful activities for nurturing social connection and belonging among newcomers (Spaaij, 2015; Donnelly & Coakley, 2002; McDonald, Spaaij & Dukic, 2018; Walseth & Fasting, 2004). In Canada, organizations such as *Camp Cosmos* and the *Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity* continue to subsidize the participation of newcomers in sport and physical activity as way to enhance their social inclusion (CanadaHelps, 2020; CIC News, 2020). Scholars have also associated migrants' participation in physical activity with enhanced physical and mental health (Sallis & Owen, 1999), positive cognitive and academic development (Shephard & Trudeau, 2008), and reduced truancy among young people (Bailey, 2005)—all issues that disproportionately affect refugee families (Dhillon, Centeio & Dillon, 2019).

However, scholars have also drawn attention to the potentially alienating properties associated with sport, recreation, and leisure for newcomers (Mohammadi, 2019). For example, Shahrzad Mohammadi (2019) argued that attempting to incorporate newcomers into mainstream sports and leisure settings, while ignoring other interpersonal and structural barriers to their participation, may ultimately reproduce mechanisms of social exclusion. Many of the refugees in Mohammadi's (2019) study also found it difficult to access formal physical activity programs

due to a lack of childcare services, which prevented them from leaving their homes. Previous research on refugee and new immigrant families has similarly found that lack of time, financial instability, limited transportation services, and perceived discrimination against their traditional norms and cultural practices can also lower attendance in these programs (Stodolska, 2015; Gobster, 2002; Lovelock, K., Lovelock, B., Jellum, & Thompson, 2011).

Of significance is that most of the research on the early resettlement experiences of newcomers has been reported by community organizers and social reformers (Chandler, Vamplew & Cronin, 2007; Jeanes, O'Connor & Alfrey, 2014; Spaaij, 2015), thus offering limited firsthand accounts of sport, recreation, and leisure within the resettlement process. Kronick et al. (2015) explained that firsthand accounts from the perspective of refugees will allow researchers to "contextualize interview data, expand on participants' accounts of life […], and to provide observations on children's emotional responses to [various challenges]" (p. 288). There is also a need for research that investigates the distinct contextual challenges that influence the health, wellness, and physical activity experiences of refugees in their host country. Indeed, newly relocated refugees may be unaware of neighbourhood or community safety concerns (Mendoza-Vasconez et al., 2016), may lack basic health literacy due to cultural and linguistic barriers (Berkman et al., 2011), and may also be unaware of local opportunities to enhance their sport and physical activity experiences (Bantham et al., 2020).

The purpose of my proposed qualitative case study was to examine how a single refugee family who recently relocated from Chad to Canada conceived and negotiated various sport, recreation, and leisure opportunities against a backdrop of various other social pressures associated with the resettlement process, including the COVID-19 pandemic that emerged about midway through my academic program. The family with whom I conducted my research

consisted of two sisters who moved to Montréal from Chad with 8 children in 2018. They lived

in two separate dwellings yet maintained close contact with one another through phone calls and

weekly social outings. Both sisters had to relocate to Canada without their husbands—an

unfortunately common practice as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

guidelines prioritize the protection of women and children as they are more likely to suffer rape,

slavery, and abduction while crossing borders (Callister, 2016; UNICEF, 2016; Young, 2002).

My initial study was to be guided by the following questions:

- How does a new refugee family in Montréal conceive and negotiate various sport,

  recreation, and leisure opportunities during the resettlement process?

- What sorts of barriers and facilitators exist with regards to refugees' access to different

  sport, recreation, and leisure pursuits?

- What do the experiences of a new refugee family reveal about the politics of sport,

  recreation, and leisure in a major Canadian city?

However, an additional question emerged over the course of my academic program due

to the COVID-19 pandemic that had forced all Montréalers to restrict social gatherings and to

limit non-essential activities such as team sports and other leisure activities:

- How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the everyday life and leisure practices of a

  new refugee family struggling to adjust to life in Canada?

The primary method of data collection for this study was critical ethnography—a method

that seeks to "expose power relationships through in-depth and sustained involvement in a

research setting" (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 25). Ethnographic research typically consists of three core

research methods, including: participant observation, qualitative interviewing, and textual

analysis. However, the distinguishing method of ethnographic research is participant

observation, which involves the researcher/ethnographer acting as both a participant and also as an observer within a setting for a sustained period of time (May, 1997). Following my colloquium, I had initially planned to visit the refugee family at least once per week for a period of four months. However, government-imposed restrictions in red zone regions such as Montréal prohibited my in-person visits. I instead relied on weekly Zoom and phone interviews to collect my data until the restrictions were lifted in May 2021.

My participant observation and interviews for this study formally commenced following the completion of my colloquium in Fall 2020. However, my personal investment in this social issue dates to January 2016 when I first volunteered with *Friends for a Cause*—a Montréal-based non-profit that assists refugee families with the resettlement process by organizing various outreach activities, such as food and clothing drives, language-learning classes, and other social outings designed to introduce newcomers to different parts of the city. My initial volunteer duties entailed helping to organize various online fundraisers, as well as coordinating different youth sporting events that aimed to foster new friendships among refugees and Muslim youths in Montréal. However, since the COVID-19 virus hit Montréal, my duties had also transitioned to include regular phone calls to ensure that newcomer families were meeting their basic needs, and to inform them about the latest government-imposed safety measures. These phone calls revealed the enhanced alienation and suffering experienced by many refugee families throughout the pandemic, and also alerted me to the significance of capturing these experiences within my own research project—a mission that was reinforced by my participants who encouraged me to document their struggles in the hopes of improving social services for those in similar situations.

My thesis is organized into four main sections. In Chapter Two, I review the historical role of sport, recreation, and leisure in the resettlement of newcomers, dating back to the 17th

century when European settlers first arrived in Canada. I also explore literature about the Sport-for-Development and Peace movement, which has been associated with both positive and negative outcomes within vulnerable communities. This section concludes by noting that Leisure and Migration Studies has only recently started to focus on refugee resettlement patterns.

In Chapter Three, I discuss my theoretical and methodology framework for this study. The chapter begins with an introduction to Edouard Glissant's (1990) *Poetics of Relation* that loosely guided my theory and analysis. Glissant is a postcolonial novelist, poet, and social theorist whose research casts important light upon the transformative capacities of intercultural encounters. I next outline the main ethnographic methods that were used for data collection, which included: participant observation, conversational interviews, and textual analysis. Finally, the chapter concluded with a discussion about the ethical concerns and limitations that shaped this study, which were exceptional in the context of COVID-19.

In Chapter Four, I explore four central themes that arose from my ethnographic fieldwork: 1) 'a tale of two contexts: from Chad to Montréal', in which I detail the cultural, geographical and political contrasts between Chad and Montréal; 2) 'fundamental barriers to sport and leisure activities,' in which I highlight the multitude of social and cultural factors that impede engagement in sport, recreation, and leisure physical activities for my participants; 3) 'conflicting definitions of leisure', in which I explore the contrasting experiences of relocation and resettlement among my main participants and their children; and 4) 'the exacerbation of inequality during the pandemic', in which I explore how the COVID-19 pandemic enhanced the challenges and difficulties of resettlement for my participants and their children.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I conclude this thesis by reiterating the central themes of my ethnographic research. I also provide an additional vignette to recapitulate the challenges of resettlement and the resilience demonstrated by my participants.

Chapter II:
Literature Review

It has been over three decades since Bruce Kidd (1985) called on sport studies scholars to investigate the social and physical cultural experiences of new immigrants as they navigate the resettlement process. Research on this matter has nevertheless been slow to develop, despite the growing displacement of a record-setting 26 million refugees worldwide in 2019 (UNHCR, 2020). Moreover, the limited research that does exist on this matter has all-too-often folded the complex experiences of diverse newcomer groups (e.g., refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers, etc.) into a singular overarching narrative that generally fails to account for the potential cultural and migratory distinctions between newcomer groups (Quirke, 2015). Researchers have also tended to focus on large-scale Sport-for-Development and Peace programs within organized encampments (Hancock, Lyras & Ha, 2013; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009), while neglecting to consider the voices and experiences of refugee families at the community-level.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In Section one, I outline the historical role that sport, recreation, and leisure has played in the resettlement of newcomers in Canada. Section two, next, explores the scholarly literature on Sport-for-Development and Peace programming, paying special attention to the top-down delivery of such programming within vulnerable communities and refugee encampments. Finally, my literature review concludes by noting that the leisure studies scholarship has only recently begun to explore the leisure experiences of refugees. I further argue that community-based analyses conducted with, and alongside distinct newcomer groups affords a fruitful area for future scholars to consider.

2.1. A Brief History of (Re)Settlement through Sport, Recreation, & Leisure

Sport, recreation, and leisure have afforded a vehicle for resettlement and identity building in Canada since at least as early as the first settlers arrived in the 17th century. For example, settlers' early adoption of First Nations physical cultural practices such as snowshoeing, tobogganing, and canoeing was vital to the survival of early settlements (Metcalfe, 1970; Robidoux, 2006). Settlers also hosted prolonged religious celebrations and social gatherings to stay pre-occupied during the wintertime; for example, Christmas festivities often continued until the end of January, and wedding celebrations occasionally lasted up to five days to prolong community socializing (Metcalfe, 1970). Such activities—at the time considered 'leisure activities'—kept settlers moderately physically active when stuck indoors and helped them to preserve the traditional social and physical cultural practices of France. However, a new Canadian national identity was starting to take shape in the 19th century that was rooted in both Indigenous and European physical cultural pursuits and an emergent northern character epitomized by *les coureurs des bois* (Robidoux, 2006)—French fur traders who had adopted First Nations' physical pursuits related to hunting and transportation (Robidoux, 2006; Saunders, 1939). Settlers used these locally derived activities and behaviours to distinguish themselves from their European origins, while also competing against First Nations groups in sports such as lacrosse in order to claim these activities as their own (Robidoux, 2006).

The City of Montréal holds a particularly prominent place in this national history since many of Canada's first organized sports clubs were formed here during the 19th century (Redmond, 1979). The city was headquarters to the fur trade, and later expanded through the construction of water canals and railway projects to become the home to other major banking, shipping, and various manufacturing industries (Redmond, 1979). By the end of the 19th century,

the city's English-speaking aristocracy had formed Canada's first comprehensive sport and social club—the famous Montreal Amateur Athletic Association (Redmond, 1979; Wise & Fisher, 1979). Of course, access to organized sport, recreation, and leisure pursuits was generally restricted to businessmen and other professionals, as well as military officers, during much of the 19th and early 20th centuries (Redmond, 1979). Financial and other social restrictions seriously hindered the participation of many new/working class immigrants in organized sports and other social clubs (Joseph, Darnell & Nakamura, 2012), and women were almost always relegated to the proverbial sidelines of such activities (Hall, 2016).

However, in time, the official narrative on immigration in Canada eventually became dominated by the view that new immigrants—and society as a whole—could potentially benefit from their participation in 'appropriate' sport and physical cultural pursuits to better adjust or "fit in" to their new home country (Doherty & Taylor, 2010). For example, the first YMCA in North America opened in 1851 in old Montréal as a socially sanctioned alternative to 'deviant' forms of leisure for the city's new (mostly Irish) immigrant population labouring away on the Lachine Canal and toiling away their leisure hours at Joe Beef's Tavern or other similarly unsavoury establishments (Delottinville, 1982).[1] Social reformers habitually considered participation in mainstream sports such as rugby, cricket, soccer, and lacrosse to be morally uplifting for new immigrants as it was seen to facilitate their transition from working class/immigrant cultures into a more gentrified culture and identity. For example, baseball in the United States was thought to play an assimilatory role for new immigrants adjusting to life in their new home. As a Catholic priest once noted to another observer when discussing an immigrant's involvement in an early

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[1] In North America, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)—an organization rooted in the evangelistic social movement—was initially geared toward developing working class and new immigrant populations through free language classes and by way of other 'Americanization' projects (Hopkins, 1951; Zald & Denton, 1963).

20th century baseball game: "You see that Filipino? […] He is looked upon as a good American because he plays a first class game of baseball" (Mills & Seymour, 1991, p. 96).

Of course, the assimilatory dimensions of sport and physical culture certainly merits critique. Robert Day (1981) noted that early social reformers tended to promote sport and physical activity to cultivate a very specific view and character in society—one that prioritized the values and beliefs of the white male aristocracy, and that had effectively institutionalized discrimination against immigrant communities (Day, 1981; Denis, 1977). The physical cultural pursuits of minority groups were almost always reframed as "differed, less desired, and thus not worthy of support (Paraschak & Tirone, 2015, p. 101). Milton Gordon (1964, p. 81) described this process as "structural assimilation," and further criticized its contribution to the eventual erasure of an ethnic group's most distinctive characteristics.

Of course, it is perfectly logical and reasonable to assume that many new immigrants grafted their own values and cultural beliefs upon these new/dominant sport forms, and that they may have also derived significant value and pleasure from participation in such activities. New immigrants in Montréal often worked long hours away from home and endured harsh conditions just to survive and to make ends meet for their families in a new country with few dedicated social services (Delottinville, 1982; Guerin-Gonzales, 1994; Surdam, 2020). The children of new immigrants were also regularly left to care for both themselves and for the elderly during the daytime, even having to eat and go to sleep by themselves while their parents were at work (Balgopal, 2000). Trends such as these were ubiquitous across many urban centres during the industrial revolution; however, they were particularly prominent in port cities such as Montréal, Boston, and New York that were home to significant industrial activity and that had also attracted large immigrant populations who banded together for security.

However, an associated fallout from these broader urbanizing trends was the onset of a now familiar stereotype that associated new immigrant children with deviance, degeneracy, and truancy from school. Philip Bean & Joy Melville (1989) summarized the public perception of immigrant youth in the late 19th century as follows: "much crime, drunkenness and prostitution was the result of the child migration scheme… [and a child's] poor background would have a bad effect on the Canadian race" (p. 73). By the end of the 1880s, the Canadian media spoke less about the hardships experienced by immigrant children, and instead re-focused attention on the problems they posed to the rest of society, such as increased crime rates, disease, and the associated financial burdens of having to incarcerate 'undesirables' (Bean & Melville, 1989).

Several individuals nevertheless fought against the misguided stereotyping of new immigrant children. In Chicago, the famous social worker, Jane Addams, actively resisted some of the more deleterious trends associated with urbanization by instead promoting a more compassionate approach to childhood development through the creation of supervised play and recreational facilities for immigrant youth. In 1893, Addams organized various fundraising campaigns to help build public playgrounds in Chicago's immigrant neighbourhoods (Reynolds II, 2017), with the aim of encouraging youth of diverse ethnic backgrounds to play together in celebration of their cultural differences (McArthur, 1975). Addams and other social reformers of the "Chicago Playground Movement" considered playgrounds "a catalyst in breaking down national and racial prejudices" (McArthur, 1975, p. 388), and also considered them to be potentially powerful venues for the preservation of ethnic diversity—a stark contrast from the widely rebuked public school system that had long taught new immigrant children to detest their cultural backgrounds and to reject traditional practices from their homelands (McArthur, 1975).

However, unlike Jane Addams's more integrative mission that focused on child welfare (Retamales & Reichwein, 2014), many of her contemporaries simply viewed playgrounds as a cost-effective alternative to youth deviance and, more cynically, employed these sorts of leisure resources as a cleansing mechanism for the city's unmannerly immigrant children (Guttman, 2010). For example, the Edmonton Gyro Club of the 1920s organized various recreation and leisure activities to instill "righteous" behaviour and patriotism among new immigrant children (Retamales & Reichwein, 2014). The Gyro Club also built playgrounds to better monitor the activities of new immigrant children whom they feared would be up to no good if left to their own devices (McArthur, 1975). Gyro-built playgrounds and recreational programs were thus intended to pacify resistance in an "emerging urban and capitalist social formation" through the normalization of class relations (Valverde, 2008, p. 103).

In Montréal, the early 20th century witnessed another period of major urban reform that was driven by a population-boom that had more than tripled in size in the wake of large-scale industrialization (Wolfe & Strachan, 1988). Led by the wife of William Petterson—a former principal of McGill University—members of the civic elite had acquired and developed significant tracts of public land and green space on which they built urban parks to placate the leisure needs of the city's swelling population, especially newcomers (Harry, Gale & Hendee, 1969). In 1902, Mrs. Petterson initiated the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association (MPPA) that focused on providing outdoor recreation and leisure space for residents living in the city's poorer neighbourhoods. The MPPA was initially conceived of as a women's protest movement organized by a group of women seeking a more active role in urban reform throughout Montréal (Wolfe & Strachan, 1988); however, the organization's official goal was to help less fortunate Montréalers become healthier and more disciplined citizens, while also

combating other urbanization-related problems, such as overcrowding and various sanitation problems linked to poverty (Lubove, 1967; Wolfe & Strachan, 1988). The MPPA also sought to protect the city's most prominent landmark, Mount Royal, from the Montreal Street Railway Company who had endeavoured to build a railway through the park (Wolfe & Strachan, 1988).

As a result, public parks and playgrounds with naturalistic-looking landscapes were built throughout Montréal in the hopes of providing youths with spaces to play and interact with friends, and for learning and developing discipline, among other benefits (Wolfe & Strachan, 1988). Yet, as Doreen Massey (1999) argued, these sorts of leisure facilities were also "always constructed out of articulations of social relations" (p.183)—meaning that immigrants from lower socio-economic backgrounds could only access parks and playgrounds on terms that were dictated to them by the City's English-speaking aristocracy (Caron, 2016). Indeed, the MPPA sought to preserve the natural beauty of parks such as Mount Royal by appealing to Victorian sensibilities, rather than by equipping them with design features that would have been more familiar and culturally salient to newcomer groups (Caron, 2016). Similar associations (such as the YMCA, the Women's National Immigration Society, and the Parks Protective Association) also all sought to massage dominant white/Christian values among working class populations with various sport, recreation, and leisure initiatives (Kloper, 2009; Tirone & Pedlar, 2010; Wolfe & Strachan, 1988)—a strategy that continues to persist in many of today's urban settings.

2.2. Immigration and Sport-For-Development in Contemporary Society

Sport, recreation, and leisure continue to be used in cities around the world as vehicles for helping new immigrant groups adapt to their new communities (Harney, 1985; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009). Indeed, physical activity programs have been routinely endorsed as facilitators of

social inclusion (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009), and have also been credited with generating other positive outcomes such as enhanced physical and mental health for families and youth (Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Quirke, 2015). Julie Stack and Yoshitaka Iwasaki (2009) also found that newcomers to Winnipeg, Manitoba, were able to improve their English and learn more about Canada through participation in "purposeful" leisure activities.[2] Sport has also been credited as a medium through which new immigrants can introduce physical cultural pursuits from their home country to North America (Joseph, Darnell & Nakamura, 2012), thus further diversifying the range of activities available for all Canadians to pursue. For example, Herman "Jackrabbit" Smith-Johannsen was famous for having popularized the sport of cross-country skiing after immigrating to Canada from Norway in 1929 (Johannsen, 1993). Consequently, newcomers' engagement in physical activity or structured play is now often celebrated for promoting *cross-cultural learning* (Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Tirone, Livingston, Miller & Smith, 2011), as opposed to serving as a purely unidirectional avenue for assimilation.

The use of sport within the resettlement process has nevertheless traditionally favored the motives of community organizers and social reformers over those of newcomers (Chandler, Vamplew & Cronin, 2007; Jeanes, O'Connor & Alfrey, 2014; Spaaij, 2014). As noted earlier, the historical intent behind many organizers' uses of sport has been to "encourage respectable and 'civilized' behaviour when many of the activities of the working classes and the gentry involved drinking, gambling and rough pursuits" (Donnelly, 2013, p. 178). The federal government's past involvement in organized sport and recreation has also remained largely consistent with this traditional view of sport as a morally generative and 'good' social outlet, even by way of establishing national non-profit organizations such as *Bamboo Shield* that endeavour to help

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[2] For example, Afghan immigrants to Canada used leisure spaces to connect with other immigrants from different backgrounds and to learn how coping strategies for stress associated with adapting to life in a new country.

resolve deviant behaviours among immigrant and refugee youth through extracurricular social and physical activities (Government of Canada, 2018).

The Sport-for-Development and Peace (SFDP) movement has adopted a similar conceptual framework through its deployment of sport in vulnerable communities as a positive and generative vehicle for a whole range of social outcomes (Hancock, Lyras & Ha, 2013). The ideological roots of the SFDP movement date back until at least as early as the 19th century (Darnell, Field & Kidd, 2019); however, the formal SFDP movement began in earnest in the early 2000s when, in 2003, the United Nations (UN) adopted Resolution 58/5 entitled: "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace" (Darnell, 2012). This resolution constituted the UN's formal recognition of sport's usefulness as a social platform for both communicating and partially reconciling worldwide problems of poverty, health, peace, education, disease control, environmental sustainability, and gender inequality (Beutler, 2008). The resolution was also accompanied by the UN's investment of significant financial and human capital to support SFDP programming in vulnerable communities around the world.

However, despite the positive rhetoric associated with SFDP initiatives, sport studies scholars have drawn important attention to the paternalistic messaging and racially charged assumptions underpinning many SFDP programs. For example, Barbara Heron (2007) argued that interns and volunteers associated with popular SFDP initiatives have often been portrayed as saviours within low-income communities and may be motivated by their desire to exhibit moral righteousness in the face of hardship. Heron (2007) further argued that many interns and volunteers have not taken the time to learn about the broader histories and structures of inequality that are ultimately responsible for the reproduction of global poverty since their primary focus has been upon character development. Simon Darnell (2012) also noted that

volunteers tend to be ill-informed about local/community histories, and he further questioned the ability of SFDP programs to seriously address underlying issues such as poverty and inequality.

To be sure, universities and other institutions in Canada have sought to mitigate this critique by providing more fulsome educational experiences for young people prior to a volunteer's involvement with a SFDP initiative. For example, *Play Around the World* is a service-learning course offered at the University of Alberta, where students receive three months of in-class training before travelling to different field sites in either Northern Canada or Asia to help deliver physical activity programs to low-income youth in schools, orphanages, and in various other community-based organizations (University of Alberta, 2020). However, David Purpel (1999) questioned the short period over which students are expected to learn about new cultures in service-learning courses. Purpel (1999) further noted that, without extensive training, volunteers run the risk of being insensitive to cultural differences and ignorant to relevant histories associated with racialized poverty, thus perpetuating the abuse of power that they endeavour to resolve through SFDP programming. Similar critiques have also been made of organizations affiliated with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, such as *Right to Play,* for failing to educate their volunteer workforce about the underlying social issues associated with forced human migration (more on this in Chapter 2). Finally, it is also unclear whether those communities 'helped' through SFDP programs receive such efforts positively, as most of the scholarship has focused on the experiences of volunteers as opposed to considering local perspectives on SFDP initiatives (Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006).

In Canada, most grassroots sports and recreation clubs classified as non-profits have adopted mission statements that claim to enhance the social capital of their membership through the provision of healthful sport and leisure activities (Doherty, Misener & Cuskelly, 2014;

Nowy, Feiler, & Breuer, 2020). Numerous scholars have nevertheless criticized these clubs for their lack of policies and practices aimed at nurturing genuine social inclusion (Agergaard, 2018; Taylor & Toohey, 1998). Fahlen and Karp (2010) claimed that grassroots sport and recreation clubs concern themselves mostly with maintaining a competitive atmosphere, rather than with promoting the other social benefits outlined in their mission statements. Critiques such as these resonate with the broader academic literature on sport in minority communities where researchers have profiled numerous incidences in which minority groups feel pressured to "comply with the expectations and social norms of the dominant group" (Tirone & Pedlar, 2000, p. 147). This literature has further profiled many incidences in which minority groups have experienced sports more as a "method of assimilation" than as an opportunity to genuinely engage with the host culture (Chandler & Cronin, 2002, p. 68; O'Neill, 2001).

In a similar vein, numerous Sport Studies researchers have critiqued the "mostly anecdotal" evidence used by sport clubs to back-up their claims that organized sport and physical activity function as wholly positive vehicles for the social inclusion of newcomers (Nowy, Feiler & Breuer, 2020, p. 24). Alison Baker-Lewton et al. (2017) observed that sport clubs and SFDP organizations operate as sites of both hope *and* hostility for their participants. In terms of hostility, the researchers identified numerous incidences of racial violence in the mainstream media's coverage of professional sporting events (e.g., Australian Football League), and further showed how the marginalization of newcomers can also be experienced sport settings. For example, one participant claimed that he had only been recruited by a competitive soccer team for his playing skills and not on account of any other virtues. He further accused his teammates of actively excluding him from the team's social activities due to his different cultural background (Baker-Lewton et al., 2017). Similarly, Maikel Waardenburg et al. (2019) found that

sport activities failed to provide sufficient social support for refugees living in a reception center in the Netherlands.[3] Refugees from different ethnic backgrounds had a hard time coming together and participating in sports due to language barriers, as well as other cultural differences (Waardenburg et al., 2019). Other scholars have also reported similar findings in reception centers, where untrained staff (McGee & Pelham, 2017) and fixed rules of conduct (Miller, 2010) have reduced the willingness of refugees to participate in sports.

Of course, the potentially positive and socially generative properties associated with sport and recreation programs for newcomers should not be dismissed wholesale, especially for refugees who inevitably experience a "dramatic personal change" in their life circumstances within the first few years of their arrival in a new home country (Nowy, Feiler & Brewer, 2020, p. 24). Indeed, researchers have profiled numerous positive experiences and incidences in which sport-for-development programs have proven empowering sites for refugees on personal, social, and cultural levels (Spaaij, 2012; Stone, 2018). Thus, research aimed at highlighting the voices and lived experiences of refugees and other newcomer groups would prove useful for SFDP programmers, especially as they navigate the resettlement process. Such research would also prove especially useful for club administrators looking to provide more inclusive opportunities for newcomers (Jeanes, O'Connor & Alfrey, 2015; Whitley, Coble & Jewell, 2016)—two contributions that I hope to make through my own research and knowledge translation.

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[3] Reception centers are government-run facilities that provide refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people with temporary housing before they are relocated to a host country (UNHCR, 2016; Waardenburg et al., 2019).

2.3. A Note on Terminology

As noted previously, scarce research exists concerning the sport, recreation, and leisure experiences of refugees and other newcomer groups as they navigate the resettlement process in a new home country (Bradby, Humphris, Newall & Phillimore, 2015). However, researchers have recently begun to explore the potential disconnects between the rhetoric associated with SFDP and the lived realities of participants within these programs (Mohammadi, 2019; Quirke, 2015; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Stone, 2017). One pressing critique of the literature nevertheless remains: the tendency to collapse the wide range of newcomer groups (e.g., immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, etc.) into a single cultural monolith (Bradby, Humphris, Newall & Phillimore, 2015; Quirke, 2015; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Wieland et al. 2015). I will clarify why this lexicon matters in the following paragraphs.

To begin, it is important to point out that both the UNHCR and the Canadian federal government have long used various terminologies to describe persons who have been displaced, including refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, protected person, internally displaced person, etc. (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2010; UNCHR, 2020). Many of these terms have meanings and associated political implications, including legal repercussions. For example, whereas 'refugees' are people who have been *forced* to leave their home nation to flee persecution, the term 'immigrant' simply refers to individuals who have *chosen* to permanently resettle in another country (usually for less dire purposes, such as career advancement, marriage, or for any other personal reason) (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2010). Moreover, because of their unique circumstances, refugees are entitled to various pre-departure medical services, as well as various other health care benefits designed to facilitate their smooth arrival in Canada (Government of Canada, 2019). Another important point of distinction is that refugees are generally considered to

be at a greater risk of poor health and wellness outcomes upon their arrival in Canada compared to many immigrants, as they have often been forced to flee from countries affected by war, poverty, climate collapse, and/or disrupted or deteriorating health care systems. They may have also been exposed to a range of harmful illnesses (WHO, 2020).

Of significance, though, is that, despite these sorts of discrepancies in their social circumstances, many health and wellness researchers who focus on refugee populations have simply employed the various terms listed above interchangeably and/or have generalized their results to all newcomer groups (Quirke, 2015; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Wieland et al., 2015). For example, Julie Stack and Yoshitaka Iwasaki's (2009) study of health and leisure environments during resettlement referred to their participants as both 'refugees' and 'immigrants', yet the articles they reviewed only focused on immigrant experiences. Lisa Quirke (2015) similarly collapsed refugees and immigrant experiences into a single category when exploring the health and wellness benefits associated with the leisure practices of newcomers—a pattern that was also displayed by Shahrzad Mohammadi (2019) and Chris Stone (2017) who both grouped 'refugees' and 'asylum seekers' into a single category, despite the significant differences between (and within) these groups. The problem with this cavalier use of terminology is that it risks perpetuating the (usually negative) abstractions of newcomers as either problems or victims within their new home countries (Gilroy, 1987). It also overlooks the more nuanced and complex experiences between distinct newcomer groups (Bradby, Humphris, Newall & Phillimore, 2015), thus ignoring the impact that unique experiences and pathways have on newcomers' physical and mental health which consequently impacts their resettlement process (Lindencrona, Ekblad & Hauff, 2008; Watkins, Razee & Richters, 2012). Following Lisa Quirke (2015), I thus position

the proposed study as part of a broader effort aimed at better understanding the experiences of diverse newcomer groups to advance more targeted policy recommendations.

2.4 Chapter Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter focused on historical and sociological literatures in the fields of sport, recreation, and leisure studies pertaining to immigration and resettlement. The two main subject areas of particular interest were: 1) the historical relationship of physical culture to the resettlement of newcomers, and 2) the study of sport-for-development and peace within modern-day settings. Newcomer groups have historically been marginalized and assimilated in areas of physical activity by social reformers who tended to classify them as either deviants or threats to the host culture. Mainstream sports and public parks, for example, were created and deployed as venues that facilitate the transition of newcomers into a more gentrified community. On the other hand, newcomer groups sought to use their limited access to leisure spaces for various other purposes, such as an opportunity to learn and adapt to their new surroundings, as well as to have fun and socialize with their peers. My study builds upon this latter observation by focusing on the modern-day experiences of a refugee family from Chad as they conceived and negotiated life through leisure in their now home community of Montréal, Canada.

Chapter III:
Theory & Methods

This methodology for this thesis expands on both Refugee and Leisure Studies literatures by immersing myself as a participant observer in the lives of a refugee family who recently moved to Montréal from Chad. Researchers in these fields have only recently engaged in ethnographic fieldwork exploring the role(s) of physical activity in the lives of newcomers (Dhillon, Centeio & Dillon, 2017; McDonald, Spaaij & Dukic, 2018; Spaaij, 2014; Waardenburg, Visschers, Deelen & van Liempt, 2019). However, none of the existing scholarship has focused on refugees as a familial unit, instead focusing on either a single participant or combining various individual experiences to display trends across this population (Doherty & Taylor, 2010; Quirke, 2015; Spaaij, 2014; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Whitley, Coble & Jewell, 2016). Susan Tirone and Susan Shaw (1997) found that immigrants in Canada ranked their immediate family as the single most important factor in their lives and further noted that being close to (or far away from) family impacted their experiences of leisure—an observation that highlights why it is so imperative to better understand family experiences, especially during the early phases of resettlement when little contact is made beyond the family unit.

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section one introduces the theoretical framework that guided my research, which is loosely based on Edouard Glissant's (1990) *Poetics of Relation* (1990). Section two, next, outlines the main ethnographic methods that were used for data collection, which included: participant observation, conversational interviews, and textual analysis. Section three outlines the research setting, data collection procedures, and the strategy used for data analysis. Finally, section four concludes with a discussion about the various ethical concerns and protocols that were navigated during the study; in particular, I highlight how the

COVID-19 pandemic forced significant reconfigurations in my research plan, while at the same time opening-up new questions and opportunities for consideration.

3.1. Leisure as a Site for Cross-Cultural Learning

As noted in Chapter 2, the meanings that newcomers have imbued upon dominant physical cultural pursuits remain largely unknown within the academic literature, yet rich in potential insights into the migratory experience. Indeed, physical culture constitutes important ideological terrain for cross-cultural learning, cultural survival, as well as for innovation and creative expression within postcolonial societies such as Canada. Despite its potential richness, very few researchers in either Leisure Studies or Migration Studies have drawn upon theory to enhance their analyses of the postcolonial properties associated with physical cultural pursuits (Fader, Legg & Ross, 2019; Mohammadi, 2019; Forde, Lee, Mills & Frisby, 2014).

Edouard Glissant is a postcolonial novelist, poet, and social theorist. Born in 1928 on the French island of Martinique, Glissant experienced racism at a young age, prompting his early entry into the political arena (Hawley & Nelson, 2001). He maintained an active role within the Société Africaine de Culture throughout much of his adult life—an intellectual group who campaigned for the human rights of the Black community in France (Hawley & Nelson, 2001). He also studied philosophy and ethnology in Paris and co-founded the Front Antillo-Guyanais which sought to decolonize and gain independence for the French islands (Hawley & Nelson, 2001). He was banned from traveling outside of France by French president Charles de Gaulle between 1959 and 1965 due to his separatist aspirations (Cottias, 2011; Hawley & Nelson, 2001). During that time, Glissant began writing and became known as "one of the most important writers and thinkers from the French West Indies" (Hawley & Nelson, 2001, p. 206).

Glissant's work contrasts against dominant trends within the scholarly literature by shedding light upon the impact that *migrants* have upon their new surroundings (Dash, 1995). For example, Glissant's (1990) *Poetics of Relation* explored how intercultural encounters generate new meanings that can subvert the dominant culture even whilst retaining its apparent form or structure. However, Glissant (1990) also cautioned that the potentially subversive properties associated with the adoption of dominant practices is subjective and not entirely dissociated from one's social position (p. 161). Consequently, Glissant (1990) expressed sensitivity to the diversity that exist within different cultures and communities, and to the relative inequality among its members. As Glissant (1990, p. 133) proclaimed, "diversity [that] exists among cultures does not prevent the formation of hierarchies among civilizations."

For example, one of the ways that Glissant (1990) described the formation of hierarchies was through a "chaos-monde" [chaotic world] or an "immeasurable intermixing of cultures" which gives way to several unpredictable outcomes, such as naïve beliefs, passive adoptions or rejections of cultural practices, and the formation of new cultural expressions (pp. 138, 163). For Glissant (1990), those who "discover" or colonize a land (e.g., European settlers in North America and their descendants) have retained a systematic advantage within the broader system of cultural exchanges; Nevertheless, these advantages are not fixed—they can be contested and subverted by marginalized groups (p. 56), but the hierarchy will still be maintained if less common cultural practices are neglected and/or forgotten as communities will inevitably regress to dominant cultural norms, and support the social position of actors who propagate them (p. 147). As Glissant (1990) explained: "[t]hose who dominate benefit from the chaos; those who are oppressed are exasperated by it" (p. 141).

Like Glissant, my fieldwork tried to discover how a refugee family conceived and negotiated cultural pursuits amidst the "chaos-monde" of resettlement. I specifically aimed to explore the inherent challenges and poetic responses to resettlement from the perspective of my participants: a period of intense intercultural exchange that is complicated by a range of socio-cultural and economic-political factors. Refugees who encounter the "chaos-monde" must promptly connect with the dominant culture before finding their place in society. My objective here was to theorize how the experiences of one refugee family in Montréal may relate to the broader the politics of physical culture in postcolonial societies. My theoretical framework is more fully honed and developed during Chapter Three's data analysis.

3.2. Ethnographic Methods

The primary method for this study was critical ethnography. Jim Thomas (1993) explained critical ethnography as "conventional ethnography with a political purpose" (p. 4). Instead of merely describing a culture, critical ethnographers draw attention to the underlying social structures that shape peoples' everyday lives, and vice versa (Thomas, 1993). As noted in Chapter 2, only a limited number of studies have explored physical culture through the voices of refugees (Cain & Trussel, 2019; Hurly, 2018; Hurly & Walker, 2017; Mohammadi, 2019; Palmer, 2019; Spaaij, 2019; Wieland et al., 2015). Moreover, none of these studies have looked at how the lives and physical cultural experiences of refugees are linked to broader social structures.

Like other forms of ethnographic research, critical ethnography generally consists of three main methods: 1) participant observation, 2) interview techniques, and 3) textual analysis. However, the defining method of all ethnographic research is participant observation, which

involves the researcher's close and prolonged contact with a group of participants in the context of their everyday lives (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). This prolonged contact period promotes a more fulsome understanding of the group/community/institution/ or family under investigation (Krane & Baird, 2005) because the researcher is directly participating in naturally occurring settings and activities (Brewer, 2000). As a result, the data is collected through firsthand ethnographic encounters and is, thus, generally rich in description and based on the 'real time' perspectives of participants (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). The following sections explain in greater detail how I used ethnographic methods in my study. I also highlight the various ethical and practical concerns that had to be navigated throughout the research process.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is a distinguishing feature of ethnographic research and involves the researcher assuming a dual role as both participant and observer within the community they are studying (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). In essence, participant observation enables the researcher to witness in real-time what participants do, what they say, and to observe how they interact in relation to broader social issues (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). Sparkes and Smith (2013, p. 101) noted that ethnographers must select from a continuum of potential 'participation and observation' roles based upon their research goals, ranging from "complete observer" to "complete participant." For example, a complete observer is someone who remains on the sidelines, does not actively participate in the research setting, and instead focuses on taking detailed notes about what and how things happen (Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

For my research, I adopted the role of observer as participant, meaning that my level of involvement in participants' lives depended upon their desires with respect to various sport,

recreation, and leisure pursuits in Montréal. Sparkes and Smith (2013) noted that the researcher who adopts the 'observer as participant' role has typically already negotiated their entry into the ethnographic setting, and this happened to be my situation at the study's outset. My volunteer position at *Friends for a Cause* (a Montréal non-profit) had introduced me to a large community of newcomers seeking help transitioning into their new home country. In September 2019, I had met a particular refugee family who had recently relocated from Chad in 2018. The family was comprised of two sisters who lived in two separate households with their respective children. One sister had two daughters, aged 12 and 16. The other sister had six children, who ranged in ages between 3- and 16-years old at that time. The eldest children attended different elementary and secondary schools, whereas all the preschoolers attended the same daycare. The two sisters and their children met-up regularly to socialize at home, in local parks and leisure facilities, and at various community and religious gatherings.

The community setting for my ethnography was the LaSalle borough in south-west Montréal, which was home to the refugee family for 12 months at the study's outset. According to Santé Montréal (2019), LaSalle is among the leading areas on the island of Montréal where refugee claimants resettle, with a population of over 600 refugees in 2019. LaSalle is also one of the more racially and ethnically diverse boroughs in all of Montréal, with approximately 36% of its total population comprised of immigrants (Ville de Montréal, 2016). LaSalle possesses several dedicated resources for newcomers that facilitate their resettlement, including non-profit employability organizations, education and support services, and community-building organizations that encourage intercultural and interreligious dialogue (Arrondissement, 2018).

Beginning in early 2019, I met regularly with the family through my volunteer post with *Friends for a Cause*. The COVID-19 virus that hit Montréal in March 2019 and subsequent

government-imposed restrictions put an abrupt halt to our in-person meetings; however, I still maintained regular contact with the family to ensure their basic needs were being met by helping to connect them with local resources. My initial ethnographic plan was to visit each family at least once per week over a six-month period, accompanying them on various excursions to local parks, recreation facilities, and cultural/religious centers in Montréal. I had further planned on observing how family members interacted with the available leisure environments in ways that either supported or contrasted against prominent themes in the existent literature, while also exploring potential factors that either facilitated or impeded their access to certain resources, such as cost, distance, or language and cultural factors.

However, when all in-person research came to a halt for the first few months following my colloquium between January and May 2021 due to COVID-19, my research approach expanded through weekly Zoom meetings and/or phone interviews with the family until the restrictions had been lifted in May 2021. During our Zoom interviews, I asked the family if they were staying physically active, both on an individual level and as a family. I also inquired about what media platforms or news outlets they were using to get their information on matters concerning the COVID-19 outbreak, such as restrictions on private indoor gatherings and outdoor activities. From week to week, I tracked their levels of physical activity to identify whether any trends emerged, and if they were receiving sufficient support from municipal or community services during the pandemic.

The first few months following the COVID-19 outbreak were especially difficult for the family, who were already without much support outside of their immediate family members. Most of our conversations involved clarifications on the government-imposed restrictions and safety protocols, as well as which community support services were still open. Everything

seemed unavailable or off-limits during the first lockdown. The closure of schools also had a heavy toll on all family members: the children were unable to see their friends, and the parents were finding it extremely difficult to manage their job and house tasks because their children were always at home. The family sought help from volunteers at *Friends for a Cause*, who were adamant about helping refugees during the pandemic; however, they too were overwhelmed with day-to-day surprises and urgent immediate demands. Consequently, the family felt the lack of community support as detrimental to their resettlement and to any progress they had made prior to the pandemic.

Interviewing Techniques

Ethnographers typically employ some form of interviewing technique to enhance their observational findings, and to generate insights that would be otherwise difficult to acquire (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Lisa Given (2008) listed three types of interviewing techniques employed by ethnographers: 1) conversational, 2) semi-structured, and 3) structured. For my research, I conducted both conversational and semi-structured interviews; however, the main interviewing technique that I employed throughout data collection was conversational interviewing—an interview style that "foregrounds aspects of sociability, reciprocity, and symmetry in […] mundane conversation" (Given, 2008, p. 127). Conversational interviews enable the researcher to build rapport with the participant through two-way dialogue instead of trying to unpack what the participant says in a more scripted or unnatural interaction. The researcher may still come prepared with a list of topics to discuss but is aware that conversations may be rerouted according to the participant's desires or in response to the natural flow of an interaction (Given, 2008), thus creating a reciprocal environment for exchanging ideas.

In terms of semi-structured interviews, I only conducted formal interviews with the two female adult participants (i.e., the parents) who have brought their families from Chad to Montréal. Semi-structured interviews differ from a purely structured style of interviewing in that they encourage participants to express themselves more freely since they are not bound by closed questions and can therefore reveal more about their experiences with respect to a given social phenomenon (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). My formal interviews with the two adults consisted of a series of open-ended questions that primarily focused on themes of refugee resettlement and social inclusion through sport, recreation, and leisure. These interviews afforded in-depth information about the family's background and provided additional insight into their broader experiences of resettlement. I also used an interview guide for these interviews that was pre-approved by McGill's REB-III (see Appendix A). Crucially, the questions listed in this interview guide were formulated with insight from the coordinator at *Friends for a Cause*.

Textual Analysis

Textual analysis consists of both compiling and examining different written or visual data sources to enhance the researcher's understanding of the ways through which people make sense of and communicate their life experiences (Allen, 2017). In critical ethnography, this genre of analysis means considering how public policies are both constructed and implemented to connect participants' lived experiences to broader social and political issues (Ryder, 2008).

For my thesis, I reviewed and analyzed a variety of both formal and informal textual materials related to the topics of refugee resettlement and social inclusion through sport, recreation, and leisure. In terms of formal materials, I reviewed and analyzed various scholarly documents (such as those discussed in Chapter 2), as well as relevant government documents

linked to immigration and refugee records. These latter materials provided insight into the

resettlement procedures that all refugees must undergo to resettle in Canada. I also reviewed a

series of local documents about the community support services that are available for newcomers

in Montréal to gain greater understanding about local resettlement procedures. A few relevant

resources that were reviewed include websites for organizations such as *Friends for a Cause*, the

Refugee Centre, and *Action Réfugiés Montréal*, as well as other non-profit and charity groups in

Montréal that help underserved residents through the provision of sport, recreation, and leisure

(e.g., *Jumpstart* and *Sun Youth Sports*). Finally, I also examined relevant news reports and other

scholarly materials about Chad to better understand and appreciate the social, political, and

economic climate from which my participants migrated.

Collectively, my consideration of these formal and informal textual materials enhanced

my interpretation of my fieldwork observations, and provided additional insights into the general

context of refugee resettlement in Montréal (McKee, 2001). My knowledge about refugees'

experiences and the challenges faced during resettlement facilitated more thoughtful and

informed conversations with my participants, while also alerting me to potential 'trigger' points

and issues to avoid during conversations about Chad.

Data Analysis

All my data was interpreted through a general strategy of triangulation—an analytic

strategy that requires the researcher to consider multiple resources and perspectives to better

understand the research context and other potential issues (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Triangulation

is used to help address biases that may arise from the use of a single method or empirical

resource (Noble & Heale, 2019). Helen Noble and Roberta Heale (2019) explained that

triangulation enriches the credibility and validity of qualitative research by offering a "variety of datasets to explain differing aspects of a phenomenon of interest" (p.67).

Fieldwork and interview data for this study was triangulated with the academic literature, as well as with other textual data from policy documents and relevant sports organizations committed to designing socially inclusive programming for refugees. During my analysis, I looked for similarities and discrepancies among the different sources with the aim of adding greater texture and credibility to my study (Patton, 1999). Moreover, triangulation improved my data analysis because it forced me to consider multiple sources and better prepared me to identify and determine the validity of certain datasets (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Reflexivity

Raymond Gold (1958) stressed the importance of understanding one's ethnographic role to help mitigate against potential biases and to enhance the study's overall validity. Linda Finlay and Brendan Gough (2003) further explained that reflexivity requires introspection about how the researcher's own biases (vis-à-vis his/her background, taken-for-granted assumptions, actions, social positioning, etc.) inevitably shape the research process. This is especially true in the context of ethnographic research that is so heavily dependent upon the nature and quality of the researcher's field relations. Hence, the following section briefly discusses my personal investment in this research project, with particular attention to how I came to help refugee communities in Montréal through my association with *Friends for a Cause*.

My parents immigrated from Pakistan to Canada in 1972. As new immigrants, they encountered their fair share of struggles since arriving in Montréal over 40 years ago, including having to learn two new languages and earn a living while navigating a foreign culture. They

often shared stories with me about how everything looked different in Montréal compared to their home in Pakistan: from the weather, roads, and shopping centers to fact that people looked and acted differently. However, my parents always managed to find ways to overcome their challenges with the help of neighbours and various community organizations, despite being admittedly ill-prepared for life in a new wintry environment.

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, my first involvement with refugees was as a volunteer through the non-profit *Friends for a Cause* in early 2016. This was a period when many refugees relocated to Canada in the wake of an armed conflict in Syria (Government of Canada, 2017; Molnar, 2017). My initial intention was to facilitate donations to support refugee families in the form of cheques, gift cards, groceries, and toys for children. However, since that time, and at the request of community members and other volunteers, I have enjoyed the privilege of co-hosting numerous sporting events, food drives, and furniture deliveries aimed at facilitating refugee health and wellness. These events were almost always in partnership with local organizations (e.g., *Friends for a Cause*, *Islamic Circle of North America* (ICNA), *Hilm*, *OBAT Canada*, etc.) who informed me about the ongoing challenges faced by refugees.

My extensive engagement with refugees in Montréal put me in an advantageous position to conduct an ethnographic study. Ethnographies entail numerous encounters between the researcher and participants over a prolonged period. An important limitation within past studies is that they are cross-sectional in design, and thus analytically blunt in terms of identifying the more precise social factors that contribute to peoples' health and wellness outcomes within distinct locations. Participants may feel less comfortable sharing their experiences about resettlement with a researcher who is seen as either authoritative or intrusive (Raheim et al., 2016; Sparkes & Smith, 2013). In my case, the frequent and ongoing interactions I have enjoyed

with refugees and other gatekeepers has helped to establish the groundwork for trust and rapport

with numerous refugee families living in Montréal. However, it is always important to consider

that engagement in emotionally challenging research has the potential to unsettle the participants,

as well as the researcher's own well-being (Raheim et al., 2016). I tracked my own thoughts and

experiences in a reflexive journal and agreed to inform my supervisor of any provocative

situations that arose over the course of this study (fortunately, none did!).

3.3 Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness

All protocols and procedures for this study were approved by McGill University's

Research Ethics Board (REB)-III in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement for

Research Involving Humans. My initial REB submission took place in January 2020—one

month prior to the COVID-19 lockdown in Montréal. I had originally planned to conduct weekly

participant observation sessions, but this was no longer feasible due to government-imposed

social distancing measures which prevented me from organizing in-person meetings.

Consequently, I adapted the methods for this study to accommodate the new pandemic climate of

research. For example, I opted to use Zoom and/or phone interviews on a weekly basis to interact

with my participants, and these continued until the government restrictions on in-person social

gatherings were lifted in May 2021. After that point, I commenced in-person participant

observation sessions, as originally planned, but only when my participants felt comfortable, and

both REB and government officials had declared it safe to do so.

The protocols for this study were crafted according to the following four principles: 1)

equitable research relationships, 2) right to self-determination, 3) appropriate cultural and

diversity understanding, and 4) fair distribution of benefits (Clark-Kazak, 2017, p. 12; Mack,

Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005, p. 9). Data collection only commenced once the family members formally agreed to participate in the study. I explained to them the study procedures, outlined the potentials risks and benefits associated with their involvement in the study, elaborated on the safety measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (such as social distancing, hand sanitization, and face masking), and addressed any questions or concerns linked to the project (Clark-Kazak, 2017).

In terms of confidentiality, pseudonyms were used to maintain the anonymity of the participants (Lewis, 2013). Data was also kept confidential and securely stored on a password-protected computer. Only myself and my supervisor had access to the primary data. My continuous engagement with refugee communities since 2016 also ensured a high level of trustworthiness, reliability, and validity throughout the study (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003; Sparkes & Smith, 2013). I gained a great deal of firsthand experience working and communicating with refugees in Montréal over the past six years. These experiences allowed me to identify when communication and comprehension was unclear (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003), and had also alerted me to sensitive topics that could have potentially made refugees uncomfortable, such as directly talking about conflicts in their home nation.

In terms of reciprocity, the Chadian community in the borough of LaSalle is quite small, representing less than 0.4% of the total immigrant population (Ville de Montréal, 2018). As such, the participants have been forced to navigate and discover parts of their town without much help from people from their country of origin. My goal was to learn how they navigate the challenges of resettling in a new and foreign city through the prism of sport, recreation, and leisure; however, an additional goal of mine was to help introduce the family to nearby resources, such as food banks, and educational services with which I was familiar through my volunteer work.

The two mothers were also financially compensated for their contributions to this study through a pre-paid $250 credit card given to them at the start of my fieldwork.

3.4. Chapter Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter introduced and summarized the theory and methods that were used throughout this study. I began by outlining Edouard Glissant's theories about the transformative capacities of intercultural mixing—a framework that I use and develop throughout my analytic chapter. Next, I discussed the different ethnographic methods that were used for data collection, which included participant observation, conversational and semi-structured interviewing, and textual analysis. All data was analysed using a general strategy of triangulation to improve the credibility and validity of my research. Finally, I laid out the ethical considerations that shaped this study, especially with respect to the global pandemic that hit Montréal in winter 2020. My extensive involvement with refugee communities helped me to better understand the issues and ongoing challenges that impacted the ethical completion of this study.

Chapter IV:
Data Analysis

This chapter analyzes the results and major themes that emerged throughout my virtual ethnography. As discussed in Chapter III, the bulk of my fieldwork in 2020 was conducted online by way of weekly Zoom meetings with my participants due to government-imposed restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since mid-2019, I had built rapport with the family by periodically visiting them through my volunteer work with the non-profit, *Friends for a Cause*. Prior to the pandemic, we met regularly at least once per month to visit and to inquire about their experiences trying to adapt to a new (Canadian) culture. We typically had our conversations while walking in parks near their home or while grabbing coffee at a nearby café. However, since March 2020, the priority for volunteers at *Friends for a Cause* shifted to ensure that newcomers were sufficiently equipped with necessities such as food and sanitation supplies throughout the pandemic. We also sought to help families navigate broader social issues such as job loss, adapting to remote work or learning environments, and by connecting them with local community services whenever possible. I consequently nurtured even greater rapport with my participants throughout this period, while learning about their struggles and strategies for managing life during the pandemic—both of which I explore throughout this chapter.

I have organized this chapter into three sections. In Section one, I introduce the broader social and cultural backdrop for this study by briefly outlining the humanitarian crisis in Chad from which my participants fled and that is currently affecting over 6 million individuals. Section two, next, explores the barriers that this family has thus far encountered during their transition to life in Montréal in terms of accessing different leisure opportunities. This section also highlights how difficult it can be to balance everyday life and leisure opportunities against the more pressing struggles to meet basic survival needs. For instance, I explain how

compromised sleep due to persistent financial precarity and housing instability were barriers to accessing leisure opportunities in the city. Of significance is that these barriers were emblematic of broader socio-cultural and economic-political issues that affected the family's integrative experience in Montréal. Finally, Section three explores how all these barriers have been enhanced by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter concludes with a few summative comments about the pressing need for sports and leisure organizations to become more educated and sensitive to the realities of life for refugee families in Montréal, especially in the context of increased social and economic inequalities.

4.1. A Tale of Two Contexts: From Chad to Montréal

Chad is the fifth largest country in Africa and home to over 16 million people (BBC, 2018). The country has a rich cultural heritage, and archaeologists speculate that early civilizations date back as far as 3000 B.C. (Azevedo, 1998). Chad is also known for its crossroads of religions, trade, and livelihoods, particularly after migratory movements intensified following the 15th century (Azevedo, 1998). These migrations and the corresponding intermingling of peoples have largely been incited by major environmental shifts across the different geographic regions of the country (Reyna, 1990). Landlocked in the heart of continental Africa, Chad enjoys a variety of landscapes and climate zones that range from arid deserts to flooded grasslands and savannahs. The country's northern third is in the Sahara Desert and experiences less than 200mm of annual rainfall (Azevedo, 2019). The lack of precipitation makes the region largely unsuitable for human habitation, which is why it is home to only 1% of the country's total population (Azevedo, 2019; USAID, 2016). The country's middle portion is called the Sahelian Zone, otherwise known as Africa's transitory region, located between the

Saharan north and the savannahs of southern Chad (USAID, 2019). The country's capital city, N'Djamena, as well as Lake Chad, are also located in this region (USAID, 2019), while the southernmost Sudanese or Tropical region is by far most populous due to its tropical climate and vast woodlands (Azevedo, 2019; USAID, 2016; USAID, 2019).

In total, there are over 130 different languages spoken in Chad (Zuchora-Walske, 2009), with Chadian Arabic and French as the country's two official languages (Zuchora-Walske, 2009). Many Chadians also speak various local Indigenous languages and other regional dialects (Zuchora-Walske, 2009). In terms of religion, moreover, Islam and Christianity are equally prominent throughout the country's urban areas, with the caveat that most northerners practice Islam and most southerners practice Christianity or Indigenous religions (Office of International Religious Freedom, 2018; Zuchora-Walske, 2009). Chad is nevertheless recognized as a secular state with no official religion. However, in 2018, former President Idriss Déby enforced aggressive constitutional revisions that required all elected officeholders to take an Islamic oath (Luxmoore, 2018)—a move that sparked outrage from Christians and religious minorities (Luxmoore, 2018). Such controversial government actions have further divided Chad and cemented existing social inequalities and other regional tensions.

Despite the country's complex political landscape, many Chadians regularly practice sport and physical cultural pursuits, as well as other leisure activities. Soccer is by far the most popular sport in Chad yet remains the near exclusive preserve of boys and young men (Zuchora-Walske, 2009). Girls, on the other hand, enjoy jump rope and a form of hopscotch called tap tap (Zuchora-Walske, 2009), among other low-impact activities. Popular sports that are more specific to urban areas in Chad include basketball, boxing, martial arts, and track and field.

Freestyle wrestling is also a popular traditional sport in Chad, which has historically been practiced by boys and men in rural areas (Zuchora-Walkse, 2009).

At the international level, only 27 different athletes from Chad have participated in the Summer Olympic Games since 1964 (Olympedia, 2021). The relatively low number of Chadian Olympians partially explains why Chad has yet to win an Olympic medal (Olympedia, 2021; UNCHR, 2016). However, the country's limited success in international competition has also been attributed to the government's dispassionate view of high-performance sport coupled with the failure to integrate professional athletes into national development plans (Kakonge, 2016). Consequently, Chad's sports facilities and leisure programs have historically received limited funding (Fuller et al., 2010). Present-day social and political tensions have further halted all potential investments in sport, recreation, and leisure infrastructure (Kakonge, 2016). Indeed, Chad currently faces multiple humanitarian crises owing to a complex blend of social problems including an estimated 461,000 children under the age of five who are at risk of severe acute malnutrition (UNICEF, 2020). In addition, nearly half of Chad's total population reportedly lives below the poverty line, which means that a person's average income is insufficient to afford necessities such as food, water, and shelter (OCHA, 2019).

Over the last decade, conflicts caused by droughts, as well as political and religious disputes in neighbouring countries, have spilled over into Chad resulting in numerous violent outbursts and displays of social unrest (Red Cross Red Crescent, 2005). In November 2015, the federal government declared an official state of emergency in the Lake Chad region following Boko Haram led attacks on Chadian civilians (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2020).[4] A more

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[4] Boko Haram is an Islamist militant group from Nigeria. The group was founded in 2002 with the aim of overthrowing the Nigerian government and creating an Islamist state (Coleman 2014). Since 2015, Boko Haram has caused havoc in Chad, particularly around the Lake Chad basin—an area that combines rich agriculture, fishing, and migration from neighbouring countries (International Crisis Group, 2015).

recent state of emergency was declared in 2019 in Eastern Chad following armed intercommunal attacks that had been largely incited by severe food shortages (Al Jazeera, 2019; Radio France International, 2019). As a result, Chad now ranks 186th out of 188 countries worldwide on the Human Development Index (International Rescue Committee, 2020; UNICEF 2020)—an index that ranks countries based on their populations' life expectancy, education levels, and standard of living (United Nations Development Programme, 2019).

As noted in the introduction, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened existing inequalities and other social tensions in Chad. Since the beginning of the pandemic, government-imposed restrictions on community gatherings and other lockdown measures have severely interfered with the ability of humanitarian organizations to monitor the different crises unfolding across the country (The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], 2021). Organizations such as UNICEF and the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) were effectively sidelined throughout the pandemic from helping to test and administer medicine for COVID-19 patients, as well as from helping to monitor and advocate for short-term solutions to other tensions throughout the country (OCHA, 2021; Reuters, 2021).

In 2021, many of these issues peaked when then President Déby—who had been in power since 1976—was assassinated by armed rebel groups. President Déby had previously been re-elected five times due to constitutional amendments that occurred in both 2005 and 2018 that effectively removed presidential term limits and thus opened the door for President Déby to retain power until a projected 2033 (Haque, 2021), at which point he would have been 81 years old. Opposition groups and civic leaders had long criticized Déby's management of Chad's economy, which cratered in recent years due to a collapsing oil industry and armed rebel attacks in the country's northern provinces (Al Jazeerah, 2021). Déby was also heavily criticized for

trying to create a monarchy through media and institutional control (Haque, 2021). Human rights advocates also argued against President Déby's stranglehold over the country's oil industry, stating that Chad should be a stable and rich country due to its bountiful natural resources. Instead, the country suffers from alarming levels of hunger, low life expectancy, and a broken education and healthcare system (Tampa, 2021). Chad's military council installed a transitional government following Déby's assassination that was intended to organize democratic elections and to facilitate much needed institutional changes; however, social, and political instability remain widespread throughout the country (Al Jazeera, 2021).

4.2. Fundamental barriers to sport and leisure activities

The political and social contexts into which my participants arrived in Montréal was radically different from the one they fled in Chad. As stated earlier, Montréal is a relatively safe city located in a prosperous North American country that has long proven to be a haven for migrants of all categories (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2021; Canadian Immigration and Immigration Resource Center, 2021). However, Montréal has not been immune from social inequalities. The recent adoption of Bills 21 and 96, for example, disproportionately impact populations that are already marginalized. Because of these and other social pressures, newcomers to Montréal such as Khai and Maktuba face a host of difficulties adjusting to the social and cultural pressures of their new environment.

The borough of LaSalle is a good illustration of both wider societal challenges and opportunities that newcomers traditionally encounter upon moving to a city such as Montréal. As one of Montréal's major industrial centers (Ville de Montréal, 2021), LaSalle presents opportunities for both locals and newcomers alike in various lines of employment. Factories and commercial properties line popular streets such as the Angrignon and Newman Boulevards, and

neighbourhoods can be divided based on their visible economic disparities (Ville de Montréal, 2021). The Angrignon Est sector is the hub for modern residential high-rise projects and favours both public and active means of transportation. In contrast, Village des Rapides is a residential sector colloquially referred to as "The Bronx" owing to its aging housing stock that dates to the 1920s and its largely racialized population (Ville de Montréal, 2021).

In terms of sports and leisure pursuits, there is over 100 different community and social organizations in LaSalle, as well as 18 different sports clubs (Ville de Montréal, 2021). The borough also offers residents the chance to discover new artists from around the province through hosting seasonal exhibitions such as the LaSalle Cultural Program and live performances at the widely popular Desjardins Theater (Ville de Montréal, 2021). Several recreational facilities and cultural centers in LaSalle also offer free admission and leisure activities to newcomers to help nurture social integration—a strategy that was newly adopted by the borough owing to the recent uptick in immigration (Government of Quebec, 2021; Henri-Lemieux, 2021; Miekus, 2021, The Canadian Press, 2021). Non-profits and recreational groups around Montréal have also adopted similar initiatives to assist newcomers in their social, economic, and cultural integration to the city (Arrondissement, 2018).

Prior to moving to Montréal, the two families that participated in my study formerly lived in Chad's capital city of N'Djamena. Despite enduring many hardships, both sisters reflected nostalgically about the environmental and cultural richness of Chad. Gatherings with extended family took place every weekend and involved full course meals and traditional games. Maktuba and her two daughters spent entire days outside at family picnics, barbecues, and simply exploring nearby forests and other nature trails. Both sisters were also fascinated by Chad's

cultural and historic heritage and took their children on regular visits to the Chad National Museum, as well as to different mosques and cathedrals for which N'Djamena is famous.

However, upon moving to Montréal, one of my earliest ethnographic observations was that both mothers were constantly pre-occupied with childcare duties such as preparing lunches, readying them for school, and helping with their homework. This left little time or energy to pursue various recreation or leisure activities available in the city. Indeed, the labour associated with raising children as a single parent without the social capital of extended family and friends nearby tremendously impacted their ability to carry out other important tasks (e.g., searching for jobs, taking professional equivalency tests, language-learning classes, etc.). As noted previously, both sisters moved to Montréal without their husbands due to immigration restrictions. At the time of writing, the elder sister, Khai, is still awaiting approval for her husband's sponsorship application after over 2-years of separation. Khai has six young children under the age of eight. Maktuba recently separated from her spouse who no longer intends to relocate to Canada. She has two daughters aged 13 and 17 years old, respectively.

The feelings of exhaustion and fatigue that both sisters experienced is demonstrated in the following ethnographic interview with Khai:

> *Khai: I don't have time to meet other families in my neighbourhood. It is very difficult right now. Some days my kids are at home because of the pandemic. On the days they go to school, I drop them off and pick them up and make sure that all six are ready with their lunchboxes, gym clothes, and everything else that kids need these days. I basically assume the role of two parents since I am alone here in Montréal without my husband. The constant pressure of caring for my kids leaves me exhausted at the end of the day.*

I've averaged four to five hours of sleep per night since coming to Canada. I can't remember the last time I enjoyed a full eight hours of sleep!

Shoaib: How about during the day? Are you able to find time to nap?

Khai: No. I'm always going in and out of the house. I fainted twice from exhaustion and dehydration before the pandemic started. The ambulance came. Even on weekends I am running around. I just don't have time to relax or sleep.

(pers. comm., January 23, 2021).

This conversation reveals the severe stress that Khai has endured as a single parent with six young children in Montréal. The stress of constantly having to care for her children alongside a host of other duties such as work, and grocery shopping has compromised her health in the past. Not only must she overcome the primary barriers that impede her access to appropriate care in Montréal (i.e., administrative, legal, financial and language barriers), but she must also find the time and motivation to be able to care for her own health.

Before moving to Canada, Khai's lifestyle was very different in Chad where she could rely on her husband and other relatives for help:

Khai: I worked for 17 years in Chad, and I have a PhD in Accounting and Finance.

Shoaib: Wow! You were able to do that with kids?

Khai: Yes. It was not easy, but it was doable. My husband was helping me with our children. He knew I was very ambitious.

Shoaib: Were you able to find any equivalency classes in Montréal?

Khai: I can get a master's equivalency, but I must take classes. I even started the classes, but I had to stop.

Shoaib: How come?

Khai: The COVID cases were rising, and the kids had to stay at home. I paid $300 for the classes, and I did not have money for a babysitter so I couldn't study. My sister is also very busy.

Shoaib: I pray you will be able to restart the classes soon.

Khai: Yes, I pray for this, too. I want to pursue university in Montréal, even if it's part-time. Keep us in your prayers, Shoaib.

(pers. comm., January 23, 2021).

In theoretical terms, the sorts of pressures described by Khai are consistent with what Glissant (1990) called the "chaos-monde" [chaotic world]—a circumstance that arises from inequalities among citizens of the same society. More specifically, "chaos-monde" reflects a world in which the privileged in society benefit most from a state's institutions and services, even if these institutions are meant for "everyone." Barriers of entry to different services and opportunities (e.g., opportunities for leisure) are perpetuated when institutions and services are created without recognizing the realities of society's most vulnerable members. Khai's family situation, for instance, reflects the "chaos-monde" in the sense that she struggles to find opportunities that can accommodate her circumstances. Even searching for housing accommodations proved overwhelming in lieu of her numerous and more pressing family obligations. Moreover, the unpredictability of school during the pandemic also enhanced her struggles and made establishing a routine beyond childcare and other family obligations nearly impossible.

Khai and Maktuba nevertheless strived to establish a daily routine for themselves despite their hectic schedules. For example, Khai began each day by waking up for the morning Islamic prayer before sunrise, which motivated her to spend the rest of her day caring for her young children. Maktuba was similarly dedicated to helping her daughters with their homework in the

evening time. Khai and Maktuba often planned to meet on weekends. While weekends were ideal times for the two sisters and their children to come together, they had little energy to entertain or organize any leisure activities. Instead, Khai and Maktuba typically took turns watching over the children so that each sister had time to catch up on sleep. During one of my conversations with Maktuba, she said, *"It is important for us to meet regularly. We help each other a lot. I usually visit my sister on weekends, and she cooks food for me and my children while I rest my eyes. Sometimes her three youngest children will come stay with me on weekends so that she can also rest."* Both sisters viewed the weekends as opportunities to rest, which ironically took away from any free time they would have to explore leisure activities in their surrounding area. According to Donelle Barnes and Nina Almasy (2005), lack of time was indeed one of the greatest barriers to physical activity for refugees adapting to a new North American culture. As a result, refugees were more likely to become sedentary through the fatigue of trying to survive and adapt to a new way of life (Barnes & Almasy, 2005).

Throughout my fieldwork, my participant families expressed keen interest in learning about any nearby sport, recreation, and leisure services. However, the challenge of finding opportunities that were adapted to their families' realities proved almost insurmountable. Consider the following interaction with Maktuba, who shared with me her desire to organize at least one memorable outing with her family in Montreal during the summertime:

> *Shoaib: I saw this post on social media that might be of interest to you (the post contained an advertisement for a family outing to the La Ronde amusement park). Have you heard of La Ronde?*
>
> *Maktuba: Yes, of course! My kids have been wanting to go there for a very long time.*

Shoaib: That's great! A mosque in Montreal's Saint-Laurent area is organizing a trip to La Ronde in July. I will try to see if there is a way to get your family to join without having to pay full price. Do you know if Khai and her children would also be interested?

Maktuba: Shoaib, we would really like to do at least one family outing with all of us together this summer. I will talk to my sister, but I want us to all go together.

Shoaib: I will try my best to make it happen. I will ask the mosque and other organizations if there is a way to reduce the cost for your family, and then I will crowd-fund the trip. That way, you won't have to pay for anything.

Maktuba: Please let us know. My sister has her car so she can come on her own. And for me and my daughters, I will need help getting there.

Shoaib: That's fine. I will arrange that for you when we get to that point.

Maktuba: I will be very grateful if you can plan this trip for us, Shoaib. These are good memories that the kids will have when they are older.

(pers. comm., May 28, 2021).

This conversation made me reflect on the family's scarce social network, as well as numerous other factors that make locating resources especially difficult for families such as Maktuba's who lack time, financial, and linguistic capital. Community supports such as other family members would have greatly helped them to navigate Montréal and to accomplish even the most basic of tasks such as receiving information about halal restaurants in their area or finding help for their internet connection. However, the limited social network to which Maktuba had access was one of the major barriers to her integration into Montréal. Curiously, when asked why she had yet to reach out to community or religious services in her area, Maktuba cited lack of trust in these organizations and uncertainty about how much help they would be willing to offer her family

without recompense. This lack of trust must be interpreted through the prism of her personal experiences in Chad owing to the traumas of war, as well as to more recent experiences of racism and discrimination that she has encountered in Montréal. For example, one of the reasons that Maktuba cited as fuelling her mistrust in these organizations was the unfriendliness and lack of empathy she encountered as a visible minority. Although Maktuba did not directly elaborate on her personal experiences of racism, she explained that even hearing about incidences of racism and prejudice from her kids or in the media had instilled in her a sense of fear and mistrust. Consider the following excerpt from my discussion with Maktuba:

Maktuba: Every time I call a number, they tell me to call someone else.

Shoaib: Have you managed to get in touch with anyone to help you learn about local non-profit organizations since moving to Montréal?

Maktuba: No. I only call you and Farida when I need help.

Shoaib: What do you think these services can do to improve their accessibility to you and others who are in a similar position?

Maktuba: There's many things they can do. But they need to start by showing that they care.

Shoaib: What do you mean?

Maktuba: The news now is showing a video of a refugee who was mistreated at a hospital near where you live.

Shoaib: The Charles-LeMoyne Hospital?

Maktuba: Exactly. I saw the same thing in the news about Black and Muslim

communities in general. I rarely see any positive stories in the news about folks like me.

That has an effect, right? It certainly doesn't improve my self-confidence or willingness

to ask for help. Do they even want us here?

(pers. comm., March 19, 2021).

Maktuba's reflection shows how broader discriminatory practices in both Montréal and Québec

impact the willingness of refugees to even ask for help. For example, both Khai and Maktuba

had strong recollections about the media's coverage of the Québec City Mosque shooting in

2017, as well as the vehicle attack on a Muslim immigrant family in Ontario in June 2021.[5]

These sorts of horrific events of racism and Islamophobia cause newcomers to feel both

unwelcomed and threatened, especially when little policy changes are advanced to support

minority groups (Gilmore, 2021). Simich et al. (2005) similarly observed how service providers

and policy makers in Canada struggled to provide sufficient help to recently resettled newcomer

groups, which contributed to a sense of frustration and apathy among the communities they

intended to serve. For example, the constant underfunding of immigrant settlement services

coupled with the jurisdictional labyrinth of program governance across national, provincial, and

municipal lines often leads to a lack of adequate health and social services (Simich et al., 2005).

Both Maktuba and Khai have struggled to make new friends and forge other social

connections in Montréal since their arrival in 2018. According to Laura Simich et al. (2005), one

of the main challenges that refugees face in Canada post-resettlement is learning 'where' and

'how' to get help. Most refugees are forced to navigate a "confusing, fragmented health and

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[5] Conversations about systemic racism have become increasingly present throughout large North American and Canadian institutions, as well within large cities internationally, in the wake of George Floyd's death in May 2020. In 2020, Montréal appointed its first municipal commissioner to fight against systemic racism and discrimination. The commission promises to help resolve discriminatory dynamics in our city's institutions through research on existing systemic oppressions and concrete strategies (Laou, 2020).

social service sector," all while being limited in the number of people who support them (p. 261). In relation to Glissant's "chaos-monde", the state bears primary responsibility for the unwelcoming and disorienting social setting into which newcomers enter; however, the blame almost always falls squarely on the shoulders of newcomers. In Canada, for example, refugees bring different traditions, religious beliefs, and cultural values that must be pushed aside through a wide range of institutional forces that ultimately shape the policies in public health and educational services (e.g., Québec's Law 21 project, which forbids Québec residents who work in governmental positions from wearing religious symbols—a law that obviously complicates and contradicts other state rhetoric about cultural tolerance) (Dion, 2019). In addition, cultural insensitivity, limited resources, the lack of constructive policies and programs, and narrow service mandates also make it difficult to adapt institutional resources to suit the unique needs and life circumstances of refugees from diverse countries around the globe (Galabuzi, 2004; Simich et al., 2005). Ultimately, though, the gap between politics, policies and social services, and refugee realities often leaves refugees feeling isolated from their new communities.

4.3. Conflicting definitions of leisure

An additional theme that emerged over the course of my fieldwork involved the contrasting experiences of relocation between my main participants and their children. While Maktuba and Khai struggled to forge and sustain strong social connections in Montreal, both mothers were relieved that their children had, for the most part, adapted smoothly to their new communities. They attributed their children's resilience and adaptability to their innocence, but more concretely they credit their children with being able to establish friendships. Khai further

elaborated on the positive role that daycare monitors and elementary school teachers have had on her children's integration:

> *Khai: When we first moved to Canada, my children and I didn't want to be apart from each other. My children didn't want to go to daycare or to school, because they were afraid of not having their mother by their side.*
>
> *Shoaib: Were you nervous to see your children on their own in daycare and at school?*
>
> *Khai: I was very nervous and scared for the first few weeks. I remember always praying for their safety and hoping that they would return home with a smile.*
>
> *Shoaib: How was your children's experience?*
>
> *Khai: It was very positive. My children always praise their instructors for being in a good mood.*
>
> *Shoaib: Do you think games and sports have contributed to your children's positive experience?*
>
> *Khai: Absolutely! They tell me about all the different games that they play. Sometimes it is the teacher that organizes the games, but my older children tell me that they usually just decide what to play with their friends. I think it is a great way for them to get closer to their peers.*
>
> <div align="right">(pers. comm., May 28, 2021).</div>

Khai acknowledged the positive role that both teachers and loosely structured leisure practices played in her children's adaptation process. At first, she was both nervous and scared to see her children begin this new chapter in life. These feelings were soon calmed when her children revealed all the positive experiences they enjoyed outside of the home. Khai further noted that sports and games helped to bring her children closer to their peers—an observation that Flesner

et al. (2020) similarly discovered in their study on the inclusive properties of sport-activities for refugee youths. However, Flesner et al. (2020) also cautioned that the inclusiveness of certain sporting activities may be linked to broader assimilatory patterns such as the need for newcomers to put aside parts of their identity to avoid potential conflicts related to ethnicity, religion, or social class (Flensner et al., 2020). In addition, the "new common and unifying identity" promoted through certain sport-activities can at times conflict with newcomers' previous beliefs or practices (p. 78). For Khai, though, she only highlighted the positive outcomes for her children associated with playing sports and games while attending school, perhaps because her children are still too young to say or behave in a way that is contrary to how she raised them.

On the other hand, Maktuba's two daughters are in their teenage years and are growing up in an environment that is much different from what they experienced in Chad. As Maktuba recounted, *"This new environment has taken all of [them] some getting used to."* Consider the following excerpt from my conversation with Maktuba that highlights some of the challenges she has encountered in the new school year:

> *Shoaib: How are your daughters doing at school this year? Did they make new friends?*
>
> *Maktuba: They enjoy going to school. I am happy for that. My older daughter, Aisha, has some close friends. She is on the phone with them every day.*
>
> *Shoaib: That's nice to hear. Having close friends is important.*
>
> *Maktuba: It is, but both my daughters are struggling in school. I want them to focus more on their homework first. They can call their friends on the weekends.*
>
> *Shoaib: How is your youngest daughter doing?*
>
> *Maktuba: Muntaha needs help with her math homework. I try to help her, but there are a lot of things in her books that I don't remember.*

Shoaib: Have you tried looking for a tutor?

Maktuba: We looked online, but the prices are too expensive. Her final exams are approaching, too.

Shoaib: Have you tried asking her math teacher for help?

Maktuba: That's a good idea. I will try calling the school tomorrow.

Shoaib: Do your daughters participate in any extracurricular activities or sports? Those can also help them better organize their time and even help them do better at school.

Maktuba: Well, Muntaha has asked me many times to enroll her in dance classes with some of her school friends.

Shoaib: Did you find any dance schools near you?

Maktuba: My daughter found many of them, but I want her to improve her grades at school before she starts other activities. I said the same thing to Aisha.

Shoaib: What do they say about that?

Maktuba: We have argued about it many times. Muntaha is very persistent about taking dance classes, but I tell her to focus on school first. A lot of these problems are new problems for me, Shoaib.

Shoaib: What do you mean by new problems?

Maktuba: We could have avoided a lot of these problems in Chad. After-school tutors were very popular and affordable. Also, I'm sure Muntaha could have danced with her friends without taking any classes. That's what Aisha used to do when she was younger.

(pers. comm. June 8, 2021).

This excerpt sheds light on a few themes and subtle tensions that can emerge during the resettlement process. First, the potential inter-generational conflicts that can arise between

parents and their adolescent children are often enhanced for new immigrant and refugee families owing to the different cultural worlds in which they have been socialized (Deng & Marlowe, 2013). Maktuba is predominantly concerned with her children's grades at school, as well as trying to find them an affordable tutor. Her concerns likely stem from her own academic background in Chad where education for youths was seen as the central building block for success and where life in general was more affordable. On the other hand, Aisha and Muntaha are both more interested in building friendships and extracurricular activities to enhance the quality of their new life in Montréal. Guo et al. (2019) noted that the integration of refugee children in the Canadian school system was vital to their settlement needs. Ironically, Maktuba's primary focus on academic performance may inadvertently be pulling them away from forming stronger friendships through sport and leisure activities and, in turn, inhibiting their integration process. She envisions how life would have been different for her and her children had they still been living in Chad where sport and leisure was more commonly practiced together as a family as opposed to with a small group of similarly aged friends, and where school was prioritized over extracurricular activities.

In theoretical terms, the above tensions resemble what Glissant (1997) called "Créolization", which he described as "se changer en échangeant avec l'autre sans se perdre ou se dénaturer" [change by exchanging with the other without losing or distorting oneself] (p. 25). Maktuba's children have started this process of change and individual identity development by interacting with new friends and showing interest in locally rooted extracurricular activities such as North American style dance and trending hip-hop music. Maktuba, however, worries that these sorts of interactions and activities may negatively impact her children's academic performance, which she considers essential to their success and social advancement in a new

country. Sonia Dhaliwal (2020) noted that young newcomers settling in Canada often negotiate a disconnect between parental expectations and those of the new/mainstream peer culture in which they are being socialized. They encounter a unique range of pressures from parents, peers, and mainstream culture and are stuck feeling the need to please everyone (Dhaliwal, 2020).

Maktuba reflected on the potential consequences of pulling her children away from leisure activities in the following excerpt:

Maktuba: I used to view leisure as a distraction.

Shoaib: What do you mean by distraction?

Maktuba: I didn't want my kids to join any activities during the school year because I thought this would distract them from school. Now, I think that it was good for them.

Shoaib: Can you elaborate on that? Did you notice anything new or different about their behaviour once they started engaging in more leisure pursuits?

Maktuba: Well, I took away Aisha's phone during the last month of school so that she would focus on her exams. She became quieter and didn't do any better at school.

Shoaib: How about Muntaha?

Maktuba: She also struggled. Neither of them saw their friends after school had ended for the year because I wanted them to spend more time studying during the vacation. Instead, they ended up spending their free time in silence and doing nothing.

Shoaib: What do you mean they spent their free time in silence?

Maktuba: I mean to say that they were often lost in their thoughts. I realized that it's important for them to have balance between school and other activities. Their activities keep them busy and happy.

(pers. comm. June 29, 2021).

Maktuba's concerns about leisure activities have changed since she has arrived in Canada. She no longer considers leisure purely as a distraction from more productive activities but as an essential part of her children's happiness and even generative of their academic performance. However, it is evident through Maktuba's dialogue that her children's success remains both her main priority and concern. Lauren Gilbert et al. (2017) noted that parental monitoring of academics was positively associated with immigrant children's success in several school subjects. Yet, in the context of refugee families, children may be dealing with undiagnosed learning difficulties that are associated with emotional problems rooted in their migration experience (Rousseau et al., 1996). Moreover, Maktuba's children may be viewing her monitoring as an additional stressor which, in essence, is contributing to poor academic achievements. Sara Bokhari (2011) noted that newcomer parents can pressure their children to succeed in school to demonstrate that their families 'made it' in their new milieu. While Maktuba never expressed this sentiment to me in my fieldwork, her children may still be acutely aware of their families' resettlement difficulties and sense the pressure to ameliorate their familial situation, especially owing to all the sacrifices their families have endured.

4.4. The exacerbation of inequality during the pandemic

The final theme of my research concerns the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Khai, Maktuba, and their children's resettlement. Jennifer Edmonds and Antoine Flahault (2021) explored how the first wave of the pandemic that hit Montréal in early 2020 enhanced pre-existing inequalities and barriers to health and social services among marginalized groups—inequalities that were further aggravated by new challenges such as school and border closures, as well as the inability to access community and religious centers (Edmonds & Flahault, 2021).

Over two years have passed since the first wave of COVID-19, and my participants are still struggling to establish any normalcy in their daily routines and to advance in their resettlement. As Maktuba mentioned, *"Our lives feel like they have been on pause since the start of pandemic."* Consider the following discussion with Maktuba that took place after I had brought her a donated food basket from a local non-profit organization. Maktuba asked if I could help fix a computer that she had also received as a donation:

Shoaib: I am not great with computers, but I will try my best to help.

Maktuba: Thank you so much, Shoaib. My children really need the computer for their studies.

Shoaib: How long have you had it for?

Maktuba: It has only been a few days. Farida [a social worker] helped to get it for us.

Shoaib: And what's the problem?

Maktuba: It won't connect to the internet. I called our service provider, but they told us that there must be an issue with the computer since our cellphones can still connect to the Wi-Fi.

Shoaib: Have your computer troubles affected your children's schooling in any way?

Maktuba: For now, they are doing their homework on the cellphones. It will be very difficult for them to continue this way.

Shoaib: For sure. Can the school help with any of this?

Maktuba: I tried asking their teachers, but they said they cannot help us right now since everyone is going through an adjustment period. I really hope this won't affect their grades. They are already struggling in a couple of classes.

Shoaib: Do you think their friends can help them out?

Maktuba: I have not tried asking them. My children get sad when I mention their friends,

because their friends seem to be living without any problems.

Shoaib: What do you mean?

Maktuba: They don't seem to be as affected by the pandemic. They have working

computers and can rely on their parents for help. Our situation is very different.

(pers. comm. September 25, 2020).

This was one of the more difficult conversations I had during my fieldwork. I could feel

Maktuba's stress concerning her children's wellbeing, as well as her frustration with being

unable to support them how she would like. Maktuba was again forced to rely on her limited

social network for support (in this case, Farida and me). While Ministries of Education across

Canada had asked schools to develop plans to accommodate the specific needs of refugee

students at the beginning of the pandemic, little if anything has been done to help teachers

support these students (Edmonds & Flahault, 2021). According to Jens Nielsen (2021), teachers

in non-pandemic circumstances reportedly feel overwhelmed trying to facilitate refugee students'

learning experiences, and these can include: making a connection with the entire refugee family

to learn about their objectives and challenges, helping families adjust to online learning, and

combating issues of systemic racism for those who are visibly different in appearance.

During the latter stages of the pandemic, certain school services across Montréal focused

on Québec's welcome class "Francization" program to accommodate for the growing number of

refugees who could not attend its services at the start of the pandemic (Despatie, 2022). Rather

than focus on the more pressing concerns linked to refugee schooling during the pandemic, the

province's educational system instead focused its attention on these French classes, leading to

the negligence of refugee families' specific needs during the pandemic. Khai shared her concerns with me regarding the direction of the province's support for newcomers:

> *Maktuba: The government is focusing a lot on the French language, but refugees need a lot more support than this. My family already knows how to speak French, but now what? We need help with getting good jobs and acquiring our degree equivalencies. Our children deserve stability. Are they receiving any extra help? (May 15, 2022).*

Not only has the pandemic introduced new challenges for refugee families such as my participants, but it has also amplified other pre-existing challenges to their successful integration. For example, Eva Spiritus-Beerden et al. (2021) found that migrants tended to draw upon informal networks (e.g., family, friends, and/or community helpers) for support when formal support services are inaccessible. However, Maktuba and Khai were not even able to see each other and visit with their respective families for several weeks of strict COVID-19 lockdown measures in 2020 and 2021. This affected Khai's aspirations for attending university in Canada:

> *Khai: I started taking English classes because I thought it would help me find a better job in Canada. I had even hoped to get a university degree one day. But now I don't know anymore. I am usually a very ambitious person. I have a doctorate degree in finance from Chad. But how can I accomplish anything here without support? I can't even meet my sister! I visited Maktuba with my kids last month because there was a power outage in my apartment. Her neighbour called the police on us because, by law, we are not allowed to socialize during the lockdown. Thank God the police had some common sense and let us stay, but what should we do now? My kids were asking why the police were there. I had no energy to explain any of this to them. It's exhausting. (February 10, 2021).*

One of the central observations throughout my fieldwork has been the high value that both Khai and Maktuba place on education for themselves and for their children. However, the excerpt above reveals how Khai's personal ambitions for higher education are slowly turning into feelings of despair. The pandemic has limited her ability to interact with anyone, even her sister, which has interrupted her ability to envision a better future for herself amidst the chaos of her more pressing family obligations. Authors Kristen Perry and Christine Mallozzi (2011) explained that aspirations for higher learning and educational obstacles among refugees are often invisible to those in power during resettlement contexts: "Stereotypical images of refugees, particularly those from Africa, often depict refugees as poor, un- or under-educated, low literate or illiterate, helpless, and in need of 'saving' by those who are more fortunate" (p. 259). In effect, government institutions reinforce these stereotypical images by prioritizing the immediate employment of refugees and imposing lengthy accreditation processes that devalue their skills and dissuade them from pursuing supplementary education (Perry & Mallozzi, 2011).

During the first wave of the pandemic, the Premier of Québec, François Legault, called upon asylum seekers to work on the frontlines of long-term care homes, referring to them as "guardian angels" for their contributions. In a similar vein, Québec's Immigration Minister, Marco Mendicino, publicly recognized the efforts of newly resettled families who contributed to the province's frontline healthcare efforts and further announced a new program that would allow asylum seekers working in healthcare to apply for permanent residency in Canada, thus expediting their prospect of a more secure future in Canada, along with several other benefits (Stevenson, 2020). More recent reports, however, reveal that only a fraction of asylum seekers had their applications processed since this announcement, while the majority of applicants were denied permanent residency due to the province's narrow asylum laws (Rafiquddin, 2021).

In May 2021, Premier Legault created even more discontent among refugees who stepped-up during the pandemic by announcing that Québec would prioritize economic immigrants (i.e., higher wage-earning immigrants) over refugees and asylum seekers, because it would help achieve his goal of increasing the average salary of Québecers (Global News, 2021). The opposition attacked his comments, suggesting that Premier Legault was being insensitive and inconsiderate to newcomers: "Immigrants are not objects, let alone numbers, they are human beings" (The Canadian Press, 2021), an attack he brushed aside without acknowledgement.

Collectively, the political rhetoric, inconsistent public policies and messaging, and media reports of violence against racialized newcomers has taken a significant toll on the mental health and wellbeing of refugee families such as the one profiled in this thesis. Both Khai and Maktuba felt that they and their families needed to be extremely careful and comply with government expectations for newcomers after the incident that occurred involving their neighbours. While Khai has managed to find a stable career, Maktuba has found it extremely difficult to even think about rebuilding her career in Montréal within the evolving landscape of public health and social measures that have emerged during the pandemic. Consider the following excerpt:

> *Shoaib: Did you find any new job opportunities?*
>
> *Maktuba: I have not been looking. I will start [looking] after all the COVID-19 rules are finished.*
>
> *Shoaib: Do you find the rules confusing?*
>
> *Maktuba: We don't know which rules to follow.*
>
> *Shoaib: How have the different rules affected your lives?*
>
> *Maktuba: We don't want to break any rules. We don't go anywhere anymore. We are scared to go anywhere!*

Shoaib: Do you still go to any parks or walk around in your neighbourhood?

Maktuba: No, we haven't done that at all this past year.

Shoaib: Do you still think about the police incident?

Maktuba: I try not to. My kids ask me a lot about what to do and how to behave because they are scared, too. They are scared to see the police again.

Shoaib: Have they spoken to you about it?

Maktuba: I tell them not to talk about it, especially with their friends at school. I don't want them getting into any trouble. These things are family matters.

(pers. comm. February 17, 2021).

As the above excerpt illustrates, my participants experienced significant difficulties understanding and navigating the different public health measures that were introduced during the pandemic: they did not know who or what sources to trust, what resources were available to them, or who they could ask for help. The pressure to act as 'good refugees' was also enhanced during the pandemic, and has effectively immobilized my participants from leaving their apartment, thus adding even more stress during an already stressful resettlement process.

Glissant's (2010) theory of "opacity" provides a useful framework for exploring how these challenges are emblematic of broader social and institutional forces that govern the opportunities for newcomers in a host society. According to Glissant, oppressed populations have the "right to opacity," meaning that they can and should be allowed to simply exist 'differently' in their new surroundings without feeling anxious or pressured to completely abandon their culture and traditions (Glissant, 2010, p. 189). In Québec, as regulations loosen and immigration returns to pre-pandemic rates, Premier Legault has remained focused on controlling the integration of newcomers with the passing of Bill 96 in June 2022—a new

language law under which all government services, aside health care, must be provided in French (Rukavina, 2022). The new law also calls on newcomers to learn French within six months of their arrival, after which they will no longer have access to most public services in another language (Stevenson, 2022).

While my participants were not directly affected by Bill 96 since they already speak French, they were quick to point out how its announcement enhanced their anxiety and feelings of insecurity, making them "feel as though we're living under a microscope" (pers. comm., May 29, 2022). Consequently, they avoided public spaces and withdrew entirely from social gatherings, even those that were integral to their health and wellbeing in Montréal. Consider the following excerpt from 2021 where Maktuba hesitated to reattend the mosque after the pandemic:

> *Maktuba: It's been about two years since we last attended the mosque. I used to take my daughters every Friday evening for Quran classes.*
>
> *Shoaib: How about now? Did you find out if they restarted the classes?*
>
> *Maktuba: Not yet. I want to, but I also want to make sure that we are allowed to go back.*
>
> *Shoaib: Are you worried someone might say something?*
>
> *Maktuba: Yes, of course. We don't hear many positive things about religion in the news. My daughters also get asked by their friends about Islam, so I think it is a good idea for us to attend the mosque. I just don't want us to get in trouble again.*
>
> *Shoaib: Are you worried about being judged for attending the mosque?*
>
> *Maktuba: No, it is not about the judgement. I just don't want to get us in any trouble, and especially not from one of my own neighbours again. I feel as though I am being watched. We're always being watched.*

(pers. comm. February 24, 2021).

It was evident through my fieldwork that religion occupied an important role in my participants'

households. However, Maktuba has not even made the effort to inquire about whether her

mosque's local services have resumed since its initial closure in Winter 2020. The irony here is

that the insecurity and pressure felt by newcomers has effectively immobilized my participants

from leaving their apartment out of fear of being judged or for doing something wrong, thus

inhibiting their integration withing their new community. In theoretical terms, Glissant (2010)

argued that accepting the opacity of others (and in this case, their privacy) is even more

important than accepting their differences because it protects them from assimilation in a context

of a cultural domination (i.e., colonialism), and from erasure in a context of standardization (i.e.,

globalization). While Maktuba and Kha are trying to find a balance between becoming Canadian

and preserving their Chadian heritage, the ethnocentric-driven adaptation process is proving to

be more difficult than what they formerly anticipated.

4.5. Chapter Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter examined four central themes that arose from my ethnographic fieldwork

involving a newly resettled refugee family to Montréal. Theme one details the cultural,

geographic, and political contrasts between my participants' home nation of Chad and Montréal.

Theme two speaks to my observation of the barriers to sport and leisure activities that were

experienced by my participants. For example, parenting stress took a heavy toll on my

participants, which is typical of other resettled families, especially refugee women who are often

forced to flee their home countries without their husbands and other loved ones. Such

circumstances prevent refugees from prioritizing their own health and wellbeing and redirects

them into Edouard Glissant's 'chaos-monde', a social condition that saps them of both time and motivation to search for local support services.

The third theme introduced in this chapter builds on theme two by exploring the intergenerational conflicts that can arise between parents and their children during resettlement. Whereas parents focus and prioritize their children's academic achievements, refugee youth instead are focusing on participating in leisure activities and sports. The children's focus on extracurricular activities, in turn, brings them closer to their peers further promotes their integration to their new host society (Flesner et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2019). Finally, Theme four highlights the compounding effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the resettlement of newcomers. For my participants, this was demonstrated by a stagnation in any attempts they had at establishing a daily routine for themselves. Moreover, they indicated having received little to no support from the Québec government during the pandemic, further marginalizing them and leaving them with the feeling that little progress was made since their arrival to Montréal back in 2018.

Chapter V:
Concluding Remarks

This study shed important light on how a new refugee family from Chad adjusted to life through leisure in the City of Montréal between 2019 and 2022. The firsthand accounts explored throughout this thesis help to expand on the body of literature on Refugee & Leisure Studies, as well as Sport & Leisure Studies literatures. While my study primarily highlighted the challenges of resettlement, it also revealed the tenacity and courage through which my participants navigated their new surroundings. As Khai explained, *"Canada is not like Chad, but it is our home now. I want to show my children everything that Canada has to offer us."*

In Chapter One, I situated this thesis within the broader scholarly literature on Refugee & Leisure Studies. I argued that, while the literature has drawn important attention to the historical reports of social reformers and community organizations, far less attention has been paid to the firsthand experiences of newcomers. I also argued that more research is needed to investigate how various factors such as distinct contextual, familial, and cultural challenges impact the health and wellbeing of newcomers.

Chapter Two discussed the historical role of sport, recreation, and leisure in relation to the resettlement process of newcomers in Canada. I explored how this history traditionally prioritized the values and beliefs of the white aristocracy as opposed to the voices of newcomers. The alienation of newcomers in terms of both literature and sporting/recreational infrastructure has further contributed to their characterization as passive consumers as sport and leisure practices, as opposed to the purveyors of physical culture. This top-down framing and program structure has also been reflected in the literature on Sport-for-Development & Peace.

Chapter Three discussed the works of postcolonial novelist and social theorist Edouard Glissant. I specifically outlined Glissant's theories on the transformative capacities of

intercultural mixing, which were led by his notion of the "chaos-monde" [chaotic-world] (Glissant, 1990). Chapter Three also mentioned the ethnographic methods that were deployed for this research, which included: participant observation mainly through Zoom and phone interviews, conversational and semi-structured interviewing techniques, and textual analysis. The ethical considerations and trustworthiness for this research were also outlined.

Finally, Chapter Four discussed the major themes that emerged from my ethnographic fieldwork. The first theme highlighted the 'fundamental barriers to sport and leisure activities,' in which I highlighted the multitude of social and cultural factors that impeded engagement in sport, recreation, and leisure physical activities for my participants. The second theme called 'conflicting definitions of leisure' explored the contrasting experiences of relocation and resettlement among my main participants and their children. Whereas the adults found the 'chaos-monde' of resettlement extremely difficult and exhausting, their children were far better at adapting to their new surroundings. These experiences, at times, contributed to intergenerational conflict between the parents and their children who harboured differing views about leisure, academics, and other social and cultural matters. Finally, the third theme labelled 'the exacerbation of inequality during the pandemic,' explored how the COVID-19 pandemic that hit during the middle of my fieldwork enhanced the challenges and difficulties of resettlement for my participants and their children. My participants were only able to access limited resources during the government-imposed lockdowns and were largely disoriented by the mixed-messages flowing from officials and the heightened surveillance of nosy neighbours.

To conclude, I hope this critical ethnography has given an important firsthand glimpse of the resettlement experiences of a newly resettled refugee family to Montréal. Many of the vignettes that were provided in this thesis were used to highlight both the positive and negative

influences of sport and physical cultural pursuits for my participants during 2019-2021. While refugees have been regularly categorized as vulnerable and at-risk of physical and mental health distress in both popular and scholarly accounts, one particular vignette from my ethnographic research persuaded me of the need for more accurate descriptors that highlight their resilience:

Shoaib: Are you getting used to the Canadian winters?

Maktuba: This year has been much better than previous years. We have our jackets and boots, but sometimes we are unprepared when it comes to the little things.

Shoaib: What do you mean by little things?

Maktuba: On some of the colder days, my daughters go to school wearing multiple socks because their feet get very cold. On those days, I am left without any socks and decide to stay home for the entire day. When it snows a lot and I forget to shovel the steps at night, there is too much snow piled up at our doorsteps the following day.

Shoaib: I can most certainly help you get more pairs of socks. And as for the snow, I forget to do that, too, sometimes. And I was born here!

Maktuba: Oh, you were born here! Masha Allah [what God has willed has happened]! That is so amazing to hear!

Shoaib: Yes, my parents moved here back in the 1970s.

Maktuba: I am so happy to hear this! It is great that your parents moved here so many years ago and made Canada their home.

Shoaib: How do you feel about living in Canada?

Maktuba: It is a wonderful country. We haven't received our citizenship yet, but I am sure that with time our situation will change for the better. I pray for this all the time and especially for my kids.

(pers. comm., February 17, 2021).

Maktuba's enthusiastic response to hearing that I was born in Canada captured her hopefulness

and optimism, albeit being in a vulnerable position. Maktuba discussed several challenges in this

excerpt alone, including: the cold winter weather, financial instability, and limited legal status.

However, she was still able to look past these obstacles of relocation and envisioned a more

promising future for her and her family—a way of thinking that is demonstrative of her strength

and resilience in the face of hardship.

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APPENDIX A

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Interview Guide/Questionnaire

- What does leisure and physical activity mean to you? What do you enjoy most about living in Montreal?
  - Gather information related to population demographics, particular activities, community features;

- How has your level of physical activity changed since you moved to Montreal?
  - Probe for reasons why these activities may or may not be different;

- What are some of your favorite sports? What do you think about Canada's most popular sport, hockey?
  - Probe for reasons why certain sports were chosen over others;
  - Gather information related to social inclusion in Montreal by finding out whether hockey is accessible;

- How has the winter in Montreal impacted your level of physical activity? Were you well prepared for the previous winter in terms of clothing?
  - Gather information related to what kind of help they may have received since moving to Montreal to prepare for the winter;

- How do you travel across Montreal?

- Are there any places you frequently visit (i.e. workplace, grocery store, bank, parks, etc.)?
  - Probe for reasons why these places were chosen over others;

- What are some activities you and your family members enjoy doing together in Montreal?
  - Probe for information related to the resettlement experience and the impact of having family members in Montreal;

- How has the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing affected your level of physical activity?

- Is there anything else you would like to add or share?