

Final Thesis Report

Understanding the Narratives of Immigrant and Refugee Women (IRW) in Intimate Partner
Violence in Canada Across Pre-migration, Migration, and Post-migration (PMP) Trajectories

by

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Studies on intimate partner violence have established several contributing and complicating factors to IPV concerns among immigrant families in the diaspora. The implications of IPV indicate that immigrant and refugee women are entangled in their relationships based on cultural, structural, and familial factors.

Aim and Objectives: There is a scarcity of wholistic research on immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence across pre-migration, migration and post-migration trajectories in Canada. This narrative study explored the IPV experiences of immigrant and refugee women in Canada across the pre-migration, migration, and post-migration (PMP) trajectories through four research questions: What are the immigrant and refugee women's experiences of IPV in the pre-migration, migration, and post-migration periods? To what extent has the cultural background of newcomer women impacted their relationships and settlement in their new societies, which led to intimate partner violence? How has the precarious immigration status of immigrant and refugee women influenced their continuous stay in their relationships? How helpful have the mainstream interventions been for IRW in IPV relationships in Canada?

Methods: Twenty-seven IRW from sixteen racialized communities from Africa, Asia, The Caribbean, Europe, South America, and the Middle East were recruited in Winnipeg through flyers, community organizations, snowball sampling, and social media. Virtual (video and telephone) semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants. Whereas all participants had minimal English communication, five participants requested interpretations to ensure fluent narration of their IPV experiences. Research data were analyzed through MAXQDA qualitative software using Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) three-dimensional features – temporality, sociality, and place and question alignment analysis methods.

Results: The study indicated that the intersections of gender, age, reproduction/pregnancy, immigration, systemic, socio-economic, and cultural/religious factors contributed to the continuity and vulnerability of immigrant and refugee women's IPV experiences across PMP. All participants highlighted the theme of wives as slaves. Participants reported the deprivation of self-determination in their intimate relationships and the Canadian systems, but highlighted self-efficacy within the Canadian culture. Some participants advised experiencing the same level of violence across all borders. The study produced a PMP model of assessment and interventions for IRW service providers.

Keywords: immigrant and refugee women, culture, intimate partner violence, pre-migration, migration, post-migration, precarious immigration, settlement

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my “PRECIOUS JEWEL,” my mother, Madam Monisola Julianah Akinyemi (1930-2020). Mama, you were the epitome of love and peace, a mother indeed! You taught us what sacrificial love meant and demonstrated it to the core. You were that centre of peace that connected all families together. You were my prophetess...I remembered how you pronounced success to my future when you prepared me for my first day of school. Those words guided my thoughts and made me believe I could do everything I put my mind to. Mama, this degree was meant to be a surprise to honour you, but unfortunately, death did not allow you to witness this time. I am sure that even as you sleep, your spirit rejoices in this success. Mama, no one can take your place in my heart, you are one in billions, and if I have to choose a mother again, I will choose you again and again. Rest on sweetheart, till the day of resurrection when we will meet to part no more! Sun re o!

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
DEDICATION	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Philosophical Stance	9
Purpose of the Study	14
CHAPTER 2	17
REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE	17
Marriage Procedures	26
Child Bride and Its Impacts on the Victims.....	27
Is Forced Marriage Cultural?.....	29
Why Families Engage in Forced Marriages.....	30
Forced Marriage, Policy, and Law.....	34
IPV against Immigrant Women in Transition.....	35
CHAPTER 3	46
CONCEPT OF VIOLENCE	46
Family Conflict Theories	48
CHAPTER 4	59
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS	59
African Feminism and Critical Cultural Lens.....	59
Why African Feminism and Critical Cultural Frameworks.....	66
Limitations of the Theoretical Frameworks.....	68
CHAPTER 5	70
RESEARCH DESIGN	70
Methodology	70
Qualitative Research Inquiry Methodology.....	70
Narrative Approach.....	72
Sampling	76
Research Schedule	76
Data Collection	81
Transcription, Coding, and Analysis	82
Ethical Issues	88
Limitations and Challenges.....	89
CHAPTER 6	93
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	93

Brief Quantitative Analysis.....	97
Participants’ Demographic Information Analysis	97
Participants’ Age and Countries	98
Participants’ Immigration Status.....	98
Comparisons of Age, Number of Years in Relationships and Marital Status	99
Educational Qualification Groups.....	100
IRW’s Education and Income	100
Comparisons of Age, Immigration Status, and Income	101
Number of Years in Canada and IRW’s Income	102
Age and Number of Years in Canada	104
Qualitative Data and Research Questions Alignment with Thematic Analysis ..	104
Pre-migration Intimate Partner Violence Significant Emerging Theme.....	105
Wives as Slaves.....	106
Migration Period IPV Experiences	111
Coercive Migration	112
Migration as an Escape Route.....	113
Post-migration IPV Experiences	115
Multifarious Oppression	117
Physical, Mental, and Gaslighting Abuse	117
Financial Terrorism and Joint Account.....	122
Marital Rape.....	126
Pregnancy and Post-natal IPV Experiences	128
After-separation IPV Experiences	130
Differences in Pre- and Post-migration IPV Experiences.....	134
Post-migration Protection Services Availability.....	134
Same Level IPV Experiences.....	136
Lack of Support Network.....	137
Support Received during IPV Experiences.....	138
Children as Shields	139
Reverberated Oppression	141
Covid-19 and Intimate Partner Violence	144
Emotional Abuse.....	145
Mental Health Issues.....	146
Influence of Culture on IPV	147
Marriage Procedures	148
Forever Marital Contract.....	151
Immigrant Women’s Perceptions of Cultural Transference	153
Canadian Culture and IRW’s IPV Experiences	158
Downward Mobility.....	158
Gender Roles.....	159
Women’s Independence and Protection Services	160
Self-Efficacy	162
Influence of Precarious Immigration Status on IPV	164
Access to Services.....	168

Why IRW do not Access Mainstream Services	168
The Loving Victims	169
Cultural Factors.....	171
Fear and Trust Issues	172
Lack of Information	176
Immigrant Women’s Contacts with Government Services	177
Negative Experiences with Government Services.....	177
Positive Experiences with Government Services	184
Negative Case	186
Telling Our Stories.....	187
Resilience.....	190
The Created Future	192
Education on IPV, Women’s Rights, Canadian Systems, and Resources	192
Provision of Culturally Appropriate Services.....	194
Safety Planning	195
Support for Non-status and International Women Students	196
Concepts of Home and Safety.....	197
Independence and Autonomy	197
Privileges and Resources	198
CHAPTER 7	202
DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS	202
Demographical Interpretation	202
PMP Intimate Partner Violence Experience	206
Influence of Culture on IPV	221
Influence of Precarious Immigration Status on IPV	229
Access to Services.....	229
Telling Our Stories.....	234
Resilience.....	235
The Created Future	236
Encapsulation of the Study	240
CHAPTER 8.....	244
Implications for Social Work Education, Practice, Research, Other Service Provisions and Policy.....	244
PMP Model of Assessment and Interventions	248
Strengths and Limitations of the Study.....	252
Recommendations for Future Studies	254
References.....	257
Appendices.....	290
Appendix A – Letter of Introduction for Peer-Driven Recruitment	290
Appendix B – Flyer for Participants Recruitment	292
Appendix C – List of Community Resources	293
Appendix D – Demographic Profile for Participants.....	295
Appendix E – Individual Interview Consent Form.....	296
Appendix F – Individual Interview Questions.....	299

Final Thesis Report

Appendix G – Oath of Confidentiality.....	302
Appendix H – Telephone Recruitment Script for Individual Interview Participants.....	304
Appendix I – Email Recruitment Script for Individual Interview Participants.....	306
Appendix J – Peer Recruiting Organization List	308
Appendix K – Participants’ Demographic Information.....	309

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Intimate partner violence is concerning due to its prevalence globally (WHO, 2013). The World Health Organization (2007) estimates that intimate partner violence affects two-thirds of women (WHO, 2013). Thus, this form of violence has become a global pandemic that requires firm and stricter policies from the World Health Organization and host countries for effective outcomes (Campbell, 2002). Intimate partner violence directly affects the victims and indirectly the general society and the global economy. IPV's annual estimated costs in Canada is \$1.16 billion, while the global economic cost is set at \$1.5 trillion, the Canadian economy's size (U.N. Women, 2016). Internationally, various conventions and treaties have been enacted to protect women against intimate partner violence, and many countries, including Canada, have passed laws against the abuse of women (Alaggia et al., 2009).

According to Statistics Canada (2009), about 40,200 incidents of spousal violence, that is, violence against legally married, common law, separated, and divorced partners, were reported to the police in 2007, representing about 12% of all police-reported crimes. It is indicated that women continued to account for 83% of the victims. Out of 65 spousal homicides reported in 2007, fifty-one of them were women whom their current or former spouses killed. In Canada, reports of IPV indicated that 28% of women 15 years and older had been victims of IPV from either their current or former partner, 12% reported of current or former dating partner, and another category falls to 0.4%. Out of 93,000 victims in 2016, 79% were women, and 8 out of 10 were women (Burczycka, 2016). This report excluded unreported incidents (Perrault 2015).

Consequentially, statistics have shown women as the primary victims of intimate partner violence globally (WHO, 2013). For instance, in 2017, intimate partner violence affected about 96,000 victims aged 15 to 89 in Canada, with 79 percent of women victims (Burczycka, Conroy

Final Thesis Report

& Savage, 2018). It is also estimated that 1 in 10 women experience rape from their intimate partners with no available record for men. One out of seven women and one out of eighteen men also experience stalking that may probably lead to severe harm or killings (NCADV, 2019). Since more women report marital rape than men, it is pivotal to consider the concerns of power and control when working with women who experienced marital rape in their intimate partner violence relationships and how perpetrators should be held responsible for their actions (Yllo & Torres, 2016; Bergen, 2016). Despite this knowledge, women and girls continue to experience layers of violence daily at interpersonal and structural levels (Abramowitz & Moran, 2012; Montesanti, 2015; Shannon et al., 2009).

Intimate partner violence involves a series of repetitive acts characterized by increasing tension, abuse, rationalization, reconciliation, and periods of calm (Athena Legal Info, 2016). It is a plague that can impact any relationship irrespective of the economic status, gender, or religious affiliation of the partners involved in the intimate relationships. According to Athena Legal Rights Information (2016), intimate partner violence has four phases: the escalation phase, the explosion phase, the justification phase, and the honeymoon phase, otherwise known as the period of calm and reconciliation. Therefore, it is imperative to understand that these phases may influence the decisions made by the victims and why they may not be judged based on those decisions.

Intimate partner violence is categorized based on the characteristics of the relationships. Therefore, knowledge of these various categories is vital in understanding the dynamics of IPV for effective interventions. For example, coercive controlling violence is depicted as a pattern of emotional intimidation, coercion, and control, including physical assaults

Final Thesis Report

against partners (Kelly & Johnson, 2008). These characteristics were used to develop the Duluth Model of violence interventions through its Power and Control Wheel (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

Coercive controlling violence is synonymous with abuse patterns by “wife beaters” or “partner abusers”, and this term is broadly used by shelter workers (Kelly & Johnson, 2008). However, according to The Conversation (2017), terrorism is a tactic that uses specific strategies to achieve specific goals. Johnson (1995) uses the term “patriarchal terrorism” or “intimate terrorism” (IT) (Johnson, 2008) to describe coercive controlling violence based on patriarchal characteristics of asymmetrical power and the struggle of the abusers to relinquish such power. Uninterrupted diverse strategies used in asymmetric power struggles make it difficult to break the cycle of intimate partner violence. In intimate partner violence with intimate terrorism, it is opined that victims sustain more injuries, pain, and loss of work with health consequences and PTSD (Johnson & Leone, 2005).

Considering the characteristics of various forms of violence experienced by women, Stanko (1985) considers these experiences as intimate intrusions. In exploring this term, Stanko discusses women’s experiences concerning four aspects of victimization; incest, physical violence, rape, and sexual harassment. It could be deduced that victimization of women in all these areas depicts a violation of their private space, rights, and personal dignity. This intrusion affirms the dehumanization of females through masculine suppression. It is assumed that when people are dehumanized, it is easier for oppressors to perpetrate consistent victimization since they have achieved their goals of “caging” their victims in the corner of hopelessness and worthlessness.

In consonance with the general origin of violence, intimate partner violence also has a long history, with its foundation in evolutionary and cultural forces (Chester & DeWall, 2018).

Final Thesis Report

According to these authors, survival goals or self-defense may actuate intimate partner violence (Raj & Silverman, 2002; Shui-Thornton et al., 2005). These survival goals may take the form of controlling behavior, where abusive partners prevent their victims from having intimate relationships with potential partners, previous partners, or an act of protecting their interest of “repossessing” the victims (Buss & Duntley, 2011). In addition, the victims may be subjected to physical and emotional abuse or deaths where these goals are threatened (McLaurin, 1991; Arneil, 2001).

In this situation, men control their women’s sexual life and independence, subjecting women to physical and emotional bondage (Kauffman, 1910; Shui-Thorton et al., 2005). In addition, they may sexually assault or rape their partners to make them feel powerless and worthless—all these patterns of behavior brace domination over females. Studies have also attested to biological traits or genes as contributing factors for violence against women (Ehrensaft et al., 2003). Men’s cultural expectations also enhance gender-based control behavior that espouses them as the “owners” of their partners. This possessive mentality accentuates the dehumanization factors responsible for violence against women, which majorly see women as sex objects (Gervais, Vescio, Forster, Maass, & Suitner, 2012). In agreement with these opinions, I have witnessed situations where victims of intimate partner violence reported abuse from their male children and described the abuse as their partners’ imitated behaviour. This supports the patriarchal hegemony that targets women as objects of oppression based on their gender. Participants in this study also revealed intergenerational abuse whereby victimization is perceived as family norm due to men’s cultural positions that accord men the opportunity to use force in the family.

Final Thesis Report

Additionally, poverty is seen as one other major contributing factor to violence against women (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017). In some culture, men are expected to be the breadwinner who controls the economic power of the family, thus financial dependence of women on men with abusive behaviour could exacerbate violence against women in this context. Whereas poverty increases the vulnerability of women in abusive relationships, paradoxically, women of affluence have also been found not to be excluded from intimate partner violence relationships (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017). Although women of diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds often keep their abuse secret, it is presumed that women of affluence go the extra mile to keep their private lives away from the public and avoid seeking help for their intimate partner violence experiences (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017). The mentality of perfectionism, privacy, and maintenance of affluent status creates a counterfactual impression of lack of violence among the affluent communities (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017). Regardless of age, economic and cultural context, it is evident that intimate partner violence occurs in all contexts and has short- and long-term impacts on its victims (Howell, 2011; Government of Canada, 2003).

Therefore, the notion of generalizing women as equal or deliberate perpetrators based on specific studies (Gray & Foshee, 1997; Straus, 2008; Bates, 2016) repudiates the relational power dynamics in heterosexual relationships and posits violence against women as non-patriarchal. This hypothesis sees violence against women as a generalized violence and may present violence against women as justifiable. Although patriarchy is not the only contributing factor to violence against women (Crenshaw, 1991), patriarchy plays an essential role in intimate relationships' power dynamics.

Men who may be seen as the subordinates in same-sex relationships also experience the impact of power differential, as they are mostly presumed to be the victims in their relationships based on the demonstration of masculine oppressive behaviors from their male partners (Akinyele-Akanbi, ECDV, 2019; Frankland & Brown, 2014; Renzetti, 1992; Oringer & Samuelson, 2011). According to Johnson (2008), there is always an apparent power and control pattern in relationships with coercive control, the situations he also refers to as incipient coercive controlling violence. Thus, this indicates that subordinates or partners on lower levels of power in relationships (since there is hierarchy in the relationships), may also experience violence as women. Additionally, studies have established the role of power in intimate partner violence. For example, Johnson (2006) found that 93% of violence perpetration was by men, with only 3% by women in his study. Graham-Kevan and Archer (2003) also found that 87% of perpetrators were men, and one out of seven women were perpetrators.

The impacts of coercive control violence show higher rates of homicide for women who exit their violent relationships (Hotton, 2001; Wilson & Daly, 1993), than those who stay with their aggressive and controlling partners (Johnson & Hotton, 2003). Considering the effects of separation on women, it is apparent that women who attempt to be “different” by seeking or claiming independence from their controlling partners sometimes pay with their lives (Pereira et al., 2013; Hyman et al., 2006).

Arguments have ensued around the symmetrical nature of violence between partners. While some studies have seen women’s violence in intimate relationships as an act that should be accounted for by the perpetrators (Mason et al., 2014; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Misra, Selwyn, & Martin, 2012), others have seen it as an act of self-defense (Johnson, 2008; Allen, Swan, & Raghavan, 2008; Pagelow, 1981; Saunders, 1986). In addition, some victims of IPV are

Final Thesis Report

assumed to combine anger with their fear of being harmed when protecting themselves from catastrophic situations (Walker, 1984), the group identified as Violent Resistance (VR) (typically women) by Johnson (2008).

Regardless, in some cultures, women's violence towards their male partners is intolerable and taken as disrespectful behavior to home authority, which may escalate aggression (Bowker, 1983) or instigate violence from the in-laws. Indeed, in some cultures, culturally-inclined women (women who believe that every aspect of their lives should conform with their cultural expectations) internalize abuse due to the indoctrination and general acceptance of masculine roles in their culture (Jejeebhoy, 1998; Zakar et al., 2013). Notwithstanding, male gender dominance cannot be generalized to all cultures. Women who reciprocate violence may find themselves blamed for their actions. In addition, their retaliation may lead to inter-family squabbles, depending on the perceptions of the conflicts by the extended family members. These and other reasons may make women blame themselves for the violence and take responsibility for being abused to reconcile with their partners (Pagelow, 1981).

Women in intimate violence may develop psychological problems of hopelessness, which may lead to suicidal ideation or suicide attempts (Ferraro 2006), loss of self-esteem (Chang, 1996), and depression (Golding, 1999). Unlike situations where men's aggression occurs towards their female partners due to power dynamics, situational couple violence is explicitly characterized by general phenomena among couples (Kelly & Johnson, 2008).

Although Ellis and Stuckless (1996) presume that situational couple violence results from a lack of emotional regulation from a partner, Holtzworth-Munroe et al. (1994) see the relationships within this context as characterized by typical arguments with neither of the

Final Thesis Report

partners controlling the other. Therefore, men in these types of relationships are regarded as non-violent.

In their Canadian survey on partner violence, Kwong, Bartholomew, and Dutton (1999) found men's violence towards their partner at 12.9% and women's violence at 12.5%, with rarely reported injuries. More often, suspicion of infidelity and jealousy are responsible for situational couple violence (Kelly & Johnson, 2008). Contrary to the calamitous coercive controlling violence or separation-instigated violence (Johnston & Campbell, 1993; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Kelly & Johnson, 2008), couples involved in situational violence amicably separate without fear of being hunted down by their partners (Babcock et al. 2004; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Moreover, this amicable separation may assist partners in working together for the sake of their children to allow access to children, as some men believe that co-parenting with their partners helps with self-maturity or growth (Keshet & Rosenthal, 1978).

Separation-instigated violence is opined to be provoked by the involvement of child welfare services, child sexual abuse allegations, or severing of parental relationships with children (Gardner, 1987). Thus, service providers working on intimate partner violence cases require thorough investigation to understand the dynamics of cases with separation and divorce. In addition, mistakes made in working with partners involved in IPV may lead to irreparable loss due to violent reactions that may erupt due to interventions. Notwithstanding the different types of violence and their strategies, as someone who has over two decades of work experience with couples, I believe that both men and women could be violent towards one another. However, theoretically, I seem to lean more towards the feminist view of men's prevalence of violence towards women due to the traditional culture of patriarchy, religion, and economic power. This perspective has contributed more to my interest in this study.

Final Thesis Report

While newcomer women in their new homelands hope for freedom and safety, challenges faced in their host countries seem not to differ from those of their home countries. For the benefit of understanding this study, the term intimate partner violence is used to explore the experiences of immigrant women's violence in their intimate relationships across pre-migration, migration, and post-migration trajectories.

Philosophical Stance

The philosophical assumptions of researchers have an impact on the studies they conduct. These assumptions determine the research areas mapped, potential participants, methodology, and methods of the studies. The epistemological reflexivity “requires the researcher to consider how the research question is defined and limited, and how the design of the study constructs the data, encourages the researcher to reflect on their assumptions for the research and its subsequent findings” (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015, p. 174). In this study, my belief and philosophical stance are shaped by realism, the notion that individuals have interpretations of their world, independent of other people's beliefs and understanding of them (Bhaskar, 1978).

My role in this study is primarily that of a researcher. I am an African-Canadian, precisely of Nigerian (Yoruba) indigenous descent. Whereas several minority voices have been heard regarding intimate partner violence among immigrant families in the diaspora, this study is my humble attempt to add my unique contribution to the knowledge in this field. My interest in this study emanated from my experience as an immigrant woman from a patriarchal communal background where women and girls are treated as “secondary creatures,” irrespective of their smartness or brilliancy. Although I grew up in an environment where male and female children were treated with equal respect and given the same opportunities, it is essential to know that families develop their cultures while practicing the dominant culture passively.

Final Thesis Report

This cultural perception of women starts with the emphasis or the importance placed on gender, thus contributing to the limited rights of females (Raj & Silverman, 2002). Culturally, children develop self-esteem from their cultural perceptions, contributing to how some women assimilate the “second class creature” mentality. In this situation, women believe they have to keep to themselves even when they are being violated. Male children are groomed as leaders in some families and acquire some essential information about their families more than female children. With this leadership mentality imparted on male children, some develop abusive behavior towards their partners later in life.

This intergenerational parental behaviour originates from the idea of seeing male children as the upholders of the family names or strongholds of families. As learned culturally, women’s subordination started from childhood and continues to womanhood. Even though some women in my culture experience oppression, some still contribute to other women’s oppression by using the “in-laws’ perceived power”. The in-laws’ perceived power is used chiefly when families have male children. For instance, the in-laws, most especially mothers-in-law, brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law, use the opportunities of their connections with married male children and siblings to treat the daughters-in-law as less human. Sometimes, these in-laws have unrealistic expectations from their daughters-in-law. One could have expected the women to understand better than the male oppressors since they are also culturally treated as secondary human beings. However, women-in-laws sometimes are the most terrible ones as they often project their experiences on the women married into their families.

As a spiritual counsellor from Africa, listening to women’s stories of abuse and oppression from different perspectives motivated me to learn more about the issues suppressing women in their intimate relationships. Migrating to Canada served as an encouragement to

Final Thesis Report

pursue further studies to acquire knowledge on women's issues in a field where interpersonal connections could be made with the less privileged women. Counselling women from my vantage position as a minister in a church in Canada added mind-blowing revelations to my understanding of the dynamics of women's experiences within the Canadian context. Providing counselling for immigrant families also added the unique experience of an immigrant woman who received abuse from both her son and partner.

Following the unique experiences I obtained while counselling families in the church, I decided to pursue a graduate degree in social work, during which I wrote most of my papers exploring domestic violence issues. I was employed with a Child Welfare Agency after completing my Masters' degree, which allowed me to work with domestic violence-related cases. As a child-protection worker, over ninety percent of my caseload were intimate partner violence from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Although certain factors responsible for violence in these families were homogenous, I realized that working with immigrant families had some unique complicating factors that the mainstream social workers did not understand. This observation encouraged me to take more immigrant and refugee family cases even when I had more cases to work with. This lack of knowledge of immigrant women's issues by mainstream social workers was made known when meeting with immigrant women. As understood from immigrant women, mainstream social workers, especially the intake workers, spoke to them in condescending tones and threatened apprehension of their children after receiving calls from the community.

Working with more immigrant and refugee family cases in child welfare also made me "vulnerable" because some of these women were verbally abusive and resistant towards me despite being an immigrant myself. Nonetheless, having worked as a telephone interviewer with

Final Thesis Report

Statistics Canada has taught me not to take things personally when representing specific systems such as child welfare, where service providers can take children from their families for some reasons (biased and unbiased). While working with more families, I observed a lack of disclosure of issues in the family. Immigrant and refugee women used silence or passive communication to communicate a lack of interest or resistance to service provision. This sometimes contributed to why some cases are opened longer than others.

Additionally, immigrant women often refused services without their partners. I also noticed that some immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence in their relationships lived in a big family composition with their in-laws. For instance, I visited an immigrant woman in her home, where the mother-in-law and the sister-in-law took over the discussions, and the client just acknowledged everything they said and laughed. As a previous student of theatre arts who majored in playwriting and criticism and communication, I concentrated more on the non-verbal cues of my client to understand that there was a “huge ice hidden under the iceberg” in the context of her home. I knew that the real situations were not being discussed, but I could not figure out what those issues were and why the client was just consenting to her in-laws. This was another eye-opening situation that stimulated my thirst for more knowledge on immigrant and refugee women’s experiences of intimate partner violence in Canada.

Another child welfare experience that induced my passion for this study was a client’s unique experience. One of the critical questions I always asked my clients was to know their perception of their relationships and who they were in such relationships. During the years of working with women in abusive relationships, none had disclosed the process of their marriages as concerning as one particular woman who informed me of having had an arranged marriage.

Final Thesis Report

She presented her arranged marriage as entanglement and the major contributing factor to her abuse.

The term or concept “arranged marriage” gave me another issue to explore when working with immigrant and refugee women, as this was entirely new to me. I discussed this discovery with a colleague, and she said the concept was also new to her. To add to the uniqueness of this case, I received after-hour reports of allegations made by the partner about the woman almost every day. New issues were emerging each time I followed up after-hour reports with my client. One day, she decided to give up her children to her ex-partner, who was already married to another woman. This decision probably contributed to her mental health problems and suicidal thoughts. This case was like a rollercoaster as the problems were unending.

Working with immigrant and refugee families experiencing intimate partner violence as a protection worker, clinical counsellor, and church minister informed me of the dynamics in intimate partner violence situations and the importance of developing a quest to know more on these concerning issues. Every case has unique characteristics that cannot be generalized. Individuals have interpretations of their stories due to their world’s heterogeneous realities, notwithstanding the shared experiences. I observed that the more I contacted women in intimate partner violence relationships, the less I knew about the dynamics of this pandemic.

As observed in my service within the child welfare system, the deleterious impacts of lack of openness on the part of clients and workers’ lack of knowledge of immigrant and refugee family issues continue to contribute to the increased apprehension of immigrant children. Therefore, I thought that professionals working in multicultural settings such as child welfare and other Canadian systems should be curious about the complicating factors responsible for intimate partner violence among immigrant and refugee families.

Understanding that not all intimate partner violence cases are reported to the police (Statistics Canada, 2019; Gracia, 2004) or involved in the child welfare system, and that being an immigrant does not indicate my all-round mastery of immigrant women's intimate partner violence experiences, I decided to explore immigrant and refugee women's experiences of intimate partner violence across pre-migration, migration, and post-migration trajectories to increase my knowledge and to contribute to professional knowledge with this doctoral research.

Developing this study was due to observing the paucity in the wholistic study of immigrant and refugee women's experiences of intimate partner violence as a continuum. Understanding the continuity of immigrant and refugee women's violent experiences would enhance and contribute to practical knowledge and culturally competent interventions.

Purpose of the Study

Notwithstanding the considerable numbers of previous studies on immigrant women and their experiences with intimate partner violence (IPV) in their newfound homes, it is essential to note that none of these previous studies has done in-depth explorations to understand the narratives of immigrant and refugee women's personal experiences of intimate partner violence as a continuum across borders: pre-migration, during migration, and post-migration (PMP) trajectories. The operational definition of immigrant and refugee women for this study indicates women who were born outside Canada, migrated to Canada, and resided in Canada at the time of the study. The term immigrant and refugee women (IRW) refers to all immigrant and refugee women with and without status residing in Canada. This report interchangeably uses immigrant and refugee women (IRW) and immigrant women (IW).

According to Statistics Canada (2019), Manitoba had the highest rate of intimate partner violence reports in Canada between 2018 and 2019. In addition, the statistics indicated higher

IPV among Arab, Black, and Latin American women (Statistics Canada, 2019). Therefore, this study aimed to understand immigrant and refugee women's narratives of intimate partner violence across pre-migration, migration, and post-migration trajectories. The exploratory study provided further insights into various aspects of the phenomena explored by understanding how the intersections of gender, race, migration, sexuality, and culture contribute to newcomer women's experiences of intimate partner violence in Canada.

To achieve this study's purpose, twenty-seven immigrant women from a wide range of countries of origin participated in this study: Iran, India, Ecuador, Portugal, Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Republic of Congo, China, England, Pakistan, Syria, Venezuela, Jamaica, and Egypt. The study used in-depth semi-structured individual interviews to collect data from the participants. Participants were women between eighteen and fifty-nine years. A detailed description of the participants is discussed in Chapter 5. The research questions were categorized into three sections that depicted the past and the present experiences of intimate partner violence and the expected future experiences of immigrant and refugee women in Canada.

The following Primary and subordinate questions were used in this study to explore the immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence experiences:

- What are immigrant and refugee women's experiences of intimate partner violence in the pre-migration, migration, and post-migration periods?

Subordinate questions that were posed for the study were

- To what extent has the cultural background of newcomer women impacted their relationships and settlement in their new societies, which led to intimate partner violence?

Final Thesis Report

- How has the precarious immigration status of immigrant and refugee women influenced their continuous stay in their relationships?
- How helpful have the mainstream interventions been for immigrant and refugee women experiencing intimate partner violence in their relationships in Canada?

Participants' responses to the research questions indicated the study's connection to previous studies on intimate partner violence experiences with immigrant women. Therefore, the summary discussed in this chapter includes the rationale, context, and methodology for conducting this study to learn about the experiences of immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence across the PMP.

Chapter 2 of this paper discusses the literature review, which examines the related articles on immigrant and refugee women's experiences of intimate partner violence across borders, issues of culture, and immigration policies promulgated to protect women in abusive relationships. Chapter 3 discusses the concept of violence and family conflict theories. Chapter 4 describes the two theoretical frameworks used in this qualitative research and how these theories were used as the lenses to analyze the data. Chapter 5 outlines the research's qualitative methodology, data collection methods, and analytical process. Chapter 6 presents the findings in detail by discussing the participants' demography and what immigrant and refugee women discussed in the narration of violent experiences in their relationships and negative cases. Chapter 7 discusses the findings that result from the study and the limitations of the study. Chapter 8, the final chapter, discusses the implications of the study for social work education, practice, and research with a discussion on the PMP model of intervention.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Relevant Literature

This chapter examines the related articles on immigrant and refugee women's experiences of intimate partner violence, the concept of violence, contexts of intimate partner violence and types of relational violence, cultural and immigration issues.

Violence has been one of the principal instruments used in the world to show anger towards specific individuals, genders, or race, to achieve power and control, through subtility or usurpation (Cohn & Dirks, 1988; Butt 2013; Martin-Marquez, 2008; Neu, 2000; Falola, 2009).

Violence occurs at personal, systemic, and communal levels (McKittrick 1999; Boaz, 2007; Hattery, 2009; Desforges, 1999). The twentieth century is identified as the era of excessive violence (Keane, 1996; Bufacchi, 2005; Payne, 2002; Hattery, 2009), with approximately 105 million people killed within this century (Steger, 2003, p. 13). In responding to violence, the state also uses its monopolistic power to curb violence through "autonomized violence" (Brady & Garver, 1991). This use of power to suppress culminated in men's culture of violence (Lendman, 2007; Friedman, 2003; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Shui-Thornton et al., 2005) since men also learn to use violence to show power over women when their authority is challenged. Comparatively, men's use of power may not be like that of the state, but it could still have the same effect as some women die from their partners' violence (Abrahams et al., 2009; McLaurin, 1991; Arneil, 2001; Frye & Wilt, 2001). Furthermore, while the state's violence towards men may have both physical and psychological effects on the victims, men's violence also affects the unborn babies, children in the families and their future behaviour, and expectations due to pre- and post-natal physical abuse (Heaman, 2005; Martin et al., 2004; Diaz-Olavarrieta et al., 2007; Thananowan & Heidrich, 2008).

Final Thesis Report

Until recently, violence in intimate relationships was viewed as a personal or private problem due to the perception of the family as an independent entity (Flanzer, 1982). This family independence was supported by Mill's principle on liberty (1861) (Mill, 1998), whereby individuals should be freed from societal intrusion. Mill (1861) believed that individuals' freedom of thoughts and expression would serve as a catalyst to society's growth. Therefore, Mill suggested that coercion should only be used on two occasions; for self-defense, and protection of others (Mill, 1998).

However, challenges of divorce and separation and the call for equal rights for women and children under capitalism catalyzed challenging family autonomy (Mill, 1869). Contrary to the societal patriarchal practice, Mill opposes the subjection of women and children and advocates for equal treatment for all (1869). While violence towards an individual is generally not accepted irrespective of its contextual factors, violence in intimate contexts seems to be riveting attention due to failure to provide immunity from family members' aggression (Gelles & Straus, 1988). Whereas I partially support Mill's principle of family independence, I also believe that the coercion of service providers such as the police should be involved in families with intimate partner violence to ensure the safety of immigrant and refugee women (IRW) and their children in intimate partner violence situations. On the other hand, immigrant and refugee women's liberty to decision-making about their needs should be honoured, respected, and protected from the coercion of service providers.

Since the politics of definition has played down the impacts of intimate partner violence on women, acknowledging women's experiences of violence in form of poverty, unemployment, terrorism, and other challenges experienced due to their involvement in various institutions is essential (DeKeseredy, 2011; Crescenzi & Holman, 2017; Jaskulowski & Pawlak, 2020).

Final Thesis Report

Consequently, the call for clarity of the definition of violence against women has often been perceived as a revolutionary act against men's hegemony (DeKeseredy, 2011) rather than "resolutionary" (a means of resolution) due to their perception as "secondary human beings", slaves, or mere objects in their intimate relationships (Lovejoy, 2011). As a result, women's agitation against men's violence has been seen as a "war" against men's authority rather than opportunities for strategic solutions to violence against women. According to Platek (ECDV, 2019), "language" is essential in understanding and assessing the context under which women operate in the world. For instance, Anderson et al. (2008) also added that differentiating the terms used in violence against women will enhance the understanding and context of violence, which may eventually improve the intervention.

Some opinions indicate that because some women retaliate against violence with violence, using the term "intimate partner violence" exonerates one gender group (primarily women) from the context of violence, and therefore, release women from taking responsibility for demonstrating violence towards violent partners (Barnett, Miller-Perrin, & Perrin, 2005). However, whereas some women could be violent towards nonviolent men while others could retaliate against violence, it is essential to know that not all IPV victims demonstrate violence. In fact, talking back to partners in some cultures could trigger further abuse (Schuler et al., 1996; McLaurin, 1991; Arneil, 2001). In contrast, some violent resistant victims (victims who also demonstrated violence) (Johnson 2008) may still love their abusive partners unconditionally and protect them from taking responsibility for their abusive behavior (Fleury et al., 1998; Johnson, 2008).

The argument about symmetrical and asymmetrical violence (Johnson, 2006) and whether the definition of violence against women should be done narrowly or broadly (Ellis &

Final Thesis Report

DeKeseredy, 1996) has also contributed to the assessment and intervention of violence in intimate relationships (McDowell, 2014; DeKeseredy, 2011). While some researchers (DeKeseredy, 2000; Abraham, 2000; Morash et al., 2007; Prakash et al. 2009; Ferraro, 2006) have considered the narrow term of violence by paying attention only to the physical assaults, some have considered the broad term of violence against women by acknowledging the impacts of physical, psychological (Abraham, 2000; Morash et al., 2007; Prakash et al., 2019; Ferraro, 2006; Sweet, 2019) and the structural violence against women in heterosexual relationships (Galtung, 1969). It is disheartening that the negative experiences of immigrant women in intimate partner violence within the systems have been mostly based on the narrow assessment of the service providers. More often, assessment is based on physical signs that may affect violence perpetration credibility, especially if the perpetrators have no prior criminal records (Silva, 2021).

In some instances, the IRW's perspectives and resilience (Gungor & Strohmeier, 2020; Corley & Sabri, 2020; Njie et al., 2020) have either been ignored or disputed during interventions, thus contributing to the re-oppression of the oppressed (Maiter & Stalker, 2011; Maiter et al., 2009; Sawrikar & Katz, 2014; Humphreys et al., 1999). This lack of engagement with IRW has influenced their help-seeking behaviour (Guruje & Humphreys, 2009; Bui, 2003; Ahmad et al., 2009; Holtman & Rickards, 2018). Due to a lack of proper assessment of problems and possible re-oppression, some IRW have boycotted the mainstream services for fear or a lack of trust in the system (Dutton et al., 2003; Holtmann & Rickards, 2018; Power et al., 2006; Ruark et al., 2017; Lelaurain et al., 2018).

On the other hand, while some IRW found the systems oppressive, others have found the health and educational sectors (Dastjerdi et al., 2012) and spirituality helpful as they were not

Final Thesis Report

only supported but found their perspectives respected and honoured (Corley & Sabri, 2020; Crossman et., 2016; Logan & Walker, 2004). In addition, even though studies have established job challenges for immigrant families in the diaspora, some immigrant women have found job opportunities, the police, welfare, and child welfare systems helpful in their new homeland (Tastsoglou & Miedema, 2005; Man, 2004; Wu et al., 2011, 2012, & 2013).

Also, the impact of gender roles in intimate partner violence cannot be underestimated (Mikkell, 1997; hooks, 2000; Gilbar et al., 2021; Min, 2001; Fragoso & Kashubeck, 2000; Hyman et al., 2011). Unlike biological classifications of human beings, gender is perceived through societal norms and values and thereby requires specific roles and responsibilities from people. For example, gender puts a family in a hierarchical position of up-to-bottom relationships and accords one partner's authority over the other (Flanzer, 1982). This societal gender-based power structure has forcibly shifted domestic responsibilities to women. This cultural and societal shift in responsibilities has contributed to hegemonic mothering and women's domestication (the belief that women should primarily be responsible for home maintenance) (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017; Dow, 2016) and punishment for failure to live up to the expectations of the controlling gender (usually men in heterosexual relations, cultural and social norms) (Sarkis, 2018; Kaba, 2007).

As a result of these gender group expectations, some intimate relationships have become traps and are characterized by behavioral patterns that serve as agents of physical, emotional, and/or sexual harm to people in relationships (WHO, 2012). As posited by some authors, intimate partner violence is a pattern of coercion and assaultive behaviors, including sexual assault, physical injury, psychological abuse, enforcement of social isolation, stalking, deprivation, intimidation, and threats (Cronholm, Fogart, Ambuel, & Harrison, 2011; Fong,

2002). Such abuse could involve and not be limited to slapping, shoving, hitting, beating, name-calling, intimidation, threats of harm, financial deprivation, isolation, parental alienation, and sexual compulsion (WHO, 2012; Gardner, 1999).

Intimate partner violence is typified by power and control (Holmes & Lundy, 1990), based on societal constructed, perceived, and assimilated masculine cultural superiority. However, differences between these concepts have been made to clarify their characteristics and help discover contextual causes, effects, and “effective” interventions for intimate partner violence (Flanzer, 1982). Family violence or domestic violence occurs within the context of family or domestic settings (Anderson, Abraham, Bruessow, Coleman, McCarthy, Harris-Odimbe, & Tong, 2008). It could include, but is not limited to, abuse of children by their parents or vice versa (most especially violence from adult children towards their parents), abuse of stepchildren by step-parents or foster parents, depending on what family connotes to individuals (Gelles & Straus, 1988). Some explorations of violence against women have seen the incident within the context of a home as domestic violence or family violence, and these terms have been interchangeably used for intimate partner violence (Wallace, 2015, Ellsberg, Jansen, Heise, Watts, & Garcia-Moreno, 2008).

Therefore, a deliberate use of a general term such as “family violence” or “domestic violence” to discourage taking sides with women dismisses the excruciation of women’s experiences of violence in their intimate relationships. Instead, using the term “intimate partner violence” takes us away from generalized violence by identifying specific contexts within which violence occurs. Thus, to avoid generalizing the violent experience of the participants, this study adopted the use of intimate partner violence to understand the unique violent experiences of immigrant and refugee women in their intimate relationships.

Final Thesis Report

However, the term *intimate partner violence* is a problematic term to define dependent on location (Pournagbash-Tehrani, 2011) since the term “violence against women” does not exist in some settings. This means that women in some cultures are treated as objects and personal properties or “second-hand creation.” Whereas culture has contributed negatively to intimate partner violence in some contexts, culture has also helped immigrant women to achieve self-actualization (Kim & Sherman, 2007; Bandura, 1994) through a change in self-perception (Sullivan et al., 2013; Markus et al., 1985). However, studies and statistics have shown that women and girls in intimate relationships are often victims of intimate partner violence (Jaden & Thoennes, 2000; Wisner, Gilmer, Saltzman, & Zink, 1999). Men’s hegemonic behavior undermines the impacts of violence on women and discourages working towards appropriate measures for consequences for perpetrators. As Becker (1973) puts it, the violent act’s quality may not be as painful as not having consequences for the act of violence perpetration.

While violence in intimate relationships could both be symmetrical and asymmetrical, a deeper understanding of the contextual dynamics of love, compassion, and “heart-within-heart” (DeWall et al., 2014; Power, Koch, Kralik, & Jackson, 2006) requires the use of the term “intimate partner violence.” These dynamics or characteristics contribute to IPV complications. Whether violence within the context of love is mutual or asymmetrical still concerns itself with one of the partners’ victimization in heterosexual relationships. As a result of the complications and danger involved in IPV, some IPV victims suffer short or long-term psychological and physical effects (Government of Canada, 2003; Wyatt & Powell, 1988; Irish, Kobayashi, & Delahanty, 2010). However, the suffering of women in intimate relationships is complicated due to the love context (Power et al., 2006; Ruark et al., 2017; Lelaurain et al., 2018), denial of victimization, and the victims’ emotional connections with their aggressive partners (DeWall et

al., 2014; Power, Koch, Kralik, & Jackson, 2006). Therefore, it is critical to avoid using a narrow lens, which considers the physical and sexual abuse (including forceful penetration) (DeKeseredy, 2011; Penal & Ann, 2016), which sometimes occur among strangers, to assess “persistent violence” that occurs within the context of love or intimate relationships.

Although women of diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds often keep their abuse secret, it is presumed that women of affluence go the extra mile to keep their secrets (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017; Haselschwerdt, 2013). The mentality of perfectionism, privacy, and maintenance of affluent status creates a counterfactual impression of lack of violence among the affluent communities (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017). Regardless of age and cultural context, intimate partner violence has short- and long-term impacts on its victims (Howell, 2011; Government of Canada, 2003).

Although intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships is presumed to be symmetrical or asymmetrical (Johnston and Campbell, 1993), my belief in asymmetrical power imbalance and cultural factors (Morrison et al., 1999) for IPV helps in considering theoretical lenses (African feminism and critical cultural theories) that enhanced the understanding of immigrant women’s intimate partner violence narratives within different power contexts during their pre-migration, migration and post-migration trajectories. Apart from the asymmetrical power context, several other factors are responsible for intimate partner violence, some of which are, but not limited to infidelity (Nemeth et al. 2012), rejection and aggression triggers (Finkel, 2014), self-control fatigue (Denson, DeWall, & Finkel, 2012), and trauma (Farrer, Frost, & Hedges, 2012). Other factors include low education, alcohol, drugs, young age, economic factors, and multiple partners (male) (Basar & Demirci, 2018; Jahromi et al., 2016). Supporting these hypotheses were some of the findings in this study. The study revealed that immigrant and

refugee women's low education, economic factors, suspicion of infidelity, and separation from their abusive partners heightened their violent experiences in their intimate relationships.

While various authors posit diverse causes of violence against women, Galtung (1990) sums all violence characteristics around culture. He defines cultural violence as all aspects of our existence; language, art, symbols, religion, ideology, empirical science, and formal science used to legitimize violence at different human interaction levels. Beyond all these factors are complicated issues that militate against immigrant women's self-fulfillment in their new homes worldwide. As discovered in this study, studies have established cultural practices and patriarchy as crucial factors in intimate partner violence perpetration against immigrant women across borders (Femi-Ajao, 2018; Hunt, 1997; King, 2016). As discovered in this study, some of these practices include the marriage procedures of immigrant women. Whereas some of these marriage procedures exist among immigrant families, they could not be generalized to all immigrant cultures or excluded from the mainstream culture (Brown, 2015; Simmons & Burn, 2013).

Marriage Procedures

Marriage procedures are other fundamental ways of violence against immigrant and refugee women (Swegman, 2016). Some immigrant and refugee women are either involved in their relationships through forced marriage, arranged marriage, child bride, early marriage, or religion (Tenkorang, 2019) which eventually contributed to their low educational level (Parsons et al., 2015). Although forced marriage is a marriage devoid of the consent of one or two of the partners involved and a contradictory process against human rights declaration, the concept remains a complicated one to define (Del Mar Pastor Bravo, Martinez, & Ruiz, 2014; United Nations, 1968; Simmons & Burn, 2013).

Final Thesis Report

Forced marriage could be seen as a big umbrella that encapsulates other human rights violations. However, using it does not reveal its full elements and the level of its atrocities. Whereas some people have used forced marriage and “arranged marriage” interchangeably, some other scholars have seen the process as diversified, with both marriages leading to poverty and lack of protection, since they are both delineated by sexual, physical, and emotional abuse (Del Mar Pastor Bravo, Martinez, & Ruiz, 2014). While forced and arranged marriages have some similarities (coercion and force), arranged marriages could receive “positive” concurrence if both parties love each other. For instance, when both partners agree to marry, an arranged marriage has a different connotation. Thus, the marriage “arrangement” (a solemnization process) is made in concordance with the couple’s consent to the union.

Contrarily, in some cultures, arranged marriage is a process undertaken by parents or extended family members, whereby young girls are forcibly married to older men (Somerset, 2000; Allendorf & Pandian, 2016). It is approximated that both forced and arranged marriages are more beneficial to the couples’ families than couples since the marriages are organized for economic or relational purposes (Efevbera, 2017). Forced and arranged marriages have been culturally associated with Africa, South Asia, The Middle East, and Latin America, assuming its extension to the western world through migration (Singh & Samara, 1996; Del Mar Pastor, Martinez, & Ruiz, 2014). Nonetheless, the gender neutrality of forced marriage shows that both boys and girls are coerced to engage in marriages outside their will. Boys and men also experience forced marriage due to sexual orientation (Baker, 2015). However, women and girls are recorded to have a higher experience of forced marriage victimization (Bruce 2003).

In a Nigerian sexual context, young men of marriageable ages could be forced to marry females chosen by their parents to discourage them from practicing homosexuality or maintain

financial ties with family friends or business partners. The same process could apply to girls or young adults of marriageable age who reside with their parents. Nigeria's homophobic policy is grounded in cultural and spiritual practices (Sekoni et al., 2016).

Nigerians' religion and cultures are interwoven, and for any child to go against such could lead to a specific punishment measure. Nigeria is not the only homophobic nation in Africa. In Africa, culture and religion are webbed. Although, civilization and religious atrocities have contributed to atheism among the young generations. Notwithstanding, a higher percentage of African people are spiritually sensitive to their lifestyles. For example, from the researcher's internal experience, in Nigeria, people are either Christians, Muslims, or traditionalists and these spiritual practices guide their lifestyles, including marriage procedures.

Child Bride and its Impacts on the Victims

Studies have shown the connection between a child bride and intimate partner violence (Yount et al., 2016; Hong Le et al., 2014; Del Mar Pastor Bravo, Martinez, & Ruiz, 2014; United Nations, 1968; Simmons & Burn, 2013). For instance, McFarlane, Nava, Gilroy, and Maddoux (2016), in their seven-year study on the interconnectivity of child bride, forced marriage, and intimate partner violence, posit child bride as a marriage of a child before his/her 18th birthday. The authors estimate that over 700 million women in the world are engaged in marriagesⁱⁿ their teenage years, most especially before their 18th birthday.

Child bride, early marriage, and forced marriage are related to experiences of intimate partner violence. Since it is inferred that most victims of forced marriage and child marriage have been forcibly given to marriage before their 15th year birthday, their age is also seen as a contributing factor to their gender-based violence vulnerability (McFarlane et al., 2016). Despite the prevalence of forced marriage and child marriage, it is presumed that if the present state of

Final Thesis Report

child bride and forced marriage persists, about 140 million girls would be married before their 18th-year birthday between 2011 and 2020 (WHO, 2013). In addition, 14.2 million girls will be forcibly married annually, while 39,000 will be married daily (WHO 2013). Dank, Love, Esthappan, and Zweig (2018) identified forced marriage and child marriage as ways to perpetuate intimate partner violence and sexual violence, with most victims of forced marriage and child marriage exposed to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV. Furthermore, this early exposure to sexual activities has been attributed to child mothers' death and stillbirths due to their immature physical bodies (McFarlane et al., 2016).

In their study with 277 women on the relationship between attempts of forced marriage, the frequency and severity of IPV, mental health condition, and the behavioral conditions of the victims' children, McFarlane et al. (2016) showed that seventeen percent (47) of these women had forced marriage experiences, with forty-five percent (approximately 125) of the participants under 18 years during the time of their marriage. Eleven women out of these forty-seven advised of death threats, while twenty married those men. Twenty-eight participants also reported being impregnated by their partners.

Other impacts of child brides and forced marriages indicate more threats from their abusive partners, social isolation, financial abuse, and physical pain due to psychological distress, sexual abuse, and children's behavioral problems. The study establishes low parenting skills for girls and women involved in forced marriage based on their parenting experiences.

Victims of forced marriage suffer psychological problems and sometimes experience physiological disabilities because of their age (Ahmed, Khan, Alia, & Noushad, 2013). This is due to their sexual abuse experiences (Cunradi, 2010; Torres, 2019; Bagwell-Gray, 2019; Stockman & Gundersen, 2018; de Jong et al., 2015; Banyard, 1997; Pearson, 2011). In the

Final Thesis Report

Northern part of Nigeria, girls are sometimes betrothed to their “husbands-to-be” when they are born. The groom-to-be family will start caring for the baby girl by contributing either in cash or kind to the little girl’s caring until she turns ten or age of majority when she can no longer resist her parents’ plan for her marital life.

However, because the girls in these situations are exposed to only the “partners-to-be” families, they are sometimes happy and looking forward to being married to their husbands. Notwithstanding these victims’ innocence, the reality remains that they are still being exposed to sexual assault by men who are sometimes older than they are and deprived of the right to choose their partners and or to consent to their marriages. While this kind of early marriage or forced marriage mainly occurs within the Hausa people who practice Islamic religion, this idea raises a concern of whether the parental insistence of marrying from specific cultures should be categorized as forced marriage since this idea also contradicts human rights.

Whereas early marriage is not common among the Southerners and the Easterners in Nigeria, some parents still insist on the archaic idea of having their children marry from their culture, community, or town. Unfortunately, the idea has led to some couples’ untimely deaths because of the commitment to their relationships and the resistance to parental control.

Is Forced Marriage Cultural?

Forced marriage practice has been established to be one of the contributing factors to intimate partner violence (McFarlane et al., 2016; Swegman, 2016). In a literature review on forced marriage prevalence conducted by the Tahirih Justice Center in the U.S. (Baker 2015), the outcome showed that three thousand cases were found within two years. The results were from immigrant communities from fifty-six countries and diverse faith communities. Most forced marriage cases were connected with South Asian and Muslim communities (Baker 2015).

However, it was established from the research conducted in the U.K., U.S., Europe, and Canada that forced marriage is a universal practice across all cultures and religious communities (Baker 2015). Furthermore, SALCO's research outcome showed that forced marriage is not peculiar to immigrant families in Canada. The survey outcome revealed that 31% of participants had been in Canada for over ten years when they experienced forced marriage, 20% had been residents for seven to ten years, 22% in Canada between one to three years, while 16% had resided in Canada for four to six years. Forty-four of the participants were Canadian citizens, while forty-one were permanent residents (Bendriss, 2008).

The review theorized that since forced marriage is patriarchal, the concept should be handled within the context of violence against women and girls rather than looking at it from cultural perspectives. In this article, Browne (2015) examines Lee Marsh's experience, a victim of Forced Marriage among the Jehovah's Witness congregation in Montreal. Marsh was forcibly married to a Jehovah's witness member and was excommunicated when she requested for divorce because of sexual, emotional, and physical abuse from her partner.

In Simmons and Burn (2013), the authors addressed the challenges attached to defining Forced Marriage by positing that Forced Marriage is beyond the problems of consent and coercion. The article defined Forced Marriage as perpetuating forcible practices that control the victims to confine them to specified gender expectations and roles. Like other authors mentioned above, the article reiterated the limited knowledge on Forced Marriage, notwithstanding its prevalence.

Why Families engage in Forced Marriages

According to the report from the Department of Justice on the Practice of Forced Marriage in Canada (Department of Justice, 2016), the following were identified as responsible factors for forced marriage:

Marriage as a Family Responsibility

According to this report, parents and family members see it as their responsibility to give their children's hands in marriage irrespective of age and gender. In this process, gender-neutrality occurs when parents decide to marry for their children. Parents take complete responsibility for choosing partners for children (male and female) of marriageable ages or connecting them with partners from known families.

Considering this factor, marriage in Yoruba culture is a family responsibility. Parents and older siblings take leadership roles in the process of marriage solemnization. Parents work collaboratively with their marriageable age children in deciding when to do the marriage, how to do it, where and whom to invite. Furthermore, because of the spiritual sensitivity in the atmosphere, children are often cognizant of the spiritual and cultural environments and carefully work with their parents on their marriages to have blissful unions. Notwithstanding, there are still families among the Yorubas where the archaic idea of marrying from the same town is prevalent.

Protective tendency

The report further indicated that parents sometimes engage in the forced marriage process as a protective act. Parents assume the responsibility to choose for their children to protect them by choosing their partners from a familial environment, family, culture, or community. For instance, parents could refrain their children from marrying into particular families because of a recognized curse, illness, or hostility between their communities and the potential in-laws. Thus,

parents may use this protective tendency to coerce their children to marry partners of their choice.

Preservation of family bonds outside current geographical locations

Preservation of family connection is another factor that contributes to forced marriage globally. Considering this factor, it is essential to know that most families with children outside their geographical locations may consciously or unconsciously fall into practicing forced marriage (Department of Justice, 2016). This family principle bereaves immigrant women the right to divorce or exit abusive relationships (Furtado et al., 2013; Sarawati, 2020; Olivares, 2011). For instance, there have been instances where children in the diaspora have had their parents marrying partners for them from their countries of origin. Additionally, people have returned to Africa to find partners in their country of origin to retain ancestral connections. The cultural factor could also contribute to this tendency (Enright 2009).

Control of women's sexuality

The studies (Department of Justice, 2016; Varga, 2003) opined that the patriarchal instinct of gender domination contributes to this aspect of forced marriage. Families or parents forcibly marry their daughters away to control their sexuality by preventing them from having pre-marital sex or engaging in romantic relationships.

Sometimes, parents warn their children from pre-marital sex and threaten to enforce marriage on them if they get impregnated outside wedlock. This sexual control has contributed to young girls' marriages to rapists or aggressive partners. In addition, some rapists may not be ready for parental responsibilities, thus forcing the victims on them may incite anger towards the victims (Wamoyi et al., 2011).

While some parents may deliberately target female children to use the patriarchal power over them, as posited by this finding, others may not have gender priority in preserving family respect.

Safety of family honor (religion and culture)

Although this report (Department of Justice, 2016) separates this factor from honor marriage, the factors could be interwoven since they contribute to the victims' families' honor at the expense of their pains and victimization. It is presumed that the victims are forcibly married to preserve the family's religion and culture. Nonetheless, forced marriage is non-cultural and is inherent in all religions (Baker 2015; Browne, 2015; Simmons & Burn, 2013).

Notwithstanding, the idea of forcing victims to marry their rapists is inhumane as this will contribute immensely to the psychological effects of rape on the victims by retraumatizing them. Unlike the preservation of sacred honor, not all families will forcibly marry their daughters to their rapists. In Yoruba culture, rapists may be spiritually attacked and punished for their acts of cruelty.

Dowry or financial benefits

Poverty is a behemoth problem in the world today, with the most vulnerable (children, women, and elders) feeling the impacts. Owing to the impacts of poverty on the vulnerable, the U.N. and the developed countries should help alleviate poverty by supporting the developing countries' economic situations. However, it is not very pleasant to know that rather than helping the developing countries, the developed countries are more economically sensitive to the benefits of their relationships with the developing countries.

Del Mar Pastor et al. (2014) identified dowry or financial benefits as another factor responsible for forced marriage. It is opined that due to financial constraints, families engage in

collecting money for their children to improve their lifestyles or settle their debt (YouTube, 2013; Frias, 2017). Contrarily, while some families may be collecting dowry to alleviate poverty's effects, it is vital to know that dowry is collected to honor the brides in some cultures. For instance, dowry among the Nigerian Yoruba people is collected during the wedding engagement to teach the groom's family that their daughter is not cheap to marry. The dowry is intentionally returned to the groom's family to inform them that the bride is invaluable and not an object to be sold. Thus, they are expected to treat the bride with honor, respect, and dignity.

Forced Marriage, Policy, and Law

Evans (2017) examined the Canadian Acts, Bill S-7 – “Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act,” in halting Forced Marriage. The bias and racist motive behind this Act attracted criticism rather than commendation. This shows the Canadian perception of Forced Marriage as cultural. In addition, the Acts explicitly target immigrant and refugee families, even though there have been shreds of evidence of arranged marriage and Forced Marriage in Canada.

Notwithstanding the criticism, Canada was portrayed as the nation to organize the first global forum on Forced Marriage – through the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO). Initially, Canada has had laws against Forced Marriage (although not specifically used the term Forced Marriage) prohibiting marriage without consent in 1948 and recently portrayed Forced Marriage as a cultural and foreign idea, brought into Canada by immigration.

Despite the recognizable flaw in Canada's new law against forced marriage, it is commendable to know that Canada still tries to be as accommodating as possible to immigrant and refugee families. Most notably, in this regard, is the Canadian open and warm embrace of immigrants and refugee families to Canada from the USA due to President Trump's immigration policy. However, in addition to this commendable act, there is a need for overhauling the

Canadian system to address the structural implied racism and prejudice and how this might influence the disclosure of forced marriage, arranged marriage, and child bride in Canada. Since Canada is not exempted from forced marriage practice, it is imperative to ensure positive engagement with immigrant women at the point of entry and those within the system to understand their marriage procedures. However, engagement with immigrant women in intimate partner violence should be done in ways that minimize the process of re-telling their traumatic stories within the system (Delker et al., 2020; Overstreet et al., 2019).

Service providers should be knowledgeable of factors responsible for migration. For example, as found in this study, some immigrant women were forced to become principal applicants to support to sponsor their partners' migration, while others embrace migration to exit their abusive relationships pre-migration (Simmons & Burn, 2013; Gungor & Strohmeier, 2020; Corley & Sabri, 2020; Njie et al., 2020) due to lack of recognition of violence against women (Pournaghash-Tehrani, 2011).

IPV Against Immigrant Women in Transition

While the reviewed Canadian spousal violence laws acknowledged the seriousness and complexity of this problem (Department of Justice, 2021), intimate partner violence continues to be a forbidden discussion among some groups since it is deemed a private issue (Department of Justice, 2021). Whereas intimate partner violence is described in different ways for an easy understanding of the context as wife-beating, wife abuse, wife assault, violence against women, spousal abuse, or partner abuse, certain countries still fail to acknowledge the existence or prevalence of this type of the abuse (Pournaghash-Tehrani, 2011). In countries where intimate partner violence is recognized, the broken legal systems and cultural beliefs about family contribute to the perpetuation of violence against women (Snyder, 2019). Consequentially,

Final Thesis Report

concerns of intimate partner violence among immigrant families in the diaspora are gaining more attention from academics, the government, and the service providers, as some families migrated from societies where violence against women is normalized and at a higher rate.

Due to the prevalence of the atrocities committed against women, attempts to elude this experience seem difficult for the victims, even when they no longer reside in their countries of origin. For instance, in 2020, the nation of Fiji, with a population of 901,840 citizens, recorded 1,545 cases of violence against women, including attempted murder, manslaughter, infanticide, and physical assault (Rodriguez, 2020). Other violent reports included 99 sexual offenses, 1,644 other crimes against women, with 573 children as violence victims (Rodriguez, 2020). The international lifetime intimate partner violence prevalence is estimated at 20% for the Western Pacific, 22% for Europe and high-income countries, 25% for America, 31% for the Eastern Mediterranean region, 33% for African continent and 31% for the South Asian region (WHO, 2021). These statistics indicate higher lifetime IPV prevalence among immigrant and refugee communities and therefore suggest the importance of IPV screening for service users working with immigrant and refugee families. Understanding that immigrants leave their countries of origin for different purposes is vital for service providers in the diaspora. Whereas some women migrate voluntarily from their countries to another for economic advantage, others migrate for the safety of their lives (Gieling, Thijs, & Verkuyten, 2011). Thus, migration for women with safety concerns may increase their exposure to physical, emotional, and sexual violence from smugglers, human traffickers, police and border guards, and their intimate partners and other migrants (UN Women, 2022). In addition, some immigrant women living across national borders are exposed to violence due to cultural practices and patriarchal systems carried over from their countries of origin (Femi-Ajao, 2018).

Canadian Immigration Pathways and Policies

Canada has diverse immigration pathways to improve and sustain its economic vibrancy and support refugee families. These pathways include family sponsorship, express entry (skilled workers pathway), provincial nominees, Atlantic Immigration Pilot, Start-up visa, Quebec-selected skilled workers, Caregiver, Self-employed (self-employed in cultural and athletic activities), Rural and Northern immigration Pilot (started in 2019 to support small Canadian communities' economy), Agri-Food Pilot, and Healthcare Workers Permanent Resident pathway (Government of Canada, 2021). Other immigration pathways include the Temporary Residence to permanent residence pathways (this is a limited time pathway), Permanent residence pathways for Hong Kong residents, Economic mobility pathways pilot (this is a permanent residence pathway for eligible skilled refugees with available loans), and Refugees pathway (Government of Canada, 2021). The Canadian country-based immigration statistics identified 341,000 migrants in 2019 (Statista Research Department, 2021). According to this report India had the highest migrants with 85,585, followed by China with 30,260 and the Philippines with 27,820 consecutively. Other statistics included that Nigeria has 12,600, USA, 10,800, Pakistan, 10,790, Syria, 10,120, Eritrea, 7,003, Korea, 6,110 and Iran, 6,006.

According to the 2020 annual report on immigration, Gender-based immigration pathways for 2019 indicated that 31,849 women were principal applicants under the family reunification sponsorship while 22,910 were men for English-speaking families. French-speaking principal women applicants numbered 1,837 while men were 1,061. Statistics for principal applicants for refugees and protected persons in Canada indicated 4,875 women and 9,390 men with two gender-neutral principal applicants for English-speaking candidates. Comparably, French-speaking applications were made by 748 women and 729 men as principal

applicants. Principal applicants for other pathway categories showed 1,191 women and 988 men for English and French-speaking applicants (Government of Canada, 2020). This report shows more women principal applicants for all pathway categories except for the refugees and protected persons, thus, posing a concern of whether coercive migration could be responsible for the higher number of women applicants, especially for the family sponsorship pathway (Simmons & Burn, 2013; Boyd & Grieco, 2014).

Whereas some studies indicated that immigration laws have the same impacts on both men and women because of their gender-neutral components, it is opined that women are more vulnerable than men (Simons 1999), especially for non-status women. Immigrant and refugee women's legal status complicates their abuse and contributes to their isolation since they are consistently more vulnerable to abuse (MacLeod & Shin, 1990 in Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). Considering the immigration gender breakdown statistics, more women or girls may be susceptible to IPV due to immigration (Statistics Canada, 2021; Du Mont et al., 2012; Scheer et al., 2020; Ahmad et al., 2013). In 2019, the total immigration statistics indicated that 160,029 women migrated to Canada compared to 153,572 men (Jeudy, 2021). As indicated in this study, immigrant women migrated to Canada due to various reasons such as using the opportunity to escape their abusive relationships with their previous partners, coercive migration, cultural factors wherein women were brought to Canada as refugees through forced marriage to live with their partners in Canada. Even though these factors could not be generalized to why the numbers of immigrant women applicants exceeded those of men, however they raised more reasons for future studies, to understand how these factors might contribute or complicate IPV of immigrant and refugee women in Canada.

Moreover, despite the higher number of women principal applicants in 2019, the Canadian IRB (Immigrant and Refugee Board) approved 18,400 principal applicants asylum seekers deemed for protection. 44% of the applicants approved were women, while 56% were men, with ten percent gender-neutral applicants (Statistics, 2021). This outcome may influence the immigrant women's perception of Canada as a safe home since the concept of safety or protection is determined by the service providers (Moore, 2000; Sixsmith, 1986; Tomas & Dittmar, 1995; Benjamin, 1995; Lawrence, 1995; Moore, 2000). There is no doubt that immigrant men also face structural barriers like women. However, the vulnerability of women to intimate partner violence due to their migration non-status compounds their situations. Thus, approving more immigrant women's applications will enable them to access the necessary support if they are involved in intimate partner violence relationships.

In 1971, the Canadian government incorporated an official multiculturalism policy. The multiculturalism policy acknowledged the Canadian societies' ethnocultural components (Historical Timeline, 2018). This policy and others paved the way for an open immigration policy based on her quest for expansion (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). The Government of Canada (2021) stipulates that the Family migration category requires a family member aged 18 and over who lives in Canada (a Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident) could sponsor a close family member.

The sponsors are required to meet income guidelines such as providing shelter, maintenance, settlement needs, and general care of such immediate family members and the dependants for ten years or until the person is twenty years, depending on which comes first. In addition, sponsors or principal applicants are expected to take a three-year minimum Oath of

Responsibility for their partners with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Alaggia, Regehr, & Rishchynski, 2009).

Meanwhile, when their partners refuse to take further responsibility within this specified time, the policy expects them to apply for social support. Unfortunately, partners with abusive behaviour may not give this information on assistance to women. Some immigrant men will instead use the oath aspect to threaten their women with deportation and loss of their children to the government if they try to report or discuss their abusive experiences with anyone outside the family. On the other hand, if the principal applicants are women, the cultural role responsibilities may be shifted to women, thereby making women the families' breadwinners, which may challenge men's cultural financial or breadwinner role and instigate violence against the women principal applicants (Yick, 2001). Furthermore, this study and other studies have shown immigrant women's financial independence as a trigger to violence against them in Canada due to their adaptability to their new home and higher income (Raj & Silverman, 2002; Kaba, 2007; Guruge et al., 2010). Therefore, immigrant and refugee women tend to be on the losing side, whether as principal or dependent applicants. However, despite the awareness of the prevalence of intimate partner violence among immigrant and refugee families, the Canadian government does not create an "easy pathway" for immigrant women to quickly process their permanent stay without applying under humanitarian and compassionate grounds, which generally subjects applicants to the discretion of the officers-in-charge (Alaggia et al., 2009).

Another central challenge area for immigrant and refugee families is the skill requirement for the application process. Even though specific skills are required for migration qualification, immigrants still struggle to find jobs because of their foreign credentials (Sakamoto et al., 2013). Having migrated to Canada, skilled immigrant workers experience unequal treatment compared

to Canadian skilled workers, contrary to their high hopes for equal treatment. Their overseas credentials, which Citizenship and Immigration Canada used as prerequisites to migrating to Canada, are no longer recognized as equal to Canadian skilled workers (Sakamoto, Chin, & Young, 2013). As shown in this study, immigrant men's job insecurity contributed to aggression towards immigrant women (Finkel, 2014). In addition to the lack of recognition of their overseas certificates, skilled immigrant workers also face language barriers. They may have to go to English class before they can apply for jobs in Canada (Sakamoto et al., 2013). Although some immigrant men face language barriers as immigrant women, this research also highlighted domestic responsibilities such as child caregiving as unique barriers to immigrant women's independence in Canada and IPV experiences (Pallitto et al., 2013).

Most notable is the request for a "Canadian experience" from newcomers. This mandated "Canadian experience" is a tactic adopted by Canadian employers to discriminate against immigrant skilled workers' professional experiences and credentials (Sakamoto et al., 2013). These challenges and others unmentioned have made immigrants susceptible to underemployment, unemployment, social isolation, inability to live the past good life, and poverty (Bauder, 2003; Papademetriou et al., 2009; Tran, 2018; Borjas, 2006). In addition, the frustration resulting from their inability to pay off loans taken in the process of migration and their inability to play their cultural roles as the head of their families to provide for their needs has led to role reversals that also contribute to violence among immigrant families (Yick, 2001; Kaba, 2007; Guruge et al., 2010).

In 2016, a comparison of immigrant and refugee families' economic situations for those who have resided in Canada between zero to twenty years was compiled (Global News, January 22, 2016). The statistics show that 69% skilled workers were employed with a 31%

unemployment rate, and 55.99% of all immigrants and refugees employed with a 44.01% unemployment rate during their first year of arrival in Canada. However, after twenty years of arriving in Canada, statistics indicate a 62.65% employment rate for all immigrants and refugees with a 37.35% unemployment rate (6.65% unemployment reduction for all immigrants and refugees after twenty years) and a 68.86% employment rate for skilled workers with a 31.14% unemployment rate. This reveals that only 6.65% immigrants and refugees were employed between their first year and twenty years of arrival in Canada, while 0.14% skilled workers lost their jobs.

Therefore, the number of unemployed skilled workers increased after twenty years of arrival in Canada, with 37.75% immigrants and refugees unemployed between zero to twenty years of arriving in Canada. This shows how poverty may heighten intimate partner violence perpetration among immigrants and refugees in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2019; Picot & Lu, 2017). This attests to the impacts of structural violence on immigrant families. It could be deduced from the above statistics that the Canadian socio-political and economic systemic culture deprived immigrant and refugee families' access to job equity through its systematic marginalization of immigrant and refugee in the workforce (Galtung, 1990; Christie, 1979; Durkheim, 1951). As highlighted in this study, immigrant women reported that the marginalization of their partners in job security affected their partners' lifestyle and self-esteem, which also contributed to jealousy and aggression triggers towards them.

The Canadian 3-year Oath of responsibility and "ten years of sheltering and caring" of family members by the principal applicant also put immigrant and refugee women under their men for consistent 3 years or more for silent suffering if they are being abused (Alaggia, Regehr, & Rishchynski, 2009). If the non-status women apply for permanent residence status under

humanitarian and compassionate ground, their “destiny” is at the discretion of the officers in charge (Alaggia et al., 2009).

It is estimated that about 200,000 to 500,000 non-status migrants reside in Canada despite its strict, highly regulated migration policies and geographical benefits (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). As revealed in this study, this number may include some immigrants whose landed papers were repealed, international students who lost their student status and are in transition, partners who came to Canada as visitors but refused visa renewal by immigration. In addition, according to one of the participants who was a non-status, the long-time legal process could also be a factor in the higher number of non-status migrants in Canada.

In 2017, about half of Canadians voted in favour of deportation for illegal migrants in Canada (Nickel & Ljunggren, 2017) since some people are unaware of the vulnerability of some non-status women to intimate partner violence. It is no doubt that immigrant and refugee women in this situation face violence both at personal and structural levels. Even though patriarchal principles could be stated to be all-inclusive, the “status” of these women in their new homeland plays a vital role in their experiences of intimate partner violence as well (Menjivar 1999). Their non-status identity deprives them of their voices. It is essential to know that some immigrant and refugee women come from patriarchal and communal societies where responsibilities are distributed based on the gender binary, and failure to fit into any of this binary could be catastrophic (Lee et al., 2021; Kalunta-Crumpton, 2015).

Therefore, it is imperative to know that immigration problems may contribute to non-status vulnerability to forced marriage (Black, 2013). Women who forcibly marry men for the benefit of having their status stabilized in the western world often fall victim to sexual, physical, and psychological abuse by their partners (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2005). Additionally, intimate

partner violence victims may avoid contact with the legal system as expected due to language barriers, cultural barriers, and geographical locations (Ghafournia, 2006; Galtung, 1969; Galtung & Hoivik, 1971). Therefore, it will be beneficial for the immigration ministry to consider the vulnerability of non-status women to abuse layers by granting them permanent status.

Understandably, due process needs to be considered in the immigration process; however, once women are proved innocent of any prior criminal offense, immigrant and refugee women should be helped to settle in their new homeland. With due immigration process, host countries should develop ways to encourage women to open up about their intimate partner violence experiences, to reduce family secrecy that may restrict women from disclosing their abusive relationships to the appropriate systems (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017; Haselschwerdt, 2013). Furthermore, service providers should avoid blaming the victims and acknowledge that irrespective of the available supports in the host countries, IRW's sense of home may obstruct their engagement with the systems and service providers (Baffoe, 2010). It is also imperative to understand that the length of stay in Canada does not determine the experience of IPV and the knowledge of available resources (Ogunsiji et al., 2012; Hyman et al., 2006).

Covid-19 and Intimate Partner Violence

The emergence of the global pandemic has also exacerbated immigrant and refugee IPV experiences across borders (UN Women, 2019). According to the World Health Organization (2020) and other studies (Moreira & da Costa, 2020; Jetelina et al., 2021; Buttell & Ferrera, 2020), the incidence of the global pandemic (Covid-19) has heightened intimate partner violence in China, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, with a drastic reduction in IPV survivors' help-seeking habits documented in some other parts of the world due to avoiding contact with the pandemic virus (WHO, 2020). In addition, the stay-at-home order and isolation

Final Thesis Report

culminated in closing help services that support immigrant and refugee women in IPV relationships, and this also contributed to immigrant and refugee women's vulnerability to intimate partner violence and mental health issues (UN Women, 2019).

Therefore, women in abusive relationships experienced mental health problems (Fontiadoue et al., 2006; Goldings, 1999) since there was no outlet for their escape, especially for those living with their abusive partners (Maiti et al., 2020; Government of Canada, 2003; Wyatt & Powell, 1988; Irish, Kobayashi, & Delahanty, 2010; Statistics Canada, 2020). In Canada, an increase in alcohol and drug use is reported with a fifty percent increase in mental health for the Canadians during Covid-19 lockdown measures (Statistics Canada, 2020; Centre for Excellence Women's Health, 2020; Angus Reid Institute (ARI), 2020). Furthermore, since alcohol is a factor in intimate partner violence (Bernett & Bland, 2008), increased substance use has also heightened violence against women during the pandemic (Statistics Canada, 2020). Though some factors for women's abuse could be homogeneous, newcomer women's partner violence experiences lend credence to its heterogeneity, owing to other dynamics included in their immigration process and their experiences within their dual cultural setting.

Summarily, this chapter discusses the Canadian laws and policies promulgated to protect women and children oppressed by families through cultural practices of forced and arranged marriages, child brides, and gender-based expectations. In addition, factors contributing to intimate partner violence such as immigration, infidelity, rejection, aggression triggers, self-control fatigue, trauma, and substance usage were highlighted. Finally, the chapter established the enormous effects of IPV on individuals, societies, and the global economy and how these factors correlate with this study. The following chapter considers the concept of violence and family conflict theories.

CHAPTER 3

Concept of Violence

The conceptualization of violence enhances its deeper understanding and evocative interventions. Bufacchi (2005) appraises two distinct ways of examining the concept of violence. This examination helps understand violence either as an act of violation of rights or force. The author identifies two concepts – minimalized conception of violence and comprehensive conception of violence (p. 193). The minimalized concept elaborates an intentional act of excessive force to achieve the set goals, while the comprehensive conception of violence considers the violation of rights. Here, Bufacchi's concept of violence helps us to understand the existence of power and control in relationships either at personal or structural levels and the importance of considering power imbalance in all relationships – intimate relationships (Johnson 2008; hooks, 2006) and systemic interactions (Galtung, 1969 & 1990; Galtung & Hoivik, 1971) during interventions most especially with marginalized groups like immigrant and refugee families. These concepts allow the service providers to consider using the broad lens of assessment to understand holistically how force or coercion as well as powerlessness play in the lives of individuals in their interactions at intimate and systemic levels (DeKeseredy, 2011). Using African feminism and critical cultural theories that were appropriate to examine violence against immigrant women in this study helped in considering Bufacchi's minimalized and comprehensive violence against immigrant and refugee women and how the asymmetrical power imbalance in their intimate relationships has contributed to intimate terrorism (Johnson, 2008; hooks, 2006) and their systemic oppression due to their social groups (Galtung, 1969 & 1990). Additionally, Bufacchi's concepts of violence interconnect with African feminism and

Final Thesis Report

critical cultural lenses by allowing us to understand how human rights violation could be perpetrated deliberately at different levels of relationships.

Even though I concur with the notion of violence as a force, which could either be positive or negative (Coady, 1986), the concept fails to recognize violence against women as a consistent use of force to achieve domination. Recognizing violence against women as a continuum would assist in exploring the victims' self-perceived helpful supports instead of imposing certain services on them (Sabrie et al., 2018; Stewart et al., 2006; Bonnycastle, 2019; Bonnycastle et al., 2021; Daoud et al., 2016; Baker et al., 2009). The process could also be considered a minimized violence that is often used by child welfare when immigrant women are threatened with the apprehension of their children to enforce engagement with the system. In addition, women who are assaulted sexually are forced to comply, and resistance acts are depicted as an insurgency to men, leading to their death or aggravated physical assaults (Leatherman, 2011). Thus, this hegemonic masculinity corresponds with Bufacchi's comprehensive concept of violence whereby women's rights are violated (Bufacchi, 2005). These rights are categorized as the right to dignity and right to one's body (Garver, 1968 & 1973).

In conformity with Nozick's (1974) right to self-ownership (p. 9), this right gives every human being the right to protect themselves from being violated. The question now is, are women human beings? If so, where is their right to self-ownership? The patriarchal culture is inherent with norms and beliefs about women's positions that deprive them of their rights to self-ownership. Women and girls' experiences of rape in the world are outrageous, and the fight for their respect and dignity is on a continuum (Tadros, 2014; Ackerly & Okin, 1999; Mernissi, 1991; Parliament of the World's Religions, 2015). Global statistics indicate that sexual

exploitation-based trafficking involves 51% of women and 71% of girls (U.N. Women, 2018), with few strong nations having criminalization and protective policies against human trafficking (UNODC, 2016).

Women and girls do not only struggle with their dignity within the context of their homes but also within the educational settings (Cantor et al., 2015; DeKeseredy, 2011) and work setting (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018), inclusive of women in political power (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016). Therefore, the violation of women's dignity and respect has no sacred cow. Violation of women happens even in the world superpower nations such as Canada (Macdonald & Sirotich, 2005; Hesketh et al., 2002; Lanctot & Guay, 2014) and the United States of America (Fitzgerald, 1993; Alexander, Franklin, & Wolf, 2011; Clancy et al., 2014). Moreover, women in public positions such as journalists, human rights activists, and women politicians continue to face harassment and violence daily (U.N. Women, 2020; European Parliament, 2019). Therefore, the question remains which woman is human?

The term "human dignity" attracts fluidity due to its accommodative exclusion and inclusion criteria (Finck, 2016). However, human dignity encompasses recognizing self-worth, self-respect, and intrinsic individualistic potentials, which accords respect for all human beings, irrespective of class, race, gender, and religion (Centre for Bioethics and Human Dignity, 2019).

Whereas the fight for dignity and respect for individuals' rights of sexuality is a continuum in the UAE, there have been positive reports on the protection of women against harassment (rape and stalking), shouting and insults (emotional/psychological abuse), and rude gestures by the UAE (World Nomads, 2019).

Family Conflict Theories

The ability to curb violence in the family and to alleviate its impacts on the victims and potential victims requires more than documenting statistics on the incidence of violence but having “in-depth information about the violence and its relationship in which it occurs, and the analysis of the society wherein wife-beating occurs” (Dobash & Dobash, 1979, p. 12).

The following theories explain the philosophical background of family violence that relate to this study.

Intra-family Violence Theory

Gelles and Straus’ (1988) pedagogy on family conflicts assumes that family members abuse one another because they could consider their abuse as acts with no consequences. Thus, according to these authors, family members tend to control their anger outside but take it upon their members based on the perceived “unquestionable” right to use violence to achieve their emotional or physical goals. While notion on the ability to control anger or violent acts outside may be potent because of public punishment, it is vital to know that the societal construct of masculine hegemony and expectations empower abusers (typically men) to “discipline” the weaker ones (who are primarily women and children), since men are culturally considered the “head” of the family (hooks, 2006).

This theory fails by minimizing the importance of accountability of the perpetrators to family members. Instead, it emphasizes the perpetrators’ societal or cultural “abusive responsibilities”. The silence of the family members should not be taken as consent to abuse but rather as a response to the victims’ fear of domination (Weitzman, 2000) or personal reputation (Rohan et al., 2014). Under no condition should family members be accorded the right to harm other members without consequences.

Final Thesis Report

Furthermore, the family culture of secrecy guides the interactional patterns in intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships (Poulos, 2019). This factor may contribute to the general perception of the consequences of harming family members since what happens within a home stays within the family. Under family secrecy, family members' violence may become "normal" and make behaviors culturally approved, statistically frequent, and consciously or unconsciously approved by some family members (Gelles & Straus, 1979). In some situations, keeping abusive family secrets has contributed to victims' negative help-seeking behavior and deaths (Rohan et al., 2014; Dutton et al., 2003; Holtmann & Rickards, 2018). Supporting this notion were immigrant women's narratives on their marital forever contract. Immigrant women revealed their expectations from family members to stay in their relationships irrespective of the circumstances that ensue in their intimate relationships.

Besides the rules of family secrecy, the "triangular relationship" of the abuser, victim, and the rescuer, is also created in the families due to the persistence of violence (Flanzer, 1982, p. 10). Therefore, since outsiders might not know outrightly know what occurs within a family, it may be difficult for outsiders to know whether or not an abuser within the family unit has consequences for his abusive behavior. According to Flanzer, the pathological triangle allows family members to exchange their roles over time. The rescuer may become an abuser in the process of protecting herself from the abuser by complying with the abuser's externalization of blame by blaming the victim. Thus, the abuser's externalization of blame and the rescuer's compliance with the abuser's attitude force the victim to internalize the blame by accepting responsibilities for the cause of violence. As revealed in this study, family members and other supposed support for immigrant women who could have been the rescuers – parents, in-laws, and cultural group members – contributed to IRW's victimization in their intimate relationships.

Final Thesis Report

Participants described how parents and in-laws passively and actively contributed to their physical and emotional abuse. For instance, a participant reported the loss of her sister to IPV due to their parent's attempts to protect their reputation in the community. In concordance with the emotional abuse of immigrant and refugee women in Canada in this study, Ahmad et al., (2005) in their investigation on self-reported physical and emotional abuse among the Canadian-born (CB) and Canadian-immigrant, estimated that emotional abuse was higher among Canadian-immigrant than Canadian-born women with Canadian-immigrant with 14.7% to Canadian-born women 8.7%.

As Flanzer (1982) suggested, a family member can halt the persistence of violence by changing their roles and expressing their perceptions of the violence. For example, a change in the rescuer's perception of violence against the victim within a family could lead to support for the victim and a change in the perpetration of violence within a family unit. Furthermore, this simple change in the family dynamics may eventually change other family members' roles and perceptions about the acceptance or indifferent attitude towards violence. Considering the context of the victim's death described above, as Flanzer posited, the victim could have been saved if the parents changed their perceptions about the victim's abusive relationship and supported the victim without prioritizing their reputation.

Also, in consonance with Flanzer's idea of breaking the pathological triangle relationships within the family, the Manitoba government mandated the concept of being "your neighbors' keepers" (Manitoba Laws, 2019). This has equitably distributed responsibilities to society members to keep and maintain a safe environment for all, whether within the family or in the communities, by reporting acts of violence. For instance, under the Manitoba Laws (2019), the Child and Family Services Acts accord members of the society the fundamental

responsibilities for a child's safety, security, and well-being. Hence, public members are mandated to act in the best interest of children by reporting any suspicion of child abuse or violence within the family that may impact a child(ren) emotionally or physically. Unfortunately, even though the Act is supposed to encourage society to report violence and be the rescuers, the consideration of racism, prejudice, and personal conflicts among people are not considered. The laxity to consider that some people may use the system as a weapon of oppression, as shown in this study is missing. Studies have shown the involvement of child and family services in intimate partner violence as a complicating factor (Maiter & Stalker, 2011; Maiter et al., 2009; Sawrikar & Katz, 2014; Humphreys et al., 1999). As highlighted by one of the participants in this study, reports of immigrant families and their oppression within the child welfare system constituted to negative perceptions of the system and resistance to service usage.

The subculture of Violence Theory

Wolfgang and Ferracutti's idea (1967) suggests that the subculture of violence contributes to family violence. These criminologists affirmed that violence occurs within a specific culture. Therefore, violence within such culture is normalized and seen as an acceptable lifestyle. In antithesis to this notion of the subculture of violence, it should be known that this type of notion originated from the colonial mentality of superior/inferior cultural dichotomy (Callaway, 1987; Jaiyeola & Aladegbola, 2020).

Subculture theory also presupposes that uneven violence occurrence is due to poverty (Palmer, 1972; Coser, 1967), cultural norms, and values (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967). In opposition to this, women from lower economic and affluent families have been deemed the victims of intimate partner violence (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017). When women from lower economic families could quickly move to shelters for safety, women in affluence are

Final Thesis Report

consumed with fear of exiting their abusive relationships because of its aftermath and the fear of “denting” their families’ images (Weitzman, 2000; Shapiro, 2017; CrimeReads, 2019).

Furthermore, the colonial mentality categorizes all cultures into two groups of white versus other (Ikime, 1977; Neu, 2000). Notwithstanding this categorization, the patriarchal system within cultures also upholds women’s subjectivity, thereby contributing to violent acts against women and children. Contrary to this philosophical stance, studies have shown violence as a common factor in all cultures, races, classes, and gender categories (Del Mar Pastor Bravo, Martinez, & Ruiz, 2014; Catalano, 2007).

Veritably, the number of people killed annually in New York through violence in families is equivalent to those killed in Northern Ireland between 1969 and 1978 (Gelles & Straus, 1979). Therefore, it could be assumed that a higher percentage of violence occurred among white families during this time (Catalano, 2007). Even though America had no studies on family violence before 1971 (Gelles & Straus, 1979), it is assumed that few articles mentioned violence in their discussions in a pathological way, some of which analyzed partner homicides and child abuse (O’Brien, 1971; Steele & Pollock, 1974).

Other articles include those intended to discover domestic violence intervention strategies (Bard, 1969; Gelles & Straus, 1979; Parnas, 1970). By “different colors of violence,” it is imperative to know that there is no sacred culture. Therefore, it is crucial to know that blaming a specific race or group for the general acceptance of violence as culture takes responsibilities away from individuals perpetrating violence. This cultural blame has also contributed to the inability to apprehend the real causes of violence against women globally (Kasturirangan et al., 2004). As mentioned above, whereas violence is a common coin among cultures, this study indicates that some cultures could accommodate and normalize violence more than others,

especially in intimate relationships based on gender-based disparity treatment. Relating to this theory is the perception of all the participants as slaves in their culture. Participants described how their culture contributed to their treatment as objects whose opinions were irrelevant. In addition, participants revealed that attempts to demonstrate their human rights trigger aggression towards them (Finkel, 2014).

Social-Psychological Theories

Gelles and Straus (1979) opined that these theories emerged from assessing individuals' interactions with their social environment, such as other people, organizations, and groups. These theories include; social learning theories, frustration-aggression theory and aggression theory, self-attitude theory, symbolic theory, exchange theory, and attribution theory (pp. 561-562). The social-cultural theories of Straus and Hotaling (1980) evaluate the causes of family violence within the societal context (Kelly, 2011). Two of these theories will be discussed here.

Social Learning Theory

Gelles and Straus (1979) present the family as a place of learning, where children learn acts of violence from their environment of growth. The theory emphasizes family members as tutors of violence through role modeling, from which children imitate violent behaviors. Patterson and Reid. (1973) on contributing factors to the learning theory, hypothesize that Skinner's (1938) operant conditioning of rewards and punishment unwittingly encourage and reinforce violence. According to Patterson, Cobb, and Ray (1973), Patterson and Reid (1973), and Spinetta and Rigler (1972), children learn abusive behaviour from their environment of growth. It is opined that children become aggressive and violent men and women towards others, based on their discretion of giving consequences to destructive behaviors. Whereas family members' role modeling could guide children's interactional patterns, this theory fails to

Final Thesis Report

recognize people's freedom of choice. No doubt witnessing violence as a child could have a daunting impact. However, children's resilience could also be overlooked if all concentration is on the effects of IPV childhood effects (Graham-Bermann et al., 2009; Shannon-Balla & Ginette-Lafreinerre, 2010). Furthermore, the theory fails to acknowledge that not all children who grew up with abusive parents or violent family members emulated aggression or violent behavior. In contrast to this myth, some adults who witness abuse as children often decide to live better and be different from their parents by creating a safe and healthy environment (Gelles & Straus, 1979). Thus, they choose not to allow their children to relive their childhood. In certain situations, children IPV witnesses have been seen as their mothers' protectors in some situations (Adhia et al., 2019).

Besides, the theory fails by shifting the accountability of individuals' violent behaviors to their family members, thereby encouraging violent and aggressive people to blame their families for their aggression.

In its correspondence to this study, some children demonstrated heroic characteristics by interrupting violence against their mothers by physically challenging their abusive fathers or shielding their mothers from the perpetrators. Whereas these children were presented heroic by preventing possible catastrophic situations, it could not be ruled out that these children would not be abusive in the future, having witnessed how their mothers were treated by their fathers. While this is not intended to blame childhood abuse victims, it is crucial to encourage men and women in this category to attend counseling to deal with their childhood experiences and understand how this may impact their relationships. Though the divergence in people's resilience level dictates how they handle life situations, there should be no justifiable reasons for perpetuating abuse as adults.

Structural Theory of Violence

According to this theory, structural violence occurs when certain groups are deprived of their needs due to the socio-political and economic systems (Christie, 1979; Durkheim, 1951). Structure in the society creates classism through access to health systems, job equity, and other resources, which leads to conflict among the less privileged (Cramer, 2005). Due to the perpetuation of inequality, the less privileged become frustrated and respond to the discrepancy in society through violence towards themselves, access to limited resources, or towards the dominant group (Coser, 1967). The excellent examples of this could be seen in the Black Lives Matter protests that started in America and led to other protests against structural oppression across the globe (The Washington Post, May 28, 2020) and the Nigerian youth protests that emerged from End SARS criminality to agitation for the division of the country to other preferred nations such as the Yoruba and Biafra nations.

While perpetrators could easily be traced in “direct violence”, structural violence has violence embedded in its operational policies, and it indirectly affects individuals (Galtung, 1969). Galtung and Hoivik (1971) conceptualize structural violence as indirect violence that kills slowly because of its contribution to avoidable problems. These theorists hypothesize that high mortality rates among the less privileged are preventable if people have equal access to health resources or equal treatment. An example of this is that of the Indigenous peoples of Canada. Indigenous peoples’ structural racism experiences have contributed to preventable deaths and intergenerational trauma (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2014). Women and girls in families also experience cultural violence based on religious and cultural ideologies in their daily lives (Galtung, 1990). Notwithstanding the good Canadian gestures of open immigration, Canadian structural violence has also contributed to immigrant and refugee’s downward mobility, mental

Final Thesis Report

health problems, poverty, and other preventable problems due to its inherent racism (Bauder, 2003; Papademetriou et al., 2009; Tran, 2018; Borjas, 2006; Kelly, 2005; Walker, 2008). Partially agreeing with the opinion of the “fire for fire” approach of the less privileged response to the structural violence, this notion could not be generalized. Not all low-income people, or the suppressed or oppressed, respond to their oppression by violence. For instance, many immigrant professionals have resorted to returning to their home countries due to Canadian systemic racism (DeKeseredy, 2011) towards their profession and their international certificates or continue with menial jobs in Canada (Crescenzi & Holman, 2017; Jaskulowski & Pawlak, 2020). Simultaneously, some refugees internalize their oppression and suffer mental health problems since there are no more home countries to return to while their host countries are not considerate enough through their immigration policy (American Psychiatric Association, 2020; Porter & Haslam, 2005; Council on Foreign Relations, 2020).

Nonetheless, since structural violence contributes to frustrations among family immigrant members, this is highlighted as one contributing factor to violence within the family system if they struggle to meet their needs (Gelles, 1974; Bauder, 2003; Papademetriou et al., 2009; Tran, 2018; Borjas, 2006). Whereas the Canadian government continues to bring in more immigrants and refugees, it is essential to address the systemic racism, prejudice, and marginalization of immigrant skilled workers. As discovered in this study, immigrant women identified their partners’ marginalization within the Canadian government as contributing to their downward mobility, which eventually triggered aggression towards them. Therefore, considering structural oppression as slow and indirect violence will prevent professionals from blaming the vulnerable groups and galvanize plans to alleviate the impacts of racism, inequality, and oppression on the less privileged.

Final Thesis Report

This chapter recaps foundational findings that reinforce the need for research on immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence experiences across pre-migration, migration, and post-migration trajectories. The foundation studies have established the challenges of immigrant women and their immigration status in the host countries, the impacts of cultural practices and violence on women, conflict theories, and certification problems. However, the subsequent chapters exclusively focus on understanding the narratives of immigrant and refugee women's experiences of intimate partner violence across their pre-migration, migration, and post-migration trajectories in Canada. Chapter four discusses the methodology for understanding the immigrant and refugee women's narratives of intimate partner violence across PMP in Canada, using African feminism and critical cultural theoretical frameworks.

CHAPTER 4

Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter discusses the two theoretical frameworks used as the lens for analysis and guidance in this research. The theoretical frameworks are discussed, with the main concepts identified. Doing research with the less privileged such as immigrant and refugee women requires caution in choosing the appropriate theoretical approach to prevent the sustenance of oppression. As opined by Lindsay-Dennis (2015), it is crucial to adopt culturally- relevant research paradigms when studying the lived experiences of the oppressed to avoid pathologization of the participants, which is very common when marginalized groups in difficulty encounter persons and groups who have power and authority.

A theoretical framework is a lens through which a study is conceived, processed, and analyzed. It helps to answer two primary research questions: the problem and why the researcher's approach to solving the problem or answering the research question is achievable (Lederman & Lederman, 2015). The two theoretical lenses chosen for this study enabled me to cautiously and empathetically connect with the immigrant and refugee women (IRW) to understand their intimate partner violence (IPV) experiences within their dual cultural contexts. In addition, these culturally inclined frameworks also helped in the conscious examination of the research process and power-sharing. Likewise, these theoretical frameworks helped combine Black feminist and critical cultural perspectives. They are culturally based theories that consider intersectional oppressions in the contextual and interactive effects of culture, race, class, and gender (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015).

Theoretical Frameworks: African Feminism and Critical Cultural Lens

Final Thesis Report

This research was conducted using the African feminism theoretical framework and critical cultural lens. These theoretical frameworks were also used as the analytical lenses for collecting and interpreting the research findings.

The African women's movement was primarily spurred by advocacy against colonial rule and racist philosophies of repression and exploitation of men and women (Mikell, 1997). Nonetheless, since men also benefit both directly and indirectly from their colonial masters through political involvement, women and children have suffered the most from post-colonial oppression. Initially, African women had always been part of traditional collective structures before the colonialists' invasion (Mikell, 1997). Colonization with its three-fold mission – church/mission, governance, and trade-was disruptively influential on traditional power and gender roles in Africa (Mikkell, 1997; hooks, 2000).

As a result of this, African feminism emanated as a post-colonial activist movement against the marginalization of women of colour and called for a positive transformation of societies that treat women as full citizens in all spheres of life (Mekgwe, 2006). African feminism requested women's inclusive rights in policymaking, legislation, and transformation language (Lewis, 2008). African feminism seeks equal rights of men and women as humans by considering the Yoruba (West Africa) concept of "eniyan", a gender-neutral noun to denote humans and how women should be treated (Oyewumi, 1977).

African feminism is humanistic. It strives to stand for women's self-actualization, self-will, and self-dignity (Mikell, 1995) and contradicts all norms and traditions of women's suppression. As a theoretical lens, the utilization of African feminism in this study gave voice to the silenced and the "invisible" immigrant and refugee women (IRW) to tell their stories of IPV,

Final Thesis Report

how their experiences as women have impacted their self-actualization, self-will, and self-dignity, and to suggest what best services they desire as interventions in their unique situations.

African feminism tenets include these seven key issues; patriarchy, race, tradition, underdevelopment, sexuality, global feminism, and love (Salami, 2012). In the discourse of patriarchy, African feminism challenges the men's hegemonic behaviour whereby women, irrespective of their race, ethnic or class, are treated as inferior and are deprived of opportunities accorded to men. According to Salami (2012), African feminism pays attention to how patriarchy as a system uses law, tradition, force, ritual, customs, education, language, labour, and religion to keep women subservient in public and private life. In addition, African feminists attempt to unwrap the colonialist mentality of African dependency and unwrite the history of imperialism that presents the colonizers' theories and ways of doing things that impact men and women of African descent (Salami, 2012). African feminism enabled the study to consider the intersections of oppression of immigrant and refugee women within different contexts; systemic rules, regulations and policies, culture and traditions as well as during pre-migration, migration, and post-migration periods, Intersectionality of oppression considers the unequal treatment of immigrant and refugee women across borders (Crenshaw, 1991)

Using this theory as the lens of exploration and analysis of immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence experiences helped to understand how the patriarchal system contributed to the suppression and oppression of immigrant and refugee women. There is a negative impression of women's dependency on men and women's portrayal as worse than men in the world's developing regions (Salami, 2012).

African feminism lens enabled the examination of immigrant and refugee women's contributions and roles in their new homeland and understanding how resilient they are while

Final Thesis Report

operating within multiple oppressive systems. Besides, the African feminism lens enabled the understanding of immigrant and refugee women's dependency on men as a choice, an act of force, or control.

African traditions are significantly saturated with gender role expectations, often manifest in household responsibilities, marriage customs, reproductive rights, or sexual freedoms. Thus, adopting the African feminism lens helped dig into how traditions or traditional expectations contributed to the abuse and dehumanization of immigrant and refugee women across borders. In African feminism, the concept of love is enormous in relationships. African feminism believes that everyone deserves to be loved and that love and justice complement revolution and change (Salami, 2012). In this stance, African feminism questions knowledge production legitimacy, decolonizing, and depatriarchalizing minds by focusing on healing, reconciliation, and societal transformation where sexual, racial, spiritual, psychological, and social equality are acknowledged (Salami, 2021), supported, and sustained.

African feminism agitates for creating a space with less micro and macro-aggression (Salami, 2021), where racism, discrimination, and prejudice are not denied, ignored, and swept under the carpet but discussed and dismantled for self-realization. Employing African feminism allowed me to examine the concept of love and intimate partner violence and experiences of immigrant and refugee women within the Canadian context to understand their experiences with the Canadian systems and advocate for change and reformation in service provisions, policies, and education for immigrant and refugee women and their families.

As mentioned above, I see some of the concepts of Black feminism (Collins, 2000) and Womanism (Phillips, 2006) in African feminism as both theories advocate for the empowerment and self-definition of women through agitation for anti-oppression, recognition of lived

experience as a yardstick of meaning, importance of dialogue, motherhood, spirituality, and ethics of care.

Critical Cultural Lens

Differentiating traditional theory from critical cultural theory, Horkheimer (1972) described traditional theory as a positivistic theory of the status quo. According to Horkheimer, the traditional theory has the harmony of all as the principal goal to benefit the state by maximizing individual's productivity and the economy of the state as a whole, without contradictory opinions. In contrary to the critical cultural theory that considers the "concerns for reasonable conditions of life" of individuals in relation to the systemic operation. (Horkheimer, 1972, p, 199), traditional cultural theory is demonstrated through patriarchy, religion (Christianity), and economy in forms of nature that should be accepted as it is and not challenged by human reasoning (Gonzalez et al., 2001).

In contrast to traditional theory was the development of the critical cultural lens that accentuates the relationship between structural ideological beliefs and the material conditions of people within those structures (King, 2016). While critical cultural theory is a lens of assessing or interpreting how and why individuals form judgements about danger, pollution, and threat with specific attention to social context (Tansey & O'Riordan, 1999), the discussion about safety and risks could not be debated in isolation without considering the asymmetrical power relations, injustices, and systems of domination based on people's social groups (King, 2016; Tansey & O'Riordan, 1999). The critical cultural theory is appropriate in exploring and analyzing the roles played by culture and how immigrant and refugee women form judgements about risks and safety in their relationships and across their migration trajectories (internally and externally) (Turan et al., 2016) based on their social groups. As judgements about risks and social justice are

based on cultural relationships, expectations, and the values within which people operate (Tansey & O’Riordan, 1999; Althusser, 2001), using a critical cultural lens assisted in exploring how cultural relationships, systemic values, and expectations contribute to the oppression of immigrant and refugee women in their intimate relationships.

Storey (2010) explored the importance of cultural meanings and how meanings help create authority, legitimacy, and hegemony. The critical cultural theory emphasizes the construction, regulation, and contestation of identities such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, gender, and class and considers the importance of women’s intersectional experiences within the contexts of these constructed identities (King, 2016). Although some parts of culture could be visible, their meanings could be intrinsically invisible – “their cultural meaning ... lies precisely and only in how the insiders interpret these practices” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 8). Culture contributes significantly to perceptions of self, how we feel, think, and act (Hofstede et al., 2005).

Louis Althusser’s (2001) hypothesis on cultural theory further examined the relationship between ideology and human subjectivity and declares that personal ideology or belief system contributes to individuals’ subjectivity through conscious and unconscious knowledge of their positions in the world. Cultures and religion are mostly interwoven and inseparable among immigrant and refugee families. Thus, a critical cultural lens helped examine and analyze how religion, traditions, and culture contributed to intimate partner violence among immigrant and refugee families.

Since no one lives in isolation of societal ideology and culture because we are subjects of societal ideology, people tend to construct their personalities from the internalized ideology and culture (Lacan, 1977; King, 2016). Althusser (2001) referred to this internalization process and conscious acceptance of pre-existing identities or ideologies as **interpellation**. The critical

Final Thesis Report

cultural theory posits that masculinity on its own does not uphold hegemony through feminine subordination, but it has some parts of the male predominance privileged and sustained through cultural practices (Hunt, 1997; King, 2016).

It is assumed that identity often shifts and is not fixed (Howe, 1994; Jackson, 2004). Adopting a critical cultural lens helped me to explore how interpellation has contributed to immigrant and refugee women's power relations in their relationships, how their knowledge of culture and religion has shaped their self-perceptions, and how a change in cultural context has contributed to change in self-perception (Kim & Sherman, 2007; Markus et al., 1985). The critical cultural lens also assisted in understanding how immigrant and refugee women's partners' interpellation has contributed to their sense of loss of cultural power and how this contributed to their self-perception and violence against immigrant and refugee women in Canada.

Borrowing from the State's ideology of enforcement of conformity to rules through several agents such as the police, justice system, and child welfare (Althusser, 2001), cultural practitioners also have ways of enforcing conformity to norms and values. According to critical cultural scholars, male domination is related to cultural expectations about men's characteristics such as physical strength and aggression (King, 2015). This study used critical cultural theory to understand and analyze how men's expected cultural roles concerning physical strength and aggression manifested in violence against immigrant and refugee women. In addition, the critical cultural lens was used to analyze the peculiar roles of culture in the participants' lives – importantly, how culture was used to enforce oppression of immigrant and refugee women through their partners, in-laws, arranged marriages, forced marriage, after separation violent experiences, marital rape or rape as a weapon of war and other intersections of oppression.

Final Thesis Report

African feminism and critical cultural lenses were also used to identify and analyze immigrant and refugee women's experiences within the Canadian systems. These culturally-based theories helped to explore and analyze the context and the interactions of immigrant and refugee women with the Canadian child welfare system, justice system, educational system, and health care system to understand how these systems have helped or contributed to the oppression of immigrant and refugee women.

As discussed above, exploration of the lived experiences of the oppressed requires culturally-based theoretical lenses that would consider the context and interactive effects of culture, race, class, gender, and other categories of oppression (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). George and Stith (2014), in their feminist view of intimate partner violence, used an intersectional feminist perspective in their discussion on patriarchal controls. Contrary to the conception of patriarchy as the primary cause of IPV (Stark & Flitcraft, 1996), George and Stith (2014) suggested using intersectional perspectives that capture women's intimate partner violence experiences within gender, sexuality, race, nationality, and culture.

In understanding the ecological factors for domestic violence among immigrant Latinas, Perilla, Bakeman, and Norris (1994) adopted multiple frameworks – intrapsychic (learned helplessness), interpersonal (family violence), and feminist theory. Their findings indicated the role of Latino culture in the United States, the importance of using more than a theoretical framework in research, and considering the ecological factors in studying abuse with specific populations.

Biwa (2020) also adopted the African feminism framework in her study with women in Namibia's mining association. In this study, the researcher explored the Namibian men and women's collaborative efforts towards the co-construction of future mining works. The outcome

showed the difference in mainstream or western feminism tenets of gender antagonism and competition and African feminism tenets of gender equality, inclusion, and empowerment. The study also emphasized collaborative actions between men and women.

Why African feminism and Critical Cultural Frameworks

Adopting a positivist paradigm to research assumes that knowledge could be achieved by verifying observable experience against self-analysis of personal experiences (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). Contrary to positivism, personal experiences such as intimate partner experiences could not be measured and observed fully to understand immigrant and refugee women's personal violent experiences. Research with a positivistic approach is value-free and based on predictions, control, and empirical verifications (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). Adopting this approach will not allow the understanding of the impacts of cultural assimilation on immigrant and refugee women as the outcome of such cannot be predicted, controlled, or measured.

Positivism does not allow researcher-participants relationships, leading to a lack of empathy for oppressed groups like immigrant and refugee women. In situations like this, lack of empathy may contribute to the power imbalance between the researcher and the participants, whereby the participants' control and abuse are ingeminated in the research process. Nevertheless, engaging with the powerless and voiceless group as immigrant and refugee women requires an empathetic paradigm and theoretical frameworks with a realist ontology that believes in multiple realities (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Therefore, using qualitative and African feminism and critical cultural frameworks assisted in meeting these requirements. Furthermore, African feminism and critical cultural theoretical frameworks allowed the researcher's engagement with the participants and encouraged the researcher's cultural lens in the research

process. As required by the positivistic approach, an emotionless researcher is inevitably permitted to disregard the participants' feelings and thoughts and their bias regarding their choice of research topics (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). Every research topic emanates from personal interest, which may not be free of personal biases. It would be unfair to assume that this research is "immunized" from the researcher's cultural, gender, ethnic, racial, spiritual, and religious perspectives. Rather than ignoring these nuances, researchers must acknowledge their biases and influence on the research topics and the outcome. Not only do these theoretical frameworks create opportunities for recognition of personal biases, but they also assist in creating conscious bracketing of those biases.

Utilizing African feminism and critical cultural lenses enabled the understanding of the trauma experienced by immigrant and refugee women in their abusive relationships. These theories also helped to explore the colonizers' strategies of violence – physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual and the impacts of these strategies on Immigrant women (Moane, 1966; Moane & Campling, 1999). Conversely, a positivistic approach to this study would deny or ignore the traumatic experiences of immigrant and refugee women in intimate partner violence and may probably pathologize their perspectives (Leary, 2005; Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). For instance, a positivistic approach may blame immigrant and refugee women for being responsible for violence against them by failing to consider the contexts within which immigrant and refugee women operate and how their relationships interact within those contexts. Finally, using these two theories also enabled the understanding of the complexity of IRW in their intimate relationships and the intersectional oppression experienced by immigrant women across borders.

Limitations of the Theoretical Frameworks

Final Thesis Report

Whereas African feminism is humanistic, its applicability to studying intimate partner violence experiences with white women in intimate partner violence may be challenging. This is because not all white women who are victims of intimate partner violence are less privileged, voiceless, and impacted by colonialism.

In summary, this chapter has discussed the two theoretical frameworks adopted for this study. The subsequent chapters discuss the research findings, discussion of the findings, implications of the study for practice, education and future research, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5
Research Design
Methodology

This research was conducted in Manitoba between September 2020 and April 2021. The study explored different contexts within which immigrant women experienced intimate partner violence, in the realms of premigration, during the migration process (transit stage), and postmigration (PMP). The research aimed to contribute further knowledge to immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence experiences and establish their violence experiences as a continuum. In addition, the research provided a PMP model of intervention for service providers who engage with immigrant and refugee women in intimate partner violence.

This chapter recapitulates the methodology engaged in the study and its limitations. The reason for the methodology chosen, the instruments of data gathering, sampling process and modalities used, the target population, and sample size are discussed in this chapter. This chapter also elaborates on achieving trustworthiness (validity and reliability), ethical issues, and how they were addressed (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) with the thematic analytical process (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Qualitative Research Inquiry Methodology

This study adopted a Qualitative Research Methodology. Choosing a specific research methodology requires considering the purpose of the study and the intended required answers (Patton, 2002). Qualitative methodology enables researchers to study issues in depth using open-ended questions that understand and capture the different perspectives without pre-empting those perspectives through instruments such as questionnaires (Butina, 2015; Patton, 2002). In addition, the qualitative methodology provides a wealth of detailed information on a small number of participants resulting in a profound understanding of the participants (Butina, 2015).

Final Thesis Report

The qualitative approach was chosen for this research because it complied with the conventional epistemology that social reality is not a factual reality outside of us but a process being constructed daily by our acts. This construction process leads to the understanding and interpretations of individuals' actions, behaviour, and opinions (Kus, 2003). Furthermore, the qualitative research methodology generates and analyzes data that are not reducible to numbers (Figgou, 2015). The fact that qualitative methodology focuses on meaning and interpretation and prioritizes inductive theory-generating research (Figgou, 2015) made it well suited for this study.

The qualitative research methodology was preferred for this study because of its sensitivity to the situated context-specific and recognition that the researcher's perspectives and subjectivities are intrinsically involved in the research process. Furthermore, the qualitative research process also considers the acknowledgement of the researcher's personal bias as a way to create self-reflection; such self-reflection is lacking in a quantitative study (Figgou, 2015).

Unlike quantitative methodology, the qualitative approach was preferred for the study because it is interpretative due to its interest in the meaning of the words or phrases and the inherent meanings of the participants' narratives (Mayring, 2000; Figgou, 2015). In addition, qualitative inquiry helped to understand the participants' realities and the dynamics of the explored problems that could not be quantified by numbers (Queiros et al., 2017).

Qualitative inquiry methodology was used for this study because it works with meanings, beliefs, values, motives, and attitudes related to a deeper space of relationships, processes, and phenomena that cannot be reduced to numbers (Maxwell, 2013; Queiros et al., 2017). In addition, the qualitative approach enabled this study to occur in the participants' natural habitats and helped transform the participants' world into field notes and texts to recognize common themes across the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

As an immigrant woman from a patriarchal culture, my position helped me to identify with immigrant and refugee women to join my voice to the unheard voices to make their stories heard. Moreover, as an immigrant woman who acknowledges respect as an essential value of immigrant and refugee women, conscious cultural-sensitive practice in communicating with the participants through respect, empathy, and active listening created trusting relationships and a connection with their stories. (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015).

Narrative Approach

As a form of qualitative methodology, the narrative approach entails collecting stories from individuals or small groups of people (Butina, 2015). The narrative approach is understood from two different perspectives: a collection of lived experiences and analytical processes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Specifically, this research used both perspectives. This study followed Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) narrative approach. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative research starts with self-stories (self-reflection) and the ability to connect with the storytellers – the personal and the social (interaction) (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The justification should relate to the context of their life experiences, tensions, and personal inquiry puzzles (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Therefore, narrative research is done with people and not on people. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) posit that since the narrative approach is interactional and people tell stories as they live, collecting people's lived experiences should be done in their natural habitat. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also hypothesise that people live in continuity, that people have their past, present, and future and tell their stories as they continue to live within different places (setting) and context (situations). Collecting people's lived experiences could be done through open-ended interviews, documents, archival materials, participant observation, and casual chatting (Creswell, 2013).

Final Thesis Report

Considering all these characteristics, this study found Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) narrative inquiry as the most appropriate to understanding the lived experiences of immigrant and refugee women intimate partner violence across pre-migration, migration, and post-migration (PMP). The three-dimensional features; temporality, sociality, and place were used to explore the intimate partner violence experiences of immigrant and refugee women in chronological order – the past, present, and the future (temporality), the conditions under which the events unfold (sociality) and the places of events (place) (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) across PMP.

The future part of temporality was used to explore the participants' hopes for safety, sense of home, and the expected service provisions to have the expected home or sense of belonging and safety in Canada. The narrative approach helped to understand immigrant and refugee women's experiences within their socio-cultural and Canadian institutional contexts (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Therefore, it enabled the gathering of immigrant and refugee women's stories in continuity and chronologically.

As an immigrant social worker who has experienced power over within the Canadian system based on the decision to break the status quo, I understood how immigrant and refugee women who are less privileged than I am could experience oppression within the system and their cultural setting. As a social worker and a minister of religion in the community who works around the clock with immigrant and refugee women and their families, I understand how their men and service providers control immigrant and refugee women's narratives. Having witnessed the crying of immigrant and refugee women in the child welfare system, using narrative inquiry afforded them the opportunities to tell their stories in their preferred way without being judged, blamed, or controlled.

Final Thesis Report

Qualitative inquiry empowered immigrant and refugee women and made them feel supported, recognized, respected, and treated like every other human being who controls what to say, when to say something, where to say it, and how to say it without fear of being misconceived. In concordance with the tenets of the chosen narrative approach, the researcher connected with immigrant and refugee women virtually in their homes, at their preferred day and time to tell their stories. As part of the lives of the ordinary, marginalized, and the silenced, personal narrative dissolves the notion of master narratives as the process enables “people to make sense of their experiences, claim identities and get a life” by telling their stories (Langellier, 2001, p. 700; Riessman, 2008).

I found the narrative method as the most consistent with the African feminist and critical cultural perspectives adopted in my data analysis. The narrative approach and these theories helped identify common issues discussed from different perspectives and directed how immigrant and refugee women’s experiences are understood and re-narrated. As Hunn et al. (2006) postulated, it is crucial how people’s narratives are narrated.

As a group of unseen and unheard women, the narrative inquiry allowed the immigrant and refugee women to interpret and give personal meanings to their lived experiences (Clandinin & Huber, 2002). As a person who believes in human dignity, choosing narrative inquiry assisted in empowering the immigrant and refugee women to shed light on their perceived identities within their dual cultural settings to enable advocacy for their human rights and systemic change.

Qualitative and narrative methodologies were also chosen because some previous studies have also used these approaches to understand participants’ lived experiences. For example, Brown (2006) adopted a narrative approach to understanding participants’ collective identities in organizations. Ylioki (2001 in McAlpine, 2016) also adopted the narrative lens to explore the

Final Thesis Report

relationship between master's students and their supervisors to understand the problems encountered in their thesis writing process. In their study, Hopwood and Paulson (2012) also engaged a narrative approach to understand doctoral students' experiences and the importance of paying attention to body expressions rather than solely prioritizing mind privileges. In McAlpine's narrative study (2016), a longitudinal approach was adopted to understand the career paths of eight social scientists from the beginning of their doctoral program to a few years after graduation. The study's outcome indicated that postdoctoral career trajectories are built successfully from the start of the program.

Research Questions

To achieve the research purpose, the research questions were divided into three parts to cover the various migration trajectories: the pre-migration, migration, and post-migration sections. These questions helped me capture the narratives of immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence experiences. Therefore, the following primary and subordinate questions were used in this study to explore the immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence experiences:

- 1) What are immigrant and refugee women's experiences of intimate partner violence in the pre-migration, migration, and post-migration periods?

Subordinate questions

- 2) To what extent has the cultural background of newcomer women impacted their relationships and settlement in their new societies, which led to intimate partner violence?
- 3) How has the precarious immigration status of immigrant and refugee women influenced their continuous stay in their relationships?

- 4) How helpful have the mainstream interventions been for immigrant and refugee women experiencing intimate partner violence in their relationships in Canada?

Sampling

The spread of the pandemic affected the recruitment of participants for this study. As required by the Health Safety Protocol, meeting with the community organizations was halted due to social distancing, and all communication was done virtually.

Research Schedule

Phase One

Non-probability purposive sampling was adopted for this study (Csciernik, Birnbaum, & Pierce, 2010). The purposive sampling helped get maximum variation since the demographic form allowed me to reach various participants from different nationalities, cultural backgrounds, ages, migration status, years in marriage, income levels, and years spent in Canada. These maximum variations were preferred because they helped document narrative variations and individuals' demographics to determine if these narratives would lead to common themes.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

- Immigrant and refugee women born outside Canada, migrated to Canada and lived in Canada during this study
- Who are 18 years and above
- Immigrant and refugee women from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Bermuda, and Europe
- Who are married, single, separated, divorced, or in abusive relationships.
- Who are capable of speaking English language or broken English (a form of African English language).

Final Thesis Report

Safety was prioritized for all participants by discussing available community resources. Participants were reminded of their rights to withdraw at will at any stage of the study and choose time comfortable and safe to narrate their stories. This contributed to how and when the interviews were conducted within the seven days of the week and from eight in the morning till late at night as required by the participants. Participants who still lived with their partners chose the time their partners were away from home. Some potential participants were excluded to keep to safety protocol during the pandemic. These participants wanted to meet in person to prevent their partners from knowing about their involvement in the study.

Despite the social distancing policy, the proposed Peer-driven recruitment (PDR) (Anderson, 2010) process continued virtually. The researcher called and spoke with the community organizations working with immigrant and refugee families and discussed the research with them. In addition, to mitigate the ethical concerns of coercion, biases, and confidentiality during the recruitment of participants through service providers, a letter of introduction (Appendix A) and the research flyer (Appendix B) were emailed to the community organizations and cultural groups such as Safe Housing and Direct Empowerment Inc. (SHADE), NEEDS Centre Inc. (Newcomers Employment and Education Development Services), Norwest Coop, West Central Women's Resource Center, ACOMI (African Communities of Manitoba Inc.), NAMI (Nigerian Association of Manitoba Inc.), Council of South Sudanese of Manitoba Inc, Family Dynamics, and Social Planning Council of Winnipeg (for peer recruitment). Community organizations also helped pass the research information to other organizations, which helped in the recruitment process (See Appendix G for the links to these organizations).

Final Thesis Report

All these organizations and cultural groups are either immigrant groups or immigrant supporting immigrant organizations. For instance, SHADE Inc. is a Winnipeg charitable organization that supports women in abusive relationships secure transitioning housing, a safe place for immigrant women and their children in preparation for independent living. Family Dynamics also has a unit of the organization that supports immigrant families (families with PR only) in their integration process. They also support women in IPV relationships connect with transitioning housing and other support services in the community. NEEDS Centre is an integration-focused organization for immigrant and refugee families in Winnipeg. They provide various programs such as education, employment information, and other services to immigrant and refugee families for effective and positive integration. ACOMI (African Communities Organization of Manitoba Inc), NAMI, and Sudanese community groups are immigrant and refugee cultural associations.

While Sudanese community group and NAMI specifically support their cultural group members, ACOMI (African Communities Organization of Manitoba Inc) is an umbrella organization supporting African immigrant and refugee families in Manitoba. Although Social Planning Council of Winnipeg is not a specific immigrant-focused organization, they have integral organizations like Immigration Partnership Winnipeg that support immigrant and refugee families. Like Social Planning Council, Norwest Coop is also open to cross-cultural Manitobans. However, the organization also support immigrant and refugee families. Finally, among the peer-recruiters was the West Central Women's Resource Center, with a primary goal of supporting women from multi-cultural backgrounds.

Peer-driven recruitment helped access minority groups and enabled participants from diverse groups (Simon & Mosavel, 2010). In addition, community organizations assisted in

Final Thesis Report

posting research flyers on their websites and discussed the research with their participants during their virtual group meetings. Snowball sampling (Csciernik, Birnbaum, & Pierce, 2010) was also used to recruit participants.

Participants were recruited based on the recommendations of immigrant and refugee women who participated in the study. The Recruitment Flyer was screened shot and distributed through WhatsApp, Messenger app, and an attachment on text messaging app. Advertisement of flyers was done bi-weekly on the Facebook page for seven months (September 2020 to March 2021) to other potential participants that could not be reached through community organizations. Interested participants were sent an email transcript (Appendix I) for further information on the study, while the telephone transcript (Appendix H) was read to those who responded to the flyer via telephone.

Participants responded to the flyers by email, telephone calls, and text. Once participants showed interest in participating in the study, consent (Appendix E) and demographic (Appendix D) forms were discussed and emailed to the participants. Participants filled out these forms and returned them, and the interviews were scheduled based on their availabilities.

Phase Two

In qualitative studies, there are no generalized rules (Patton, 2002). The ambiguity of qualitative sample size is due to the varied answers being sought, theoretical framework, types of data collected, resources, and time (Patton, 2002; Butina, 2015; Merriam, 2009). According to Patton (2002), the minimum sample size is determined when no new information emerges from the study or when redundancy is reached. Due to time constraints, determining saturation for this study was challenging since this study is for a doctoral dissertation. Although my dissertation

Final Thesis Report

committee set my minimum sample size as twenty-five, twenty-seven immigrant and refugee women participated in this study.

Twenty-seven participants were recruited for the study. Anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality were discussed with the participants. Participants were sent the consent forms and informed of their rights to withdraw from the study. In addition, participants were advised to refuse specific questions as deemed fit for them and were informed of the breach of confidentiality as indicated in the form. A participant requested that the demographic and the consent forms be sent to her Messenger, but she never returned the forms. When she was asked why she requested that forms should be sent to her Messenger, she advised that talking was hard for her.

Participants were informed of the mandatory requirement report of child abuse and the assignment of pseudonyms. Feedback and debriefing were also discussed with the participants. I also discussed the available resources that could support the participants if they experienced any distress after the interview, and I sent them the list of support resources. Finally, participants were informed that their time would be compensated. The demographic and consent forms were filled out and returned to the researcher.

The demographic information showed the dynamics in all participants' ages, financial status, cultural groups, and immigration status. The participants' countries of origin include Liberia, Portugal, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Egypt, Nigeria, India, Sierra Leone, Iran, Ecuador, Jamaica, Venezuela, England, China, Syria, and Pakistan. The analysis chapter will thoroughly discuss complete demographic information (chapter 6). While some of the participants could speak minimal English language, it was suggested by the peer recruiters that interpreters be provided to enable them to narrate their experiences fully.

Data Collection

In qualitative studies, data collection is done through interviews, observations, open-ended surveys, or documents (Creswell 2013; Braun et al., 2020). Most qualitative studies collect data using interviews; nevertheless, a qualitative researcher could gather data from observations and or documents since the data collection procedure is about asking, watching, and reviewing (Butina, 2015; Merriam, 2009).

This study used semi-structured open-ended questions to collect the participants' narratives as required by narrative research. This type of interview question was adapted to allow for probes. The interview guide consisted of nineteen questions with multiple probing questions listed under them. Participants were interviewed individually once except for one who had to end the first interview because of her appointment. This participant concluded the interview the following day.

The expected time for the individual interviews was scheduled to be sixty to ninety minutes. However, the interviews ranged between forty-five minutes to two and a half hours due to interpretation and the participants' readiness to tell their stories. In addition, participants' safety was ensured by working together based on their availabilities and their choice of communication. Thus, interviews were conducted as early as 6.30 am and as late as 11 pm within the seven days of the week.

Participants were identified by pseudonyms, and interviews were conducted through telephone, Zoom, and WhatsApp video. A potential participant requested that all the documents be sent to her Messenger. However, the questions requested a long time for her answer through texts; thus, she opted out of the study.

Although some participants specifically requested zoom to see the researcher facially, all interviews were recorded with an audio recorder. Recorded interviews prevented the falsification of ideas or stories of the participants (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). In addition to member checking, recorded interviews helped establish the data's validity and reliability or trustworthiness, as the data can be checked back and forth for clarification (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The researcher gave the participants opportunities to ask questions and then discussed community resources further. At the end of the interviews, participants were encouraged to contact the researcher to share more information. This encouraged some participants to email more information on the IPV experiences through email or phone calls.

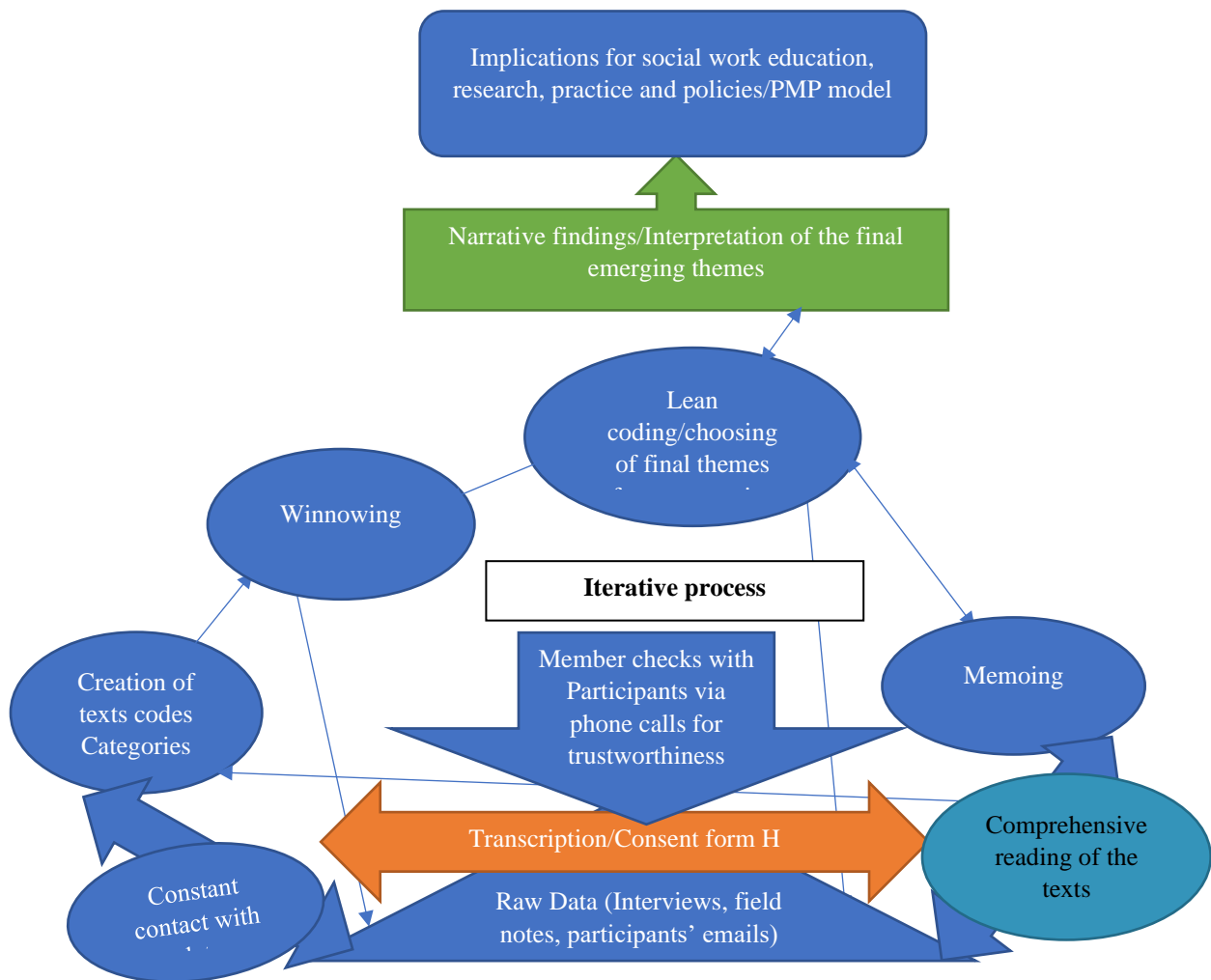
During the interviews, field notes were taken to capture those ideas that may contribute to preliminary or probable final codes and themes. Field notes also helped me follow up with some issues or ideas discussed in the interviews. Focus groups were supposed to gather immigrant and refugee women's collective intimate partner violence experiences. However, this was discussed as one of the study's limitations under limitations and challenges. Participants were compensated for their time with \$50 each.

Transcription, Coding, and Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data collected (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative data analysis started with transcribing the interviews into texts. Initially, I did the first few transcriptions, but when I found that I could not solely complete the transcriptions, I engaged the services of transcribers. The transcribers signed the Oath of Confidentiality form (Appendix G).

Although the participants were identified as pseudonyms, all other identifiable information was de-identified, and transcripts were stored in a passworded computer used only by the researcher. Data collection and analysis were not done as step-by-step as in recruitment and data collection. Instead, data collection and analysis were done simultaneously and iteratively, as shown in the diagram below:

The analytical process at a glance



In qualitative studies, narrative analysis has four approaches: thematic analysis, structural analysis, interactional analysis, and performative analysis (Riessman, 2005). The structural

Final Thesis Report

analysis focuses on the way narratives are done or how a story is told or put together (Holloway & Freshwater, 2007). Contrary to thematic analysis, language is treated seriously and used as an object of close investigation (Riessman, 2005). The interactional analytical process emphasizes the dialogic process between the research participants and the researchers, and the process is seen as a co-construction of meanings (Riessman, 2005). However, I used thematic analysis since I intended to look at what was said rather than how things were said by the participants (Riessman, 2005). The thematic analysis helped me to focus on how the participants construct their realities through their narratives.

Whereas thematic analysis is not required to follow pre-existing theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2006), I used my theoretical framework to identify the participants' constructed realities within their dual cultural settings through the PMP periods according to the research questions. Braun and Clarke (2006) posited that transparency regarding our theoretical framework is essential while using thematic analysis as this determines the assumptions about the nature of the data and what the data represent in terms of the participants' realities. Thematic analysis was used to identify common themes across the participants' narratives. The preliminary findings confirmed previous studies.

I analyzed my data using two theoretical frameworks – African and western philosophical frameworks (as discussed above) – African feminism and critical cultural theory to achieve crystallization. As posited by Tracy (2010), crystallization is a quality criterion involving various data sources, methods, and theoretical lenses in research.

Braun and Clarke's six-stage thematic analysis process (2006) was adopted. These stages involved; self-familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. I chose thematic analysis because

Final Thesis Report

it is flexible, easy, quick to learn, and requires little to no qualitative research experience from new researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

My data collection and preliminary analytical process were done simultaneously. I had the opportunity of transcribing some of my interviews while transcription services transcribed some. I sent the interviews for transcription right after each interview, which helped me retain my experiences and the participants' responses to research questions in my memories. Thus, transcription helped me recap what the participants narrated during the interviews. Reading other transcriptions and the ones done by me assisted with memoing some common ideas and salient themes narrated by the participants.

As hypothesized by Creswell and Poth (2018), memoing or writing in the margins of transcripts helps in the initial process of exploring the database. Memoing was a continuous process throughout the analytical process. Memoing included writing reflective ideas on my journal, Samsung notes, and sending notes to myself as emails at any time of the day. In addition, I was contacting the participants to validate the transcripts at intervals. As none of the participants requested to read the transcripts, validating the data through phone calls was seen as the only way of member checking to establish trustworthiness.

Once the data was confirmed and corrected where necessary, the iterative process of understanding the texts continued. I continued reading the texts for familiarization of the details (Creswell, 2013) and paid attention to similar ideas across the participants' narratives. Gradual familiarization with my data metamorphosed to identifying the preliminary codes. Preliminary coding was done with the first three interviews during the first reading on word documents. Some possible emerging themes were recorded on a different word document saved as "preliminary coding categories."

Final Thesis Report

To explore the use of analytical software, the researcher downloaded a free QDA Miner Lite to continue the preliminary coding process. Finally, I decided to use MAXQDA software to analyze this study. First, the precoding identified the participants' quotes, metaphors, and passages that stood out for me (Layder, 1998). According to Glesne (2006), coding is a progressive process of sorting and defining and defining and sorting scraps of collected data that apply to my research purpose. The preliminary coding was done through anchor coding (Adu, 2019) to ensure research question alignment codes. Then, I continued manually on a word document with colour coding, highlighting common ideas with the same colours. Furthermore, I copied and pasted the preliminary codes and data to a different word document and saved it as coding categories to create a codebook (Saldana, 2016).

After pasting the preliminary codes on a word document, I searched for related articles to see if these emerging codes have been part of previous research themes. Since my research explored the participants' realities and interpretive meanings, I employed In Vivo, process coding, Versus coding, and affective coding (Saldana, 2016). In Vivo, coding is called "verbatim coding or the indigenous coding" (Saldana, 2016. P. 105). In Vivo coding was used to identify the exact words used by the participants in the data. In Vivo coding helped create elevated awareness of the participants' unique circumstances (p. 73). Using Versus coding enabled the application of the unique circumstances to other participants (Saldana, 2016).

According to Saldana (2016), the process coding helps to identify routines and rituals of human life – what people do to resolve life problems. Thus, using process coding enabled the identification of immigrant and refugee women's rituals or actions taken in staying safe, leaving their abusive relationships, or resolving the problems encountered in their relationships. In

Final Thesis Report

addition, the affective coding methods were used in identifying the participants' values, emotions, conflicts, and judgments (Saldana, 2016).

Participating in another research as a co-investigator allowed me to access MAXQDA software. I was trained to use MAXQDA analytical software to analyze the other research data, which was advantageous in my coding. I took advantage of the learned software to continue my coding. First, I uploaded the preliminary coding categories, the email documents sent by the participants during member checks, and the transcripts on the software. Then, I refined my codes to patterns or categories based on the research questions. After coding all the transcripts, I uploaded the code systems from the software to understand how the codes were aligned to the questions. Cross-case responses were made through the code systems. I also uploaded the themes on the software report Smart Publisher for constant comparison of principal and sub-themes. The researcher received feedback from her dissertation chair on the salient preliminary themes.

As discussed earlier, my analysis was done using the research alignment methods. Thus, the coding patterns emerged to produce the immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence experienced in the past and present, with future expectations in their new homeland.

As proposed for the study, negative case analyses of surprises or unexpected themes were also included and discussed. The emerging themes' analysis was done on a theme-to-theme basis from the theoretical frameworks – African feminism and critical cultural lenses. To achieve the transferability of the emerging themes, common themes were found in this study when compared with previous studies.

Even though coding memos were consistent parts of the analysis, the final analysis stage included collating all the reflective memos and other relevant reflections on the themes and the epiphanies. I concluded my documentation with implications of the study for research, social

work education, practice, and policies. I developed a PMP model of interventions for service providers working with immigrant and refugee women and their families based on the findings in the study. I believe that every good and effective intervention starts with asking the right questions. Thus, the PMP model suggested probes for service providers to learn how to support immigrant and refugee women in Canada.

Ethical Issues

Three ethical issues emerged during this explorative study. Firstly, a participant insisted on having her name and information identified. The participant advised that she wanted everyone to know what her partner had done to her in Canada. To keep to the ethical protocol, I reiterated the consent form and informed the participant of the importance of keeping to the study's ethical requirements.

Secondly, although participants were not directly asked about their knowledge of children potentially needing protection or other vulnerable persons at risk of harm, two-child abuse incidents were disclosed. I discussed the importance of reporting the incidents to child and family services with the participants, and the reports were made to the intake services. The intake workers advised that the cases were in their systems and that there would be a follow-up.

Feedback/Debriefing

Participants were given the opportunities to debrief during and after the individual interviews, and participants were reminded to use their resources as given to them before the interviews. Some community peer recruiters asked if the research result would be shared with them, and I told them that the results would be shared locally, nationally, and internationally.

Potential Benefits and Risks

I was able to get funding from the Faculty of Social Work endowment fund for this study. Thus, this enabled me to compensate the participants with \$50 each for their time during this challenging pandemic. In addition, it was good to know that the participants found their participation empowering and therapeutic.

Limitations and Challenges

Although qualitative methodology encourages connections between the researcher and the participants to create a conducive atmosphere for trust, for participants to share their stories, a researcher's inability to relate with participants as an ally may impact the data collection (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, the researcher's profound connection with the participants may also contribute to bias in the study. While narrative methodology empowers the participants to tell their stories in their ways, it is essential to know that their stories' interpretation is not value-neutral. The researcher's worldview might also influence the interpretation of the participants' stories. Choosing narrative inquiry depends on the purpose, questions, and theoretical framework proposed for the study. This is because narrative inquiry may not be appropriate for a study that requires extensive sampling and researchers seeking a comfortable and unimpeded view of subjects (Riessman, 1993). Narrative inquiry requires gathering extensive data about the participant to fully understand the contexts within which the participants' narratives emerge (Butina, 2015). Thus, the analytical process of such information may be prolonged and detailed (Creswell, 2013; Riessman, 1993; Butina, 2015).

In narrative inquiry, keeping to the ethical issue of anonymity may be challenging. Some participants may not want their anonymity protected and want their stories shared as narrated (Butler-Kisber, 2010). For instance, in the course of the research, Emma (pseudonym) insisted that she wanted her information revealed and her story traceable. Emma said she was open to

Final Thesis Report

speaking out about her intimate partner violence without mincing words. However, I had to inform the participant that the study needed to follow the ethical procedure of confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity. The challenge of social distancing during the pandemic contributed to the inability to involve many immigrant and refugee women in this study. Some interested participants expressed their concerns about space and privacy in their homes. These potential participants advised of their interest in the study and, at the same time, their fear of not being able to narrate their IPV stories in the presence of their family members. Some service providers were also screened out of the study because the study only focused on the IPV victims' narratives.

The pandemic also discouraged some immigrant and refugee women from participating in the study due to an outbreak of the virus in their apartments. Participants advised that they were moved out of their apartments, which heightened their pandemic-related stress. Since interviews were conducted virtually, internet interruption contributed to spending a longer time on the interviews than expected. Questions had to be repeated several times due to a break in virtual communication.

Some participants did not have access to computers, and some of those who had access to computers preferred communicating with the researcher through their phone for privacy and confidential purposes. Thus, distributing documents (demographic and consent forms) through WhatsApp, Messenger, and attachments on standard texts was challenging as some of these documents could not be filled on these apps. Participants had to look for ways of printing them out to fill. Participants then took pictures of the documents and returned them to the researcher.

The pandemic restrictions also deprived some immigrant and refugee women the opportunities to tell their stories because they lived with their abusive partners and would not

Final Thesis Report

want them to know they were discussing their issues with anyone. The inability to meet in person also contributed to another potential participant's withdrawal from the study. The woman explained her fear of being monitored on her phone by her home country and was scared of deportation. Whereas the restriction contributed to missing some potential participants, this study also benefitted from it. Some participants were willing to participate in the study because of the virtual modality used in data collection and the time availability.

The small sample size in the qualitative study may not be generalizable to the collective experiences of immigrant and refugee members in Canada (Oppong, 2013). However, it is vital to know that people's lived experiences are peculiar and cannot be disputed, and such narratives may be transferable to likely contexts and settings. Alshenqeeti (2014) suggests that mainly using interviews as a research instrument could affect the validity and reliability of data collected. In addressing these concerns, Jamshed (2014) proposes a combination of interviews and observation. While the use of interviews for data collection could be effective through interview skills, a combination of interview and observation may not necessarily guarantee validity and reliability if the researcher does not follow the due protocol. For instance, a reflexive relationship in qualitative inquiry is essential to connect with the participants and engage with them throughout the study. This research was done with the participants and thus required a positive and respectful relationship that would assist triangulation in achieving validity and reliability of data.

Additionally, consideration of a combination of interview and observation as the significant way of achieving validity and reliability fails to consider unprecedented situations such as the pandemic, where some participants could only connect with the researcher through telephone or text to collect data. The initial plan was to use focus groups as part of research

instruments—however, the pandemic (COVID-19) problem created distance in social contact with the participants to curtail the virus spread. Focus groups could have helped to capture collective narratives from immigrant and refugee women. Focus groups could also have enabled the92efuge92nher to capture more information from the participants than individual participants because some people feel more comfortable talking among groups than individuals. Focus groups also offer clarifications and discuss the phenomenon from different perspectives; nonetheless, this depends on the level and kinds of interactions that emerge in the process (Acocella, 2012; Queiros et al., 2017). Even though some people use focus groups to speak out more than usual, encouraging others to participate may also be challenging (Acocella, 2012).

The summaries discussed in this chapter are the rationale, context, methodology, and procedures for conducting this study to learn about the experiences of immigrant and refugee women’s intimate partner violence across the PMP. The conclusive part elaborated on the limitations and the challenges encountered during the study procedure. The subsequent chapter summarizes the findings that have resulted from the steps of data collection and analyses outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER 6

Research Findings and Analysis

This qualitative study took place in Winnipeg between September 2020 and April 2021. The study focused on understanding the narratives of intimate partner violence experiences of immigrant and refugee women (IRW) in Canada in chronological order (pre-migration, migration, and post-migration), the influence of culture on intimate partner violence, influence of precarious immigration status on IPV, and access to services. The narrative inquiry was rightly chosen to capture the detailed stories of immigrant and refugee women, using Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) three-dimensional features, temporality (the past, present, and future), sociality, and place and question alignment analytical process.

This chapter presents the findings derived from the individual semi-structured interviews conducted with immigrant and refugee women in understanding their narratives of the experiences of intimate partner violence. Although all participants could speak minimal English Language as required for the study, some participants required interpretation to narrate their stories thoroughly and comfortably without leaving out essential parts of their stories. In addition, participants took time to tell their stories in bits for accurate capture of their stories. The narratives collected have been presented using African feminism, critical cultural theoretical frameworks, and counter storytelling.

The principles or tenets of African feminism and critical cultural lenses were used to identify how the participants' stories answered the research questions. For example, as an anti-colonial theory, African feminism assisted in understanding how colonization shaped immigrants' women's self-perception as slaves in their relationships, the characteristics of slavery, and gender disparity treatment of immigrant women at personal, familial, and systemic

levels. Specifically, African feminism as an anti-colonial and humanistic lens enabled the understanding and identification of when, who, and how immigrant women were treated with dignity, respect, and honour or inhumanly. For example, this lens enabled the understanding of themes such as wives as slaves, multifarious oppression, coercive migration, post-migration protection services, and others alike. In addition, the African feminism tenets of patriarchy, race, tradition, underdevelopment, sexuality, and love, enabled the discovery of how patriarchy, race, tradition, poverty, and gender contributed to the perpetuation of violence against immigrant women across PMP. For example, from the participants' narratives, the lens assisted the identification of themes such as marriage procedures, financial terrorism, and joint account, migration as an escape route, marital rape, reverberate oppression, and negative experiences with government services. African feminism as a theory that considers the context of love also enabled the understanding and the identification of the influence of love on the participants' decision-making in their abusive relationships and the role of love at large in the study. This could be seen through themes such as the loving victims, fear and trust issues with the systems, and children as shields. This lens also assisted the unwrapping of colonial mentality of mastery over subjects by empowering the participants to determine the needed future supports in their new homeland for improved settlement experience.

While critical cultural theory interprets how and why individuals form judgements about danger, pollution, and threat with specific attention to social context (Tansey & O'Riordan, 1999), the discussion about safety and risks could not be debated in isolation without considering the asymmetrical power relations, injustices, and systems of domination based on people's social groups (King, 2016; Tansey & O'Riordan, 1999). Critical cultural theory assisted in identifying and understanding the immigrant women's experiences in their contacts with different structures

Final Thesis Report

(such as the child and family services, school system, immigration, legal aid, and police), and how the helping process has contributed to the re-oppression and safety of immigrant women and their children.

Additionally, the critical cultural lens enabled the understanding and identification of where, when, and how the social contexts of immigrant women contributed to their violent experiences in their intimate relationships. For instance, the exploration of immigrant women's interactions with their pre-migration environment contributed to identifying the theme of "wives as slaves", which revealed how immigrants perceived themselves through their culture and religion.

Critical cultural theory assisted in identifying how race contributed to immigrant women's oppression and positive experiences in the post-migration period. For example, the critical cultural lens enabled the understanding and identification of themes such as why immigrant women do not access mainstream services, negative and positive experiences with government services, and fear and trust issues.

The critical cultural lens also enabled the understanding of immigrant women's perceptions of risk and safety, their decisions based on their formed judgement on risk and safety. Like African feminism, the critical cultural lens also facilitated the understanding and identification of the impacts of the dual cultural settings on IRW's self-perceptions and self-actualization. This could be seen in identifying themes such as self-efficacy, wives as slaves, women's independence and protection services, downward mobility, gender roles, and immigrant women's perceptions of cultural transference.

Finally, African feminism and critical cultural lenses jointly assisted the understanding and identification of the effects of the precarious immigration status on the IPV experiences of

Final Thesis Report

the non-status, international students, and refugee women, and how the immigration system has contributed to the re-oppression and safety of immigrant women and their children. Overall, both theories enabled the understanding of the intersectional oppression of IRW across borders in their engagement with the systemic operation of the host countries, cultural and religious groups and their families.

Using counter-storytelling, a tenet of Critical Race Theory (Hunn et al., 2006) to analyze the immigrant and refugee women's experiences also created powerful meanings of the narratives. It also helped this research to challenge the myths about immigrant and refugee women's "good life" in Canada. Incorporating the counter-storytelling, a method of telling the stories of people who are not often heard (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), also helped analyze the experiences of racism and discrimination of immigrant and refugee women engaged with the Canadian system while seeking support in their abusive relationships.

This chapter mainly focuses on the chronological presentation of data in response to the four research questions to facilitate the discussion presented in chapter 7. First, this chapter presents the participants' background information by analyzing their demographic details. Then, tables and charts were used in cross-case analysis to enhance the understanding of the varied characteristics of the participants. Second, the themes are presented in four stages according to the research questions; PMP intimate partner experiences, influence of culture on IPV, influence of precarious immigration on IPV, and access to services. Third, the final part of the chapter summarizes the contents discussed here. All participants were assigned pseudonyms for confidential purposes to protect their identities.

As mentioned in the previous chapter on methodology, twenty-seven immigrant and refugee women participated in this study. Five participants had multiple immigration trajectories

with refugee camp experiences; nineteen came directly to Canada as landed immigrants, refugees, or international students. The other two had multiple immigration trajectories without refugee camp experience. Twelve participants identified as permanent residents, another twelve Canadian citizens, while one each was non-status, an international student, and a refugee. Other categorized demographic analysis is done below. Even though nine participants still lived with their partners during the study, all participants narrated experiences of emotional or psychological abuse from their current and previous partners.

Some of the participants who were still living with their partners reported their fear of engaging in the study because they were isolated from the communities by their partners. As discussed in chapter five, the safety of all participants was prioritized. Unlike the participants who were divorced or separated and had their safe homes where they felt free to speak about their abusive relationships, the researcher observed a different level of fear with those living with their partners due to control and isolation. To ensure the safety of this specific group, the participants determined the time of the interview when their partners were out of the house. Safety plans were done with the participants by educating them on emergency number to call and how to contact shelters in the communities. Whereas this study was qualitative, the following brief quantitative analysis was done to understand the participants' demographic information ostensively.

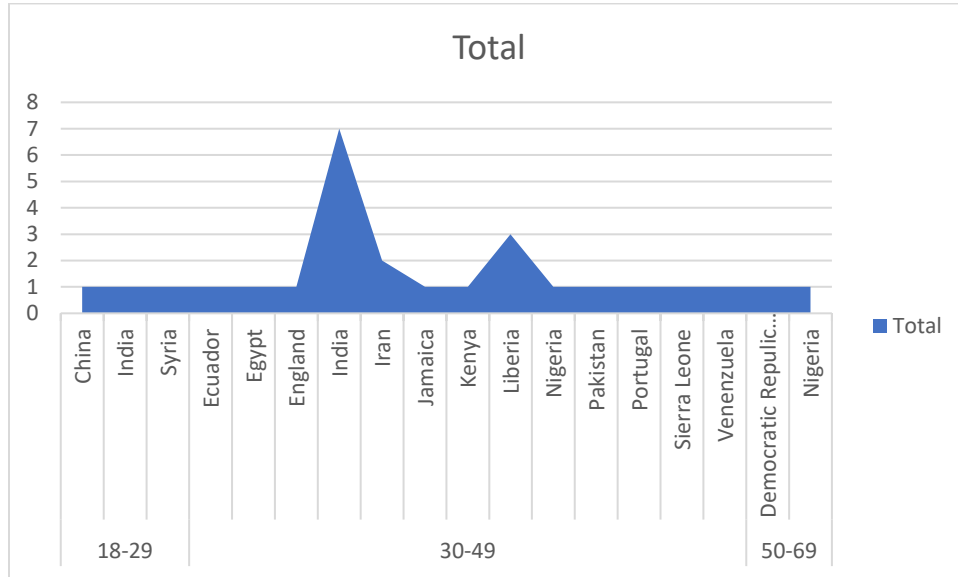
Brief Quantitative Analysis

Participants' Demographic Information

The quantitative analysis discussed the participants' age groups, countries of origin, and immigration statuses. Other aspects of the demography highlighted included the comparisons of

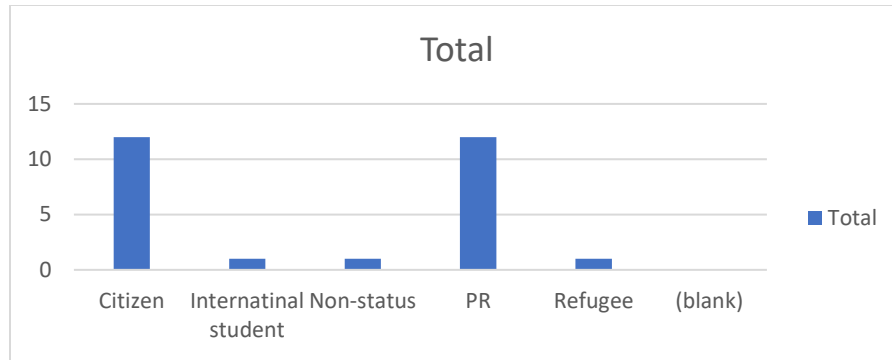
the participants' age and number of years in Canada, educational qualification and income, number of years in Canada and income, age, and number of years in Canada.

Figure 1/Participants' Age and Countries



Twenty-two of these participants were between ages thirty to forty-nine, three were eighteen years to twenty-nine years, and two were fifty to sixty-nine years. As shown above in the chart and table, twenty-seven immigrant and refugee women from sixteen countries participated in the study. Nine participants were from different parts of Africa. Other participants included one from the Caribbean, ten from Asia, and two from Europe. The participants also included two South Americans from Ecuador and Venezuela, with three Middle Easterners from Iran and Syria.

Figure 2/Participants' immigration status



As described in the chart above, twelve of the twenty-seven participants were Canadian citizens, and another twelve had permanent residence status. The remaining three participants included one international student, one refugee, and one non-status.

Comparisons of Age, Number of Years in Relationship, and Marital Status

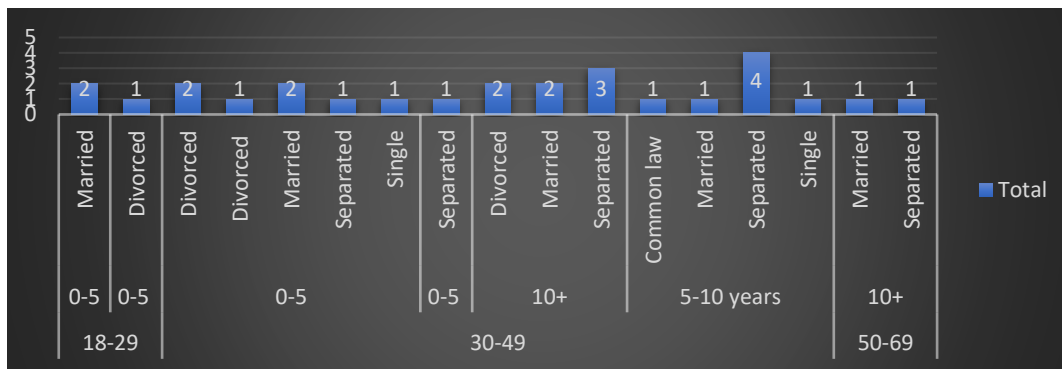


Figure 3/Age, # of years in relationships and marital status

As indicated in the chart above, three participants aged from eighteen to twenty-nine had been in their relationships between zero to five years. Two of these participants were married, with one divorced. Twenty-two participants were between thirty and forty-nine years. Eight of these participants had been in their relationships between zero and five years, seven in their relationships between five and ten. The last seven of ages thirty to forty-nine years had been in their relationships for over ten years.

Among those between zero and five years in relationships, three women were divorced, two married, two separated, while one woman was single. Four of the women in five to ten-year

relationships separated, while three were single and a common-law partner. Additionally, three women from ages thirty to forty-nine who had been in their relationships for over ten years reported separation from partners; two were divorced while another two were married. Finally, two women were between ages fifty and sixty-nine, one married and one with separation status.

Figure 4/Educational Qualification Groups

Educational Level	Count of Education
High school diploma or less	8
Post-graduate degree	5
Post-secondary Certificate	12
Some post secondary Certificate	1
Undergraduate Certificate	1
Grand Total	27

All the participants had formal education – twelve participants had post-secondary education certificates, while one each had some post-secondary and undergraduate certificates. In addition, some eight participants had a high school diploma or less, and the last five women had post-graduate degree certificates.

IRW's Education and Income

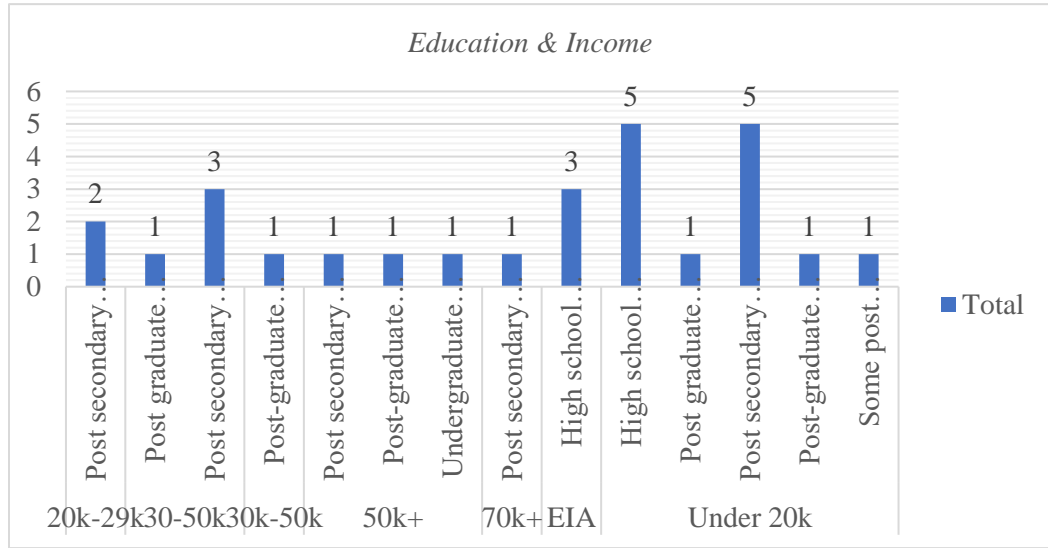


Figure 5/Participants' income and education comparison

Five of the thirteen participants with annual income under twenty thousand dollars had a high school diploma or less, and another five had post-secondary certificates. Two had post-graduate education and one with some post-secondary certificate. Two participants with post-secondary reported earning between twenty and twenty-nine thousand dollars in a year. Four participants reported earning thirty to fifty thousand dollars annually. Three of these participants had post-secondary certificates and one with a post-graduate degree.

There was a participant with a post-graduate certificate with thirty to fifty thousand dollars annual income. Among three participants with fifty-plus thousand dollars a year income, each had a post-graduate certificate, post-secondary certificate, and an undergraduate degree. One participant with a post-secondary certificate indicated earning over seventy thousand dollars a year, while three participants with high school diplomas or less were on Employment Insurance Assistance (EIA).

Comparisons of Age, Immigration Status and Income

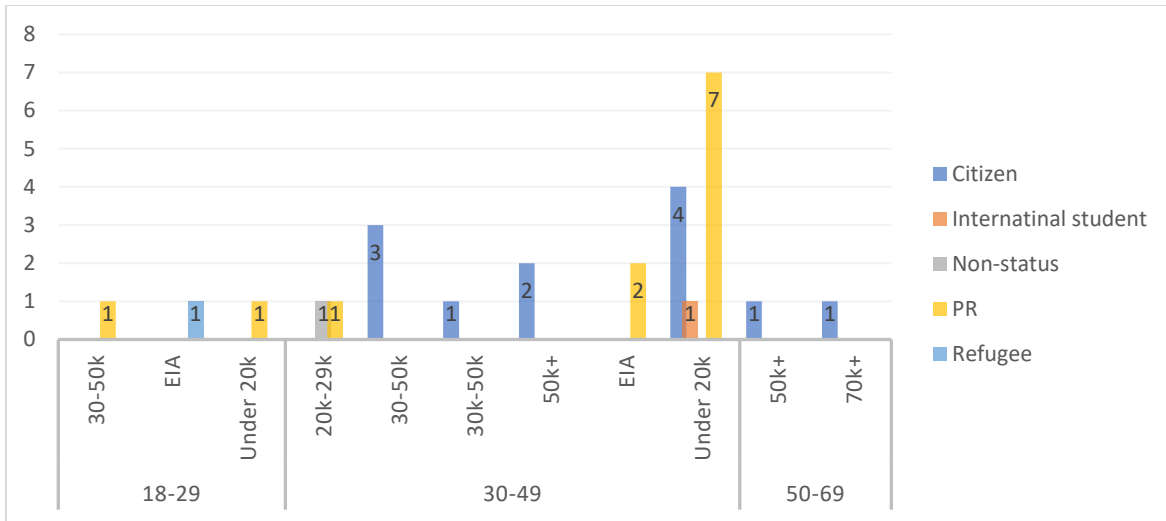


Figure 6/Participants' Age, Immigration status, and income comparison

Out of the three participants aged eighteen to twenty-nine, one was on EIA (Employment Insurance Assistance), one earned under twenty thousand dollars annually while the other earned between thirty thousand and fifty thousand dollars annually. Two of these participants had Permanent Residence status, while the one was a refugee. From thirty to forty-nine years age group, ten participants were Canadian citizens. Two citizens earned above fifty thousand dollars a year, four earned less than twenty thousand dollars, four earned between thirty and fifty thousand dollars. Other participants in this group category included seven Permanent Residents (PR) with annual income under twenty thousand dollars, two Permanent Residents on EIA, and another Permanent Resident with an annual income of twenty to twenty-nine thousand dollars. Two other women in this age category included a Non-Status participant with an income of twenty to twenty-nine thousand annual income and an International student with an income less than twenty thousand dollars.

Number of Years in Canada and IRW's Income

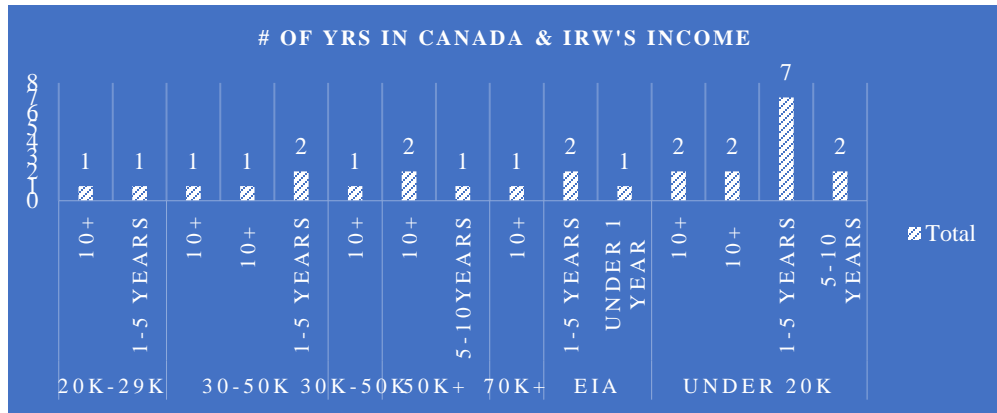


Figure 7/Participants' # of years in Canada and income

Out of eight participants who had lived in Canada for over ten years, one participant reported over seventy thousand dollars annual income, another one with thirty to fifty thousand annual income, while four women earned under twenty thousand dollars a year. The remaining two participants with over ten-year residence in Canada earned between thirty to fifty thousand dollars a year. Three participants indicated living in Canada between five and ten years. Two of these participants earned under twenty thousand dollars annually, while one earned over fifty thousand dollars.

Twelve women had resided in Canada between one to five years. Seven of these women earned less than twenty thousand years, two with thirty to fifty thousand dollars annual income, one woman with twenty to twenty-nine thousand dollars, and two women on Employment Insurance Assistance (EIA).

Age and Number of Years in Canada

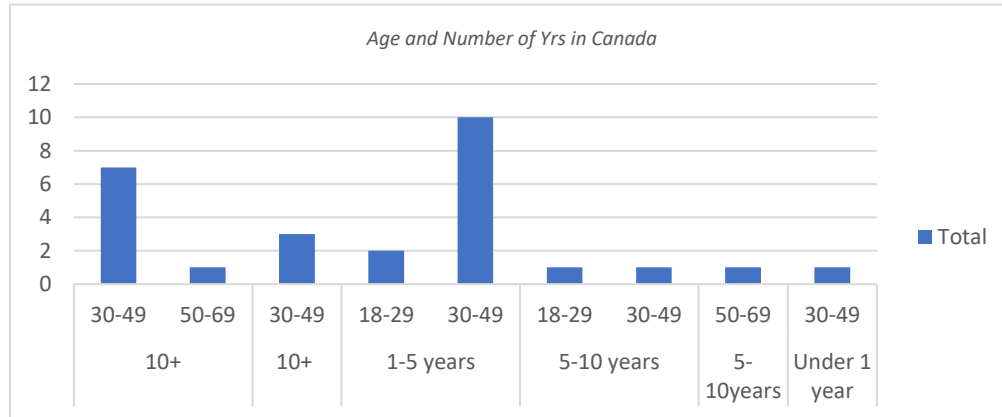


Figure 8/Participants age and # of years in Canada

The youngest group of participants consisted of women between eighteen to twenty-nine years. One out of these three women has resided in Canada for five to ten years, while one had been in Canada for one to five years. Among the twenty-two participants aged thirty to forty-nine, ten participants had resided in Canada for over ten years. Another ten participants had been Canadian residents for one to five years, while two had resided in Canada for five to ten years and less than a year. Finally, two participants aged fifty to sixty-nine years reported living in Canada for over ten years and between five and ten years, respectively.

The quantitative data summary suggested that over eighty percent (n=22) of the participants were aged 30 to 49, eleven percent (n=3) were aged 18 to 29, and over seven percent were aged 50 to 69. Two groups of twelve participants were Canadian citizens and permanent residents, while the remaining three included one international student, a refugee, and a non-status. In addition, the data highlighted that all participants are educated with a minimum of a high school diploma or post-secondary education and the highest educational attainment of a post-graduate degree. The following discussed the qualitative findings in the study.

Qualitative Data and Research Questions Alignment with Thematic Analysis

As mentioned above, the study used in-depth individual interviews as data-gathering instruments. The analysis was organized according to research questions to effectively capture the immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence across the pre-migration, migration, and post-migration trajectories; influence of culture on IPV, influence of precarious immigration status, and access to mainstream services. Multiple coding types such as In Vivo, process coding, value coding, and affective coding (Saldana, 2016) were used to arrive at the identified themes. The principles of the two theories – African feminism and critical cultural theories – were used as lenses to find how the participants' narratives answer the research questions.

The sections discussed the participants' narratives based on research questions and supported the discussion with the participants' quotes for trustworthiness. As observed during the thematic analysis procedure, some of the themes were linked to pre-and post-migration events in the lives of the immigrant and refugee women. All respondents were assigned pseudonyms.

PMP INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE EXPERIENCE (Pre-Migration Intimate Partner Violence Experiences)

Responding to questions on their pre-migration intimate partner violence experiences, all participants described themselves as voiceless, helpless, and invisible in their relationships. Participants revealed they were treated as objects, and attempts to demonstrate their visibility by giving ideas or talking back to their partners often resulted in physical, emotional, or psychological violence. One principal theme of “wives as slaves” encapsulated all the experiences described by the participants. This theme was chosen because the term “slave” was used explicitly by participants. Whereas this theme was identified with premigration, the slavery experiences permeate all the PMP stages.

Significant Theme: Wives as slaves

Immigrant and refugee women narrated experiences of abuse or punishment due to their gender (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017; Dow, 2016; Del Mar Pastor Bravo, Martinez, & Ruiz, 2014; United Nations, 1968; Simmons & Burn, 2013). Immigrant women discussed their *slavery*-related experiences within their cultural and religious contexts (Ikime, 1977; Neu, 2000). Immigrant and refugee women reported abuse from their partners due to failure to meet up with domestic responsibilities (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017; Dow, 2016), talking back to their partners, or attempting to be decision-makers (Schuler et al., 1996). All participants narrated experiences of intimate partner violence in the context of *slavery* in different ways. For instance, Emma described her experience of slavery as an experience of deprivation of freedom or self-determination in her multiple relationships. In her narration, she explained how her partner controlled her endeavours by stopping her from school and embarking on business. Emma informed that she could not move forward due to her partner's control and described her experience as "hellish." According to her, one of the partners threatened to kill her with no consequences. Her narration is as follows:

...like he's taking away.... Just I started this business. He's like, Oh, it's not good. You can't do it. I want to do that.... "No, you can't do it". It's always like trying to take away everything is just like I mean, Like I'm nowhere because it doesn't let me do the things, I want to do things he's always bossing me around. This is what you have to do you can't do this? You can't do that? That's not life? Enjoy doing something somebody's just gonna say don't do it, and I live my life for this many years, not even doing the things I like. That's like that's slavery. That's punishment. That's hellish... He said that he owns me that I am his now. I am his, and he can kill me, and nobody will question that's a religious leader talking to me like that, and I couldn't just say anything.

In her narrative, Tiffany narrated her own violent experience from the superior-inferior mentality within the African culture. To her, marriage meant "living for your partners". Tiffany

Final Thesis Report

narrated that when a woman is married to an African man, the woman becomes the man's complete caregiver since her primary responsibilities are to serve the partner. According to her:

More about that would be, African men feel that they are superior over women. Women don't have a lot of voice, and if you want to exercise your right of saying even though I'm a woman, they will say, "you are my wife". More especially, I always say, "I'm not a child. I'm not one of the children for me to be treated like one of the children in the house. That usually brings us lot of fight, misunderstanding a lot, and that's one of the challenges that I normally have in my home". African men always take women to be they married to you, you should be the one to do everything. Cooking, anything. To me, those are all abuses. It's a weight on the woman.

To Amanda, her relationships involved multiple partners exerting total control over her and treating her as a "subject." In her narratives, Amanda explained being overpowered by her partners since the partners made final decisions in her relationships. She described her relationships as unhealthy. As Tiffany, Amanda also described her domestication and service responsibilities in her relationships. Amanda's narrative was captured as shown below:

Ah, like the person was just always- at the edge of everything you know, every decision-making you know. He has to be the final, and uh. It's like almost like I to be subject to everything. Everything that he says, I should just say "yes" and nothing else but "yes" and I kind of really. I kind of looked at it as that was kind of overpowering, not really like. Yeah, it wasn't kind of um, healthy. It wasn't kind of unhealthy relationship where only the one side should be the one who should have the final say, and you don't have anything to say. Yeah, so that was really kind of edgy for me as well" And some of the guys that I dated like....Even for them to like be kind and be able to, you know, like um, take part in the house chores and stuff I like that. Nothing they always want "Oh yeah, I want that, I want this" they always want it, but they never want to give. That was one that I really experience that was really not good. You know, this is... I'm talking about my culture.

From Skyla's perspective, an immigrant woman is expected to serve in her relationship. In her culture, women are expected to "accept" the servant role as this qualifies them to be

Final Thesis Report

“super women.” According to her, most women are raised to be subservient in their relationships. To Skyla, women are still treated as properties despite the opportunities given to women in their secular professions. Below was an excerpt from her narratives:

In my country now a woman has a good place. I mean, you can work in same position like men, you can do whatever you want in a good way of course, but some men see that when you get married, you are the property of them. So they think that you can't go outside, you can't spend more time with friends, you can't talk with male friends...women accept the roles like you need to be a good woman. You need to be a super good woman because you need to serve your husband...you need to, for example, put the need for him first.

Amelia's experiences involved serious physical assaults for arguing with her partner.

According to her, her partner was a “yes” man. Amelia related that she was always required to say “yes” to her partner, and disagreeing with him always led to physical assaults. She said in Canada, he slapped her, but nobody would have cared about it if she was killed in her country. Describing how she felt in her relationship before migrating, Amelia said, “A creature I'm not a human being”. The following is an excerpt from her narrative:

We were getting conversation, and I wasn't agreeing with him on the same opinion. So suddenly I told him, “Yes,” he is that type of person. He would be shouting or screaming at me, and the like says bad words to me insulting me. But this time he was getting so angry and then slapped me on my face. I couldn't believe that, and I told him how did you do something like that. So he told me “you don't talk like that” so he started to hit and kick my head and kick me so hard until I fell down on the floor, and I fainted”. Some day we got fight inside the bedroom, and he slapped me and I opened...and he stopped, before he never did, he doesn't need to do that. Actually, if he killed me in the apartment like no one cares....He was fighting with me again why I decided to go to the police because I decided I will not continue in this relationship. He checked my underwear and my panty to see if I am shaving my vagina because he accused me that I made sex with other men. You know, like he wants just to accuse me of anything to scare me or to

Final Thesis Report

say that I am garbage.

One of Madison's intimate partner violence experiences occurred during her pregnancy. In her narrative, she explained how her partner locked her up in the washroom and left to work with the key even though she was sick. Her narration was as shown below: “

I was pregnant too, and I was not in the best of health. I had a very bad morning sickness. I was vomiting, and I couldn't eat. It was really bad. At that point, he locked me up in the washroom because I told him when I walked in the washroom, and I said, “There's no water in the bathtub. He locked me in, and I couldn't even open it, obviously, because it's a different country. It's not like Canada, where washrooms lock from inside. This washroom locked, it would be locked from outside, so I couldn't open it. I screamed and shouted everything. Then he said, “You have to stop ordering me around; you have to stop telling me what to do.

To Sarah, who had some post-secondary education certificate from her country of origin, women's educational level is irrelevant to their marital experience. From her perspective, culture determined the immigrant and refugee women's experiences in their matrimonial homes. In narrating her violent experience within her cultural context, Sarah said...

The culture had a very, very negative impact because this is normal. The man has the right to discipline or hit the wife and teach her how to behave in life even if she was educated.

Joan described her intimate partner's experience as imprisonment. She said that obedience to all her partner's instructions could be likened to her being in jail. Her narrative was, “It was like I'm living in a jail, I have to listen to everything he's telling me. I don't have any control of myself or in my life”.

Ella's experience was discussed within the contexts of religion and the culture of her partner. According to her, her partner agreed to religious tolerance when they met. However, she advised that her partner became aggressive when they arrived in Canada because he forced her to change her religion because she was meant to be his slave. She reported that her partner

threatened she would be deported back to her country with her son when the government found her on the street. Her life is as described below:

He started to tell me that I needed to wear Muslim clothes and change for him. I said, "No because you accepted me since the beginning in my way. I am not going to change for you." He said one day that if I didn't like it, he's going to put everything in the street. Also, that they are going to kick me and my kid off to the street. He said I would be returned back home and that they were going to deport me. He said that he has a room in the basement, and this is the room I am going to use since I am going to be the slave for him". All the time he was saying I need to accept that he can hit me, have sex whenever he wants it doesn't matter if I don't want to have sex with him. He forced me to use the clothes like a Muslim woman.

For Belinda, her culture expected total submission to her partner. She informed that women were "invisible" in their culture as they were treated like nothing. Belinda described how the invisibility of women in their culture contributed to polygamy. To her, women and girls were not allowed vital roles in family affairs. Belinda's narrative shows the following:

In the culture is...about women being like nothing like submissive to men we don't amount to anything in the home. In this show, making even like they married like a couple of wives, and then the first wife don't have seen that. You know I don't want I don't want to get a call wife like so. Yeah, so our form is like women are really like going through a lot of stuff because they don't have a say in the home and even in the family as daughter or wife.

Regarding Lisa, becoming a wife in her culture enlisted her as a servant. According to her, people in her culture took women for servants once they were married. She said that wives were primarily expected to be reproductive vessels and dependent on their partners. She informed that women were not supposed to work in her culture. She said...

Yes, actually, in my country, people think women are like men's servants. She is here to make the food or take care of the kids; that's it. She can't go for the job. She can't do anything else. She just depended on her husband.

Tricia, like Lisa, also informed of women's primary reproductive responsibility in her culture. According to Lisa, wives were expected to be in total obedience to their partners, and any challenge to this could lead to violence against them. In her narrative, she said that....

Yeah, so cultural essentially a woman is not supposed to oppose anything from the partner, answer back or just have a conversation there supposed to be a yes or no. Basically, there is no kind of communication between the two of them. It's just about having children, and if you go against that, then the conversation could turn out violence.

In Allia's story, marriage gave men authority over their women. Once the "contract" is signed, the women's status changes. Allia' indicated her partner's behaviour changed after marriage. She said marriage enabled her partner to talk and treat her the way he pleased. In the affirmation of her treatment within her culture, she said....

As I told you before marriage, he was so nice, so nice, but after the marriage, the same day after the marriage, he just changed. His behavior was changed towards me. He treated me like his property. He can do anything with me. He can say anything to me because now, I'm his wife and his property.

MIGRATION PERIOD IPV EXPERIENCE

When responding to questions on migration period intimate partner violence experiences and the support received during this time, some participants reported multiple migration trajectories, moving from one refugee camp to another. Some participants described their good life in their home country and how their partners forced them to apply as principal applicants to benefit their partners. Participants highlighted their business survival strategies at the refugee camps, travelling outside the city to buy products to sell at the refugee camps. Whereas some participants found migration forceful, some used it as an opportunity to leave their countries where women were not fully supported in abusive relationships.

Two themes emerged from the participants' narratives. These themes include; coercive migration (Simmons & Burn, 2013; Boyd & Grieco, 2013; Turan et al., 2016) and migration as an escape route. Six participants' narratives were categorized under this section; Two groups of three participants experienced coercive migration and migration as an escape route from intimate partner violence.

Significant Theme: Coercive Migration

Three participants narrated their coercive experiences with their partners during their migration process. According to Tricia, Allia, and Lily, they felt comfortable in their home countries and were resistant to migrating to Canada. In her story, Tricia said she knew immigrants' experiences with employment challenges, housing, and certification problems. She described how her resistance to migration had contributed to physical and psychological abuse from her partner. From her understanding, her partner could not have migrated to Canada, which led to coercion. The following is presented from Tricia's narrative:

So during the migration process, initially I did not want to come to abroad because I've heard so many stories about immigrants in their lack of jobs. Lack of housing. There's so much the immigrants lack when they immigrate, and it doesn't matter how educated you are it's like starting from scratch. So I decided, and I let him know that I don't want to come, and I think that was part of it tonight at the immigration will not allow him to come unless I have agreed because he was married at that point so, but at that point, it was just like the physical violence and verbal violence and yeah, so the putting down most of the time.

Allia narrated she was in a career development program when her partner, who was already in Canada, advised her to withdraw from the program. She described her partner's behaviour towards her migration as a "pressure." Allia described how her partner threatened to withdraw his financial support for her and her child. According to her, the partner called her job

manager and school to denigrate her for her resistance. Allia's immigration coercion is described below:

During the sponsorship procedure, he was in Canada, and I was in our country with my son. At that time, I was studying (a career course). It was a one-year course, but he pressurized me to leave the course and just come to Canada. I told him that I need some time, he said, "No, just come here, come here, come here; otherwise, I will not send any more money for you and our son. He started calling my teachers at my institute. He talked badly with my teachers and manager also. He continuously calling them daily, and he threatened me, "If you will not obey me, I will tell bad things about you to your institution..." Bad things meant that you're a bad character girl, you don't have a good character. That time nobody will like you, how can you study there?"...I felt so bad. I was crying that if he will do so, so what the people, what my classmates, my teachers what they will think about me. I was feeling so bad.

Lily's coercion emanated from her qualifications for the principal applicant. She said she had a degree and work experience needed by Canadian immigration. Nonetheless, Lily said she had a comfortable life in her home country and was not interested in migrating. In her narrative, she explained that her partner physically assaulted her, sent her out of her matrimonial home, and told her not to return to him until she agreed to be the principal applicant. An excerpt from Lily's narrative is shown below:

This was one evening after dinner; we were talking about the application again to Canada, and then I tried saying that, "I am happy here. We have a good life. I don't want to go to Canada." I was supposed to be the main applicant. Then he said that "If you don't want to go to Canada, then you should just leave this house and go to your parents." I resisted. I said, "No, this is my house. I will not go." Then that's when he started getting physical. He slapped me. He kicked me. Then he said, "You have to go," and he made me leave... and he said, "You can only come back if you are ready to go to Canada and be the main applicant." Then eventually, I did.

Significant Theme: Migration as an Escape Route

Final Thesis Report

Four women described their intimate partner violence and their attempts to escape the abusive relationships through migration. Amelia, Madison, Grace, and Emma all had diverse experiences. While Amelia and Madison explored migration to escape from abuse and moved to Canada with their partners, Emma migrated from her country to another country with a different partner who eventually brought her to Canada. Grace joined her partner in Canada through an arranged marriage. Amelia married her partner in another country where she said was not protective of women's lives. To Amelia, living in the new country and moving back to her country of origin would have made no difference. According to her, she had to agree with her partner to move to Canada to exit the relationship. In her narrative, her plan of migration was towards a long-term plan. Her narrative is shown below:

...I don't want to stay with him. I know that I will not continue like that because it's like the violence is increasing, and it reached out to me like he cracked my bones here and like the violence became very dangerous and serious. OK, so I told myself why it was many things together. OK, I don't want him to send me back to our country now. It's a toxic life there and also toxic life with my partner. So I say to myself, why? I didn't give up trying. It was like long term plan. Let me try to immigrate to Canada.

From Madison's perspective, she was enduring all forms of abuse to receive sponsorship from her partner. According to Madison, although her partner became more aggressive towards her, her family could not protect her and seek justice; instead, they had to pacify him to proceed with her sponsorship process. To migrate to Canada, Madison endured both physical and sexual assaults from her partner. An excerpt from her narrative is as follows:

He became very violent, but I am very lucky because I had my family there, I had a brother, I had a father, I had my neighbours, my landlord, they were all very supportive, and my ex-husband, my son's father, would have gone to prison he would have died. He's not from my country, so they would have killed him, but because I was under his sponsorship, they calmed him down because of that. If there was no sponsorship, my brother would have killed him.

I didn't want to have to sleep with him because I was too busy with a child or whatever. I was forced to sleep with him because he said he would not go ahead with the immigration.

Emma had a unique experience with her escape. She was separated from her boyfriend and forcibly married to a man from her tribe. Her intimate partner violence with her parent's preferred partner spurred her to reconnect with her former boyfriend. Emma requested assistance from her former boyfriend to travel out of her country. Emma said the boyfriend gave her conditions to marry him and to give him babies primarily. According to Emma, she agreed with him to prevent going back to her tribal partner. Her story is narrated below:

So I told this one here (not from my tribe) this person was a very good person we were together before. He decided to travel, and I said, I just want to leave. I don't wanna be in (my country) Feeling I'm gonna die if I stay there, so he said, OK, he was going to help me, but he gave me a condition that I must be his conditional wife, helping me, I must be his wife which was already planned before he left just because my family said no. That's the reason why we didn't even get married in the first place but at the end. He gave me a condition that I'm coming to have babies, and I'm coming to be his wife, and I'm going to change my name to his last name,....I still don't have a problem with that....I just want to get out of the bad relationship... I had to leave.

For Grace, migrating to a new country could be challenging when one has to leave the familiar to the unfamiliar and when the primary support is the abuser. Although Grace found migration challenging, she advised that she used the opportunity to escape from her abusive relationship. In her narration, she said.....

Coming to a new country is very hard, leaving everything behind. On top of that, if your partner or your support system works against you and abuses you, it's very hard. I took it as a chance to escape and also find my own way if you know what I mean. Just trying to find out where and how I can move on.

Post-Migration IPV Experiences

Final Thesis Report

Relating their post-migration IPV experiences in response to the research question, participants identified the differences in their pre-and post-migration intimate partner violence experiences. While some reported the same level of violence, others described theirs as “bigger, terrible and worse”. Participants highlighted resource availability as helpful; however, some participants reported having negative experiences in their contacts with some service providers. Participants reported physical, emotional, psychological abuse and strategic financial exploitation from their partners. Participants identified sexual and physical abuse pre-and post-natal for refusing abortion and seeking parenting support.

Additionally, participants reported receiving post-separation threats and emotional abuse (Ahmad et al., 2005; Hyman et al., 2006) from family members pre and during the pandemic. Mental health and lack of support were also identified in the post-migration pandemic period. Participants identified their children as their protective shield and the impacts of their dual cultural contexts and migration status on their IPV experiences. In consideration of the impacts of narrating traumatic events on IPV victims, some participants reported experiencing triggers of their past abuse when telling their stories, some described narrating their stories as therapeutic, while others saw the process as a means of education for other women. Finally, immigrant women recommended ways to feel safe in Canada and their negative and positive experiences in their contacts with service providers.

Studies have established that women in intimate partner violence lack control over their sexual life (Ehrensaft et al., 2003; WHO, 2012; Gardner, 1999; Gervais, Vescio, Forster, Maass, & Suitner, 2012). In agreement with this study, previous studies have highlighted pre-and post-natal violent experiences of immigrant and refugee women in their intimate relationships (Diaz-Olavarrieta et al., 2007; Thananowan & Heidrich, 2008), including the effects of the abuse on

their mental health (DeWall et al., 2014; Power, Koch, Kralik, & Jackson, 2006). Correlating with the past studies, seven themes emerged for this question. These themes are divided into multifarious oppression, loving victims, and mental health issues. Five themes categorized under multifarious oppression include: physical, emotional, and gaslighting abuse, financial terrorism and joint account, marital rape, pregnancy, and post-natal intimate partner violence, and after-separation IPV experiences.

Significant Theme: Multifarious Oppression

As found in the literature review, holistic understanding of violence against immigrant and refugee women could be understood through the broader lens of violence that acknowledged the impacts of violence on the physical and psychological wellbeing of the participants (WHO, 2012; DeKeseredy, 2000; Abraham, 2000; Morash et al., 2007; Prakash et al., 2019; Ferraro, 2006). Results from the study demonstrated a broader perspective of the participants' violent experiences. In this study, all participants experienced either physical, emotional, gaslighting, sexual, or financial oppression after migration. While some experienced at least one form of oppression, others experienced two or more forms of oppression. For a succinct analysis of these oppression groups, multifarious oppression is categorized into five themes; physical, emotional, and gaslighting abuse, financial terrorism, and joint account, marital rape (NCADV, 2019), pregnancy post-natal IPV, and after-separation IPV experiences. The other two themes are mental health issues and IPV. Each theme starts with a summary of the participants' experiences and is followed by a case report with quotes for trustworthiness.

Significant Theme: Physical, Mental, and Gaslighting Abuse

Immigrant women's intimate partner violent experiences permeate the three stages of pre-migration, migration, and post-migration. This indicates that the oppression of immigrant

women occurs in all contexts. As mentioned earlier, all participants described experiencing at least one form of oppression, while some had two or more experiences. This theme is brought under post-migration to establish the continuity of immigrant women's oppression.

Participants described experiencing physical assaults in the form of slapping, choking, strangulation, pushing, kicking, punching, pulling of hair, dragging on the floor, hitting, slapping of face, tying of hands and legs. In addition, some participants narrated assaults with weapons, such as belts, whips, and knives, while some participants reported that chairs, glass cups, plates, spoons, or hot water were thrown at them by their partners. Besides, some participants said their partners threatened to kill them with knives and guns and threatened to kill their parents as well (McFarlane et al., 2016; Pereira et al., 2013; Hotton, 2001; Wilson & Daly, 1993; Cronholm et al., 2011).

Other participants reported belittlement, isolation, sense of rejection, abandonment, and distortion of reality, with a few narrating experiences with ejection from their apartment since their partners registered everything with their names. All participants described their experiences and the impacts on their physical and mental well-being.

For Joan, her experiences encompassed all forms of oppression. Joan described how her partner was constantly beating her and telling her she could go anywhere she wanted. She described the traumatic incident where her partner put a knife on her neck and pressured her to put her sister on the phone. From her perspective, her partner did whatever pleased him to oppress her, ranging from beating with hands, a whip, pulling her hair, and even threatening to kill her with a knife. Joan described her sense of insecurity even in Canada. She said,

I don't have the feeling of safety in my place to talk with everybody or even when I'm going to make a decision, sometimes I'm afraid to talk about it on the phone or in the house.

Final Thesis Report

According to Joan, she was not allowed to visit her parents without the partner's consent, and her parents were also not spared from her marital abuse. Joan's narrative is shown below:

He was always beating me. He would beat me told me like, "I don't want you. You can go anywhere. I don't want you. He had a knife and put it under my neck. He wanted me to call my sister and put it on the speaker. Sometimes, he uses a knife, sometimes he just beat me with hands or whip or pulls my hair. He would lock the door and go to work. I had to stay home all day without the key to go out. I was not allowed to visit my parents when he didn't want it. He always had a weapon in his car, so if I wanted to do something, or I didn't want to accept something, he's telling me, "I will kill your parents," or "I'll pay somebody money to kill your parents."

For Lily, she needed to decipher when her partner needed to drink tea or not; otherwise, this would lead to a physical assault. Lily described that her premigration oppression started with her resistance to migration. She said her partner slapped and kicked her and sent her out of the house. She expressed experiencing worse violence in Canada. Here is Lily's narrative...

Before coming to Canada, he beat me multiple times. A lot of time it was because I didn't want to come to Canada. He would just pick up fights with me when asking me, "Why didn't you ask me for tea? Why didn't you ask for this or that." He will just use those excuses to get verbally and physically abusive. After coming to Canada, things got worse.

In relating her unique, intimate partner violence experience, Sarah said, "I think I went through all types of abuse". She explained being called bad and inappropriate names by her partner. Sarah described how her partner despised her motherhood and told her she should not have had children or even married since she lacked a parental role model. Describing her multiple violent experiences, Sarah said....

I went through all types of abuse. Emotional, psychological, and physical. He used to hit me on my eye, my face, my mouth, pushed me. He used to call me names that were really bad and inappropriate. For example, he would tell me that you don't understand or you shouldn't start a household, you shouldn't have kids, you shouldn't get married since your parents didn't teach you

Final Thesis Report

how to behave when you go to your husband's family's house. He was telling me that there was something wrong with my brain.

Lisa described her partner as a criminal-minded person. She said her partner put guns on her head several times and had attempted to kill her. Lisa explained having been punched on the face, slapped, pushed on the neck, and sat on for twelve or more hours. For Sarah, living in Canada has not stopped receiving death threats from her partner. Lisa said her partner had attempted killing her few times. The following is an excerpt from Lisa's story:

Yes, he put guns on my head so many times. He punched on my face. Yes, back home. He's a very criminal-minded person. He hit me all the time in our country and abused me all the time. Sometimes he is trying to kill me with a gun, or hit a punch, or push my neck. One day he sat on my stomach at least 12 or 13 hours. Actually, I was looking at his phone, and he said, "Why are you looking at my phone?" and he slapped me. We came here about two years. After that, he was trying so many times to kill me. He said, "Today I'll finish you, and I'll kill you because I can't tolerate you.

Sophia's story comprised of multiple abusive relationships, pre, and post-migration. She described her two relationships in Canada as abusive. She also informed her pre-migration partner as controlling. Sophia said her ex-partner forced her to answer all phone calls and controlled what she wore and whom she associated with. She expressed how smoking as a woman portrayed her as "slutty" in her culture because good women do not smoke. In her narration, Sophia said...

I've had two serious relationships in Canada, and both of them were abusive. The first one was with a person from my own country. He was very controlling. I was not allowed to have a missed call. I had to always answer my phone. Very, very controlling about what I wore, about smoking. In my country, it's not about the bad habit. It's just that if women smoke they're just slutty. Good women don't smoke.

Like some participants, Emma's experiences were a combination of physical, emotional, and gaslighting. She described how her partner isolated her from other women and the

Final Thesis Report

community to prevent her from sharing her marital problems and influence. Emma said her partner compared her with other women and told her she did not look good enough. Emma said her partner showed her pictures of women's breasts and made her look "stupid" by condemning whatever she did for her children. Relating to how her partner described the impact of her violent experience with him, Emma said she called her a "psycho girl".

As a researcher from the same cultural background as Emma, calling someone, a "psycho" implies insanity. Here, Emma narrated how her partner made her doubt her sanity and her violent experience. She related that she became sleepless due to "emotional torture." Emma's descriptive story is shown below:

I can't even hang out with other people 'cause he doesn't want me to make friends 'cause he felt like if I make friends,...I might be able to tell them what's going on.He felt like it was gonna change me that he likes the way I am....He is always trying to make me feel like I don't look good enough.....This man...just condemned everything makes me look stupid as if I don't know anything. He just takes my hands off...his body and push me away in front of the woman...and I feel so bad...he is showing me pictures of other women's breasts and telling me see how beautiful this is? How their breasts look beautiful.... I end up not being able to sleep because he's emotionally torturing me. He physically abused me again in front of my son. I can't even buy toys for my kids. This man messed me up, he said to me what I bought is ugly is not good that I don't even know how to buy things. Like make me feel worthless...I wasn't coping...in school and now you have to call me this psycho..... I'm mentally sick.... He makes me feel bad for calling the cops.

Allia's experiences were more of emotional abuse, although with some physical assaults. Allia described the intense attack on her self-esteem by her partner and how her partner's emotional abuse was affecting her mental health. Allia expressed that her partner often put her down and told her she was good for nothing and dependent on him for everything. Allia's narrative is displayed below:

Yes. Sometimes he beat me, he did that, but mostly he did the

mental abuse. It's very bad for my mental health. All the time he tried to put me down; he tried to put in my mind that, "You're good for nothing, you cannot do anything, you cannot study, you're just nothing, you're totally dependant on me, and you cannot earn and you cannot do anything.

Amelia's description included a temporary loss of speech resulting from a head injury sustained from her partner's assault. She said her partner hit and kicked her hard, and she fell down and passed out. According to her, the physical assault ensued from her partner, correcting how she spoke to him. In addition, Amelia related her housing problem experience with her partner after he moved out because her name was not part of the lease agreement. The excerpt from her narrative is shown below:

So he told me you don't talk like that so he started to hit and kick my head and kick me so hard until I fell down on the floor and I fainted, And he tried to put me on the bed, but I remember when I woke up.... so I lost temporarily to talk like... I really can't talk...He has everything at home, under his name (phone company), everything, even the lease for the apartment. I wasn't existing in this relationship. I was like a ghost I see my shadow I don't see myself....My plan it was to kill myself. But I wrote a letter first for my family and my kids.

In addition to Amelia's experience was her mental health issue. Amelia's narrative showed she was also paranoid as she thought her partner was always watching her wherever she was. In her narrative, she said, "He was watching me, stalking like now when I'm not there.....I wasn't sleeping, I wasn't taking a shower at all". She also expressed suicidal ideation.

Significant Theme: "Financial Terrorism" and Joint Account

Fourteen participants narrated their financial violence from their partners. Immigrant women explained how they were pressured to work and open joint accounts when they arrived in Canada. Some participants said they were forced to work while their partners stayed at home and spent the money in Canada or travelled across continents.

Participants described their experiences of working hard but being deprived of access to the joint bank accounts. Respondents said that their partners had to buy the groceries, buy the women's necessities such as sanitary pads, and deny them eating their cultural foods and wearing cultural clothing. While some women simply said their men stole their money, some of them established the strategies used in what they described as "financial terrorism". Some women discussed how their men impersonated them to get credit cards and welfare services for which they had to take responsibility.

Besides, some respondents disclosed that their partners controlled family mail and prevented them from knowing about child tax benefits. For example, from Olivia's story, her partner collected her paycheques and bank card and spent her money as he pleased. For her, talking to her partner was a way of getting a black eye. In her narrative, she said:

He will take the cheque from me, or he held my bank card. He was the one that was keeping my bank card. He will use my money whichever way he wants. And I have never since the day I came to his house, up to the day we separated. I never know how much he was making, how much he makes per month biweekly or per year nothing... and then I talked he will just raise his hand, he will just slap me like slap my face, and I will sustain black eye.

As a non-status immigrant woman, Madison, describing her partner, said, "...Now I'm going to talk about the abuse, he stole a lot of money from me". The respondent reported that her partner stole the money she kept for her immigration process and refused to work to avoid paying child support for a couple of years after her divorce. In her story, Madison explained that her lawyer advised she should abort her pregnancy because she had no insurance and money for her legal support. The following indicates her direct quotes:

He didn't want to pay child support to his child. He hadn't paid for ...years...He didn't work because he didn't want to pay child support, so the financial abuse started....he stole my credit cards....He stole my bank cards and he took money out of the account...

Final Thesis Report

He stole cash. I was looking for immigration lawyers and.....He stole the money that I had saved....He would skip work and I had to run after him....I got pregnant with him he told me he didn't want the child. That was painful. I spoke to my immigration lawyer, my immigration lawyer thought it's best that I abort the child....he said, "You don't have healthcare, you don't have immigration, it's going to be difficult for you to take care of the child." It was a painful decision.

Becky and her child were physically and emotionally assaulted by her partner because of the child tax benefit application. In her narration, Becky could not read the English language when she first arrived in Canada. Becky's partner used the opportunity to apply for the child tax benefit in her name and signed the papers forging her signature. According to her, the partner made mistakes with the application, and the form was sent back when he was at work. Becky got to know of the child tax benefits when someone interpreted the form to her. She said challenging her partner's fraudulent act led to her partner's violence towards her and her child. In her story, she said.....

.....first thing that happened after we moved here was he applied for child benefits. He filled out the form,.....and he actually did fraud, because he did my signature without my permission. He signed for me to receive the money, not me with the wrong names. And then he thought maybe it's the same as our country.....but he didn't get away with it. The form came back. So he was at work at the time, so I asked someone to read for me what was in the form. And then I figured out that he filled the form wrong and signed for me, when he should not be. He put my name as a secondary applicant, but he put his name as the main person that was looking after the child. And then he forged my signature. When he came home, and I asked him, "You shouldn't have done this; you shouldn't have copied my signature.", he physically abused me. He pushed my head into the wall and choked me...He pushed me, and then he pulled my hair and I fell down...turned to his son and threw the son against the wall.

For Samantha, her partner controlled all the mail and impersonated her to get credit cards and government assistance which she had to pay back. She described how her partner withdrew

from school and refused to work because he wanted her kind of job. Samantha said her partner withdrew her money and spent it on other women. Samantha's narrative is stated below:

He controlled all the courier. All the money that was coming....
Use the money that was in the joint account without even caring
what the children would eat....when I opened my own bank account,
he write a check on his name and use my signature...He will use my
signature as if I'm using the money...he got a credit card using my
name...he has all my information, my name and my pin number.....
Financial abuse again. He will use the money. He quit schooling...He
then just started traveling (another continent)...(another province) you
know? He will spend six months in (another continent). He went to
social assistance, starts getting money. That's what he was traveling with.
He will take the money from social system, will take the money from
our bank account. So in (another continent), he was a big boss. A big boss.

In her story, Amelia said she was pressured to open a joint account with her partner. She said her partner told her to get whichever available job immediately she got to Canada because he needed money. Although she was responsible for paying all the bills and making all the money, she could not access the money. She explained that when she asked her partner to leave some money for her, she was told, "you don't need money; you spend money wrongly". Here is part of Amelia's story....

.....when I came here, he insisted on opening a joint account...I
didn't read any laws about Canada laws...like I came he put me under
stress, find job, find job. You should be sure to find job whatever
the job, but just like I want money...But he doesn't want to pay
any penny he wants me....that he is using me.... He always takes
my money.... Uh, I am paying all the expenses and also... as I
mentioned for you earlier, that he asked me to open joint like a joint
account...Secondly, I can't find any money like you know you you
have your daily expenses like you want to buy water. You want to
buy something. I can't find my money. And even I'm scared to ask
him...But like I told him leave for me some money. I need to be told
me "no, you don't need money. You use money wrongly.

Emma relayed that her money went to the joint account, which her partner controlled. From her perspective, she was mandated not to buy cultural foods or clothing and that her

partner did the groceries and her personal needs such as underwear and sanitary pads. Emma's narrative is shown below:

Whenever my salary comes, it goes straight to the joint account he's in control. It doesn't allow me to access the money. He's the only one that accesses money. He is the only one that does transactions and if I want to buy anything. I have to take permission, and if he says no, it's not necessary to get what I want, then I won't get it...that happens for many years like I can't really touch or use the money he's the one that always does stuff...my personal stuff like underwear....sanitary...He gave me rules that I cannot shop in (ethnic) store, so for many years...I didn't have to eat our native food ...and also he made me not to wear natives.

Skyla's experiences were that of "economic violence" and isolation from friends and family. She said: "I suffered economical violence too because all my money...he takes all my money, all my time and he isolated me from my friends and my family too". She posited that in their culture, divorce is a thing of shame. For Allia, if her parents failed to give money to her partner as requested, her financial terrorism threatened her marriage and cultural status. In her narrative, she said, "He called my parents and asked for money, otherwise, he said, "if your parents will not give the money, I will give you the divorce."

Significant Theme: Marital Rape

This theme is discussed under post-migration intimate partner violence of immigrant women because the narratives transcend pre-migration. Seven participants narrated unique stories of rape. Participants described their unique experiences, ranging from war rape experiences to forceful anal sex. While some participants explained their non-consented sexual acts from cultural perspectives, others informed of having non-consented sex for immigration status.

Final Thesis Report

From Samantha's perspective, she was used as a weapon of war to shame her community during the war. She described how having a forceful sexual act with her partner retraumatized her war-related rape experience. In her story, she said...

Yeah, ...There it has been used as a weapon of war...They rape back home...The woman has been used as an instrument....They are objects of a sexual object...the rape at that time...during the war was to shame people, to destroy the community because the rape was done in the public in the presence of your kids, your husbands.... when the rape happened...I was pregnant and I lost the pregnancy.....he knew the pain I went through, and as a husband, who knows the trauma I went through taking me by force again was a bit traumatizing. It was a big trigger.

For Tiffany, saying "no" to her partner's sexual requests was considered acting against cultural responsibility. According to her, refusing sexual responsibility could lead to family meetings to discuss what is meant to be private. In her story, she indicated...

Yes. For back home, it will be more sexual because we cannot say no.[chuckles] We can't say no to the man whenever he wants to have sex with you...that's my experience.....Culturally, you are not allowed to refuse the man when he wants to have sex with you, you cannot refuse, because if you refuse, they're going to gather family together to talk to you that you cannot do so.

From her viewpoint, getting immigration stability meant doing whatever it cost her. Madison said she had to have unconsented sex for her partner to proceed with her immigration sponsorship. According to her, her Canadian non-status gave her no other option but to stay in her abusive relationship. The excerpt from her story is shown below;

I was forced to sleep with him because he said he would not go ahead with the immigration....It was kind of marital rape...He cheated on me...it made me feel sick, but I was stuck, I was in sponsorship, I couldn't leave.,.,I was subjected to marital rape a few times.

Becky's experience was another unique one. She explained her partner arranged for three men to rape her because she refused a divorce from him. In her story, her partner held her and covered her mouth while he allowed other men to molest her. Becky's story is indicated below:

....My husband wanted a divorce that time, but I didn't want to give him divorce....he brought three men to rape me...They tore my clothes, and then they were on top of... my husband put his hand on my mouth, and then those other men were on top of me. But even police came, but they didn't do anything about it.

Evelyn told of her multiple marital rape experiences within her multiple relationships. She specifically shared the experience of neck dislocation during her resistance to anal sex with one of her multiple abusive partners. Narrating her experience, Evelyn said...

There was a lot of sexual abuse also too, having sex without consent, forcing me to have sex...I was forced to have anal sex. I was fighting with him not to do it. Then the disc in my neck is also not straight from that physical abuse and the fighting. I've experienced a lot of that actually with men who are abusive.

Significant Theme: Pregnancy and Post-Natal IPV Experiences

Nine women told of intimate partner violence during pregnancy and a few weeks after delivery. Participants talked of physical, emotional, and psychological oppression. While some participants expressed experiences of rejection and abandonment by their partners, others spoke of emotional abuse by their female friends. Participants also narrated receiving physical assaults after delivery.

Leah told of her emotional abuse from her partner during the early stage of her pregnancy. She said her partner physically abused her and rejected her with the pregnancy.

Leah's story is as told below:

Then within the next three, four months, I got pregnant. He started saying things like, "I don't want to keep you. I want you to leave." There were lots of name-calling. He questioned my character, abused my parents...He physically beat me. There was a lot of

Final Thesis Report

name-calling, mental and emotional verbal abuse.

Sarah's story also was about rejection and physical assault during the early stage of her pregnancy. Sarah said she was not aware she was pregnant when her partner beat her. She reported that the partner rejected the pregnancy when he found out. Sarah said she had to abort the baby because of the rejection. Sarah's excerpt is displayed below:

He hit me when I was pregnant at the beginning of my pregnancy. I didn't even know I was pregnant at that time. He hit me and....he told me that he does not want the baby, and I have to abort the baby.

Amelia's experience was induced by refusing abusive treatment. She explained that her partner did not like being challenged and therefore kicked her in the stomach. Amelia said she spent some few days at the hospital following the bleeding she experienced after the physical assault. Her narrative shows the following:

I was pregnant...I refused this type of treatment or dealing with it. He doesn't like that, and he started to kick me on my stomach... and very hard with his leg and I got bleeding, and I went to the hospital and stayed like three or four days.

For Olivia, her emotional abuse during pregnancy did not only come from her partner but also from his female friends. Narrating her experience, Olivia said her partner abandoned her because she refused to abort her two babies. She explained how her partner's female friends called her house and abused her verbally. Olivia's narrative shows the following....

When I usually get pregnant, he would take me... two occasions to do the abortion...I refused to do the abortion, that's one of the main reasons why he left me....We saw lots of struggle with abandonment like he would go out at night. He wouldn't come home because I refused to go to the abortion, and then he will be dating different women. They will be telling me... "you will suffer here and then when you are crying you would be shedding blood, not tears.

Final Thesis Report

From Belinda's perspective, asking for assistance with caring for her child metamorphosed into physical assault a few weeks after the delivery of her baby. According to her, her partner saw child caregiving as her primary responsibility that required no assistance. She said she was tired and needed some time off parenting but was physically abused when she requested assistance from her partner. Belinda's experience is supported with her narrative below:

Physical um yeah like...three different times and...I just put to bed like two weeks the first time, and then I was tired so he came from work, and then I'm like, can you help me? At least take care of the baby just for me to have some rest. So it didn't go down well with him because maybe he just feels that it's my responsibility as a mother to take care of the child, even when I'm tired, right?...I took the baby to him in his room....and then he got angry and then came to my room and then slapped me in the face... C-section delivery for that matter, yeah....

Significant Theme: After-separation Intimate Partner Violence Experiences

Previous studies have established the aggravated violence experienced by victims of intimate partner violence. In agreement with the past studies, six participants shared their after-separation violence experiences—three participants related experiences of death threats (Pereira et al., 2013; Hotton, 2001; Wilson & Daly, 1993; Cronholm et al., 2011), and two shared threats of character defamation through the internet and in the community. Two participants also narrated stalking experiences whereby their partners monitored them with cameras in their houses. Two other participants shared their stories of partners breaching the restraining orders.

Participants also talked of cultural perception of control of women as a sign of love and the use of the Canadian system against them. One of the participants shared her experience of eviction and her partner taking about all her immigration documents.

Final Thesis Report

From Sophia's story, controlling women and refusing to let go of them by their partners was a sign of love. Sophia said she received character defamation threats from her partner when she decided to exit her abusive relationship. She expressed that her partner threatened to post her intimate pictures on her building. According to Sophia, the intention was to defame her personality culturally. Sophia's narrative is shown below:

Where I come from, the culture is that that's just what men do if they love you and they care about you. They don't want you talking to other men; they want to know where you are constantly...Back then, I also didn't go as far as considering it abuse. I remember vividly is a guy I was dating, and I decided to break up with him. He wouldn't have it. He threatened to print intimate photos of me, which again, in a traditional cross-culture, it doesn't take a lot for a photo to be considered intimate....He said, "I'll print all of those, and I'll come to your building, and I'm going to post all of them on your walls, the hallway walls."

Amelia was another participant who shared her experience of stalking and character defamation threats. She explained that her partner mounted cameras to monitor her in her apartment. Amelia related that her partner threatened her, saying, "I will hit you and the kids like a train I don't care about you and the kids any more", if she continued asking for child support.

Amelia said her partner attacked her apartment many times, and she felt like her partner was still watching her. She described how she was evicted from the apartment because her name was not on the lease. Amelia said she lost her job, and her partner seized the immigration documents she could use to receive government support. She added that her partner withdrew all her savings and sent them to their country. In her narration, Amelia said, "Even the document that I should go with to EIA or EI he took all this document. So do you see like I'm nothing? I'm flying I'm flying I am not existing as a person".

Final Thesis Report

According to her, “Two weeks after I received a letter from the property manager and she told me I want you to leave the apartment, you and your kids. Why? You are not on the lease. I don’t know you and the kids”. She added that her partner threatened to report her, that she was using alcohol to put her in “*court*” because she did not understand Canadian laws. From her perspective, suffering after separation was horrible. Amelia’s narrative is stated below:

.....he told me that...I am spying on you, your phone. I could show you cameras everywhere. And I know that you are talking, he started to threaten me, that he is filming me....if you didn’t listen to me...I will go to (home country) I will spread this on internet... Threatening me that day when I told him “no, I’m not agreeing to write for you that I will not ask you for any money for the kids because it’s their right it’s not my right, it is their right and they are still young so I should have to fight for their rights. He told me...if you try to play with me any games I will hit you and the kids like a train I don’t care about you and the kids any more....he will be like he will put me in the court. He will allege that I am alcohol addiction (indistinct words)...Oh he manipulate me. I don’t know any laws here... so I was very scared...he told me, like “I will ruin your reputation”. The suffering after separation was more horrible than separation.

Both Emma and Sarah told the stories of their partners’ breach of the restraining orders. Emma disclosed that her partner sneaked into her house at midnight. She said her partner stalked her and turned her friends against her for involving the police in her relationship. In describing her after-separation experience, Emma said, “He was almost killing me”. Emma’s narrative shows the following:

He broke his no-contact order many times talking to me, interacting with me. Even the last one that happened...he came herehe took his spare key. He got into the house in the midnight..... he stalked me all the time....he used a spare key in the midnight. I was sleeping. He opened the door and coming to the house at every time around 1 a.m....my ex actually turns a lot of people against me. Huh. Like a lot of our friends, he turned them away from me,...He was almost killing me.

Final Thesis Report

On the other hand, Sarah said her partner was arrested and jailed for a few days.

According to Sarah, her partner contacted and continued to threaten to kill her after his release.

From her excerpt, Sarah said,

After he left, he spent three days in prison and left, and he started to threaten me to kill me. He was not supposed to contact me or come close to where I am, but he still sent a message to threaten me and say that I was mean and why did I do that to him.

Isabella was another participant whose partner used his system's knowledge to oppress her after separation. From her story, Isabella said her partner attempted taking her children from her care by manipulating her children against her friend and reporting falsified information to child and family services. She informed that the ex-partner filed for sole custody of her children to have her children transferred to his new partner. In her narration, Isabella relayed the experience of stalking and being monitored through cameras by her ex-partner. She informed she was separated from her cultural community because her partner accused her of infidelity.

Isabella's after-separation narrative is shown below:

When we separated, and the children were visiting him, he would tell the children to complain of not being safe around my friends. My ex-partner went to marry another woman and brought her here, He is always lying and reporting me to CFS that I am not taking care of my children. He reported to CFS and file for sole custody of my children to give my children to his new wife....He put cameras everywhere to monitor me day and night and to see who visited me. He reported me to our community that I was flirting around and everyone moved away from me. He separated me from all my friends and I could not even talk to anyone. My ex-partner called my parents and told them I was having an affair with another man, which is against our culture.

For Ella, moving away from her ex-partner did not stop his control over her but exacerbated the problem. Ella said the partner stopped the threat when he knew she planned to involve the police. In her simple way of expressing her after-separation ordeal, Ella said,

When I moved to the new apartment...he was telling me that he was going to kill me ...until one day I said like, “I am going to inform the police in order that they put a restriction and he stopped.

Significant Theme: Differences in Pre- and Post Migration IPV Experiences

Although Corley and Sabri (2020) examined the pre-and post-migration stress and violence exposures, sources of resilience, and psychosocial outcome, this study attempted to understand the pre- and post-migration IPV of IRW. Findings under this question are categorized into five: post-migration protection services availability, pre-migration severe IPV experiences, post-migration severe IPV experiences, same level IPV experiences, and lack of support networks in Canada. While relating the differences in their IPV experiences during the pre- and post-migration stages, eight participants highlighted post-migration protection services as outstanding for them. Five participants spoke of experiencing the same level of violence in Canada; five participants expressed pre-migration severe intimate partner violence experiences. In comparison, two participants related post-migration “bigger, terrible and worse” intimate partner violence. Two other participants spoke of lack of support in Canada (Raj & Silverman, 2002; Du Mont & Fonte, 2012), while six identified the same level of intimate partner violence during the pre- and post-migration periods. Therefore, this section will analyze three themes: post-migration protection services availability, same-level violence experience, and lack of support networks.

Post-migration Protection Services Availability

As mentioned earlier, eight participants identified equal protection services for men and women. Participants acknowledged the presence of IPV problems everywhere and lack of voice during pre-migration, but the availability of equal protection services in Canada distinguished their experiences. In her response to the research question, Leah said, “In Canada, people are equal...if there’s abuse...you can call the police”.

Final Thesis Report

From Grace, intimate partner violence occurs in all cultures, but services are more accessible in Canada. In her story, Grace related, “It happens everywhere, but here it’s easier to find resources and people to talk to...and find help....”.

For Hannah, intimate partner violence back home was extreme and verbal, but she said, “...but there are resources to turn to here”. From Tiffany, women had no voice during pre-migration, and settling intimate violence was a communal affair with partial gender disparity treatments. However, according to her, the Canadian system accords equal opportunity for everyone to pursue justice for their cause. Tiffany’s excerpt is shown below:

Before is you had no say you have to go back and to the community, it doesn’t matter whether you went to the police, will be like this is a simple thing. You have to discuss with the elders. You have to go back to your family... to discuss with their families, but then post immigration kind of gives someone a voice whether it’s a man or a woman they have somewhere they can do things legally, and rules have to be followed... back home rules are bent but stricter here.

Joan and Sarah spoke of the support they received in getting divorced. Both participants acknowledged that achieving this in their countries would have been difficult. Sarah said the police involvement was helpful, and the government services helped her be the primary caregiver for her child. Sarah said,

In my country...it would have been more difficult in the way of divorce ...I called the police...There was not much women’s rights... I don’t think that they would have stood by me...There was not much women’s rights....I don’t think that I would have been able to keep my son...or get rights.

For Joan, getting divorced back home was difficult despite having her family network. She counted it a blessing to live in a safe place. In her story, Joan said,

Oh, it is a big difference.... I even was not able to get divorce, even though I had my parents there, my relatives, everyone, but I was afraid if he make trouble for me or for my family....Right now, the process is slow to get divorce, but I know I’m more safe than

back home...it's a blessing to have a place to live, a safe place and I have food.

Allia's experience with the police and child and family services stood out for her. She said her experience with the government services for women made the difference. In her narration, Allia said, "In Canada, my experience is that the government is supporting the women here. I did file the police complaint two times, and the family or the child something—child, family, parent...". Calling the police made a huge difference for Lily in her intimate partner violence experience, she said,

Okay. The biggest difference there is that over here you can call 911, and the police will help you, but back home, getting help from the law, judiciary, police is harder.

Same Level IPV Experiences

Six participants acknowledged they experienced the same level of violence pre- and post-migration. For example, Josephine described her pre-migration intimate partner violence as "very, very bad". She disclosed that her initial good experience in Canada only lasted for a few days. In her story, Josephine said, "My experience back home was very, very bad and experience from Canada is not good. We just spend two or three days, it's good, but after, it's very, very bad".

Joan's stories suggested her partner physically abused her when she got to Canada. Joan said that her partner was apprised of the Canadian protection laws. Notwithstanding, comparing her pre- and migration violent experience, Joan said,

In the beginning, I was pregnant, he beats me one time, but his brother is living here. They told him it's going to be a big problem for him if he continued the same. Verbally or emotionally, he was the same.

From Becky's perspective, she was neither safe here nor back home. In her story, Becky informed of safety and security problems and lack of freedom of movement. She said she

preferred staying indoors to prevent an unprecedented attack from her partner. Comparing such pre-migration experience with living in Canada, Becky said,

I had no safety or security back home, so I even couldn't go outside because I didn't know if he would come and attack me. So my life was basically in danger....So there were no difference in the level of domestic violence. After moving to Canada.

Amelia said that nothing changed for her in intimate partner violence. She said she felt the same thing as she did before migration. Describing her experience allegorically, she said, "When I came here, I felt all the things I was suffering. In the other country before Canada, it was under the surface; here it was above the surface".

For Sammy, there were no other ways of describing her experiences of violence than to say the experience had been the same, while Lisa simply said, "same behaviour. He doesn't change and no never".

Lack of Support Network

Grace and Sophia identified a lack of support network as the major difference in their intimate partner violence experiences. She was one of the youngest participants aged 18 and 29 years. According to her demographic information, Grace was still married to her partner. As she identified, violence is a norm in her pre-migration environment where women do not talk about it. According to Grace, the inability to connect with support networks in Canada contributed to her sense of loneliness and helplessness, like her pre-migration environment. She described her partner as manipulative, which might possibly contribute to her disconnection from available supports in Canada. Describing her experience, Grace explained...

Where I come from, the violence is considered as part of normal life. There's not enough protection for women, so it's hard to find resources outside of your home. The partner that I'm with, he is very manipulative, to say the least. It's just been hard to find people to connect with. It's the same case now in Canada.

Sophia's narrative showed her support network premigration. Sophia was a woman between 30 and 49 years. Sophia narrated that she came to Canada as an international student with little or no support system. She explained that her intimate partner violence experience would have been prevented if her family were in Canada. According to Sophia, international students in intimate partner violence would prefer to stay away from the police to have a clean record. Sophia's excerpt is shown below:

I think back home, having family, having a place to go without them having finances that were 100% separate limited people's ability to exert any kind of control, aside from emotional....I was on my own in a new country...I don't think a lot of people with a student visa would go to the police and file a report because they're like, "Oh, I just want to stay away from the police. I want to stay away from the courts. I don't want that on my record".

Support Received during IPV Experiences

Whereas the participants enumerated few sources of their supports during their IPV experiences, it is essential to know that while children were presented as protection shields, some violent behavior might have also developed as learned behavior from their environment of growth (Gelles & Straus, 1973; Flanzer, 1982; Patterson, Cobb, & Ray, 1973; Patterson & Reid, 1973; Spinetta & Rigler, 1972).

Twenty-one participants commented on their support systems during their intimate partner violence experiences, with three lamenting about receiving no support. Eight participants recalled receiving support from family and friends, most of whom lived outside Canada. Three participants shared that they found counselling and groups helpful, while another three advised that they received no support from anywhere. Five other participants received government support (EIA, police, child subsidy, and legal aid lawyers). Two groups of three participants received support from the shelters and church organizations. Participants who received support

Final Thesis Report

from family and friends mostly received support from outside Canada except for participants that were protected by their children. Recalling her support network, Brenda said, "...honestly. Just like my parents and some really close family friends. That's it". Even though Ella needed help in Canada, she still called her country to seek direction on how to go about it. Ella stated:

I called one friend back home, and he gave me one phone number
From a lawyer. I called the lawyer, and he said, "You need to call
the police now." That day, I called the police.

Four of these participants received varied support. For instance, Lisa received support from the government (legal aid lawyer and the police), shelter, and family. She reminisced,

My mother was living with me all the time because she was afraid.
She was afraid from him because he can kill me anytime. That's why
she was living with me every time....That time they said, "If you want to
go to the shelter, then you can come with us. You're safe in the shelter."
.....Government is helping so much...they provide me two lawyers.

Like Lisa, Samantha received support from individual counselling, a friend, and a church organization. Samantha informed of the vital role her spirituality played in her healing. Restating her support network, Samantha said,

... I have a really good support from the women's counseling ... friend
and....I also got pastoral support, I know that this has nothing to do with
the research, but my spirituality has a big impact also in my healing.

Unlike Lisa and Samantha, who received support from three support networks, Evelyn also benefitted from counselling and the shelter. She recalled – "I went to a women's shelter....I've done Grief and Loss".

Besides the groups mentioned above of support received by the participants, there were two other significant themes: Children as shields and reverberated oppression.

Significant Theme: *Children as Shields*

Final Thesis Report

Four participants spoke of their children as their protective shields. Three participants told of how their sons intervened when they were victims of sexual or physical assaults, while one used her children as protective shields from her partner's violence. As stated, Samantha had a rape experience during the war in their country, and reliving such experience through marital rape by her partner was painful for her as the situation reminded her of her sister's death, whom her partner killed. In her story, her partner attempted to force her to have sex against her will. She said the partner tied her hands and feet, and she could not breathe. However, her son arrived at the nick of time to save her. Samantha's story is shown below:

... he was really at force and I couldn't breathe....and then thinking about my sister that was killed...my son really pushed me to get out from that relationship....I couldn't speak. He just went in the bedroom. He told the dad....Leave her alone....Then my son told me I'm calling the police....I said no...Then my son says...you are leaving this house immediately. So that's how I left that relationship...he wanted to be physical with my son ...he was my protector, my my shield.

For Becky, it was her thirteen-year-old son who was her shield. Becky narrated that her teenage son rescued her when her partner physically abused and choked her. According to Becky, her son held his father back from what could have been catastrophic and allowed her to call the police. However, the child was physically assaulted while protecting his mother. Becky's story shows the following:

...he physically abused me. He pushed my head into the wall and choked me. Yeah. So he pushed me against the wall, and choke me and strangled me....what he did was, he pushed me, and then he pulled my hair and I fell down. And then I went outside to save myself, and I called police then. Because my son, at age 13, tried to get his father off, and then his father turned to his son and threw the son against the wall.

Corresponding with Becky's narrative, Evelyn's son witnessed his mother's sexual assaults by her multiple partners. Despite his vulnerability, the son made efforts to shield his

mother from the abuse. Nevertheless, like Becky's son, he was also physically and emotionally abused by the mother's partner. Narrating her experience, Becky stated...

My son himself also actually witnessed me being sexually assaulted, raped. I remember he would always come in the room and he would tell the guy to get off my mommy, get off my mommy.... Yes, my son was yelled at and physically abused when he tried to protect me, yes, by hitting, yes, spanking, yes.

To protect herself from physical assaults, Olivia used her children as shields from her partner. Olivia advised that she refused to have sex with her partner due to his multiple relationships outside his marriage. Her refusal to have sex instigated a fight between her and her partner wherein she had to use her children to protect herself from physical abuse. Olivia's excerpt shows the following:

If he goes out. To sleep with other women and he comes home he wanna sleep with me I would say no then we'll start fighting, fighting, fighting. Then the kids will wake up, and then I'll grab the kids just to protect myself.

Although the study did not intend to explore the oppression of the participants from family members (parents and the in-laws), friends, cultural communities, and religious group members, eighteen participants shared their experiences of oppression from these supposed support groups. Thus, these different types of oppression are discussed under one central theme of reverberated oppression.

Significant Theme: Reverberated Oppression

This study defines *reverberated oppression* as when the victims' family members (parents, siblings, uncle, aunt, in-laws), friends, cultural or religious groups who should be supportive and protective of them contribute to the oppression of victims of intimate partner violence through their actions or inactions. Such actions or inactions re-echoed the oppression and could include emotional, psychological, physical, financial or sexual oppression.

Reverberated oppression is distinguished from systemic oppression because the groups involved here are supposed to be the internal support network for the victims of intimate partner violence. This theme relates to Flanzer's "triangular relationship" of the abuser, victim, and rescuer (1982, p. 10). As discussed in the literature review, the pathological triangle allows family members to change their roles in IPV situations. For instance, some of the participants' parents tolerated violence against their daughters and blamed the participants to protect themselves from the abusers.

The theme is further presented under post-migration because it depicts the participants' experiences across pre-migration, migration, and post-migration trajectories. Thirteen participants narrated stories of oppression from their in-laws, four participants expressed receiving oppression from their cultural communities, two participants from parents, and two from religious members. Three of these participants shared two forms of oppression. Sarah experienced oppression from her in-laws and cultural community. Lisa experienced oppression from the in-laws and her parents, while Emma received oppression from her religious group members.

Cases will be presented since they all have the characteristics of the types of oppression enumerated under the reverberated oppression; oppression from the in-laws, parents, cultural communities, and religious group members. Samantha's case will also be reported because her younger sister died in her relationship due to parental oppression.

From Lisa's perspective, her mother-in-law knew of the son's abusive behaviour towards her but only told her son to reduce the intensity of the abuse. Notwithstanding her marital experience, Lisa's parents could not support her to prevent shame from her community, and she was forced to stay with her partner and the mother-in-law. Relating her story, Lisa said...

Final Thesis Report

Yes, his mother knows everything....Just told him, “Don’t hit too hard.” That’s it...if we talk with our parents, they said, “Because he’s your husband and he’s your in-law’s family, if you came here in our home, that’s not good. People talk about you because your daughter is not good. Why she’s sitting in your house? Or why she doesn’t go in their in-law’s family?”

Like Lisa, Sarah’s mother-in-law also played a vital role in her oppression. According to Sarah, she was always present when the abuse took place and often gave directions on how specific ways to abuse her and instigated divorce to shame her since divorce is shameful in their culture. Rather than receiving support from the cultural community, Sarah advised that all she got was blames, “negative energy and talks,” and isolation from her family, which affected her mental health. Below is an excerpt from Sarah.....

His mother was always with him even when he was wrong. She even taught him bad things—like ways to treat me or bad things to do to me. She never stood by me. In any chance that she got, she would tell him divorce her, send her back to her family, to her parents. She played the biggest role in creating problems...when it comes to my culture, I did not get any support....All I got was negative energy and talking that affected my wellbeing. People didn’t talk to me, they didn’t talk to my family. They were blaming me for what I did. He’s a man, I shouldn’t put him in prison or report him...Even my friends, my very close friends, blocked me.

It was a mix of religious members and in-laws’ oppression for Emma. Emma spoke of a specific church member who slept over at her family house when she was absent. According to her, this particular woman was part of the friends who understood the problems in her marital relationship. In addition to the oppression from her church members, Emma advised that her in-laws’ inactions also contributed to her marital oppression. She stated...

I traveled, and this woman came to my house when I wasn’t home this is a church member somebody that I should trust, she came to my house..... she said she came to my house to study why would you come to my house to study with my husband when I’m not home....but they know that he physically abuse me and none of them call me and say anything and said they are sorry or say. Let’s fix this. Let’s talk to our brother. Let’s meet

the 2 of you they never called me. They never asked for a meeting to address issue. They just let it down...I felt like they support what their brother is doing.

For Samantha, the oppression did not go without a significant loss in the family. As narrated, Samantha's younger sister was involved in intimate partner violence in her relationship. However, like Sarah's parents, Samantha's family reputation was prioritized over her sister's life as they always sent her back to the abusive relationship, which eventually claimed her life.

Narrating the traumatic experience of the loss, Samantha recalled...

About the intimate domestic violence is about my youngest sister, the one who was just after me she was killed by the husband because of that... Yeah domestic violence, intimate partner violence...When they started within the relationship...she will report and my mom will tell her. She will run away and come to our place? Come to our mom's place and my father they will send her away. Will send her back. They would say no, no, it's your husband. You married for worse better for...for better, for better and for worse then. You have children....Yeah...so all those things made that my sister stay in that relationship and she ended up being killed.

Amelia explained she had no friends because the cultural community secluded her from community friends. Amelia stated she was stigmatized as a "bad" woman for reporting her partner to the police. She recalled, "The cultural community cut their relationship with me like. They show that I am a bad woman, a prostitute, and I reported my husband or my ex-husband...You are not good woman". So no, no friends.

Significant Theme: COVID-19 and Intimate Partner Violence

This study shows the compatibility of outcomes with other studies on the impacts of the pandemic on intimate partner violence (World Health Organization, 2020). The findings show significant emotional abuse and mental health issues during the COVID-19 pandemic (Statistics Canada, 2020; Centre for Excellence Women's Health, 2020; Angus Reid Institute (ARI, 2020)). One participant reported a good experience during the pandemic because her partner travelled,

and there was no communication between them. Other minor issues reported included financial pressure, parenting challenges, and two break-up marriages due to arguments. The marriage breakups were reported by a participant who was close with the two families. One other participant disclosed consistent experience of intimate partner violence for about four months. The participant advised that she arrived in Canada when the pandemic started and stayed with her partner for about four months before separation. For this paper, cases of emotional abuse and mental health issues will be presented and supported with some of the findings from the cases for trustworthiness.

Emotional Abuse

Nine participants reported experiences of emotional or psychological abuse during the pandemic. Participants said their partners used terrible words and threatened them through texts, most notably on children-related chats and divorce. Relating to her text threat, Madison said, “There was verbal violence from my husband. He was in another province. He sent me the threatening texts and everything”.

Participants talked of anger problems with partners and yelling during their visits and advised of struggle with coping with their partners’ behaviour. For instance, Brenda said, “...Like he still visited us...some of his temper would start to go...Like some psychological....during the time...I couldn’t imagine all of us together during this time”.

Allia, in her story, said that the partner emotionally abused her because she opened a discussion on their divorce process. She said, “...Because I have to talk with him sometimes regarding the divorce, That time he always told me that “you are good for nothing...bad things, abusing words, insulting words”.

Final Thesis Report

For Emma and Joan, their experiences were about the issues of children. According to Emma, her partner wanted her out of their house to avoid child support. She advised that the partner preferred her to visit the children to him moving out of the house. Emma said she received texts that affected her school performance, parenting ability, and overall psychological wellbeing. Below is an excerpt from her story....

Yeah, psychological texting me. Make me feel bad when I was taking my exam, I needed to focus... I couldn't take care my kids. He wanted me out of our house, so he doesn't pay child support. He wanted me to go without anything. I should come and be visiting my kids instead of him leaving. He wants me to leave and be coming to visit my kids because he doesn't want to leave so he can be paying child support.

Joan's story was regarding the child custody issue. Joan reported that her partner stalked her to check if she was entertaining other men in her place. She added that her partner emotionally abused her and her child, asking the child inappropriate questions. Joan stated,

Oh, yes. Regarding to having the kids together, he is bothering me a lot. He is still treating me or saying bad words even in front of my kids or he's questioning my older one a lot, which is not the proper for his age. He's asking him a lot and make him to be aware for something that he shouldn't be in this age. He's checking on me all the time...in the parking lot to see if there is another car, or somebody with me.

Like Joan, Sophia's experience was also about control. Joan stated that her partner controlled everything and everyone around him during the pandemic. She presented control as the typical characteristic of her intimate partner violence. Relating her experience, Sophia expressed, "He's definitely controlling. I can tell you he's controlling with Everyone and everything...just with his intimate partner, or with everyone because he's even controlling of the dogs".

Mental Health Issues

Five participants pointed to the impacts of lockdown on their mental health conditions. All participants commented on how hard the pandemic lockdown was on them. Participants advised of lack of support, feelings of sadness and loneliness, and prolonged recovery time. For Amelia and Belinda, coping with parenting during the pandemic significantly impacted them, coupled with the anxiety of getting the virus for Belinda because of her work. Describing her stay home experience, Amelia said, “It was so bad I gained a lot of weight...I get depression. It was so hard time, and still I’m suffering from that because of no support”. Expressing how uncertain the pandemic time was, Skyla, like Belinda and Amelia, also described her sadness and loneliness. She said, “COVID is not easy...the process is terrible, and sometimes you feel like you are lonely, you are alone. Sometimes you feel sad...but the process to recover yourself is long”.

While Hanna said being stuck at home for twenty hours was not good for her mental health, Tiffany used just two strong words to describe her Covid-19 stay-at-home experience. She said, “Very depressing”.

The next section of this paper discusses how immigrant and refugee women could be supported in Canada. The section presents the concepts of safety and home and the desired effective support services from the participants’ perspectives. The section is presented using four questions. The participants’ perspectives are reported under each question and supported with some participants’ cases for trustworthiness.

Influence of Culture on IPV

Participants’ responses to research on the influence of culture on their IPV experiences identified some significant findings. Immigrant women identified unconsented marriage process as a complicating factor to their abusive relationships. The participants highlighted that despite

their inability sometimes to choose their partners, they also lacked the power to exit their relationships at will. Participants reported their perceptions about their culture on gender treatment and their decisions to discourage their children from participating in female maltreatment. In addition, participants described mixed experiences within the Canadian culture; lack of job security for partners, supports for women, and ability to maximize their potentials.

Eight themes emerged from IRW's responses to questions on their IPV experiences within their dual cultural settings. In connection to previous studies, participants appeared to connect their intimate partner violence with their marriage procedures (Swegman, 2016; Del Mar Pastor Bravo, Martinez, & Ruiz, 2014; United Nations, 1968; Simmons & Burn, 2013), forever marital (Furtado et al., 2013; Saraswati, 2020; Olivares, 2011; Rohan et al., 2014), immigrant women's perceptions of cultural transference (Bui & Morash, 1999; Kasturirangan et al., 2004; Raj & Silverman, 2002), downward mobility (Bauder, 2003; Papademetriou et al., 2009; Tran, 2018; Borjas, 2006), gender roles (Gilbar et al., 2021; Min; Fragoso, & Kashubeck, 2000; Hyman et al., 2011), women's independence and protection services, and self-efficacy (Howe, 1994; Jackson, 2004; Kim & Sherman, 2007). The theme of immigrant women's perceptions of cultural transference is presented under two categories of the participants' responses; negative perceptions of cultural transference and positive perceptions of cultural transference.

Significant Theme: Marriage Procedures

One theme that immigrant and refugee women discussed in their narration of violent experiences in their marriages was their marriage procedures. Twelve participants narrated experiences of arranged marriage, forced marriage, young marriage, and dating site marriage. Whereas other marriage procedures experienced here are involuntary, dating site marriage was a voluntary method of connecting partners virtually. Eight participants' demographic

Final Thesis Report

characteristics are discussed to enhance the understanding of the connectivity of this theme to their intimate partner violence in the subsequent chapters on discussion (chapters 6, 7, and 8).

Their narratives were briefly discussed and supported with their quotes for validity.

Sammy was one of the three youngest participants of ages 18 to 29. Sammy is a refugee and on government assistance (EIA). Sammy has been in her relationship for one to five years, and at the time of the interview, she was still married. In her narrative, her parents forced her to marry her partner. Sarah's narrative shows the following:

Yes. It was my family who brought the proposal, I guess to me. I wanted to continue my studies after grade 12, but I did not have that choice and we got married so I was forced to marry him. I actually tried to run away, but I couldn't. I was caught. Now I'm here.

Sarah was another participant aged 18 to 29 years. Sarah is a Permanent Resident with an income under twenty thousand dollars a year. She had been in her relationship between zero to five years. She identified as a divorcee. In her narrative, Sarah revealed that her abuse started from the first day of her arranged marriage. Sarah's story is shown below....

I got married when I was 19 years old. As I said, it was an arranged marriage. The violence or abuse started from the first day. It was psychological in talking from the first day, and then after that, it was day after day, and then it started to be physical violence. There were problems between him and his mom, and that affected him in a negative way.

Grace was the last of the three youngest participants aged 18 to 29. Grace has a Permanent Resident status in Canada, and she was still married at the time of the interview. Grace earned between thirty to fifty thousand dollars annually. For Grace, words are not enough to describe the violent abuse she experienced in her arranged marriage. She described her arranged marriage procedure as "hard to explain." Grace narrated, "My marriage was arranged,

Final Thesis Report

and my experience has been hard. It's been hard to put into words, I guess. I'm not sure how to explain it".

Madison was a woman between thirty and forty-nine years. She earned between twenty to twenty-nine thousand dollars a year. She identified as "Non-Status" in Canada. Madison has been in her marriage between zero to five years. She identified as married during the interview. The essential part of her marriage process was her Islamic religion. In her narrative, Madison expressed.... "We did an Islamic marriage. I didn't want to marry him". Here, Madison reported her religion w"s used to force her to marry her partner.

Ella was between thirty and forty-nine years during the time of this study. She was between five to ten years in her relationship before separating. Ella is a Permanent Resident and on government assistance (EIA) during the study. Ella's marriage procedure was unique as she got married through a dating site. Describing her marriage process, Ella said, "I met my ex-husband on a dating site on the internet, and we met at my country because of his job".

Lily was another participant of ages thirty to forty-nine. She was a Permanent Resident. Lily was in her relationship between zero and five before separation. Lily's annual income was under twenty thousand dollars. Lily described her marriage as an arranged one...."My marriage was an arranged marriage."

Emma is a Canadian citizen. She was a woman between thirty and forty-nine years. Emma has been in her relationship for over ten years before her divorce. Emma's yearly income was less than twenty thousand dollars. Emma's described her first marriage as an arranged marriage of tribalism and religion. In her narrative, she said.....

I still preferred my boyfriend, which is my present husband, so the religious leader one was like, you know, pushing, and he didn't give me time at all. He went straight to my parents, and he told my parents how he is interested in me, how he wanted to marry me,

and at the end, my parents were like. Oh, he is better than going to a person from a different tribe, and at the end, we were together in the relationship like he was really abusive, he was judgmental. Yeah, my parents forced me to marry him because of our tribe, I didn't want to.

Amelia was a woman between thirty to forty-nine years. Amelia was married for over ten years before her separation. She has a Permanent Resident status with an annual income under twenty thousand dollars. She defined her marriage as arranged and young, even though she married at the age of twenty. She said...

I am originally from my country. OK, but we married in another country. I didn't know him. It was like a marriage arrangement. And I started to like...to face, uh, domestic violence after one year from my night. You know, I married when I was 20. So I was so young

Significant Theme: Forever Marital Contract

This theme was categorized under pre-migration because culture is transposed from the countries of origin to the Canadian setting. Like the previous theme, participants' narratives were presented for trustworthiness. Nine out of the participants narrated their marital contracts within their culture. According to the participants, their marital contracts determined what immigrant and refugee women were culturally permitted or limited to do about their marriages.

In her narrative on her decision-making on divorce, Sarah advised that her cultural pressure did not permit her as a woman to initiate divorce. She said her partner opted out of the relationship and requested for divorce. From her perspective, she did not leave her relationship. Sarah's verbatim indicated below:

I did not leave. I did not start that because of cultural pressure that it's very difficult to be divorced. There was a problem, and he was the one who told me, who started it and told me that he wants to divorce me. And my son was two months at that time.

Final Thesis Report

For Josephine, violence against women is the norm in her culture. According to her, she was advised by everyone to stay in her relationship despite her violent experience. Josephine's narration is stated below:

Everyone would tell me, "No, no, no, you just stay with that person."
In my country, most of the women are beaten, abused a lot of times, but there, women are not doing anything because in my country, in my culture, violence is very, very typical.

For Samantha's culture, marriage is for better for worse. Samantha said that once women get married in her culture, there is no going back as women are expected to endure all situations. In her narrative, Samantha said... "They would say no, no, it's your husband. You married for better and for worse".

For Amelia, leaving her relationship deprived her of engaging in any other relationship. She said no man would marry her after divorce. In her story, she said, "You have you have no life, no life after separation.... Yes, and if I get divorced, I can't continue with another man".

In Olivia's culture, leaving one's relationship is forbidden because it is attached to shame. According to her, women are expected to keep their experiences and endure the relationships until death. Olivia's narrative is shown below.....:

You know this is like a shame. It's a taboo if you leave the marriage, so just don't say anything you have, just have to go back, and that's how you end up staying in the relationship till God decides who goes first.

Emily's perspective was narrated through religion. According to her, religion was being used to encourage women to stay in their abusive relationships. Emily said that women were encouraged to continue praying for their partners until a change occurred. She added that sometimes, women died in abusive relationships while waiting for their partners to change due to religious devotion. Emily's narrative is as follows:

Even though the Bible talks about women should be protected, some people are still there who harass their women, and the women, they will tell you in church, “You have to endure and take the embarrassment. The husband will change, go and pray and fast that the man will change.” A lot of women or a lot of also men stay and endure the situation and keep praying and fasting for the day that their partners will change. In the process, either they leave, or they die.

According to Becky, women have no freedom to exit their marriage. She said women are pressured to stay in their relationships even when they experience abuse. She explained women receive no support to leave their relationships but are encouraged to be hopeful for a change of behaviour for their partners. In her narrative, she said....

In my country, girls have no freedom. So if you're in a relationship, for example, you get married. And if your husband is beating you, physically abusing you. Everyone tells you no matter; maybe he'll change tomorrow. So once you are in a relationship, you have to be in a relationship with the same person for the rest of your life. So basically, there is no freedom.

Significant Theme: Immigrant Women's Perceptions of Cultural Transference

Whereas the participants came from different cultural background, the results of this study indicated some common experiences within their cultural settings. Notwithstanding the common experiences with cultural oppression, it is essential not to generalize these outcomes to all women from this cultural background. Immigrant women's perceptions of their decisions to transfer their culture to their children were seen from different perspectives. Immigrant and refugee women's decision on cultural transference lends credence to the perceptions of cultural violence as a way to legitimize violence against immigrant and refugee women through ideology and religion (Chester & DeWall, 2018; Galtung, 1990). Out of twenty-one respondents, six participants advised of their intentions not to pass their culture to their children, while fifteen supported cultural transference. This theme is discussed under two categories: Negative and Positive Perceptions of Cultural Transference.

Negative Perceptions of Cultural Transference

On her perception of the transference of her culture to her children, Amelia advised that she struggled with the gender disparity treatments. From her perspective, passing her culture to her children was not necessary as she also struggled with women's treatment within her culture growing up. Her perception of culture was inclusive of religious practice. Her narrative shows the following:

No, it's not important. Honestly, before I married, I was always struggling with my family about that like even my dad. Sometimes like I shared with him the domestic violence 'cause I'm not that type of woman wearing hijab or just say yes for everything I have my independent character, and this is not acceptable in our country. I should say yes for my dad for any man in the family I should say yes and obey the orders, and this is not me.

Although she has no child presently, Skyla informed of having no plan to transfer her culture to children. Below is an excerpt from her narrative:

To be honest if I have children, I don't have at the moment, for me I prefer not to pass the culture. I don't want if I have a male or a son or a daughter that they believe that they need to be scared if they say something to their partners, I don't like that.

For Josephine, passing her culture to her children is not suitable for her children. Her narrative indicated, "No. I do not think my country's culture is good for my children".

From Olivia's perspective, passing her culture to her children might affect their psychological well-being, which contributed to her decision not to pass her culture to them.

According to her, women are damaged in her culture because of gender-related abuse. She said in her narrative that.....

I don't think I wanna pass that culture to my kids. I don't think it was healthy because if even you don't have a voice, psychologically you are being abused, you've been damaged, so I don't think I'll be able to pass that kind of culture to my own kids.

In her narration, Emma expressed her disbelief in her culture. She expressed her disbelief through the context of children's relationships with adults. As explained by her, adults are never wrong. Emma said that children are expected to apologize to elders in her culture even when they are wronged. Her verbatim narrative included the following:

I don't wanna pass my culture so they know I don't believe in it because you know that if you're old and you're wrong, the child will still have to apologize to you. When you literally hold this charge, the child will have to apologize, or the child cannot tell you, "umm mommy, daddy, and this is where you did me wrong" because they're scared.

Based on her intimate partner violence experience, Lisa decided not to transfer her culture to her children. To buttress her decision and how this has influenced her daughter, Lisa said her child had refused to visit her country because of the way women are treated. Lisa's quote is shown below:

No, never. If I talk with my daughter, "You want to go to my country?" She said, "I don't want to go to your because their culture is not good. We don't like it. There they don't respect women, so we don't like it.

Positive Perceptions of Cultural Transference

As mentioned above, fifteen respondents supported cultural transference. Four themes emerged in their discussions on their support for cultural transference: rituals and religion, family connection, language and life skills, and education. Although these women supported the transference of their culture to their children, they all expressed their disagreement with the way men treat women. Nevertheless, in their opinions, their culture has some positive aspects that should be emulated or practiced by their children, despite the gender unequal treatment.

Participants' narratives are reported below:

Final Thesis Report

Following Lisa's narrative, she advised supporting cultural transference in good and positive ways. Using her experience in her relationship, Lisa said she taught her son the importance of loyalty and respect for women. Her narratives show the following:

I want that my child follows my culture in the right way, in a positive way, not in a negative way. When he was with me, I always told him, "Always respect the women, always, always, always, never cheat a girl, never told a lie, and be loyal always, honest and never cheat a girl, never hurt a girl, always respect a girl, women, ladies", I always taught him these things.

Amanda described the importance of family connection in her decision. She said children should know their origin to enable connectivity with their culture. Amanda emphasized the relevance of cultural transference, especially to Canadian-born children, to connect with their family-oriented background. Amanda's excerpt is displayed below:

Oh yeah, it is important because we all came from somewhere before we came here, so it's very important for us to be able to pass on our heritage to our children. Very important for them to know where they come from. You know, for them to be able to understand where their root is. For them to relate to their culture and not just only being born in Canada, but to know that before parents came to Canada, they came from somewhere. So I am not only a Canadian. The way like we're very family-oriented. We, as African, believe in togetherness.

To Sophia, the good parts of her culture were essential for transference. She said she would not want most parts of the culture to be known to her children. Sophia believed that her children should know her cultural rituals and traditions. In her narrative, she said that....

Only the good parts. Oh, dear. Most of it, I would not want to pass on. There are some good things about it. Mostly like traditions, rituals, and stuff, but the overall culture, I would not like them to be aware of it. What I don't want to transfer to my kids is a much longer list. That's the whole traditional way of thinking about women, about honor, about nationalism, about ethnicity. Those are all things that I cannot possibly like.

Final Thesis Report

Brenda was another respondent whose emphasis was on family connection. Brenda said she would want the cultural family connection to continue with her children irrespective of their age. Brenda expressed she would want her children to be free to discuss anything with her and not imbibe the Canadian culture where children 18 years are free from parental guidance.

Brenda, in her narrative, said the following:

Oh yes, it's important, yeah. A family closeness. You know, coming to each other for problems and trying to help solve them. I want my children to know they can talk to me about anything, but even when they are 35, you know, and we could even still be living together like it doesn't have to be this culture of Oh you're 18, bye and then to the front door.

To Tricia, every culture has both sides of the coin – the good and the bad. Tricia expressed that she would like her children to know the good part of her culture. Most important to her are her language and life skills. For example, she said she would like her children to know how to cook and do other house chores. Her decisions were expressed in her narrative like this:

My culture... every culture has its good and its bad...I would love them to have like a good part of our culture. Culture means they have to know their language. They have to know how to cook. They have to know like house chores. And that for me it's for all the children, whether it's a boy or a girl. They have to know their language. That's part of the culture, so it is very important to me that they know those things are a good part of the culture.

Hannah's support for cultural transference was based on her decision to use it to educate her child. She explained that she would like her children to know her culture from her experience to prevent going through the same problem. Expressing her own view, she said, "It is important. I will like my children to know what I have passed through and to try new things".

The last respondent to be discussed here is Tiffany. Tiffany reported that she held her culture in high esteem except in the treatment of women. She said that the tricky part of her

culture was the mandatory priority accorded men by women once they are married. In her narration, she said...

It is very important....not in the sexual part. [laughs], anything.... like that is not important...raising children in my culture, there's a lot of cultural value we have other than mere violence...For a lot of those good sides, I value my culture a lot, but when it comes to men thinking like... it's sometimes hard to say it's like, they just think that women when you're married to them, that's it.... You are married to them; everything has to be the man. That is the tough one. Culturally, that sometimes becomes very, very hard to deal with.

Canadian Culture and IRW's IPV Experiences

Commensurating with previous studies, this research also identified downward mobility, gender roles, women's independence, protection services, and self-efficacy as risk factors for IPV experiences (Sakamoto et al., 2013; Bauder, 2003; Papademetriou et al., 2009; Tran, 2018; Borjas, 2006). Two participants commented on downward mobility, three talked about gender roles, and seven commented on women's independence and protection services. Twelve participants talked about self-efficacy and expressed their real identities as free women with human rights within Canadian culture. Themes are presented under Canadian culture and IRW's IPV experiences and supported for trustworthiness.

Significant Theme: Downward Mobility

Both Brenda and Tiffany spoke of their partners' struggle coming to Canada. Their stories explained how their partners had good and well-paid jobs before coming to Canada. The participants expressed that their partners had high expectations from Canada but eventually found their hopes dashed due to lack of employment. Participants highlighted that immigrant men struggle with adaptability to their new way of life, unlike their women. Participants expressed that frustrations faced by their men induce violence in immigrant families. Furthermore, since men's social life is impacted by financial instability due to unemployment,

participants opined that men's self-esteem is affected, contributing to violence towards immigrant women.

According to Brenda, downward mobility contributes to a sense of inadequacy for immigrant men in Canada. She added that due to unemployment and dashed hopes, immigrant men who have always had a sense of superiority lost their authority since they are no longer placed in unique and highly esteemed positions as in their countries of origin. In her story, Brenda stated,

The men they don't feel so adequate here....they had a good job back home....they had a better life. Just because they're from another country doesn't mean they're struggling... men could have a good amount of money and good life in a way in some ways, right? So they come here, and they think it's going to be even better than that, but they are misled. You know they have high expectations; Canada is good... Men more than women they struggle with this self-esteem...They're struggling with their self-esteem because the men are now not looked upon as....some superior being here...The genders are a little bit more equal, and this is scary for some men.to have to deal with. And also society does not treat them as they are.... they are treated as just a human being here. In a way you know and even sometimes or worse, when they're immigrants...and they take it out on their family you know that kind of struggle?

Corresponding with Brenda, Tiffany also spoke of her partner's experience as a new immigrant in Canada. She explained that her partner had a good job in their country but struggled to find a job in Canada. Tiffany said coping with unemployment is challenging for immigrant men. Tiffany recalled....

My husband, when he came here, there was no work. He was someone who had a very good job, and when he came here, he tried to find a job, he couldn't find a job. Someone coming here, they don't have the job from the beginning, it's very challenging for men. We women, we cope, but the men, they don't cope. They take the stress in different ways.

Significant Theme: Gender Roles

Three participants highlighted changes in gender cultural roles. Participants expressed that immigrant men found it challenging to accept their new reality where they do not have to be their families' principal or final decision-makers. For Samantha, she said immigrant men do not democratize decision-making in their families. She stated, "... gender role (laughed)....you know? Like our men will take the last decision.... they don't confirm".

For Tricia, the change in gender role faced by immigrant men in Canada lies with participating in house chores and childcaring. She said that culturally, there are gender-based roles whereby women have responsibilities for childcaring and house maintenance, and men provide financially for the family. However, she said that coming to Canada, where both genders work, has created a new atmosphere where men are required to participate in childcaring and house chores. The participant anticipated that men might perceive the change or disruption in gender roles as an act of insurrection by immigrant women, thus instigating violence in the family. In her story, she stated...

So you come here and as partners as...they have children...things like cooking and changing diapers and feeding children that's not something that our culture is basically into and does not embrace, so there's certain duties that belong to a woman. And when you come to immigrate then those duties have to be shared among both partners because now the woman has to also work the man has to work. So one has to be at home. The other one is not especially if you have little children and so that brings a conflict, conflict in terms of why would I be doing this. I'm not used to doing this so that's....what kind of things that make partners be aggressive to each other.

Significant Theme: Women's Independence and Protection Services

Protecting victims from their abusers could trigger violence against the victims as this takes power and control from the perpetrators and prevent them from the goals of either repossessing the victims or protecting other personal interests (Buss & Duntley, 2011). Seven participants identified women's independence, financial independence, decision autonomy, and

Final Thesis Report

the protection services as catalysts to immigrant men's violence towards their women.

Participants expressed that immigrant men often call Canada "women's country". In her story, Evelyn said: "Well, they say in Canada, this is the women's country". In concordance with Evelyn, Emma said that some men perceived disparity in the way women and men are treated in Canada, especially concerning employment. According to her, some immigrant men thought women were either employed or had better jobs, while their partners were unemployed or underemployed. She stated...

Some men say when they came here...see that Canadian system treats women differently from men services...Some people think they were able to get job partner doesn't get job. Or they really got a better job than the partner.

Unlike their countries of origin, where women require permission from parents and partners, Lisa described Canada as a free country. She noted that women have the freedom to self-decision and movement. Narrating her story, she said:

Canadian culture is so freely culture. Woman has so much freedom, we can do anything. We can go anywhere, but back home, we can't do anything without our husband permission or parents' permission. There is too much rights.

For Joan and Becky, their financial independence and the protection services received caused problems with their partners. Joan said when her partner observed she was educated and could support herself and had an accommodation, her partner's countenance changed towards her. She said: "When he sees differences like I have my own place, I can work or study, and now I have my own car, it's going to be hurtful for him".

As regards Becky, the opportunity of receiving the needed support here prevented her from experiencing recurring abuse by her partner. Becky said she always went back to her

abusive relationship because she had no alternative support. However, moving to Canada had changed her situation and led to jealousy from her partner. Becky stated:

Back home because there was no support for me, so I would at the end eventually go to him for the support. But after we moved here, I was doing everything on my own and all the support I was getting. He was so jealous of me. And he would eventually call back home to my parents.

Canadian culture empowered Sarah through the protection service of the police. Her in-laws had always expected her to endure abuse from her partner even when dying, but moving to Canada enlightened her to explore the needed supports that put her partner and in-laws at her mercy. Describing her experience, Sarah said...

They were thinking, how did I do this? How dare I do this? I'm not a good girl. I was supposed to let him kill me and that would be normal for them. I shouldn't do any of that if I were a good girl. In their family, this was normal. It would have been okay for them to let him hit me. They would tell me, "Oh, it's okay. Let him hit you, let him stay late with other girls, you will heal. It's okay." When I did this, they were begging me to get him out of prison. They even asked me to lie.

For Josephine, Canadian culture has positively influenced their men's behavior since they know their self-protection rights. She said, "Canada is good...That's why here too many men in our community are good because they know if they're doing something wrong with the wife, then wife will call the police....".

Significant Theme: Self-Efficacy

There is a difference between an imposed identity and a priori identity. Twelve immigrant women highlighted self-discovery and self-actualization in Canada. The participants expressed that they could express themselves in their relationships and reject what did not work for them since the Canadian culture of rights gave them a voice. For example, Samantha, expressing how she took control of financial oppression in her relationship, said: "So he moved...

Final Thesis Report

he became aggressive when I put a stop to the finance...here we go back to school, we learn, we talk, we want our voice to be heard”.

Tricia, who once explained how her partner physically abused her because she talked back to him, stated, “...and now that I have a voice, I can say no because the rules have to be followed, kind of”. The consciousness of human rights for immigrant women motivated them to stand up for themselves and motivate others to stand up. Amanda, in her story, said,

...Women should not allow abuse no matter what, uh, abuse it should be. Whether physical, verbal abuse, or financial abuse. Any form of abuse, like emotional, they should get out there, you know, talk to somebody you know.

The Canadian culture of rights does assist immigrant women in being assertive against oppression in their relationships and systemic oppression. For example, Amelia had to fight for her child’s mental well-being by preventing her child from emotional abuse from her partner, who was released from jail and was allowed to meet with the child at school without consulting her. Telling the story of her right to decision-making over her child, she expressed:

I told her (worker’s name), I need to clear some things, one of them and the most important I am the mother. I am the controller I am. I am the primary care controller. Not you, not him.

For Skyla, the self-recovery within the Canadian culture was amazing. Skyla said she could maximize her freedom of expression, and more importantly, her mental wellbeing was recovered. In her story, she said...

Now it is like finally I recover myself, my self-esteem... now I feel like no, you are beautiful, you are super hard working, you are intelligent, so I think that Canada gave me the opportunity to recover myself....I find myself, I can talk with my parents, I don’t have pressure about nothing....I can say whatever I want, I’m free.... Yes, of course. I feel a new person as I told you, the self esteem that I recover is amazing. I feel good...I have my life again...that is beautiful... it is like I have my life again, so that is beautiful.

Regarding Olivia, the Canadian culture helped her discover the innate power suppressed by her gender-based culture. She stood up for her babies by refusing the two proposed abortions by her partner. She expressed...

I have the power that was my own power....Yes, because I refused to do the abortion. I told him no...Women are aware of our right now. That you have right to make their own decision. They have right to... I mean keep their own money and they have right to kind of have a say into decision-making within the family. It's not just like back home.

Josephine and Ella discovered their independence, lived for themselves, and assisted people at will. This self-conscious decision-making independence helped Ella to achieve her goals. In their stories, Josephine said, "Here, we are not living for that person too much...Here we are very independent". Ella's story was of self-actualization, she said, her story Ella said...

All the time he tried to put me down, he tried to put in my mind that, "You're good for nothing, you cannot do anything, you cannot study, you're just nothing, you're totally dependant on me, and you cannot earn and you cannot do anything," but right now I'm so confident because I finished my studies also and right now I'm working. Whatever he said about me, I prove it that he is wrong and do it.

In summary, the influence of culture on immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence experiences had shown how the personal culture of immigrant and refugee women and the Canadian culture had impacted their IPV experiences. In addition to these two perspectives were immigrant and refugee women's perspectives on their openness to transferring their cultural practices to their children.

Influence of Precarious Immigration Status on IPV

Precarious immigration status is indicative of the state of struggling with one's stability or the stability of one's immigration status either as a result of a lack of permanent residence documentation, or lack of information about one's permanent residence status. As indicated in this study, some participants struggled with their immigration status, due to their conflict with

the Canadian system, which led to the revocation of their permanent residence status. Thus, the revocation of the permanent residence status complicated their vulnerability to intimate partner violence experiences due to lack of support. On the hand, while some participants' refugee status contributed to their intimate partner violence, some participants' lack of information on their permanent residence status and access to support exacerbated their intimate partner violence experiences. For the latter group of immigrant women, their partners' controlling behaviour and their isolation from the community enabled their partners to threaten them with police arrest and deportation.

As observed during the study, all participants were open about their immigration trajectories. This openness enabled the identification of themes such as coercive migration and migration as an escape route. While specifically responding to the question on the influence of precarious immigration status on their decisions to stay or leave their abusive relations, a participant described her violent attack at the refugee camp and her inability to report due to lack of information and her refugee status. Some participants also revealed a lack of support from immigration officers and police officers for being dependent applicants and non-status women. In addition, some of the participants illustrated their inability to exit their relationships for lack of connection to resources, while lack of knowledge of immigration status also contributed to fear of deportation for some. Findings also show that international students avoided contact with the system to have clean records. Finally, participants' narratives indicated that the number of years does not reduce the influence of precarious immigration status on intimate partner violence experiences in Canada.

In connection with the past studies, four participants narrated the complications created by their precarious immigration status in their intimate partner violence relationships

Final Thesis Report

(Burczycka, Conroy, & Savage, 2018; Gupta et al., 2010; Hyman et al., 2006; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Du Mont et al., 2012). For instance, Ella, who identified as a permanent resident, had been in Canada less than a year. She reported that her partner threatened her with deportation because she refused to wear Muslim clothes even though the partner agreed with her to practice her religion before marriage. Whereas Ella arrived Canada as a permanent resident, it was apparent in her narration that her lack of information about her status and knowledge of available resources contributed to her concerns of deportation. Ella said her partner told her she would be confined to the basement while he cut off Wi-Fi to prevent her from contacting people outside her family. Ella's story shows the following:

Since that day, he started to tell me that I needed to wear the Muslim clothes and change for him. I said "No, because you accepted me since the beginning in my way. I am not going to change for you." He said one day that if I didn't like it, he's going to put everything in the street. Also, that they are going to kick me and my kid off to the street. He said I would be returned back home and that they were going to deport me. He said that he has a room in the basement, and this is the room I am going to use since I am going to be the slave for him..... I was super scared because I felt that since that day the psychological abuse started and he just cut the Wi-Fi for me and my son so I didn't have access to talk with my family.

One of the participants narrated her violent experience during her transition between refugee camps before arriving in Canada. Amanda was a Canadian citizen aged 30-49 years. Amanda transitioned between multiple refugee camps before arriving in Canada. Amanda described her refugee status as a factor in her violation. She said that her boyfriend could have hurt her when he fought with her because he suspected her of cheating on him. Amanda lamented that the perpetrator was not apprehended because of a lack of information on how to seek justice. Amanda's excerpt is shown below.....

I had my experience with a guy that I was dating. Now, you know, for some reason, he thought that I was, uh, I was cheating on him on some way. And then he came and yeah, he came in, broke up a fight with me and yeah. If those

Final Thesis Report

guys weren't there, if they weren't there to see it on the scene, he could've hurt me before even like, he could've have hurt me badly.....There's no justice. The person does not receive any consequences for their actions...Basically yeah, that (country's name) incident is the one that I have had really like remember, I was a refugee there and I don't know where to go.

Sammy was one of the youngest participants (18-29 years) who had no other support than her partner. She was brought to Canada as a refugee and had only been in Canada for less than two years (1-5 years in Canada). Sammy was on assistance and could not go out independently due to a lack of community connections. She was a high school graduate when she was forced to marry her partner, who was then in Canada and was married for one to five years. Sammy's age and immigration status exacerbated her violent experience in her relationship. Narrating her helplessness in her relationship, Sammy said...

I want to come out of it because like I said, it's very hard to keep going when all of this happens, but I'm not really sure how to come out of it, and if I do then where will I go, what will I do money-wise, home wise?

Madison had been in Canada for over ten years. Her PR status was repealed because of her problem with the healthcare system over her child. Madison has resided in Canada for over ten years and married for zero to five years. Although not on assistance, her annual income was between twenty thousand dollars and twenty-nine thousand dollars. According to Madison, her immigration status has contributed to layers of violence in her relationship as she has access to limited support while her white partner took advantage of her immigration status to abuse her and got away with the abuse. During the interview, Madison was unsure of staying in Canada as she had already been ordered to leave Canada despite her application for refugee status under the humanitarian and compassionate pathway. Madison's story shows the following:

They should charge him for abusing me. He's gotten away scot-free. The only thing that the police said they would do is give him a warrant and I could get a restraining order so that he wouldn't contact me

anymore. That's all they're doing. He got away with a lot of abuse, documented abuse, there're texts from him apologizing for hitting me. I went to the hospital, there are hospital reports. I've spoken to a social worker about the cocaine field abuse I went through. It means nothing. The police are not charging him, they're not doing anything. There should be some kind of justice for women like me. I'm getting no justice. I still don't have immigration.

Sophia was a Canadian citizen aged 30 to 49 years. She migrated to Canada as an international student. Sophia narrated her IPV experience in her previous relationship. According to her, she concluded not to contact the police during her abuse to avoid having a record with the system. In her narrative, she said.....

I don't think a lot of people with a student visa would go to the police and file a report because they're like, "Oh, I just want to stay away from the police. I want to stay away from the courts. I don't want that on my record." When you're a citizen, you're like, "Well, sought off it's my country as much as it's yours." I do think it gives you a certain level of vulnerability. Amazingly enough, I tolerated things in Canada that I would have never tolerated in (my country) because I had strong backing. The other aspect of it is when you are an immigrant and you're alone, getting out of a relationship is hard. Who are you going to go to? Who's your friend, who's consoling you, whose shoulder are you going to cry on? Whose couch are you going to sleep on? I didn't have any of those.

Access to Services

When answering the research question on immigrant women's contact with the mainstream services, participants described their experiences from two perspectives; negative and positive experiences. Immigrant women identified a lack of trust and information, cultural factors, and the love for their partners for passive help-seeking behaviour.

Why IRW do not Access Mainstream Services

In consonance with previous studies, this study revealed some of the responsible factors why immigrant women's help-seeking behaviour is sporadic (Bui, 2003; Ahmad et al., 2009); Holtman & Rickards, 2018). Four primary themes emerged for these questions. These themes

include; the loving victims, cultural factors, fear and trust issues, and lack of information (Power et al., 2006; Ruark et al., 2017; Lelaurain et al., 2018). The summary of the participants' narratives will be highlighted, and some of the cases will be presented. In addition, quotes from individual case analyses will be used for trustworthiness.

Significant Theme: The Loving Victims

This theme is used to analyze the participants' stories to show the importance of love within the context of intimate partner violence. Twenty-six participants talked of their love experiences despite their abuse in their relationships. Some of these cases will be used to support the generalized ideas identified in the participants' narratives for this dissertation. In responding to the above questions, some participants showed their protective factors by minimizing their partners' behaviour and being judged by their family members. While some participants advised they were ready to make their relationships work at all cost, others spoke of loving amidst abuse as a cultural factor. Participants advised they were taught to accept jealousy and control as elements of love and any relationship void of these is deficient of love. Sophia, in her narrative, said....

Well, I think that from a very young age, we are trained to think that if your partner gets mad at you or is jealous, it's a sign of love. If they don't get jealous, it means they don't love you. All of the violence that is resulting from that, where did you go? Why did you wear this? Who did you talk to? Let me check your phone, it's all interpreted as a sign of love and caring. If he doesn't get jealous, it's because he doesn't love you.

Like Sophia, Skyla did not see anything wrong with her partner, isolating her from spending time with her family and friends. She said it was an act of love because he wanted her to spend more time with him. Telling her love story in her abusive relationship, Skyla said,

Then he starts with my family too, "No, I don't want you to spend time with your family, I want that you spend time with me".

Final Thesis Report

But when you're in love you think that, "Yes, I want to spend all my time with the person", right"... And then I remember that when I told my mom that I am going to get married, she was super upset with me. She told me, "No, he's not a good person." But as I told you, I was in love, I think so or I was blind. Sometimes I feel like I was blind.

While some participants said they did not involve the police in their relationship to prevent destroying their partners' records, others said their motives of involving the police or seeking help was to assist their partners to get help. Participants highlighted they loved their partners and would not want their partners to be labelled "abusers" when seeking help with their relationships. Tiffany, when narrating her story, said...

Yes. Sometimes because we believe that it's going to ruin the person's record That's why. If one of the person can get help, because one time thing, the person can get help, and get counselling, instead of just going, "You are an abuser." If you love someone, you don't want them to go through that.

At the early stage of her pregnancy, Madison had some scars sustained from hot water poured on her by her partner. Madison said her partner did not mean to pour the water on her despite the sustained injury and might not know the water was hot. According to her, when the police were involved because of a fight, Madison refused to send her partner out of their house, as suggested by the police. The excerpt from her is shown below:

I was three or four months pregnant. He threw hot water on me when I was four months pregnant, I think, and he burned my arm. I had a bandage for three weeks...., I still have a scar on my arm from the hot water that he threw on me, but it wasn't really his fault. He didn't know that the water was that hot...We had a fight my husband called the police. The police wanted my husband to leave the house and not come back. It was cold so I couldn't throw him out of the househe's not a bad guy, but when he gets desperate.....he becomes violent.

For Lily, Lisa and Emma, it was all about love. The three participants expressed their commitment to their relationships and would do everything to make them work. Although Lisa was no longer with her partner, she said she would never have left him if he had not left the

relationship. In her story, she said, “No, never, I don’t want to leave him”. Lily said she was determined to compromise and stand through whatever happened in her relationship. Lily explained she did not seek help because she wanted to be with him. Lily’s story is shown below:

I wanted to compromise and I was willing to bear whatever was happening. Even though my parents or my family members would say that you don’t have to go back to him, I would talk to them and then I would go back....I did not access any support because I wanted to be with him in any condition.

Emma’s story was of commitment and protection. She stated that though her partner hurt her, she did not see any of his wrongdoings. Emma expressed that she was not calling the police as needed because she did not want to hurt him. Emma also showed her love to her partner by protecting him from her family members, keeping all the abuse to herself. Narrating her experience, Emma said....

Whenever he does things I don’t see it wrong because I love him so much that I don’t really see anything wrong....So even though he’s hurt me badly. I don’t really want any bad thing for him so but there was a lot of physical violence and financial abuse was so much ...I don’t wanna be calling cops like all the time and I don’t want to hurt him right....I just tried to protect him and eventually I did protect him.... I’m not gonna feel good that I put him in problems.... I don’t want any other community hate him.

Significant Theme: Cultural Factors

Eight participants identified cultural factors as vital contributing factors as to why immigrant women do not seek help or access mainstream services. Participants said they preferred talking to friends and family members to accessing mainstream services. Some participants expressed the cultural value of keeping marriages at all cost and respect for their partners and in-laws. Participants highlighted, that women in their cultures were discouraged from speaking out about their abuse experiences to people outside their families to maintain good

reputations for their in-laws. Participants also talked about the idea of families in the diaspora, listening to their families in the countries of origin as a discouragement to seeking help.

For Brenda talking to family and friends was her preference because she was a woman of new culture in Canada. She said, “We would rather talk to very close friends or family”. From Belinda’s perspective, culture taught them to keep their marriage secret; however, stories heard from other immigrant women in Canada discouraged immigrant women from accessing mainstream services. From her narrative, she said...

First of all, I can say it’s based on the culture of where we came from, right as an immigrant....and then coming to Canada like sometimes because of what you hear from other people, right? Some people have different story, different experience or what they went through in Canada.

For Leah and Lisa, keeping the family secrets and not divulging their abuse experiences was mandated in their culture to maintain their partners’ and in-laws’ reputations in their community. In telling her story, Leah said...

In my culture, there is this idea that you should keep these things, marital problems, in the home...also the in-laws, they discouraged me to do anything because they were afraid of getting a bad reputation in the society and the extended family. They didn’t want people talking about us.

Olivia attested to the vital role of culture in immigrant women’s decisions on their marital problems. Yet, to her, even when immigrant women meet with service providers, they are still being held back from opening up about their experiences. The following excerpt is from her story...

Well, again culture, traditional culture and values. It’s a very big role in that because some people don’t want to like voice out all what they’ve gone through, they don’t want to disclose things to their counselors or their therapists.

Significant Theme: Fear and Trust Issues

Ten participants talked about fear and trust issues regarding accessing support in Canada. Participants expressed fear of what partners could do after exiting their relationships and what could happen to their partners if police were involved. Specifically, participants spoke of the fear of losing their children and partners to the systems. Some participants also consider the impact of divorce on them since divorce is not permitted in their cultures. Participants also highlighted the fear of loneliness and coping financially without partners since some immigrant women have literacy challenges that might prevent them from employment. From others' perspectives, it was about the fear of being judged or humiliated for seeking help. From Emily's perspective, it was not just about the shame but also of being disrespected and ignored by service providers. From her personal experience, Emily said she stopped attending services because her service provider ignored her opinion about what she needed. She informed that immigrant women are scared of being vulnerable, struggle with language barriers, and may face child-caring challenges after seeking mainstream services. In her narrative, she said....

Shame, you're talking to someone and you're afraid that somebody will not give you attention. You prefer to be where you are than being shamed or being ignored....I was referred to the specialist, went and saw him. He checked me and he started making me look as if--In fact, what I felt was like you're coming--Why do you need a child?.... I didn't want to face that kind of behavior. I was discouraged....Looking for a child is a big deal. It's a very serious matter....I don't want to go through a second trauma....I'm not going again....I stopped that service They don't want to be vulnerable. They're not bold enough to talk for themselves. They need advocates, advocates to represent them, advocates to talk with when they have needs.....Shame, vulnerability, those are the things that stop them from--They're intimidated. They don't speak English. Language barrier. There's language barrier,...social status, there's too much going on that you just get stuck there where you are. Settling your children, settling yourself, just too much going on for them.

Brenda did not contact any social service because she did not trust the system because women do not know how much they should reveal to service providers. She said she did not

Final Thesis Report

want the partner to be taken away from the children. According to her, social services are inconsiderate of their partners' conditions and may not understand the context of the problems thoroughly. Apart from this, Brenda said the fear of dealing with controlling partners might have an impact. If the partners find out their women are seeking help. Telling her story, Brenda said...

I didn't talk to any social service about this. And no no no I 'cause you we are.. newer to Canada I don't trust this stuff. OK, yeah, we don't trust the stuff.... You mentioned about the children, right in the beginning of the interview said if there is child abuse you you are obliged to report it.....a lot of women are scared if they say too much he will maybe even be taken away from their own children they don't know. And if they're new to this country, they don't know what is really going on here? What kind of things can really happen. So many women don't wanna talk to just anybody about what's going on...if they have a husband who's very controlling and following them. They're scared to even go to a counseling service because he could find out.

As suggested by Brenda, Grace's stated her fear of what her controlling partner could do if he found out she received help to leave him. According to her, Grace said....

I've been trying to come up with a plan to leave and go to a safer place where he cannot find me because that is something I'm scared about. If I leave, I want to leave everything and not look back.

For Evelyn and Emma, it was the fear of being judged by their community members. Both participants said that immigrant women are scared of seeking help because of what their community members would say about leaving their relationships or discussing their family affairs with service providers. Both participants also highlighted the fear of child and family services taking their children. For example, Emma, in her narrative, said...

Number one, fear. Fear of being judged by other fellow and from the people from our community...I don't want them in the sense that some people from my community send people from my community and say... CFS are all interested in your kids. They just want to take your kids. So you don't give them the opportunity to come into this situation don't even let them.

Final Thesis Report

Besides her ideas of fear of being judged by the community member, Evelyn said there is also a fear of partners manipulating the systems to take children from immigrant women. In her narrative, she said...

Maybe they're scared, they'll be judged. Maybe fear....Maybe they were threatened by their partner. Maybe they'll report the children to CFS or they'll take the children.

From her standpoint, Samantha said that immigrant women are afraid of being alone since they are financially dependent on their partners. In addition, she highlighted literacy and language problems faced by immigrant women. She said these problems contribute to why immigrant women are fearful of leaving their relationships since they may not financially be able to meet their needs and those of their children. Below is an excerpt from her....

Sometimes they are afraid, the fear of being alone for women who depend financially on the husband and the fear to be independent financially. Or if they have a low literacy where will they get a job because they are not equipped enough to handle the children by themselves so all those things make them very difficult.

For Sarah, the word "divorce" was scary primarily because of her son. Sarah said she was afraid of the unknown if she left her marriage. She remained in her abusive relationship because of her cultural consideration that divorce could damage her family. Sarah's narrative is shown below:

Okay. Fear first, and second, just like me, fear of the word divorce. What will happen to me, especially that I have a son? I was scared. I did not know how my life would be that's why for one year and seven months, I did not tell anyone, did not report, I was patient, I was fearful. When it comes to culture, the world of divorce, how dare you damage your family?

Corresponding with Emily, Belinda suggested that immigrant women prefer to stay in their abusive relationships after learning from improper treatment of others by service providers.

Belinda said that immigrant women would prefer to stay in their familiar environment to take their children to an unsafe environment. In her story, she said...

Some people went to share their experiences to other places like they didn't like the way they were treated there, and then there was no privacy and no proper treatment. So if you kind of meet those kind of people that have been through bad experience, then you won't want to leave your abusive marriage to go in a place where your children won't find security...Some women just prefer to stay there.

Significant Theme: Lack of Information

Seven participants recognized a lack of information on available resources for why immigrant women stay in abusive relationships. Some participants spoke of their knowledge of resources years after they needed them. Additionally, participants highlighted a lack of knowledge of specific resources that are meant to support women in abusive relationships. For instance, Sophia said she was stuck in her relationship because she did not know about resources she could access when she needed to move out of her relationship. She said she was not aware of any financial and housing resources for her and worried about education on intimate partner violence in schools. In her story, Sophia said....

Absolutely. I think, first of all, there's lack of information about what services are available. I learned about women's shelters years after I needed them.... I didn't know where to go. I didn't know who to ask for financial help... Is there a loan you can apply for, battered women loan? Was the university—Did they ever say anything about intimate partner violence? No. They never said anything. There was no education. There was no resources....I didn't feel supported at all. I felt like I had no choice, and if I go back to my country, I risk getting arrested and thrown in prison...absolutely no support.

Such as Sophia, Emma also attested to a lack of information as a factor for immigrant women not seeking supports. Emma was ignorant of available community resources as well. In her story, Emma said, “Yeah, the many in many cases they weren't aware of these opportunities like initially I wasn't aware of this opportunity...And so it's lack of awareness”.

For Sammy, she had planned to move away from her abusive relationship, but for lack of knowledge about the needed support. Sammy is a refugee and financially dependent on EIA and lived with her partner. Sammy was worried if she would be able to get support financially if her plan succeeded. Sammy said in her story...

I want to come out of it because like I said, it's very hard to keep going when all of this happens, but I'm not really sure how to come out of it, and if I do then where will I go, what will I do money-wise, home wise?

Like Sammy, Amelia's lack of knowledge of resources created fear of what could happen in her relationship. Amelia said she was terrified of what could happen to her relationship since she did not know how the Canadian system works. Describing her experience, Amelia said, "I fear great, because I wasn't aware of anything...I don't have any idea about the Canadian system".

Significant Theme: Immigrant Women's Contacts with Government Services

Negative Experiences with Government Services

A broader lens to understanding the impacts of violence against immigrant and refugee women in Canada could also be done by considering the roles of the Canadian structures in their interventions (Galtung, 1969; Galtung & Hoivik, 1971; Ghafournia, 2006), with the participants. Ten participants spoke of their negative experiences with government services. Some of these participants had negative experiences with multiple services. Three participants each talked of their refugee experiences with the child and family services social workers, the legal system (the police and legal aid lawyers), and two groups of two participants expressed their negative experiences with the healthcare and immigration systems. The two participants' narration was based on the long waiting time in the healthcare system. One participant each explained racism within the school system, housing, and parenting challenges due to the government's policy

about children. For this dissertation paper, the analysis will be based on child and family services, the legal system – the police and legal aid lawyers – and immigration systems.

Child and Family Services

The three participants with CFS experiences had unique experiences. While two participants explained they had foreknowledge of children taken away and social workers overpowering parents in their communities, one participant spoke of a threat received from social workers to apprehend her children. As mentioned earlier, these cases will be presented separately based on their unique experiences with child and family services.

Amelia was involved with CFS due to eviction from her apartment. In her story, her partner moved out of the house, and she was told to move out of the apartment because the partner had all the bills and the lease in his name. Amelia said social workers attended her house without notifying her and talked to her children without her consent, asking them questions she referred to as “weird.” As she struggled with getting accommodation for her and her children, Amelia perceived two options given her by the social worker; “be homeless or jailed” for her inability to provide shelter for her children. According to her, the shelter had restricted rules that made no sense. She also described her experience with the shelter as “weird”. Amelia perceived she was treated like an abusive mom and not a victim of intimate partner violence. In her story, she stated...

One of my coworkers she’s told me if they feel that you are weak or are you are not strong enough. They will take power over you and never give them your role, and...I put boundaries for them. I told him. Uh, not showing anytime because you need to call me first...they started to do that...as well with the kids in school all the teachers there under the admin and the principal they knew me very well so they asked me at the school and they asked me at the work, so the trust come here.... they put only pressure on me. Uh, they asking my kids very weird questions, and also they did something very very weird they give me an option that I will be in the shelter....and the

Final Thesis Report

shelter had like restricted rules. It wasn't making sense for me. Actually I told her it's like you give me like two help options. Be homeless or be in jail...every day first of all they showed up in different times to see how I am dealing with the kids... and I told them listen I am a victim and I have enough so if you want to deal with me like I'm abusing mom so we will go to other stage.

Continuing with her story of displeasure with the child and family services, Amelia said that CFS allowed her partner, who was released from jail, to meet with her child at school without her consent. She posited that she had no problem with her child having contact with the father, but she would prefer that to happen when the father was more stable. To her, the social worker could have asked about the father's behaviour before allowing him to contact her child. Amelia said her partner spoke badly about her to her child by telling him she sent him to jail. In her story, Amelia said...

My husband. I wonder my ex-husband was released from jail. He went to the school and he told my son, your mom she put me at the jail. And CFS call to the school and told them that the father he should see his kids but he was fighting with them as well. Like I told him like do you think this is father? I don't have any problem. Yes I need them to see their father, but when he is stable, responsible...this was a big fighting between me and the CFS.

Isabella's story was a bit different from Amelia's because she received a threat of apprehension from the visiting social workers. According to Isabella, her partner had called to report her to child and family services. She explained she had worked the night before the social workers visited her house unannounced, and she was a bit tired. Isabella said the social workers threatened to take her children away because of how she was talking. From her story, she expressed that her partner manipulated CFS to believe her children were not safe around her friend, and the social workers were not attentive enough to understand her own side of the story but working with her based on her partner's report. Isabella said her partner moved out of the house and left her to pay all the bills, which required her to work more hours. She recounted...

I worked overnight, right? And these two CFS workers came to my house and woke me up, and because of the way I was talking to them, they threatened to take my children away. I had to work more then because my ex-partner refused to pay for anything because he moved out of the house. My ex-partner also reported my friend to the police that the children were not safe around him. He accused him of sexually assaulting children. Even when the police investigated and found that he was not found guilty of the accusation. He also reported me to CFS that the children are not safe that I don't have time for my children. Rather than the CFS workers to listen to my own side of story, they believed everything my ex-partner told them. They accused me of not keeping my children safe.

Like Amelia, Emma was also forewarned of child and family services. According to her, her Black community members had warned her of the apprehension of children within the community. Emma said she received several calls from child and family services, but she refused to have them involved in her family. To Emma, her children had enough trauma witnessing intimate partner violence between her and the partner and would not want additional trauma for them from child and family services. Emma's excerpt is shown below:

I had a lot of discouragement from people that are from my community Black community against them. How kids are being taken. And like that. Their aim is just to take my children so that's what was in my head. But these are my kids I love my kids, so much. I don't want anybody to take my kids, just because their father. We're having all these problems. So I just didn't let them get to my kids. They called me several times they wanted to see my kids in my house which I didn't like when they try to add... you know what things are OK. We're fine, the kids are fine...Like my daughter has been affected emotionally so I don't want CFS to add more problems to what my child is going through.

Experiences with the Legal System

The Police

Two participants shared their negative experiences with the police. The participants expressed their disappointment at the disposition of the police towards them when they were called. One of these participants was disregarded because she could not speak English; the police

Final Thesis Report

believed her partner's story against her and thought her to be a "crazy woman" as presented by her partner.

Ella's problem with the police was due to the language barrier. Ella said she called the police because her partner hurt her child because he was watching television. Ella said her partner was abusive towards her son because he was not the biological father. She said she called to report her partner to the police and that one of the police officers did not believe her story because she could not speak English fluently. Ella reported that other policemen believed her partner's story that presented her as a "crazy woman" because of his fluency in English. She said she had to call the police again to request someone who could speak her language. Ella's story is shown below:

He was physical towards my son most of the time because he's not the dad.....One day he hit my child everywhere. For example, in the face, in the body with a hand like a man, not like a child. He hit him like a man, super strong....The boy was watching TV...."No, you can't watch TV no more." He took the child and he put the hands in the door. He closed the door in order that the fingers are broken. He started to hit his fingers with the door.....When the police arrived, my ex-husband, started to talk with them and he started to lie. He said I'm a bad woman and that I'm lying. One police believed in me but others don't believe in me because I can't speak English very well. He took advantage of that and he tried to show that I am a crazy woman...I said, I need to talk with somebody that speaks my language.

Joan called the police because she felt unsafe. According to Joan, her partner had put an unknown object somewhere and felt that her partner was monitoring her. Joan expressed her insecurity inside and outside her home because she could not predict what her partner could do to her whenever he was angry. Notwithstanding her unsafe feelings, Joan said she could not get help from the police after several calls. Joan stated...

One more thing that I'm not happy about it, when I call police many times asking for help because I know he put something somewhere, but I didn't know what's that because I didn't have the knowledge of that.

I just know that he's listening in somehow, but I don't know where or what that is. Police didn't help me with that. It could be dangerous one day ...if he gets mad at something...if you go to a street and something happens to you. I don't have the feeling of safety in my place to talk with everybody or even when I'm going to make a decision. Sometimes I'm afraid to talk about it on the phone or in the house.

Legal Aid Lawyers

Three participants spoke of systemic abuse of immigrant women in their interactions with the legal aid lawyers. Two women spoke of their personal experiences within the legal system, while one spoke from the perspective of a friend of hers. The two participants with personal experiences spoke of the legal aid lawyers' misdemeanour and how they were deprived of their choices. Amelia had negative experiences with two legal aid lawyers. She said she met with her lawyer to fight for child support for her children. She explained that the first legal aid lawyer lost her documents in the process and spoke rudely to her. Amelia expressed that the legal aid lawyer replied to her several emails by sending her an email stating, "sorry, I'm on vacation I can't do anything for you". Amelia informed the researcher that she neither received assistance from the legal aid lawyer nor found her lost documents. According to Amelia, the second legal aid lawyer told her to stop asking for child support but joint custody against her will. Amelia's story is narrated below:

Second one, she was very very, very highly extremely rude, very rude. If (a support's name), she came with me. And she tried to do her best to make me um not asking for any rights, just only child support and make sharing custody joint custody and don't ask for money, don't ask for anything I sit in these circles for two years. And the system really is abusing me because I can't, I can't focus on my health. I need to find my job. I will not stay forever on EIA.

Becky had a similar experience as Amelia's. According to Becky, her partner had no contact with her child for one and a half years. Becky said she went to legal aid for assistance

with getting sole custody. Becky said her legal aid lawyer told her to opt for joint custody with a primary caregiver's decision-making power against her will. In her story, Becky stated...

He hasn't communicated with him for 18 months. We went to the lawyers to try and get me sole custody. And then we got this advice that I had to check off joint custody with primary care and decision-making.... He used to abuse the kid back home, too. He used to hit the kid physically and then say bad words or use bad language with the kid.

Emily's narrative was from her friend's perspective. Emily told the story of an immigrant woman whom her white partner abused. Emily stated that the abusive white partner used her white privilege to take the immigrant woman's child from her. According to her, the woman had gone back to her country. In her story, Emily said...

...She was married to a white Canadian. This man was beating her black and blue. As we speak, the woman has gone back to her country without her child because the man made a case that he cannot allow his child to be taken back to (the woman's country) with this woman because her country is not conducive for the child. The Canadian government saw that Canada is better for the child than the child going with the mother. The woman has lost two, the child and the beating. She actually ran, running, because the man said, "I will kill you here. This is my country".

Experiences with Immigration

The two participants with negative experiences with immigration had negative experiences with multiple systems. Amelia had negative experiences with child and family services, legal aid lawyers, and immigration, while Madison had negative experiences with the healthcare system, police, and immigration. As stated in her story, her legal aid lawyer lost her documents. In her encounter with immigration, Amelia said she contacted the immigration to collect copies of the documents submitted by her partner. However, she said she was denied assistance because she was not the principal applicant. Amelia's story is presented below:

...I wasn't aware about a lot of things here because he was the main

applicant... So even when I went to the provincial and federal government to ask them, give me a copy....when we came to Canada to prove that we have access, they refused...I hired a lawyer, an immigration lawyer, and he corresponds with them and they told him sorry, she's not the main applicant. We can't, we can't help her at all.

According to Madison, she continued to be violated in her relationships due to her immigration non-status. Despite her child's condition, Amelia was unsure what could happen to her whether she would be sent back to her country. Madison said her partner used both her immigration non-status situation and white privilege to prevent justice for her. To her, the government should have ways of assisting non-status immigrant women who experience intimate partner violence to regularize their stay in Canada. Narrating her experience with immigration, Amelia stated...

There should be some kind of justice for women like me. I'm not getting justice. I still don't have immigration. We will be sent back to a country where I might not be able to work. If I can't work, who's going to take care of my son? My son has special needs...nothing there. I got abusedThe bottom line is, I did not get no justice. The Immigration isn't doing anything because he's a Canadian. I thought Canada was a place where women had rights. I guess we don't because we don't have permanent resident status. We're not immigrants, we are somewhere—I'm not even a refugee. I don't know where I am right now with my immigration status.

Positive Experiences with Government Services

Fifteen immigrant women spoke of having positive experiences in Canada in four different major areas; healthcare, education, protection services (the police), and employment opportunities. Other minor areas include; child and family services, housing, welfare services, and child tax benefit. Three participants attested they benefitted from education and student loans for themselves and their children. Another three spoke of their positive experiences with the police and job opportunities. In addition, two participants shared their experiences with shelter and welfare benefits, while one person each talked about housing, child and family services, and

child tax benefit. Some of the participants shared more than one positive experience with different services.

Healthcare and Education Services

Amanda, Samantha, and Olivia commended the Canadian government for free healthcare services and the educational system. Recalling her experience, Samantha said, “Here the difference is huge....we have health care....This education system...all my kids are doing very well...”. In comparison with her country of origin, both educational and healthcare systems are excellent from Olivia’s perspective, but she equally liked the idea of access to a student loan. She said,

The education and healthcare system is really good compared to where I came from...for example, when there is student loan. If even you don’t have money....You acquire your education, healthcare system the same.

The Police, Shelter and Child and Family Services

Ella and Allia equally benefitted positively from police and shelter services. Having had a negative experience with some white policemen who failed to understand her struggle in her abusive relationship, Ella finally received assistance from another police officer who spoke her language and was taken to a shelter. Telling her positive story, Ella stated: “At this point, the policeman told me, “Okay, we need to leave now”.

Take your clothes. We are going to go to a safe place. We went to a shelter”.

For Allia, her triple positive experiences were with the shelter, the police, and a child and family services social worker. Expressing her experiences, Allia said she was assisted to go to the shelter by the police while her child and family services helped her secure accommodation after one month. Allia’s narrative shows the following:

Police asked me to go to the shelter but I refused to go to the shelter that time because of my son, because I didn’t want to take my son to the

shelter. Because I really don't know about the shelter facilities. Yes, CFS. My CFS worker helped me—She helped me too much, and by my ex-partner he told, oh, not to talk with my worker...Don't receive her calls. He told me to do that, but I did. I received her calls....She supported me a lot. She helped me to get the shelter...and I lived there for one month. After that, I got a stable housing.

Employment Opportunities

For Skyla and Leah, it was all about their job opportunities in Canada. Skyla expressed receiving lots of opportunities in Canada. She described Canada as where goals could be achieved. Skyla planned to contribute to Canada to show her appreciation of her opportunities. Relating her story, she said...

....Here I think that people help you and of course you can achieve your goals. I think that you have the opportunity to work, you have job opportunities, you have food if you don't have food, everybody can help you. So I think that Canada offer me a lot of opportunities and I am going to try to be productive all that I can,...Return these beautiful things that Canada gave me.

Leah told her story of job opportunities she received frequently and the assistance received from the government amidst Covid-19. Expressing her experience, she said,

I am able to work more frequently and get a job easily. Even during COVID-19, the government, provided emergency benefits, which were really helpful. I find the government is helpful, and I have had a much better experience with the services since coming to Canada. Very good experience.

The above indicated that immigrant and refugee women struggled with mental health issues in their relationships, which was exacerbated by the emergence of the pandemic since these women were unable to access the needed support. Below is the report on the negative case as narrated by one of the participants who was from a matriarchal culture.

Negative Case

This case was chosen because of its positive relevance to the outcome of the study, following the rule of inclusion in choosing negative cases in qualitative studies (Mahoney & Goertz, 2004). One of the participants narrated her communal matriarchal culture. According to this participant, women who married from outside the community are known as the “money wives”. The participant stated that only the “money wife” and her children could benefit from the husband’s property. In contrast, other children born by the women in the community could only benefit from their mothers’ families. The participant said that their women have a voice and make essential decisions in the family.

It was indicated that when female children are given in marriage in this community, the partners are advised to return them to the community respectfully without any experience of abuse if the partners are no longer interested in their relationships. As narrated by the participant, the female children in this community retain their family names even after marriage. According to the participant, this culture serves as an empowering culture to the female children in the community. Notwithstanding the recognition accorded female children in this matriarchal community, women still experience abuse from their partners due to the women’s cultural expectations as homemakers. This indicates the impact of masculine hegemony in immigrant and refugee communities. Below is an excerpt from the participant’s narrative...

The women are supposed to be pampered no matter how educated that woman is, she is trained to get into her husband’s house to capture, to control in whatever way and especially the finances. She may not be working. She’s given the skills of pampering, being a mother, being the traditional cultural woman...Every child that the money wife has, has a right to benefit from the man’s family, but any child born by the woman from the village has rights in her own family...but they still see that wife battering is there. There is a wife battering. There is expectations that lead to grievances and the man becomes physical, instead of communication.

Significant Theme: Telling Our Stories

Final Thesis Report

Narrating violent stories could be traumatic and trigger specific feelings for people (Delker et al., 2020). Concerning future service provision and the impact of re-telling traumatic experiences, immigrant women responded to how they felt narrating their stories. Participants described their experiences from different perspectives; some felt confident and relieved narrating their violent experiences in their intimate relationships. Others saw it as an opportunity to educate women in IPV relationships and those at risk. For some, it was a mix of bad and good feelings. Because narrating their stories brought back their experiences, and they have moved on.

The participants' responses are presented under the theme of “telling our stories.” The analysis is done interconnectedly and supported with some quotes from the participants for trustworthiness.

While describing their experiences telling the stories of their abuse in their relationships, ten participants found the experiences therapeutic. Participants advised that they felt confident sharing their stories and relieved after letting out their feelings. For instance, Belinda advised how she felt relieved after sharing her experience. According to her, it is essential to speak up after being consumed with violence. Belinda’s narrated, “Right now it’s like I’m feeling so relieved because I’m able to speak up and let everything out of my mind....Once you have been consumed with violence or abuse, you have to speak up”.

For Madison, telling her story of abuse in her relationship was therapeutic and assisted her in organizing her thoughts. Describing her feelings, Madison stated, “Therapeutic. It has helped me because if I need to tell my psychologist to write a letter for immigration, I have my thoughts all straight”.

For Josephine, telling her story made her feel good because she had done it before. She described herself as an “open book” because she felt comfortable sharing her story with

Final Thesis Report

everyone. According to Josephine, she shared her story for single ladies to learn from her experience. She stated....

I feel very, very good because I tell my story. Most of the times, I tell story to my lawyer, my social worker, everyone, but I am open book. I'm telling to everyone, because I'm thinking, today, I am married with a dead person, so any other girl not married. I'm alerting to all girls.

Analogous to Josephine's reason for sharing her story, six other participants advised sharing their stories as an educational piece to other women. From Sophia's perspective, being an educated person does not exempt a woman from engaging in an abusive relationship, as an educated person might be experiencing abuse without knowing. Sophia suggested she told her story of abuse to educate people. Sophia's excerpt is shown below:

No, other than educating people....I have no problem telling people I'm in an abusive relationship. This was a platform for me to go and say, "Hey, look, educated woman, liberated, I don't hold stuff in. I say what I think.....it could happen to anyone, and you could even not know it.

For Olivia, telling her story of abuse was two-sided. Olivia explained that telling her story of abuse was something she avoided. Like the other four participants, the experience could be painful because it could trigger past feelings. Olivia thought the abuse experience should be left in the past. However, she thought that sharing her experience could also serve to educate people about intimate partner violence. Olivia's description is captured below:

It's not something that I really like talking about because I'm somebody my philosophy is whatever I've gone through it my past, I've dealt with it. I've been there, I've done it, it's gone. It's my past. So because talking about it kind of triggers some emotions or some feelings that you don't really wanna talk about it. You just wanna suppress it or let it go....but because it's something educational.

Corresponding with Olivia's feelings in a certain way, Leah's experience was a mix of good and bad. Although the participant was not coerced to share her story, she felt that sharing her experience brought back her past experience. Relating her experience, Leah said...

I am not feeling good or bad. I felt that I wanted to share my story, but it did trigger things from the past. I am trying to move forward. I do not want to think about, but because I shared the story, I have to think about him and everything that happened to me. I'm coping. I'm okay.

Skylla found sharing her story emotional. According to her, whereas she reminded herself to live in the moment, sharing her story put pressure on her chest because she did not want to relive the experience again. Sharing her experience of telling her story of abuse in her relationship, Skylla stated...

It was not easy, right. I'm not crying because I am trying to be strong, but of course, when you remember the things it's like horrible, you feel in your chest a pressure because you don't want to think about this again. You are trying to forget. Of course, when you start to remember it's like, "No, I don't like it," but I'm happy because I was not like when I was at the beginning when I remember the things I was crying all the time. Now it's like, "Okay it happened, but you are okay," so that's good.

Significant Theme: Resilience

Relevant to past studies, the participant demonstrated resilience in their relationships across all borders (Gungor & Strohmeier, 2020; Corley & Sabri, 2020; Njie et al., 2020). Participants demonstrated adaptability skills under various conditions and these strengths should be considered by service providers when working with immigrant and refugee women in intimate partner violence relationships. The three women, Amanda, Tiffany, and Belinda, who had multiple refugee camp experiences, showed resilience in the way they were able to adapt to their new situations at their multiple refugee camps. For example, both Amanda and Tiffany became businesswomen selling farm products such as roasted fish, plantain, and other crops to survive. On the other hand, Belinda described her multiple refugee camp experiences as hard and challenging but that she adapted to the situations through her cultural belief in resiliency.

Amanda reported her experience of abuse by her boyfriend while at the refugee camp. She said the man jumped on her and beat her up because he suspected she was dating another

Final Thesis Report

person. According to her, she was rescued from the perpetrator by a boy who fought for her. Amanda explained that she was disappointed she could not get justice for her abuse because she was a refugee. However, Amanda's resilience was displayed in her self-sustained business endeavour. In her story, Amanda advised of her trips to another city to purchase plantain, roasted fish, and other things since the refugee supports were not sufficient for her and her family.

Amanda's narrative is shown below:

Yeah, um. I kind of was, um, being like disappointed when the guy jumped on me and started beating me because he said I was talking to another person, which is not true....I didn't really go to justice. You know, like since the boy who came and fought for me and broke off the fight, I wasn't able to take it to justice because I didn't know how to go about it. You know, because I was in a foreign country so I really didn't know what to do so.... that was a kind of um affected me a little bit....Oh, I used to do my business....with the little money....I used to sell I always went to another city and buy plantain.... from plantains, roasted fish and stuff like that. Yeah, that's how I survived through a refugee camp. Yeah, I was doing my own business. Yeah, on the side, then I came to Canada.

Like Amanda, Tiffany also engaged in business to support herself. In her survivor story, Tiffany said.....

I sold. I was selling in the market. I used to go from little towns, like the farmer market kind of thing, and then buy crops and then bring it in the city, and then sell it again, resell them. That's how I was surviving.

Belinda's story was different as she grew up in different refugee camps. Belinda narrated she was a child when her family flew from their country due to war. She said she had no foreknowledge of a refugee camp experience, but all she could remember was the tough times. In her narratives, financially stable people in their country also struggled to maintain their past lifestyles at the refugee camps. Nevertheless, her culture of resilience helped her through it all. Belinda's narrative is specified below:

In summary, immigrant and refugee women reported their adaptability skills across all borders. Immigrant and refugee women were able to adapt to different conditions and culture as they moved across borders and these strengths should be considered by service providers when working with immigrant women in intimate partner violence relationships.

The Created Future

In correspondence with the previous studies, this study established the importance of education on IPV, women's rights, Canadian systems, and resources, provision of culturally appropriate services (Sabri et al., 2018; Sawrika, 2012; Stewart et al., 2006), safety planning (Bonnycastle, 2019; Bonnycastle et al., 2021; Daoud et al., 2016), housing for immigrant women exiting their abusive relationships, and support for non-status immigrant women (Du Mont et al., 2012; Hyman et al., 2006; Ahmad et al., 2013; Scheer et al., 2020). Minor themes include; emergency financial support, the inclusion of immigrant women in policy and managerial positions, undercover services, training for service providers, housing, and support for immigrant men. Four significant themes; education on IPV, women's rights, Canadian systems and resources, provision of culturally appropriate services, safety planning, and support for non-status immigrant women, will be presented in this paper and supported with some of the cases for trustworthiness.

Significant Theme: Education on IPV, Women's Rights, Canadian Systems, and Resources

Thirteen participants acknowledged that the creation of education on intimate partner violence, women's rights, and available resources was essential in supporting new immigrant and refugee women in Canada. Participants suggested there should be information on mandatory workshops for new immigrant women at the point of entry. Participants advocated for training on the Canadian systems' operational methods for immigrant women. It was indicated that

Final Thesis Report

knowledge on how Canadian systems work would assist immigrant women in accessing the needed resources. Using an example of an immigrant woman who called the police by her partner because she was abused, but who was arrested because the partner stabbed himself and lied to the police that the woman stabbed him. Narrating the experience of this immigrant woman, Emily said,

....When the woman called 911, the police came he stabbed himself and lied that the woman stabbed him and....You know how the law is here. She was the one that was rather arrested. The law itself. Understand the law. Whoever reports first. I've so taken time to study that. One lady talked to me and said, "The law in Canada is funny...those are also factors that could be discouraging people from talking.....Again, the process of the law is something that they should be taught to immigrants. The process of the law. How does the law take its course? If I want to report if I'm going through an abusive relationship, how do I go about it? If he's beating me, how do I call 911?"

As part of education and awareness for women, participants suggested the importance of teaching immigrant women how to exit their relationships if they wish so safely. Speaking on the safety plan, Amelia stated, "...we need to be educated...we really need the workshops. One of the things we need is a safety plan to get out from this relationship. How can I move out...if I'm still alive?".

Since most immigrant women came from where they have little or no rights, education on women's rights in Canada was another notion that was raised. Emphasizing the importance of awareness of women's rights within the Canadian culture, Joan suggested,

When they arrive in Canada, information and awareness about their rights is the most important thing. Women are living in fear because they don't know about the options available to them. Just knowing about the supports that are available, or what to do in such a situation, or what can be done is very empowering. At the same time, emotional health, having a counselor or a therapist is as important as having medicine or other healthcare. That would also be something that is beneficial.

As indicated in the study, experiencing intimate partner violence in a new environment where the woman's only support is the partner could be challenging. One of the youngest participants, Grace, requested that information on resources be available in the community offices serving immigrant families. In her response, she said...

I think support to put in place is that people are aware about the support. For example, if you have a family doctor, maybe in the office they can have some resources, or even at your school if you are a student.

Significant Theme: Provision of Culturally Appropriate Services

Four participants emphasized the importance of culturally appropriate services for immigrant women experiencing intimate partner violence. From the participants' perspectives, creating culturally appropriate services for immigrant women would enable easy access to support and create a comfortable and trusting environment where they could open up to talk about their abuse experiences. Supporting the need and importance of culturally appropriate services, Tiffany spoke of her friend's experience:

I think places that immigrant women can be able to meet and express some of these things that is happening to them....One of my friends that I used to work with for long, she was going through her abuses. I know she came with a big bruise once, and she said to me she fell, and she have to go to emergency because she was unconscious of the fight. She went to emergency, she lied to the people again there, she said she fell. All the time I worked with her...she told me those seven years, it was always a fight.

From Skyla's perspective, it is apparent that Canada has lots of community resources. However, some of these community resources are managed by white service providers who may not understand the immigrant and refugee women's stories due to the language barrier and other factors. In agitating for culturally appropriate services, Skyla stated.....

Canada as I told you they offer a lot of help, but you know unfortunately for immigrant people are difficult, because first, we can't speak English very well. So we can go to the lawyer and we can do all the process and

apply for the refugee or something, so for us it's a real difficult.

Corresponding with Skyla's position, Becky also highlighted the importance of cultural space shared as immigrant women and language in service provision. Contributing her ideas to the desired services, Becky said, "Women program for immigrants so that women can share that space and be comfortable with each other. And also the community service she received, and then based on education, English classes".

For Samantha, having immigrant women who are survivors of intimate partner violence or experienced in intimate partner violence issues working with immigrant women would benefit immigrant women. Samantha also emphasized the critical importance of language in service provision for immigrant women. She said,

...We don't want the white people to come and teach us about us. If it can be an immigrant person who has gone through that and who got the support he needed who has a handy testimony. So that will be and then the person speaking their language their first language. So how to find those people who are survivor who are resilient, who we are resilient and survivors from domestic violence and those who are experienced in our problems.

Significant Theme: Safety Planning

Participants' suggestions on safety planning and housing are merged under this theme because a safe place was highlighted as safety for people who might want to exit their relationships. In addition, six participants accentuated safety planning as vital in supporting immigrant women in intimate partner violence in Canada. For instance, Madison said, "The biggest thing is we should be protected".

Associating housing with safety, Brenda articulated the significance of housing in safety planning by suggesting free housing for immigrant women. She said, "Maybe there needs to be places for them to stay for a while for free, that's safe". For Amelia, exiting an abusive

relationship may be difficult. Amelia recommended safety planning as necessary assistance for exiting abusive relationships. In her story, she said, "...One of the things that we need more is a safety plan to get out from this relationship. How can I move out if I'm still alive?"

Corresponding with Brenda's idea, Skyla also advocated for free housing for immigrant women seeking safety from their abusive relationships. For her, not having a place might be scary. Expressing her opinion, Skyla said...

Also, with house for example, if you are not lucky, where are you going to live? You need a place to stay. So probably they can help you with the same time and then you can pay, I don't know. Sounds like a dream, but maybe it could be.

Significant Theme: Support for Non-status and International Women Students

Two participants here were a non-status woman and an international student. Madison, a non-status, advised that she was forced to stay in her abusive relationship because she was being sponsored by her partner, who was also violent. Madison said she had no other support in Canada. From Madison's perspective, the inability to regularize her status in Canada through the humanitarian and compassionate process had kept her unsafe in her abusive relationship.

Advocating for women like her, Madison said...

If we want to get out of a violent relationship, we should be allowed humanitarian and compassionate status. It's a peak because you don't have any ties to Canada. Women like me should not be forced to stay in a violent relationship because we are being sponsored. We should be allowed to stay in Canada and not be told that, oh, because you don't have ties or you don't have a reason, that is a child or a spouse in Canada, you cannot stay here anymore. Even though you're in a violent relationship. We should be allowed to get out of that relationship and be able to stay in Canada and not be forced to be beaten up, or experience emotional violence, that's violence.

For Skyla, government support for immigrant women students who experience violence from their partners is essential for their safety in Canada. From her perspective, immigrant

Final Thesis Report

women like her could be left in limbo when they are stuck in their abusive relationships or left with no support if their partners decide to go back to their country. Elucidating her opinion,

Skyla stated:

For example, one thing that they can, for example in my case like a international student, if you came to Canada with a couple and he just comeback to your country and left you without nothing, the government can support you okay, we are going to offer the education for free, but you need to pay when you are working.

Significant Theme: Concepts of Home and Safety

Three primary themes emerged from the participants' descriptions of home and safety. These themes are independence and autonomy, privileges and resources, and serenity. Fifteen participants highlighted independence and autonomy, fourteen emphasized privileges and resources, and eleven identified serenity. In addition, the eleven participants highlighted a lack of violence and argument and the presence of happiness and peace to express their feelings of home and safety. This section discusses two significant themes – independence and autonomy and privileges and resources. The themes are discussed and supported with quotes from some participants for trustworthiness.

Significant Theme: Independence and Autonomy

As mentioned above, fifteen participants defined concepts of home and safety as having opportunities for self-determination. Participants spoke of the ability to have one's mind, make decisions without any fear of hurt, and the right to personal space. To some participants, safety and home meant freedom to do what they wanted to do at their time without force. While some participants defined safety and home as freedom of movement and authority over personal space, some participants like Sophia defined safety and home as racial and gender benefit equality in Canada. In her response, Sophia said...

Final Thesis Report

Doing what I want to do without being threatened. Without feeling threatened or danger. I would feel safe if I could walk my dog at midnight without feeling unsafe, without feeling threatened. I want to be able to make my decisions, not without fear of consequences, but without fear for bodily harm or emotional abuse...Is it okay to say I would feel safe if I can do whatever a white man feels safe to do in this country.

For Belinda, safety meant being in control of herself, her wants, mind, and decisions. In her story, she said:

Safe is what is like is for you to have your own mind, your own decision, yes. So then you feel safe because why you know what you want and you have control of it...when you feel in control of your of yourself, your decision your wants...the opportunity to make decision on your own.

From Leah's perspective, safety transcends having personal ideas and opinions; it is also about having a personal identity and not imposing an identity on her. In her definition of safety, Leah said: "Safe is that where people are not telling me who I am, but I am able to create my own idea of who I am and my opinions".

Olivia described "home" as where she achieved her financial independence to achieve her goals. Olivia advised that Canada as a home enabled her educational opportunity that enhanced her buying a house and living happily with her children "without a man". Olivia's definition of a home is captured below:

...anyways with my education, I've been able to acquire my independence cause I work for myself. I do things on my own. I've been able to buy my own house where my kids were living happily ever after without no man.

Skyla loved her family, friends, and everything about her country. However, she said she did not miss anything because now she had the autonomy to do whatever she wanted at her own time. Expressing her sense of home, Skyla stated....

...I love my country,...I love my family, I love my friends, I love everything from my country....So I don't miss nothing, because now I can prepare my food. If I want to eat I eat, if not I don't.

Significant Theme: Privileges and Resources

As mentioned earlier, fourteen participants described feelings of home and safety as the presence of privileges and resources. Participants indicated that they felt safe and at home when they had parenting and emotional support and could tell their stories without being judged. Whereas some participants missed their home countries, they saw access to resources as opportunities to having a new life. For instance, Ella said, “I feel grateful to be here because I think that I can start a new life”. For Allia, her feelings of home included a sense of “security, safety, and support for women”. Having a non-judgmental support system for her children makes Tricia feels at home. According to Tricia, a non-judgmental support system is an inclusive support system that accepts people the way they are. Tricia’s perspective on the concepts of home and safety is captured below:

Having someone to support you like with children where you can sleep peacefully. You can. There’s a bigger, larger support group that does not judge you that is my feeling of home is no judgment. It does not matter who you are, you belong to them. They are your family; they will support you all through.

Like Tricia, Madison explained her feelings of home and safety around her special-needs child. To her, getting the needed support for her son creates a home for her. She said, “The biggest thing is where my son is; it can be anywhere for me. Now, Canada is home because my son is getting a lot of services”.

Comparing her country of origin with her preferred sense of home and safety, Samantha described the non-judgmental support she received from her counsellor. According to her, opening up about her relationship’s abuse experience would have resulted to stigma in her home country. Samantha’s excerpt is shown below:

I had counsellor I have people to support me. Back home, to whom you go and tell your story, it’s always that you are a very proud woman. A woman should be submissive... “You can’t say things like that...”

Final Thesis Report

As an immigrant student in an abusive relationship, receiving appropriate and timely school support helped her nostalgia for emotional support back home. Narrating her experience, Joan said she received support from her school when she was in a bad state emotionally. Joan said receiving support that enabled her to speak of her concerns enhanced her growth and made her feel safe. In her narrative, she said:

Back home, I will have emotional support, I have family there, but here, there are lots of organizations. They would help you to make you feel better. I was in a really bad mood. I was so tired in the school when... They realized that and they asked to just come and talk to me and I opened up and talked about my situation...I have a lot of support here to grow, to improve my life in a safe place.

For Josephine, receiving support made her feel at home. Describing her feelings of home, Josephine said she would have gone back to her country if she had received the needed support. She said, “There’s more community centers ...that’s why I was standing now. If I have no support here, then I will be back to my country”.

As part of future consideration for service providers, participants highlighted the importance of demonstrating caution around retelling traumatic stories. Relating their experiences of narrating their IPV experiences, participants saw telling their stories to educate IPV victims and at-risk women. Similarly, some participants found telling their stories therapeutic, while others felt it painful to retell traumatic experiences.

Summary

Overall, this chapter has concluded the findings from individual interviews with twenty-seven immigrant women from sixteen countries about their intimate partner violence experiences across pre-migration, migration, and post-migration trajectories. The findings are presented through research question alignment analysis with emerged salient themes from cross cases.

Final Thesis Report

Each theme analysis is supported with quotes from the participants for trustworthiness. The themes that emerged assisted in understanding the narratives of immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence in Canada. The themes are analyzed in chronological order of the past, present, and future, elaborating the desired services that could support immigrant and refugee women in their abusive relationships in Canada, the influence of culture on IPV, the influence of precarious immigration status on IPV, and access to services. The study shows the experiences of immigrant and refugee women within their dual cultural settings and how these influence their self-perception and decision-making.

Additionally, the study expatiates on both the negative and positive experiences of immigrant and refugee women in their engagement with the government services in Canada. Finally, the study shows how resilient and self-efficacious immigrant and refugee women are despite their violent experiences in their relationships. Participants were able to make sense of their experiences, claim identities and create an expected life for themselves (Bhaskar, 1978; Langellier, 2001; Riessman, 2008).

The subsequent chapters discuss the connections between this study and the extant literature on immigrant and refugee women in intimate partner violence in the diaspora. The chapter discusses the similarities and the differences between this study and previous studies with immigrant and refugee women with intimate partner violence experiences. The chapters will also discuss the limitation of this study and offer future research recommendations, with implications for social work practice, education, research, and other service providers such as immigration and healthcare services.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS

The objective of this qualitative narrative study was to address the gap in the existing studies that exclusively address the immigrant and refugee women's (IRW) intimate partner violence experiences in Canada. More specifically, this research aspired to understand the narratives of immigrant and refugee women's (IRW) intimate partner violence experiences across pre-migration, migration, and post-migration trajectories.

This chapter interprets the findings, the implications of the findings, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future studies. The interpretation of the findings takes the format of the previous chapter, in chronological order of the research questions; pre-migration and post-migration intimate partner violence experiences, the influence of culture on IPV, the influence of precarious immigration status on IPV, and access to services.

The tenets of the theories were used in identifying narratives that answer the research questions. The theoretical lenses, African feminism, and critical cultural lenses have enabled the analytical process to reveal the IRW's experiences across the PMP, the impacts of the dual cultural settings on their self-perceptions, and overall intimate partner violence experience in Canada, the influence of culture on intimate partner violence, the influence of precarious immigration status on IPV, and access to services. In addition, the theories have assisted in understanding the effects of the precarious immigration status on the IPV experiences of the non-status, international students, and refugee women. The theoretical lenses also assisted in understanding the immigrant women's experiences within the systemic operation and how the process has contributed to the re-oppression and safety of immigrant women and their children.

While critical cultural theory interprets how and why individuals form judgements about danger, pollution, and threat with specific attention to social context (Tansey & O'Riordan,

1999), the discussion about safety and risks could not be debated in isolation without considering the asymmetrical power relations, injustices, and systems of domination based on people's social groups (King, 2016; Tansey & O'Riordan, 1999; Fong, 2002). Using counter-storytelling, a tenet of Critical Race Theory (Hunn et al., 2006) to analyze the immigrant and refugee women's experiences helped create powerful meanings from their narratives. It also helped this research to challenge the myths about immigrant and refugee women's "good life" in Canada. Incorporating the counter-storytelling, a method of telling the stories of people who are not often heard (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), also helped analyze the experiences of racism and discrimination of immigrant and refugee women engaged with the Canadian system while seeking support in their abusive relationships.

Discussion of Key Findings

Demographical Interpretation

The two theories used in the analytical process of the data collected have enabled the understanding of the IRW's violent experiences in their intimate relationships. In addition, the theories assisted in the knowledge of the IRW's self-perceptions with their dual cultural settings (personal and Canadian cultures). As posited by cultural theory, assessing individuals' judgements about danger and safety could not be done in isolation of the social context – the asymmetrical power relations, injustices, and systems of domination (King, 2016; Tansey & O'Riordan, 1999). Thus, the theories helped further to understand the roles of these social contexts and the intersectional oppression of immigrant women in their intimate violence relationships. In addition, the African feminism assisted in revealing the influence of love context, colonialism, and patriarchy on IRW's IPV experiences across the PMP.

The findings indicate that the number of years in Canada does not determine or mitigate the exposure of immigrant and refugee women to intimate partner violence in Canada. Research findings show that more than half (eighteen) of the participants had been in Canada for one to five years and more than ten years in some instances. For instance, eight participants indicated they had been in Canada for over ten years, while ten participants had lived in Canada between one and five years. Although this is not generalizable, the findings show that immigrant women who had been in Canada for over ten years and the new immigrant women with one to five years residency and settlement are susceptible to intimate partner violence (Ogunsiji et al., 2012). Thus, contrary to Hyman et al.'s (2006) findings which suggested that recent immigrants are at a lower risk of IPV than non-recent immigrant women, findings from this study show that new immigrant and refugee women and those who had lived here longer than ten years are at the same level of risk of intimate partner violence in Canada.

In correspondence with previous studies, the concerns of poverty and financial dependency of immigrant and refugee women on their partners are indicated in this study (Hyman et al., 2011; Cardoso et al., 2016; Picot & Hou, 2003; Picot & Lu, 2017). Among the two groups mentioned above, five of the participants who had lived in Canada for over ten years earned less than thirty thousand dollars a year. One of these participants received between twenty and twenty-nine thousand dollars per annum, while four earned less than twenty thousand dollars a year. Eight of the new immigrant group of one to five years residence in Canada earned less than twenty thousand dollars a year. While seven of these participants received less than twenty thousand dollars per annum, one was on government assistance. Overall, the study results show that three participants were on government assistance. Eight earned less than twenty thousand dollars a year, while eleven received between twenty to twenty-nine thousand dollars per year.

Final Thesis Report

Relating to Global News (January 22, 2016) analysis of prolonged poverty among immigrant families, this study shows that immigrant and refugee women earning below the poverty line in abusive relationships with financial dependency on their partners may struggle to leave their relationships.

The study also shows that the age of the participants and immigration status exacerbated their intimate partner violence in Canada. The findings correspond with Gupta et al. (2010), Hyman et al. (2006), Raj and Silverman (2002), and Du Mont et al.'s (2012) studies on complicating factors to intimate partner violence for immigrant and refugee women. For instance, three participants were of ages eighteen to twenty-nine, with one of the participants identified as a refugee. Although the participant identified as a refugee on the demographic form, she advised that she did not know her status in Canada during the interview. The participant explained that all she knew was that she received assistance from the government and could not work or go outside without her partner. This particular young woman also advised that she was forced into her marriage by her parents. In addition, three participants of different immigration status – international student, a refugee, and non-status – also narrated unique, intimate partner violence experiences concerning their status. Thus, the study seemed to indicate that age, marriage process, and immigration status were complicating factors to intimate partner violence experiences of immigrant and refugee women in Canada.

Research findings confirm that an average participant had at least a high school diploma. Most participants had much more than high school diploma, and one with some post-secondary certificates. Five participants had post-graduate degrees, while one had an undergraduate degree (Lu & Hou, 2019). The study shows that two post-graduate participants earned less than twenty

thousand a year, while another two earned between thirty and fifty thousand dollars, with one earning fifty thousand dollars plus a year. Comparing this study with Fitzsimmons et al. (2020), Delara (2016), and Li (2001), this outcome, in some ways, agrees with the previous studies that immigrant women earned less in Canada, notwithstanding their educational level. Unlike many studies that highlighted low education as a factor of intimate partner violence among immigrant families (Basar & Demirci, 2018; Jahromi et al., 2016), this result establishes that immigrant women's literacy also contributes to their intimate partner violence experiences since this qualifies them as skilled principal applicants (Bronridge & Halli, 2002). This study shows that immigrant women's higher education contributed to their abuse from their partners due to their resistance to their partners' requests to leave their comfortable lifestyles being enjoyed in their home countries. The study shows that immigrant women who were principal applicants were forced to migrate to benefit their partners with lower educational qualifications.

PMP INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE EXPERIENCE

While pre-migration and migration experiences were analyzed separately under the findings, both findings are discussed under the pre-migration intimate partner violence experiences since both occurred in the past. In addition, the resilience theme is discussed under the future to inform the service providers of the innate strengths in immigrant and refugee women and explore more on these when working with them.

Pre-migration IPV Experiences

Wives as Slaves

The theme of "wives as slaves" was one theme that connected all participants. As discovered from the study, this theme encapsulates all forms of abuse received by immigrant and

Final Thesis Report

refugee women in their relationships. All participants highlighted the “slavery” experience in one way or another by describing themselves as slaves, voiceless, and powerless in their relationships. Participants enumerated experiences of physical, emotional, and psychological abuse. The theme affirmed the power dynamics and patriarchal hegemony among immigrant and refugee women’s relationships contrary to studies with generalized bidirectional violence in heterosexual relationships (Gray & Foshee, 1997; Straus, 2008; Bates, 2016; Crenshaw, 1999). As shown in the findings, immigrant women’s descriptions of their experiences as “slavery” correspond with Lovejoy’s (2011) definition of slavery as a form of exploitation with the idea that slaves are property and coercion can be used at will. In addition, immigrant and refugee women narrated experiences of abuse or punishment due to their gender roles (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017; Dow, 2016; Del Mar Pastor Bravo, Martinez, & Ruiz, 2014; United Nations, 1968; Simmons & Burn, 2013).

Collectively, the majority of the immigrant and refugee women in this study agreed they were treated as properties in their relationships due to cultural gender-role expectations (Lendman, 2007; Friedman, 2003; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Shui-Thornton et al., 2005). As slaves have no right to self-defense or voice in their relationships with their masters, the study established that attempting to speak up as a freed person in their relationships mostly leads to physical abuse, emotional abuse, or death threats (Schuler et al., 1996; McLaurin, 1991; Arneil, 2001). Immigrant women discussed their *slavery*-related experiences within their cultural and religious contexts (Ikime, 1977; Neu 2000). Immigrant and refugee women reported abuse from their partners due to failure to meet up with domestic responsibilities (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017; Dow, 2016), talking back to their partners, or attempting to be decision-makers (Schuler et al., 1996). All these behavioral characteristics might indicate acts of insurgency

Final Thesis Report

against the “assumed family hegemony” (DeKeseredy, 2011; Crescenzi & Holman, 2017; Jaskulowski & Pawlak, 2020). As narrated by the participants, they were treated as “beings” without dignity, self-worth, self-respect, and intrinsic potentials (Centre for Bioethics and Human Dignity, 2019).

The results presented the intersectional oppression of culture and masculine hegemony as immigrant and refugee women are treated as inferior beings by their partners who, in most cases, have been in the country much longer and expected to endure their relationships irrespective of the abuse and keep the family issues secret (Ogunsiji et al., 2012). Since many immigrant and refugee women are required by their culture and religion to be submissive to their partners, the partners control their lives, and living in such relationships is “hellish,” as Emma describes. According to the findings, living in an abusive relationship is like living in bondage (Kauffman, 1910; Shui-Thornton et al., 2005). The study presents that since these immigrant women have no life of their own in their relationships, they are treated as their men’s property that can be used and disposed of at will (Stange, 1998; Pournagbash-Tehrani, 2011). Olivia highlighted how her partner described her as property that could be disposed of at any time, and she said, “he said that he owns me that I am his now. I am his, and he can kill me, and nobody will question”. According to the findings, immigrant and refugee women and children are treated the same way and mandated by their cultural values to be silent and demonstrate total submission to their male partners.

The use of African feminism enabled the understanding of the immigrant women’s self-perceptions and how abusive relationships could also be seen as “modern-day” slavery, whereby immigrant women had no right over their lives. Immigrant women were deprived of their decision-making rights in their intimate relationships and their engagements with the systems of

the host countries (Snyder, 2019). African feminism and critical cultural lens assisted the agitation for the deconstruction of oppressive systems that dehumanize immigrant women at familial and systemic levels (Salami, 2021; King, 2016; Tansey & O’Riordan, 1999).

Migration Period IPV Experiences

Although discussion on immigration has usually been gender-biased and men as principal applicants (Boyd & Grieco, 2014; Simmons & Burn, 2013), this study shows that some immigrant women were principal applicants, however against their will (Government of Canada, 2020). Findings from this study show some consistency with previous studies on coercive sponsorship of immigrant men (Simmons & Burn, 2013). Whereas Simmon and Burn (2013) highlighted coercion and threats for victims in the diaspora, this study presents coercion and threats for immigrant women in their countries of origin. The findings in this study demonstrated that educated immigrant women are coerced to apply as principal applicants to support their partners’ immigration goals. The participants highlighted that they were forced, threatened with divorce, and even physically abused for not supporting partners’ migration or willing to migrate to Canada. While some participants said they did not want to migrate to Canada because they lived well in their countries, some said they were discouraged from migrating because of the foreknowledge of immigrants’ unemployment rate and other negative experiences. The study shows that immigrant and refugee women could be abused irrespective of who the principal applicants are. It is vital to understand that while some immigrant women see migration as an opportunity to better lives, some immigrant women are forced by their partners to leave their better lives in their country of origin. Some immigrant women had a good education with suitable employment in pre-migration only to migrate to Canada to face unemployment or underemployment.

Migration as an Escape Route

In line with Turan et al.'s (2016) study of internal migration of pregnant women as an escape from their violent relationships in Kenya, this study shows evidence that some women see international migration as an escape route from their violent relationships. The findings show that immigrant women on contractual agreements left their abusive relationships to migrate with other partners, while some immigrant women suggested or accepted migration as a long-term plan towards exiting their violent relationships. For instance, Grace said, "...It's very hard...I took it as a chance to escape and also find my own way". Essentially, immigrant and refugee women used immigration opportunities to leave their countries of origin to protect themselves from either being forced to stay in their current relationships or as part of a long-term plan to exit their current relationships. In this process, some of the women agreed with their partners of being "baby mamas" in their host countries. For instance, Emma's new partner told her she could only migrate with him if she agreed to stay home and give him babies. When she recalled her contractual migration process, Emma said, "He gave me a condition that I'm coming to have babies, and I'm coming to be his wife" (Mummert, 2012).

Based on the findings, immigrant and refugee women may not access sexual health or birth control services since their men control their reproductive choices (Gele et al., 2020). It is deduced from the study that women in intimate partner violence could be desperate at doing anything to exit their abusive relationships. However, this may not give immigrant women the expected results because their men still hold on to the contracts and use them to control their lives in the diaspora (Anitha, 2019).

According to Lovejoy (2011), the master determines the slave's reproductive activities and all parts of his or her life. The study relates to this in the narrative of Emma. Her new partner

instructed that she would only be helped to escape her violent relationship if she agreed to become a “baby mama” and full-time stay-at-home mother. The study shows that immigrant and refugee women may not have the power to determine the number of children they desire to have in their new country due to the pre-signed contracts between them and their partners. In essence, consistent childbirth may also be a risk factor to assessing intimate partner violence among immigrant and refugee families.

Post-migration IPV Experiences

Multifarious Oppression

Physical, Mental, and Gaslighting Abuse

The study shows that immigrant and refugee women experienced multiple layers of oppression (physical, mental, and gaslighting) across the stages of immigration and within all contexts. In addition, the findings show that all immigrant and refugee women experienced more than one form of oppression. For example, immigrant women and refugee women reported physical violence such as choking, kicking, hair pulling, face slapping, tying down, slapping, punching, dragging on the floor, throwing objects, sitting on, holding down while being punched (DeKeseredy, 2000; Abraham, 2000; Morash et al., 2007; Prakash et al., 2019; Ferraro, 2006), and death threats (Cronholm, Fogart, Ambuel, & Harrison, 2011). As reported in the study, some of these physical assaults resulted in temporary severe health issues such as loss of teeth, broken jaws, to permanent disability (Kramer et al., 2004). For instance, Amelia reported she lost the ability to wear particular shoes because her partner threw a glass cup at her and cut veins in one of her feet.

In addition to their physical violence experiences, immigrant and refugee women experienced emotional abuse and gaslighting. The study shows experiences of belittlement,

isolation, a sense of rejection, abandonment, distortion of reality, and death threats. Whereas emotional violence had been identified as a form of control in IPV-related relationships, it is evident in the study that immigrant and refugee women may face a higher level of violence due to lack of support (Raj & Silverman, 2002; Du Mont & Fonte, 2012). As reported in the study, immigrant and refugee women were isolated from family and friends and received death threats for their parents and themselves. For instance, Joan's life was not the only one threatened, but her parents were also at risk (McFarlane et al., 2016; Pereira et al., 2013; Hotton, 2001; Wilson & Daly, 1993; Cronholm et al., 2011).

As indicated in the study, gaslighting was used as a manipulative weapon to make immigrant and refugee women doubt their sanity (Sweet, 2019). The study shows that immigrant and refugee women's gaslighting experiences are a form of cultural oppression, whereby women are made to believe they are nothing, powerless, and helpless (Anderson 2010; Stark, 2007). This situation thus creates an atmosphere of entrapment for them (Richie, 1991). Immigrant and refugee women reported that their partners called them "psycho." The term "psycho" culturally means someone with insanity, thus making immigrant and refugee women doubt their decision-making ability. As demonstrated in Sarkis (2018), this study also shows the use of gaslighting as an abusive tactic used to control immigrant and refugee women and make them feel incapable of making the right decision. For instance, immigrant and refugee women often doubted their decision to involve the police in their relationships even when they knew it was essential for their safety. Therefore, they withdraw their report and take responsibility for what happened or even protect their partners from the police. For instance, Emma said her partner made her feel she was "crazy." When someone says, "you are crazy," or makes you feel you are crazy in the Nigerian context, it connotes you are insane. Therefore, diction is depicted as cultural in this study, and

this should also be considered when working with immigrant and refugee women to avoid re-oppressing the oppressed.

Like other studies with immigrant women, the participants' narratives indicate the interconnection of the emotional, psychological and health issues for immigrant and refugee women (Lee & Hadeed, 2009; Hurtwitz et al., 2006; Anderson, 2009). As established in the findings, immigrant and refugee women related the impacts of their emotional abuse on their mental health. There were discussions on anxiety, depression, and paranoia. The study indicates the importance of paying attention to the mental health issues of 213efuge213ntt and 213efugeee women experiencing intimate partner violence in Canada. Assessment of the mental well-being of immigrant and refugee women is essential in supporting them in their new homeland.

Financial Terrorism and Joint Account

The term "terrorism" describes the immigrant and refugee women's post-migration financial oppression experiences because of the diverse operationalized ways adopted by their partners to control their finances. Contrary to most studies where the financial dependency of immigrant and refugee women had contributed to their IPV experiences in the diaspora (Haselschwerdt & Hardesty, 2017; Holtmann & Rickards, 2018; Damra & Abujilban, 2020), this study presents immigrant and refugee women's financial contribution to their families as a factor in their intimate partner violence experiences.

The study's outcome shows a significant report of financial terrorism and the use of joint accounts to control immigrant and refugee women's financial independence (Raj & Silverman, 2002; Kaba, 2007; Guruge et al., 2010) through force or subtility (Cohn & Dirks, 1988; Butt 2013; Martin-Marquez, 2008; Neu, 2000; Falola, 2009). Immigrant and refugee women were pressured to seek employment when they arrived in Canada to get money for their partners to

spend. The findings identify that immigrant and refugee women were compelled to have joint bank accounts to which only their partners had access information. As indicated in the findings, whereas immigrant and refugee women were sometimes the breadwinners making money, their needs must be approved before being met. Their partners denied, disregarded, or forgotten any need deemed unnecessary for immigrant women. Besides controlling their paycheques, the findings show that immigrant women's partners controlled the mails, kept their bank and credit cards, and impersonated them to secure credit cards and welfare assistance. The study shows that financial terrorism may also contribute to immigrant and refugee women's mental health issues since they are forced to be responsible for their partners' financial misappropriation, culminating in their inability to meet their children's needs.

Whereas previous studies have advocated for the income tax credit to support women experiencing intimate partner violence (Edmonds et al., 2021; Spencer et al., 2020), this study indicates how child tax benefit and child support contribute to immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence in Canada. As reported in the study, immigrant women's partners avoided paying child support and applied for child tax benefits on behalf of their partners, using their information without their consent. As stated in the study, challenging their partners regarding this behaviour contributed to physical abuse towards them and their children. Since divorce is taboo for immigrant and refugee women in some cultures (Sarawati, 2020), the study also shows divorce as a weapon of financial extortion by immigrant and refugee women's partners. For instance, participant Allia recalled her partner's financial terrorism strategy. Allia recalled that her partner called her parents, requested money, and threatened to divorce their daughter if they refused to give him the money. Using culture as a weapon of financial terrorism indicates how culture not only oppresses the female gender but also contributes to parental

Final Thesis Report

oppression. In essence, parental cultural oppression may also be seen as one factor responsible for forever marital contracts enforced on immigrant and refugee women. Considerable overlaps exist between this theme and wives as slaves because of the roles played in the economic gains of their partners (Lovejoy, 2011). In contrast to some previous studies as mentioned above, this study proved immigrant women as hardworking and financially independent. Therefore, it is evident that the participants' partners' strategies corroborated with patriarchal terrorism (Johnson, 1995), which involved patterns of power and control (Johnson, 2008; Ikime, 1977; Neu 2000).

Marital Rape

Concerns of marital rape have been discussed within different contexts, globally and nationally, with debates on whether it should be criminalized or not (Yllo & Torres, 2016; Bergen, 2016). Notwithstanding the debates on marital rape, it is imperative to understand that forceful sex involves the use of power and control and a deliberate act to show women's helplessness (Ehrensaft et al., 2003; Gervais, Vescio, Forster, Maass, & Suitner, 2012), which is contrary to human rights (Penal & Ann, 2016). In concordance with previous studies on intimate partner violence, women's sexual assaults, and emotional bondage (Cunradi, 2010; Torres, 2019; Bagwell-Gray, 2019; Stockman, & Gundersen, 2018; Kauffman, 1910), this study establishes immigrant and refugee women's experiences of marital rape pre-and post-migration. Immigrant and refugee women reported unconsented sexual acts from their partners and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases (Dank, Love, Esthappan, & Zweig, 2018). In addition, the study shows that some non-status immigrant and refugee women had sex with their partners against their will to receive support for their immigration application. As stated by Madison, a non-status woman, she said, "I was forced to sleep with him because he said he would not go ahead with the

immigration...it was a kind of marital rape...I was subjected to marital rape a few times.” The findings show that immigrant and refugee women with precarious immigration status are at high risk of more than one form of oppression in their abusive relationships (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2005). As narrated in the study, immigrant and refugee women’s marital rape intersects with physical and psychological oppression. Samantha recalled her traumatic experience with her partner when she was sexually assaulted.

According to Samantha, her partner’s taking her by force reminded her of her rape experience during the war. She stated, “...when the rape happened...I was pregnant, and I lost the pregnancy.....he knew the pain I went through; taking me by force again was a bit traumatizing. It was a big trigger.” Although immigrant and refugee women recognized marital rape as oppressive, the study shows that immigrant and refugee women see having sex against their will as their cultural responsibility (Ehrensaft et al., 2003; WHO, 2012, Gardner, 1999; Gervais, Vescio, Forster, Maass, & Suitner, 2012), which may have consequences if they are rejected. This perceived notion shows the immigrant women’s assimilated patriarchal authority and entitlement over immigrant and refugee women’s bodies (Sikweyiya et al., 2020). The inability of immigrant and refugee women to control their personal space and sexual life affirmed intimate intrusion and the dehumanization of immigrant and refugee women (Stanko,1985). Notwithstanding the immigrant women’s perception of unconsented marital sex as a cultural responsibility, it is essential to know that unconsented marital sex violates immigrant women’s rights – the right to one’s body and individuals’ dignity (Garver, 1968 &1973; Bufacchi, 2005), and to self-ownership (Nozick, 1974, p. 9),

Pregnancy and Post-Natal IPV Experiences

There had been considerable discussions on intimate partner violence and physical assaults of women during pregnancy (Diaz-Olavarrieta et al., 2007; Thananowan & Heidrich, 2008). Other studies have considered the impacts of intimate partner violence on pregnant women and their unborn children (Heaman, 2005; Martin et al., 2004). This study presents reports of physical assaults of immigrant and refugee women during pregnancy and after delivery in line with these previous studies. Immigrant and refugee women reported physical assaults such as hitting and kicking on the stomach, which eventually led to a pregnancy loss for some women (Heaman, 2005; Martin et al., 2010), while some women reported physical assaults shortly after child delivery (Charles & Perreira, 2007; Martin et al., 2004). The study shows that when immigrant and refugee women got physically assaulted when they requested help with caregiving, the study presents some findings that correlate with previous studies on unintended pregnancy that instigated physical assaults of immigrant and refugee women (Pallitto et al., 2013). According to this study, immigrant and refugee women may experience physical and emotional violence because they refuse to abort their babies (Williams & Brackley, 2009; Silverman et al., 2010). Given the study narratives, pregnancy (Farid et al., 2008) and child delivery could be risk factors for intimate partner violence experiences of immigrant and refugee women in their new homeland.

After-separation Intimate Partner Violence Experiences

There is sometimes a belief that leaving an abusive relationship stops it all. However, studies have shown the continuation of violence (Crossman et al., 2016; Logan & Walker, 2004; Johnston & Campbell, 1993; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Kelly & Johnson, 2008) and homicides after violence (Johnson & Hotton, 2003; Hotton, 2001; Wilson & Daly, 1993). Parallel to the previous studies, this study recorded immigrant and refugee women's after-separation-intimate

partner violence experiences. Immigrant and refugee women reported receiving death threats, threats of character defamation through social media and within their cultural community, and stalking. In addition, there were reports of breaches of restraining orders, which some women perceived as a culture of possession and love (Du Mont et al., 2012; Papp et al., 2017). As indicated in the findings, Sophia said, “Where I come from, the culture is that.... that’s just what men do if they love you and they care about you.” Reports show ex-partners monitored immigrant and refugee women through cameras, phones and seized their identification documents to prevent them from accessing support services, as well as threats of false allegations (Trocme & Bala, 2005). Corresponding with Pavao et al.’s (2007) findings on housing instability problems with IPV victims, this study shows the eviction problems faced by immigrant and refugee women after their partners left their apartments. As indicated in the findings, immigrant and refugee women are not only threatened after separation; their children are also at risk of harm (Stith et al., 2009; Department of Justice, 2016).

Differences in Pre- and Post-migration IPV Experiences

Whereas this study aimed to understand the differences in pre-and post-migration IPV experiences among 27 immigrant and refugee women, Corley and Sabri (2020) explored the pre-and post-migration stress and violence exposures, sources of resilience, and psychosocial outcomes. Their results showed faith as a source of resilience among the participants and supported culturally appropriate interventions for mental health improvement for the victims. Findings in this study show that immigrant and refugee women found post-migration protection services available and valuable. The results indicate that immigrant and refugee women lacked protection services in their countries of origin because women had no voice in their communities, and family violence is addressed by family and community elders. Immigrant and

refugee women found the police service valuable. As reported in the findings, women are not allowed to initiate divorce or are supported to leave their relationships in most of their cultures. Thus, the most discussed difference here was the support received post-migration to process the divorce. Although some immigrant and refugee women found post-migration protection services valuable, others reported a lack of support networks in their new homeland.

Support Received during IPV Experiences

Children as Shields

While some studies indicated that IPV child-witness requires protection mostly from non-abusive mothers (Morgan & Coobes, 2016; Zink et al., 2003), others also reported children's resilience (Graham-Bermann et al., 2009; Shannon-Balla & Ginette-Lafreniere, 2010). In some ways, this study reports intimate partner violence child-witness as heroes and protective of their mothers. Although this does not rule out that children are exposed to danger when they are caught in the middle of violence between their parents, the findings report that children could prevent further violence perpetration through their prompt interventions (Flanzer, 1982; Gelles & Straus, 1979; Patterson & Reid, 1973). According to this study, immigrant children acted as shields to protect their mothers from their partners' physical assault and marital rape.

As described in the study, children's timely intervention prevented marital rape and physical assaults that could have been lethal and supported victims to leave their abusive relationships or call the police. In addition to children's intervention, the findings indicate that immigrant and refugee women with IPV experiences receive support from friends, families, spirituality, and professionals in the diaspora and the countries of origin (Walker et al., 2020). Besides, the findings also reported that children, like their mothers, are susceptible to sustain as many injuries as their mothers during physical altercations when women used their children as

protective shields from physical assaults from their partners. Even though children were presented as their mothers' protectors, this study also reveals that children are at risk of harm during intimate partner violence (Adhia et al., 2019).

Reverberated Oppression

Several studies have enumerated concerns of blaming the victims of intimate partner violence from different perspectives (Eigenberg & Policastro, 2016; Kelly 2011; Meyer 2016; Witte et al., 2006). However, this study has categorized the specific layers of oppression received from supposed supports for immigrant and refugee women in abusive relationships as reverberated oppression. These forms of oppression could either be through the inaction or actions of these supposed support networks. The findings indicate that this category of extra layers of oppression emanated from parents, in-laws, friends, religious people, and cultural groups could not be outrightly excluded from gender disparity treatment (Mill, 1869). The data shows that immigrant and refugee women were blamed and abandoned by friends and cultural communities, and some supposed supports even sabotaged their relationships. The study outlines, that mothers-in-law are directly involved in the abuse of their daughters-in-law by contributing to the physical or emotional abuse. For example, participant Lisa reported how her mother-in-law instructed her partner to abuse her physically. In addition, mothers-in-law were stated to contribute directly to IPV by influencing their sons to divorce their wives despite the shame attached to divorce in their culture. Perhaps understanding the "language" of violence against women would have changed the outcome for the victims, if especially the supposed women perpetrators (mothers, mothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law) who were also victims of patriarchal and cultural oppression were able to differentiate cultural responsibilities from "cultural abuse" of women (Platek, ECDV, 2019)

Final Thesis Report

As indicated in the study, immigrant and refugee women live with their supposed support system, which, in some cases, also contributes to their abuse. Thus, immigrant and refugee women struggle to leave their abusive relationships since the primary support system is their abusers. Furthermore, according to this study, parental rejection of immigrant and refugee women experiencing intimate partner violence has contributed to the loss of lives of the victims.

Covid-19 and IPV

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has contributed to different perspectives on intimate partner-related issues. Studies have recorded the impacts of the pandemic on the increase of intimate partner violence (UN Women, 2019; Moreira & da Costa, 2020; Jetelina et al., 2021; Buttell & Ferreira, 2020) and factors that exacerbate IPV (Gosangi et al., 2021; Lyons & Brewer, 2021). However, parallel to other studies, this study reports marital distress (Maiti et al., 2020), separation (Moser et al., 2020), mental health problems (Government of Canada, 2003; Wyatt & Powell, 1988; Irish, Kobayashi, & Delahanty, 2010; Statistics Canada, 2020), and emotional abuse (Campbell, 2020). The findings show significant reports of emotional abuse, anxiety, and depression (Ferraro 2006; Fontiadou et al., 2006; Goldings, 1999) due to their traumatic experiences (Farrer, Frost, & Hedges, 2012). New immigrant women reported consistent abuse that led to separation a few months after arrival in Canada. According to the study's outcome, despite being separated from their partners, immigrant and refugee women reported receiving threats and emotional abuse via texts, especially when divorce and childcare issues are initiated. In addition, reports indicated that the pandemic exacerbated immigrant and refugee women's mental health problems because of separation from the community since they had no support system.

Influence of Culture on IPV

Marriage Procedures

Participants appeared to connect their intimate partner violence with their marriage process (Swegman, 2016; Del Mar Pastor Bravo, Martinez, & Ruiz, 2014; United Nations, 1968; Simmons & Burn, 2013). Participants highlighted issues of forced marriage, arranged marriage, and child marriage, and religion as complicating factors in their violent experiences in their intimate relationships (Department of Justice, 2016). The findings reveal that family members often processed participants' marriages with their unknown partners against their will (Del Mar Pastor et al., 2014). As indicated in the study, arranged marriages and forced marriages occurred in Canada and foreign countries (Somerset 2000; Allendorf & Pandian, 2016). Some participants indicated their marriages were arranged by families living in Canada, while some of them were arranged or forced to marry their partners living in Canada by their families outside Canada (Ogbuagu 2012). Although some participants agreed with their arranged marriages, the study shows that the youngest participants with forced and arranged marriage experiences did not agree with their marriage process. Thus, they found it harder in their intimate partner violence experience (McFarlane et al., 2016). In addition, the study reveals parental interest in the forced marriages of their children due to immigration benefits (Simmons & Burn, 2013) and the intersections of religion, culture, tribalism, and deprivation of female education for women involved in forced marriages (Hester et al., 2008). For instance, one of the participants experienced forced and child marriage because she was betrothed to her partner before she turned eighteen years and was stopped from furthering her education after high school (Simmons & Burn, 2013).

Since education is empowering, it is imperative to know that the deliberate act of stopping children's education and coercing them to marry against their will is to keep them under

oppression perpetually. Thus, the study presents immigrant and refugee women's lower educational attainment as one of the risk factors for intimate partner violence (Parsons et al., 2015). Immigrant women's continued education is halted by forced marriage or arranged marriage which contributes to financial dependency on their abusive partners. The study also presents the intersectionality of other abuse for victims of forced marriage (Swegman, 2016) and the vulnerability of children involved in arranged and forced marriage to intimate partner violence (Tenkorang, 2019). For instance, one of the young participants was a refugee, and she had no family or friends in Canada. Therefore, she was financially, physically, and emotionally dependent on her partner. Scheduling an interview with this participant was challenging because she was not supposed to speak or relate with anyone outside the family. Considering this experience, the study shows the use of isolation as a weapon of oppression of immigrant and refugee women in Canada and the importance of exploring their support system when working with them. Whereas the factors of marriage procedures are known complicating factors to IPV, how then can we know the effectiveness of the Canadian Act, Bill S-7, the "Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act" (Evans, 2017) in halting or reducing the effect of forced or arranged marriage problems on immigrant and refugee women's IPV experiences?

Forever Marital Contract

The "forever" marital contract and what that implies does nothing to break any cycle of intimate partner violence. From the findings, immigrant women are culturally expected to commit to the success of their relationship eternally (Furtado et al., 2013). Attempts to leave their relationships will shame their immediate families; thus, divorce is taboo (Saraswati, 2020). Whereas divorce is forbidden because of shame for the family, due to men's cultural hegemony as the final decision-makers, only men in some cultures are permitted to initiate divorce

(Olivares, 2011). To protect their family reputation and prevent guilt, immigrant and refugee women keep their family abusive secrets and remain in their abusive relationships, which has led to the loss of lives of some of the victims (Flanzer, 1982; Rohan et al., 2014; Poulos, 2019; Gelles & Straus, 1979). For instance, one of the participants emphasized that her partner killed her sister during physical altercations because their parents encouraged her to stay in her relationship (Abrahams et al., 2009; McLaurin, 1991; Arneil, 2001; Frye & Wilt, 2001).

Immigrant Women's Perceptions of Cultural Transference

The role of culture in perpetrating intimate partner violence among immigrant families cannot be over-emphasized. Several studies on intimate partner violence have delved into the roles played by culture in the perpetration of violence against immigrant and refugee women in their intimate relationships and at systemic levels (Galtung, 1969 & 1990; Bui & Morash, 1999; Kasturirangan et al., 2004; Raj & Silverman, 2002). The study shows that participants' responses to their perceptions about whether they would like to transfer their culture to their children revealed two different ways: negative perceptions of cultural transference and positive perceptions. However, whereas previous studies explored the influence of culture on intimate partner violence against immigrant and refugee women, there is a paucity of studies on cultural transference perceptions of immigrant women with intimate partner violence experiences.

As mentioned above, the findings present the negative and positive perceptions of cultural transference. There is a perceived agreement among some participants that their culture would not be transferred to their children because of the cultural gender-based treatment. As presented in the study, some immigrant and refugee women acclaimed their culture as inappropriate, unimportant, and unhealthy for their children because of how women are deprived of voice and psychologically damaged.

According to the study, some participants decided not to pass their culture on to their children because men are always culturally “presumed” right in how they treat their wives, and adults are never wrong. Children have to take responsibility for adults’ faults and apologize for what they do not do. Additionally, some immigrant women negated transferring their culture to their children because they did not want their children to live in fear in their relationships. Based on their experiences, immigrant and refugee women decided not to support their children practicing their culture. As women, they lived in fear of the known and the unknown of what their partners could do in their relationships. Preventing their children from practicing their culture is a way of protecting them from exposure to gender maltreatment.

On the contrary, some participants opined that culture has good and bad sides. The findings reveal that the participants supported cultural transference based on certain factors such as rituals and religion, family connection, language and life skills, and education. As much as this group of participants supported cultural transference, the study shows that the participants were against traditional ways of thinking and treating women. Immigrant women supported cultural transference to create awareness for violence against women.

In the study, religion, rituals, and traditions interconnect with culture. Immigrant women believed their children should know about these practices. As derived from the findings, the participants agreed that family connection, language, and life skills are essential in their children’s cultural learning. Comparing their communal living with the individualistic Canadian context, participants highlighted communal living as a support network where children could always return for spiritual and emotional support. The quest for family connection and tradition in cultural transference establishes a connection with a previous study on retention of cultural transmission among Asian Indians (Inman et al., 2017).

Canadian Culture and IRW's IPV Experiences

Downward Mobility

Several studies on immigrants' experiences in the diaspora have discussed issues of downward mobility (Bauder, 2003; Papademetriou et al., 2009; Tran, 2018; Borjas, 2006) and the impact of this trajectory. Complementarily, findings from this study also present immigrant and refugee women's discussion of downward mobility as a factor in their intimate partner violence experiences in Canada. Immigrant and refugee women reported that their partners had good and well-paid jobs in their countries of origin. According to the immigrant and refugee women, their partners had high hopes of coming to Canada but only to have their hopes dashed due to lack of unemployment or Canadian experiences (Sakamoto et al., 2013; Global News January 22, 2016) and structural racism and discrimination (Kelly, 2005; Walker, 2008). The findings indicate that immigrant men get frustrated and take their frustration on their partners, who quickly adapt to new ways of living in Canada.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that lack of employment and social life affects immigrant men's self-esteem and self-perception within Canadian culture and instigates violence against immigrant and refugee women. Immigrant and refugee women reported that their partners lost a sense of authority since they are treated equally as everyone, contrary to their perceived cultural special treatment. And in their frustration, anger, and sense of hopelessness, they take their anger on the people closest to them: their partners, a very unfortunate tendency and development.

Gender Roles

Changes in gender roles have contributed to cultural challenges among immigrant families. Studies have recorded the influence of cultural gender roles on intimate partner

violence among immigrant families ((Mikkell, 1997; hooks, 2000; Gilbar et al., 2021; Min, 2001; Fragoso & Kashubeck, 2000; Hyman et al., 2011). In relating to previous studies, this study outlines that immigrant men struggle with deviating from their cultural roles as human beings meant to be served and the final decision-makers. As reported in this study, Canadian culture changes the immigrants' family dynamics where women, like their partners, work to support their families financially. Immigrant and refugee women reported that men's authority is challenged due to women's employment inclusion, and they are required to participate in house chores and child caregiving against the norms they are used to in their countries and cultures of origin. Immigrant women in this study explained that inviting their partners to take new roles is perceived as insurrection, contributing to violence in their families. For instance, Tricia explained aggression experienced by immigrant and refugee women when they requested their partners to change their children's diapers or cook for the family.

Women's Independence and Protection Services

Although there are several studies on different areas of IPV among immigrant families, such as the perceptions of factors influencing IPV among immigrant families (Hyman et al., 2011; Buss & Duntley, 2011), barriers to access and use of social supports among immigrant IPV victims (Guruge & Humphreys, 2009), and immigrant women's perceptions of intimate partner violence (Mason et al., 2008); there is sparseness on studies on the influence of Canadian culture on IRW's intimate partner violence. This study posits that some immigrant men perceived Canada as a women's country and offered women preferential job security and social protection. Immigrant women reported that their partners complained of lack of jobs or being underemployed while their women are offered better jobs. According to this study, Canadian culture enables women's financial independence and offers protection services from abuse

contrary to the immigrant and refugee women's experiences within their culture from their countries of origin. To immigrant and refugee women, the Canadian culture is a culture of freedom where they had freedom of movement and could make vital decisions without consulting their parents and partners. However, immigrant and refugee women perceived that Canada's financial freedom and support do not go down well with their partners and thereby contributed to the partners' aggression towards them.

Self-Efficacy

It is assumed that identity is fluid based on contextual factors (Howe, 1994; Jackson, 2004). These findings show that immigrant and refugee women demonstrated self-efficacy within the Canadian culture despite their violent experiences (Bandura, 1994). Contrary to the immigrant and refugee culture, where self-expression may not be encouraged or perceived positively, Canadian cultural traditions consider self-expression of feelings and thoughts as one of the ways to achieve selfhood (Kim & Sherman, 2007). As indicated in the study, living in a different culture that supports selfhood and self-actualization empowers immigrant and refugee women to be assertive in their relationships and within the oppressive systems and discover their innate potentials suppressed by the patriarchal culture. Data shows that immigrant and refugee women achieved self-discovery and self-actualization in the context of their newly embraced culture. As a result of their self-discovery, immigrant and refugee women improved their mental well-being and achieved their goals contrary to their partners' negative perceptions (Sullivan et al., 2013). Furthermore, the study shows that the changes in the self-perceptions of immigrant and refugee women in Canada change their minds about their ability to achieve their desired goals because the perception of "self" is foundational to other meanings in life (Markus et al., 1985).

Influence of Precarious Immigration Status on IPV

The impacts of immigration status on intimate partner violence could not be underestimated. Several studies have highlighted the complications involved in the experiences of violence of immigrant women in the diaspora (Burczycka, Conroy, & Savage, 2018; Gupta et al., 2010; Hyman et al., 2006; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Du Mont et al., 2012). In consonance with the past studies, this research established that immigrant women with precarious immigration status are more vulnerable to violence because of a lack of support systems (MacLeod & Shin, 1990 in Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). Despite all policies promulgated against violence against women in their intimate relationships, the immigration process and policies are not supportive enough to allow non-status women to stabilize their status (Alaggia et al., 2009; Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). Immigrant women are sometimes required to prove their marriage authenticity with their abusive partners (Ghafournia, 2006). Realistically, even if immigrant and refugee women have legal documents to support the authenticity of their marriages, there is a high probability that their abusive partners may deprive them of access to these documents for them to be deported, to where they would be culturally punished for “rebellious” against their partners. For example, Amelia narrated how her partner took all her documents with him when he moved out of the apartment. According to her, the immigration workers refused to assist her because she was not the principal applicant.

Access to Services

Why IRW do not Access Mainstream Services

Synonymous to other studies that explored the help-seeking attitudes of immigrant and refugee women in their new homeland (Bui, 2003; Ahmad et al., 2009; Holtman & Rickards, 2018), this study also reports cultural factors as one of the main factors why immigrant and

refugee women do not access mainstream services in Canada. Besides this, the outcome of this study also reports fear and trust issues for service providers and the systems (Dutton et al., 2003; Holtmann & Rickards, 2018; Morrison et al., 1999), the love aspect of intimate relationships (Power et al., 2006; Ruark et al., 2017; Lelaurain et al., 2018), and lack of information.

The context of love in intimate partner violence has been discussed by previous studies as mentioned earlier. As indicated in this study, immigrant and refugee women reported cultural belief that their partners' jealousy and control are out of love and care (Kelly & Johnson, 2008). Immigrant and refugee women reported that when their partners isolated them from their families and friends, it was all because their partners wanted them to spend more time with one another. The immigrant and refugee women highlighted avoiding mainstream services for their relationships to protect their partners' records. This study reveals that immigrant and refugee women would compromise to make their relationships work out and prefer to receive support for their partners rather than stigmatizing them as abusers. As reported in the study, immigrant and refugee women preferred cultural ways to resolve their conflicts with their partners by talking to friends and family members, even when they are in their countries of origin. The reluctance or refusal to seek help is also because immigrant and refugee women must maintain good family reputations and keep marriage at all costs. As reported by immigrant and refugee women, cultural consideration is huge in decision-making in their relationships. The outcome also relates to the expressions of fear from different perspectives. Immigrant and refugee women reported the fear of their partners' reactions to accessing services, fear of the aftermath of divorce because of their financial dependency on their partners, and fear of judgment from friends, family, and community. According to the study's outcome, IRW's fear also stems from the disrespectful behaviour of service providers towards their needs and decision-making, the consequences that

may follow opening up to service providers, and the fear of partners manipulating the systems against them.

Most importantly, immigrant and refugee women refer to the consequences of having their children taken away from them or fathers taken away from their children. Besides all the factors mentioned above was a report on lack of information on the available resources. The findings show that immigrant and refugee women may not access resources because they lack information on the available resources. Most notably, immigrant and refugee women reported a lack of information on accessing EIA and housing and other available resources for exiting abusive relationships.

Immigrant and Refugee Women's Contacts with Government Services

Negative Experiences with Government Services

As outlined in the findings, immigrant and refugee women's experiences were from two perspectives; negative and positive. As opined by Galtung (1969) and Galtung and Hoivik (1971), the host countries' operation often contributes to the oppression of immigrant and refugee women. In their contact with the government services' representatives, Immigrant and refugee women reported negative experiences with child and family services (Maiter & Stalker, 2011; Maiter et al., 2009; Sawrikar & Katz, 2014; Humphreys et al., 1999). Apart from second-hand negative child and family services reports among immigrant communities, immigrant and refugee women also reported discrepancies in the system's services. For example, immigrant and refugee women reported that their opinions were not considered in their children's contacts with their ex-partners. The social workers ignored their narratives even when their ex-partners were unstable (Hughes et al., 2011). The report also indicates that social workers showed up at immigrant and refugee women's homes without prior contact or consideration of their plans,

Final Thesis Report

exercised coercion (Mill, 1998), treated them like child abusers, and threatened them with apprehension. Research outcomes also show that immigrant and refugee women had negative encounters with the police and immigration officers (Vidales et al., 2009; Wu et al., 2013). Immigrant and refugee women reported language barrier problems when accessing police services, which contributed to the police taking sides with their partners since they struggled to explain their experiences adequately (Herbst & Walker, 2001). McDowell (2014) and DeKeseredy (2011) indicated that using the narrow lens of assessment for violence against women could lead to victim-blaming and further oppresses immigrant women (Eigenberg & Policastro, 2016; Kelly, 2011; Meyer, 2016; Witte et al., 2006) and also because the victims may not have physical injuries to support their abuse (Silva, 2021). The feelings of helplessness experienced by immigrant women when their only hope (the police) supported their abusers could be more painful than impact them psychologically since the police did not see reasons for accountability (Becker, 1973). As indicated in the findings, immigrant and refugee women were refused assistance by the immigration office when their legal aid lawyers lost their documents and for some to stabilize their status due to their abuse experiences.

Whereas several studies have explored immigrants' access and hostile services within the justice system (Silverman & Molnar, 2016; O'Nions, 2020; Saadati-Soto, 2019), there is a scarcity of studies on immigrant and refugee women's experiences with legal aid lawyers. The outcome of this study shows that legal aid lawyers mistreated immigrant and refugee women and deprived them of their voices in their cases. For instance, rather than legal aid lawyers helping seek justice for immigrant and refugee women, they instructed women seeking justice on child support to forget about asking for money and those seeking sole custody to sign joint custody, even when the situations do not warrant these outcomes and may likely endanger them. Another

concern reported in the study was the discriminatory decisions against immigrant and refugee women in mixed marriages with white men. According to the findings, Emily described her friend's experience as losing on two sides; losing her child to the white partner and not getting justice for the death threats from the partner. Thus, although assigning legal aid to immigrant and refugee women is purposed to assist them in fighting oppression, it is disheartening to know that the legal system also perpetuates the oppression of immigrant and refugee women in Canada. Whereas some immigrant and refugee women found the police system supportive in some situations, others also found some officers supportive of their abusive partners due to language barriers (Ghafournia, 2006). Despite the Canadian multiculturalism (Historical Timeline, 2018), the study shows a lack of enough culturally-sensitive service provision.

Positive Experiences with Government Services

The result of this study indicates that some immigrant and refugee women with IPV experiences had positive contacts with the government healthcare and education services, the police, protective shelters, child and family services, and employment opportunities. Despite the recent global uproar about police brutality, some few studies recorded immigrants' positive contacts with the police (Wu et al., 2011, 2012, & 2013). Corresponding with these few studies, the outcome of this research shows that immigrant and refugee women with intimate partner violence experiences found help with the police. In addition, IRW reported the police intervention in assisting them to leave the abusive environments to the shelters.

The findings also present that many immigrant and refugee women commended the Canadian healthcare and educational systems compared with their countries of origin (Dastjerdi et al., 2012). Although not much was found on immigrants' perceptions of the Canadian student loan, this study reports that some immigrant and refugee women found the student loan

beneficial to their self-development. Whereas most studies reported negative job experiences for immigrants (Tastsoglou & Miedema, 2005; Man, 2004), this study reported immigrant and refugee women's access to job opportunities. According to this study, immigrant and refugee women found help securing job opportunities, and some even reported opportunities to jobs during the pandemic. Notwithstanding, this finding could not be generalized to all immigrant and refugee women.

Telling Our Stories

There are studies on the public's perceptions of shared traumatic stories (Delker et al., 2020) and stigmatizing reactions to IPV victims' stories (Overstreet et al., 2019). However, there are limited studies on how IPV victims feel after telling their stories of pain and trauma. As described in the study, participants saw telling their stories as therapeutic and contributing to knowledge on intimate partner violence, especially for other victims and at-risk women. The findings revealed that while some participants felt relieved for telling their stories, it triggered others as telling their stories reminded them of their partners and the traumatic experiences in their relationships. Additionally, some participants were indifferent in their feelings; although telling their stories was a trigger, they felt they had moved on in their lives.

This study demonstrates that immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence is sequential. Although immigrant and refugee women have shared experiences as IPV victims, the study indicates the heterogeneity of their experiences due to the dynamics of the intersections of oppression experienced as individuals. Immigrant and refugee women acknowledged experiences of oppression at different levels; individual, systemic, relational, and communal irrespective of the number of years in Canada (McKittrick 1999; Boaz, 2007; Hattery, 2009; Desforges, 1999). The roles of culture and gender in defining immigrant and refugee women's

identities within their dual cultures are vital in the study. The fluidity of culture is demonstrated through the changes in the perceptions of “self” of immigrant and refugee women as “slaves” in one culture and as empowered goal achievers in another. The demographic information shows that literacy contributes to the victimization of immigrant and refugee women at pre- and postmigration trajectories. Additionally, despite the availability of resources in the Canadian communities, immigrant and refugee women still felt unheard, disrespected, and unsupported by the presumed supportive services for immigrant and refugee women in abusive relationships. As found in this study, some immigrant and refugee women preferred to put their abusive relationships in the past, while others preferred stigma-free supportive services for them. Telling a story of pain and trauma could have different outcomes for individuals. The study shows that immigrant and refugee women had different perspectives about telling their stories. While some saw telling their stories of abuse and pain as therapeutic, others felt indifferent because they moved on with their lives. Notwithstanding, all the participants felt that telling their stories would contribute to knowledge on IPV among immigrant families. Overall, this study shows some correspondent outcomes with previous studies and contributes new knowledge to the issues of immigrant and refugee women with intimate and partner violence experiences.

Resilience

The study shows that immigrant and refugee women were resilient despite their traumatic experiences of war and displacement (Gungor & Strohmeier, 2020; Corley & Sabri, 2020; Njie et al., 2020). The findings from the study present how immigrant and refugee women adapted to refugee situations by becoming businesswomen. Some travelled from refugee camps to the city to buy plantain and roasted fish and crops and resell the products for survival at the refugee camps. Immigrants who once lived good lives adapted to their new life at refugee camps and

new environments (Sam & Berry, 2010). Moving from one refugee camp to another could be another layer of trauma as all the participants who attended refugee camps had multiple refugee experiences. Notwithstanding, some participants advised of how they were resilient through their traditional resilience mentality. This notion relates to Ungar's (2011) study on the ecology of resilience the importance of considering the roles of social and physical ecology in resilience. For instance, although younger when she had her multiple refugee camp experiences, the study shows that Belinda's resilience came from her traditional resilience mentality. Growing up, Belinda was taught that Africans could adapt to any situation. Thus, although faced with situations beyond their control, immigrant and refugee women were able to adapt to their new situations for survival. This indicates that immigrant and refugee women should be recognized more as survivors than victims because of their innate potentials to adapt. Canadian service providers should be open to learning about innate potentials resident in immigrant and refugee women to make things work. Recognition and acknowledgement of these strengths would enhance collaborative work with immigrant and refugee women.

The Created Future

Education on IPV, Women's Rights, Canadian Systems, and Resources

Immigrant and refugee women in this study were able to identify some crucial factors that could contribute to their safety in their new homeland. Findings indicate that immigrant and refugee women preferred supportive services in Canada. According to this study, immigrant and refugee women would benefit from mandatory education on intimate partner violence, women's rights, how the law works and navigating the systems and available resources. The study shows that immigrant and refugee women desired the knowledge of the Canadian systems to enhance their ability to access the resources appropriately. The findings indicate that teaching immigrant

Final Thesis Report

and refugee women about women's rights would empower them since some came from cultures that do not recognize women's rights. According to this study, immigrant and refugee women would benefit from IPV education to safely exit abusive relationships. Participants suggested that vital information on IPV should be made available at the point of entry for immigrant and refugee women. The participants emphasized the importance of educating women on navigating the Canadian systems to prevent their men from using the systems against them. To support this need, a participant discussed an instance where an immigrant woman was abused, and the partner called the police to report her after cutting himself with a knife.

Provision of Culturally Appropriate Services

This study supports the findings of Sabri et al. (2018), Sawrika (2012), and Stewart et al. (2006), indicating the importance of culturally appropriate services. This study indicates that immigrant and refugee women still requested culturally appropriate services. Although the participants acknowledged the availability of resources in Canada, it was indicated that the services are managed by white service providers who may not understand their predicaments. The data indicates that immigrant and refugee women desire a cultural space to speak their languages and connect with shared experiences.

Safety Planning

The outcome of this study shows an overlap between safety and housing for immigrant and refugee women experiencing intimate partner violence (Bonnycastle 2019; Bonnycastle et al., 2021; Daoud et al., 2016). As described in the data, accessible and affordable housing will empower immigrant and refugee women to make informed decisions about their abusive relationships. Besides providing housing, educating immigrant and refugee women on safety planning was another vital point highlighted in the study to support immigrant women in IPV

relationships. Whereas this study focuses on immigrant and refugee women, it is pivotal to note that knowledge of available housing resources and lack of sufficient housing for women fleeing violent relationships are not specific to newcomers (Baker et al., 2009).

Support for Non-Status and International Women Students

The importance of the immigration status of women with intimate partner violence and access to support cannot be over-emphasized (Du Mont et al., 2012; Hyman et al., 2006; Ahmad et al., 2013; Scheer et al., 2020). As presented in the study's outcome, immigrant and refugee women requested Canadian support for international students and non-status women struggling with intimate partner violence (Alaggia et al., 2009). However, findings show that international students and non-status women are caged in abusive relationships because the humanitarian and compassionate process does not support them to regulate their status in Canada (Shiu-Thornton et al., 2005; MacLeod & Shin, 1990 in Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). Besides, the precarious immigration status could be convoluted by the young age of the victims (WHO, 2012).

Responding to how some of their needs could be met in Canada, participants suggested that international students who were abandoned by their support systems should be allowed to access student loans that would be repaid after completing their programs. In addition, the study shows that refugee women experiencing intimate partner violence should be protected by the police and allowed to process their immigration papers under humanitarian and compassionate processes without their partners' involvement. According to Madison, a non-status participant, supporting the refugee and non-status women in IPV relationships would safely exit their violent relationships.

Concepts of Home and Safety

Final Thesis Report

Discussions on independence, autonomy, privileges, and resources were interrelated in the participants' narratives on home and safety. Studies on the meaning of home have existed in the sociology and psychology fields for over two decades (Moore 2000; Sixsmith 1986; Tomas & Dittmar, 1995). Notwithstanding the ambiguity involved in defining the concept of home (Benjamin 1995), it is a concept that should not be ignored (Lawrence 1995). Immigrant and refugee women from their historical experiences in the study (Moore 2000) defined home as having independence and autonomy and access to privileges and resources. As observed in the findings, the concepts of home and safety are interrelated as defined by immigrant and refugee women. The findings indicate that immigrant and refugee women would feel safe and at home when they control their lives. Immigrant and refugee women suggested that living in an environment with racial and gender equality will create a safe home atmosphere for them in Canada.

Since most immigrant and refugee women lack support networks, participants suggested that access to non-judgmental privileges and support services for them and their children would ensure their safety and a sense of home in their new homeland. Participants highlighted an environment with freedom of movement and autonomy over a personal space as a safe home. From the perspectives of some participants, the concept of safety and home is about personal identity. Participants defined safety and home as places where identity is not imposed on them and their opinions are respected.

In relating to Baffoe (2010), it is observed that despite their violent experiences, pre- and post-migration, immigrants and refugee women still have a sense of connection with their countries of origin and often compare their settlement experiences with their experiences "back home." For instance, Amanda and Sophia described "home" as their roots, where families are

promptly available to support them. The concerns now are why immigrant and refugee women may still not feel at home despite the available resources in Canada. According to this study, participants who did not feel at home felt unheard and disrespected by service providers. These problems call for serious attention to the “professed” Canadian cultural-sensitive professionalism and multiculturalism.

Encapsulation of the Study

Exploring the narratives of immigrant and refugee women in this study shows the impact of intimate partner violence on immigrant and refugee women and their children. Immigrant and refugee women and their children experienced physical, emotional, psychological, and financial oppression in the context of intimate partner violence. Thus, this shows how unpredictable the outcome of violence against women could be for them and their children.

The findings reveal the resilience of immigrant and refugee women through their adaptability, not only during migration but in all contexts. Although the study shows higher educational attainment of immigrant and refugee women before migration, it also establishes how the participants embrace the Canadian context to demonstrate their self-efficacy to embrace opportunities to obtain Canadian certificates for job opportunities and financial independence that contributed to their vulnerability.

However, the study also establishes that some immigrant and refugee women, though resilient, experience intimate partner violence across borders, notwithstanding the availability of protection services (Kiss et al., 2015; Abramowitz & Moran, 2012; Montesanti, 2015; Shannon et al., 2009). Furthermore, while some studies have established bidirectional violence in intimate partner violence (Grat & Foshee, 1997; Straus, 2008; Bates, 2016), the participants’ perceptions of powerlessness and as slaves in their intimate relationships contributed to their subservient

behaviour to their abusive partners due to the relational power dynamics influenced by cultural and patriarchal values.

This finding suggests that while the participants' contacts with the Canadian systems had both positive and negative impacts, their negative experiences exacerbated their oppression. For instance, the participants' narratives suggested negative experiences with the police, legal aid lawyers, child welfare, and immigration officers. In conformity with the previous studies, the findings also revealed the influence of culture, gender, age, marriage procedures, religion, poverty, immigration status, and diverse social contexts on violent experiences of immigrant and refugee women in their relationships. In addition, the findings identify the influence of the Canadian right-conscious cultural practice on immigrant and refugee women's self-efficacy and self-actualization to a high degree. Finally, the study also proposes the immigrant and refugee women's preferred support in Canada.

Succinctly, African feminism as an anti-colonial and humanistic lens enabled the understanding and identification of when, who, and how immigrant women were treated with dignity, respect, or disdain. For example, this lens enabled the understanding of themes such as wives as slaves, multifarious oppression, coercive migration, and post-migration protection services. Through its tenets of patriarchy, race, tradition, underdevelopment, sexuality, and love, African feminism also enabled the discovery of how patriarchy, race, tradition, poverty, and gender contributed to the perpetration of violence against immigrant women across PMP. For example, from the participants' narratives, the lens assisted the identification of themes such as marriage procedures, financial terrorism, and joint account, migration as an escape route, marital rape, reverberate oppression, negative experiences with government services, and others.

African feminism as a theory that considers the context of love also enabled the understanding and the identification of the influence of love on the participants' decision making in their abusive relationships and the role of love at large. This could be seen through themes such as the loving victims, fear and trust issues with the systems, and children as shields. This lens also assisted the unwrapping of colonial mentality of mastery over subjects by empowering the participants to determine the needed future supports in their new homeland for improved settlement experience.

Additionally, the critical cultural lens enabled the understanding and identification of where, when and how the social contexts of immigrant women contributed to their violent experiences in their intimate relationships. For instance, the exploration of immigrant women's interactions with their pre-migration environment contributed to the identification of the theme of "wives as slaves", which revealed how immigrants perceived themselves through their culture and religion.

Critical cultural theory assisted in identifying how race contributed to immigrant women's oppression and positive experiences in the post-migration period. For example, the critical cultural lens enabled the understanding and identification of themes such as why immigrant women do not access mainstream services and negative and positive experiences with government services and fear and trust issues among others.

The critical cultural lens also enabled the understanding of immigrant women's perceptions of risk and safety, their decisions based on their formed judgement on risk and safety. Like African feminism, the critical cultural lens also facilitated the understanding and identification of the impacts of the dual cultural settings on IRW's self-perceptions and self-actualization. This could be seen in the identification of themes such as self-efficacy, wives as

Final Thesis Report

slaves, women's independence and protection services, downward mobility, gender roles, and immigrant women's perceptions of cultural transference among others.

Finally, African feminism and critical cultural lenses assisted in understanding the effects of the precarious immigration status on the IPV experiences of the non-status, international students, and refugee women, and how the immigration system has contributed to the re-oppression and safety of immigrant women and their children. The subsequent section discusses potential implications of the outcome of this study for social work education, practice, research, banking sector, justice, and healthcare systems.

CHAPTER 8

Implications for Social Work Education, Practice and Research, Other Service Provisions and Policy

This final chapter elaborates the importance of the study to social work education, practice and research. The chapter also discusses the implications of the study for banking services with immigrant families, justice system, health sectors, and immigration policies.

Additionally, the chapter discusses the PMP model of assessment and intervention for professionals working with immigrant families. Finally, this chapter elaborates the strengths and limitations of this study and recommends future study.

As discussed in chapter 4, the study shows the intersectionality of oppression of immigrant and refugee women who have or are experiencing intimate partner violence. The findings indicated that immigrant and refugee women experience intersectional oppression based on their gender, age, socio-economic, cultural, religious, systemic, immigration, and reproductive factors.

The IRW's intersectionality of oppression enhances service providers' knowledge of the multiple layers of risk factors for immigrant and refugee women. The chart below shows the interconnectivity of the intimate partner violence risk factors for immigrant and refugee women.

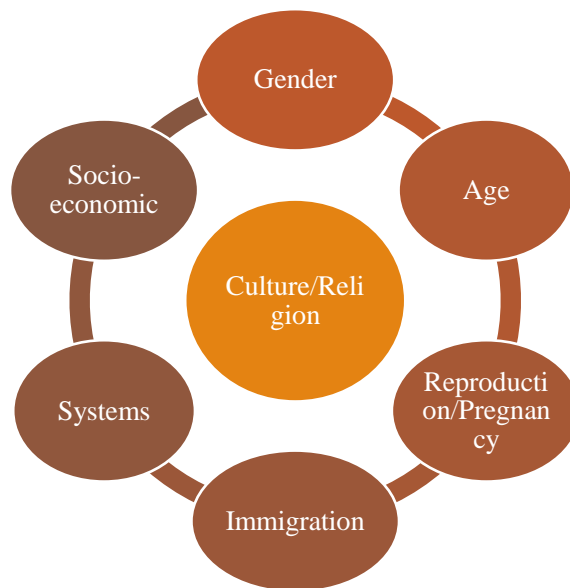


Figure 9/IRW's Intersectionality of Oppression

The study methodology adopted a narrative approach to understanding the lived experiences of immigrant and refugee women in intimate partner violence relationships. Thus, the intention behind the chosen methodology was to give voice to the silenced. Therefore, even though the outcomes of the study experiences are heterogeneous and applicable to the field of study, the results cannot be generalized. Nevertheless, the findings indicate implications for social work education, practice, research, healthcare, banking, immigration, and justice systems.

As indicated above, the study's outcome shows the intersectional oppressions experienced by immigrant and refugee women. As more immigrant and refugee families are welcome to Canada, social work education should incorporate mandated immigration and immigrant-related courses into their programs.

Students should learn about this group of new families to understand the dynamics of their families and how to work with them. Learning about migration will heighten social workers' knowledge of the impacts of migration and intimate partner violence on immigrant and refugee children and their mothers and mitigate the effects of the systems (child welfare, justice

Final Thesis Report

system, welfare system) on them. In addition, since there is a dearth of knowledge on cultural practices in social work education, introducing a cultural day in social work schools, where students, professors, and community members from diverse cultural backgrounds are invited to discuss their cultural practices, will create cultural awareness about newcomer families. This will also enhance students' cultural responsiveness, respect, and humility.

Creating a cultural day could also be emulated by social service organizations to embrace multiculturalism as professed by Canada. Finally, social workers and other service providers should practice empathy to connect with immigrant and refugee women's pains and trauma.

The Canadian policy on the educational system should also incorporate classes on immigrant and refugee families in the school curricula to understand the possible issues affecting immigrant students rather than judging their behaviours based on colour. For instance, Emma narrated that she struggled with her school program because of her mental health due to her intimate partner violence. However, she did not narrate that her school supported her during the interview.

Thus, where possible, special committees headed by immigrants should be organized in schools to understand the underlining factors of immigrant and refugee struggle at school. As suggested by the participants in the findings, there should be mandatory education on intimate partner violence, human rights, navigating the Canadian systems, and the available resources for all newcomers. Pamphlets on this information should be given to new immigrants and refugees at the points of entry into Canada, and there should be follow-up calls and check-ups with the women until after a year.

Banking sectors, legal aid lawyers, and the police should also attend mandatory training on immigrant and refugee families to understand family dynamics. In addition, more immigrant

Final Thesis Report

professionals should be employed to provide culturally appropriate services to immigrant and refugee women as needed. As revealed in the study, immigrant women were directly and indirectly oppressed by the services provided by these organizations. For instance, all participants experienced financial oppression through joint family accounts usually controlled by their male partners.

Therefore, while respecting their relationships, bank service providers should meet immigrant and refugee women one-on-one to discuss options available for all services. Service providers should respect whatever decisions immigrant and refugee women's opinions. It should be understood that while immigrant and refugee women in their new homeland could decide to have joint bank accounts at the initial meetings, having the necessary information with them could assist in making future decisions.

According to the findings from this study, pregnancy and post-natal supports from the participants' partners were also identified as risk factors for immigrant and refugee women in intimate partner violence. Therefore, the healthcare systems need to screen immigrant and refugee women for intimate partner violence during pre- and post-natal appointments with follow-up services. In addition, the provision of affordable housing is synonymous with the concepts of home and safety. Therefore, service providers should endeavor to support immigrant and refugee women in intimate partner violence relationships to access housing for them and their children.

As related in the study, immigrant men's unemployment difficulties and statuses also contributed to violence against immigrant and refugee women. To extenuate men's frustration and violence against immigrant and refugee women, more job opportunities should be created for immigrant men based on their qualifications. As well, immigrants should have equal

opportunities in the educational settings, administrative and policymaking positions within the systems that work with minorities.

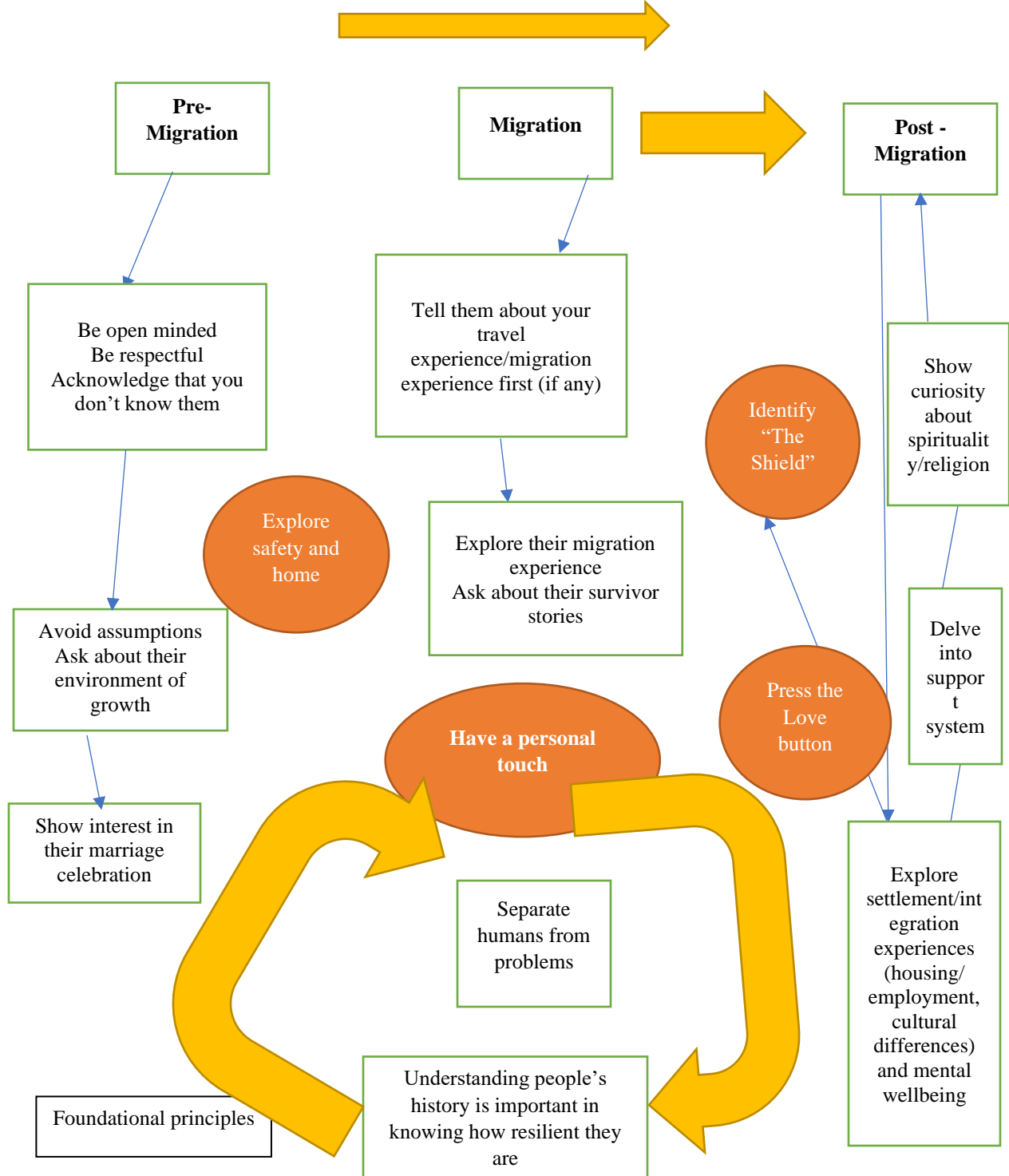
As shown in this study, there are a number of studies in this area of employment difficulties for immigrant men leading to role-reversals and downward social mobility that have implications for family violence (Gans, 2009; Vianello, 2014; Teo, 2007). Thus, the concerns of unemployment or underemployment among immigrant families require serious attention from the Canadian government and private organizations.

PMP Model of Assessment and Intervention

(Making the Invisible Visible)

As discovered in the findings, all service providers can use the IRW's intersectionality of oppression and PMP model when working with immigrant and refugee women for bioecological assessment (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007) and effective interventions.

Figure 10/PMP Model
(Making the Invisible Visible)



Corresponding with the bioecological theory, the PMP model will assist the service providers to explore the past (premigration historical background) and collaboratively create the desired future. The model has three foundational principles; have a personal touch (connect with IRW to see things through their perspectives), separate humans from problems (understand that the IRW may have problems, but they are not the problems); and understanding IRW's history is vital in knowing how resilient they are (listen to understand people's stories to identify their strengths).

The PMP model shows the importance of holistic intervention by showing step-by-step positive communication and behavioural modifications required in working with vulnerable immigrant and refugee women to achieve the intended effective intervention outcomes. The model presents factors to consider when working with IRW. For instance, the pre-migration section shows how service providers could establish relationships with IRW and areas to explore when gathering case and safety planning information. The PMP model gives directions on the process such as open-mindedness, respectful attitude, avoiding assumptions, and digging deep into past experiences to create a safe home for the future. For instance, a simple question such as "please, tell me about yourself" after the service providers have introduced themselves may create an atmosphere of a mutual relationship and not of power.

As observed during the study, a respectful attitude creates an atmosphere of openness for a personal touch with immigrant and refugee women. Establishing a mutual relationship by getting to know one another helps prevent assumptions or personal bias and promotes respect for IRW's pre-migration experience. In addition, the contents under migration present a gradual approach to understanding the IRW's migration. For instance, when service providers who have always lived in Canada listen to IRW who have traumatic experiences of staying in multiple

Final Thesis Report

refugee camps, such workers will be able to work with their clients with empathy as well as from strengths perspectives rather than judging the clients for their decisions of staying in or leaving their abusive relationships. On the other hand, the post-migration contents present areas to consider when collaboratively working with IRW to create a timely, safe and supportive homeland.

Service providers should understand that effective interventions are preceded by asking appropriate questions. Thus, the PMP model also helps the service providers with the content achievement by guiding the service providers, areas to explore to better understand the IRW's situations. For example, when exploring the concepts of safety and home, it is essential to identify who is the Shield for immigrant and refugee women in the family. The findings identified children who protect their mothers from their partners' assaults as the Shields. Identifying the Shield will assist in creating an inclusive safety plan for the victims and at-risk children.

The context of love was one of the notions discussed by immigrant and refugee women. Therefore, service providers should understand that it is natural for humans to sacrifice themselves to help others (Cartmill & Brown, 2011) – the tendency that the IPV victims may show as a protective factor of their partners. The service providers need to understand that the presence of violence in the family does not eradicate the context of love. Whereas the love context (Fleury et al., 1998) could show the level of complication in IPV cases, it could also help to understand the victims' decisions about their relationships. Therefore, to collaboratively plan for the future, service providers should press the love button to understand the perceptions of immigrant and refugee women on their relationships. Service providers should respect the

immigrant and refugee women's independence and autonomy to prevent contributing to the assimilated sense of slavery.

As presented in this study, telling stories of violence could be traumatic. Therefore, requesting immigrant and refugee women to repeat their traumatic stories should be limited to the barest minimum or avoided where necessary. This study also indicates that immigrant and refugee women with vicarious immigration status are at high risk of lethal attack because of their inability to access services (Simons 1999). Therefore, the Canadian government should provide programs and resources that assist immigrant and refugee women in intimate partner violence relationships to exit their relationships by regularizing their status through the humanitarian and compassionate process.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Adopting a narrative methodology for this research using semi-structured interviews allowed immigrant and refugee women to tell their stories the way they wanted without having anyone to control what they said or how they said it. As revealed in the study, participants saw their participation as opportunities to have someone listen to them as this is not common in their culture. The study empowered immigrant and refugee women to suggest practical ways of working with their group, some of which are part of the recommendations above. Whereas the pandemic allowed the study to occur at the participants' natural habitats and at different times and days, this also serves as an obstruction to the participation of other potential participants with no privacy. Some potential participants were excluded from this study for lack of other places to use to participate in the study.

Since the study proposed interviewing immigrant and refugee women victims of intimate partner violence, some service providers were screened out because the study only focused on

Final Thesis Report

the IPV victims' narratives. The pandemic also discouraged some immigrant and refugee women from participating in the study due to an outbreak of the virus in their apartments. Since interviews were conducted virtually, internet interruptions contributed to spending a longer time on the interviews than expected. Questions had to be repeated several times due to a break in virtual communication or interruptions by the participants' family members.

Some participants did not have access to computers, and some of those who had access to computers preferred communicating with the researcher through their phone for privacy and confidential purposes. Thus, distributing documents (demographic and consent forms) through WhatsApp, Messenger, and attachments on standard texts were challenging as some of these documents could not be filled on these apps. Instead, participants had to print them out and send them as pictures. The pandemic restrictions also deprived some immigrant and refugee women the opportunities to tell their stories because they lived with their abusive partners and would not want them to know they were discussing their issues with anyone.

The inability to meet in person also contributed to another potential participant's withdrawal from the study. The woman explained her fear of being monitored by her home country on her phone. The participant advised that her home country would hear her IPV narration, and she might be deported. Whereas the restriction contributed to missing some potential participants, this study also benefitted from the restrictions as some participants were willing to participate in the study because of the virtual modality used in data collection. The virtual modalities enabled the participants to attend to their children's needs, participate at any time of the day and week in the comfort of their homes. Whereas this study had a small sample size, the findings indicate connections to the past studies and add new knowledge on immigrant and refugee women's intimate partner violence experiences.

Recommendations for Future Studies

The small sample size in the qualitative study may not be generalizable to the collective experiences of immigrant and refugee women in Canada (Oppong, 2013). However, it is vital to know that people's lived experiences are peculiar and cannot be disputed. Therefore, a much larger sample size with interviews and focus group discussions is recommended to add more knowledge to this study. Focus groups could have helped capture collective experience narratives from immigrant and refugee women because some people feel more comfortable talking among groups than as individuals. Although focus groups could offer clarifications and discuss the phenomenon from different perspectives; the data gathered could be influenced by the level and type of interactions that exist between the researchers and the participants nonetheless, this depends on the level and kinds of interactions that emerge in the process (Acocella, 2012; Queiros et al., 2017). Even though some people use focus groups to speak out more than usual, encouraging others to participate may also be challenging (Acocella, 2012).

Alshenqeeti (2014) suggests that mainly using interviews as a research instrument could affect the validity and reliability of data collected. In addressing these concerns, Jamshed (2014) proposes a combination of interviews and observation. While interviews for data collection could be effective through interview skills, a combination of interview and observation may not necessarily guarantee validity and reliability if the researcher does not follow the due protocol. For instance, in qualitative inquiry, a reflexive relationship is essential to connect with the participants and engage them throughout the study. This research was done with a vulnerable population group. The studies with vulnerable population groups required a positive and respectful relationship that would assist triangulation in achieving the trustworthiness of data. In essence, creating a respectful atmosphere void of hierarchical power relations will enhance good

relationships that will allow the researchers to contact the participants to clarify ideas discussed by the participants when needed for validity.

Due to Covid-19, the research did not include focus group discussions to understand immigrant and refugee women's collective intimate partner violence experiences across pre-migration, migration, and post-migration trajectories. Therefore, it is suggested that future research with this group should include focus group discussions to understand the collective experiences of this vulnerable group. Additionally, considering a combination of interviews and observation as the significant way of achieving trustworthiness fails to consider unprecedented situations such as the pandemic, where some participants could only connect with the researcher through telephone or text to collect data. Thus, researchers should always prepare for unprecedented situations and ways of validating data.

This study reveals some of the complexities of interracial marriages of immigrant and refugee women and how the white partners used their “whiteness” to influence the oppression of immigrant and refugee women. Thus, future studies will benefit from understanding the experiences of immigrant and refugee women in interracial relationships and their IPV experiences in Canada. In addition, discussions on arranged marriages, forced marriages, and child brides are just emerging; therefore, it is recommended that future studies consider young immigrant and refugee women aged 18 to 29 years with IPV experiences. In this study, three young women of ages 18 to 29 participated. Only one of these participants earned between 30k to 50k, while one was on government assistance and the other participant had an annual salary of under 20k. Though identified as a refugee, one of these participants advised that she did not know her status. Considering the vulnerability of these young women participants, it is suggested

that a nationwide study be conducted to include more participants in this category to understand their unique experiences that may be complicated with immigration status in Canada.

Based on the experience of a non-status participant with a special needs child who also advised of her fear of deportation, it is suggested that the future study will benefit from understanding specifically from the interconnectivity of immigration status and intimate partner violence, most especially of women with special needs children. Additionally, immigrant and refugee women identified their partners' experiences of racism, marginalization, and prejudice as contributing factors to their violent experiences. Therefore, understanding these factors and men's self-perceptions in Canada would be a significant area of future interest.

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APPENDICES



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Appendix A

Letter of Introduction for Peer-Driven Recruitment

Date:

Collaborating Agency:
Attention: Contact Person
Address:

Protocol Approval #: **Protocol # P2020:053 (HS24103)**

Researcher: Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi, PhD Candidate, RSW
Faculty of Social Work
University of Manitoba.
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Advisor: Professor Michael Baffoe
Faculty of Social Work
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Study recruitment: Understanding the narratives of immigrant and refugee women (IRW) in intimate partner violence in Canada across pre-migration, migration and post-migration (PMP) trajectories

I am writing to formally request your agency permission to speak with immigrant and refugee women who have experienced or are experiencing intimate partner violence to participate in the above referenced study scheduled to start in August 2020. The purpose of this project is to develop further insight into various aspects of the phenomena being explored. Specifically, to broaden the understanding of immigrant and refugee women's experiences of intimate partner violence pre-migration, during migration process and post-migration, including the period of Covid-19 stay at home policy and to develop a PMP model for effective interventions with immigrant and refugee families in Canada.

I will like to involve 20 immigrant or refugee women.

Final Thesis Report

- Who are 18 years and above
- Immigrant and refugee women from Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Bermuda, and Europe
- Who are married, single, separated, divorced, and in their abusive relationships
- Who are capable of speaking English language or broken English (a form of African English language)

Upon consenting to participate in this study, study participants will be asked to complete a few demographic questions and to engage in a 60-90-minute virtual individual interviews.

Participation in this study is confidential and participants can withdraw from the study at will after the interview participation without any penalty. I will be pleased to meet with you and/or your designate to further discuss the planned research and respond to any questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you for attending to this request and please do not hesitate to contact me. I am looking forward to hearing back from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi, PhD Candidate, RSW
Faculty of Social Work.
University of Manitoba
Email: akinyelb@myumanitoba.ca



Faculty of Social Work

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Appendix B Flyer for Participant Recruitment

A research study is being conducted by a doctoral candidate at the University of Manitoba, who has partnered with community practitioners, community leaders and cross-cultural community members, to explore the experiences of immigrant and refugee women involved in consistent intimate partner violence in their new homeland.

AND

You may be eligible to participate in this study

I am interested in talking to immigrant and refugee women who have experienced or are experiencing intimate partner violence, who are 18 years of age or older, who are single, married, separated and divorced.

Study participants will be asked to complete a few demographic questions via emails and to engage in a 60-90-minute virtual individual interview discussion with the researcher about their experiences of intimate partner violence pre-migration, during migration and post-migration including during the Covid-19 stay at home policy and their ideas of effective interventions.

Your involvement is completely voluntary. Your participation will take 60-90 minutes. Your contribution will help the academia, the community leaders, and service providers to understand immigrant and refugee women's experiences with intimate partner violence in their new homeland.

The research is approved by the University of Manitoba Human Ethics Board

Interested? Have questions?

Contact Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba - email akinyelb@umanitoba.ca. Take the flyer and think about it.



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Appendix C List of Community Resources

1. Immigrant Women's Counselling Services
Access Norwest,
785 Keewatin Street,
Winnipeg, Mb.
204-938-5900
2. Family Dynamics
401-393 Portage Avenue,
Winnipeg, MB.
R3B 3H6
Telephone: 204-947-1401
3. **Klinic Community Health**
870 Portage Avenue,
Winnipeg, MB.
R3G 0P1
Telephone: 204-784-7059
204-784-4067 – Drop in counselling
4. **Willows Place Inc**
24-hour Crisis line and counselling
204-615-0313 ext. 0
5. **Ikwe Widdjiitiwin**
Ikwe Crisis Toll-Free – 1-800-362-3344.
6. Domestic Violence Support Services
405 Broadway #1410
204-945-6851
7. Victim Services
P.O. Box 1680,
Winnipeg, MB
204-986-6350

Final Thesis Report

8. A Woman's Place – Domestic Violence Support & Legal Services
Suite #202-323 Portage Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba.
204-940-6624



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Appendix D Demographic Profile for Participants

Participant's Name: _____ (Pseudonym as assigned by the researcher)

Please respond to the following demographic questions. This information will be kept confidential and will be stored separately from any other information/data you provide for this research.

Check the box beside the category most applicable to you.

1. Your age falls into which category: 18-29 30-49 50-69 70+
2. How long have you been in your relationship? 0-5years 5-10years 10years+
3. I am Married Divorced Separated Single
4. How long have you lived in Canada? Under 1year 1-5years 5-10years 10+.
5. I am a Citizen Permanent Resident Non-status Refugee
6. What is the highest level of education achieved so far?
 High school diploma or less Some post-secondary education
 Post-secondary certificate, diploma or undergraduate degree
 Post-graduate degree (Master or PhD)
7. Country of origin _____
8. What is your job title?

9. What is your income level category?
 Under \$20K \$20K-\$29K \$30K-\$50K \$50K+
Other _____



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Appendix E Individual Interview Consent Form

Name (pseudonym as assigned):

Date:

Title of Research Project: **Understanding the narratives of immigrant and refugee women (IRW) in intimate partner violence in Canada across premigration, migration and postmigration (PMP) trajectories**

Protocol Approval #: **Protocol # P2020:053 (HS24103)**

Principal Investigator: Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi, PhD Candidate, RSW
Faculty of Social Work
University of Manitoba

Email: akinyelb@myumanitoba.ca

Advisor: Professor Michael Baffoe
Faculty of Social Work
University of Manitoba

Email: Michael.Baffoe@umanitoba.ca

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for yourself. This form gives you the idea of what the research is about and what you will be doing as a participant. If you have any question about the study, please feel free to ask the researcher. The researcher is also happy to read it to you if you like.

Purpose of the Research

Intimate partner violence is any action from your partner that poses danger to your life. Such actions may include pushing, kicking, yelling, slapping, beating, locking up in a room, withholding money, food and any items, that are necessary for your well-being. The purpose of this research is to increase the knowledge of intimate partner violence experiences of immigrant and refugee women before they left their countries, when they were preparing to leave their countries and when they got to their new home countries. The research will like to know what your experience looks like during the Covid-19 stay at home policy. The research will also like to know how you think the needs of immigrant and refugee women could be best met in Canada,

to develop a PMP model for effective interventions with immigrant and refugee families in Canada.

Your Participation Will Include

Participation in this study is out of your free will. You may decide to stop participating in the study whenever you want. If you agree to participate in the study, you will be given a new name. Anything you tell the researcher will not be traced to your new name. You be given a form to tell the researcher about your country of origin, whether you are working or not and how much you are receiving from your job. In the form, the researcher will like to know if you are single, married, divorced or separated, and other information that may help to know the background information of the participants. Remember, none of this information will be in your name. This will help to describe the group characteristics of those who participate. The researcher will be asking you questions that will allow you to tell your stories for 60 to 90 minutes. Your stories will be recorded. The researcher will meet with **20** immigrant and refugee women like you to hear their stories.

You can talk to the researcher about how you are feeling when you are telling your story or after you are done telling your stories. A list of community services will be given to you for use if you still need to talk to someone else after the study. You are free to refuse to answer any question if you want. You will not lose any benefit for doing this.

Potential Benefits and Risks

You will benefit from this study by contributing to the knowledge on the experiences of immigrant and refugee women's experiences of IPV and how immigrant and refugee women can be supported in Canada. I will like you to know that telling your stories of IPV may lead to more abuse if some people know about this. To help keep you safe, I will work with you to choose when you will like us to talk.

Confidentiality

All your information will be kept with the researcher in a safe place. No other person apart from the person that will help to type your story and the research committee will know about your story of IPV. The result of the study will be presented at the researcher's school and national and international conferences. The result will be published in academic journals.

Limitation of Confidentiality

The research is expected to follow the Citizens' safety rule and the professional rules and policies. These rules and policies require citizens' commitment to the safety of the children and other vulnerable. As a result of this, the researcher like other citizens is expected under the law, to report if there is a problem that a child needs protection. As a member of regulatory bodies such as the Manitoba College of Social Workers, the researcher has additional expectations to report if a person plans to harm himself/herself or other people.

University Review

The University of Manitoba reserves the right to review adherence to approved research protocols. This may involve reviewing the records of this research project to ensure that it is in compliance with ethical standards for conducting research with human participants.

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This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project which you cannot resolve with the Principal Investigator, you may contact a representative of the Human Ethics Secretary at (204) 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you for your records.

You are signing this form because you have understood everything you need to know before telling your story of IPV. You should please feel free to ask any question at any time. If you will like to talk to me, you can email at akinyelb@umanitoba.ca.

Please, tick ✓ the following **boxes** to show your agreement to participating in this study.

I have read and reviewed the consent form with the principal investigator

I have had the opportunity to have any of my questions answered

I, _____ (Print Name) agree to participate in the study. I agree to have the interview audio recorded. I agree to be contacted by phone or email if further information is required after the interview. I agree to have the findings (which may include quotations) from this project published or presented in a manner that does not reveal my identity.

I want to receive a summary of the findings: Yes No

I consent to have the summary received by email: Yes No

Email address: _____ (Please provide email address)

Participant's Name _____ (Printed name)

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's name _____ (Printed name)

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____



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Appendix F **Individual Interview Questions**

Pre-Migration

1. Tell me about your experiences of intimate partner violence in your country of origin or last place of habitual residence before you moved.
2. How would you describe your culture and your experience of intimate partner violence?
3. How important is it to you to pass your culture to your children?

Possible Probes: You said.... Tell me more about that.

You said.....What does that mean to you?

Migration

4. How would you describe your experience of intimate partner violence at refugee camp or your last place of habitual residence after you have left your country of origin?
5. Can you describe the type of support you had at the refugee camp or your last place of habitual residence before you came to Canada?
6. How were you able to cope at the refugee camp or your last place of habitual residence?

Post-migration

7. Can you please tell me your experience of intimate partner violence in Canada?
8. How will you describe the difference(s) in your experience(s) of violence before and after migration?
9. Comparing your life at your country of origin or last place of habitual residence and Canada, how would you describe your feelings of “home”?

10. What is keeping you to stay in the abusive relationships or what has led you to leave your relationship?

Possible Probes: You said... Do you have any more thoughts about that particular period?

How did it all happen?

Do you have any additional feelings about that occasion?

11 Tell me about the things that have changed for you and your family since you arrived in Canada in the following areas: For example, government services, health care and education for the children.

12. What aspect of Canadian culture or way of life do you think has contributed to violence in your relationship? For instance, in the area of your relationship with your children and your relationship with partner.

13. What kind of support have you had in the face of violence or abuse in your relationship? Has it been from friends, extended family, church, community, mosque or mainstream services?

14. What discourages you and others to access services?

Possible Probes: You said... Tell me more about that particular situation?

Do you have any additional feelings about that situation?

15. How best can immigrant and refugee women in IPV be supported in Canada?

16. What does it mean to be safe?

Possible Probes: You said ... Do you have any more thoughts about that particular occasion?

How did it happen?

Tell me more about your feelings about that occasion?

17. How has your experience of stay at home been during the COVID-19 lockdown?

Final Thesis Report

18. Please, tell me if there has been any issue of violence in your family during the lockdown.

19. How has this process of telling your story been for you?



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Appendix G Oath of Confidentiality

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Title of Research Project: Understanding the narratives of immigrant and refugee women (IRW) in intimate partner violence in Canada across premigration, migration and postmigration (PMP) trajectories

Protocol Approval #: Protocol # P2020:053 (HS24103)

Principal Investigator: Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi, PhD Candidate, RSW
Faculty of Social Work
University of Manitoba
Email: akinyelb@myumanitoba.ca

Advisor: Professor Michael Baffoe
Faculty of Social Work
University of Manitoba
Email: Michael.Baffoe@umanitoba.ca

The consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It gives you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this project is to develop further insight into various aspects of the phenomena being explored. Specifically, to broaden the understanding of immigrant and refugee women's experiences of intimate partner violence pre-migration, during migration process and post-migration, including during Covid-19 stay at home policy and to develop a PMP model for effective interventions with immigrant and refugee families in Canada

Your Participation Will Include

Participation in this study is to transcribe the audio-taped interviews conducted with immigrant and refugee women into word documents. It is mandatory that you abide to the confidentiality rule by not sharing any of the study-related personal information of the participants with anyone other than the Principal Investigator.

Final Thesis Report

If you would like more information or clarification of any of these points, please contact me, Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi at my email, akinyelb@myumanitoba.ca.

Please, place a check mark in the corresponding box to signal your consent and agreement.

I have read and reviewed the consent form with the principal investigator

I have had the opportunity to have any of my questions answered

I, _____ (Print Name) agree to participate in the study as a transcriber and to keep all the participants' information and data confidential.

I consent to the confidentiality policy of the ethics protocol: Yes No

Email address: _____ (Please provide email address)

Transcriber's Name _____ (Printed name)

Transcriber's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's name _____ (Printed name)

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____



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Appendix H

Telephone Recruitment Script for Individual Interview Participants

Hello, my name is Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi. I am a social work doctoral candidate at the University of Manitoba. I am returning your call requesting further information about participating in the study, *Understanding the narratives of immigrant and refugee women (IRW) in intimate partner violence in Canada across pre-migration, migration and post-migration (PMP) trajectories.*

Thank you for your interest in the study. I am interested in interviewing immigrant and refugee women who are either single, married, separated or divorced to relate their experiences of intimate partner violence during pre-migration, during migration and post-migration periods. (Pause). I am interested in hearing about your perceptions about your culture, spirituality, your migration experiences in relation to intimate partner violence and Canadian service provisions for immigrant and refugee women that are experiencing intimate partner violence. I am also interested in hearing about your experiences of intimate partner violence during COVID-19 lockdown. (Pause).

Participation in the study is voluntary. It will have no impact on any other services you are currently receiving or on any of your immigration proceedings. You can withdraw from the interview at any time and/or refuse to answer any interview questions. You can review the transcription of your audio-taped interview and identify any section you do not want included in the data collected for the study

If you are interested, I could schedule a time for you to participate in a virtual interview. You will be asked to complete the consent form and a demographic form before participating in the study. You will participate in an audio-taped interview - the whole process will take approximately 60-90 minutes. After completing the consent form, you will be provided with an honorarium (a \$25= gift card to support your time, bus faire and childcare).

Do you have any questions about this study? (Pause)

Final Thesis Report

Response: Yes No

Are you interested in participating in the study? (Pause)

Response: Yes No

If no.... Thank you for contacting me about the study. All the best.

If yes.....What date or time would work for you? (Pause).

Scheduled Appointment

Date: _____

Location: _____

Time: _____

If you would like to read through the Consent Form in advance of the interview date, I will send you a copy to your email.

Email if provided: _____



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Appendix I

Email Recruitment Script for Individual Interview

Dear Participant,

My name is Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi. I am a social work doctoral candidate at the University of Manitoba. I am returning your email requesting further information about participating in the study, *Understanding the narratives of immigrant and refugee women (IRW) in intimate partner violence in Canada across pre-migration, migration and post-migration (PMP) trajectories.*

Thank you for your interest in the study. I am interested in interviewing immigrant and refugee women who are either single, married, separated or divorced to relate their experiences of intimate partner violence during pre-migration, migration and post-migration periods. I am interested in hearing about your perceptions about your culture, spirituality, your migration experiences in relation to intimate partner violence and Canadian service provisions for immigrant and refugee women that are experiencing intimate partner violence. I am also interested in hearing about your experiences of intimate partner violence during COVID-19 lockdown.

Participation in the study is voluntary. It will have no impact on any services you are currently receiving or on any of your immigration proceedings. You can withdraw from the interview at any time and/or refuse to answer any interview questions. You can review the transcription of your audio-taped interview and identify any section you do not want included in the data collected for the study.

If you are interested, I could schedule a time for you to participate in a virtual interview. You will be asked to complete the consent form and a demographic form before participating in the study. You will participate in an audio-taped interview - the whole process will take approximately 60-90 minutes. After completing the consent form, you will be provided with an honorarium (a \$25= gift card to support your time, bus faire and childcare).

Do you have any questions about this study?

Response: Yes No

Are you interested in participating in the study?

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Response: Yes No

If no.... Thank you for contacting me about the study. All the best.

If yes.....What date or time would work for you?

Scheduled Appointment

Date: _____

Location: _____

Time: _____

If you would like to read through the Consent Form in advance of the interview date, I will send you a copy to your email.

Yours sincerely,

Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi, PhD Candidate

Appendix J

Peer Recruiting Organization List

1. S.H.A.D.E Inc. - <https://mansomanitoba.silkstart.com/companies/shade-safe-housing-and-directed-empowerment-inc>
2. NEEDS Centre - <http://www.needsinc.ca/>
3. Norwest Coop - <https://norwestcoop.ca/about-us/what-we-do/>
4. West Central Women's Resource Center - <https://wcwrc.ca/>
5. ACOMI (African Communities of Manitoba Inc.) - <https://africancommunities.ca/about/>
6. NAMI (Nigerian Association of Manitoba Inc.) - <https://nami-mb.ca/>
7. Council of South Sudanese of Manitoba Inc. - <http://cosscom.ca/>
8. Family Dynamics - <https://familydynamics.ca/services/neighbourhood-immigrant-settlement-workers/>
9. Social Planning Council of Winnipeg - <https://spcw.mb.ca/>

*Please refer to page 78 for information on these organizations.

Appendix K

Participants' Demographic Information

Participants	Age	# of years in relationship	Marital status	# of years in Canada	Status in Canada	Education	Country of origin	Income	Continent
Grace	18-29	0-5	Married	1-5	PR	Post secondary Certificate	India	30-50k	Asia
Sarah	18-29	0-5	Divorced	5-10	PR	High school diploma or less	Syria	Under 20k	Middle Eastern
Sammy	18-29	0-5	Married	1-5	Refugee	High school diploma or less	China	EIA	Asia
Amanda	30-49	0-5	Single	10+	Citizen	Post secondary Certificate	Liberia	Under 20k	Africa
Belinda	30-49	0-5	Divorced	1-5	Citizen	Post secondary Certificate	Liberia	30-50k	Africa
Brenda	30-49	0-5	Married	10+	Citizen	Post graduate degree	Portugal	30-50k	Europe
Tiffany	30-49	10+	Married	10+	Citizen	High school diploma or less	Liberia	Under 20k	Africa
Tricia	30-49	10+	Married	10+	Citizen	Post secondary Certificate	Kenya	50k+	Africa
Amelia	30-49	10+	Separated	1-5	PR	Post secondary Certificate	Egypt	Under 20k	Africa
Emma	30-49	10+	Divorced	10+	Citizen	Post secondary Certificate	Nigeria	Under 20k	Africa
Isabella	30-49	10+	Divorced	10+	Citizen	Post secondary Certificate	India	30-50k	Asia
Becky	30-49	10+	Separated	1-5	PR	High school diploma or less	India	Under 20k	Asia
Olivia	30-49	0-5	Divorced	10+	Citizen	Undergraduate Certificate	Sierra Leone	50K+ Under	Africa
Leah	30-49	0-5	Separated	1-5	PR	Post graduate degree	India	20k	Asia
Skylla	30-49	5-10 years	Separated	1-5	International student	Post secondary Certificate	Ecuador	Under 20k	South America
Sophia	30-49	5-10 years	Married	10+	Citizen	Post-graduate degree	Iran	30k-50k	Middle Eastern
Evelyn	30-49	5-10 years	Single	10+	Citizen	High school diploma or less	Jamaica	Under 20k	Caribbean
Ella	30-49	5-10 years	Separated	Under 1 year	PR	High school diploma or less	Venezuela	EIA	South America
Madison	30-49	0-5	Married	10+	Non-status	Post secondary Certificate	Pakistan	20k-29k	Middle Eastern
Hannah	30-49	5-10 years	Common law	5-10	PR	High school diploma or less	England	Under 20k	Europe
Josephine	30-49	0-5	Divorced	1-5	PR	Post-graduate degree	India	20k	Asia
Joan	30-49	5-10 years	Separated	1-5	PR	Some post secondary Certificate	Iran	Under 20k	Middle Eastern
Lily	30-49	0-5	Separated	1-5	PR	Post secondary Certificate	India	Under 20k	Asia
Lisa	30-49	5-10 years	Separated	1-5	PR	High school diploma or less	India	EIA	Asia
Allia	30-49	10+	Separated	1-5	PR	Post secondary Certificate	India	20k-29k	Asia
Samantha	50-69	10+	Separated	10+	Citizen	Post secondary Certificate	Democratic Rep of Congo	70k+	Africa
Emily	50-69	10+	Married	5-10 years	Citizen	Post-graduate degree	Nigeria	50K+	Africa