

**EXPANDING MEANINGS OF HOME:
A Case Study of Nigerian Migrant Families and Their School-Aged Children**

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Abstract

This qualitative case study facilitates understanding of how Nigerian migrant children and their families within the Manitoba K-12 educational system articulate their ideas of home with regards to their sense of identity, perception of belonging, and emotional relations. Specifically, the research considers how these families negotiate and navigate the complexity that surrounds the concept of home in their migration narratives and experiences. Undergirding this study is critical constructivist theory, which incorporates critical notions into social constructivist theory. The theory allows individuals or groups to be cognizant of the social, political, and historical issues within the context of the community or society in which they live (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). The data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic and partially during periods of remote learning when children were at home with their parents and meeting with their teachers online. The methods included interviews, observations, and photovoice to collect data and to learn about the experiences of the participants, particularly about how they conceptualize and understand their ideas of home.

The findings suggest that participants identify and articulate a complex and multidimensional meaning of home: home was not seen as a fixed place or space, home was experienced in several different ways. The participants saw home as a place of peace, comfort, happiness, joy, and safety and where individuals living in the space felt accepted and loved. The participants also articulated the ideas of home as the social and physical unit of the dwelling, as identity and self, as threatening and dangerous spaces, and as journeying. The participant children built relationships with individuals within their school communities and engaged in organized sports both in school and community that helped them to realize a sense of belonging, comfort, security, and familiarity in Canada. The participant parents were involved in different

Nigerian associations, connected with their churches, and established social networks within their African and Nigerian communities that kept them grounded in their new home. Participant families were able to negotiate and navigate the complexities of their new home through physical components such as their traditional food, attire, movies, and paintings. They also kept in touch with people in their country of origin through technology; phone calls and social media that preserved their memories of home and their cultural traditions and identities.

This study offers insights on how migrant children and their families realize a sense of identity, a perception of belonging, and an affirmation of self in their new home. The study underscored the human need for connection to new people and places, and to community and work organizations. This research importantly foregrounds the voices of African immigrant children and their families so they may inform policy and future research, as it encourages them to share their often unheard and untold stories. This study contributes to the research addressing the links between and among education, migration, and home.

Chapter One

Setting the Stage for the Study

Personal Background

In the context of my dissertation research, my own background and identity as an immigrant and international student have positioned me to undertake this research. I understand the transition to life in Canada and, as such, I am moved to reflect on the influence of connections that I made prior to my arrival in the country, both with my family members who had been living in Canada for many years and with the Canadian university where I planned to study. Growing up in Nigeria, I was raised in a middle-class family; my mom was a teacher, and my dad was an engineer. It is a common belief in Nigeria that parents' socioeconomic success is directly linked to their children's academic success (Kim & Kwak, 2019; Kim & Sondhi, 2019; Water & Brooke, 2011). In other words, children's academic achievement is connected to differential access to educational opportunities of varying quality and distinction, some of which are available only to those of families with higher incomes (Water & Brooke, 2011). With this understanding, both of my parents worked hard to give us an opportunity to have a good education and, in addition to that commitment, they made sure that they instilled good moral values and beliefs. Furthermore, they taught us that we had the skills to succeed as long as we kept believing in ourselves. Although I was somewhat unaware at the time, this shared struggle for our success created some of my first knowledge of what it meant to be part of a family and my first understanding of home. Such family support and mentoring prepared me for the unique and difficult life challenges I would face when I came to Canada.

I remember when I first started imagining coming to Canada for school. I had friends that were going to school both in the United Kingdom and in the United States, but my dad had

brothers who had been living in Canada for many years. He had visited his brothers several times and he planned to send his children to Canada for school. At that time, my parents believed that emigrating from Nigeria for the purpose of obtaining international credentials would enhance people's class mobility, particularly people who are from a developing country, as Nigeria is considered to be. Although they did not articulate their ideas in the academic language that I now understand, they equally believed that acquiring international credentials would help us to gain the necessary linguistic and social capital to navigate the dominant capitalist societies (Kim & Sondhi, 2019; Findlay, 2011). Given the awareness and understanding that acquiring such an education necessitated migration, I chose to come to Canada for my post-graduate education. I hope to be able to sponsor my sister to join me.

After completing my undergraduate university degree in my home country of Nigeria, as well as one year of compulsory voluntary community service, I applied to come to Canada for graduate school. In August 2010, I submitted an application to both Brandon University and the University of Manitoba, but I was unable to afford the application fee at that time. After three months of consultation, I was able to find a family member who would help me pay the application fee. In the meantime, I had compared the two universities and realized that Brandon University (BU) would be the less expensive option because international graduate students at BU were charged the same fees as domestic students. I began working on the application, but I struggled with the process. It was foreign to me, and I was working independently without the advice of an agent. In most cases, wealthy families in Nigeria would hire such agents to help them navigate the process of applying to overseas schools. Furthermore, when I completed the first step, my application was forwarded to the program office and in my first correspondence with the Faculty of Education at Brandon University, I learned that I would need to complete a

written test to be admitted to the program. Because of the time difference, the university allowed me 24 hours to complete the test. I received the test at 10:00 p.m. Nigeria time (4:00 p.m. in Canada). It was very challenging to try to work within that time limit given the fact that I did not own a computer or have access to the internet. Moreover, I did not know anyone who could lend me a computer to do the test. So, I had to rent a computer to type and send my response. Due to the cost, I completed this task in two stages. First, I was able to type my document for a per-page fee. Then, I had to travel a long distance to get to an internet café where I could access the internet to send the test back. The internet café charged per half-hour to use the internet and I remember the challenges of learning to attach and send a document. It took me a full hour to send one document! I was unemployed at the time, so I also had to find enough money to pay for transportation and to pay for the use of the computers. When I received the results from the first test, I learned that BU wanted me to do the test again because I did not know how to format my paper properly, nor did I understand the conventions for supporting my points. This time, they provided some suggestions about what I should do differently and asked me to submit a new response. Following my second response, with the additional same cost as for the first effort, I was accepted into the program.

The process to secure a student visa took many months. I had already enrolled in classes for the fall, and it was drawing close to the time for classes to begin but I had not yet received confirmation that I would be issued a student visa. Finally, I decided that I would try to begin the classes online from Nigeria and to continue to await permission to study in Canada. I was enrolled in two classes for the fall semester but given my lack of experience with computers, online classes proved to be a challenge. My professors expected that master's students should be able to access and use online tools. I was frustrated at first because there was so much that I did

not know about the technology, about the context of education in Canada, and about the expectations of students in this foreign culture. Moreover, it was difficult for the professor to understand that my struggle was due to my lack of knowledge of the culture of education in Canada, as well as the online delivery platform, and not because I did not have the capacity to do well in the class.

I remember receiving a supportive private e-mail from one of my professors, however, who expressed concern about my lack of participation in the online community. Thankfully, she had identified my predicament as she asked if I had a problem accessing a computer, or accessing the internet, or having regular electricity, and inquired whether those aspects were inhibiting my participation. I replied and told her exactly what was happening. She said she would give me extra time and that we could work things out. That was a relief but when it came to the time to pay tuition, I had not been able to secure sufficient funds to pay so I was removed from my classes. I felt disappointed but in retrospect I realized that I did not have adequate resources to succeed in the classes at that time. So, I continued to await the results of my visa application.

After seven months, I heard back from the Canadian embassy with instructions to say that I should go and pay one year of the tuition fee and return with the receipt to be granted my visa. It took another month to be able to mobilize enough funds with the help of family members to pay for part of the tuition. Fortunately for me, the embassy granted my visa, and I was given permission to move to Canada on December 31, 2012. My Mom purchased a plane ticket for me to fly to Winnipeg and gave me four hundred dollars for spending money. When I arrived in Brandon, I was able to live with my uncle and help in his business to offset what he was giving

me in room and board. Although I had missed the beginning of the winter semester, I was able to start classes in spring and find employment that met the regulations of my student visa.

As I reflect, I will always remember the day that I left Nigeria. It was January 20th, 2013, on a 28° C Day in Lagos, Nigeria, that I said goodbye to my family and boarded a plane bound for Winnipeg. After I said my goodbyes and moved into the security line-up, I remember feeling totally alone for the first time in my life. I had purchased a one-way flight and I was unsure about when I would see my home and my family again. Moments later the immigration officers checked my passport and when they found out that I was going to Canada, they asked me to step aside. They had recognized that the semester was scheduled to start before my arrival in Canada and planned to hold me back. They asked for me to give them money to let me go. I told them that I would be willing to give them half of what I had. Fortunately, the Canadian embassy had written a letter attached to my visa that stated that I could travel anytime until my visa expired. When the officer saw this letter, he let me go without payment. Next, I met with a customs officer who asked to see my letter of acceptance to the university. When he realized that I was coming to Canada to study Education, he said that that choice of study was ridiculous, threw my letter on the floor, and yelled at me to get out of his space. Shaken by these first experiences, I boarded a plane bound for Amsterdam where I would make a connection to Toronto before the final flight to Winnipeg. I arrived in Winnipeg 24 hours later in the frigid cold of a January winter.

When I started university in Canada, I was confronted with the challenges of being an international student who understood neither the culture of the classroom nor the cultural values that were embedded within the curriculum. After a discussion about my struggles, the Chair of the Graduate Program in the Faculty of Education suggested that I could attend some face-to-

face classes in the undergraduate program to help me to learn about how education in Canada was different than in Nigeria. That participation was a valuable experience for me. The students were completely engaged in the classroom, and they worked to co-create knowledge with the professor. It was so unlike my educational experience in Nigeria where teachers tend to be viewed as omniscient, and where teacher-student relationships are often characterized by oppression on the part of the teachers towards the students (Freire, 2000). My experience in this classroom at Brandon University suggested that the students had the liberty to choose their behaviour in class. I observed that students were eating lunch during class, chewing gum, sending text messages, talking to their class colleagues, and playing with fidget toys that were distributed by the professor. Even given this behaviour, I could understand the culture of respect that existed between the professor and the students. This experience helped me to understand expectations within my own graduate classroom experiences and I pushed myself to become more comfortable with sharing my opinions and experiences with my classmates by adding to class discussions and/or by participating in online forums. In one of my classes, the professor paired me with a local student to be his partner so that we could give each other feedback and encouragement with class assignments. I was paired with a man who was a guidance counsellor in a local school. This was a great experience for me. Not only did we support each other with our work, but we also became friends and we often met for dinner before class. This relationship gave me the confidence to begin feeling more comfortable moving within the mainstream culture in Canada.

Throughout the application process and into my first few courses, I was encouraged by the communication from the Faculty of Education office at BU. When I wrote to the Chair of the Graduate Program when I was still in Nigeria, he wrote back personally. I was honored that

someone in his position would take the time to respond to me. The secretary made the time to develop a relationship with me through email and when I finally arrived in Canada, she helped me to navigate my way through campus and through the many processes that are required of students. With all this support, I was able to successfully overcome the obstacles that I faced as an international student in Canada.

In January 2014, while still a graduate student at BU, I got a job working as a research assistant. Most of the students in the graduate program in the Faculty of Education were full time teachers so they were unable to fill positions as research assistants. That job gave me the opportunity to work closely with Faculty of Education professors in their research by engaging in literature reviews, data collection, data analyses, and conference presentations. During this time, I grew more comfortable with my academic skills and with the academic culture within the university. I could see and appreciate the contributions that I was able to make to the different research projects and to the relationships that I had with the academic faculty at the university.

In addition to the support network that I developed through my connections at the university, I relied on support from the Nigerian community within the city. On Sundays, I was part of a youth leadership team that brought people together to worship, to support each other, to share information about navigating the Canadian system, and to welcome Nigerians who were new to Canada. These connections with the Nigerian community played an important role in my transition to Canadian life. When I stepped inside the doors of the building where we met, it was like I was able to be home for a few hours—the people spoke my language, they understood my culture, and they worshiped in a way that felt familiar. This community was important to me because it helped me to stay grounded within my Nigerian identity.

Retrospectively, I am starting now to understand how my presence has also influenced the people and places that I have visited in Canada. At my universities, I have added to the diversity of the student body, I have helped other international students to understand how to succeed in the programs, and I have shared my Nigerian experiences with my Canadian classmates and helped them to see a different perspective of the world. As an employee, I have been hired to do important jobs that some people are unwilling to do—providing respite for parents whose children experience both physical and intellectual disabilities, for example. Through my work as a caregiver and respite worker, I have developed friendships with seniors, and with disabled youth and adults and their parents.

At this point in my journey, I now understand the different aspects that have shaped my motivations and the decision to study in Canada for my post-graduate education. These reasons include: my parents' beliefs and their social class; the prestige and value of a Canadian education (i.e., an understanding that acquiring Western credentials would provide economic and social capital); the connections of family members that had been living in Canada for years; and an opportunity of a less expensive university tuition fee; as well as the conflicted economic situation in my country of origin. Findlay (2011) referred to these motivations as key push factors of mobility to study abroad. These factors have allowed for a subsequent deeper personal understanding of my own motivations and decisions to come to Canada for school.

Furthermore, the support that I received from the Graduate Chair in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University, the graduate office assistant, and other professors at Brandon University are factors that helped my initial transition into Canadian academic and social life. The personal connections and interactions that I had with all representatives from the school enhanced my adjustment and made a positive difference to my international education

experience. Although I moved to Canada to study at the post-graduate level, my own experience of education mobility has given me an understanding about the struggles of other African international students. Moreover, as the researcher, I am on a journey of developing an understanding of how I have come to realize a sense of identity, as well as a perception of belonging and affirmation in Canada and thus, this study fosters my continued reflection on these phenomena.

This understanding has prompted me to consider, for my dissertation research, 1) *the educational mobility and adjustment of kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12) Nigerian immigrant students and their families (i.e., five migrant families) as they move from their country of origin to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada and 2) how they understand and expand their concepts of home in a new educational setting*. I would like to learn from the stories that the students and their families might share about their experiences in the hopes of helping others who are new to Canada to navigate the academic and societal culture. Moreover, childhood has often been viewed as involving predictable stages of development associated with passivity where children are seen as being socialized into identities as submissive members of families (Guiliani & Feldman, 1993; Moskal, 2015). The social meaning and the position that are attributed to childhood are changing in the present-day western society, however, where young people are finding their voice and are considered less subservient by their families (Hart, et al., 1997; Jans, 2004; James, 2011). As such, focusing on children as migrants challenges the dominant ideology that limits children's perception and action (see Huijsmans, 2011). It is important to study and understand the concept of home from the perspective of these young students along with their families and to understand their experiences within their own local educational and social context. The more we understand, the more knowledge that we have to develop initiatives that

will be of assistance to these students and their families as they work to make Canada their new home. The reason for this particular research focus was that there is less research in this area than with adult students (Moskal, 2015). As well, the attention of immigrant parents tends to be the healthy adjustment and academic success of their children; their own needs often come second (Kanu, 2008; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009). Therefore, it is valuable to consider parents' perspectives in this type of research.

Introduction to the Study: Exploring the Concept of Home

African-born individuals in Canada comprised 13.4 per cent of the total population in 2016 compared to 3.2 per cent in 1971 (see Statistics Canada, 2019). The growing presence of African immigrants, individually as teens or adult students, as well as the children of immigrants and refugees, justifies the increasing exploration of and attention to their needs. Migration has been recognized as one of the defining experiences of people's lives (Anisef, et al., 2010; Kanu, 2008; Li & Grineva, 2017; Suarez-Orozco, 2011), prompting a curiosity to develop a deeper understanding of the migration experience, as well as to understand how migrants conceptualize home and construct their new home environments. Moreover, facilitating positive experiences with regard to migration and home are of importance to the positive socio-emotional and educational experiences of children, along with families, who move from one country to another (Gorman-Murray, 2007; Liu, 2014; Moskal, 2015).

The notion of home is an ambiguous concept that has undergone dramatic change in recent years (Rapport & Dawson, 1998; Mallet, 2004; Wiles, 2008). On the one hand, home is defined as the stable physical center of the universe; a safe place to leave and return to (Rapport & Dawson, 1998). Rapport and Dawson (1998) defined home, however, also as something that can be taken along whenever one decamps. This definition of home suggests that home, along

with one's own self, might be mobile. Many scholars have argued that home cannot be viewed only as a physical dwelling but also as a space of belonging, intimacy, security, relationship, and selfhood (e.g., Gorman-Murray, 2007; Liu, 2014; Wiles, 2008). Gorman-Murray (2007) expounds that home involves seeking personal security and emotional commitment, as well as self-discovery. This concept of home suggests that home is "a place and a space inhabited by family, people, things, belongings, and where particular activities and relationships are lived" (Mallett, 2004, p. 63). These definitions show that the concept of home is not a fixed and static object but more of a dynamic process and as such, the meaning of home becomes complex and multi-dimensional.

Although research has shown that perceptions of home tend to evoke emotional aspects and correlate to a sense of protection, place, comfort, joy, and/or positivity (e.g., Brickell, 2012; Guiliani & Feldman, 1993; Moore, 2000; Short, 2006), Brickell (2012) also calls attention to the negativity and alienation that may be associated with home. Brickell (2012) indicated that home could be a potential site of emotional struggle, ambivalence, violence, fear, and/or conflict. In this case, there may be disparities, then, between the ideals and lived realities of home. Brickell (2012) reconceptualized home as a continuous process of negotiations, contracts, renegotiations, and exchanges of the self. Schroder (2006) affirmed that the characteristics of home can be limiting, and that feelings of solidarity and safety, and the protective function of home, are sometimes achieved by acts of exclusion and/or regulation, which in turn can be oppressive. As such, the symbolic construction of home that enlists a sense of belonging, place, memory, and nostalgia has often been complicated by the role of the negative and ambivalent feelings of home (Brickell, 2012; Schroder, 2006). Brickell (2012), Guiliani and Feldman (1993), Moore (2000), and Short (2006) concluded that these mixed feelings regarding home are inherent to the

experiences of continually re-forming and re-defining what home means to each of us. Thus, home might sometimes be “a place or space that disappoints, aggravates, neglects, confines, and contradicts, as much as it inspires and comforts us” (Brickell, 2012, p. 226). These sometimes contradictory understandings of home provide a more nuanced understanding of what Nigerian immigrant children along with their families may conceive of as home as they settle in Canada, and to recognize the sometimes conflicting social and academic realities of these students within the K-12 school system in Canada.

Research Problem

The nature of home has been viewed in one way or another, as a closed and also an open space, but also constructed out of movement, communication, and social relations that are continuously stretching beyond one’s current lived experience (Brickell, 2012; Liu, 2014; Massey, 1992; Moskal, 2015). In relation to that concept, migration has been used to describe movement and dislocation, the crossing of borders and boundaries in search of a home. This generalization of the meaning of migration in search of home allows the notion of home to become celebrated and to be perceived as transformative and liberating (Moskal, 2015), a departure from living-as-usual, perhaps leaving an environment of conflict and/or instability. However, migration has different and often difficult challenges; it may disrupt family life and create tension and conflict among family members, for example, as new ways of living are introduced, perhaps to be embraced by youth faster than their parents (Dustmann & Glitz, 2011). For young children, migration processes might shape and mediate their identity construction; that is, children’s current identity upon emigrating may initially be rendered difficult while their sense of belonging and sense of place may be negatively impacted by their new educational environment (Dustmann & Glitz, 2011). However, given that school is one of the sites where

culture is introduced and learned, it is also the site where much of the integration of children takes place (Pumariega, et al., 2010). Schools need to be proactive so as to become strategic places and/or spaces that assist immigrant children and families to reconstruct and re-visualize a sense of belonging, and to realize a sense of identity that does not require that they give up who they are and what they imagine themselves as becoming. While memories of home for migrants may be filled with nostalgic feelings as well as ambivalence toward their new surroundings (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011), schools need to provide a safe haven for these African immigrant students and their families. Such affirming environments will mentor a strong sense of belonging and attachment to their new surroundings, so they might become grounded in the experiences of their new environments. The activity of creating positive new home environments needs to be rooted in community and human existence and thus, community and human connections and interactions can be crucial in the construction of home and a sense of belonging in the experiences of African migrant families.

During the 2020-2021 school year when this research took place, the transition experiences of the Nigerian migrant children and families in the study were affected by the health restrictions, such as physical distancing interventions and stay-at-home orders, that were put in place to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The experiences that these families described were based on current school situations that were significantly different than normal. At times, school was disrupted, and students were asked to stay home and to meet with their teachers online during the day. At other times, schooling took place face to face, but relationships were limited by health protocols, social distancing, and tightly structured cohorts of students to limit exposure to the virus. The COVID-19 pandemic blurred the boundaries between home and school by extending classrooms to places within the home. Parents necessarily took on

active roles in their children's education and students had less opportunity to socialize with their peers. As a result, this unusual event has changed the way home is being defined and altered African migrants' experiences of establishing home in a new environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to build an understanding of how Nigerian migrant families and their children, who were enrolled in kindergarten to grade 12 schools in Manitoba, articulate their ideas of home with regards to their sense of identity, perception of belonging, and emotional relations. The aim was to understand how these families negotiate and navigate the complexity that surrounds the concept of home in their migration narratives and experiences. As such, this study informs understandings of how migrant children, and their families realize a sense of identity, a perception of belonging, and affirmation in their new home. Throughout the course of the study, I was cognizant that the responses of the participants would be affected by the fact that their own understandings of home and school were currently being reshaped by the health restrictions that enforced remote learning and social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding how migrants ground their lives in their destination countries is crucial for enriching appreciation and support of their processes for imagining and creating home in Canada. When children and youth feel settled, they are more able to realize academic success (Pumariega, et al., 2010; Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Such a study also involves recognition that while migrants may share some common characteristics in terms of how they understand home, their ideas and experiences of home may differ with each person and family. A refugee's experience of home may be different from that of an economic migrant, for example. As such, it is crucial to investigate and to understand that the experience of creating home in a new country does not affect all migrants in the same way. This study concentrated on Nigerian

immigrant families who have physically crossed the Canadian border and are settled in Winnipeg Manitoba and included those with children who are pursuing formal education in Manitoba's elementary and secondary schools. In this study, I defined immigrant children to include children of immigrants and refugees. This study attempted to understand the meaning that this group attributes to home and its relationships with their sense of place, identity, and belonging in Manitoba, and its K-12 schools.

Research Questions

This research was guided by the following questions:

1. How do Nigerian migrant families and their children, who are enrolled in K-12 schools in Manitoba, conceptualize and articulate ideas of home?
2. What are the defining aspects of Nigerian migrant children's and their families' sense of belonging and identity in their experiences with the Manitoba K-12 school system?
3. How can participants' understandings of home inform educational approaches to supporting migrant students and families?
4. How did the Nigerian migrant children and their families experience the changes to home and school during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Need for the Study

Many studies have examined the ideas of home or the migration-home nexus through different lenses (e.g., Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2018; Liu, 2014; Qian et al., 2011). However, there are limited numbers of studies that explore the concept of home specifically in relation to the K-12 educational context. As such, many of the studies that focus on migration and home have done so solely from the perspectives of adult migrants. Less research has examined children's (ages 5-18) perspective of home and their abilities to create identities and meanings of home on

multiple scales or in different locations. In addition, childhood has often been seen as involving predictable phases of growth connected with inaction where children are seen as compliant members of families who are socialized into identities by their parents (Guiliani & Feldman, 1993; Moskal, 2015), thus leading to fewer research studies that particularly focus on the active processes of children as they re-define and create home. In this study, I examined how Nigerian migrant children and families' experiences of home were re-created within Manitoba's elementary and secondary schools. This study sought to contribute to the literature and research addressing the links between and among migration, home, and education, particularly with reference to kindergarten to Grade 12 education in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. As well, the study may contribute to an understanding of the concept of home in relation to broader social processes such as, building social interactions, personal relationships, and support networks.

In terms of earlier studies, Liu (2014) examined and reflected on her own and 47 other highly educated Chinese migrants' experiences of transnational mobility between China and New Zealand. She described how increased transnational mobility can shape Chinese migrants' concepts of home, sense of identity, social spaces, and emotional relations in different places/spaces. Qian et al. (2011) investigated urban Chinese migrants' sense of place across two geographical scales in China: a community cultural center and the city of Guangzhou. Using a multi-scalar perspective, the authors (2011) described how these migrants re-established their psychological connections with their place of destination and through specific place experiences. Belford and Lahiri-Roy (2018) explored how two Australian transnational migrant women (re)negotiated their identities, notion of home, and distanced intimacies. The authors defined intimacies with home as "a complicated, ambivalent set of imaginings, biographies, and

emotions in relation to place, people, and socio-cultural expectations” (p. 1). The study offered an understanding of intimacies with home through an emotional dimension.

Kanu’s (2008) study on the educational needs and barriers of African refugee students in Manitoba investigated the acculturation, integration, and school success of students. The students involved in her study came from war-affected, disrupted schooling backgrounds, as well as those whose culture, ethnicity, language, and religion are significantly different from those of the mainstream group. In her findings, she described educational needs broadly to include academics, social, psychological, linguistic, and economic (Kanu, 2008). She stressed that these factors undermined the African refugee students’ ability to participate and succeed in Manitoba schools. Kanu (2008) concluded that the students’ lack of culturally appropriate and sufficient support programs, such as sports or recreational programs, have contributed to their ability to adapt, acculturate, and cope well with schoolwork in Manitoba schools and society.

There is less evidence from the literature to support how African immigrant children and their families re-define their complex and diverse lived experiences of home both as it relates to the family dwelling and to children’s educational context; as such, there are deficiencies in the knowledge base in this area of study. This supports my intention to explore and research in this area. This qualitative case study concentrated on five Nigerian immigrant families and children in urban schools in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Theoretical Framework

This study, which focused on Nigerian immigrant children and families as they expand on the notions of home in a new educational setting in Canada, is informed by critical constructivist theory. The notion of critical constructivism incorporates critical notions into a social constructivist framework. Social constructivist theory suggests that an individual’s

construction of knowledge is the product of social interaction, interpretation, and understanding (Adams, 2006; Doolittle & Hicks, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Social constructivist theory develops the idea or understanding of the social construction of reality, essentially how the reality of everyday life is co-created and shared with others (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Critical theory is concerned with extending human consciousness of oneself as a social being while interrogating the ways that dominant power operates to manage knowledge (Giroux, 2009). Critical theory calls for the necessity of an ongoing critique of social relationships and the need to develop a discourse of social change and liberation (Giroux, 2009). The pairing of constructivism and critical theory relies on the premise that both perspectives share a common opposition to traditional understandings of knowledge production (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Foucault, 1984; Freire, 2000; Giroux, 2009). As such, both theories have served a common epistemologically dissident role in the history and politics of social thought (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019).

Critical constructivist theory, then, points to the politics of knowledge and discourse and the ways politics define and label groups within a society (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Foucault, 1984; Freire, 2000). Critical constructivist theory posits that knowledge is socially constructed, and deeply rooted in a nexus of power relations (Kincheloe, 2005; McLaren, 2009). As such, a critical constructivist approach raises questions about the types of knowledge individual or groups interact with and attempts to restructure the power relations between different groups in a society based on what is currently defined and recognized as knowledge. The theory allows for individuals or groups to be cognizant of the social, political, and historical issues within the context of the community or society in which they live (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Foucault, 1984; Freire, 2000; Kincheloe, 2005). To that end, critical constructivist theory promotes reflection on the production not only of knowledge, but also of self in relation with knowledge (Barkin &

Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). The following paragraphs detail how critical constructivist theory provides an appropriate framework for this study.

Critical constructivist theory focuses on how individuals discern ways their environments shape their perception and construct their consciousness (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). As such, the theory emphasizes how humans make meaning in relation to the interactions among and between their environments, their experiences, and their lived realities. With this understanding, the creation of knowledge cannot be separated from the social environment in which it is formed and, as such, knowledge is a product of social interaction among individuals rather than individual cognizing (Adams, 2006; Doolittle & Hicks, 2003). Berger and Luckmann (1991) argued that “the worlds in which we all live are not just there; not just natural objective phenomena but are constructed by a whole range of social arrangements and practices” (p. 45). Thus, the notion of home is entrenched within a social environment and moves within a sphere of the relationships upon which that home is built. Through social interactions and relationships with people and social arrangements in the destination country, immigrant children and families re-imagine and reconstruct their knowledge, understandings, experiences, and feelings of home.

Learning, thus, is viewed as a process of active knowledge construction within and through social forms and processes. Vygotsky (1986) explained that such reliance on a social source of knowledge—thus an activity—brings language, culture, and context together and to the forefront. Moreover, Fosnot (1996) affirmed that learning from the critical constructivist perspective involves “constructing new representations and models of reality and human meaning-making ventures with culturally developed tools and symbols and then further negotiating such meaning through cooperative social activity, discourse and debate” (p. ix). As such, discourse defines and produces the objects of our knowledge (Foucault, 1984). Foucault

(1984) explained that discourse is a historically contingent social process that produces knowledge and meaning. To that end, reality is understood to be created through processes of social exchange, historically situated, and thus, critical constructivist theory is invested in the collective generation of meaning among people (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005).

Moreover, identity itself, like learning, is also formed through social processes (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Berger and Luckmann (1991) explained that identity is a key element of subjective reality; and as such, subjective reality stands in dialectical relationship with identity. To that end, identity emerges from the dialectic between individual and society and thus, identity is maintained, modified, or reshaped by social relations (Adams, 2006; Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Through social learning and processes, the realities and identity of African immigrants' children and their families are maintained, constructed, and/or reconstructed within their new home and school environment. Thus, critical constructivist theory supports the development of an understanding and exploration of human interactions, connections, and relationships in building a sense of identity, of belonging, and of place for African immigrant children along with their families within the K-12 Canadian school system.

Critical constructivist theory posits that knowledge consists of mental constructs that have satisfied the constraints of objective reality (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). Barkin and Sjoberg (2019), and Kincheloe (2005) explained that embracing critical constructivist theory involves commitment to the infiltration of the world of objective appearances—to expose the underlying social relationships through critical analyses of those relationships—that may have taken on the status of accepted things or objects. Giroux (2009) explained that social relationships are historically mediated by relationships of domination and subordination. Espousing a critical constructivist theory lens involves rejecting all forms of rationality that

subordinates human consciousness and action to the imperatives of objective truths (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). To that end, critical constructivist theory opposes philosophies that celebrate social harmony without problematizing or interrogating the basic assumptions of the wider society (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Foucault, 1984; Kincheloe, 2005). Thus, critical constructivist theory interrogates the politics of home by responding to the experience of those who may be currently living on the margins or within the changes of what they may conceptualize positively as home, such as African migrant children along with their families within the K-12 Canadian school system.

While home is continuously problematized, analyzed, interrogated, re-constructed, and reconsidered, Blunt and Dowling (2006) identified three components of home drawn from critical geographies of home: (1) Home is problematized as simultaneously material and imaginative; (2) home is interrogated as the nexus between home, power, and identity, and (3) home is analyzed as a multi-scalar concept. The material and imaginative component of home suggests that home is not only a physical site in which individuals reside but also an imaginative and symbolic space of emotion and belonging (Ahmed, 1999; Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Mallett, 2004). Ralph and Staeheli (2011) affirmed that migrants' efforts to make sense of home with attention to imagination, aspiration, and desire are important in shaping where to locate their home. The second component, that is the connections between home, power, and identity, "ties into debates concerning the domestic as a locus of personality, belonging and meaning to which people are differently positioned, and differentially experienced according to age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class" (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p. 22). Ralph and Staeheli (2011) explained that the relationships between home and social life are intersectional, shaped by class,

gender, race, sexuality, and other power-laden relationships, which, as such, are important factors in shaping the experiences of home for migrants.

The multi-scalar perspectives of home indicate how individuals re-establish emotional connections with their place of destination, as a result of some specific place experiences (Qian, et al., 2011). Blunt and Dowling (2006) explained that the multi-scalar idea of home emphasizes “the porosity of home as the personal relations it plays host to transect public and political worlds” (p. 23). The multi-scalar perspective problematizes the analysis of home as a fixed, bounded, and enclosed site and as such, it shifts the analysis to the threshold-crossing capacity of home to extend and connect people and places across time and space (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Qian, et al., 2011; Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). Qian et al. (2011), as well as Ralph and Staeheli (2011), expounded that multi-scalar perspectives of home can influence migrants’ psychological bonding, routine practices, and everyday lives. Blunt and Dowling (2006) contended that the critical geography of home extends beyond the binary of an exclusionary or idealized construct to show the complexity of home.

Critical constructivist theory prompts us to understand and probe issues of ethnicity, language, social class, and race, for example (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005), as these issues affect African migrants’ experiences of home. As such, critical constructivist theory interrogates the homogenous categorization of group experience that ignores the important national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, political, and racial differences that exist within the population (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2003, 2009). Such homogenous descriptions ignore that for African children and their families, racial and ethnic identities may be fluid and complex rather than a single ideology that presents African immigrant children and their families’ experiences of home as monolithic. Critical constructivist theory considers the

significance of within-group heterogeneity and the existence of simultaneous, multiple, and intersecting identities (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) affirmed that all people have overlapping identities and multiple lenses through which the world is experienced. A critical constructivist lens alludes to the possibility of diverse and/or multiple perspectives by which people perceive, understand, and describe the world.

Furthermore, Nyika and Murry-Orr (2017) and Vandeyar (2010) explained that concepts of race and racism are part of the dominant cultural ideology that manifests in multiple contexts and are crucial and defining factors to consider in understanding individual and group experiences within a place. Critical constructivist theory argues for the criticality, legitimacy, and appropriateness of intersecting lived experiences of racial or ethnic minorities in the analysis of home (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). Critical constructivist theory interrogates and thus, in this study, helped to shed light on how African immigrant children and their families in the K-12 Canadian school system may be racialized within their varied identities based on nationality, ethnicity, language, and other cultural signifiers.

Critical constructivist theory serves to illustrate the relationship between race and how home is being identified. Individuals often narrate their experiences through dialogue and/or storytelling (Nyika & Murry-Orr, 2017). As such, marginalized people often recount stories that describe the perceptions of the way they view the world, modeled by their norms, values, experiences, and beliefs (McLaren, 2009; Nyika & Murry-Orr, 2017). Critical constructivist theory advocates for marginalized people to tell their often unheard and unacknowledged stories and for their perspectives to be applied to the existing dominant narratives that influence the law of a country or province (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005), under which educational

policy may also be considered (McLaren, 2009). Ahmed (1999), and Dossa and Golubovic (2019), explained that migration and the concept of home in fact also involve generational acts of storytelling about prior histories of movement and dislocation. Ahmed (1999) expounded that “migrations involve complex and contradictory relationships to social privilege and marginality, and they involve acts of narration through which groups or families imagine a mythic past” (p. 342). As such, the stories of dislocation help us also to relocate a home (Dossa & Golubovic, 2019); they provide a shape, a contour, another layer to the past itself (Ahmed, 1999).

As lost homes are remembered, new forms of belonging are imagined and engendered (Dossa & Golubovic, 2019). Ahmed (1999) affirmed that the telling of stories is bound up with and touched by the forming of new communities. Critical constructivist theory allowed me as the researcher to embrace the voices of African immigrant children and their families so that they could communicate their stories and experiences of home. Moreover, critical constructivist theory provided me with a lens to interpret the stories of the Nigerian migrant families and their children and a way to understand how they re-define home in their present environments and to discover how they gained a sense of place, identity, belonging, and community with the K-12 Canadian school system.

A critical constructivist approach provided an appropriate framework to study how Nigerian migrant children and their families re-define and reconstruct their home within Manitoba’s K-12 schools. Critical constructivist theory helped to illustrate how migrants’ sense of home, identity, belonging, and experiences are constructed through relationships and interactions with other people and other social arrangements in a specific physical location, as well as within virtual spaces. The critical constructivist theory led me to critique the ambiguous and contradictory understandings of home and to build a deeper understanding of how the

concept of home affects migrant children and families. Critical constructivist theory led to dialogue during the interviews that encouraged the Nigerian migrant families to interrogate issues of race and racism that continue to be central to the understanding of intergroup relations that have historically been characterized by racism, oppression, and continued social inequity. This theoretical approach showed how African immigrants' identities are not developed based on fixed identifications with a singular home. Critical constructivist theory gives voice to those whose voices and stories have remained largely unheard and untold (Dossa & Golubovic, 2019) and encourages African migrants to communicate their stories of lost home and to re-imagine a new home in the present. To that end, critical constructivist theory led to the development of a deeper understanding about how Nigerian migrants' experiences and perceptions of home are constructed via linguistic codes; cultural signs; race, class, gender, and other often-hidden modes of power within the Manitoba's K-12 school system.

Delimitations

The delimitations of a study are the boundaries that are developed by the researcher to define the study. I chose to delimit the study to focus on how Nigerian immigrant children and their families re-imagine their home as they transition to life and school in Canada. The participants in this study included seven African immigrant children, who were enrolled in K-12 schools in Winnipeg, Manitoba and their families. The children and their families were recruited through a Facebook group that was developed as a community to where African immigrants could support each other as they transitioned to life in Canada. Although it was not originally part of the research design, interview questions and research questions were altered to include how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the experiences and definitions of home and school life

for the Nigerian migrant children and families. This research study included interviews, field notes, observations, and photovoice.

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter one includes the researcher's story, the introduction, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the need for the study, the theoretical framework, and the delimitation of the study, as well as the overview of the chapters. Chapter two analyzes the relevant literature on home, migration, and education, particularly as it applies to migrants who physically crossed the border into Canada, as well as in relation to how they construct their knowledge and perception of home. In chapter three, the methodology of the study is addressed. In that process, the chapter includes sections on importance of this research, research design, interviews, observations, photovoice methodology, establishing the relationships between the research questions and the instruments, connecting with potential participants, research sampling within a population, ethics when conducting research with potentially vulnerable populations, trustworthiness and triangulation, and my positionality as researcher and epistemology. As well, data analysis procedures are described. Chapter four elaborates the data from the study based on the themes that emerged from the process of data analysis. Finally, chapter five provides a summary of the study, as well as the significance, limitations, and implications for African migrant children and families, research, practice, and policy. Chapter five ends with my final reflections about the findings.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to explore relevant juxtaposing literature on home, migration, and education, particularly as that applies to migrants who have physically crossed their originating home border to other countries, such as Canada. This exploration seeks to deepen understanding about the concept of home while interrogating many perspectives around which to unravel the clusters of overlapping and ambiguous meanings of home. As well, the intent is to explore and thus to recognize how home can be re-defined and grounded within the local context so as to engender a sense of place, identity, and belonging. In this chapter, I start by analyzing relevant research on the complex and multi-dimensional meaning of home. Then, I examine the notions of home and migration to deepen understanding of the two concepts. Lastly, I investigate the relationships between and among home, migration, and education so as to understand how migrant children along with their families may realize a sense of place, belonging, and identity, particularly within their local education setting. The critical constructivist approach, as explained in Chapter One, undergirds and provides the foundation for the following literature review.

The Complex and Multi-Dimensional Meaning of Home

The concept of home can mean different things to different people, as well as different things to the same persons as they grow older. The meanings of home may shift across a number of registers: home can mean where one usually lives; it can mean where one's family lives; it can mean one's native country (Ahmed, 1999), or it can also mean educational spaces (Brewer & McCabe, 2015; Stewart, 2011). With this understanding, Ahmed (1999) explained that individuals may have multiple homes with each one different from the other. As such, home is

described as conflated with or related to house, family, haven, self, gender, and journeying (Mallet, 2004). Mallet (2004) interrogated whether home is a place(s), space(s), feeling(s), practices, and/or an active state of being in the world. Many scholars have considered notions of being-at-home, creating, or making home, and the ideal home (e.g., Ahmed, 1999; Dossa & Golubovic, 2019; Jackson, 1995; Mallet, 2004; Somerville, 1997; Wardaugh, 1995). Home may also be concrete (i.e., a physical building), less concrete (i.e., a region or locality), or totally abstract (i.e., a spiritual home) (Annison, 2010). Similarly, Sixsmith (1986) classified home as personal, social, and physical. Sixsmith (1986) explained that home can be transitory or enduring in nature. These categories and meanings of home show that the concept has a variety of existential levels of meaning. Exploring the ideologies that surround these meanings might allow us to understand how Nigerian migrant children and their families in Canada consider and articulate their own meaning of home within their new home and school environments.

To complete this section of the study, I relied on searches through academic databases and online search engines such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and EBSCO host, from the University of Manitoba library. I believe those databases have the potential to identify the appropriate literature to compile a complete knowledge of past works on the notion of home and migration. The search was conducted by entering the following terms in the databases and/or search engines: migration and education, notions of home, migration and home, home and migration, homelessness, geography of home, home and African migrants, home and identity, educational home, migrant children and families, COVID-19 pandemic and schooling, COVID-19 pandemic and Manitoba, COVID-19, and African migrants. The results (i.e., journals, e-books, and edited books) of the search were compiled and used to review the literature for this study.

In the following sections, I will describe how home has been conceptualized within different categories of meaning. I will also problematize the ideas of home as they are combined with other concepts and in a way that may deepen knowledge of how migrants understand what constitutes home for them. Summarizing statements will conclude this section.

Home Conceptualized within Categories of Meaning

Given that the consideration of what constitutes a home differs from one person to another, Després (1991) as well as Sixsmith (1986) and Smith (1994), identified ten categories and meanings of home through interviewing individuals occupying the home. First, *home as security and control* (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986; Smith, 1994) refers to home as an arena of authority for an individual and as providing the individual with a sense of security. In this category, home can be viewed differently according to age and gender; as such, adults considered home to be a place of spatial control and supervision. In this same category, children regarded home as a place of freedom of activity and a place of physical and emotional security. The second category describes *home as a reflection of one's ideas and values* (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986; Smith, 1994). Individuals who identified in this category referred to their home as a symbol of how they see themselves and want to be seen by others. People in this group express their tastes, interests, and character through furniture and decoration, thus through objects and meaningful material possessions in the home. The third category that the authors identified defines *home as acting upon and modifying one's dwelling* (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986; Smith, 1994). This understanding of home translates home as emerging from the process of controlling and acting upon one's environment. The process of creating this kind of home includes people's physical, financial, and emotional involvement with their dwelling unit (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986; Smith, 1994). Després (1991) explained that regardless of the

age and gender of the people associating with this definition or category of home, it is still viewed as providing a sense of achievement and control, an avenue for self-expression, and a place for freedom of action (see also Smith, 1994).

In the fourth category, Després (1991) and Sixsmith (1986), as well as Smith (1994), categorized *home as permanence and continuity*. This category or conceptualization of home described home as a temporal process that can be experienced over time. That is, home may become a familiar environment over a period of time, a place that provides an individual with a sense of belonging and of having roots to a place (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986). Després (1991) explained that home may be perceived as memories, dating back to childhood for example, and/or a place where children were raised and/or a home before a beloved spouse died. As such, this notion of home indicates connections with individual's past experiences. The fifth category identified *home as the relationships with family and friends* (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986; Smith, 1994). In this dimension of home, the concept is described as a place to strengthen and secure the relationships with the people one cares about. Home is perceived and practiced as the place of needed emotional experience, and as providing an environment of social understanding where individuals' actions, opinions, and moods are accepted (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986). This dimension of home shows it as a place to share with others, such as a place to entertain relatives and friends, and to raise children (Després, 1991). The sixth category of home described *home as center of activities* (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986; Smith, 1994). In this dimension of the understanding of home, the concept acts as a purposive entity; that is, home as a behavioral center is supportive of one's work, hobby, and leisure activities and of activities related to human physiological needs (Després, 1991; Smith, 1994).

The seventh category of home that Després (1991), Sixsmith (1986), and Smith (1994) described illustrates *home as a refuge from the outside world*. This dimension of home embraces home as a haven or sanctuary and as such, that understanding is an essential feature of a home. That concept of home identifies it as a place to retreat from external pressures, a place for privacy, independence, and comfort and where levels of social interactions can be controlled (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986). The eighth category views *home as an indicator of one's personal status* (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986). This category of home shows how individuals view their home as showing their social status and socio-economic position. Després (1991) explained that this category of home is marked as the least important in the classifications of the meaning of home. The ninth category identifies *home as a material structure* (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986; Smith, 1994). In this category, home is described as the concrete physical structure of the dwelling. Després (1991) and Smith (1994) linked home to its unchangeable properties. Després (1991) explained that the structural dimensions of home may include the physical features of the neighborhood and the structures in which the home is located. The beauty and style, as well as the unique characteristics of the home, are classified as parts of the material structure of home (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986). The tenth and the last category describes *home as a place to own*. In this dimension, home is associated with a positive experience, and it is viewed as freedom of action, control of space, and permanency (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986; Smith, 1994). In this category, Després (1991) and Sixsmith (1986) explained that the ownership of home is often seen as giving solid ground to family life and thus, that notion plays an important role in the pride people attribute to their home. The ten categories of the meaning of home provide an understanding of the concepts of home through person-to-environment relationships and they mostly point to the physical dwelling of the home. As such,

these categories of home contribute to the forces that have helped in the development of the meaning of home for home occupants—their social construction of home—and thus may shape what is perceived as home and not simply reflect what is perceived.

Several researchers have critiqued, however, that these ten categories and articulated meanings of home assume a predominantly non-sociological approach in their analysis of home (e.g., Ahmed, 1999; Easthope, 2004; Mallet, 2004; Massey, 1994; Somerville, 1997). As such, the ten-point process utilized assesses priority to the meaning of home as referring to the spatial boundaries of home, of family territory, and of personal territories within the dwelling (Mallet, 2004; Somerville, 1997). Moreover, it may be noted that the emphasis is on control and security operating at different socio-spatial levels (i.e., person-room relations and/or family-neighborhood relations) and is expressed in physical and psychological terms (Somerville, 1997). Within these analyses, each meaning of home routinely emphasizes a certain particular meaning of home and neglects or downplays other meanings, particularly to the broader concept of culture and/or identity during challenging times such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the period of this research, home as people knew it became completely transformed because of COVID-19. Home suddenly became the literal, psychological, and emotional space where school and work took place simultaneously. This unusual time in our current history allowed people to reflect on what home meant to them. As a result, the outcomes of this study shifted dramatically as families considered home within their current contexts. To that end, some researchers (Mallet, 2004; Massey, 1994; Somerville, 1997) note that the attendant meanings of home in the authors' (Després, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986; Smith, 1994) analyses are weak and underdeveloped and as such, they lack any coherent or unified theories (Somerville, 1997).

The following sections discuss the ideas of home as they are integrated with other concepts in the literature. The sections investigate and critique the notions of home as a physical dwelling; home as real, ideal, and remembered; home as a haven or refuge; home as identity, self, and being; home as feeling or being-at-home in the world; and home as journeying. These interrogations will increase awareness of how migrants, particularly African migrants, may come to understand and articulate their perceptions, experiences, memories, and meanings of home.

Home as a Physical Dwelling

In this section, I start by describing the origin of the term home so as to deepen our understanding of its primary purposes in our society. I then describe how various scholars have problematized the ideas of home merely as a physical structure providing shelter for the individual. Lastly, I demonstrate how home might be reconceptualized as showing the relationships between and among societies, cultures, and individuals.

Some researchers have examined the origin of the word home as part of a comprehensive idea so as to identify the historical background of the term. According to Hollander (1991), the Germanic words for home, '*heim, ham, and heem,*' originated from the Indo-European *Kei*, which means to lie and/or laying down and something beloved or dear. In this case, home can mean to some extent a place to lay one's head (Hollander, 1991). Hollander (1991) explained that the German term for a house describes it as a physical structure where individuals reside, or a dwelling place for a family that then becomes permeated with the sense of home. The English term for home was derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *ham* which means a village, estate, or town (Hollander, 1991). Hollander (1991) stated that the understanding of home in English law came to encompass the important aspects that form the domestic principles designed as preserving familial property. As such, the western conception of home privileges a physical

structure or dwelling, such as a house and/or possession (Hollander, 1991). With this understanding, house and home come to mean the same entity.

Some scholars, however, have argued against the association between home and the physical dwelling, noting that such a conflation may reductively present home as one-dimensional (Dovey, 1985; Mallet, 2014; Nowicka, 2006; Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). Mallet (2004) noted that a physical dwelling or shelter involves only one aspect of home. Likewise, Ralph and Staeheli (2011) contested how home is often imagined as neatly confined and propose a conceptualization of home as “messy, mobile, blurred, and confused” (p. 3). Furthermore, Mallet (2004) considered home as a locale and defines it as “simultaneously and indivisibly a spatial and a social unit of interaction” (p. 68). This definition suggests that home might be “a place or space through which forms of social relations and social institutions are constituted and reproduced” (Mallet, 2004, p. 68). Mallet (2004) affirmed that “home is a ‘socio-spatial system’ that represents the fusion of the physical unit and the social unit” (p. 68). This idea suggests that home arises out of sets of connected elements and relationships. Ralph and Staeheli (2011) explained that the reconceptualization of home as tied to social and dynamic processes will deepen our understanding of how home is inflected with mobility and how migrants may well continue to ground their lives across locations and within sets of relationships.

According to some authors, the home also may be viewed beyond just a physical structure, but also as the “crucible of the social system” (Mallet, 2004, p. 68), thus representing an important interface between society and the individual (Nowicka, 2006). Nowicka (2006) and Ralph and Staeheli (2011) explained that the creation of home emerges out of the reiteration of social processes and sets of relationships to both humans and non-humans. As such, the meaning of home varies within diverse cultural values and across cultural and social settings (Ralph &

Staeheli, 2011). For example, Mallet (2004) explained that within some households, gender and age are the key dimensions that differentiate members' perceptions of the meaning of home. Also, aspects such as location, together with class and/or ethnicity, may contribute to the differences in the meaning of home that occur between and among individuals (Mallet, 2004; Nowicka, 2006; Ralph & Staeheli, 2011).

Mallet (2004) called for the development of a more complex understanding and/or view of home that considers the interaction between place and social relationships. She (2004) explained that home "is always lived as a relationship, a tension....Like any words we use to cover a particular field of experience, home always begets its own negation....It may evoke security in one context and seem confining in another" (p. 70). Forming, re-forming, and sustaining these social relationships as an important facet of home can be challenging for individuals, particularly for migrants, as there may be frequent dissonance between their lived and their ideal experiences of home (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011).

Home as Real, Ideal, and as Remembered

In this section, I examine the concept of home as real, ideal, and as remembered in order to develop an understanding of how people perceive and experience home within a place or space. I also show the link between the real, ideal, and remembered home and how a person's lived experiences and memories of home are not essentially fixed but are fluid. Lastly, I describe the influence and the importance of memory in constructing the meaning of home for individuals, particularly for migrants.

Mallet (2004), and Ralph and Staeheli (2011), considered the notions of real and ideal meanings of home and describe the symbolic potency of the ideal or idealized notions of home with the real-life currently lived experience of home. Ralph and Staeheli (2011) described the

ideal home as a sentimental and nostalgic journey for a lost time and space, and/or a search for a promised land—a place where individuals would be fulfilled. The debates about the ideal home may largely focus on nostalgic and romantic notions of home (Mallet, 2004; Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). However, the descriptions of a real home are based on people's diverse lived experiences and understandings of home. Mallet (2004) argued that the concepts both of home as ideal and home as reality are integral to the individual's social construction of their perceptions. Both Mallet (2004) and Ralph and Staeheli (2011) expounded that the real and ideal notions of home are not pure or separate concepts of domains; they are mutually defining concepts and experiences that may be combined to explain the meaning individuals attribute to home. To support their claim, Ralph and Staeheli (2011) argued that while home for migrants is about the real experiences of creating and maintaining connections and links among various locations, such constructions of home as reality do not necessarily undermine the continued salience of home's idealized features such as one's memories of home. Conversely, however, constantly revisiting memories of home through objects, for example, can lead to a romanticized, nostalgic feeling or view that may often be in tension with the day-to-day lived experience of home in a new locale (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011).

In understanding the links between home and remembrance, Massey (1992, 1994) explained that the boundaries of home are permeable and as such, home has no static essential past. The identity and meaning of a home may be constructed and negotiated (Massey, 1994) through memories. Massey (1992) confirmed that "remembering, which involves memories of the traditional, are important in constructing the meaning of home because they illuminate and transform the present" (p. 14). Massey (1992) asserted that the notion of home is created by the social relations that arise in a specific location, the social effects that occur in this interaction,

and the positive interrelations with elsewhere. Moreover, to make sense of the meaning of home, Ralph and Staeheli (2011) called our consideration to the role of imagination, aspiration, and desire in shaping or influencing where migrants locate or find a new place to call home. To that end, the identification of a place as home is provisional and/or in flux (Mallet, 2004). The identity and meaning of a place and/or home were created and negotiated through both the lived experiences and the memories of home for migrant children and their families.

Easthope (2004), Mallet (2004), Massey (1994), and Rapport and Dawson (1998) also described the role of memory in constructing the meaning of home for migrants. As well, Massey (1994) and Rapport and Dawson (1998) expounded that home for this group involves their cultural norms and imaginations. As such, while explaining their ideas, Rapport and Dawson (1998) described that “home brings together memory and longing, the ideational, the effective and physical, the spatial and the temporal, the local and the global, the positively evaluated and the negatively” (p. 8). Similarly, Mallet (2004) and Easthope (2004) suggested that an individual’s home memories, including their tenure in any given home, is vital to their understanding of the meaning of home, as well as their view of the ideal home. Thus, the relationship between home and memory may be complex and fluid (Mallet, 2004; Massey, 1994) for migrants. The process of remembering illustrates the essence and meaning of home and how migrants may ground their lives across international borders. The memories of the home may define migrants’ appreciations and aspirations of home, especially when home is remembered as a haven (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011).

Home as Haven or Refuge

In this section, I define how home is often described in the literature as a haven or refuge. I also explain the differences between the notions of the public and private, and inside and

outside world. Lastly, I describe the challenges that surround the idea of home as haven and offer some critical approaches that question the conception of home as a haven.

The conceptualization of home as a haven or refuge suggests that home may be a place and/or space where people can retreat and relax (Mallet, 2004), a source of protection (Somerville, 1997). This understanding of home is connected to the distinction between concepts of public and private, and inside and outside world (Mallet, 2004; Somerville, 1997). The inside domain of the home suggests a comfortable, secure, safe, and defined space. On the other hand, the outside domain is perceived as an imposing, a threatening and dangerous space, as well as a more diffused and less defined space (Mallet, 2004; Somerville, 1997). Mallet (2004) explained that in “the outside domain, there are different performative expectations for individuals and as such, there are different rules for engagement with people, places, and things” (p. 70). This dichotomy of inside and outside meanings of home tends to concentrate on the physical construction of boundaries, the formation of personal space, and the sociological dualism of inside/outside relations (Somerville, 1997).

The notion of home as a refuge also suggests that home is a private, “often familial realm visibly distinguished from public space and removed from public scrutiny and surveillance” (Mallet, 2004, p. 71). Mallet (2004) explained that the “public sphere is associated with work and political engagements and non-kin relationships” (p. 71). In contrast to a notion of home as public, Somerville (1997) described the private realm of the home as a space that offers freedom, personal control, and security, and that provides opportunity for creativity and rejuvenation. This meaning of home as a refuge illustrates home as a place of intimacy that provides a context for close, caring relationships (Mallet, 2004), as well as personal fulfillment for which privacy is essential (Somerville, 1997). Saunders and Williams (1988) described that the understanding of

home as a distinct private domain is supported by three interrelated ideas: privacy, privatism, and privatization. Saunders and Williams (1988) expounded that these ideas about home as a haven or refuge describe home as a place or space where the private spheres of social life are reproduced. Such understandings of home rest upon ideas about the home as the locale in which migrants' intimate relationships can be constructed and maintained (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). However, COVID-19 required both employed adults and school students to connect through video conferencing on a daily basis, which allowed the public to have a view of their private space.

In describing home as a safe haven for queer migrant subjects, Gopinath (2005) described that "the home is seen as a place to be left behind, to be escaped in order to emerge into another liberatory space" (p. 14). Gopinath explained that this queer group views home as a major site of gender and sexual oppression. She expounded that often "staying put becomes a way of remaining within the oppressive structure of the home—as domestic space, racialized community space, and national space—while imaginatively working to dislodge its heteronormative logic" (pp.14-15). Gopinath (2005) radically resituated questions of home, dwelling, and domestic space of migrants, particularly for queer individuals living in the diaspora. Gopinath posited that diaspora is a space of refuge for queer migrants' subjects over their (home) nation which is seen as a space of sexual oppression. Thus, Canada may provide a refuge for queer migrant subjects along with their families against gender and sexual oppression.

The ideas around home as haven or refuge that suggest home as a private realm are not without their difficulties. Jones (2000) argued that the characterization of home as haven is an expression of an idealized, romanticized, or even nostalgic notion of home, and it is often at odds with the reality of many people's lived experiences of home. For example, the COVID-19

pandemic challenged the idea of home as a private domain when everyone around the world was forced to work and study at home. Suddenly, people were able to see each other's living spaces via online platforms, such as Zoom, Skype, or Teams, in an unprecedented scale. Similarly, Fairhurst (1998) contended that while the home is characterized by intimate relations, such intimacy may include experiences of violent treatment. Brickell (2012), Fairhurst (1998), and Jones (2000), for example, rejected the idea that the 'private haven' is predominantly a secure, safe, or regenerative space because there is increasing evidence of women, children, and older people being subjected to violence and abuse in their own home environments. As such, home for these groups of people may be a site of fear and isolation, a prison, a threat to safety, rather than a place of absolute freedom and/or ontological security (Brickell, 2012; Giddens, 1990). Wardaugh (1999) discarded the dichotomy of safe-inside and dangerous-outside descriptions of home. She (1999) explained that "privacy, safety, security, comfort and refuge are not necessarily associated with the inside description of home but may be found beyond its reaches" (p. 96). Wardaugh (1999) also stated that danger, fear, and insecurity are not always located in the outside world, but quite the opposite.

Wardaugh further argued that the beliefs and notions of home as a haven contribute to the creation of the feeling of homelessness. Wardaugh (1999) clarified that "those who are abused and violated within the domestic spaces are likely to feel homeless at home and many subsequently become homeless in an objective sense, in that they escape, or are ejected from their violent homes" (pp. 96-97). Similarly, Wardaugh (1999) also noted that "those who reject or are unable to conform to the conventional ideas and expressions of gender, sexuality, and class might both be symbolically and literally excluded from the notion or semblance of home" (p. 97). This resonated with Brickell's (2012) and Schroder's (2006) views of home as a

potential site of exclusion, emotional struggle, ambivalence, violence, fear, and/or conflict. As well, Sibley (1995) confirmed that this understanding of home might also be perceived as a space “where a fear of difference, of non-conforming people, activities or artifacts can be projected onto the objects and spaces comprising the home” (p. 91). Thus, while home may be viewed as a vital space for understanding the micro-geographies of social and safe spatial boundaries (Wardaugh, 1999), it may also be seen as a vulnerable crucible or space of alienation and exclusion (Brickell, 2012; Schroder, 2006).

Other critics of the idea of home as an enclosed, private space and as a haven from the outside world have provided some examples to support their position. Jackson (1995) described the nomadic peoples whose dwelling is not synonymous with being housed and settled, and that they do not focus on the idea of home as a private place that is visibly differentiated from the outside world. Similarly, Jackson (1995) described the people of Nuakata Island, Papua New Guinea, whose home is variously interpreted as matrilineal villages or the island itself, and that they do not perceive their home as a private physical dwelling that is clearly distinguished from an outside world. Rather, they associate their home to the lands and places where their matrilineal ancestors stayed or dwelled (Jackson, 1995). Home, then, may become an expression of a person’s subjectivity in the world rather than an identifiable refuge. With this understanding, home simply might be a space or place where African migrant children and their families feel at ease and are able to express and fulfill their unique selves or identities.

Home as Identity, Self, and Being

In this section, I discuss the relationship between home as identity, self, and being so as to deepen an understanding of these concepts. In doing this, I describe how home is fundamental to identity, self, and existence for example, as a culture, an emotional environment, and/or a

geographical location. Lastly, I explain how the bonds between people and home are formed by social and cultural conditions.

Scholars have discussed the relationships between home and identity, and/or the idea of the self (e.g., Easthope, 2004; Mallet, 2004; Manzo, 2003; Massey 1994; Somerville, 1997). Mallet (2004) and Manzo (2003) explained that home is an expression or symbol of the self and as such, it may be an emotional environment, a culture, a location, a political system, a historical time and place, a house, and/or a combination of all these things. Easthope (2004) and Manzo (2003) considered home as an inalienable source of identity and explain that identity is created both internally in the mind and through the person's interactions with the outside world. Similarly, Mallet (2004) visualized home in terms of "concentric circles" (p. 83). Mallet (2004) explained that these circles embody an aspect of existential experience that comprise house, town, family, social environment, personal environment, the nation, civic society, the civilization, and the world: "Deprived of all the aspects of his home, man [*sic*] would be deprived of himself, of his humanity" (Mallet, 2004, p. 83). The international travel restrictions put in place during COVID-19 threatened access to participants home countries and added a complexity to their ability to maintain their sense of identity. Mallet (2004) affirmed that "the circles of our home are an inalienable part of us, and an inseparable component of our human uniqueness and identity" (p. 84). Easthope (2004) also confirmed that our personal identity is no longer understood as "a matter of sheer self-consciousness but now involves essentially an awareness of one's place, an awareness that there is no place without self; and no self without place" (p. 130). This understanding about home allowed me, as the researcher, to explore how Nigerian migrant children and families understand the bonds and relationships they have

established that have shaped their identities and connected those identities to their new home environments.

Easthope (2004) used the term *topophilia* to explain the affective bond between people and home. She explained that this bond can be stronger for some individuals than for others and may be expressed differently by people from different cultures. Easthope explained that “*topophilia* is an effective response to place, but it is also a practice that can actively produce places for people” (p. 130). In this sense, the bond that people nurture toward and within a place can change the nature of that place. As such, home is being with others, and being with others also constitutes the individual, a reciprocal creating and being (Mallet, 2004). With such an understanding, Mallet (2004) described home as “the intersubjective relationships that brings a self, person or I into being or existence” (p. 83). Home is thus understood as fundamental to the interrelated process of becoming and the more static state of being. Easthope (2004) confirmed that “the life of the mind is given form in the places and spaces in which people dwell and those places influence human memories, feelings and thoughts” (p. 130). Easthope explained that the bond between people and home means that the investigation of home is essential and that while senses of home are developed from every aspect of individuals’ life experience, senses of place permeate everyday life and experiences. Moreover, one’s sense of place is shaped in part by the social, cultural, and economic circumstances in which individuals find themselves (Easthope, 2004, Mallet, 2004, Somerville, 1997). The idea or sense of home is thus a social construct (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Massey, 1994), and as such, the meanings of home are inherent in the connotation individuals give to them. This concept of home would allow the researcher to explore how Nigerian migrant children and their families culturally interpret the world around

them, former and current, and how they actively give meaning to their experiences of home, self, identity, and the notions of being and feeling at home.

Home, and Feeling or Being-at-Home in the World

This section describes the notion of being and feeling at home in the world so as to increase our awareness about the different ways that people construct, imagine, and recount their experiences and memories of home. The section also explores the different ways individuals may think about home and away from home, how the construction of home is founded in various activities, for example, that make individuals feel welcome within a place or space. Lastly, I describe the complexity, as well as the fluidity, that surrounds the notion of home as an individual's expression of their shifting identity and/or sense of self in the world.

Researchers have considered the notion of being-at-home in their efforts to comprehend the meaning of home (e.g., Ahmed, 1999; Jackson, 1995; Mallet, 2004; Somerville, 1997). In her article entitled "Home and Away: Narratives of Migration and Estrangement," Ahmed (1999) described the experiences of being-at-home in the world. For Ahmed, home is a stative verb rather than a noun, a state of being which is not essentially confined by a geographical location. Somerville (1997) also explained that phenomenologists do not attempt to describe the essence of home or to confine an individual's experiences of home. Instead, they focus their observations on how people make sense of home in diverse ways and how they feel and think about home. Ahmed (1999) described how the experience of home is not limited to a fixed site, but that it can be the in-between space. Ahmed (1999) explained that "home is here, not a particular place that one simply inhabits, but more than one place. The journey between homes provides the subject with the contours of a space of belonging" (p. 330). Ahmed's concept of home showed the dialectical relationship between the self and object in a deliberate production of home that

supports the subject's understanding of home. As such, "the movement between homes hence allows home to become an image, to become separated from the particular worldly space of living here, through the possibility of some memories" (Ahmed, 1999, p. 331). A place, then, may be understood to be elsewhere, but it is also where the self is going (Ahmed, 1999).

Somerville (1997) posited that home cannot be adequately conceptualized in terms of space and time but, rather, (1992, 1997) explained that home is in part an ideological construct, and that ideology recognizes no mere spatial or temporal boundaries. Somerville (1992) wrote to support his claim:

Home is not just a matter of feelings and lived experience but also of cognition and intellectual construction: people may have a sense of home even though they have no experience or memory of it... We cannot know what home really is outside of these ideological structures. (p. 530)

Moreover, Somerville (1997) explained that individuals are understood to construct mental representations of the world. In that process, people may become attached even to certain objects in the world and they may tend to identify themselves with these objects in order to preserve their sense of identity within their everyday lives (Somerville, 1997). Somerville (1997) asserted that by restricting home to solely a locale, that many ideas of home may be left out of its meaning. Somerville postulated a provisional, conceptual constructive meaning of home. He identified six key signifiers of home: shelter, hearth, privacy, roots, abode, and paradise. Within this ideological construction of home, Somerville concluded that the important goal is to understand what the home means to different people and to endeavor to elucidate the range of different meanings that we find within our research. Somerville (1997) called for a unitary social phenomenology grounded in a belief in the socially, historically, and culturally dependent nature

of social relations—relations that are understood and constructed by the deliberate action of free agents.

Similarly, Jackson (1995) described individuals' experiences of being-at-home in the world without alluding to fixed notions of society, culture, and the person. Jackson (1995) explained that home is grounded less in a place and more in the activity that occurs in the place. Jackson (1995) described how in different societies, "people work—in reality and through illusion, alone and in concert with others to shape the course of their own lives" (p. 123). Jackson (1995) explained that "home is lived in the tension between the given and the chosen, then and now, here and there" (p. 123). Mallet (2004) added to the complexity as she contends that the dialectical tension between shaping and being shaped by the world often shifts too far towards one direction or the other, leading to alienation and exclusion.

Wardaugh (1999) explained that while home is at least partially a physical place, it is more a state of being that is lived, a space that is an expression of social meanings and identities. She (1999) emphasized that the concept of home cannot exist without the accompanying concept of homelessness and that "home and homelessness exist in a dynamic dialectical relationship. The concept of home and homelessness are not oppositional fixed terms; rather, they refer to complex and shifting experiences and identities" (Wardaugh, 1999, p. 95) that occur over periods of time. This understanding of home demonstrates how an individual's identity and experience of being in the world are not based on a fixed association with a singular home. As such, the concept allows for a fluid model of identification with various places and various homes. This approach allows the researcher to explore how Nigerian migrants articulate a multilayered, hybrid identity that affirms their experience of self and feeling at home for example, as they

journey through the world (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). Contrastingly, the experience of living in the COVID-19 pandemic forced people to find a place-based home, at least temporarily.

Home and Journeying

In this section, I analyze the notion of home and journey, or the home-leaving concepts, so as to deepen an understanding of how migrants might identify the meaning and experiences of home across transnational boundaries. I posit how home may be constructed out of a migrant's movement, rather than seen as what is built in a fixed and bounded spatial realm. I also explain how the construction of home may occur in various relational conditions that give meaning to migrants' understanding and experiences of home. Lastly, I argue how home comprises an encounter and experience of both the strange and the familiar.

The essence of home as a journey is associated with considerations of home-leaving and/or staying, ideas that are fundamentally associated with migrants and refugees (Ahmed, 1999; Ralph & Staeheli, 2011; Tucker, 1994). Home, in this sense, is represented as a spatial and relational realm (Dovey, 1985) from which people may venture into the world (Rapport & Dawson, 1998). For Ahmed (1999), home may be less about where one is from and more about where a person is going. Ahmed (1999) contends that "home becomes the necessity of the subject's future..., rather than the past which binds the self to a given place" (p. 331). Ahmed's argument is consistent with that of Massey (1994), that the nature of home has always been open and constructed out of the movement that is stretched beyond it. In recounting the experiences of migrants and refugees, Tucker (1994) explained that home-searching is a basic human trait, but one that arises out of the inclination of humans to migrate as a means of ensuring their survival. Dossa and Golubovic (2019) state that "migration has moved away from the dominance of territorialized and nationalized forms of belonging and towards cross-border, multi-sited, and

extra-national affiliations” (p. 177). The meaning of home as a journey has also been linked to other concepts such as dependency, interdependence, and autonomy, as well as continuity and dis/location (Dossa & Golubovic, 2019; Mallet, 2004). Mallet (2004) concluded that the conditions by which people leave their homelands, their journeys beyond and away from home, and their destinations will all often impact their identity and their understanding of the meaning of home.

Moreover, movement, as including the leaving of the familiar—even if that might be negative—may be understood as involving an encounter with strange lands and strangers that may engender feelings of homeless states of being or identities (Ahmed, 1999; Jackson, 1995). Both Ahmed (1999) and Jackson (1995) explained that home is not a pure confined or fixed space of belonging and identity, and that researchers should direct their attention to consider what it means to be at home, to inhabit a particular space, and that they should continuously question the relationship between and among identity, belonging, and home. Ahmed (1999) offered a migrant ontology as well as a consideration of the historical patterns so as to understand the relation between home and the world of migrants who have left home. Ahmed (1999) used the term nomadism to make clear what it means to be in the world and explains that such movements cannot be attached with any fixed notions of home or origin. Instead, Ahmed (1999) explained that nomadism, which may (or may not) be synonymous with migration, is associated with a movement that goes beyond all forms of boundaries (Ahmed, 1999).

Ahmed (1999) explained further that home may be experienced and occupied by strangers. Thus, home encompasses movement which involves strangers, that is, both the strange and the familiar:

There is always an encounter with strangeness at stake, even within the home: the home does not secure identity by expelling strangers but requires those strangers to establish relations of proximity and distance within the home, and not just between home and away....There is already strangeness and movement within the home itself. (p. 340)

Ahmed expounded that when one is at home, one is a member of the family, a neighbor, a friend, and when one leaves home one would become the stranger, for example. Thus, the experience of “home always involves encounters between those who stay at home, those who arrive, and those who leave” (Ahmed, 1999, p. 340). Ahmed concluded that home does not stay at the same space, which is simply the familiar; there is movement and dislocation within the construction of home and thus, home is a complex and contingent space(s) of inhabitation.

Summarizing the Nature of Home

The consideration of the nature of home in the previous sections deepens understanding of what it means to be at home and/or to inhabit a place and might question the association between and among identity, belonging, and home (see Ahmed, 1999). The boundaries between home and self, and between home and away, are permeable. As such, these examined concepts of home offer some insight into how migrants may attempt to make sense of home, as the various concepts illustrate complex models of identification with home that overlap in different and important ways. Furthermore, the complex and ambiguous models of identification of home demonstrates how various concepts of consideration might weave within a migrant’s movements during the leaving of one place and their experiences as they settle in another.

The review of literature regarding the notions of home also deepens knowledge regarding the complex and multi-dimensional meanings of home. In problematizing and considering home

as complex and involving several aspects, the meaning of home is no longer confined within a manufactured dichotomy and/or strict constructs. A home is not simply a physical location, but is located in both space and time, as well as in social interactions among people and their environments. Cultural beliefs and social practices shape the broad range of formal indicators of home within any socio-cultural context. Therefore, home is a social and cultural construct, the boundaries of which are not fixed, but rather imbued and unstable. As such, the definition and identification of home is in a continuous state of flux. Home is constructed and negotiated through both lived experiences and memories of home. These lived conditions, as well as imaginations, aspirations, and desires for home may shape or influence how people define what is meant by home.

Home is described as a place or space where the private and public spheres of social life are reproduced (Saunders & Williams, 1988). With every aspect of social life, home and its relationships are intersectional; that is, informed and formed by considerations of class, gender, race, age, and sexuality, for example. While home may be a haven or refuge for some individuals, it may also be a place riven with inequality, power, and violence as well as or instead of intimacy, love, and care. Home may occur in a dynamic, dialectical relationship with the self and object and/or in an encounter with strangers. Experiences of home and being in the world are not merely based on a static identification with a singular home, as home may be experienced on one's journey, meeting strangers, and/or experiencing both the strange and the familiar. To that end, it is crucial to explore migrants' unfixed identifications with multiple homes, an approach that may inspire an understanding of a complex and salient narrative related to the experience of home as migrants have emigrated from their countries of origin to Canada.

Home and Migration

In this section, I define and combine the notions of home and migration to facilitate understanding of how migrants construct and re-imagine home across international borders. In so doing, I also explain the changing relations between the concepts of home and migration and discuss how the forces of globalization continue to shape and influence migration and thus, migrants' lives. Then I examine the challenges and advantages of finding a home during the migration process. I conclude this section with some summarizing thoughts and statements.

The meaning of home for migrants shifts and evolves (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002), as migration is a journey that includes the crossing of borders (Ahmed, 1991; Chambers, 1994). Chambers (1994) asserted that migration involves movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival may be immutable or certain. Likewise, the notions of home carry contradictions and ambiguities, particularly for migrant children and their families. For example, home has been described as a place of refuge (Mallet, 2004). On the other hand, it has also been perceived as a site of violence, oppression, and alienation (Brickell, 2012; Schroder, 2006). Home can be firmly rooted in a place (Nowicka, 2006), or be experienced as an abstraction that extends beyond individual's physical dwelling (Ahmed, 1999; Ralph & Staeheli, 2011; Wardaugh, 1999). Home can be understood as fixed and bounded (Després, 1991; Hollander, 1991), but also as mobile and messy (Nowicka, 2006; Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). The notion of home has been discussed to show that relationships between self and identity link individuals with the internal world and external world (Massey, 1994; Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). Migrants leaving their countries of origin strive to make a new home and negotiate the contradictions and ambiguities that surround all these explored notions of home.

Rapport and Dawson (1998) explained that there is an implicit recognition in the description of home and migration that there is a dynamic relationship between the two concepts:

Increasingly, one is seen moving between homes, erstwhile to current or as moving between multiple homes, from one compressed socio-cultural environment to another; or as being at home in continuous movement, among creolized cultural forms; and so, one's home is movement *per se*. (p. 27)

Rapport and Dawson (1998) illustrated that there is a fundamental relationship between movement, and distinct cultural practice and expression, and as such, the act of migration brings individuals into a new cultural and political environment. The authors (1998) concluded that “not only can one be at home in movement, but movement can be one's very home. One's identity is formed on the move: a migrant's tale of stuttering transitions and heterogeneities” (p. 27). Such understandings about home and migration allow us to reconsider how migrant children and their families re-create home in their new environments.

Globalization is one of the forces shaping the character and impact of migration (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002; Chambers, 2004; Doyle, 2004). As such, the volume of human mobility around the globe permeates all facets of present-day life (Urry, 2000). For example, Al-Ali and Koser (2002), and Chambers (2004), described the relationship between specific circumstances around migration and migrants' distinctive conceptions of home. With this understanding, Doyle (2004) clarified the differences between voluntary and involuntary migrants so as to understand the global flows of migrants and the conditions that impact and/or motivate how they may come to realize home in different ways. Doyle (2004) explained that voluntary migrants (e.g., skilled and unskilled labor specifically targeted by the receiving country's economic immigration policies; see OECD, 2019) move with the initial intention of establishing permanent residence in their

countries of destination. As such, finding a better opportunity in the receiving country is often the reason for voluntary migration (Doyle, 2004). Involuntary migrants include refugees and those with refugee-like status, including those seeking temporary protection (Doyle, 2004). Refugees are forced to leave their countries often owing to fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, and/or membership in a particular social group (UNHCR, 2015). Chambers (2004) explained that the particular living conditions, before, in the country of origin and, after, in the newly formed residence can influence migrant's articulations of home. Thus, home for migrants may be "spaces inhabited by people of various social classes, different generations and political orientations with diverse experiences of previous and current homes and the movements between them" (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002, p. 6). Al-Ali and Koser (2002) concluded that whether one migrates voluntarily or involuntarily has significant implications for post-migration identity development. In the following section I will explore the 'gain and loss' aspects of finding a new home in migration and thus, describe how these aspects may have a lasting impact on migrants' lives and their accompanying concepts of home.

Gain and Loss Aspects of Finding a Home in Migration

In this section, I discuss the 'gain and loss' aspects of finding a new home to elucidate how migrants may perceive and articulate their sense of belonging in the host country. I start by describing the loss that migrants may experience in their transition to a new home, which may be related to their values, traditions, and ideals for example, that may be lost over time as a result of migration. Then, I examine how migrants' movements away from their originating physical, cultural, economic, social, political, and/or environmental spaces may positively influence their lives in their new home. I also critique aspects of finding home, particularly the economic gain (i.e., careers, quality of life, safety, and reliable infrastructures) of finding a home, as I review

research that indicates some variations of viewpoint among migrant groups that are from different areas of the world.

The ‘gain and loss’ aspects of finding a new home refer to the implications of leaving familiar things in one’s country of origin and starting something new in another. As such, within all of us, the internal and external ties to our past and to that reality still form part of our current existence and identity, or how we are and how we see ourselves (Pollock, 1989). Moreover, the search for a new home might be self-motivated or voluntary, or, on the other hand, necessitated by the involuntary nature of social and political upheavals that mandated migration (Pollock, 1989). Pollock (1989) confirmed that sometimes a search for a new home may have been motivated as a means of survival. Similarly, the search for a new home may include a seeking of business opportunities, family reunification, education, and/or a desire for change and exploration, as well as a fleeing from poverty, persecution, war, and/or natural disaster in one’s originating home country (Williams, et al., 2012). Williams et al. (2012) explained that regardless of the reasons for migration, migrants bring with them rich cultures and ways of being that may be sources of inspiration and growth in the receiving countries, such as Canada. As such, Pollock (1989) contended that “we cannot, we should not, we must not disavow our heritage lest we lose more than we gain” (p. 145). Pollock called for the amalgams of the old and the new in order to enrich us all.

Pollock (1989), and Williams et al. (2012), explained that when one is forced and/or involuntarily leaves one’s country of origin or physical home, the experience involves a loss and severance. Povrzanovic-Frykman (2002) asserted that the physical space of the home, even if that is a country that one involuntarily leaves, is of primary importance because it is a place where one’s personal identity is situated and confirmed, as well as where one’s everyday routine,

negative and/or positive, has been maintained. Pollock (1989) expounded that coming to a new home involves, for many migrants,

learning a new language, hearing different songs and news reports, having to participate in or watch new sports, getting used to new foods, learning new customs, becoming immersed in new historical and cultural heroes, learning new forms of government, new mores, new folkways. (pp. 147-148)

Pollock explained that the pain of the severance and the loss of security of what one identifies with in the country of origin may result in a feeling of loss for migrants even as they settle in their new home. Also, Williams et al. (2012) described migrants' losses in terms of the values, traditions, ideals, and elements that migrants give up in order to embrace the culture of their new home environment. White's (2012) study, elaborated in *Immigration Experience: Losses and Gains for Immigrant and Refugee Women*, describes that the lack of community support to raise their children was one of the losses identified by these women. She (2012) expounded that the losses these women experienced in the receiving country grew as individualism and independence increased. White explained that the immigrant and refugee women in her study highlighted the importance of relationships and connections within their community and to one another that had helped them thrive in their country of origin. White (2012) concluded that through the celebration of many of the migrants' cultures, traditions, and rites, migrants may maintain connections to one another, celebrate and sustain nurturing roles, and develop an awareness of themselves in their new communities and in the world.

Hendriks et al. (2018) also described the severe costs associated with finding a home. The authors (2018) explained that many of these costs are associated within the critical well-being domains, particularly those relating to social and esteem needs. For example, Hendriks et al.

(2018) described the articulated feeling of homesickness caused by separation from friends and family from the country of origin, as well as social exclusion in the receiving country (e.g., discrimination), socio-economic issues, and decreased social participation due to linguistic and cultural barriers as the social costs when in search of a new home. The authors (2018) expounded that the social costs and/or losses often result in experiences of social isolation, loneliness, depression, and impaired social support among migrants. These costs may result in mental health problems and can exacerbate the stress of migrant children and their families while they struggle to find a sense of belonging in their new home.

The gains aspect of finding a new home, which can be viewed as elements that might positively influence migrants' lives in their new home, may vary for individual migrants. The gains realized in a new home may encompass safety, security (e.g., economic), freedom (e.g., political), education, gender and income equality, and/or health care accessibility (Barkin, 1967; Hendriks et al., 2018; Osiname, 2018; Tushabe, 2019). For example, Osiname's (2018) study, entitled *Experiences of African Refugee Young Adults in Winnipeg, Canada*, noted that the participants expressed appreciation for the freedom they experienced to live without fear and coercion in their new home. There was a consensus among the participants that they felt safe in Canada and that inherent within the safety was a feeling of freedom that they had not experienced prior to arriving in Canada. Osiname (2018) concluded that the experience of freedom in Canada helped these young adults gain confidence that made a difference for them and contributed to their positive social adjustment to life in their new home.

Similarly, Hendriks et al. (2018) described the economic gains experienced by voluntary migrants. The authors (2018) explained that finding a new home for voluntary migrants may lead to improved well-being, as some of these migrants often cite improvements in quality of life in

their destination countries. Likewise, Barkin (1967) described the economic gains that voluntary migrants may experience, which include “the experience, the knowledge of a new language, the understanding of urban society, the insights into ways people in the destination countries live, and the newly acquired specific occupational skills and industrial know-how” (pp. 504-505). Tushabe (2019) affirmed in her article, *Those Who Journey See: Becoming a Canadian Citizen is a Transformation with Gains and Losses*, that “migrating, wherever that may lead you, will open your eyes to the unfamiliar. It exposes you to the experiences that will transform you, whether you like it or not” (CBC News, Saskatchewan, para. 5). Tushabe described that within the experience of finding a home, she has simultaneously become a mother, a wife, and a writer and thus, expresses gratitude for migrating to Canada as having facilitated her success. Hendriks et al. (2018) confirmed that migrants may experience considerable life satisfaction in their host countries and, as such, these gains may positively affect their lives in their new home environments.

Some studies have problematized the assessment of life satisfaction and showed some variations in its perceived presence, which can be partly explained by differences in the characteristics of migrants’ countries of origin and the migrants’ experiences in their home countries (e.g., Bartram, 2011; Bohnke, 2008; Frank, Hou, & Schellenberg, 2014; Hendriks et al., 2018). These studies indicate that national conditions of migrants’ source countries may account for some difference in perceived life satisfaction among immigrant groups and, in particular, that migrants from a developed country have experienced higher success levels than those from a developing country and thus assess their life satisfaction with a different scale. Bartram (2011) found lower levels of life satisfaction among immigrants in the United States who came from developing nations than among those from developed nations; particularly,

immigrants from Europe and Canada do not differ significantly from the American-born population in terms of perceived life satisfaction, while those from Asia, Latin America, and Africa report significantly lower levels of life satisfaction. Bartram (2011) explained that aspects such as knowledge of the underlying culture within the destination country, common language, recognition of qualifications, as well as lack of discrimination due to visible characteristics such as race and/or religion are inherent within the difference.

Bohnke (2008), Frank et al. (2014), and Helliwell et al. (2009) argued that while economic conditions are important to individuals' life satisfaction evaluations, the social context is equally important. Similarly, White (2012) contended that while the economic dimension of migrating may be vital to the lives of migrants, it is only one dimension. Several authors (e.g., Bartram, 2011; Bohnke, 2008; Frank et al., 2014, Helliwell et al., 2009; Hendriks et al., 2018; White, 2012) affirm that the non-economic factors (e.g., social) can contribute significantly to migrants' well-being, and thus affect their happiness and assist in their positive identity formation in the destination country. In the following sections, I will examine literature that addresses how a migrant's identity is negotiated and formed during migration and in their new home environments. I will also explore the complexities that migrant children and their families might experience that may influence their sense of identity and belonging within their local educational setting.

Home: Identity Formation in Migration

In this section, I examine salient notions of home and how those affect identities for migrants, as the two concepts are indivisible aspects that shape migrants' past and current constructions and experiences of home. I also illustrate how migrants negotiate identities within multiple home spaces, both in their country of origin and destination countries. Lastly, I discuss

how migrants' identities are not fixed but may involve dynamic and fluid identifications with multiple homes.

The concepts of home and migrants' identity formation are inseparable because with all movements and border crossings, the changing nature of home is a salient indicator within migrants' identity construction (Kinefuchi, 2010). Kinefuchi (2010) emphasized that "how we view, construct, and experience home inform and help to shape us: who we were, who we are and who we will be" (p. 231). Al-Ali and Koser (2002) expounded that often migrants are faced with questions around identity and home; that is, grappling with a sense of who they understand themselves to be in relation to home. Chambers (1994) explained that the concepts of home and identity for migrants vary and that these concepts depend on a migrant's political, economic, cultural, and personal circumstances of immigration and post-migration lives. Kinefuchi (2010) further expounded that because devastating conflicts, unequal global economies, and environmental devastations for example, continue to move people internationally, there is a strong need for finding home space and a sense of cultural belonging in new places. As such, Pipher (2002) confirmed that "place is identity because identity is shaped through a shared space, a community, a home that serves a global positioning system" (p. 22). In this sense, identity remains incomprehensible unless it is located in the world and unless one becomes aware of how others then articulate and explain that world (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Through human connections and interactions in the receiving communities and countries, migrants' identities are influenced, re-formed, and recreated within their new home.

Kinefuchi (2010) and Ralph and Staeheli (2011) explained that contemporary migrants continuously negotiate identities between their old and new world and forge new iterations of identification with home in both places. Similarly, in his study about the Jews who are located

outside Israel, Hoffman (1999) explained that the Jews have preserved their identity by nurturing a strong notion of home which, although identified by the physical location of Israel, has become less geographic and more spiritual over time. Hoffman's (1999) study revealed the link between home and identity and clarifies that migrants may maintain contacts across international borders, and thus their identity is not essentially tied to a single home. Al-Ali and Koser (2002) argued that "it is not only national, cultural and social belongings but also a sense of self, of one's identity, which corresponds to various conceptualizations of home" (p. 7). These listed aspects (i.e., national, cultural, and social belonging) lead to a social construction of the sense of self.

Furthermore, Magat's (1999) study of Israeli and Japanese immigrants to Canada illustrated how different concepts of the nature of self, as well as levels of commitment to new places, affect migrants' adaptive responses. For Israeli migrants, Magat (1999) explained that those participants with a strong identity with Israel are confronted with a dilemma if considering the idea of establishing new homes elsewhere. These particular Israeli participants in his study explained that only Israel is their true home and that having other homes would lead to a fragmentation of individual selves. In contrast, Magat (1999) explained that the Japanese migrants in his study experienced that they can live comfortably outside of their country of origin, and thus form multiple homes and senses of belonging while retaining a strong Japanese identity because home and country of origin are less strongly conflated. This understanding of the link between home and identity shows that while some migrants may negotiate and forge identities with their new home environment that may coexist comfortably with their originating country, other migrants may be more likely to see that preserving their root identities is connected with an originating country. Haller and Landolt (2005), and Levitt and Waters (2002),

called for a durable re-orientation of migrants' *habitus* whereby values are conceptualized together to maintain and transform identities and homes.

To that end, Ralph and Staeheli's (2011) study of migrants' transnational identities showed how home might be simultaneously lived both 'here' and 'there'. The authors (2011) explained that studies with migrants that neglect how migrants maintain multiple identities that are attached to more than one home run the risk of overlooking the complex and multifaceted ways in which migrants negotiate settlement in their new home. Kivisto (2003) called for research that considers how migrants maintain transnational connections while at the same time integrating into their receiving societies. Staeheli and Nagel's (2006) research with Arab American activists in the United States exemplifies the connection between the maintenance of transnational ties and integration into the receiving community. The authors (2006) explained that to address the stigma associated with Muslim populations in the United States post-9/11, the Arab American activists described how their complex identities connected to multiple homes enhanced their sense of belonging. The participants in the study affirmed that their multiple identifications with plural homes served as a way of making them better Americans. Staeheli and Nagel (2006) concluded, thus, that migrants' plural orientation and identification with multiple home and destination countries may facilitate their integration and enhance their sense of belonging in local spaces, which may include migrants' local educational settings.

Educational Home of Migrant Children and Families

In this section, I examine the nature of the educational home of migrant children and families to understand how schools might be a place of positive socialization and acculturation towards a growing feeling of being-at-home. I explore literature that describes migrants' approaches to education and/or schools, as well as their sometimes lack of understanding of the

school system in their destination countries. I also explore the contradictions of expectations between schools and families, which may be a result of migrants' cultural misunderstandings in their new settings and describe how children's identities are changed within these conflicting expectations, and which may engender conflict in how home is now conceptualized. I discuss how migrant children negotiate senses of belonging in their new school environments so that these environments can be conceptualized as part of their home. Finally, I explore the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on home and school for African migrant children and their families.

Schools can be key sites of socialization and acculturation for children. For migrant children, in particular, schools are often the place where they first encounter in-depth contact with the host culture (Pumariaga, et al, 2010; Suarez-Orozco, 2001). This might also be true for migrant parents. Although their own work and social life can be partially confined within the boundaries of their own community networks that include other migrants from the same country, their children's education often requires parents to encounter and engage with the receiving society, including its culture and its institutions (Brewer & McCabe, 2015). Schools may play a significant role in assisting and supporting migrant children's and their families' adjustment and integration, and, as such, in the realization of a sense of home. Furthermore, schools may serve as a place that provides a sense of security, comfort, belonging, identity, and ultimately familiarity for migrant children along with their families as they move from their country of origin into their new environment (Brewer & McCabe, 2015; Stewart, 2011).

Studies have shown the various ways that migrant children and their families approach schools and/or education in their destination countries (e.g., Brewer & McCabe, 2015; Ryan, D'Angelo, Sales, & Lopez Rodriguez, 2010a). These studies presented that families' styles regarding education in the destination country are strongly influenced by their pre-migration

experiences and by the culture of their country of origin. As such, these experiences and cultural practices may affect how migrant children, along with their parents, perceive their new home. For example, in some societies and/or cultures of migrants, Brewer and McCabe (2015) explained that it is a common practice for parents to hold teachers in high esteem and as authority figures that cannot be questioned or challenged. However, in other societies, the authors explain that parents may have a more assertive and questioning attitude towards education. Similarly, Ryan et al. (2010a) explained that migrant children and their families may be accustomed to a system of schooling in which several practical elements are significantly different from that of the receiving country, including the curriculum, the forms of communication between school and family, the amount and type of homework assigned to pupils, and the classroom layout, for example. Roer-Strier and Strier (2006) stated that “parental social cognition, childrearing ideologies, expectations, norms, rules and beliefs tend to preserve meaningful elements of migrant’s original culture in their new home environment” (p.104). To that end, these elements might lead to contradictions of expectations and tension and thus misunderstanding between migrant parents and schools (Brewer & McCabe, 2015; Ryan et al., 2010a).

D’Angelo and Ryan (2011) described how migrants may hold firm to their own values and traditions from the originating culture. D’ Angelo and Ryan (2011) explained that cultural identity is part of an individual’s self-conception and self-perception of their own world. Understanding that may help us unravel the misunderstandings around differences between people and institutions in the country of destination and people from different countries or other backgrounds, especially differences in attitude and values. For example, Reynolds (2008) explained that migrants may regard the education system in the destination country as inferior to

that of their own country of origin simply because of the inherent differences that exist between them. Also, Ryan et al. (2010a) elaborated that migrants' cultural differences, particularly in relation to respect for elders, may lead some migrants to misunderstand the relationships between children and their families in their receiving country. As such, Ryan et al. (2010a, 2010b) explained that migrant parents may feel concern that their children may copy what they perceive as negative behaviors from their host peers that may challenge the parental authority that was established in their country of origin. Adams and Kirova (2006) argued that migration requires a form of cultural frame-switching, a process of understanding and engagement with cultural norms of the receiving society. The authors (2006) explained that a switch in cultural frame does not mean that migrant children and their families should abandon their values and traditions completely. Rather, Adams and Kirova (2006) called for a mutual understanding between migrant parents and the school system, so they can both become aware of each other's worldview and expectations. Both in-school and after-school initiatives may help in that progress toward mutual understanding and appreciation. This work toward understanding between the school and the family can possibly ease tensions and dispel misunderstandings and thereby promote a greater sense of trust and cooperation between African migrant families and the local school system.

It is important to understand how children's identity, and evolving notions of home, are shaped within these sometimes conflicting influences and expectations of the host country and migrant families. Adams and Kirova (2006) contended that "children's identity construction is influenced by at least two distinct, and sometimes contradicting, cultural systems: the home culture, and the school culture" (p. 8). Roer-Strier and Strier (2006) asserted that the contradictions between these cultural systems may put pressure on migrant children as they find

themselves at a crossroads between home and school cultures. As such, migration experiences are sometimes experienced as unexpected, confusing, shocking, and/or frightening (D'Angelo & Ryan, 2011; Gorman-Murray, 2007; Moskal, 2015). D'Angelo and Ryan (2011) explained that such feelings may accompany migrant children to the classroom. These feelings might be exacerbated and/or alleviated depending upon the practices and strategies that are in place both in schools and within families (D'Angelo & Ryan, 2011; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) expounded, as well, that the cultural capital that migrants bring with them from their country of origin may not be easily translated into the new environment. Likewise, the authors (2001) explained that the cultural capital that is valued within the receiving society may not be accessible to migrant children in the short term. Migrant children are expected to understand the routines, rights and responsibilities, and the social customs of their new home environment (Chuang & Moreno, 2011), but that process may take time. Devine (2009) noted that migrant children are not mere recipients of cultures, but that they can also contribute to processes of cultural capital accumulation through their learning experiences in the school environment. Adams and Shambleau (2006) explained that attaining cultural capital in the new society may be measured in terms of how well migrant children are doing in school, learning the new language, and making new friends. Such accumulation in cultural capital would help to advance migrant children's sense of belonging, and thus of home, in their new school environment.

Roer-Strier and Strier (2006) contended that language proficiency is regarded in many receiving societies as the vehicle for the integration of migrant children, a necessary part of belonging. However, Duff (2017), Kim and Duff (2012), and Reynolds (2008) explained that,

while true, it is also misleading to simply equate language acquisition with acculturation into the new society. Duff (2017) explained that challenges with language acquisition are just the most evident of the many issues faced by migrant children. Other issues that migrant children may face in their new school environment may include finding new friends; dealing with loss and loneliness; adjusting to a new teacher and new school system; adjusting to a new cultural environment; trauma that may have occurred preceding, during, and after migration; and racism or anti-immigration sentiments (Kanu, 2008; Reynolds, 2008). These factors may compound to affect African migrant children's adjustment and adaptation to Canadian society and lead to poor academic outcomes for many of these children.

Several authors have described the impact of trauma, for example, on some migrant groups, particularly as that relates to refugee children and their families (e.g., Block, Cross, Riggs, & Gibbs, 2014; Kanu, 2008; Pumariega et al., 2010). Refugee children and their families have often been exposed to human rights violations and systemic violence in their country of origin (UNHCR, 2015). Exposure to violence comprises a risk factor for poor mental health outcomes for refugee children along with their families (Pumariega, et al., 2010). In some instances, refugee children and their families may develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after arriving in their country of origin (Kanu, 2008; Pumariega, et al., 2010). McBrien (2005) affirmed that about 70 per cent of refugees that come from violent backgrounds experienced stressful memories that resulted in PTSD after they have resettled in their receiving countries. Block et al. (2014) described other manifestations associated with trauma in children, which include: social withdrawal and regressive behaviors, hyperarousal or dissociation, flashbacks, aggression, inability to concentrate, attachment difficulties, sleep disturbances, feelings of guilt, depression, and anxiety disorder. Kanu (2008) explained that often neither

refugee children nor their families have received treatments or have programs available to deal with these traumas. Kanu (2008) concluded that when the problems persist over time without being healed, they can lead to poor academic performance. That is, the effect of trauma, if left untreated, may lead to reduced or deflated learning achievements for these children (Block et al., 2014).

Researchers have also shown the damaging effects of bullying on migrant children's academic performance and the associated impact on their psychological and sociocultural adaptations (e.g., Rossiter, et al., 2015; Shakya, et al., 2012). These relevant studies explain that discrimination in and out of school can have adverse impacts on migrant children's sense of identity and well-being and can make school an alienating and unsafe space. Similarly, Rossiter et al. (2015) explained that the bullying that takes place in schools often leads to marginalization and isolation, and/or stereotypes for migrant children and, as such, may contribute to difficulties in terms of integration and social inclusion for them. For example, migrant children that are from Muslim countries may experience discrimination due to their religious beliefs, as they may practice religious traditions that many in Canada may have come to fear, because of an association to violence and terrorism after 9/11 (Richmond, 2001). Discrimination can exacerbate acculturation challenges for migrant children and lead to low self-esteem, stress, depression, poor academic performance, school dropout, substance abuse, and behavioral problems (Pumariega et al., 2010).

These situations, as described, may leave migrant children isolated within their school environment and with no perceived viable alternatives for positive response, thus encouraging them to seek maladapted solutions, like gang involvement, so as to provide a supportive structure to traverse their circumstances and to realize a sense of home, including a sense of belonging,

solidarity, protection, comfort, and warmth (Pumariiega et al., 2010). Schools, however, can be responsive and sensitive so as to attend to the complex academic, psychological, and socio-cultural needs of African migrant children and their families. With positive, responsive initiatives, the school can be a safe space where African children and their families can realize a sense of home that includes a sense security, comfort, belonging, identity, and familiarity. The school can also be a place where African migrant children and their families' stress and discrimination can be mediated, as well as a place where the migrant's integration and acculturation can be facilitated (Pumariiega et al., 2010). During the time period of this study, schools struggled to perform these supportive and protective functions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the health restrictions that were put in place to keep everyone safe.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Schooling in Manitoba

The first COVID-19 virus case was announced in Manitoba on March 12, 2020. The following day, the government of Manitoba declared that after the spring break and in the final week of March schools would move on to remote learning for two weeks (CBC News, Manitoba, September 2020; Manitoba Education, 2020). Teachers had from March 13 until the beginning of spring break to get their students ready for two weeks of learning from home (CBC News, Manitoba, September 2020; Manitoba Education, 2020). In some cases, teachers prepared printed packages of learning resources and assignments to be sent home; however, in most cases teachers were prepared to meet their students online and expected that parents would assist with learning support, with encouragement, and with classroom management (CBC News, Manitoba, September 2020). Teachers had to learn how to use the online platforms and learn how to plan lessons for online delivery. Sayer and Braun (2020) confirmed that during the closures of schools the immediate challenge became for educators to learn how to teach remotely and how to engage

parents to support their children's learning. Throughout the data collection period, the participants' teachers continued to work through these challenges as they supported the students and families in periods of remote learning. The following section examines the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on school and home for African migrant children and families.

Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on School and Home for Migrant Children and Families

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the way we interact with each other, the way we work, learn, and envision home (Eyles et al., 2020; Gadermann et al., 2021; Sayer & Braun, 2020). Schools have also been impacted. When the virus was identified, schools made a shift to remote learning and Kindergarten to Grade 12 students and teachers were required to meet and conduct classes online (CBC News, Manitoba, September 2020). The impact of remote learning and other protocols put in place to disrupt the transmission of the COVID-19 virus has been significant for children and families, particularly for African migrant students and their families (Gadermann et al., 2021; Sayer & Braun, 2020). Immigrant children face enormous challenges during this transition to remote learning. Sayer and Braun (2020) considered three main reasons why immigrant students were more disadvantaged than other students by the educational impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors explain that: (1) schools with more socioeconomically marginalized families including a larger percentage of immigrant families were less prepared to provide resources for the move to remote learning, (2) there were significant communication challenges with multilingual families as schools worked to organize and distribute resources; there was often a flood of information in English to students and parents with minimal accommodation for English learner families. (3) online resources and remote learning that were put in place by schools for content-area learning did not support students'

English acquisition and lacked meaningful social interactions needed to support their learning. Sayer and Braun (2020) argued that schools need to create opportunities for teachers to connect with immigrant families and their children in new ways for them to learn during remote learning. For example, schools need to continue to reach out to immigrant students and their families to ensure they are connected with their teachers and to make sure they have all the information and technology available for remote learning (Eyles et al., 2020; Gadermann et al., 2021; Sayer & Braun, 2020). Such connections and interventions might reduce the disparate impact of COVID-19 and remote learning issues confronted by immigrant students and their families (see Sayer & Braun, 2020).

Furthermore, Gadermann et al. (2021) argued that school closures due to the pandemic are concerning not merely for the disruption to typical classroom learning, but also for the loss of systems-level safeguards, such as nutrition programs afterschool care, school health and counselling services. These systems and structures previously operated to support the mental health and well-being of families and sought to mitigate the risks that contribute to health and social inequities among structurally vulnerable children and families (See Gadermann et al., 2021). Thornton et al. (2020) explained that children's early exposure to stress can have long-lasting effects. Although young children initially appear to be less susceptible to the physical effect of the virus; however, they are experiencing significant challenges resulting from the social and economic impacts of the pandemic within their family context (Gadermann et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic presents numerous threats to families through social isolation due to physical distancing measures, school closures, financial and employment insecurity, housing instability and changes to health and social care access (Gadermann et al., 2021; Thornton et al., 2020; Sayer & Braun, 2020).

Thornton et al. (2020) illuminated that parents have experienced increase pressures to social support with consequences for their mental health during the pandemic. Gadermann et al.'s (2021) study revealed that parents were concerned about finances, isolation, depression, and loneliness during the pandemic. Sayer and Braun (2020) expounded that school closures and the break of after-school activities added to parental pressure to balance responsibility – including becoming the sole providers of supervision and education for their children – at the same time dealing with heightened financial and emotional issues (See Gadermann et al., 2021). Although families, generally, are affected by the disruptions of the pandemic. Gadermann et al. (2020), Sayer and Braun (2020) and Thornton et al. (2020) argued that these pressures and disruptions disproportionately affect families, particularly migrant families, who experience health and social inequities, including fewer financial and social resources, crowded homes, and limited technology and internet access. The impacts of the pandemic continued to affect the mental health and well-being of migrant children and their families in Canada and around the world, thus changing the meaning of home for this group.

The collision of these stressors (i.e., social isolation due to physical distancing measures, school closures, financial and employment insecurity, housing instability and changes to health and social care access) have contributed to increased domestic violence (Gadermann et al., 2021; Thornton et al., 2020). Thornton et al. (2020) explained that the introduction of the COVID-19 pandemic measures contributed to a 'shadow pandemic' of domestic and family violence and generated a significant increase in both the incidence and the severity of the cases. The authors expounded that the shutdown of schools, community activities and non-essential services have all increased the risk of children by making abuse more frequent. Gadermann et al.'s (2021) study showed that there is increased occurrence of physical punishment of children since the

pandemic started. A nationally representative cross-sectional survey monitoring mental health of people in Canada showed a dramatic surge in calls documented by Kids Help Phone; a national helpline for young people, with a 48 percent increase in calls about social isolation, a 42 percent increase calls about anxiety and stress and a 28 percent increase in calls about physical abuse (See Gadermann et al., 2021). These assessments indicate that the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have increased the incidence of family violence and abuse. These incidents of family violence and abuse can endanger young people's mental health on a large scale, particularly with children who are from marginalized and socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds likely to be disproportionately affected (See Thornton et al., 2020).

Summary

The review of the literature has revealed that home for migrants can be viewed as shifting and evolving and that home cannot be seen separately as either static or mobile. The particular circumstances of this research, during the COVID-19 pandemic, created the condition where home, as we knew it, was disrupted and became more static than in the time just prior to the pandemic. Immigrant families, who had arrived in Manitoba, were forced to stay due to travel restrictions and forced to spend more time at home due to health restrictions. The fixed and fluid components of home need to be appreciated both from the perspective of the literature prior to the pandemic and through the lens of the literature that emerged during the pandemic. In both phases of history, the static and mobile components of home intertwine and work together, without disregarding any of their separate qualities. As such, migration can connect or bring people together in a new socio-political environment as that understanding will illustrate the dynamic relationships and contradictions between and among home, movement, and cultural practices. In their new environment, migrants must negotiate the contradictions and ambiguities

that surround the many notions of home. Some of these contradictions are shaped by globalization forces that continue to influence migration. The forces of globalization and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have created a need to develop an understanding, within the literature, of migrants' conditions before and after migration, as well as their motivation to realize a positive home outside of their countries of origin.

There are many implications stemming from the leaving something familiar in one's country of origin and starting anew in another country. Whether the conditions for migrating may be voluntary or involuntary, migrants bring with them their own cultures that they may expect will ground their lives in the receiving countries. On the other hand, migrants will also find that they have to adapt to the culture of their new environment, including the language, the customs, and the new ways of doing things (Pollock, 1989; White, 2012). As such, many migrants may experience loss as they face separation from friends and family, and may give up some of their traditions, values, and language while engaged in the process of embracing the new host culture (Williams et al., 2012; White, 2012). The costs associated with finding a home in another country may include, at least initially, social isolation and exclusion, loneliness, depression, homesickness, and debilitated social support, all which may result in reduced mental health for migrant children and their families (Hendriks et al., 2018). Scholars (e.g., Hendriks et al., 2018; Osiname, 2018) have also described the advantages of finding a new home, which may include safety, security (e.g., economic), freedom, and education, all which may positively influence and improve migrants' sense of well-being in the receiving country. Other studies (e.g., Bartram, 2011; Bohnke, 2008; Frank et al., 2014; Helliwell et al., 2009; Hendriks et al., 2018) have noted the variation that exists in the economic gain assessments among migrant groups that

are from different regions of the world. These studies also emphasized that non-economic factors such as social aspects have the potential to advance migrants' overall well-being.

Migrants' articulations and experiences of home inform their identity formation because home and identity formation for migrants are dependent on pre- and post-migration political, economic, cultural, and personal conditions or factors. As such, migrants' identities may be shaped and/or influenced by human connections and interactions in their originating as well as, increasingly, in their receiving country. In other words, migrants may re-form identities through constantly negotiating their identities between their old and new world and/or through constructing iterations of identification with home in both spaces. Migrants' plural orientation and identification with multiple homes may become how they simultaneously live both 'here' and 'there' (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011); that is, connecting, interacting, and identifying with multiple homes. Such a process may facilitate their integration and enhance their sense of belonging in their receiving country.

Migrant children's identity may be influenced as a result of their experiences within their new settings. As such, they may often feel pressured to navigate between the home and school cultures, which may include the conflicting expectations of their family and the school. Factors such as level of language proficiency, loneliness, trauma, and racism, for example, may compound to affect their sense of belonging, integration, and academic outcomes in their new school environment. However, migrant children and their families' sense of belonging may also be advanced within their local educational environments because the school is seen as one of the first sites where the receiving countries' culture is introduced and learned and the site where much of the integration of migrants' children and their families occurs. During COVID-19, when schools were in periods of remote learning, parents were involved in classroom proceedings and

became even more aware of the culture of schools (Popyk, 2020). Schools can assist migrant children along with their families to realize a sense of belonging, comfort, identity, security, familiarity, and home. Researchers (e.g., Adams & Kirova, 2006) have suggested a form of cultural frame-switching that calls for a mutual understanding between migrant parents and the school. The mutual understanding of expectations and differences would ease tensions and encourage a sense of trust and collaboration between migrant families and schools, even during unprecedented times such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

This chapter has deliberated on the relevant juxtaposing literature on home, migration, and education, especially as that relates to migrants who have physically crossed their originating home borders to other destination countries, such as Canada. This examination has deepened understanding about the concept of home and the many ways to unravel the complex and multidimensional meanings of home. For example, it has made clear how the ideas of home are integrated and/or combined with other concepts to develop our understanding of how migrants may construct and re-imagine their homes across international borders. The exploration of the literature has also captured the complexity and increased understanding of the complexity of finding a home in migration. As such, the ‘gain and loss’ aspects of finding a home in migration have increased knowledge and awareness about how migrants may perceive and articulate their sense of belonging in the destination country. To that end, the investigation illustrates that the activity of creating positive new home environments needs to be rooted in community and human existence. Community, with its human connections and interactions is crucial in the construction of home and a sense of belonging in the experiences of African migrant children and families.

Furthermore, the literature review has offered insight on how migrants negotiate identities between and among multiple home spaces, both in their originating country and receiving countries. The analysis has considered the nature of the educational home for migrants and their families. Although there are challenges that migrant families and their children, who are enrolled in the kindergarten to grade 12 schools in Manitoba, may encounter (e.g., cultural differences, parents' expectations, lack of understanding of the host country's educational system, issues of remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic), schools can be places where African migrant children and their families in Canada can re-imagine and ground their home, as well as spaces where they can realize a sense of place, identity, comfort, security, familiarity, and belonging.

The next chapter provides details about the methodology of the study. In the chapter, I include sections on importance of this research, research design, interview plans, fieldnotes and observation plans, photovoice methodology, establishing the relationships between the research questions and the instruments, connecting with potential participants, research sampling within a population, ethics when conducting research with potentially vulnerable populations, trustworthiness and triangulation, data analyses, and researcher's positionality and epistemology.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how Nigerian migrant families and their children, who were enrolled in kindergarten to grade 12 schools in Manitoba, articulate their ideas of home with regards to their sense of identity, perception of belonging, and emotional relations. I sought to understand how these families negotiate and navigate the complexity that surrounds the concept of home in their migration narratives and experiences. This study delineates how migrant children, and their families identify and articulate their sense of belonging with respect to their new home. To that end, as the researcher, I sought to understand how migrant children along with their families, perceive home as they conceptualize the notion within their local context. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do Nigerian migrant families and their children, who are enrolled in K-12 schools in Manitoba, conceptualize and articulate ideas of home?
2. What are the defining aspects of Nigerian migrant children's and their families' sense of belonging and identity in their experiences with the Manitoba K-12 school system?
3. How can participants' understandings of home inform educational approaches to supporting migrant students and families?
4. How did the Nigerian migrant children and their families experience the changes to home and school during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Why Conduct this Research?

Canada has a need to attract young immigrants, for a variety of reasons. For example, Canada has witnessed a significant growth in its aging population over the past several years. The proportion of the population aged 65 and above is considered and measured as the aging

population (Statistics Canada, 2019) because of its links to separation from labor force and the initiation to a range of social benefits (Moore & Pacey, 2004). Furthermore, parallel with many developed countries (e.g., United States), Canada is experiencing declining fertility and mortality rates (Mitra, 1992); thus, Canada's older population is growing at a considerably faster rate than the total population (Statistics Canada, 2019). For example, in 2014 the number of individuals in the range of 65 to 90 years old was estimated as 5.5 million out of a total population of 35 million, which constituted 15.7 per cent of Canada's total population. However, by 2018 the number of persons aged 65 years and older increased to 6.3 million out of a total population of 37 million (Statistics Canada, 2019) and constituted 17.0 per cent of Canada's total population. Although there is a noticeable increase of 5.7 per cent in Canada's population between 2014 and 2018, the population aged 65 years and older has sustained a growth rate of 14.6 per cent. The population aged 65 years and over continued to grow at a faster rate than any other category (See Statistics Canada, 2019), thus the need to balance that growth with initiatives that attract younger people to the country and to mentor their positive integration into Canadian society.

Attracting migrants, however, requires that the receiving country understands, and addresses issues related to both the backgrounds and the transitions of the migrating individuals. Traumatic backgrounds and the migration process itself have been linked to mental health issues for migrant families (Beiser, Hou, Hyman, & Tousignant, 2000; Bhugra, 2004). Migration and its accompanying stressors continue to affect migrant families as they go through a series of stages of adjustment in their new home environment (Beiser et al., 2000; Bhugra, 2004). These stressors may increase emotional distress and psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Bhugra, 2004). Likewise, long term exposure to trauma has been linked to higher risk of emotional disturbance and mental health

issues for migrants and refugees (Kanu, 2008; Pumariaga et al., 2010). Mental health symptoms have remained a long-term significant risk factor for migrants' families, along with their children (Pumariaga et al., 2010). Other risk factors that affect the degree of manifestation and impairment for migrants include poverty, education, subsequent unemployment, low self-esteem, and poor physical health (Beiser et al., 2000; Bhugra, 2004; Kanu, 2008; Pumariaga et al., 2010). This issue calls for the attention to their needs toward addressing their social adjustment into their new home.

Studies have shown the complexity of relocation experiences for migrant children. They may be adversely affected by the mobility of their parents. These children's identities may be impacted by their experiences of migration, and their sense of belonging and sense of place may be negatively influenced in their new environment (Dustmann & Glitz, 2011). Because adaptation processes may be more complex and thus take longer than expected, the education sector needs to be cognizant of and prepared for migrant children's needs as presented. Moreover, schools often are the first site where migrant children and their families encounter and engage with Canadian society and where the new culture is introduced and learned (Pumariaga et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important to understand how migrant children and their families encounter, negotiate, and adapt to schooling in Canada. Within this process, migrant children and their families may come to re-envision and recreate their own identities, and thus redefine home itself. To this end, migrant children along with their parents need to be able to negotiate, establish, and navigate their new home environment, as the concepts around migration and the realization of a sense of home are important to migrants' positive socio-emotional and educational experiences (Gorman-Murray, 2007; Liu, 2014; Moskal, 2015).

This research generated knowledge about how the Nigerian immigrant students and families negotiate the complexities of re-defining and recreating home in their new home environment. The research also provided insights into how Nigerian immigrant students and their families perceive a sense of belonging and how they identify (or not) with mainstream culture, and how they may, in fact, change the nature of mainstream culture itself. Additionally, the results of the research may increase the understanding of how schools might ease African immigrant students' and families' transitions and help them to stay connected within their new environment.

Research Design

This study took place during the 2020-2021 school year when the health restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to impose strict protocols when students were in the building and at times required students to stay home and participate in online learning activities. These restrictions, which prevented the research from taking place in schools, led to a change in the research design for this study. Rather than meeting with children and their parents at their school in an after-school program as I had planned, I met with them remotely via Zoom from their homes in the evening. Although this took the research outside of the school setting, the children and their parents shared their perspectives about the role that schools, teachers, and classmates played in the process of settling and finding a feeling of home within the K-12 school system in Manitoba.

This qualitative research investigated the experiences of five Nigerian migrant families whose children were enrolled in Manitoba K-12 schools, documenting and analyzing their ideas of home with regards to their sense of identity, perception of belonging, and emotional relations. The actual data collection took place primarily during one of the periods of remote learning

when students were at home with one or both parents and participating in classes via online platforms. Although I was able to engage in some observation during my interactions online with the families, it was difficult to reach the level of observation that I had hoped would be possible when I planned the original research protocol. Therefore, this investigation relied on the personal perspectives of the participating Nigerian migrant families and their children who were enrolled in Manitoba K-12 schools.

A case study methodology was employed to explore the observable and learned patterns of behaviour, customs, and ways of a culture-sharing group (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that the culture-sharing group may be considered a case when a researcher attempts to develop an in-depth understanding of a single case or explore an issue or problem using the case as a specific illustration. Thus, case study research involves the study of cases within a real life, contemporary context, and/or setting (Yin, 2014). As such, researchers look for the details of interactions within this context. To that end, case studies are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoints of the participants in a study by using multiple sources of data, which includes several interviewees and/or several research approaches, for example (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Yin, 2014).

To address the purpose of this research, I adopted the case study approach as articulated by Creswell and Poth (2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) viewed case study as a methodology, a type of design in qualitative research. The authors explained that a case may be an object of study as well as a product of the inquiry. Creswell (2012), and Creswell and Poth (2018), contended that a case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system—with the ‘bounded’ aspect referring to the delimitations of a study—based on data collection. Activities, events,

processes, and/or individuals are examples of bounded systems (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this sense, these bounded systems can be defined and described within certain parameters. The parameters for bounding a case study may be marked by the specific place where the case is located and/or the time frame in which the case is studied (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted that the unit of analysis in case study research might be multiple cases (i.e., a multi-site study), and/or a single case (i.e., a within-site study). The unit of analysis in this case study was a single case. This case study garnered insights from five Nigerian migrant families and their children who were enrolled in kindergarten to grade 12 schools in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Creswell and Poth (2018) delineated a structure for reporting case study research, which I followed. The authors (2018) explained that when reporting a qualitative case study, a researcher may open with a vignette to allow the readers to conceptualize and understand a similar vicarious experience to get a feel for the time and place of the study. Next, the researcher identifies and describes the issue, the purpose, and the method of the study so that the readers learn about how the study came to be considered by the researcher, and the issues surrounding the case. As such, key issues are presented by the researcher so that the reader can understand the complexity of the case (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Next, the researcher probes further into several of the issues to confirm and contest evidence. Following that step, Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that assertions are presented and may be in the form of a summary of what the researcher understands about the case. Lastly, the researcher ends with a closing vignette, a passage describing participants' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) concluded that this structure provides a well-detailed account of the case; presents themes, assertions, and/or interpretations of the researcher; and begins and ends with realistic scenarios. This knowledge

was used to provide structure for reporting this case study research. The following sections described the methods (i.e., interviews, fieldnotes and observations, and photovoice) that were used for data collection in this research study.

Interviews

Interviews were utilized to gather information for this study. Interviews are a very common form of data collection in case study research (Creswell, 2012; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Stake, 1995). Open-ended questions are asked in qualitative research so that the participants can best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviews can be classified as structured, semi-structured, and/or unstructured (Creswell, 2012; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Seidman, 2013). Hancock and Algozzine (2006) explained that semi-structured interviews are well-suited for case study research. The authors (2006) elaborated that by using the semi-structured approach, the researcher asks predetermined but flexibly worded questions. In addition to posing predetermined questions, Seidman (2013) explained that researchers using semi-structured interviews may ask follow-up questions designed to probe more deeply into issues of interest to interviewees. I used a semi-structured approach to interview the participants for this study. Open-ended questions were posed to gather information and probe deep issues of interest to the interviewees, especially pertaining to the area of this study.

Seidman (2013) elaborated that interviewing is a powerful way to gain insight into educational and other important social issues through an understanding gained of the experience of the individuals whose lives reflect those issues. As a method of inquiry, Seidman (2013) noted that interviewing is most consistent with people's ability to make meaning through language. To understand human behaviour means to understand their use of language. Seidman (2013)

explained that the use of language contains within its activity the paradigm of cooperative inquiry and that language is the primary tool whose use enables human interpretation of meanings to occur. Such an approach embraces critical constructivism. At the heart of what it means to be human is the ability of people to symbolize their experiences with others (such as the researcher) through language (Seidman, 2013). In-depth interviewing reflects an interest in understanding the lived experiences of other people and the meaning they construct out of those experiences. As such, my insider status in this research as being from Nigeria as were all participant families allowed me to understand the modes of narrative description that my interviewees chose, thus their modes of social construction.

Being interested in others is the key to some of the basic assumptions underlying interviewing techniques (Seidman, 2013). Seidman (2013) explained that at the heart of interviewing, that approach to research involves an interest in other individuals' stories because understanding their ways of interpreting their lives is significant towards learning how to help them make their lives more purposeful and meaningful, and thus more worthwhile (See also Eisner, 1993). Seidman (2013) further clarified that such an approach requires that the interviewers keep their own egos in check. The interviewers need to understand that the interviewees are the important knowers with reference to the research. Through the interviewer's actions, they demonstrate and indicate that others' stories are important (Seidman, 2013). Interviewing, then, is a basic mode of inquiry that helps in facilitating the recounting of narratives of individuals' lived experiences in a way that allows humans to make sense of their own and others' experiences. These interviewing procedures were used to gather the unique narratives of the participating Nigerian migrant children and their families so as to build an atmosphere of trust with the participants, and by extension within the study itself. This approach,

and its explanation, provided the rationale for its inclusion as an emancipatory research approach that fits within the critical constructivist lens.

The interview protocol was designed to structure the interviews for this research study (See Appendix D for interview protocol). The interview protocol I designed helped me to organize my thoughts on aspects such as subject headings, concluding ideas, and information on ending the interview and thanking the respondent (Creswell, 2012). To that end, an interview protocol was used in this research to remind the participants about the purpose of the study, to provide a structure for me to conduct the interview, and to record essential information.

Studies have shown the importance of applying care when designing the interview protocol (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell (2012) and Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested a process to ensure that considerable care is taken in designing the interview protocol. Based on their suggestions: (1) I made sure that my research questions and the purpose of the interview were stated in clear, concise language; (2) I explored themes from the literature in the development of the interview questions and on aspects such as migration, home, and education to allow the participants in this study to tell their stories; (3) I used open-ended questions so that the participants could choose their answers and voice their experiences unhindered by my own perspectives and/or worldview; and (4) I organized the interview questions around flexible rather than leading questions so as to facilitate the free flow of information from the participants and to make sure that I gave the participants enough distance to plan their responses without suggestion or intimidation (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In an attempt to fully understand the experiences of the participating families in this study, I conducted three rounds of interviews with the Nigerian families and their children who were enrolled in a K-12 school in Manitoba. The interviews varied in length. The first interview

with each family typically lasted approximately 90 minutes, the second interview took up to 120 minutes, and the third interview tended to be completed within 30-45 minutes. A total of seven children and nine adults were interviewed.

To ensure that everyone in the family had a chance to speak and speak freely, I started each round of the interviews with the parents before proceeding to conduct interviews with the children. The Nigerian children and families expressed that they felt more comfortable when the parent(s) were present with the children during the interviews. Therefore, during the parents' interviews sometimes the children were present and sometimes they were not, but there was always at least one parent, usually the mother, present during the children's interviews.

The interviews were conducted and recorded via the Zoom video conferencing platform. A personal recording device was used to record a backup copy in the case that I encountered technical issues. To reiterate, the interview protocols were developed for making notes and asking questions toward gaining specific information related to the aim of this study, as well as for keeping the interview conversational.

Interviews with Students and their Families

I conducted three rounds of interviews with the participating Nigerian migrant children and families in this study. The first interview helped me to develop a foundation of trust with the Nigerian migrant children along with their families and to solicit specific questions they had about the research, as well as to set the stage for introducing the photovoice methodology. In the second round of interviews, key and specific questions about participants' experiences of home were asked. This second round of interviews probed with deeper questions about each participant's sense of place, identity, and belonging in their new home. The third round of interviews helped me to ask follow-up questions about the research and provided me with the

opportunity to engage the children and families in the photovoice activity (See Appendix E for photovoice prompts). Moreover, if clarification was needed for the photovoice prompt questions, I made sure to not divert the meaning from the original questions, but only explain questions in terms that the interviewee is more familiar with and understands (See Appendix D for interview questions with the Nigerian migrant children and families).

First interviews. In the first round of interviews with the families, I asked questions that helped me to lay the foundation of trust and rapport. I asked comfortable questions that garnered general information about the participants (See Appendix D). Seidman (2013) explained that such a start to an interview will help to set the tone of a conversation and will also distinguish the interview as a form of inquiry. I informed the families that the three interviews would be conducted over a six-week period to allow flexibility for scheduling and to allow time for ongoing analysis of the data. During this first round of interviews, I also introduced the photovoice component of the study (See photovoice section for more details) in order to allow time for families to develop a deeper understanding of the methodology. To that end, in this round of interviews, I explained to the participating students and their families how they might select pre-existing and/or new photographic materials. I asked the Nigerian families to take pictures with their phones for the photovoice activity. Family members who did not have a personal phone, made use of other devices such as iPads or tablets depending on their choice. I asked each person in the family to select at least one photograph for our second meeting so that I could illustrate how we would engage in the photovoice process that I had planned more extensively for interview three. The first interview included time for the families to ask clarifying questions about anything that they did not understand about the process, the outcomes and/or the protocols for the research. Additionally, the first interview provided time to give

specific instructions about taking photos for the photovoice component of the research (See Appendix D).

Second interviews. The second round of interviews with the families took the form of a narrative description of how they experience home, which included reference to their time in Canada and/or in their country of origin. I posed questions that provided the participants with the opportunity to describe their experiences and how they perceived a sense of place, identity, and belonging within their new home and school environments (See Appendix D). In this round, I asked open-ended questions specifically to each member of the family to allow for the unique and independent thoughts of each individual in the family. Rubin and Rubin (2012) attested that when researchers ask key questions, they tend to solicit the most valuable information in a research study; such crucial questions were asked during the second round of interviews with the participating families. In this second round of interviews, I also re-oriented the families to the photovoice process and used the photograph(s) that they selected for this interview to illustrate the process that we would use to discuss their photographs in more depth in interview three. In summary, this round of interviews addressed key and relevant questions about the study and assisted families with questions they might have about the photovoice process.

Third interviews. The final round of interviews allowed me to revisit and pose the questions that I felt that participants had not elaborated in the first and second rounds and provided the participants the opportunity for the description of their photovoice activity, which involved a description of their photographs and the associated importance of those photographs to how the interviewees defined home. I revisited and clarified with the families the purpose of the photovoice activity, as needed. This understanding allowed the interviewees to explore and communicate what home means to them with reference to their photographs and by revisiting

previously posed questions. In this third round of interviews, the families were invited to contribute a reflective narrative about the interview experience. I thanked the participating families and requested follow-up or additional information, if needed, from them, as well as provided contacts for future support should they need it.

Fieldnotes and Observations

My original design for this study involved visiting families in their homes and conducting formal observations. When the data collection was adapted and the interviews were conducted via Zoom, I attempted to use the same protocols that I had proposed, but I recognize that my observations were limited to what I could view through my participants' webcams. In some of the families, the children were purposeful in showing me parts of their homes. In other families, the parents moved to plug in their devices or to interact with their children. Although it was not the same as being present in the home, I was able to make some observations about the physical surroundings of the dwellings.

Observations were employed to collect information for this study and happened purposefully and concurrently with the interviews. Observation, one of the key qualitative research tools for collecting data, is based on and supportive of the research purpose and questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that observation is a process of gathering open-ended, first-hand information by observing people and places at a research site. Creswell and Poth (2018) affirmed that observation involves an act of noting a phenomenon in the field through the five senses of the observer, often with note-taking instruments and recordings for scientific purposes. The authors (2018) expounded that the observer may utilize senses such as sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. To this end, observing in a setting requires special skills because the researcher is usually involved in that which he or

she is observing (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Due to the health restrictions that were in place to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, I was unable to visit the homes of my participants. The observations in this study were limited to what I could observe during the interview process on Zoom.

Researchers have stressed the importance of conducting observations in tandem with interviews (e.g., Adler & Adler, 1994; Smith, 2013; Tjora, 2006). Tjora (2006) explained that interviews and observations are interactive on their own but together that interviews provide leads for the researcher's observations, while observations suggest probes for interviews. For example, during my interviews when I observed a young participant who was anxious, I needed to adjust my approach. Smith (2013) expounded that conducting an observation while interviewing participants allows for insights into the typical and occasionally extraordinary features of everyday life that participants might not feel worth commenting on in an interview without the interviewer making the connection. In other words, conducting observations concurrently with interviews allows researchers to understand not just what participants *say* they do, but also to see what they "*really*" do in the reality of everyday life and how they display and communicate that importance (Adler & Adler, 1994). Adler and Adler (1994) maintained that observations have much value as an alternative or additional source of data for understanding information gathered through other means such as interviews. To that end, collecting observation and interview data simultaneously can generate a more complex understanding of peoples' lives (Adler & Adler, 1994; Smith, 2013; Tjora, 2006).

Scholars (e.g., Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018) have presented the significance of designing an observational protocol to address or reduce potential challenges in observation. Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that an observation protocol is a form designed by the

researcher before data collection to be used for taking field notes during observation. On this form, “researchers record a chronology of events, a detailed portrait of an individual or individuals, a picture or map of the setting, or verbatim quotes of individuals” (Creswell, 2012, p. 227). Creswell (2012) clarified that the development of an observation protocol (See Appendix F for observation protocol) ensures that researchers have an organized mechanism for recording and keeping observation fieldnotes.

Before I began my concurrent observation and interviewing with the participating Nigerian children and their families, it was important to seek the required consent from the parents and assent from the children. I told the families that the observations would be concurrent with the interviews. During one interview, for example, I had an opportunity to watch as one parent guided his children through homework activities during the time that I was conducting his interview. Another family had their children involved in before-bed reading and then had to pause the interview to tuck their kids into bed before we could continue with the interview. Such observations helped to reveal how these families subjectively experienced mobility and constructed a sense of home. As noted, although limited, I developed an observation protocol to record my observation fieldnotes, which occurred concurrently with the recording of the interview fieldnotes. I noted an ‘O’ prior to my observational comments. All of the fieldnotes were headed by the date, time, and place of interview and observation. I included both descriptive details and reflective notes on my observations. The latter reflective aspect, which included notes about my experiences, feelings, and learnings (see Creswell & Poth, 2018), occurred as soon as possible after that interview and observation was completed. As explained, in the first sessions of my interviews and observations, I asked questions that helped me to build initial rapport with the children and their families. After I had finished my interviews and

observations, I thanked the participating families and confirmed with them about the use of the data and their accessibility to the study.

Photovoice Methodology

Photovoice was also used to gather data for this research. Photovoice is a qualitative research method that provides participants with an opportunity to take new or to use previous photographs that allow them, during their explanations of the importance of the photograph(s), to elaborate salient issues connected to the study and to present those issues in individual and/or group discussions (Hergenrather, et al., 2009). Hergenrather et al. (2009), and Wang and Burris (1997), explained that photovoice allows individuals to reflect on their personal and community aspects and strengths, to create critical dialogue, to share knowledge about their issues, and to develop and/or host a forum for the presentation of their lived experiences and priorities through self-identified images, languages, and context. As such, photovoice is action-oriented and promotes critical dialogue and knowledge generation so as to encourage personal and group reflection, and perhaps change (Wang & Burris, 1997). Shah (2015) expounded that this concept is based on the understanding that images allow participants to perceive and communicate what is significant to them, and to define their concerns and priorities. Hergenrather et al. (2009) confirmed that in photovoice, the participants themselves take and/or select the images as a part of an approach known as reflective photography and/or auto-driven photo elicitation—the image then acts as the stimulus and guide for discussion with the researcher. These descriptions affirm that photovoice is based on a method of photo-interviewing where photographs are used as a part in the interviewing process with collaboration from the participant who explains the significance of the photograph that they have taken or chosen (See Shah, 2015).

In most cases, photovoice participants are actively connected to the research process (Latz, 2017; Shah, 2015). Latz (2017) explained that the involvement of photovoice participants can take many forms; participants may help in constructing photograph prompts, and/or assist in analyzing the data. Shah (2015) expounded that photovoice essentially positions participants both as participants and as co-researchers. As such, “photovoice allows research participants to be involved in the research, to make freely informed choices, and to create commitment to the examination and analysis of the results” (Latz, 2017, p. 3). Photovoice methodology creates an environment in which participants can give and get valid information and where participants have the choice to be involved in the research process (Latz, 2017; Shah, 2015).

During my initial interviews with the families, I introduced the photovoice component of the study so that families understood the overall goal, including the responsibilities related to taking and using photographs in this research (See Appendix E). After the families agreed to participate and during the first interview, I asked them to use their phones to take photographs and explained how they could select photographic subjects that represent their experiences of creating home. I also explained how we would use those photographs to initiate our discussion about their experiences. In this first round, I gave the families the following prompts: (1) Take new or select previously taken photographs that will help me to understand, during your subsequent description of the photograph(s), what home means to you; (2) Take photographs of items or scenes in your home or at school that have meaning to you in relation to how you define home; (3) Use the photographs to show me and to talk about how you understand home; (4) Do not include pictures that show the faces (thus the identity) of people in your school or in your neighborhood, as we would need permission from those people to take and include their pictures. Latz (2017), and Wang and Burris (1997), reiterated that photovoice makes space for

participants' voices to be heard, through their stories, which can be a driving force for the creation and communication of new knowledge.

In the second round of interviews, I re-oriented families with the photovoice process, reinforced the prompts from the first interview, and used the photograph(s) that they had selected to initiate a discussion of its importance with the interviewee, and thus provided an illustration of the photovoice activity before interview three. This illustration encouraged them to work towards selecting or taking meaningful photographs that depicted and helped them to elaborate their experiences of creating a sense of home in a new environment. This initial activity during interview two provided an opportunity for participants to ask questions or to explain challenges that they had encountered with taking or choosing photographs for this study.

During the third interview, the more extensive round of the photovoice activity took place. In this session, I focused on the family's perceptions of their sense of belonging at school and at home. I asked open-ended questions and gave the participants an opportunity to answer the questions with reference to their photograph(s). I had explained to family members who did not have a personal phone that they could use other device such as iPads or tablets depending on their choice to select photos. The participants all agreed that they have access to phones, cameras, iPads, or tablets. For example, I asked each family member to tell me: Why did you take and/or select this photograph? What does this photograph represent? How does this photograph connect with your understanding of home? I emphasized that their photographs could help them to tell their story so that I could better understand their ideas and their elaborations of home, their lives, and their educational experiences through the explanations of their chosen photographs.

In interview three, participants contextualized and described each photograph, including those selected or taken by another family member. I asked each family member to choose their three favourite photographs, perhaps their most compelling photographs, and give these photographs titles, which they would share in the family group. In this sense, family members were given an opportunity to share and/or introduce each other's photographs. Then, I asked each family member to provide their own interpretation of each chosen photograph in their own words, describe what a photograph means to them, relate what story it tells, and reflect on their own unique experiences with the chosen photographs to elaborate and articulate their ideas of home. The resulting information was used as data for my analysis, which increased my knowledge of the understandings of home as articulated by the families. Mitchell (2008) contended that the interpretive process during photovoice methodology does not have to be limited to an individual participant and the researcher. In this study, although family members responded individually during the photovoice portion of the interview, each of them described what each of the photographs meant to them. Mitchell (2008) explained that visual texts are very accessible, and that the possibilities when inviting other interpretations are critical. To that end, the participating family members in this study interpreted what one another's photographs meant to them. Such interpretations differed from those of the family member who selected the photograph.

I was anticipating 36 photographs that participants shared with me via Zoom as part of the photovoice interview. When I asked participants to send them to me electronically so that I could include them as data in my study, I received 28 photos. Despite my instructions to not include faces in the photos, the children and families included photographs that were easily identifiable to members of their extended families and other individuals from their

neighborhoods, as these pictures represented some of the meanings of home articulated during the photovoice interview. I excluded some of these identifiable pictures from my data and analysis because of the ethical issues around privacy and confidentiality. As part of my analysis, I sorted the photographs into themes. In the end, there were four themes that included pictures that could be used. I selected representative photos from each of those groups to include in chapter four.

Establishing the Relationships Between the Research Questions and the Instruments

This study included interview, observation, and photovoice data. The following chart outlines how I utilized the selected data to develop an answer for each of the research questions.

Table 1

Summarizing Relationships Between the Research Questions and the Instruments

Research Questions	Interview	Photovoice	Observation
How do Nigerian migrant families and their children, who are enrolled in K-12 schools in Manitoba, conceptualize and articulate ideas of home?	X	X	X
What are the defining aspects of Nigerian migrant children's and their families' sense of belonging and identity in their experiences with the Manitoba K-12 school system?	X	X	X
How can participants' understandings of home inform educational approaches to supporting migrant students and families?	X	X	X

How did the Nigerian migrant children and their		
families experience the changes to home and	X	X
school during the COVID-19 pandemic?		

Note. The table illustrates¹ the connection between the research questions and the data collection instruments.

Connecting with Potential Participants

During the time period of the data collection in-person contact had become nearly impossible because of the COVID-19 pandemic; and as such, as the researcher, I was unable to connect with my participants in-person, so I was forced to change my research plans and find other techniques to carry out my research. In this concise section, I describe how researchers can proceed with using electronic or digital communication platforms (i.e., Zoom or Skype) to conduct interviews and to continue their research from a distance during the unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic. I examine how technology served as a useful tool for connecting with my participants I describe how researchers should proceed while conducting online interviews with participants in a research study. I also focus on the importance of building rapport with participants during an interview.

Technology served as a useful tool for social interaction and research prior to the pandemic (Howlett, 2021), and it has since become even more important as an avenue to connect and engage with participants in a research study (Lupton, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has limited researchers' ability to access the resources they draw on to read, write, analyze, and publish (See Howlett, 2021). It has also limited researchers' ability to access participants that they study, as many of these participants are inaccessible indefinitely or at least need to be

accessed in new ways (Howlett, 2021). Lupton (2020) articulated that the transition from immersive methods to more hands-off approaches is imperative as the national and provincial governments rapidly responded to COVID-19 in March 2020 with lockdowns and border closures. Lupton (2020) expounded that most researchers needed to adjust and utilize mediated approaches such as the use of technology to avoid in-person contacts and interactions. Likewise, in suggesting alternative approaches during the pandemic, Howlett (2021) highlighted that technology is useful for research across different disciplines because it is increasingly easier to engage with participants in different settings.

Interviews over the phone, Skype, and instant messaging software have similarly been used by social science researchers when access to in-person contact and interactions was difficult (Carter, 2011; Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). Howlett (2021) described that these interactive virtual web-based platforms (i.e., Zoom meetings) delivers several benefits. The author explained that videoconferencing approaches are particularly useful for data collection and that the real time nature of the exchanges can resemble the honesty of onsite interviews, as the dynamic environments prevent participants from overthinking their answers or considering the most socially desirable responses. Likewise, Markham (2009) and Sullivan (2012) posited that videoconferencing approaches such as Zoom meetings allow researchers to access verbal and non-verbal cues, providing equally authentic experiences to in-person interviews. Howlett (2021) and Lupton (2020) added that using videoconferencing approaches in online interviews ensures more personable interactions including greater spontaneity in enabling participants to answer questions immediately. The use of Zoom videoconferencing has allowed me to connect with my participants and encouraged more personable interactions with them in this study.

Research Sampling within a Population

The interviewees for this study were selected through purposeful sampling, which occurs when the researcher intentionally selects persons and places through which to learn to understand the central phenomena (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research to select sites and/or individuals to be participants in a research study. In qualitative research, a researcher purposefully selects participants or sites that will help to build an understanding of the posed study focus and its related research questions; thus, qualitative researchers use purposeful sampling to select participants and sites that are believed to be information rich (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). One objective of qualitative research is to present the complexity of a site itself, as well as the complexity of the information provided by individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, purposeful sampling applies to both sites and individuals. Purposeful sampling in qualitative research involves choosing sites and participants that will provide the greatest insights into the topic at hand.

As the researcher, I used a purposeful sampling approach to select the five families participating in this research study. In particular, my inclusion criteria to select families included Black African migrant families who have physically crossed the Canadian border to settle in southern Manitoba, and whose children were pursuing formal education in Manitoba's elementary and/or secondary schools. As such, the minimum age for the inclusion of individual participant was age five. The exclusion criteria were not to include families who are not proficient in English language and families who are too busy to respond to my invitation. I initiated the process of gathering participants through a post to a social media group where African families support each other to transition to Canadian society. From there, I utilized a snowball approach and asked my first volunteers to share my post on their social media, so that

way others who were willing to participate contacted me. As it turned out, eight families responded and contacted me initially to indicate that they would like to participate in the study, however, two of the potential families did not respond to three different requests for their continued interest and participation. One other family sent an email to be withdrawn from the study due to a family emergency.

Ethics When Conducting Research with Potentially Vulnerable Populations

Vulnerable populations are defined as groups that are susceptible to harm because of their socio-economic status, minority status, and/or certain medical conditions, for example (Demi & Warren, 1995; Marshall & Batten, 2003). This section details the ethical issues that arose when conducting research with this vulnerable population of African migrant children and their families in this study. The research protocols and ethics of care, as approved by the University of Manitoba, Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board ensured their safety. As researcher, I understood the importance of building trusting relationships with the participants and approaching the research space with integrity to ensure that the participants had a positive experience. I considered the following ethical issues before embarking on the study: informed consent, consideration of cultural and personal boundaries and respect for individuals, interpretation of the data and ownership of the data, confidentiality, and permission from ethics committee (Creswell, 2012; TCPS-2). The following sections detail the ethical issues that were considered in this study.

Informed Consent with Vulnerable Populations

Informed consent when conducting research across cultures needs special consideration. Marshall and Batten (2003) explained that consent in research studies across cultures must be an on-going process. The authors (2003) expounded that consent must be asked for and be given at

every stage of the research process. This approach ensured that participants in this study understood each of the different steps of the research proceedings before participating. Marshall and Batten (2003) affirmed that “the foundation of consent for marginalized groups must be clearly and operationally defined” (p. 10). Furthermore, the authors (2003) clarified that informed consent must be explained in language(s) that participants can comprehend. While I had been concerned that some families who volunteered for the study, would experience language barriers that was not the case for participants in this study. With consideration of language obstacles, Escobedo, et al. (2007) identified possible covert communication inefficiencies in informed consent. The authors (2007) explained that language might be a barrier to understanding the informed consent process, which could lead to ineffective communication between the researcher and the participants, for example in a situation where individuals sign the consent form without being fully aware of what they are signing. While participants in this study spoke English, they also shared my own first language, although none of them were known to me before the research, so I was able to support them and to ensure that they had a full understanding of the research before we proceeded. As well, participants may come from experiences of oppression by those in power, and may fear the ethics process itself, including the affixing of their signature on any document (See Osiname, 2018). In order to protect participants from exploitation, Demi and Warren (1995), Escobedo et al. (2007), and Marshall and Batten (2003) explained that to ensure authentically informed consent, consent must be designed and explained in the language that participants understand. This process allowed the participants to comprehend the nature and the purpose of the study without any deception. As such, participants must be fully informed about any risks related to the research. Demi and Warren (1995) explained that if the known risks exceed the potential benefits, the study must be revised so that

the risks are minimized, and the benefits are increased. Demi and Warren (1995) and Escobedo et al. (2007) stated that if these expectations cannot be accomplished, the study should be abandoned.

To begin my research, I posted an invitation on the African Diaspora (pseudonym) group on Facebook to invite African migrant families living in Winnipeg with school-aged children to participate in the study (See Appendix A). When interested families contacted me, I described my study, including the purpose, and explained that I was conducting this research in partial fulfillment of my Doctor of Philosophy degree program at the University of Manitoba (See Appendix B). I made arrangements to send a formal letter of invitation and the consent form to the family via email and asked them to sign and return the form to me just prior to our face-to-face interview (See Appendix C). I explained that if they agreed to participate, I would use their email address to set up an interview time that worked for both of us.

When I communicated with the families about my study, I introduced myself to the parents (e.g., providing name, country of origin, and that I am a student) and explained the purpose of my study, which was to develop an understanding of how Nigerian migrant children and their families re-define home within the K-12 school system in Manitoba. I asked the parents for permission to invite their children, if the children were under 18 years of age, to participate in my study (See Appendix C). Prior to conducting interviews with the children, I explained the research and went through the consent process with them. I tried to reframe all aspects in a way that I thought it would be easier for them to understand and then checked for understanding and confirmed their agreement to participate before I proceeded.

Initially, formal correspondence including a letter of introduction requesting permission to invite both the parents and the children to participate, consent forms, as well as the recruitment

letters were sent to the parents via email addresses that they provided for that purpose (See Appendices A & B). I asked the parents to distribute the recruitment letters to members of the family, after they had signed the permission letter. I waited for correspondence from the parents. Once I received the signed consent form, I proceeded with arranging an interview time.

The formal letter of invitation was written in language that would be understood by all members of the participating families (See Appendix B) and included the consent form (See Appendix C) and the interview questions and interview prompts (See Appendix D & E). As previously noted, consent was reconfirmed in an on-going process and the process was explained in language(s) that the families could comprehend. For the one family that seemed less comfortable with English, I was able to explain the information in Yoruba, their first language. Prior to beginning the first interviews and observations, I took the time to review and verify the consent form with each of the participating children and families to ensure that they understood their rights and I asked them to confirm their consent verbally before proceeding with the interviews. I also explained and clarified to the families that given the relatively small population of Manitoba, and the connections among African and Nigerian migrants and schools, it would still be possible, despite all precautions, that their identities might become known to other members of their own African and Nigerian community and to the broader educational public. This advice was noted in the consent form and explained verbally prior to beginning the first interview with each participant.

Cultural and Personal Boundaries and Respect for Individuals

Conducting research across cultures requires that researchers proceed in culturally sensitive ways (Piquemal & Kouritzin, 2006). It is important to pay attention to cultural differences and to personal boundaries when conducting research with participants from minority

communities. For example, Demi and Warren (1995) explained that when conducting research with families in their home or other familiar environment, such an informal atmosphere may encourage friendliness, trust, and self-disclosure. Demi and Warren (1995) stated that:

Researchers who connect to families may experience anger, sadness, and other emotions as they sympathize with them. On the other hand, researchers who do not become connected because of some characteristics or unconscious stimuli, may experience negative effects, and may withdraw from such families. (p. 190)

In the case of this research, I was able to connect easily with the participants because they shared my first language and culture, but our relationship was mitigated by the distance imposed by meeting online via Zoom. Therefore, although participants seemed to speak easily to me, I did not experience times during the interviews that felt uncomfortable because participants had shared too much information.

Marshall and Batten (2003) explained that researchers need to be aware that there may be differences between their own worldview, including their theoretical frameworks and culture, and that of the groups with whom they are studying. The authors (2003) explained that understanding individuals' cultural beliefs about family is a requirement for effective cross-cultural interactions and mutual research relationships. Understanding the diverse cultural dynamics and showing respect for families' norms and values are important during the research proceedings (Marshall & Batten, 2003). Honan, et al. (2013) explained that understanding these cultural dynamics will ensure that researchers do not force their own values on the participants or judge participants' behavior based on their own cultural values. Marshall and Batten (2003) further explained that showing respect and continuous communication are important elements in such a situation. The authors (2003) suggested that "asking, rather than telling, and on-going

consultation with a key informant in the family or community” (Marshall & Batten, 2003, p. 144) will aid toward a successful research process. In this study, I was able to understand the cultural values and beliefs of the participants because my own ethnic background is similar. However, there were times when I also noted that we did not share the same beliefs and values, in those moments, I chose to stay quiet and listen because I wanted to learn from the participants about their experiences.

In this study, I respected and honoured the values and norms of the participating families through our ongoing conversations. For example, I ensured that I followed the cultural protocols of the families by contacting the family gatekeeper before I proceeded with my research and received informed consent from the parents, as well as assent from the youth, before I proceeded with data collection. As such, I was able to understand the cultural values and beliefs of the participants because my own ethnic background is similar. I worked toward understanding and following the cultural norms of each participant with respect to every aspect of the research. For example, when I interviewed the two teenage brothers, I knew that I needed to be more relaxed and in touch with their more youthful generation. As I relaxed and tried to be more energetic, I found that they leaned in and shared more about their home and school life. When I found out that they played on their high school basketball team, I knew that it was a great place for me to connect because I also played basketball in high school. I ensured that my demeanor with the participants was marked by respect, attention, interest, and good manners (See Seidman, 2013). During the interviews, I gave the participants ample time to fashion their responses as independently as possible to avoid communicating my beliefs and worldview, even unintentionally.

I respected each family's personal boundaries by allowing the families to set a time that was convenient for them for the interviews to take place. School closures and the stay-at-home order made it easier to find times when all family members were available. However, there were two times when I had to interview the parents, who were deemed to be essential workers during the pandemic, at different times than the rest of the family. I chose to set two different times in my schedule, so that I could interview the children earlier in the evening before they were tired. Then, I could interview the parents later in the evening the same day after they had returned from work, ate supper, and settled in for the evening. I reminded all the participants a day or two before the interview date. I also ensured that the participants had access to a counselor in case they felt stressed as a result of painful memories that were elicited from some of the questions within my study. To do this, I provided the name and address of a counselor(s) in the consent letter and reminded the families that that service was available if needed at the end of my interview sessions (See Appendix C for consent form for the Nigerian migrant children and families). During the research process, I engaged in ongoing consultation and communication with the participating families. The participants in this study were not offered remuneration to participate. Paper or digital copies of the results were sent to the participating families after the completion of the study.

Participants were clearly informed about the purpose and aim of the study, and I did not engage participants in any deception about the study. I ensured that data collection took place at a time when their lives were disrupted as little as possible. As such, I arranged a time that was convenient for them to meet me in an online video conference and for most families that was during the evening after their daily activities were complete. Participants were reminded in

advance via text messages and/or phone calls about the interview. I demonstrated good manners to the Nigerian migrant children and families and approached them with kindness and empathy.

Interpreting the Data and Ownership of Data

The reporting of data and its ownership is another ethical decision to consider when conducting research with vulnerable populations. Demi and Warren (1995) described the process of reporting data as one that involves the researcher's subjective interpretation. The authors (1995) explained that generally in research, for the most part, data expressed in numerical terms may be manipulated (i.e., quantitative) and/or data may be tapped for meaning in the verbal realm (i.e., qualitative). In this latter, qualitative process, researchers may "impose their logic and values onto the communicated reality of the vulnerable family members" (Demi & Warren, 1995, p. 199). As such, subjective bias permeates the process of reporting data in research, particularly in research with vulnerable populations. Similarly, Demi and Warren (1995) described other areas where bias may manifest itself: in attending to certain stimuli during data collection, in analyzing the data, as well as in the reporting of findings and drawing conclusions, for example. Although Marshall and Batten (2003) explained that one cannot be totally unbiased, one needs to be cognizant of one's own assumptions and tendencies, which may help researchers to minimize biases in their research reports. Thus, as the researcher in this study, I was conscious in interpreting and analyzing the data while I reflected on the lived experiences of the participants to reduce any personal bias that is inherent in conducting research (Demi & Warren, 1995; Marshall & Batten, 2003). To do this, when I identified places where my beliefs, values, and assumptions varied from the participants, I tried to make conscious effort to listen for their personal beliefs, values, and assumptions and be purposeful about representing them as accurately as possible. For example, when one participant shared their religious beliefs and I

realized that we had different beliefs, I tried to be purposeful about listening without judgement so that I could learn as much as possible about the participants experiences.

The issue of data ownership is an important one that needs to be addressed in informed consent. Marshall and Batten (2003) suggested that sharing data ownership ensures an ongoing process of informed consent by participants. The authors (2003) explained that often when researchers control data management, participants and the general public are not exposed to the research results and, as such, the findings are published only in academic journals that are not available to the participants. Marshall and Batten (2003) suggested the need to translate academic dissemination of results in the form of presentations and/or community newsletters. The dissemination of research findings should be directed towards empowering the groups with whom the researcher intends to work. Moreover, as a requirement of institutional ethics, the dissemination of my research findings will include a report that will be accessible to my research participants.

Confidentiality

Protecting participants' confidentiality is of high importance, and researchers must ensure that while information is being shared, the identities of the participants are protected (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Throughout the process of the research, I took the following steps to assure the confidentiality of my participants: 1) I used pseudonyms in place of the names of the children and families. I explained to each participant that due to the size and close relationships within the African and Nigerian community in Winnipeg that their identity may become known through familiarity with their stories. As such, they signed a form to indicate their consent to participate given that knowledge; 2) I made sure that the participants' data were kept in my password protected computer and secured drawer where they will be stored until

February 2026; 3) I did not share identifiable data with other participants or individuals inside or outside of the project other than my supervisor; and 4) Both paper and digital copies of the gathered information will be kept until February 2026 and subsequently be destroyed.

Permission from Ethics Committee

Prior to beginning a research study, Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that it is important for the researcher to seek and obtain the permission of the institutional review boards. Creswell (2012) and Creswell and Poth (2018) expounded that the aim of this activity is to provide evidence to the review boards that the study design follows the guidelines for conducting ethical research. This study was conducted according to the research protocols and consent forms approved by the University of Manitoba Nursing Research Ethics Board. As it is a requirement of the University of Manitoba, I completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS-2) tutorial prior to conducting this research and submitted a copy of the certificate of tutorial completion with my ethics proposal. This tutorial gave me an in-depth understanding of ethics with reference to research involving humans (See Appendix G for a copy of my TCPS-2 certificate). This knowledge was used to address the ethical considerations when conducting the entire process of the study.

Trustworthiness and Triangulation

Trustworthiness is a determinant of the accuracy of the findings in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). One method for ensuring trustworthiness in a study is by taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to the participants for their views on its accuracy of their told stories (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This procedure involves conducting a follow-up interview with participants in the study and providing an opportunity for them to comment on the findings. In this study, I took the data analyses, the interpretations, and

the conclusions back to each of the participating families so they could assess the accuracy and credibility of their accounts. I asked each family to examine the draft of my work, including the data analyses, and to provide their own explanations or critical interpretations. I sent the document to the families by e-mail for review and comment and invited them to participate in a follow-up interview if they desired. None of the families in my study chose to participate in the follow-up interview.

Krefting (1991) described reflexivity as one specific strategy that can be used to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative research. Krefting (1991) defined reflexivity as a process of reflecting on oneself as the researcher to provide more effective and impartial analysis. This process involves examining and consciously acknowledging the assumptions and biases the researcher may bring into the research act, which might shape the outcome. Krefting (1991) noted that the researcher's background dictates the framework from which research findings are organized and analyzed. It is important to be aware of one's background and to reflect on the influence it can have on the study. Aamodt (1982) confirmed that the qualitative approach is reflexive in that the researcher is part of the research, and not separate from it. As such, the researcher then must analyze themselves in the context of the research (Aamodt, 1982). During this research study, I engaged in reflexivity through the journal that I kept. The journal helped me to document my behavior and experiences including ideas, thoughts, and feelings that I generated for my data collection. This process has helped me to continuously reflect on my own characteristics and examine the influence my background has on data gathering and analysis.

Triangulation is the process of validating evidence from different individuals, from different types of data, and/or from methods of data collection that will make the researcher's report more accurate and credible (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the researcher, I

examined all the information sources from the interviews, the observations, and the photovoice discussions and looked for themes that they had in common, as well as ‘outlier’ data. This helped to assure that the study was reliable because the information draws on multiple sources of information, individuals, and/or processes. The primary sources of data for this study were interviews, their associated observational fieldnotes, and the photovoice activity with five Nigerian immigrant families. I examined all this information and drew from the presented evidence to develop themes and to confirm my findings.

Data Analyses

Qualitative data analysis requires organizing the vast amount of information, transferring data from spoken or written words to typed files, and deciding whether to analyze data by hand or by computer (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). In qualitative research, the researcher organizes data into file folders and computer files for analysis, which could take several forms, such as: developing a matrix or a table to organize the material, organizing the materials by categories, and/or keeping duplicate copies of all forms of data (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Attention to this process is crucial in qualitative research because of the large amount of information that is gathered during the research study. As the researcher, I transcribed all interviews, fieldnotes, and visual materials into text data for analyses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data for this study was analyzed by hand. Creswell & Poth (2018) explained that analyzing by hand means that the researcher will read the data, mark them by hand, and divide them into parts (coding). The researcher codes data to generate descriptions and broad themes for analysis. To build additional layers of complex analyses the researcher connects themes into story lines, develops data into theoretical models, and shapes data into general descriptions to form complex theme connections (See Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The final step in qualitative data analyses, which is interpretation of the findings or results, is usually in the form of a narrative discussion, including an elaboration of the learnings from the study (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). These learnings or lessons constitute the researcher's interpretation of the data. As such, the narrative incorporates the understandings that the researcher brings to the study from their own personal education, culture, history, and experiences. The narrative includes the perceived meanings derived from a comparison of the findings with information from the literature or theories. To that end, as the researcher I developed conclusions, recommendations, and implications based on the interpretation of the evidence.

I personally organized and prepared all data for analyses in this study. I did a full transcription of the interviews from the fieldnotes, with reference to the recordings as needed. I arranged and elicited data from my observations and photovoice activities to capture patterns and themes. After each interview and observation, I transferred the notes to my computer as soon as possible, either the same day or the next day, so that I missed neither the words nor the essence of the interview and observation. For my interviews, I checked back to the recorded interview when I missed writing some of the interviewees' words. This procedure helped me in sorting and arranging data into accurate sentences. I analyzed all data in this study by hand, using open coding and interpretive comments to obtain the overall and unique experiences of my participants. Interpretive comments allowed me to document key reflections alongside the interview transcriptions, so that data could be revisited for further analyses.

Initially, I coded the data from the parents' interviews, the children's interviews, and the photovoice discussions separately so that I could develop an understanding of how they were different. For example, in both the children's data and the photovoice data, I saw evidence that

participation in sports was an important component for fitting into their new home, but that concept did not emerge from the data that I collected from parents. Once I had developed an understanding of how the data from the three data sources differed, I brought all of the data together so that I could integrate my understanding of how the families experienced the phenomenon. When I coded the parents' interview data, I initially divided the data into thirteen themes that were further compressed into eight themes. The children's data only contained three of the eight themes that I identified in the parents' data. The photovoice also contained three of the eight themes but the three themes in the photovoice data were different than the three in the children's data. Additionally, I noted 'outlier' data that did not fit into themes; for example, the one participant who had been hired for a professional job before coming to Canada found that it was easy to build personal relationships with white Canadians.

During coding, data was arranged by segmenting sentences based in the actual language of the participants. Next, I reduced data into meaningful themes and assigned names for those themes. I combined the themes into broader categories and made comparisons in the data tables. That coding process was used to generate a description of the presented themes for analyses and understanding. Chapter Four begins with a description about each of the participant families and their migration journeys to Canada so as to provide a context for the data without disclosing their identity. The interpretation and findings are then presented in the form of a narrative discussion, as noted. This process was the procedure that I followed when writing about lessons learned and personal interpretations that I developed during the study.

Researcher's Positionality and Epistemology

This case study considered how Nigerian migrant families and their children, who were enrolled in kindergarten to grade 12 schools in Manitoba, re-defined home after moving to

Canada. My positionality as researcher was that of an insider, and at the same time, an outsider. Bourke (2014) explained that “positionality is determined by where one stands in relation to ‘the other’” (p. 5). The author (2014) described how that identity evolves. It may be based on how we see ourselves, how others see us, or how we expect others to see us. Bourke (2014) affirmed that individuals have multiple overlapping identities within positionality. In this study, I identified several overlapping descriptions that define my researcher identity and my relationship to the topic and to the study participants.

Dhattiwala (2017) explained that an insider is someone whose memoir—religion, nationality, region, age, and/or sex, for example—gives the individual a familiarity with the group being researched. My insider status in this study—as a Black, African, Nigerian, male, and an immigrant who has lived in Canada for about nine years—afforded me access to begin my research. My insider status gave me a certain amount of legitimacy with my participants (Dhattiwala, 2017). As such, my role as a participant researcher within a community of migrants who share the common experience of recreating home within a Canadian community allowed families to identify me both personally and publicly as an insider in this study.

Hellawell (2006) described an outsider as someone studying a group in which that individual is not a member. Kerstetter (2012) explained that an outsider status can be determined based on one’s own affiliation with a university, level of formal education, research expertise, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and/or combination of these characteristics. Kerstetter’s (2012) list identified me as an outsider in this study. I was affiliated with a university and had completed a significant level of formal education in Canada. Furthermore, my experience of defining home in Canada involved an experience at the post-graduate level rather than within the K-12 public education system. Merriam et al. (2001) further expound that an outsider tends to

account for a more objective portrayal of the phenomena under study. Such a stance would allow for an authentic, accurate, and transparent account of the experiences of my participants. Thus, my insider and my outsider stances allowed me to gain access toward a deeper understanding, as an insider, while, as an outsider, reduced biases about the study phenomena (Bourke, 2014; Dhattiwala, 2017; Hellowell, 2012; Kerstetter, 2012).

As an individual, I have always tried to interpret and understand the world in which I live and work. I believe in subjective understanding of the world; that is, I acknowledge that individuals develop subjective meanings from their experiences. Within these experiences, I believe meanings are varied and multiple; thus, I seek to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow meanings translated into a few categories or ideas. Moreover, I recognize that subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically; therefore, I believe that subjective meanings are formed through interactions with others and through historical and social norms that operate in individuals' daily activities and lives. In other words, I live the praxis of a critical constructivist. In that journey, my goal in this research was to seek the individual participants' complex and subjective meanings about their experiences of the study phenomenon. I relied on the participants' views of their experiences and situations. I also recognized that my own background, as the researcher, would shape my interpretation. Therefore, in Chapter One, I included my own understanding and experiences of home so as to explore and communicate how my interpretations may flow from and be connected to my personal, cultural, and historical experiences. As such, my positionality illustrated my own predispositions based on my personal experiences as I have walked in the world, thus far.

Summary

In this third chapter, I have elaborated the study with reference to the importance of this research, research design, interview plans, fieldnotes and observations, photovoice methodology, connecting with potential participants, research sampling within a population, ethics when conducting research with potentially vulnerable populations, trustworthiness and triangulation, researcher's positionality and epistemology. As well, patterns of data analyses procedures have been described. In the next chapter, I report the findings, which comprise the analyses of the Nigerian children's and their families' interviews, my observations, and the photovoice discussions. In the final chapter, I will synthesize the results of the research; note the significance of the study; elaborate the implications for the African migrant children and families, research, practice, and policy; and as well include my final reflections on the study.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis

This study examined how Nigerian migrant families and their children, who were enrolled in kindergarten to grade 12 schools in Manitoba, articulated their ideas of home with regards to their sense of identity, perception of belonging, and emotional relationships. The study also examined how migrant children along with their families perceived home as they conceptualized the notion of home within their local education setting. As the data collection took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, their experiences reflected the impact of stay-at-home orders, travel restrictions, social distancing, and remote learning. As the researcher, I aimed to understand how these families negotiated and navigated the complexity that surrounds the concept of home in their migration narratives and experiences. This qualitative case study garnered insights from five families in southern Manitoba, Canada.

Participants: Demographics and Family Context

The participant families were selected because they were Black Africans that emigrated to Canada and had children who were presently enrolled in schools in southern Manitoba, Canada. Initially, I experienced some setbacks in data collection, due to the pandemic. With the COVID-19 outbreak and the provincial lockdown, efforts to collect data at the site where I had originally planned to recruit my participants had to be suspended. As a result, I had to make changes to my research approach and ethics application in order to access the participant children and families for this study. In the end, I chose a snowballing recruitment strategy, using my social network (i.e., African migrant Facebook group), as a way to gain access to, and to connect with, my target population during the pandemic. Because I had to follow all the COVID-19 related advice and restrictions set out by Manitoba Health officials, interviews and observations

for this study were conducted remotely using Zoom video conferencing. This had a large impact on the data that was collected and on the information that was gathered. While participants shared their experiences about their interactions with schools, they also reflected on their experiences of remote learning and their experiences of being an immigrant to Canada during the pandemic. For both the children and their parents, the context of the COVID-19 pandemic affected their responses to my questions and their reflections on life and school in Manitoba. However, since most of my families had been in Canada for several years, their perspectives about their relationships, interactions, and experiences within the K-12 schools in Manitoba had been formed prior to the beginning of the pandemic. All of the families in this study were voluntary migrants to Canada and all shared Christian beliefs. The following sections introduce the families at the center of my study and help readers to understand the backgrounds and experiences that will be detailed through my description of the data that follows in the remainder of the chapter. All names in the following sections are pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of participants.

The Ajani Family

The Ajanis, Olumide (M), 49, and Sheyi (F), 50, immigrated to Canada in 2008. The Ajani's had one child, Bolu (M), who was 10 and in grade 5 at the time of the research. Bolu was born in Canada. Olumide's work allowed him to work from home during the pandemic, so it became his responsibility to oversee Bolu's schooling during the periods of remote learning. Sheyi, a nurse, continued to work full time throughout the periods of lockdown. Olumide and Sheyi moved from Lagos, Nigeria to London, UK and after several months, they relocated to Canada. The family realized and expressed that the pandemic had brought them closer together because they spent more time together in the house. While interviewing members of the Ajani

family and observing what I could see of their family dynamics during the three hours that I spent with them on Zoom, I came to believe that their family was characterized by loving relationships. For example, when I interviewed Bolu, Olumide sat beside him with his arm wrapped around Bolu's chair so that he could touch the child's shoulder to encourage him and help him not feel intimidated by the unusual experience of being interviewed online. Perhaps, this would have been different if I had been able to conduct interviews in their homes. It would have given me an opportunity to build a relationship with Bolu in the presence of his parents and interview him solo. However, in an online space both Bolu and I were comfortable with the support of the parent in the interview. My observation of the strong relationships as evidenced by the interactions between family members, including lots of eye contact, smiling, nodding, and other supportive gestures, supports the family's statement that they grew stronger due to increased time together during the pandemic.

The Abayomi Family

Chioma (F), 49, and Amadi (M), 53, had three children in the Manitoba K-12 school system at the time of the research. The eldest of the three children, Nonso (M), was eighteen years old and in the final year of high school. Ochucko (M), the second oldest boy, was sixteen years old and in grade ten. Their sister, Chidima (F), was ten years old and in grade five. All three children were born in Nigeria before the family relocated to Canada directly from Nigeria in 2013. Prior to the pandemic, both parents worked full-time but during the first lockdown, Chioma lost her job because her line of work was considered non-essential within the province and the employer was unable to continue to pay the employees. Amadi, an electrician, was able to continue to work on different construction sites throughout the pandemic. As a result, Chioma was left to help the children with remote learning during school closures. Supporting online

learning for three children at such different levels was difficult for Chioma and the Abayomi children described online learning during the COVID-19 lockdown as very challenging. In my observations of the Abayomi family, when I met with them over Zoom, I noticed they make each person in the family feel valued, respected, and important. For example, when Chidima was telling her stories the family joined in and engaged with her to draw out her story more descriptively. Their open communication and supportive caring relationships toward one another led to deep conversations within the interviews.

The Adeyemi Family

The Adeyemi family, with parents Tunde (M), 46, and Kemi (F), 43, was a family with two children in school in Manitoba, both of whom were born in Canada. The older of the two children, Segun (M), was ten years old and in grade five at the time of the interviews. The younger child, Ola (M), was eight years old and in the third grade. The family was originally from Nigeria in the western part of Africa and lived in the United Kingdom (UK) before relocating to Canada in 2010. They emigrated from the UK to Canada voluntarily with the belief that Canada was immigrant-friendly and had programs to assist immigrants as they integrated into their new home environment. This expectation matched with what they actually experienced in Canada. The parents, who had both worked full-time outside of the home, were able to work remotely from home once the pandemic started. These parents worked in professional jobs and were grateful for the career opportunities that were presented to them in Canada. Both parents were able to provide support for their children during the period of remote learning. When I met with them online, I noticed the family are comfortable with interacting and communicating about their lived and transitional experiences in the three continents, they had lived: Nigeria (Africa), UK (Europe) and Canada (North America). My observation of the family's attentive engagement

during the interviews was evidenced by their confidence about their experience and their descriptive response to the interview questions. For example, when they shared their perspectives about how they were supported in Canada, they shared direct comparisons of their experiences in both the UK and Nigeria. The comfort that the family had with communicating their experiences led to deep discussions within the interviews and helped me to gather rich and informative data from the Adeyemi family.

The Adeolu Family

Tiwa (F), 33, and Timi (M), 38, Adeolu had three children – one in early years and two that were not yet school-aged. Kemi was the oldest child and was in kindergarten at the time of the interviews. The middle sibling was three and the youngest was still a baby. Timi Adeolu immigrated first to the UK and then to Canada, while Tiwa continued to live in their home country of Nigeria. She joined him in Canada shortly after he moved here in 2013. All of their children were born in Canada. During the pandemic, Tiwa was at home with the children, and she expressed that she appreciated the time to spend with them. In her opinion, it gave her an opportunity to get to know them better. While she missed some aspects of life in Nigeria, especially some of the fresh fruits and vegetables that were not available in Canada, she appreciated the Canadian social structure because it afforded a healthy, supportive, organized standard of living. During the time that I spent online with the Adeolu family, I observed that the parents enjoyed spending time with their young children while providing academic support for the oldest child, who was in kindergarten.

The Akinola Family

Efe (M) and Uche (F) Akinola were both in their forties. They had three children: Maro (M) was eleven years old and in grade six, Chinedu (M) was ten years old and in grade five, Obi

(M) was eight years old and in grade three. All three of their children were enrolled in elementary school in Manitoba. The family immigrated to Canada in 2009, noting that prior to moving from the UK to Canada, they believed that Canadian culture would be similar to that of the United Kingdom because both were considered western cultures. Upon arrival in Canada, though, they learned that there were few similarities. Before the pandemic, both parents worked full-time outside of the home while raising their children. Efe worked as an engineer and Uche worked as a [realtor] so during the pandemic their work was considered to be non-essential. Therefore, during the pandemic and at the time of the interviews both parents worked from home, which allowed them to provide encouragement and support for their children when they were learning remotely. In my experiences talking with members of the Akinola family and observing glimpses of their family life during the three hours that I spent with them on Zoom, I understood them to be exhausted from work and family life because I witnessed them helping their children with their assignments during my interviews with them. The parents described exercise as one strategy they are using to cope with their stress during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Figure 1.0 contains a table that summarizes the information of the Nigerian migrant families, who participated in this study. The chart depicts that the Nigerian families immigrated to Canada between 2009 and 2013. Four of the families migrated from the UK and one family moved directly from Nigeria. The Nigerian parents are between the ages of 35 to 55 years and their children are between four months old and 18 years of age. Also, the Nigerian migrant children that participated in this study are in kindergarten through grade 12 in Manitoba schools. Eight parents were working from home during the pandemic. Two were considered essential workers and, therefore, were required to go to work throughout the pandemic, and one parent

was on maternity leave. Pseudonyms were used for all the Nigerian parents and children in this study.

Table 2

Participant Demographic Chart

Surname	Parent	Age	Children (Age)	Grade	Migration Year	Work (During COVID-19)	Migration via the UK
Ajani	Olumide(M) Sheyi (F)	49- 50	<u>Bolu</u> (10)	<u>Bolu</u> (5)	2008	Olumide (non-essential), Uche (essential)	Yes
Abayomi	<u>Amadi</u> (M) <u>Chioma</u> (F)	53- 49	<u>Nonso</u> (18), <u>Ochuko</u> (16), <u>Chidima</u> (10)	<u>Nonso</u> (12), <u>Ochuko</u> (10), <u>Chidima</u> (5)	2013	<u>Amadi</u> (non-essential), <u>Chioma</u> (essential)	No
Adeyemi	Tunde (M) Kemi (F)	46- 43	Segun (10), Ola (8)	Segun (5), Ola (3)	2010	Tunde (non-essential), Kemi (non-essential)	Yes
Adeolu	<u>Timi</u> (M), <u>Tiwa</u> (F)	33- 38	Kemi (5), Kunle (3), Kola(4months)	Kemi (K)	2013	<u>Timi</u> (non-essential), <u>Tiwa</u> (maternity leave)	Yes
Akinola	<u>Efe</u> (M) Uche (F)	42- 46	<u>Maro</u> (11), <u>Obi</u> (10), <u>Chinedu</u> (8)	<u>Maro</u> (6), <u>Obi</u> (5), <u>Chinedu</u> (3)	2009	<u>Efe</u> (non-essential), Uche (essential)	Yes

Note. This chart summarizes the demographic information about the participant families.

This section described the demographics and the family context, for each of the five families that participated in the study. I began by reading all the data from each of the participant families including the interviews and photovoice, which I then analyzed for sense-making by using interpretive comments. That practice allowed me to focus on the direct experiences of each

family without floundering in the sheer amount of data. The following section describes the themes that emerged from the experiences of the participants.

Home and African Families Experiences

After clustering the relevant units of meaning from the families' experiences, the following eight themes emerged: (1) migration experiences; (2) connection to home through food, movies, and communication; (3) expectations in the new home environment; (4) memories of home and understanding of the new home; (5) building social networks in the new home; (6) building relationships and other challenges; (7) multi-dimensional meanings of home; and (8) challenges and impacts of COVID-19. The themes allowed the experiences of the study participants to be captured accurately. The stated themes were supported by the data from the participants and led to an understanding of how these families negotiated and navigated the complexity that surrounded the concept of home in their migration narratives and experiences.

Migration Experiences

The participant families described different stages of their pre-migration experiences before arriving in Canada. One family moved to Canada directly from Nigeria. The remaining four families immigrated first to the UK, before coming to Canada, and all four described this phase of their migration experience as challenging and difficult. One family contrasted the experience of living in the UK to when they were residing in their home of origin. This is how Olumide Ajani described this experience:

When we got there, things were not as easy as we thought. When I say things were not as easy, I mean in totality. In the sense that I was working in Nigeria, we were comfortable, we had a very decent home, we have our cars, and we have everything you can think about. We are now going into another country where you are downsized into a very small

space. My nieces had to leave their room for us. They moved into a smaller room... You can imagine you being downsized from a whole house into a small room. It was so challenging coupled with the fact that there was no work. It was very difficult to get work. We spent all our savings from Nigeria in that thirteen months that we spent in the UK.

Kemi Adeyemi described how challenging it was to get residency status in the UK and how they made the decision to relocate to Canada even when their family and friends thought that move would be expensive and impossible for them to achieve. This is how Kemi Adeyemi described this experience:

Everybody was thinking it is fake. They say it is a lie. It is not easy to become a permanent resident [in Canada] because they live in the UK, and they know how hard it is to [be] a permanent resident there. It is a struggle to become a resident. In the UK you have to spend like 10 years to get the same status, so everybody was saying it was fake [in Canada]. My husband said he does not feel like renewing the visa and that maybe we should try this Canada thing and we tried it. Let me say within 6 months they gave us permanent residency.

Kemi Adeyemi explained that while in the UK friends and family advised them to stay on for a couple of years to get their British residency. It was difficult to obtain, and although they did not anticipate that the process of getting permanent residency in Canada would be easy either, still, they decided to change their environment by relocating and starting a new life in Canada.

The Akinolas explained how tough it was for the family to emigrate to Canada. Efe expressed that the process of relocating to their new home was time-consuming, difficult, and

expensive. The family also described other personal factors that made the experience even more challenging. Efe Akinola stated:

Immigrating to Canada was not that easy. It was a process. It was about a two-year process. Going to the UK was like a six-month process. So, it took a lot of processing and lots of flying, and I am someone who does not like flying. I am afraid of heights, so it was quite challenging and more expensive. It was a process that took lots of my time and [I was] coming into a different culture and different sets of law.

Rapport and Dawson (1998) described the fundamental relationship between movement and distinct cultural practices and expression. The authors explain that the act of migration brings individuals into a new cultural and political environment. The experiences of the Akinola family reaffirmed that the different culture and set of laws in Canada have continued to shape them in their new home environment.

The Abayomi family emigrated directly from Nigeria. They acknowledged that they faced many difficulties including lengthy visa processing times and financial problems during their migration to Canada. Amadi Abayomi explained:

To raise money to fly to Canada was a challenge. I had some property to sell in Nigeria, so I can get money to purchase our ticket because I do not want to borrow money to move here. So, it took some time before I could sell the property and the duration on my visa was a year and to sell the property was proving impossible. So, I had thirteen days left for the visa to expire before I could sell the property, but we sold it before the visa expired and then we quickly went to the embassy in Nigeria. They gave me a big envelope at the embassy that contained my family's passports and other documents with

instructions that I should go to a particular place in Nigeria to purchase our tickets and they only sell tickets for Canadian immigrants, so [that is how] I bought our tickets.

Nonso and Ochuko Abayomi had been in grade six and four respectively when they emigrated from Nigeria with their parents and were able to describe their own migration experiences.

Ochuko described his migration experience this way:

We got on the plane...when we sat down, in front of me there was a little TV that you can watch any movie you want. Seeing that just made me feel like Canada would be like a heaven in the future.

Nonso also reflected and described his migration experience to his new home:

I kind of remember when dad and mom asked us to pray so we can make it to Canada safely. So, in mind I was thinking this place will be really nice. Sometimes I see in the movies big buildings and cars moving everywhere. I saw in this one movie fine cars and everywhere was nice and that is what I thought Canada would look like.

As first-time travelers, the Abayomi family acknowledged the support of the Canadian embassy in Nigeria that put in place measures, which aided the family's smooth travel to their new home.

When they arrived in their destination country, Ochuko and Nonso expressed that they were disappointed because everything including the food and the people were strange to them and different than they had imagined. Ochuko, the younger brother, explained some of his memories from the very first day that the family arrived in Canada:

When we first got here everything was just crazy. I remember that I was sitting beside this [white] kid and I could not [understand] what he was saying at all. He was playing on his tablet, and I was like what is going on. He was just looking at me like what are you

doing. I was just staring at him the whole time. [Later] someone came to pick us up and we went to this hotel. The food was weird I could not even eat it but after a while everything was good.

Ahmed (1999) and Jackson (1995) explained that movement which might include the leaving behind the familiar may be understood as involving an encounter with strange lands and strangers that may engender feelings of homeless states of being and identities. As such, this boy's first encounter with a White child, the strange food, and the unfamiliar environment provoked feelings of stress that were memorable for him. In comparison, the Adeolu explained that their migration experience was not as difficult because the two did not move to Canada together. At first, Timi Adeolu resided in the UK then moved on to Canada, while Tiwa Adeolu remained in Nigeria until later when she joined her husband in their new Canadian home. The family acknowledged that the spousal application that they submitted to Canadian immigration contributed to the less difficult migration experience.

The families felt a sense of relief when moving to Canada. The participant families described feelings of satisfaction with the Canadian immigration system and how they were able to find many opportunities in their new home including employment opportunities. Olumide Ajani's transition was unique because he got his current job in Canada while he was in the UK and just before his arrival in their new home. He recognized that such a unique circumstance makes a difference to the family's positive integration into Canadian society.

It has been easy for us, so to speak, here in Canada because I did not have to look for a job. It is, so far, so good here in Canada, so that transition from the UK to Canada was wonderful. The only one we had challenges with was from Nigeria to the UK but coming here has been so wonderful.

The Adeyemi's transition to their new home was positive, as well. They believed that Canada had the social structure in place for immigrants to successfully integrate into the Canadian system. This was how Kemi Adeyemi described their positive transition:

So, since then, we went to Manitoba Starts and we were able to integrate into the culture.

We got our own place and since then things have been smooth. We have no regret at all.

This place is better. They are more immigrant friendly in Canada than in the UK. I have been in both places, and I know that this place is better.

Al-Ali and Koser (2002) and Chambers (2004) described the relationship between specific conditions around migrants' unique conceptions of home, particularly for voluntary migrants. Moreover, finding a better opportunity in the receiving country is often the reason for voluntary migration (Doyle, 2004). The families' journeys were consistent with these ideas, as they viewed the processes of migrating into their new homes favorably and their new home environment as full of opportunities. The families' migration experiences of migrating to Canada were positive because of the availability of the supportive social structures in place for immigrant children and families as they integrate into the system. These positive experiences led to improved well-being for the families in their new home environment.

The use of a critical constructivist framework when understanding the Nigerian migrant children and families' experiences directed me to approach the data with a deep critical awareness and to evaluate their social, political, and historical issues within the context of the community or society that might have affected their migration experiences (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Foucault, 1984; Freire, 2000; Kincheloe, 2005). In the pre-migration phase, all of the families experienced some challenging migration processes. The families who went to the UK experienced distress, which resulted partially from unfavourable living conditions there. They

experienced challenges with unemployment, accommodation, and finances. In addition, the families faced other compounding factors such as lengthy visa processing, feelings of fright about flying in airplanes, and fear of the unknown, all morphing into frustration. These findings support the research of van Tonder (2012), who indicated that migration is a demanding and deeply confronting personal experience. Similarly, Al-Ali and Koser (2002) and Chambers (1994) pointed out how these challenges are considered part of the forces of globalization that continue to shape and influence migration and thus, migrants' lives. Chamber's (1994) work also supported these findings, as he explained that migration involves movement in which neither the point of departure nor that of arrival may be immutable or certain.

Prior to arriving in their new home, the children were hopeful and excited to relocate to Canada. They envisioned that they would experience beautiful things such as the fast cars and beautiful landscapes in Canada. They also hoped that a great future lay ahead of them as they transitioned from migratory experiences to educational experiences in their new surroundings. Baffoe (2011) described the first stage of integration for new Black African migrant children in Canada, as characterized by excitement and hope; that is, a sense of fulfillment because all the good things migrant children have watched on television about Canada are now within their reach. As such, Baffoe (2011) expounded that this early stage does not last long before the youth reach another stage of integration. At this next stage, the children negotiate the contradictions and ambiguities that surround their new home including the lifestyle, the culture, language, dressing, food, and music. The African children expressed that they were disappointed when they first arrived in their new home environment because everything including the food and the people were strange to them and different than they had imagined. These children and their

families were faced with issues (e.g., social, political, and historical) during their movement to their new home environment.

The Nigerian children and families negotiated and navigated the contradictions and ambiguities that surrounded their migration experiences as they transitioned into their new homes. Some of these families experienced positive integration in terms of gaining employment, meeting new people, and getting involved in cultural community organizations. The children were excited and hopeful for a great future ahead in their new home as they transitioned from migratory experiences to their new educational and community settings. The availability of social structures in the new home environment provided opportunities for the Nigerian families to connect and to settle in Canada. Some of the families believed that their reasons for migrating and/or finding a new home were fulfilled. Doyle (2004) noted that finding a better opportunity in the destination country is often the reason for voluntary migration. Hendriks et al.'s (2018) work supported this finding, as they explained that finding a new home for voluntary migrants may lead to improved well-being as some of these migrants often mention improvements in quality of life in their destination countries. Similarly, Barkin (1967) indicated the economic benefits that voluntary migrants may experience include “the experience, the knowledge of a new language, the understanding of urban society, the insights into ways people in the destination countries live, and the newly acquired specific occupational skills and industrial know-how” (pp. 504-505). Some of these families have experienced considerable life satisfaction that has positively affected their lives in their new home environment (see Hendriks et al., 2018).

The five families faced different and compounding challenges before leaving their previous homes, including problems of accommodation, unemployment, and financial difficulty. They also described the lengthy visa processing time as one of the hurdles they encountered at

the pre-migration phase. Further complicating the decision to move to a new home involved other personal factors such as a phobia for flying in an airplane and the fear of the unknown in their destination country. Also, two children's migration experiences involved tough balancing acts of negotiations between the culture of their country of origin and the culture of their new home. All of these factors combined to make their pre-migration experiences challenging. Families strive and negotiate the contradictions and ambiguities that surround these migration experiences differently (Massey, 1994; Ralph & Staeheli, 2011).

Connections to Home Through Food, Movies, and Communication

Migrants' motivations to keep connections with their place of origin are many. Gonzalez, et al. (2009) explain that migrants might preserve connections with their country of origin to maintain their identity, culture, and traditions, and as such, many keep this closeness through frequent communication with friends and family. The participant families described how they were able to stay connected to their home of origin while living in Canada. All the families explained that they stayed connected to their family and friends through phone calls and other social media platforms and found technology to be important in communicating and staying connected to their home of origin. Olumide Ajani stated:

We still have relatives in Nigeria. So, we still have that connection. My wife has all her siblings in Nigeria except one that is here, so that connection is still there, and we do connect with them, of course, over the phone and thank God for technology. Technology has made things so easy. I was talking to my wife the other day that this world has turned into a global village and that you can pick your phone and you will call someone in Nigeria and the person will pick it up instantly, in almost real time. So, it is via all these available technologies we have out there that we connect to our home of origin.

Kemi Adeyemi added:

I stay connected through various technology mediums like phones... I am still connected because I still have my mom there in my home of origin, my sisters, and my childhood friends and we connect on WhatsApp and other social media platforms.... The best way is just to keep in touch with your people. Thank God for social media. Thank God for phones. Thank God for technology.

Kemi explained that with the use of technology the world was a smaller place and that using social media one could communicate with anyone in any part of the world, including their country of origin. The Abayomis also connected with family and friends through phone communication. In describing how they maintained connection to the home of origin, Amadi Abayomi explained:

I talk on the phone with my friends who are living in Nigeria. We talk all the time on the phone, especially on weekends to maintain the friendship. That is how we maintain the familiarity. That is how we maintain our connections. Even when my friends want to have events in Nigeria, they invite me, and I will make sure I travel to Nigeria to attend the functions such as a burial ceremony or wedding ceremonies. I attend just to maintain my relationship with them.

The Akinolas also underlined the importance of communication within their immediate family now transitioned to life in Canada. Efe Akinola explained that: "Communication is essential like in my home here [in Canada] physical communication, you know, talking to my family, playing with them, and having family time – play some games, like cards." Communication had helped the families to stay connected to each other and to their home of origin and they believed that

these continued interactions were crucial for developing a feeling of home in their new environment.

In understanding how people develop a feeling of home, Somerville (1997) explained that individuals are understood to construct mental interpretations of the world and that people may become attached to certain objects in the world and that these objects may preserve their sense of identity within their everyday lives. The five families described African food, movies, attire, and paintings as physical components that they feel are essential for developing a feeling of home. These components provided the families with memories of home and helped them to retain a sense of belonging to their home of origin. Efe Akinola explained:

I mostly eat African food. The same food that I eat in my country of origin I eat here in Canada, and I watch lots of Nollywood movies...and our dressing, like going to church on Sunday wearing Nigerian outfits. So, people [in Nigeria] will say they look at my photo [on social media] and they say how come I always wear African attire?...It is only on Sunday I have time to wear that and I need to display my culture, so that my children would see that this is where my dad and my mom are from and this is how we dress, so that they would not forget home.

Amadi Abayomi added:

Food. The food from our country of origin. In this case I will say “Amala” because when I was in Nigeria, there is this spot I go to eat this particular kind of food. So, there was a day I went to an African store to purchase the food and I asked my wife to prepare the food. Every time I eat the food, I remember home. It feels like I should go back home to my country of origin. Also, there are some foods that you cannot find here in Canada that

I would like to eat but we have not been able to buy them. I miss those kinds of foods. I just do not want to go back to my country of origin because of food.

Figure 1

Amala



Note: Amadi Abayomi's favourite Nigerian dish.

The Adeolu family also described how much they missed eating African food and that they always made sure to get the food regardless of the cost, because it helped them to maintain the feeling of home remembered from their country of origin. The family described how they go extra lengths to get Nigerian food in Canada. Tiwa Adeolu stated:

Like some of the food we eat makes me remember home; like last year we had to cargo [ship] some food from Nigeria because we miss those foods. We do not mind that they

are expensive, and the dollar rate is high and then we have to pay an exorbitant price to ship them here. We didn't mind that we had to pay for those things [because] it makes us remember home.

Vallianatos and Raine (2008) affirmed that food connects across time and place, and for migrants, their traditional food is an important part of preserving connections to their home of origin. The authors expounded that the kinds of food that are consumed by migrants remind them of their family and friends they left behind. As such, by continuing to consume these traditional foods, migrants preserve their transnational relationships and affirm their companionship with those back home (Vallianatos & Raine, 2008). Nigerian food helped the families in this study to connect to their home of origin and to realize a sense of home in Canada.

The participant families also described African attire and paintings as physical components that have helped them to create a feeling of home in Canada. Efe Akinola explained:

I have an African painting at home showing some tribes from Nigeria and my traditional Ibo attires and the walking sticks, the red cap, and the beads; those are the things that help me remember home.

Kemi Adeyemi added:

When I see paintings from Africa, I just admire them and know these are from Africa or Nigeria, when you see some designs and some clothing too—maybe you see a person wearing Nigerian attire. I will just assume that that person is from my country of origin. When I go to a Black AfrikCanada festival that they organize downtown, you will see a lot of people that would admire your culture or when I go to a Folklorama event, I see beads and cowries, I see earrings, I see clothing from Nigeria and that makes me feel

connected. Even if I am not buying any of them, they remind me of Nigeria, and it just makes me want to buy those things.

The Adeolu family described how wearing African attire has helped them to remember home and to teach their children about their Nigerian heritage. Tiwa Adeolu stated: “We have some traditional clothes here that anytime I wear them it makes me remember home...I wear some African clothes. You know even though my children were born here in Canada I like to put it in their mind that they are from Nigeria.” Tiwa added that anytime they knew someone that was going to Nigeria, they asked them to help by bringing back some traditional clothes. Tiwa provided a photo of the traditional headgear and she explained that in her native language it is called “Aso Oke”. She expressed that in her home country of Nigeria, women would use headgear when they want to go to parties such as naming and/or wedding ceremonies and that the headgear comes in a variety of colors that they could choose from for a specific function. She expounded that the attire reminds her of her country of origin and that recently she has not had the opportunity to wear it because of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

Figure 2

Aso Oke



Note: Tiwa Adeolu's "Aso Oke" or headgear.

Baffoe and Asimeng-Boahene (2013) confirmed that African migrants actively and consciously attempt to recreate their culture in a new place with the goal of preserving cultural connections between their country of origin, themselves, and their children born in the diaspora. The authors posited that African migrants in the diaspora utilized African cultural objects, such as traditional clothes and paintings, as retentions of cultural attachments to their home of origin. The families all agreed that African traditional attire allowed them to stay connected to their cultural identity.

The critical constructivist framework serves to illustrate the relationship dynamics between and among groups (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005) and how home is being identified (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). The Nigerian families stayed connected to their family and

friends through technology, particularly through phone calls and other social media platforms. They preserved connections with their country of origin through frequent communication with friends and family, which helped them to maintain their identity, culture, and traditions in their new home. One family also highlighted the importance of physical communication, such as interacting and engaging in game activities with family members within their own immediate family. The families believed that these continued interactions were critical in instilling the cultural values of their home of origin to members of the family. Hertlein (2012) and Gonzales and Katz (2016) indicated that immigrant families have relied on communication technologies to bridge physical distances and to sustain personal relationships, particularly when it was difficult to make in-person contact. This finding supports the research of Livingstone (2002), who indicated that “technology has become part of the infrastructure of family life” (p. 67) by affecting the spatial definition of the home as well as the temporal definition of everyday family life practices (Gonzales & Katz, 2016). The use of technology fostered a sense of connectedness to their home of origin for the Nigerian migrant families in this study.

African foods, movies, attire, and paintings served as physical components that were necessary for developing a feeling of home for Nigerian migrant families. The families used these components to preserve their memories of home and to retain a sense of connection to their country of origin and their cultural traditions. Also, the Nigerian parents demonstrated their culture with these aspects so as to help their children who were born in Canada learn and understand aspects of the culture of their home of origin. Baffoe and Asimeng-Boahene (2013) pointed out that African immigrants may decorate their homes with various African paintings that describe their beliefs and underscore their memories and attachments to their country of origin. Similarly, Vallianatos and Raine’s (2008) work supports this finding, as they explained

that food connects across time and place, and for the migrant families in this study, food was an essential component of maintaining connections to home. African food, movies, attire, and paintings helped the Nigerian families to recreate and realize a sense of home in Canada.

These Nigerian families maintained important connections to their home of origin in various ways. They communicated with their family and friends via telephone calls, video calls, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms; they watched and listened to African movies and music that connected them emotionally; and they found ways to incorporate African food, attire, and paintings as other physical components that were essential for maintaining a feeling of home. The families concluded that these components preserve their sense of identity in their new home environment.

Expectations in the New Home Environment

When they described their expectations before and after they moved to their new home, these families explained how only some of these expectations matched with the realities of their new environment. Three families explained that their expectations about coming to Canada were based on giving their children a better life and they have found that they were able to actualize those goals. However, they articulated that it was a challenge for them to get a job when they arrived in Canada and that aspect did not fit into what they were expecting in their new home.

Efe Akinola described his disappointment:

One of the shocking things is that when I came, I wrote close to or over 300 applications without an interview. I was thinking with my European credentials or qualifications, it was going to be fast [to get a job], but that is not the case. That is one of the shocks I have had. The experiences were not as easy as I thought they would be. You know, before I

moved to Canada I was like, if I got there, I would get a job and there are lots of jobs, so I would just fit in, you know.

Kemi Adeyemi added:

You know my expectations were high. I thought it would be so rosy, so easy, for me to get a job and things like that but no it did not happen and that was not what I was expecting. I was disappointed, and I was a bit bitter but later I adjusted. I [decided to] make this place my home and now this is my home.

Jones (2000) argued that the description of home as a place of comfort is an expression of an idealized, romanticized, or even nostalgic notion, and it is often in conflict with the reality of migrants' lived experiences of their new home. Kemi explained that her expectations coming into her new environment were high because her husband who emigrated before her, had not told her about the reality of living abroad. By contrast, the Abayomi family's expectations matched with the reality of their new home, especially in areas such as getting quality education for their children. However, this family also expressed that they were faced with the challenge of finding employment. Chioma Abayomi stated: "In the aspect of gaining employment, it was really hard when we first arrived. It was difficult". The Abayomi family explained that they found the work ethic in Canada to be different from that of Nigeria. There were several aspects of life in Nigeria that dictated the way people approached their work. For example, often rental agreements were paid on an annual basis and most earnings were fixed so that employees were paid even when they were sick whereas in Canada, the family found that they were panicked by the need to pay bills at the end of each month particularly since working for hourly wages meant they lost income when they needed to miss work. They explained that in Canada they had to work long hours just in order to pay their monthly bills. This expectation of working so much caused the

Abayomis concern about how they could find enough family time for parenting their children in Canada. They expressed disappointment that their expectation did not match reality in this aspect.

Two families commented on the difficulty of developing relationships within Canadian culture and reflected on how it was different from the way relationships were built in Nigeria. This is how Efe Akinola expressed his disappointment:

Back home our relationship mostly is like community-based where you can know the people living in your community.... You are walking on the street, and you are greeting each other but here it is quite different. Here in Canada, you are on your own. You might not even know your neighbor. The only thing that is common is the physical space. At home here in Canada, we all stay in a physical space, and we confine ourselves but back home we also have the physical space, but we can also relate outside the physical space better.

Tiwa Adeolu added:

You know, they say it is friendly Manitoba, right? You know back home, people greet, and you have people around you but here in Canada, everybody is busy. I think it is because of the way the system is. [In Nigeria,] you have people around, let us say you have a new baby. You will have people around you to help you but here people are busy, but it is not like people do not care.

Both the Efe Akinola and Tiwa Adeolu missed living in a community based on relationship-building in their new Canadian homes. In terms of building relationships with one's own child, however, the Ajani family described that their beliefs about parenting changed when they started to understand the realities of familial relationships in Canada. They found that parenting in their

home of origin was different than in Canada and they appreciated that parents in Canada were expected to be gentle and loving towards their children. Sheyi Ajani stated:

When we got here to Canada, so many times I would talk to my husband [about how] children can have good relationships with their parents in Canada, it is interesting. I can never remember a time during my childhood that I went to sit beside my dad and have conversations with him. But here, bringing up a child you will see that love. You will see that is what brings love and peace to a home. You know when you talk to your child, you have a voice for talking to your child. It was when we got here, we learned that when disciplining a child, you do not punish a child, but in our country of origin, everything is punishment, punitive action.

Adams and Kirova (2006) explained that migration involves a form of cultural frame-switching; that is, a process of understanding and engaging with the cultural norms of migrants' destination countries. The Ajani family adopted the practise of always talking with their child and explaining to him what he had done wrong, a cultural norm they learned in their new society which they believed was a positive way to help their child to change his attitude. Olumide Ajani described his understanding of the differences in parenting in this way:

Another thing I want to add is that the way you talk to a child here is different from the way you would talk to a child in Nigeria. If you say come here, with a very loud voice, to a child in Canada, the child might start crying but when you asked the child what happened, the child might say you are yelling at him or her. The child will see it as yelling, but in Nigeria if you ask a child to come with the same tone of voice, we are used to yelling or let me say noise in Nigeria, so a Nigerian child will not see it as yelling because the child is used to it.

The Ajani family articulated that this new understanding or knowledge of parenting changed their beliefs and helped shape their realities in their new home.

Two families also described how they perceived the natural environment when they first arrived in Canada, having assumed their new home environment was unattractive because of the time of the year that they moved. This is how Chioma Abayomi described her expectation versus the reality that confronted her:

It was during fall, and I saw that everywhere in the city was dirty and I was like is this not the Canada that people talk about. I did not really like the environment at first. I talked to my husband that the Canada we were striving to come is somewhat dirty. I told him that he should look at leaves everywhere not realizing that we moved to Canada during the fall period and that it is normal for leaves to fall. The fallen leaves and the melting snow make the whole street messy; you know. Because of the time of the year we arrived in Canada, I told my husband that I do not like Canada.

Kemi Adeyemi added:

So, when I first moved to Canada, I was expecting Canada to be more beautiful than it is. Maybe [that is] because I moved to Winnipeg. When I got to the airport everywhere was dusty and muddy. You know, it was in Spring, the cars were dirty.... I was like oh my goodness why is everywhere dirty like this? They cannot even wash their cars?

The two families expressed that once they developed a deeper understanding of the seasons and the weather, they developed a better appreciation for the seasonal changes. Two families also described their surprise in learning how much colder the weather was in Canada compared to that of the UK. Kemi Adeyemi stated:

The weather is, OMG, it is colder than the UK! The UK was cold. I think the maximum temperature we saw there was -2 or -5 degrees, and everybody would be shouting this is cold! Occasionally when it snowed, nobody goes out. There may be one day of snow and the second day everything is gone, you know. It took me time to adjust in Canada... But now I like the weather. Well, not that I like it, but I do not have a choice now that Canada is my new home. I just must adjust....Let me say I am used to the weather.

Efe Akinola added:

I have never lived in a very cold place before, the nearest to the coldest place was in Scotland then the nearest to that one is when I went to the North part of Nigeria (Jos), when I went to Jos during the harmattan season. So, Canada is pretty cold, but I have learned to adapt to it.

The two families understood that the weather was one thing they needed to adjust to in their new home.

The Adeyemi family affirmed that in Canada their satisfaction in terms of having a fulfilled life matched with their expectations before arriving. The family confirmed that Canada was friendly to immigrants and that there were better supports, compared to the UK, to ensure migrant families integrated successfully into Canada. Kemi Adeyemi stated: "We felt fulfilled once we got to Canada, especially to Winnipeg....You cannot compare Canada to the UK. If you have been in both systems, you will understand what I am saying." In Canada, the family was able to build their professional careers, buy a house, purchase cars without discrimination, and feel comfortable in their own skin.

The critical constructivist framework opposes philosophies that celebrate social harmony without problematizing or interrogating the basic assumptions of the wider society (Barkin &

Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). The framework calls for the necessity of an ongoing critique of social relationships and the need to develop a discourse of social change and liberation (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019). The Nigerian children and families' expectations before they moved from their country of origin often did not match with the realities of their new home. All of the families believed life in Canada would be easy and that was one of the reasons they moved from their previous home. On getting to Canada, two of the families were surprised to experience chronic unemployment despite submitting hundreds of job applications and possessing European credentials. The families' assumptions about fitting into the Canadian workforce was proven to contradict their experiences in their new home. Galarneau and Morissette (2005) indicated that unemployment rates for recent immigrants with a university degree were at least three times that of the Canadian born. This finding supported the research of Makwarimba et al. (2013), Phythan et al. (2009), and Richmond (2001); all who indicated that the non-recognition of educational and work qualifications obtained outside of Canada seriously disadvantages immigrants in securing employment in Canadian society. This situation contributed to economic difficulty that then led to ongoing poverty for some of the participant migrant families, as some of them continued to work in menial jobs (Makwarimba et al., 2013; Phythan et al., 2009). Such conditions have direct emotional consequences for the families (see Makwarimba et al., 2013), thereby affecting their social adjustment, and thus, a sense of home in Canada.

Critical constructivist theory helps to demonstrate the relationship between race and the process of migrant families establishing a sense of home in Canada. Critical constructivist theory advocates for racialized and marginalized people to tell their often unheard and unacknowledged stories and for their viewpoints to be relevant to the existing dominant narratives that impact and influence the law of a country or province (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). The issue

of unemployment that some of the participant families experienced in their new home can be attributed to the systemic or structural racism embedded in Canadian society (See Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Furthermore, a survey by Lam et al. (2022) regarding Racism, Bias, and Discrimination, supported this understanding about the pervasiveness of racism in Manitoban society. In this report, 84% of the respondents agreed that racism is a prevalent issue in Manitoba. The issue of race and racism within Canadian society continues to affect migrant children and families and their opportunities (i.e., employment) to fulfill their dreams in their new home environment. Racism within the communities where the participant families established their homes limited their potential to realize positive adjustment and integration and thus a sense of home in Canada.

The critical constructivist framework focuses on how individuals discern ways that their environments shape their perception and construct their consciousness (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). All of the families noticed how relationship-building in their new home was different from that of their home of origin. The Nigerian families described relationship-building in their home of origin as community-based where people living in the community are sharing and taking responsibility for one another and helping with raising children. The families recognized and noted that people in their new home leaned towards individualism and independence (see White, 2012) and that that tendency discouraged and decreased interpersonal relationships. The families appreciated the community-based approach toward building relationships from their own country of origin compared to the reality they experienced in the new home. White's (2012) work supported this finding, as she highlighted the importance of relationships and connections for African immigrants within their community and to one another that had helped them thrive in their country of origin. White (2012) indicated that through the

celebration of many of the migrants' cultures, traditions, and rites, migrants may maintain connections to one another and develop an awareness of themselves in their new communities and in the world. The Nigerian migrant families celebrated their culture and traditions and maintained connections through their ethnic associations, churches, and with physical traditional objects within their new home.

Barkin and Sjoberg (2019), and Kincheloe (2005) explained that embracing a critical constructivist framework involves commitment to the infiltration of the world of objective appearances—to expose the underlying social relationships through critical analyses—that may have been accepted as the norm. The Nigerian families appreciated that the publicly accepted style of parenting in Canada was characterized by gentle, loving relationships. The Nigerian parents critically examined their own childhood experiences and found that they were different from the experiences of children in their new home. They reflected that their own cultural understandings about child-rearing discouraged intimacy and communication and encouraged corporal punishments when dealing with children. D'Angelo and Ryan (2010) indicated how migrants may hold firm to their own values and traditions from their originating culture. However, after encountering the host culture, the participating families engaged in cultural frame-switching (Adam & Kirova, 2006; Lafromboise et al., 1993), a process of appreciation and engagement with cultural norms of their new home with reference to raising children. With this understanding, the participant families agreed that when disciplining their children, it is important to engage in communication with the children so as to understand their motivations and to help them to see why they should have made a different choice in the situation. This finding supports the research of Lafromboise et al. (1993), who indicated that encounters with

the dominant culture can be positive for migrant families and that families may engage in cultural frame-switching, which may lead to acculturation over time (see Sam & Berry, 2010).

Although all five families imagined what home would look like in Canada before leaving Nigeria, some of their expectations did not match the realities of their new home; for example, some of the families experienced lack of employment opportunities, absence of community-based relationships and interactions, and an undesirable physical environment with reference to the weather. However, the families also articulated that some of their expectations did match the realities of their new home. For example, their children received a quality education, they approved of and emulated Canadian parenting styles, and experienced a better and more fulfilled life.

Memories of Home and Understanding of New Home Environment

Massey (1994) described the links between home and memory and explains that the boundaries of home are permeable, and that home has no fixed essential past. The identity and meaning of a home may be created and negotiated through memories (Massey, 1994). The families described their memories of their home of origin and illustrated how their day-to-day experiences or activities in their new home contributed to or distracted them from reflecting on those memories. Tiwa Adeolu shared these memories of her former home:

I remember home as very beautiful. The people at home are very lovely people. They are ready to help especially when you just have like a newborn. People would rally round you and take turns to babysit and help you not to feel the pressure. Most mothers, when they have their children, are overwhelmed. As a first-time mom, you do not know anything. That is one of the reasons I love home because you have lots of people. Sometimes you do not even get to play with your own child because people are taking

turns to help you. You know people would take your child and look after the child [so] you can get enough sleep and enough rest. You want to go out. You have people around you who are willing...without you even asking for help...people are willing to help you.

Efe Akinola shared a similar observation but from the opposite perspective when he reflected about Canada:

[In Canada] I would say you confine yourself in a space and you do not encroach into other people's space and another thing is that in Canada you have to mind your own business. At the same time here, you do not make too much noise. Like you are having a party, it is quiet, not much noise.

The memories of Tiwa and Efe describe the supportive community that participants remembered from their life in Nigeria and the corresponding feeling of independence or isolation that they experienced in their new home. Olumide Ajani shared his own memories of connectedness in his home of origin:

It has been a while now; it has been 14 years since we left Nigeria. So, the only time I think about home would be when I just remember my uncles and aunties, when I just remember that all these people are getting older and I may not get to see them again forever; then you understand, I think about home. I feel like at least going to see them one more time before nature takes its course on them. Couple of years ago I lost one of the uncles, which means I will never see him again because they [uncles and aunties] are in their 60s, 70s, 80s to late 80s, so anything can happen at any time.

The Ajani family added that many things triggered memories of their home of origin; particularly, Olumide explained that eating foods that were familiar to him in Nigeria brought back those memories:

This kind of thing can bring back memories of your country of origin. Sometimes my wife might be cooking, and I would be like, “Oh My God, you remind me of some memories of when I was working in Nigeria, and we have this special restaurant we go for lunch or supper across [from] my office.” Her food sometimes reminds me of those memories of home. So, when I eat it reminds me of home because no matter what, you had an experience before you moved to Canada.

The Abayomi and Adeolu families reiterated that getting used to foods that were different from the ones in their home of origin also initiated memories of home. Amadi Abayomi explained that:

In terms of the food, I can remember the way we pound yam in my country of origin, we cannot do that in Canada we cannot pound yam in Canada. That aspect of food reminds me of home in my country of origin.

Tiwa Adeolu added:

You know back home you can get everything fresh even directly from the farm so that is one of the reasons I miss home. The food alone makes me remember home. Sometimes and I cannot wait to go back home so at least I can eat fresh food.

Figure 3

Fresh Vegetable Dish with Locust Beans and Dried Fish



Note: This is a Nigerian dish prepared by Tiwo Adeolu.

Several authors (e.g., Easthope, 2004; Mallet, 2004; Massey, 1994; Rapport & Dawson, 1998) described the role of memory in constructing the meaning of home for migrants. They explain that home for this group involves their cultural norms and feelings. Massey (1994) explained that “remembering, which involves memories of the traditional, are important in constructing the meaning of home because they illuminate and transform the present” (p. 14). The Nigerian families confirmed that the memories of their traditional foods brought back memories of their home of origin.

The Akinola family described the feeling of safety in their new home as the essential thing they experienced in Canada that detracted from their memories of home in Nigeria. This is how Efe Akinola described his own memory:

I have been robbed like three times in my country of origin when armed robbers broke into my house and they shot at me, so [that is my] memory....Back home once it is 3 a.m. in the morning my eyes are open because that is when the robbers will come to our house and break down everywhere, so I have that memory but here I do not even think about that....I do not think about safety issues.

Rapport and Dawson (1998) described that “home brings together memory and longing, the ideational, the effective and physical, the spatial and the temporal, the local and the global, the positively evaluated and the negatively” (p. 8). The family’s negative experience and memory of their home of origin have allowed for a deeper appreciation of their new home environment, notably when they regarded their present home as a safe space.

Mallet (2004) and Easthope (2004) confirmed that a person's memories of home, including their time in that home are vital to their understanding of the meaning of home, as well as their view of the ideal home. The participant families believed they had come to have a deeper understanding of their new home environment over time. Efe Akinola described his own understanding:

There is constant power [electricity]. There is constant flowing of water. You know, you get whatever you want at any time as long as you have the money unlike back home sometimes you want to get something, but you do not have the means or sometimes you have the money, but you cannot get it.

In reflecting on his understanding of their new home, Efe started by describing how Canada was a credit-based society unlike his home in Nigeria that relied heavily on a cash-based system. He believed one could not survive without having a good credit rating in Canada and in order to

have such a rating you needed to show that you could handle debt successfully. He iterated how this new understanding had altered his beliefs:

So, it has changed the way I was reasoning before because I do not like debt but now my mortgage debt is there. My car finance debt is there. Sometimes I think about it and it stresses me out because I am someone who does not like owing people. If I owe you, I want to pay you immediately. I do not want...my bank account being in the red. So, it has really changed me because back home it is a cash society. So, you buy whatever you have the money to buy, but here in Canada you buy whatever you do not have the money to buy because you can get it on credit.

Efe concluded that his understanding of living in a credit-based system has changed him, and he now believed in Canada, he would always be in debt. The Ajani family stated they now understood there were certain processes and experiences that migrants needed to experience, which would present challenges in adapting to their destination countries. Olumide Ajani explained that:

Where you are going to has it own challenges as I used to tell people where you are going to is a system and every system would resist you. You have to fight to get into that system. You have to break that wall to get into that system but once you get into the system, you will be okay. That is why when people first come; they meet a lot of challenges. That is the wall that you have to break and when you are able to go in, then everything is going to be okay for you.

In accommodating new rules and the different ways he believed things were done in his new home, Olumide compared his knowledge of Nigerian culture to their adjustments to life in Canada and this is how he described the experience:

There are lots of wrong things back at home in Nigeria that have already become a norm. When we say a norm, we do not see anything wrong in them. You know when a bad thing becomes normal to you, you do not see anything wrong in it anymore but after living in this country for so long there are some things that when you hear about them, or I remember that these are the things I was doing before, or these are the things that these people are still doing but I now know that yes, they are wrong. Not that I did not know they were wrong then but it was because they were already a norm in the society so it has been accepted...but after leaving that environment or system and coming to Canada and staying here for a while you will now see that you feel irritated when you see things like that.

The Adeyemi family also shared their developing knowledge of the culture of their new home, and they described how Canadians were polite when interacting with people and how merchants and employees were skilled in the area of customer relations. The family expressed that they noticed that Canadians address individuals with good manners such as please and thank you and they have learned those things in their new home. When compared to the family's home of origin, this is how Kemi Adeyemi described her knowledge:

Let us talk about respect and communication skills. The way you talk to people, in Nigeria... We do not have communication skills, the tone, or the clarity in our communication. In Nigeria, we do not have those things. Anybody would just shout at you. They do not have customer [relation] skills. They are not customer oriented. Here in Canada, they treat people with a lot of respect and empathy. They put themselves in your shoes when they are addressing you. All those manners like please and thank you, you do

not get those things in Nigeria but here you have to learn how to talk to people. You have to learn some of your choice of words.

Three parents noted the importance placed on following the law in Canada. As they came to have a deeper understanding about what it means to follow the laws of Canada, they realized how this emphasis required individuals to be accountable for their actions in Canadian society. When juxtaposed with how individuals view the rules of law in Nigeria, Kemi Adeyemi explained that:

When it comes to driving, the way we drive in Nigeria, we do not obey traffic rules. If you want to live in your new home here in Canada, you just have to obey the traffic rules and learn driving. In Nigeria, anybody can just pick up a car and start driving anyhow but here you must follow the process. [You need to] do the process in everything you want to do. You do not cut corners. It is really more organized and if you are that kind of a person that is not used to that kind of a lifestyle, then when you come here you will need to start teaching yourself that. Obey their laws.

Chioma Abayomi added:

The basic thing that I would say here is that is in terms of law, law in Canada is like the ultimate. When they say law, you better go with that law. Back in Nigeria, there is nothing like law. The Nigerian people know the law, but nobody obeys the law but in Canada the law has shaped me a lot. Whatever they say is law in Canada, you better go with it. Do not even try to go against it. That is what I can say that has sharpened me.

Tiwa Adeolu emphasized:

The thing I would say is that in Canada there are laws, and you cannot break the laws because you have to be responsible and then you have to be accountable. There is

accountability and there is responsibility....If you break the law, you dance to the music. It is either you go to jail for a short time, or they ask you to pay money. You always get the repercussions of what you did. So, because there are laws, I know I have to be accountable and responsible. There are some things I can do in Nigeria that I cannot do here that is because there are laws and then I have to follow those laws.

As these parents gained awareness of the distinguishing features of home in their country of origin in comparison to their new homes in Canada they reflected on the systems and the people in both places and agreed that by contrasting the two, they had come to a deeper understanding of the Canadian system. Kinefuchi (2010) emphasized that “how we view, construct, and experience home informs and helps to shape us: who we were, who we are, and who we will be” (p. 231). These three participant parents in particular appreciated how Canadians followed the rules and how that knowledge helped them not only to understand and appreciate the people and the culture, but also to navigate their new home environment.

Discourse is a historically contingent social process that produces knowledge and meaning (Foucault, 1984). The critical constructivist framework emphasizes the social and political consequences of reifying and decontextualizing knowledge and attempts to regulate and distribute knowledge in ways that problematized issues of power and control within the social context (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). The framework acknowledged the social nature of all knowledge construction, justification, and ownership of knowledge in society (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). The families’ memories of their traditional food and aspects of Nigerian life encouraged them to reflect on the knowledge they were gaining of their current home. The families described memories of their home of origin and illustrated how the day-to-day experiences and activities in their new home impacted those memories. The families

remembered home to be a beautiful space with nice and lovely people residing there who were willing to help with their own personal commitments like extending childcare and supporting nursing mothers, for example. Massey (1994) indicated that identity and meaning of a new home may be constructed and negotiated through memories of the one left behind. As such, the families gained an increasing consciousness of the distinguishing qualities of home in their country of origin in comparison to Canada so as to gain a deeper understanding of their new home, as well as deeper appreciation of what they took for granted in their former home.

When the families moved to Canada, they came to an increased understanding of the systems and the people in both their country of origin and destination country, which helped them to construct their realities in Canada. The critical constructivist framework recognizes the existence of multiple, socially constructed realities instead of a single reality dominated by unchangeable natural laws (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). As such, the framework takes a critical stance with knowledge and how it is produced and exchanged (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). Because reality is seen as socially constructed, the analysis and meaning of home becomes central for the many ways African migrants make sense of their current realities. The participant families deconstructed the knowledge from their previous home as they believed that the understanding of their new home including the laws and ways of doing things have helped them to navigate and negotiate their knowledge of both homes. As such, it was when the participant families separated from their own culture and moved into another culture and/or place that they began to understand the multiple realities of home. Massey (1992) elaborated that the notion of home is created by the social relations that arise in a specific location, the social effects that occur in this interaction, and the positive interrelations with

elsewhere. The identity and meaning of a home for the families in this study was created and negotiated through both their past and current experiences of home.

With their reflective memories now influenced by day-to-day activities and experiences in Canada that have either contributed to, or distracted them from, their memories of Nigeria, some of the families described memories of their original home as pleasant and positive. They shared memories of people in their country of origin as beautiful and lovely people, who were always willing to help. Some also remembered the aunties, and the uncles who they have missed and wish they could visit, while other families expressed a love of their traditional African food that triggers the memories of Nigeria. One family in recognizing how Canada has provided a haven for them, reflected on the lack of safety they remembered experiencing in their country of origin. Finally, the participant families shared how experiences in their new home led to understanding the challenges that migrants encounter in adjusting to Canadian society such as understanding the system of trade and commerce (i.e., credit rating), the need to mind one's own business, the politeness of the mainstream Canadians, their culture, and their laws. These understandings have helped the migrant families negotiate and navigate their new home environment.

Building Social Networks in the New Home

The Nigerian families have been able to build social networks in their new home environments. Repke and Benet-Martinez (2018) described social networks in terms of their composition and structure. Regarding the composition, the authors explain that social networks involve individuals who are within one's own network. Similarly, in terms of their structure, social networks encompass how the members within these networks are connected (Repke & Benet-Martinez, 2018). The families described how they had established social networks within

the African community and how they were involved within their own Nigerian community in Canada. Efe Akinola explained that:

Currently I am the president of the Nigerian engineers in Manitoba, so I have been able to build relationships. Also, within the church community, a Nigerian church specifically, I have been able to build relationships. In terms of other Africans and other Black people or people of my skin color at work—Ghanaians, Togolese, Jamaicans, I meet a lot of them, I have been able to build relationships with them.

Tiwa Adeolu added:

We have an ethnic group here in Winnipeg [called] the Egbe Omo Yoruba. My husband is part of the committee, and they do a lot of cultural events. They do a lot of things that we do in Nigeria. They sing and sometimes the men will dress in an African way and the women will also dress in an African way. Also, my husband is from the Western part of Nigeria from Ondo state and his mom is from Ekiti and so he is a member of that association – Association of Ekiti People in which they meet at the end of the year. They usually have a big Christmas party where they rent a big hall and invite people to celebrate with them.

Olumide Ajani also clarified:

I have relationship[s] with people here especially with the Nigerian community that we met here and those that also meet us here in Canada. We try to build relationships with them. We try to engage ourselves in community service in our neighborhood and of course that has really helped me and my family.

Repke and Benet-Martinez (2018) affirmed that immigrants may benefit from building social networks with members of the same ethnic group. The authors explain that members of the same ethnic group of migrants may induce a sense of inclusion and security as they might encourage feelings of personal stability by safeguarding the migrant's identity and personality in the initial stage of adjustment in their new environment. These parents agreed that the bonds and/or relationships they have established within their African and Nigerian community have influenced them and thus have helped them to realize a feeling of home in Canada.

Sam and Berry (2010) also explained that forming social networks with individuals who are members of the mainstream society can be beneficial for migrants' social adjustment. The authors expound that, individuals from the mainstream culture may help migrants acquire culturally appropriate skills through interactions. The families explained how the relationship bonds that they established with the mainstream Canadians have shaped or influenced them in their new home. Olumide Ajani explained that his family had built a good rapport with their White neighbor and described the extent of this relationship:

Whenever they are going to be away for more than two or three days, they would let us know that they are going to be away and if we are going to be away, we let them know that we are going to be away. If we need to help them bring their garbage out, we help them and we return the garbage bin. We try to help them look after their house while they are away. They are not Nigerians, and they are not Africans; they are purely [White] Canadians.

Olumide further explained how this positive and caring relationship had led to a feeling of safety for him and his family in their neighborhood. He provided an example about how such a relationship could be beneficial to them in their home:

If I am in distress now, I would not call my brother in the UK or my sister in Nigeria, although they are my blood family. The people that I would call would probably be my next-door neighbor. If I do not have a good relationship with my next-door neighbor, I am in trouble, so I have to make sure that I have a proper relationship with them. That is why I feel that sense of safety should there, incase anything [unusual] that is happening.

Kemi Adeyemi described how the relationships she established with mainstream Canadians have helped with social integration in her new home. Kemi explained that:

I do integrate myself into the system and everybody is ready to help so I have friends among them. It is not that they come to my house, but we talk, and we are friends. We have our [each other's] phone numbers, we follow each other on social media, we send messages, and they are always there to help. They are not from my country, but they have seen me as one of them, so they are ready to help. Whenever I am going through something and I need to talk to someone, especially when it has to do with my work, they are ready to help. I can seek their advice and they will tell me this is how we would do it.

Amadi Abayomi added:

I can say it [the relationship] has shaped me in a good manner; it has helped me feel at home in Canada. Because when I was coming here, I did not have anyone in the country. I did not have an [extended] family, I did not have friends....Building relationships with people and having good friends, those things are important because you know that if anything happens you have some people that would look out for you.

Tiwa Adeolu also added:

The relationships I have made have shaped me to become a better person. I have been exposed to a lot of things. There are lots of things I did not know before but because of those relationships I have built, I have been able to know so many things.

The parents stressed the importance of intercultural contacts and relationships and described how they have managed to make connections with people from different cultures and ethnicities within Canada. This is how Olumide Ajani explained his connections with other cultures:

When you start meeting with different cultures, there are things you pick [up] from them. There may be some good things that you do not know about that they have that you can borrow and start bringing into your family because you have seen that those things make sense. For example, all these Indian spices, a lot of them are not Nigerian. We have tasted them at some point, maybe in places we have been to, and we asked them how they make it, and we now imbibe [absorb] them into our own culture and food.

Kemi Adeyemi also described how she had managed to make connections with other cultures:

I make friends with colleagues at work. You come into a different place, and you meet a different set of people, so you just have to make new friends, people from other cultures. You attend functions. You attend multicultural functions – marriages. I have been to a Punjabi marriage.

Berry (1998) explained that living in a new country can be an enriching and horizon-widening life event in which one develops new cultural competences and expands one's worldviews and relationships. The participating families built and maintained close relationships with people within their new environment. They also experienced different cultures that have aided or helped their feeling of safety and home in Canada. Furthermore, the families described how they

promoted the process of building and maintaining relationships with people in Canada. For example, Olumide Ajani expounded:

Relationships start from chatting with one another, right? Then through chatting you get to know their stories, their background... You share food if it is possible. You share their pain, and you share in their happiness. When they celebrate, you celebrate with them; then they celebrate with you. During the summer when you are having a barbecue, they are welcome if they want. Their kids can freely come to your place, and your kids can freely go into their place. So that is the kind of relationship we have built with the people around us.

Chioma Abayomi added:

I talk to my neighbors, and I could remember when we first moved into this neighborhood. It was my husband that mostly communicated with them and if I said hi, they know I am “the wife” because we are the only Black family in the neighborhood. So, we started with that greeting and through that we [got to] know one another and that is how we built that relationship.

Tiwa Adeolu expressed it simply as communication: “I talk to them even though I still maintain my boundaries. I know what to talk about especially in this culture, like there are somethings you just do not say or ask.” She went on to explain that she had learned not to ask for phone numbers, or to call someone when they were not expecting her call, or to go to anyone’s home without arranging a time to meet. Through these strategies she was able to successfully build relationships within the mainstream of Canadian culture. These parents used communication, open mindedness, food, and a variety of friendly activities as ways to connect with individuals in

their new home environment. Through conversations and rapport building with the mainstream group and individuals from other cultures, the families built caring relationships in Canada.

The Nigerian children in this study described their connection with their schools and their encounters with individuals in their new home environment. As such, an understanding of the school experiences of migrant children can lead to a deeper understanding of how school can be a place of socialization and acculturation. The children in this study described their first day at school. Five of the children described these experiences as different, scary, exciting, and fun. This how Ochuko Abayomi shared his experience about his first day at school:

It was weird. I remember I was the only Black person in my class, and everybody looked at me differently. It was still exciting, and it was fun.

Nonso Abayomi described his mixed reactions to his first day at school: “I was kind of scared, but I was still excited because I do not know anybody. It was my first time there. The school was pretty big”. Chidima Abayomi also described her experience of the first day of kindergarten:

The first day of school was exciting...I was wearing this blue sweater and pants, and it was pretty fun. I remember sitting down in a circle [with the other kids] because our teacher told us to introduce ourselves.

Segun Adeyemi described his experience on the first day of kindergarten: “The teachers gave us stickers with our names to put on our uniforms. The first day of school I met a girl and collected a toy from her, and I had to give her back the toy”. Suarez-Orozco (2001) explained that schools can be key sites of socialization and acculturation for children, in particularly for immigrant children. Schools are often the place where they first experience in-depth contact with the mainstream culture. The migrant children further described how things had changed six months after their first encounter with people in their schools. Ochuko Abayomi shared:

It was good. People did not look at me differently anymore. I had more friends, and I was as excited as I was before. It was just normal. It was just like going to school, I guess.

Nonso Abayomi added:

For me, it was just interacting with more people, gaining more friends. Let's say, at lunch instead of staying inside...being by myself, I would go outside. I would be in the field and be playing and interacting with more people.

The children explained that as time went by, they started feeling more relaxed and more comfortable at school and that they felt like now they were part of the group. Brewer and McCabe (2015) and Stewart (2011) affirmed that school may serve as a place that provides a sense of comfort and belonging for migrant children as they transition into their new environment. The Nigerian children in this study realized a sense of familiarity in their school as they engaged with people within the new school environment.

The children described how they realized a sense of familiarity and how they were welcomed into their new school environment. The children expressed that some students and the teachers treated them well and they articulated how that positive treatment made a difference and helped them realize a feeling of comfort, security, familiarity, and thus, home. Chidima Abayomi shared how she realizes a sense of home in her school:

I do feel a sense of home in my school because my teacher calls us the Room 4 family.

She says we are bunch of families. If you've been in that class once and...you go to a different school, [she says] you are still part of the Room 4 family. She is like the mom of the family.

Nonso Abayomi explained:

I feel a sense of home [at school] because it is a place I am always at, and I just know people there ... it is just a place I can have fun. I am there to learn and stuff so, it is not a place that is bad or anything.

The children further explained how they get along with their teachers at school. Chidima Abayomi explained that:

I get along with [my teachers] really well because it is really easy to get along with them. You just have to basically to go to school every day and show up with a smile on your face. That is enough to make them happy.

Bolu Ajani described how his teacher creates a feeling of comfort in class:

I like my grade 5 teacher because she does not yell at you when she is angry. She just asks to speak with you. She does not like to pick on certain student to answer a question. She tries to get the whole class [to speak] and tries to pick on the quiet students.

Tope Adeolu added:

I have two teachers, Mrs. P and Mrs. Thank you. Mrs. Thank you is my favorite teacher because she is the best and she is cute!

Pumariaga et al. (2010) and Stewart (2011) explained that schools play a significant role in assisting and supporting migrant children's adjustment and integration, and as such, in the realization of a sense of home. For these Nigerian migrant children school provided a place where they re-imagined and grounded their sense of home, as well as a space where they realized a sense of comfort, belonging, and familiarity.

Studies have showed that successful integration for immigrants' children in their new school and society depends largely on the maintenance of a positive self-identity or a

reconstruction of a newer identity shaped and controlled by their desire to fit into their new home (Baffoe, 2011; Pumariega et al., 2010). The Nigerian children described how the relationships they built with their classmates helped them to realize a sense of belonging and to shape their identities. Tope Adeolu shared the relationship she built with her classmates: “I knew Sophia when she was little. I was four when Sophia was small. She was three years old then and now Sophia is big. Emily is my best friend; we go to the gym and to music together”. Chidima Abayomi also explained that she is friends with every one of her classmates and that she believes her relationships are good. Ochuko Abayomi also expressed:

My relationship with my classmates is good. I make lot of friends easily. I have lots of friends outside school. So, every class I attend I always have at least two or three friends in the class. My electronics class I did not make any friends there, but I have my brother’s friend in that class so, that makes it easier for me to talk to a person.

Nonso Abayomi added: “It is definitely like just meeting up with my friends. We just all hang out and make jokes and just have fun around each other”. Adams and Shambleau (2006) explained that attaining cultural capital in the new society may be measured in terms of how well migrant children are doing in school, learning the new language, and making new friends. To this end, such accumulation in cultural capital would help to advance migrant children’s sense of belonging and identity in their new school environment.

The critical constructivist framework emphasizes how humans make meaning in relation to the interactions among and between their environments, their experiences, and their lived realities (Adams, 2006; Doolittle & Hicks, 2003). The creation of knowledge cannot be separated from the social environment in which it is formed and, as such, knowledge is a product of social interaction among individuals rather than individual cognizing (Adams, 2006; Doolittle & Hicks,

2003). The Nigerian migrant children and families established social networks within their school environment, within their African community and within their own Nigerian community that influenced them in their new home. The parents engaged in community service within the Nigerian community and within their neighborhoods that facilitated their sense of inclusion and security in Canada. These positive relationships encouraged their feelings of personal stability and allowed them to realize a feeling of home in their new environment. The bonds the children and families formed within their school and African community protected their identity and personality in the initial stage of adjustment in their new home. Al-Ali and Koser (2002) indicated that migrants often face questions around identity and home, and that they grapple with a sense of who they understand themselves to be in relation to home. Roggeveen and Meeteren's (2013) work supported this finding, as they explained that migrants' ethnic communities have traditionally played a central role in supporting the integration of migrants in their new home environment. The participant Nigerian migrant families benefited from developing social networks with members of the same ethnic group (See Repke & Benet-Martinez, 2018).

Some of the Nigerian children and families formed good relationships and rapport with mainstream White Canadian neighbors, as well as other people from diverse cultures that led to a feeling of safety for them in their new home. The families believed that forming these relationships was beneficial for social adjustment in Canada. These findings support the research of Phillips and Robinson (2015), who indicated that relationships rooted in social contact are based on the premise that greater intercultural contact in the neighborhood will bring social integration and help nurture a sense of common identity and belonging. However, some scholars (e.g., Lewis & Neal, 2005; McGhee, 2005; Worley, 2005) have criticized the primacy of the local neighborhood as a setting for interaction and community building, as they explained that

this idea often involves de-racialization of inequality, and the romanticising of community. Philips and Robinson (2015) indicated, however, that intercultural contact and community relations have social and cultural meanings that may be read by newcomer migrants as welcoming and embracing. Some of the Nigerian migrant families in this study felt positive about the intercultural contact and/or relationships they built with the mainstream group and people from other diverse cultures in their new home environment.

The Nigerian migrant children in this study described their educational home in Canada. They reflected on their first day at school as fun and exciting but also scary and different. These complex feelings about their new school faded away as they began to interact in their new school environment (Baffoe, 2011; Pumariega et al., 2010). They developed and maintained friendships with teachers and classmates. These social relationships have aided their social adjustment and transition into the new school culture. As such, the children felt welcomed and accepted in their new school environments and that has allowed them to realize a sense of familiarity, security, comfort, belonging, and thus, of home (McCabe, 2015; Stewart, 2011).

Through involvement in different Nigerian associations and connections with their churches, participants established social networks with their African and Nigerian communities in Canada. The families' commitments to community service in their neighborhoods have fostered relationships in their new home. Building relationships with Canadians both from the mainstream culture and from diverse ethnic backgrounds had also been beneficial to their social adjustment and a feeling of home. Key tools in developing intercultural contacts and building those relationships were an attitude of open-mindedness and good communication, as well as the sharing of food and activities. Gibson (2001) and Sam and Berry (2010) affirmed that migrants undergo acculturation processes that involve both psychological and behavioral changes due to

intercultural contact. The participating Nigerian migrants in this study used intercultural contacts to build positive social networks in their new home environment.

Building Relationships and Other Challenges in the New Home

The Nigerian families also noted challenges when building relationships within their new home community and several attributed these challenges to cultural differences that existed in between the mainstream culture and their own culture. Efe Akinola articulated that he felt cultural differences present between his family and their neighbours, have prevented them from being able to build strong relationships in their close community. Although he allowed that his family and their neighbors would greet one another when they met in the driveway shoveling snow or when they were mowing their lawns, they were not comfortable around the neighbours—just because they were not sure how the neighbours would react if they tried to build relationships with them. Efe provided an example of a time at work where there was a clash of cultural differences:

One day one of my bosses just called me and asked why you do like staying back after work? I said to him in my culture my boss has to leave the office before I leave. He said that “Oh no, the way they think here is that when you stay back in the office like that, it means that there is something you are hiding.” He said it is quite different, so I said I did not know that. In Nigeria, it is a sign of respect but here in Canada, it is a sign that there is something this person is hiding or there is something fishy.

Efe Akinola stressed that because of that incident and other similar instances, he had held back rather than taking the risk of going out of his comfort zone in trying to build relationships with the mainstream group because he was unsure what might be acceptable with them. The Adeolu and Abayomi families also described cultural differences regarding getting along with the

mainstream group and saw their culture as a barrier to forming strong relationships in their new home. This is how Chioma Abayomi described her perception of friendship in her new home:

In Canada nobody cares about me. Even if they care about me, they will say hi and then they will go. I do not have friends [in Canada] but in Nigeria I have lots of friends, like the people we grew up together with in Nigeria. We have known each other for a very long time so I find it easier to get along with them than the people I just met in my new home. So, there is nowhere to go, you just stay indoors.

Tiwa Adeolu explained that she had found that Canadians often did not respond to her formal greeting of good morning. Some would say hi and others would move directly into a conversation:

When I just came to Canada.... You know in Nigeria when you wake up, you say good morning, but when I first came and I say good morning to greet people [here], they will just respond by saying "hi," so it took a while for me to be able to adjust to the system. So, sometimes people would not even respond or say hi back, they just go straight to the point.

Chioma Abayomi admitted that the challenges of building relationships resulted in depression and loneliness for her in the new home environment. She reflected about how her life changed when she moved to Canada and how people interacted so differently in her country of origin:

When I was living in Nigeria, I have things to do with my friends like [going for] parties. There is no time for a dull moment, there is no time for loneliness or having depression. No, there is nothing like that. Even in our neighborhood people will come and spend time

with us in our house and we will all be talking together. We will spend our time together and enjoy ourselves.

While a longing for her old way of life, and the difficulty of forming relationships within her Canadian community continued to plague Chioma with homesickness for her Nigerian home of origin, Tiwa Adeolu reflected on the cultural differences between her home of origin and her new home:

In Nigeria, it is more of a community, you know; but here you can even have a next-door neighbor who does not even say hi, who even ignores you, and I think that is just the way the culture is, but we have some people who are still friendly.

Hurtado-de-Mendoza et al. (2014) elaborated that women often contrasted their lives with their countries of origin, where they frequently interacted with family, friends, and neighbors, whereas in the US their experiences were characterized by feelings of loneliness and lack of social interaction. Members of some of the families in this study confirmed that they had similar experiences in Canada and felt that their limited relationships have contributed to feelings of social isolation and exclusion. Moreover, for some of the participants, perceived cultural differences have affected the families in building strong and lasting relationships with mainstream Canadians in their new home.

The Nigerian families attempted to describe how they have navigated and negotiated such challenges in Canada. Ralph and Staeheli (2011) explained that contemporary migrants continuously negotiate personalities between their old and new world and forge new iterations of connection with home in their new space. Research participant Efe Akinola explained his determination to understand his new home environment and described constant communication and interactions as key components for understanding and navigating the mainstream culture:

It is trying to understand the people. When you understand them, you try to understand their culture because their culture will help you to understand.... [You learn] what these people like and what they do not like and then [express] constant greetings, start some type of communication and chat. With that [approach], you would be able to build that relationship. Especially if they have kids that are of the same age as your own kids it would be easier. Sometimes you let your kids and their kids play together.

Efe believed these strategies would lead to trusting relationships between his family and the mainstream Canadian neighbors. He also elaborated how he sought to incorporate Canadian culture with that of his original home:

The ways that I have navigated it is trying to understand the various laws in those countries that I have lived, and I will now combine it with mine. If I am at home, I use my law, if I am outside, I use whatever law is out there.

Olumide Ajani stressed how the merging of cultures from both the country of origin and the new home can help migrant families to navigate life in Canada:

[After experiencing life in both countries], we should be able to know what the good sides are and what are the bad sides.... We [should] try to bring that good culture [from Nigeria] into our home, and we [should] also try to bring that good culture that we are meeting here into our home to make at least our children to be better citizens of the new home we are in right now.

This idea is consistent with both Haller and Landolt's (2005), and Levitt and Waters' (2002) studies, which call for a durable re-orientation of how migrants perceive and react to the world, and whereby values are conceptualized together to maintain and transform identities and homes.

The families affirmed their belief that the bringing together of the good culture from Nigeria and the good culture in their new home would produce better families, better children, and a better society.

The Abayomis described what they learned about Canada that had helped them to navigate their challenges. The family stressed, for example, the importance of going through the right channel in reaching one's goals. Chioma Abayomi explained:

I have learned a lot of things in Canada that have helped me to navigate my new home.

For example, there is something they called 'benchmark'. So, you go to a place to assess your credentials, and that assessment would determine your placement in your chosen career. If you need more credit to be in a particular career, they will ask you to go back to the university to take some classes and then you know that you are shaping your future by taking these classes.

Similarly, Kemi Adeyemi enrolled in classes and training in her new home that have helped her to navigate the challenges she encountered in Canada. She explained these courses and training helped her to be positive and open minded and thus she was able to negotiate the challenges of her new home:

I have taken courses at work too—like communication skills. [I learned] how to show empathy to people of a different race and color and things like that. So, they have really helped me, and they have helped me to integrate myself into the culture of the new home.

Kemi explained that her family now uses the understandings they have acquired to help more recent Nigerian and African immigrants to navigate and negotiate the complexities of life in Canada.

The Nigerian migrant children in the study explained that they realized a sense of home in their neighborhood and described the relationships they have in their community as safe. They make lots of friends and they get along with people in their community, so these relationships have led to a sense of trust and protection for them. Nonso Abayomi shared how he perceived a feeling of home within his community:

I feel a sense of home here because most of the people I know here [in the neighborhood]. We go to the same school, and some are my friends. We hang out together [because] we all live in the same community. Our school is right there [in the community]. I have been to their houses, and I know their parents. They are people [that] I know so, I could trust them, and I feel a sense of home.

Bolu Ajani added:

I have some neighbors around that side that are my friends. They often come to our house. We jump on the trampoline outside in our yard.

Chidima Abayomi also described how she realizes a sense of home in their neighborhood:

There are lots of people that I know, and I can go to their houses and say, “oh can I stay here for a night, and they would say yes”. There are lots of people that are nice to me and give me stuff out of their own heart.

Ochuko Abayomi also explained that their neighborhood is quiet and that they have not witnessed any crime and that it is safe. He noted that neighbors are always looking out for each other in their community. The children articulated that they are happy in their new community because they have friends with whom they can interact and play. The Nigerian children expressed that they feel like they fit in well with people in their neighborhood and those

attachments have created a feeling of safety and protection and thus, a sense of home in the neighborhood. Scholars (e.g., Giuliani, 2003; Scannell & Gifford, 2010) portrayed place attachment as a multifaceted concept that characterizes the bonding between individuals and their important places. Scannell and Gifford (2010) argued that an attachment with a meaningful space or sense of place is a universal affective tie that fulfills fundamental needs. As such, a sense of place includes a feeling like an insider and a desire to stay in the place (see Scannell & Gifford, 2010). The Nigerian children in this study formed attachment within their neighborhood because of the insider status they felt with the people in their new home and because it fulfilled their social needs.

The children who participated in this study also explained that they engaged in after-school activities, such as sports, that helped them realize a sense of belonging in their community. Thurlow et al. (2006) found that minority children's participation in after-school programs can be beneficial to their successful academic and social development. As such, after-school programs can help migrant students develop a sense of belonging and realize a sense of home in their new environment (see Greenberg, 2013). The Nigerian migrant children explained that engaging in sports with people in their neighborhood allowed them to realize a sense of home. Nonso Abayomi shared how participation in after-school programs in his neighborhood helped him build a sense of belonging:

When we got here people started offering us clubs and activities. We wanted to do an after school [program] that was different. So even though they do not have a soccer team that I wanted to join when I got here, I was introduced to many other sports like basketball, and I was happy with that.

Figure 4

Basketball

Note: Nonso and his brother, Ochuko Abayomi both played basketball on their high school team. Ochuko Abayomi described how he was able to make friends through sports in the neighborhood, as well:

...just being able to play a sport like basketball. Basketball is the reason why I have friends. We all play basketball outside [in the neighborhood] and it's just fun. I like sports and basketball because they open a lot of things for me.

Bolu Ajani also added: "Most of my friends like sports, so we usually [play together] if it is not too cold out, we do play soccer, basketball and we would run around". Researchers (i.e., Brandmann, et al., 2017; Frossard, 2010) acknowledged that sports contribute positively to social integration for migrant children and youths. Flensner, et al. (2021) explained that sports are considered important settings for promoting participation and integration of migrant children. As such, sports can increase the typically sparse contact between migrant and non-migrant youth

and can have a significant impact on their commitment, well-being, and sense of meaning (see Langergren & Fundberg, 2009). Brandmann et al. (2017) considered sport as a tool for fostering integration and a sense of belonging among immigrants. After-school programs through recreational activities such as sports have allowed the migrant children in this study to realize a sense of belonging towards positive attitudes and identities within their communities.

A critical constructivist approach raises questions about the nature of the knowledge that individuals or groups are involved with and of attempts to restructure the power relations between different groups in a society based on what is currently defined and recognized as knowledge (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005; McLaren, 2009). Some of the Nigerian families experienced difficulties when building relationships within their new home and these challenges arose due to cultural differences that existed between their own culture and the majority culture. For example, cultural differences left some participants feeling ignored in their community. Other participant families experienced a clash of cultural difference at work. Albada et al.'s (2021) research supported this finding, as they explained that the perceived differences in values between host society and migrants may lead to negative attitudes towards migrants. Some of the Nigerian families who perceived a clash of cultural difference were discouraged from going out of their comfort zone to build relationships with the mainstream majority. The challenges of building relationships resulted in feelings of depression and loneliness for some of the participants in their new home environment. These compounding factors contributed to feelings of social isolation and exclusion for some of the Nigerian migrant parents. The families viewed these factors as the negative costs associated with finding a home. This finding supports the research of Hendriks et al. (2018) who indicated feelings of homesickness of migrants caused by separation from friends and family from the country of origin. The authors noted that social

exclusion in the receiving country, socio-economic issues, and decreased social participation due to linguistic and cultural barriers are some of the severe costs associated with searching for a new home. These factors are associated within crucial well-being domains, particularly those relating to social and esteem needs (Hendriks et al., 2018).

The Nigerian families attempted to understand the nature and dynamics of relationships with the mainstream group as they negotiated and navigated their new home. The families utilized different strategies to understand the culture of the mainstream group. They used strategies such as friendly communication and consistent greetings to build positive relationships with the majority group within their communities. They suggested allowing their kids to play in the neighborhood with the other kids from the mainstream group. The families also agreed that understanding and following the laws in the new country helped them to successfully negotiate and navigate their new home. Berger and Luckmann's (1991) work supported this finding, as they argued that "the worlds in which we all live are not just there; not just natural objective phenomena but are constructed by a whole range of social arrangements and practices" (p. 45). As such, social values play an important role in the smooth functioning of a society (Albada, et al., 2021). Albada et al. (2021) elaborated that social rules based on how to behave can help avoid conflicts between individuals and groups and may promote harmonious relations. The families recognized that the positive interactions with individuals within the mainstream culture and the knowledge of different laws within the new society helped them to define their integration outcomes more positively. The families noted that friendly interactions with the majority culture led to trust and positive relationships that facilitated their social integration and adjustments in their new home environment (Albada, et al., 2021).

Learning is viewed as a process of active knowledge construction within and through social forms and processes. Vygotsky (1986) explained that such reliance on a social source of knowledge brings language, culture, and context together and to the forefront. In working toward developing an awareness of and restructuring the power relations in the new home, a participant family described how they incorporated the culture of their home of origin and Canadian culture. The family explained that the merging of the two cultures has helped them to navigate the complexities of their new home. Some of the families described other personal learning they acquired, such as knowledge about credential assessments and enrolment in training, so as to become and remain positive and open minded and to develop the skills that they needed to navigate their new environment. This finding supported the research of Hernandez and Sonn (2019), who conceptualized acculturation as a process of meaning-making that involved migrants negotiating their identities and settlement through symbolic and cultural resources within the constraints and opportunities provided by the new environment. The Nigerian children also learned sports, such as basketball, that resulted in them feeling grounded in their school and community. Brandmann, et al. (2017) identified sports as a tool for fostering integration and a sense of belonging among immigrant children. The children acknowledged that sports contributed positively to their feeling at home in Canada.

The five participating families encountered various challenges to forming strong relationships with mainstream Canadians in their new home, which they attributed to cultural differences that exist between their own culture and the majority culture. They experienced misunderstandings as a result of these differences, and the pain of these failed attempts at relationship building led to social isolation and exclusion for some members of the migrant families. One family described positive strategies for success within the mainstream culture, such

as consistent greetings and friendly communication, which helped them to build relationships in their communities. They also noted that it was important to allow their kids to play in the neighborhood because it could build trust between the cultures and thus lead to good relationships. The Nigerian children also acknowledged that they realized a sense of home and safety in their neighborhood and that sports contributed to their positive integration in Canada. The parents described the importance of contacting government organizations and institutions for credential assessments and recommended taking training and courses for one's own development. Finally, the families suggested merging the good cultures of Nigeria and Canada, and that these strategies have helped them to achieve their goals in their new home.

Multidimensional Definitions of Home

The families in this study described the complex and multidimensional meanings of home. According to Ahmed (1999), Brewer and McCabe (2015), and Stewart (2011), the meaning of home may stretch across a number of registers. The authors explained that home can mean a place where an individual usually lives, or it can mean a space where an individual's family lives. A home can also mean a person's native country and/or educational spaces (Ahmed, 1999; Brewer & McCabe, 2015; Stewart, 2011). The five families described what home means to them. The following subsections describe each notion of home that emerged from the data as the five families described what home means to them.

Home as a Place of Peace, Comfort, Happiness, and Safety

The families described a home as a place where they find peace, a space where they are comfortable (Mallet, 2004), and a place where they are safe (Somerville, 1999). Efe Akinola defined home as a place of peace in a space where he and his family were safe and comfortable

and could come to understand and tolerate each other without any form of fear. In this type of home, Efe expounded upon the importance for individuals to be patient:

For that home to be successful, you must have patience. You must be patient enough to advance forgiveness. You need to exercise and advance forgiveness, so that whatever anybody does to you in that home it would not disturb you. Before they even offend you, you have already forgiven because you know they are not perfect. So, you know that and then you have already forgiven them.

Efe added that creating or forming a home required two people from different backgrounds coming together with their flaws and their challenges and then deciding to stay together, learn from each other, and work to improve on their shortcomings. Sheyi Ajani also defined home as where one's mind will always be and where one realizes peace. "Where you realize that peace, you call that place a home." Olumide Ajani seconded and elaborated on the idea of home as a place of peace:

Like what my wife said, "Home is where you find peace, right?" Home should be a peaceful place. Home should be a place where you are longing to go to after the day's work. Home should be where you find peace, where you find solace. Maybe you have toiled all day and you have met a lot of challenges; home should be a place where...someone would assure you that it is well.

Chioma Abayomi and Kemi Adeyemi also described a home as a place where one could feel comfortable, happy, accepted, loved, and where one looked forward to returning. Tiwa Adeolu added to these notions of home, as she stated:

Home is a comfort zone. Home is where we live with our family. Home should be a place where you feel at peace, you know where you feel loved. Home is where you are comfortable. Home should be somewhere you are eager to go after the day's work.

Mallet (2004) supported the idea that home is a place or space where people can retreat and relax, and is a source of protection (see Somerville, 1999). Efe Akinola described home as a safe and secure space that fulfills most of his needs. This is how Efe described his home as a source of protection. "So, the home is a safe and secure place for me because it gives me all the comfort [that] I need. The basic [things], which makes it safe and secure, I find them in the home."

Olumide Ajani also explained that safety was important to him in the home, and he needed to ensure the safety of his family and his properties. He described how he has experienced safety in his new home environment:

In my space that I am in right now, I have never felt unsafe. It has been safe all the way. Things have happened around us but for me, we have never had any reason to feel unsafe here. There was a time we forgot to lock our garage door and the door that leads into our home from the garage, but we still felt safe.

Kemi Adeyemi described that because home was a place where you have your loved ones, within that home you built trust and trusting relationships. She expounded that, that kind of a home guaranteed a feeling of safety and security:

We are a family; we know each other, [and] we trust each other. So, it is safe and secure for me. It is my home. I feel more comfortable. It is my home and anybody living in that house... we are together. We are safe. I share my home with somebody that I love, know, and trust and I feel safe with him and with my children too.

In parallel with the families' ideas of home Mallet (2004) and Somerville (1999) described the inside domain of the home as a defined space, a space of comfort and safety. Somerville (1999) added that the private realm of the home offers freedom, personal control, security that provides opportunity for revitalization and rejuvenation, as well as intimacy. The families confirmed that they realized these opportunities in their new home environment.

Home as a Physical Unit and Social Unit

Hollander (1991) described home as a physical structure where individuals reside and/or a dwelling place for a family that becomes permeated with the sense of home. The families in this study described how the physical space of their homes was necessary for creating a feeling of home. Efe Akinola explained why the physical space of the home was important.

Without your [physical] home, you cannot make your meals. Without the [physical] home, you cannot have somewhere to sleep. Without the [physical] home, you can be lonely because if you do not have people around you in the home, you become lonely.

Olumide Ajani also described home as a physical space: "Home could be a physical space, like I am going home. It could be a physical space where you are living. Home is not complete without a physical space." Both Chioma Abayomi and Tiwa Adeolu agreed that in order to create a feeling of home, the physical building is needed because it helps individuals realize a sense of belonging to the home. Tiwa Adeolu stated:

I believe that physical space is necessary because the family is unique, right? So, we need that physical space to create an atmosphere that is unique for us and our family. I view my own [physical] home as a sense of belongingness because I belong there, and I also view it as a sense of family because I have my family there.

Hollander (1991) affirmed that the understanding of home privileges the physical structure and/or dwelling that forms the domestic values preserving that home. With such understanding, the families perceived the home was part of the physical dwelling that created a sense of belonging and a sense of place.

However, Mallet (2004), and Ralph and Staeheli (2011) argued that the connections between home and the physical dwelling present home as one-dimensional. The authors contended that the physical aspect of the home as providing shelter involves only one aspect of home. Mallet (2004) expounded that “home is a ‘socio-spatial system’ that represents the fusion of the physical unit and the social unit” (p. 68). Three Nigerian families in this study supported this idea of home, as they explained that their homes were not defined only by physical space, but also by the social relationships within the space that were unique from the rest of the world. Furthermore, they affirmed that there was a symbiotic relationship between the family and the space that served to redefine the physical space as the social context of the home. Efe Akinola explained:

I do not [only] look at the physical building as home. I look at the people that are close to me especially my immediate family: they are the home. Without them and without me there is no home.

Olumide Ajani also described his notion of home as a social unit and distinguished the home as a physical dwelling from the home as a social unit:

Home is the people you meet there. Let me say my wife, my children, and myself. I can say we form a home. A home is different from a house. A physical building is the house. But what is inside, a person or the people will make the home, not the physical building.

The idea or notion of home as a social unit suggests that home evolves out of sets of connected groups and relationships within the home (Mallet, 2004). Although the families identified the importance of the physical dwelling, they defined home beyond the physical structure of the dwelling to re-conceptualize home as a social and a family unit.

Home as an Identity and Self

Scholars (e.g., Mallet, 2004; Manzo, 2003) have examined the relationships between home and identity and explained that home could be an expression or symbol of the self and that home could be an emotional environment, a culture, a location, a political system, a historical time and place, and a combination of many of these ideas. The Nigerian families in this study described how their home was connected to how they perceived themselves. Olumide Ajani explained that he described his home the way he saw himself and that his home was built on his own beliefs. Olumide stated:

I see myself because of the way I define my home. It is based on the foundation of my home, which is built on my beliefs. I see myself as a Christian and a Christ believer and I see myself as, not necessarily a moralist but someone that should do the right thing. That is what we build the home on. I can see myself in my home and I can see my home also in myself. I am not preaching what I am not when I am outside. So, my life at home reflects in my life even when I am not at home.

Efe Akinola also explained that people, who met him, would understand the kind of home he came from and vice-versa, “when you see my home and you see me, there is no difference.” Efe added:

I make sure that when you see me outside you would know the kind of home I am coming from. So, physical appearance and the way I relate with people, the respect I show, my character, basically define the kind of home I am coming from.

Easthope (2004) and Manzo (2003) considered home as an undeniable source of identity and explain that identity is created both internally in the mind and through the person's interactions with the outside world. Easthope (2004) affirmed that people who are from different cultures express the connection between themselves and their homes differently and that the bond is stronger for some people. As such, an individual's sense of home can be created in part by the social, cultural, and economic circumstances in which they find themselves (Easthope, 2003; Mallet, 2004). The Nigerian families culturally interpreted the world around them and actively gave meaning to their experiences of home, identity, and self.

Home as a Threatening and Dangerous Space

Brickell (2012) and Schroder (2006) explained that home can be a potential site of violence, uncertainty, fear, and conflict. Similarly, the authors expound that home can be viewed as a vulnerable space of aggression and exclusion. Although the Nigerian families described notions of home as favorable, safe and/or peaceful, two families shared times when they felt that home in their country of origin and in Canada was not a safe and secured space for them. Efe Akinola described a life-changing incident of armed robbery that threatened his life and disrupted his sleeping patterns.

At 3:00 a.m. in the morning my eyes would be wide open. I could not sleep anymore because that was the time the robbers came to our house. It was usually at that same time. So, it disrupts my sleeping pattern. It causes stress for me. It was basically a challenging time for me back home. It only left when I left that environment.

Efe also shared two times when he felt home was not a safe and secured space in the new home environment. He stated, “When my bicycle was stolen, and my neighbor’s lawn mower was stolen. I became unsafe then I said to myself why should this kind of thing happen in this neighborhood.” He explained that he called the police, and they could not find any solutions to the cases at the time. Efe Akinola also noted that he had experienced times when he could not pay his bills and he worried that he would no longer be able to keep his home. In those times, home did not feel safe. “It is stressful. Sometimes when I drive, I see homeless people you know, my mind goes straight to thinking maybe if I cannot pay my mortgage the bank could kick me out.” Olumide Ajani shared a time in his country of origin when home was not a safe and secured space. He described a time that armed robbers came to his neighborhood in Nigeria and the robbers shot at people for hours and although nobody was killed or injured, Olumide felt that danger and that his home was unsafe. He also shared a time when home was not a safe and secured space for him and the people around him in Canada:

There was a year my brother who is living in Canada was robbed. He was not at home but before he could get home things have gone bad. His house had been burgled. My brother’s things were carted away with some money and their travel passport.

Fairhurst (1998) and Jones (2000) confirmed that there are individuals who have been subjected to violence within their own environment. For these groups, home then may be a site of fear, isolation, and a threat to security (see Brickell, 2012). The families confirmed such times when their home was a site of fear, danger, and a threat to their safety. They experienced some levels of insecurity and threat that caused them sleepless nights and anxiety both in their country of origin and their new home environment, and although experiencing insecurity in their new home

came as a surprise to them, they were able to negotiate and navigate these dangers and thus, realize a sense of safety in Canada.

Home and Journeying

Ahmed (1999) explains that home may be less about where one is from and more about where one is going. Ahmed (1999) and Massey (1994) expounded that the nature of home has always been open and constructed out of the movement that is stretched beyond it. Two families in this study expressed that they realize home in their journey. For Kemi Adeyemi home does not stay in a particular place or space, home could be found even in one's movement. She stated:

It may be a hotel or a friend's place. I may find a home if I go to the beach. Some people find home when they go on vacation, you know. You can find home in migration, anywhere you are that gives you joy, that gives you peace of mind, that gives you a sense of belonging that is a home...It is not necessarily your country of origin where you grew up. anywhere you are...that gives you joy, happiness, a sense of belonging that is a home.

Ahmed (1999) supported this notion of home and declares that the experience of home always involves encounters with strangers and that home does not remain at the same space, which is simply the familiar, there is always movement within the construction of home. Efe Akinola also explained that he found home as he relocated:

And I can say that I found home while I was migrating. When I got to Europe, I thought it was home, but I look at it, the cost of living is way high. Getting permanent resident was like so difficult. It was a big challenge and when I got here the cost of living is like one third of what we used to spend in the UK. The house rent in Canada is way cheaper, the electricity bills are way cheaper, the gas bill, in fact, everything is so cheap. We were

like, this is home. So, I found home here in Canada. I found home in my journey to this place. When I got here, I knew it was home.

Although Efe did not find a permanent home in the United Kingdom, his time spent in that country gave him a point of comparison and helped him to recognize that he felt at home in Canada. Mallet (2004) explained that the conditions by which people leave their country of origin, their journeys beyond and away from home, and their destinations often affect their identity and their understanding of the meaning of home. For these families the search for their ideal home arose out of the means of ensuring their survival.

Exploring the various ideologies that surround the meanings of home might allow the development of a deeper understanding of how African migrant children and their families in Canada consider and articulate their own meaning of home within their new home environment (Ahmed, 1999; Brewer & McCabe, 2015; Stewart, 2011). The Nigerian families viewed home as a physical space where one realizes peace, safety, and comfort. Embraced within this definition of home, one of the families described tolerance and patience as key to a successful home. That family learned from each other, recognized their challenges, and worked to improve on their shortcomings. Two families considered home as a place of comfort where individuals are happy, accepted, loved, and where one returned after the day's work. The families articulated the notion of home as a safe and secure space that gives them the comfort they need. The safety of the immediate family and their property was important and within that safety, the Nigerian migrants realized trusting and caring relationships through constant greetings and checking up on one another. Mallet's (2004) and Somerville's (1997) studies support this finding, as they indicated that this understanding of home is connected to the inside realm of the home that suggests a

comfortable, secure, safe, and defined space. The Nigerian families in this study articulated that peace, comfort, happiness, and safety were important to their understandings of home.

Wardaugh (1999) argued that “privacy, safety, security, comfort and refuge are not necessarily associated with the intimate description of home but may be found beyond its reaches” (p. 96). Two families described that home could be found in a number of locations and suggested that home might be as temporary as a hotel room or a favorite place on the beach, for example. Ralph and Staeheli (2011) confirmed that migrants’ efforts to make sense of home are important in shaping where to locate their home. Somerville (1997) expounded on the ideological construction of home and explains that the important goal is to understand what home means to different people while individuals attempt to elucidate the range of different meanings of home. The Nigerian families in this study confirmed that they recognized a sense of home during movement and in a variety of locations in their journey.

Even so, the families described the physical structure of the home as important and one that gave them a sense of belonging and protection. At the same time, they found home to comprise the individuals who are residing in the dwelling, as well as the social relationships within the home. The families affirmed that although the physical structure and the social unit of the home have their own distinguishing qualities, they agreed that there were interdependent relationships between these two aspects of the home (Mallet, 2004). The findings support the research of Ahmed (1999), Blunt and Dowling (2006), and Mallet (2004), who indicated that home is not only a physical site in which individuals reside but also an inspired and symbolic space of belonging. Similarly, Mallet (2004) noted that home arises out of sets of connected elements and relationships. Mallet’s (2004) work supported this finding, as she considered home as a locale and defines it as “simultaneously and indivisibly a spatial and a social unit of

interaction” (p. 68). The families recognized the importance of the physical structure of the home and simultaneously conceptualized home as social relationships within the dwelling.

Easthope (2004), Mallet (2004), and Massey (1994) discussed the relationships between home and identity and the idea of the self. The Nigerian migrant families viewed their homes as connected to their identities and explained how their homes were built on their values and beliefs. The families’ lives reflected their homes, and their homes reflected their lives, and as such, they constructed dynamic mental representations of home, identity, and self (see Somerville, 1997). Easthope’s (2004) and Massey’s (2004) studies supported this finding, as they considered home as an indisputable source of identity and explain that identity is created both internally in the mind and through the person’s interactions with the world. Easthope (2004) affirmed that the bond between individuals and home means that the examination of home is essential and that while various senses of home are created from every aspect of individuals’ lives, senses of place permeate everyday life and experiences. The Nigerian migrant families understood the bonds and relationships they established between the home and self that have shaped their identities and connected those identities to their new home environments.

Some of the Nigerian families shared times when they felt that home in their country of origin and in Canada were not safe and secure spaces. Some of the families were confronted by armed robbers in their country of origin, and some were also robbed of their personal belongings in their new home. These events left them feeling vulnerable. Additionally, one family explained that they worried about finances, and that their inability to keep up with the bills in the new home posed a threat to their perceived safety. In these situations, home became a site of fear, danger, and threat to the families’ safety. Brickell (2012) called attention to the negativity and alienation that may be associated with home. Brickell (2012) indicated that home could be a

potential site of emotional struggle, ambivalence, violence, fear, and/or conflict. In this case, there may be disparities, then, between the ideals and lived realities of home. The author re-conceptualizes home as a continuous process of negotiations, contracts, renegotiations, and exchanges of the self. Within these renegotiations and exchanges, Mitezen (2021) described home as a comfortable refuge from a threatening world. As such, the author expounded on the notion of ‘ontological security’ (Giddens, 1991) of being that explains the fundamental need of humans to feel whole, continuous, and stable over time, especially during crisis which threatens their well-being. The Nigerian families in this study sought ontological security (Giddens, 1991) regardless of the safety issues and/or challenges they had experienced both in Canada and in their country of origin.

Several of the Nigerian migrants in this study, explained that they found home in their journey. One person had learned through migration that home was not a particular place, but that home could be any place where she felt joy, peace, and belonging. Another person described how the journey helped him to recognize home when he arrived at the place where he could afford to meet the needs of his family. For the Nigerian families, home was not a fixed place, but rather, home could be recognized during movement and in a variety of locations along the way.

Challenges and Impacts (Positive and Negative) of COVID-19

The Nigerian immigrant families experienced personal challenges and impacts due to COVID-19. Following the announcement of the first reported case of COVID-19 in Canada on January 15, 2020 (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2020), the entire country experienced fast changes to its health landscape and made numerous changes to every aspect of its institutions and environments, including the social environment (Mo et al., 2020; LaRochelle-Cote & Uppal, 2020; Laupacis, 2020). Though all of the provinces in Canada enacted policies, forcing the

closure of businesses and requiring schools to shut down periodically, differences continued to exist from province to province. The combination of school and business closures in Manitoba created challenges for some of the families in this study.

From the beginning of the pandemic, the Akinola family worked from home and though they experienced some challenges, because they see each other often, they have come to see and understand each other's differences, and have admitted that the pandemic revealed many shortcomings that existed within their relationships and within their family. The family expressed that they continued to work through these differences. Efe Akinola stated:

We see each other so often. You come to realize for example, that you do not know that [someone else in the family] does things like this, like [one of us is] just staying on the phone too much. So, there has been a lot of challenges, but we have been able to manage ourselves well.

Efe further explained that managing situations that arose from the pandemic were manageable with the right mindset and extra patience. He viewed the challenges as distractions they needed to address so that they did not become bigger issues. The family also mentioned that the pandemic caused them to spend countless hours seated in a chair because they both worked from home and needed to provide support for their children, who were learning remotely from home. The family described strategies they used to release stress after work, such as working out on their treadmill and in their mini basement gym and finding the time to go to bed early and get a good sleep each night.

LaRochelle and Uppal (2020) examined the social and economic experiences of migrants living in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that people born outside of Canada had different life experiences than those who were born in Canada. The social and

economic concerns of immigrants were different from those of Canadian-born individuals. The authors found that 44% of immigrants reported that they had very high levels of concerns for their social ties, while among those born in Canada; the comparable rates were 30%. The families in this study described the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on their mobility and social life. Olumide Ajani had this to say:

The mobility: we cannot really go out the way we want.... We cannot go to church, we have to do virtual worship every church service day, and we cannot visit family and friends. Yes, it has restricted us socially because we are social beings, right? God has created us to relate with other people but what COVID-19 has done is that it has kept everybody in their shell. It has impacted our social life.

Although Chioma Abayomi lost her employment due to the pandemic and because her line of work was considered non-essential within the province, the Abayomi family also expressed concern with how the pandemic affected their children's schooling and social life. Chioma explained:

What I can say about the pandemic is that it does not allow my children to go to school and to be free like they were before. The pandemic affects my children because they stopped going to school. They cannot go outside to play. They cannot play their basketball, you know.

Kemi Adeyemi also described that the pandemic has disrupted her social life:

Of course, not going out and meeting people, that is the negative aspect of it. I cannot socialize with people. No parties. I cannot go to church. I only see my colleagues on the computer. Those are the sad things that come with COVID-19.

Tiwa Adeolu shared how the pandemic has affected her family's social life:

I have not been able to visit my friends and family. I have not been able to accept visitors.

I have not been able to invite friends and family, so many people have not been able to visit us. We have not been able to take the baby out because of the virus. That is the way it has impacted us.

During this pandemic, the public was encouraged to engage in social distancing and remain at home whenever possible, while many shifted to working remotely from home to reduce the spread of the virus (Merkley et al., 2020). The families in this study who were non-essential workers remained at home sometimes also working from home while some of their children learned remotely.

When asked to explain the impact of COVID-19 on their social and school lives, three of the Nigerian migrant children explained that COVID-19 stopped them from going out to visit with friends, playing the sports of their choice, and using the gym. They also articulated that they found online learning to be very challenging during the COVID-19 lockdown. Chidima Abayomi shared that whenever she went to school, she often forgot to bring her mask and that she would have to go back home in the cold to get the mask and return to school. She shared her concerns related to mask wearing and other problems about the pandemic:

The [teachers] will say we should go outside and have lunch. It is so hard to breathe in the mask. We have to breathe-in the same air over and over again. I [also] like to skate but with the pandemic everywhere is closed. So, I cannot go outside to skate.

Ochuko Abayomi shared the impact of COVID-19 on his social and school life:

I cannot go outside to play basketball. I just go to the basement to dribble with the ball and to work out in the house. I miss working out with equipment because I do go to the YMCA. [Also] I do not like doing online school because I cannot talk to my friends and

talk to the teachers in person. At home, I have to join a meeting for 30 mins and wait another 30 mins to join another class until 3 p.m., I do not like doing that.

Nonso Abayomi shared his own frustration about COVID-19:

It is just that I stay at home all the time. You cannot really go outside and visit your friends. Before [the pandemic] I visit and see my friends, spend time with them but now it is just me. I am at home 24/7. I [also] do not like staying at home and taking all my classes from home.

Popyk (2020) highlighted learning and social life issues among the challenges of distance learning experienced by migrant children. The children in Popyk's (2020) study voiced that online education had been unsuccessful because of disruptions to their teachers' practices. As such, the children stated that they found it difficult to understand the school material while sitting in front of the screen. Moreover, acquiring new skills posed a challenge for the Nigerian migrant children in this study, who were navigating the norms and rules of educational practices in Canada. Popyk (2020) explained that the virtual communication during the pandemic disturbed the social lives of children whose only source of interaction with peers was the school. The provincial restrictions and the virtual communication used by most schools greatly restricted the children's personal interactions with friends, which consequently influenced their social lives. The lack of personal contact with peers led to increased social exclusion for the Nigerian children during the pandemic.

According to the participant parents, COVID-19 changed many of the ways they now think about home. All five families asserted that the pandemic, indeed, changed how they considered and viewed their home and the events that happened in the home, compared to the

pre-pandemic era. The families realized several positive aspects of remaining at home during the pandemic. Efe Akinola explained:

It has also helped me to understand the way my kids study at school. Without being at home [with them], there are some things they do at school that you might not find out. But with the pandemic, we have been able to see how they behave at school.

Sheyi Ajani believed that the pandemic brought the family closer than they had been before because spending lots of time together, she agreed was good for the family:

I think it is a good thing for us because it brings the family closer. We tend to see each other frequently; we tend to see daddy's face more.... We are all together now. No more going anywhere. And the love is increasing every day. We are stuck together forever.

Olumide Ajani added that the pandemic reinforced what their ideal home should look like, saying he felt the family had deviated from it unknowingly and now COVID-19 had strengthened that aspect. Chioma Abayomi also described the positive results of staying at home during the pandemic:

Another thing I want to say about the pandemic is that it allows me to rest [at home]. I work a lot and because of the pandemic I stopped working and I can now rest at home so that is a good thing. My job is not categorized as an essential work, so I have to sit at home because of that.

Kemi Adeyemi also described the positive aspects of staying at home during the pandemic and that although both parents worked from home, staying together at home brought unity and togetherness to her family. She referenced the busy work schedule that had affected the family's closeness before the pandemic and explained that they learned more about each other and their children because they were all together at home. Kemi also noted that the pandemic allowed her

to discover she had talent in an area different from her regular employment. She explained that she started a small business that was generating additional income for the family:

Now I am into cooking for people, and they pay me for the service.... I do it as a business. People place orders and I have a menu where they can choose what they want me to cook for them, mostly Nigerian food. Before COVID-19, I was unable to do that but with the pandemic and because I am at home, I thought about this business. I can say this pandemic made me discover myself.

Tiwa Adeolu described her own personal experience with the pandemic. She explained that she just delivered a baby and had been on maternity leave since the pandemic and the provincial restrictions, so she would have expected to stay at home even if there was no pandemic. While at home she was able to spend enough time with her husband and children to get to know them more deeply and as a result, she concluded that the pandemic changed the way she now thinks of home.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed some challenges for the Nigerian migrant children and families in this study. The migrant families' social and school lives were disrupted by the pandemic, as they explained that they could not visit friends and family, attend classes, and/or visit their churches. The Nigerian children could not spend time with their friends at school and within their communities. The children indicated that they missed going to school and receiving in-person lessons, as well as going to the gym and playing sports. Prime et al. (2020) indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic poses an acute threat to the well-being of families due to challenges related to social disruption. Moreover, as the pandemic is ongoing, the social and economic impacts are expected to be long-lived. Prime et al. (2020) pointed out that the measured impacts of the pandemic on family's well-being are currently undetermined.

The Nigerian families expressed some advantages that the pandemic has brought to their relationships. One family came to understand more about the ways their children learn in school due to remote learning. The stay-at-home orders due to the pandemic allowed the families to spend lots of time together in their homes, and thus brought them closer than they had been before the pandemic. An adult in one family noted that she discovered that her talent for cooking traditional Nigerian food could be used to generate additional income for the family. One family also used the opportunity of staying at home during the pandemic to rejuvenate and relax. All of the families experienced some positive aspects of staying at home during the COVID-19 and largely remained positive during this difficult time.

Critical constructivist theory prompts us to understand and probe issues of ethnicity, language, social class, and race, for example (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005), as these issues affect African migrants' experiences of home. As such, critical constructivist theory interrogates the homogenous labeling of group experience that overlooks the important national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, political, and racial differences that exist within the population (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2003, 2009). The critical constructivist theory problematizes the politics of home by raising awareness of the experiences of those living on the margins and calling into question how their marginalization affects their transitions to their new home environment (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2019; Kincheloe, 2005). The COVID-19 pandemic presented some challenges for the Nigerian migrant children and families in this study. In some cases, participants lost their jobs, because they were considered non-essential workers in low paying jobs. At least one of the parents in each home was faced with supporting their children with learning in a school system that seemed unfamiliar and foreign. This finding is consistent with Kantamneni's (2020) study, who explained that the COVID-19 pandemic has a differential

impact on historically marginalized groups, such as the Nigerian migrant families in this study. The author expounded that the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resulting changes in the society due to social distancing and other related restrictions, has showcased inequities in access to decent work resulting in many of the vulnerable population experiencing a much severer impact on economic and work-related issues. Kantamneni (2020) explained that international or national crises, including the pandemic, often highlight inequalities that may have been unseen or hidden prior to the event. The participants in this study, some of whom were marginalized by their socio-economic status and all of whom were marginalized by race and ethnic identity, experienced significant impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The families in this study described difficulties brought on by the pandemic. The stay-at-home orders enacted by the provincial government allowed some of these families to stay in their homes while working remotely. While some felt like the stay-at-home orders exposed the shortcomings of family members, other families appreciated how that time at home helped them to know each other more deeply, but they also described the stress that comes with working from home while providing support for children who are home schooling. The families documented lack of mobility and socialization as factors that affected their lives during the pandemic, but also voiced a recognition of how it changed the way they think of home. The families recognized positive aspects of staying at home by saying they experienced unity, intimacy, love, a healthy lifestyle, and self-discovery during the COVID-19 stay-at-home restrictions. They agreed that it pushed them to gain a deeper understanding of the way their children had learned at school before the pandemic. Although the families in this study faced with challenges during the pandemic, they remained positive and reinforced and redefined their ideal home.

Conclusion

The Nigerian migrant children and their families articulated ideas of home regarding their sense of identity, perception of belonging, and emotional relations. The participating families negotiated and navigated through the complexity that surrounds the concept of home in their migration narratives and experiences. The migration experiences of the families in this study were full of challenges when they were planning to move to Canada but since arriving in Canada, though there have been challenges, they have experienced positive migration processes. The families kept connections to their home of origin through food, movies, and communication. They utilized physical components such as paintings and attire from their home of origin for maintaining and preserving their identity in Canada. Although some of the families' expectations of Canada were confirmed, other aspects of their lives did not match with their new realities. Moreover, the memories of their home of origin allowed them to have a deeper understanding of their present home environment. These understandings helped the families to navigate and negotiate their home in Canada.

The interviewed families built social networks with their ethnic group, mainstream group, and other ethnic groups that have aided social adjustment and integration in their new home. The families also experienced challenges when forming relationships with the mainstream group due at least in part to the families' misunderstanding of cultures resulting from cultural differences. However, they persisted in utilizing different strategies that helped them to create positive relationships with people in their environment. The pandemic along with the provincial restrictions and school closures posed challenges for the Nigerian children and families, however, they maintained positive attitudes and found new opportunities to redefine and recreate their ideal home. The families conceptualized and articulated fluid understandings of home that

have helped them realize a sense of identity, belonging, safety, comfort, familiarity, love, happiness, and peace. Furthermore, the Nigerian children's understanding and identification of home within their local school and community has helped them realize a sense of belonging, comfort, familiarity, safety, here in Canada.

The following chapter, chapter five, contains final reflections and concludes the research study. This chapter provides the summary and conclusion of the study, and its overall significance, as well as implications for the African migrant children and families, research, practice, and policy.

Chapter 5

Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to build an understanding of how Nigerian migrant children within the Manitoba K-12 educational system and their families articulate their ideas of home with regards to their sense of identity, perception of belonging, and emotional relations. The aim was to understand how these families negotiate and navigate the complexity that surrounds the concept of home in their migration narratives and experiences. As such, this study developed an understanding about the extent to which the migrant children and their families have come to realize a sense of identity, a perception of belonging, and a feeling of affirmation in their new home. This final chapter concludes by reflecting on the extent to which the objectives of the study were achieved given the data collected and analyzed. As such, the chapter revisits and answers the research questions referring to the findings from the data of the five Nigerian immigrant children and families with regards to how they navigate and negotiate the complexity that surrounds the concept of home in their migration narratives and experiences. To end the final chapter, I will summarize the significance of the study for African migrant children and families, educational research, practice, and policy. Summarizing reflections will conclude the dissertation.

Revisiting and Answering the Research Questions

This next section revisits the research questions that guided the study and focuses more fully on how the data helped me to establish a more accurate response to those questions. The process of articulating answers to the research questions allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of how Nigerian migrant children and their families re-imagine and reconstruct

their knowledge, understanding, experiences, and feelings of home. This research was guided by the following questions:

1. How do Nigerian migrant families and their children, who are enrolled in K-12 schools in Manitoba, conceptualize and articulate ideas of home?
2. What are the defining aspects of Nigerian migrant children's and their families' sense of belonging and identity in their experiences with the Manitoba K-12 school system?
3. How can participants' understandings of home inform educational approaches to supporting migrant students and families?
4. How did the Nigerian migrant children and their families experience the changes to home and school during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The following sections detail the summary of findings by research question.

Research Question One: Conceptualizing and Articulating Ideas of Home

Research question one asks how Nigerian migrant families and their children, who are enrolled in K-12 schools in Manitoba, conceptualize and articulate ideas of home. The participant families conceptualized the complex and multidimensional meaning of home based on their experiences. They identified the home as a place of peace, comfort, and family love and a space of refuge from the hardships of the world. Navigating and negotiating within a foreign culture can be exhausting for migrant families, the physical space of their home provided a sense of comfort, peace, and a place where they always fit, where they could relax and be themselves. As such, their homes offered a space where they could replicate memories of their Nigerian culture and where they could feel comfortable with their Nigerian identity shielded from their struggles within Canadian society. In addition, home was not always described as a fixed place or space. Rather, they identified and experienced home in several different ways. The families

articulated that home is where they reside with their loved ones. As such, the families described home as a place of peace, comfort, happiness, and safety. They saw home as a place or space where individuals living in the home understand one another, exercise patience, and tolerate each other. The families also described home as a place or space where there is no fear, where they feel comfortable, accepted, loved, and where they looked forward to returning after long days of work. In this kind of space, the families believed they had built trust and trusting relationships. In this case, the families viewed home as a place or space where they could retreat, relax, and feel protected (Mallet, 2004; Somerville, 1999). In this type of home, the families expressed that they felt a sense of safety and security.

The families also conceptualized home as both a physical and social unit of the dwelling. The Nigerian migrant families described that the physical unit of the home was needed for their feeling of home. For example, they explained that without the physical home they could not make their meals, or sleep. The families argued that home is not complete without a physical space and that home is a physical space where one resides. One parent concluded that the physical unit of the home was necessary because it helped the family to realize a sense of belonging to the home. The parent expressed that she perceived a sense of belonging and of place to the home because she and her family resided in the same physical space of the dwelling. The participant parent further explained that the physical space is needed to create an atmosphere that is unique for the family. On the other hand, the families articulated that their homes were not characterized only by physical space, but also by the social relationships within the space (Mallet, 2004; Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). The families described the social context of the home as important to their understanding and meanings of home. The families viewed the people that are close to them in the dwelling, particularly their immediate family, as the home. They expounded

that without these people (e.g., parents and children) within the home, there would be no home. The families understood the significance of the physical unit and the social unit of the home, as well as the connections between them.

The Nigerian migrant families described the idea of home as an identity and self. One parent articulated his idea of home based on the way he viewed himself and around his beliefs. He is a Christian and a Christ believer, his idea of home is based on his beliefs, and he believed that doing right things both inside and outside of the home should reflect these beliefs. Another parent described how his home was connected to how he perceived himself, he expressed that “when you see my home and you see me, there is no difference.” The participant parent connected his idea of home to his identity: his physical appearance, character, actions, words, and interactions with people, all contributed to his conception and/or sense of home. Researchers have considered home as an undeniable source of identity and explained that identity is created both internally in the mind and through the individual’s interactions with the outside world (Easthope, 2004; Manzo, 2003). The idea of home can be an expression or symbol of the self and as such, it may be an emotional environment, a culture, a location, a political system, a historical time and place, a house, and/or a combination of all these things (See Easthope, 2004; Manzo, 2003). With this understanding, this interpretation of home has allowed the Nigerian migrant parents in this study to socially interpret the world around them including their experiences of home, self, and identity.

Two participant parents conceptualized home as a threatening and dangerous space. The families demonstrated different times when they felt that home in their country of origin and in Canada was not a safe and secure space. Two parents described an incident of armed robbery in their country of origin that threatened their life and safety and interrupted their sleeping patterns.

These episodes became a life-changing event and one that brought back difficult memories in their lives. The participant parents also articulated times when home in Canada was not a safe and secure space: a time when they were robbed of their personal belongings, a time when their family member was robbed, and a time when a neighbor was robbed in the neighborhood.

Likewise, another parent felt unsafe in the new home when he was unable to keep up with his bills and he was stressed he would no longer be able to keep his home. During these times, the Nigerian families expressed that home was a potential site of violence, uncertainty, fear, and conflict (Brickell, 2012; Schroder, 2006). Despite these challenges, the families were able to negotiate and navigate these dangers, sought 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1991), and realized a sense of home in Canada.

Two parents expressed that they found home in their journey. The families believed that home does not stay in a specific space or place and that they realized and constructed the idea of home out of their voyage. The parents expounded that home may be a number of locations as long as they find peace of mind, joy, happiness, and a sense of belonging in the space. The parents found home while they were migrating as they left their country of origin, Nigeria—they went to the UK and then to Canada, they had compared the strengths and weaknesses of these countries before choosing to remain in Canada. The time the families spent in these two countries gave them a point of consideration and helped them to recognize that they felt at home in their new home environment. Mallet (2004) and Easthope (2004) suggested that an individual's home memoirs, including their tenure in any given home, is vital to their understanding of the meaning of home, as well as their view of the ideal home. The Nigerian parents' quest for their ideal home developed from the means of assuring their survival. This complex model of identification of home suggested how home is associated with a movement

that goes beyond all forms of boundaries and that the recognition of home is in a continuous state of flux (See Ahmed, 1999). The understanding of home for the participant families in this study was formed out of their movement, social relations, lived experiences, as well as their physical dwelling (Massey, 1992; Moskal, 2015).

Research Question Two: The Defining Aspects of Families' Sense of Belonging and Identity

Research question two asks about the defining aspects of Nigerian migrant children's and their families' sense of belonging and identity in their experiences within the Manitoba K-12 school system. I believe connection is a human need. The participant families affirmed that there is a need to maintain connections to friends and family in their country of origin and to maintain connections to their culture. Technology gave the families an opportunity to stay connected to friends and family in Nigeria. However, they recognized that it was also important to seek connections in the new community and society. We rely on our connections to each other and to groups to know ourselves and to determine where we connect (Repke & Benet-Martinez, 2018). It was important for the participant families to maintain connections to Africa and to their Nigerian heritage (e.g., African festivals, Nigerian community groups, churches, food, clothing, art) but also crucial to build connections to friends and community in Canada. Although some of the parents in this study made connections with their Canadian neighbors, some of them struggled to realize a sense of belonging and did not feel like they are accepted. Depression and loneliness built when the parents struggled to fit in and felt isolated within Canadian society. Furthermore, they were disillusioned when their expectations of new friends and quality of life were not met within Canadian society. The children, on the other hand, expressed their ability to fit in through organized games and sports in their schools and communities.

The participant families started by describing their positive integration into their new home including the feelings of satisfaction with the Canadian immigration system and the social structure that was in place for immigrants to integrate successfully into the Canadian system. For example, some of the parents were able to find employment opportunities in their line of work in Canada. The families expressed that when they arrived in Canada, they understood and appreciated the opportunities to find success in the new environment. They all agreed that these positive beliefs led to their improved well-being.

The participant families realized a sense of belonging and identity by preserving connections with people in both their country of origin and in Canada. They maintained these connections, identity, culture, and traditions through frequent communication with family and friends. All of the participant families stayed connected to their family and friends, both in the country of origin and in Canada, through phone calls and other social media platforms. One parent underscored the importance of communication within the immediate family. He described this mode of communication with family as talking, playing games, and having family time with them. As such, the families in this study believed that the continued interactions with their loved ones were essential for their sense of belonging and identity in their new home. The families found technology to be a useful and an important tool in developing and maintaining a feeling of home in Canada.

The Nigerian migrant children and families were able to build social networks in their new home environment. The parents established social networks within the African community and were involved in their own Nigerian community in Canada. The parents benefited from building social networks with the members of their ethnic group. This connection induced a sense of inclusion and security for the parents and encouraged their feelings of personal stability

that safeguarded their identity and personality. Some of the Nigerian parents in this study built good rapport with mainstream Canadians that had influenced and helped them with social integration in their new home. Likewise, one parent built a positive and caring relationship with his White neighbors that led to a feeling of safety for him and his family in their community. He emphasized that he would need to turn to his White neighbors for help in times of distress and that having a good relationship with them is important for their sense of security. Sam and Berry (2010) suggested that building relationships with people who are members of the mainstream society can be valuable for migrants' social adjustment. Some of the Nigerian parents built and maintained relationships with individuals, both within their community and mainstream culture that have helped them to realize a sense of belonging and identity in their new home.

The children in this study built relationships with their classmates in their schools that helped them to realize a sense of belonging and shaped their identities in Canada. The children explained that they felt comfortable at school; they built friendships with both teachers and students in the school, and they played sports with the students from the mainstream culture. These relationships have helped the children to realize a sense of familiarity as they engaged with these individuals within their schools. A recent video developed by the "Anti Racism in Sport Campaign" (CBC News Manitoba, 2021) focused on athletes who had experienced racism on their teams in Winnipeg, however, the children and youth in this study did not describe experiences of racism in sport. In contrast, when asked about "fitting in" the children and youth explained that games and sports were the experiences that helped them to feel the strongest feeling of belonging. Research has suggested that schools can be key sites of socialization and acculturation for children. For migrant children, in particular, schools are often the place where they first encounter in-depth contact with the host culture (Pumariega, et al, 2010; Suarez-

Orozco, 2001). Encounters with individuals in the school played a significant role in assisting and supporting the children's adjustment and integration, and as such a realization of a sense of belonging and home.

Furthermore, the families described African food, movies, attire and painting as physical components that they feel are essential for developing a sense of belong and identity, and thus home. The participant families ate their traditional food, watched their traditional movies, and wore their traditional clothes that have helped them to develop a sense of belonging and identity in Canada. Likewise, these components (i.e., African food, movies, and attire) provided the families with memories of home that have helped them to retain a sense of belonging to their country of origin. The families also visited the Black AfrikCanada Festival and Folklorama events that were organized in their new home to exhibit African cultures and paintings. These events have allowed the families to stay connected to their roots and encouraged them to realize a sense of belonging and identity in their new home environment. To that end, connections to friends and families through technology; connections to culture and heritage through African festival, food, church, and community; and connections to the mainstream group through positive and caring interactions were used by the migrant children and families for navigating identity and belonging in Canada.

Research Question Three: Understandings of Home for Supporting Migrant Families in Canada

Research question three asks how participants' understandings of home can inform educational approaches to supporting migrant students and families. The findings can be interpreted to inform allies and advocates within education systems and communities about how to support the integration of African migrant children and families into Canadian society. The

lived experiences of the participants led to several suggestions for supporting transitions and establishing a sense of home both within the school and within the community.

The answer to this question emerges from participants' stories of isolation and challenges with finding authentic connections in Canadian society, from their struggles with supporting remote learning during the pandemic, and also from their stories of success. Some participants described successful strategies that they used to fit in, like greeting everyone or reaching out to make connections with the neighbors. The children explained that they found a sense of connection at school and in community through games and sports. All of the participants described how they looked for opportunities to build relationships and to break down barriers, so they felt less like outsiders and more like they had found home in Canada.

One of the clearest findings in the study was that the Nigerian children realized a sense of belonging and home in their schools and communities. All of the children and youth that were interviewed in this study explained that they had been able to build connections and realize a sense of belonging through games and sports. Even though the recent video by the "Anti Racism in Sports Campaign" (CBC News Manitoba, 2021) illustrated that sports in Manitoba were affected by racism, it was clear that the children and youth in this study felt like it was a primary source of connection for them. Therefore, creating organized sports and games and inviting newcomer families to participate will encourage their positive social integration and adjustment in Canada. Organized activities and programs such as soccer, skating, and basketball that involve families could potentially accelerate participation of migrants within their communities and schools. Furthermore, if it is a successful strategy for children, I think we need to consider if it would also be successful for adults. Perhaps, developing community activities, like skating or

soccer, would also bring adults together and help them to meet people within their neighborhoods.

The children also described how schools and educators had created a social milieu where they felt accepted and included. In contrast to their children, the Nigerian migrant parents encountered different challenges in their initial adjustment to their new home and to their understanding of, and comfort within, the school system. During the pandemic when students were forced to learn remotely from home, the Nigerian parents described that they faced challenges because they did not understand what the teacher expected, and they were unfamiliar with the curriculum. COVID-19 and the required remote learning exposed this deficit of knowledge about the education system that affects migrant families. For them to be able to support their children's learning on an ongoing basis, as well as in periods of remote learning, it is important that they understand the values, beliefs, and assumptions that are foundational to the education system and the curriculum that guides learning. This points to a need for schools to provide an awareness through printed materials, online tutorials, or face to face orientation workshops to help parents integrate into the Canadian education system.

The Nigerian migrant parents perceived cultural differences as one of the factors that had prevented them from building strong and lasting relationships with mainstream Canadians in their close community. Some of the families in this study contrasted their experiences with relationship building in their country of origin and their new home; they articulated that their experiences with building relationships in Canada were characterized by feelings of loneliness and lack of social interaction. Unlike the families' experiences of relationship building in their country of origin which was more like a community where everybody in the neighborhood interacted with one another and spent time together. The Nigerian migrant parents' challenges

with building authentic relationships with the mainstream Canadians contributed to their feelings of social isolation and exclusion in Canada. Furthermore, some of the parents attempted to understand the mainstream culture so as to navigate and negotiate the challenges of relationship building that they had identified that had helped them to forge new iterations of connection in Canada.

The Nigerian migrant parents identified strategies for navigating and negotiating relationship building with mainstream Canadians in their new home. The participant families utilized strategies such as consistent greetings and friendly communication to build relationships with their White Canadian neighbors in their communities. They noted that they found success with using these positive strategies. One Nigerian migrant parent identified the importance of allowing his children to play with kids in the neighborhood an action or a strategy he believed has a potential for building trust and may lead to building good relationships between the two cultures. Perhaps, this idea needs to become a regular event where kids and their parents could meet at the neighborhood park to play loosely organized games in addition to the organized sports that are offered in most Canadian communities. Similarly, one parent had continued to merge what he believed the good culture of both his country of origin and the new home environment to achieve his goals in Canada. These strategies have helped some of the Nigerian migrant parents in this study to navigate and negotiate the complexities of home in their new home environment. This study shows that promoting migrant families' participation in the school and community events has the potential to positively enhance their social integration and adjustment in Canada.

Research Question Four: Changes to Home and School during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Research question four asks how Nigerian migrant children and their families experience changes to home and school during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic exposed examples of economic marginalization, where immigrants were affected more than others and those in low paying jobs found themselves out of work. Others, who were employed in low paying, but essential jobs still had to continue to go to work (Kantamneni, 2020). Often without the proper personal protective gear, they were expected to interact with individuals in a very close space which heightened their possibilities of being exposed to the virus. The adults appreciated the lockdown for the time together and felt that it provided their families with a way to get to know each other again and to explore their family culture. Parents, who had to help their children with school, expressed the pressure of taking on the additional responsibility of providing support for their children who were learning from home, which affected their work-life balance. The children found the time at home to be isolating and wished to be back at school with their friends rather than learning online.

The closures of schools and businesses in Manitoba created significant challenges for some of the Nigerian children and families in this study. As such, many of the parents worked from home and the children attended classes through remote learning. Some of the parents expressed that the challenges they experienced during the pandemic arose from seeing each other often and admitted that staying at home together all the time revealed many of the flaws that existed within their relationships and within their family. One family explained that they were able to manage their challenges with the right mindset and a lot of patience before they became larger issues. Some of the families also described the stress that was involved in providing support for their children who were learning remotely. The challenges of working from home

and the responsibility of helping children with their schoolwork compounded to have a negative effect on the Nigerian parents in this study.

The Nigerian children and families documented how the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted their mobility and social life, as well as their schooling. The families raised concerns about the provincial lockdowns that restricted them from attending their churches, visiting friends and family, meeting in-person with colleagues, and going out to visit places in general. One family that just had a baby during the pandemic stressed the COVID-19 pandemic has stopped people from coming to visit their baby and the virus has also restricted them from taking the baby out of the house. Other parents expressed that COVID-19 stopped their children from attending school and engaging in their favorite outdoor sporting activities such as basketball and skating. Similarly, three of the Nigerian children articulated that the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown prevented them from visiting with friends, playing the sports of their choice, and using the gym. The lack of personal contact with peers during the lockdown led to increased social exclusion for the children in this study. The children found online learning to be challenging, as they do not enjoy staying at home and taking classes from home. Popyk (2020) underscored learning and social life issues among the issue of distance learning experienced by migrant children during the pandemic. The children in this study found it difficult to understand the school materials during the remote learning, as they adjusted to the norms and rules of educational practices in Canada. The COVID-19 pandemic posed a serious threat to the social life, school life, and well-being of the migrant children and families in this study.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic shifted the ways that the Nigerian parents think about their real home. The participant parents compared their views and ideas of home, as well as the events that happened in the home before and during the pandemic. The parents articulated

that being together in the home and providing learning support for their kids at home helped to understand the ways that their kids were learning and behaving at school. The parents understood that without providing such learning support for the children at home, it was difficult for the parents to understand some of the things they were doing at school. The COVID-19 pandemic helped the parents to see how their children learned and acted at school in Canada. The parents acknowledged that gaining a deeper understanding of their children's schooling was a positive aspect of staying at home during the pandemic.

The families also emphasized that the COVID-19 pandemic brought the family closer than they had been before the pandemic because it pushed them to spend lots of time together, which the families articulated was good for them. Before the pandemic, one family expressed that they had deviated from what they believed their ideal home should look like. The family's busy work schedule had prevented them from spending time together in their home. However, with the COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions in the province, the family saw each other frequently, and experienced increased love. During the pandemic, one parent discovered her talent for cooking traditional Nigerian food that generated additional income for the family. Another family used the opportunity of stay-at-home orders during the COVID-19 pandemic to rejuvenate and relax at home. The Nigerian migrant families in this study experienced some positive aspects of staying at home during the COVID-19 pandemic and mainly remained optimistic during this difficult time.

Significance of the Study

This study deepens the understanding of how Nigerian migrant families ground their lives in their destination country. The study illustrates the experiences of the participant Nigerian migrants who physically crossed the Canadian border and settled in urban Manitoba and whose

children are pursuing formal education in Manitoba's elementary and secondary schools. The study points to the importance of recreating and redefining home both in the destination country and in multiple locations throughout the migration experience. The process of recreating home included securing memories, maintaining connections, and experiencing cultural practices.

Families shared how their cherished cultural artifacts helped them to hold on to memories of their past – pictures, art, attire, music, or food, for example. They also confirmed the importance of being able to experience Nigerian culture through community festivals and church where they gathered with other Nigerians. Finally, they stressed the value of their ongoing connections with their Nigerian friends and family. The fluidity of those connections allowed them to evolve over time as the Nigerian migrants realized a sense of belonging in Canada despite the challenges they encountered in migration. They found ways to make Canada their new home by preserving their Nigerian culture and simultaneously adopting some aspects of Canadian culture.

Home as a Network of Connections

The study underscored the human need for connection. Participants utilized technology to maintain connections to friends and family in the country of origin. They invested time and energy into connecting with other Nigerians living in the new environment. They utilized the stabilizing support they gained from Nigerians living in the diaspora and from those who remained in Nigeria, to find the strength and confidence to contribute to their emerging relationships with people in their new community – at work, in school, and in their neighborhoods. As such, for the Nigerian migrant children and families, home was conceptualized and articulated as a network of connections. The connections that the children and parents established within the home, the connections to their Nigerian roots, and to members of their ethnic groups living in the diaspora, helped them to realize a sense of stability in their

new home, Canada. Moreover, the emergent connections and relationships that the Nigerian families were able to realize within their schools, work, and community served to keep them grounded.

Stabilizing Connections

The data clearly illustrated that the Nigerian families found stability within the safety of the relationships inside their homes and the comfort they felt in replicating their Nigerian culture within that space. Additionally, each family described the stabilizing experiences of utilizing technology to connect with friends and family in Nigeria and of participating in the Nigerian community groups and churches in Manitoba. These stabilizing connections provided a foundation for establishing a sense of home. The Nigerian families viewed home as a place of peace, comfort, family love, a space of refuge from adversity in the world, a place where they could reproduce memories of their Nigerian culture and where they felt comfortable with their Nigerian identity. In that type of home, they built trust and trusting relationships where they could relax, retreat, and feel protected. The families also retained connections to their home of origin through technology, traditional components and/or objects that helped them to stay grounded in the new environment. The participant families in this study drew attention back to the crucial importance of connections that they made with other Nigerians living in the diaspora that were essential for their sense of identity and home in Canada. These connections induced a sense of inclusion and security for the families and encouraged their feelings of personal stability that safeguarded their identity and personality, and thus, led to their positive integration and adjustment in the new home (Repke & Benet-Martinez, 2018). The stability afforded by their relationships within their home, with friends and family still living in Nigeria, and with other Nigerians living abroad supported them to reach for connections within Canadian society.

Emergent Connections

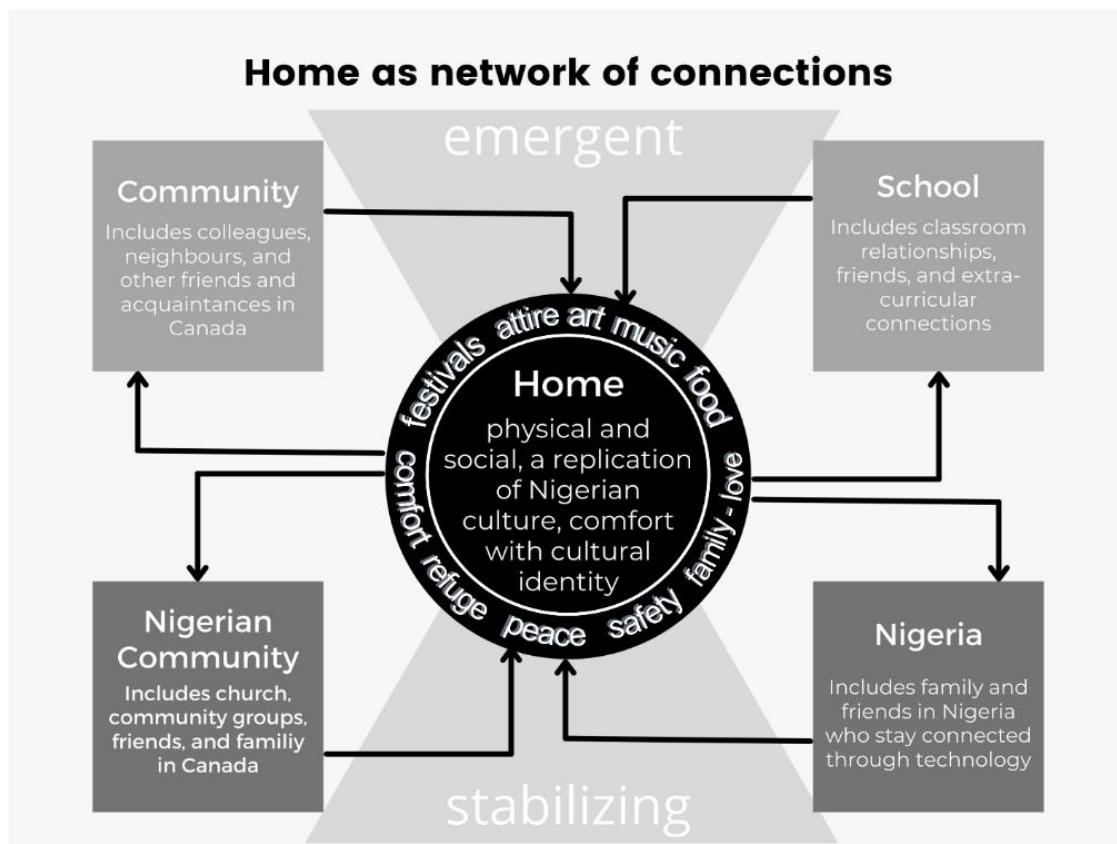
The Nigerian families were able to build emergent social networks in Canada through school, work, and their interactions with neighbors and acquaintances within their new community that helped them to realize a sense of security, comfort, belonging, identity, and ultimately familiarity in their new home environment. The study illuminates that the children realize a sense of belonging and home in their schools and communities. Participation in organized extracurricular activities has been linked with academic achievement and engagement (see Camacho & Fuligni, 2015; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). My study demonstrated that organized sports at school and extracurricular activities within their communities were beneficial for the social adjustment and sense of belonging of Nigerian migrant children and youth. The Nigerian children and families made connections with colleagues at work that helped them to navigate and negotiate their new environment. Some of the families and children endeavored to make connections with their White neighbors. They used strategies such as constant greetings and allowing their kids to play with the neighbors' kids and inviting them for a barbecue to nurture these relationships. These emerging connections (i.e., from the school, work, and community) helped Nigerian children and families feel a sense of belonging in their new home.

Figure 5 illustrates how participants described home as a network of connections. In the center the Black circle represents their physical dwelling where they feel safe from the outside world and where they are able to engage in cultural activities and to feel calm and confident in their cultural identity. The strong base of their connections in Nigeria and their connections within the Nigerian community in Canada is represented by the triangle at the bottom of the diagram. The inverted triangle at the top shows the development of their emergent connections with school, work, and community in Canada. The arrows indicate the reciprocal nature of the

connections. These connections are fluid and change over time as the families, their friends, and their community grows.

Figure 5

Home as a Network of Connections



Note: The diagram illustrates both the stabilizing relationships and the emergent relationships that help Nigerian families establish a sense of home in the new environment.

In this study, the Nigerian families described finding home to be a process of developing a network of connections. The families made connections to friends and family in Nigeria and abroad through technology, they connected to their culture and heritage through African festivals, food, art, music, attire, church, and community. These connections helped them to develop a sense of belonging and stability, to preserve their cultural identity in Canada, and to

give them confidence as they engaged in the connections that emerged within their new environments at work, at school, and within their neighborhoods. The families realized that they needed to make and maintain connections to navigate and negotiate the complexities of finding home.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of a study are issues that might prevent the data from being insightful, and thus that might prevent the researcher from hearing considered responses to the questions that were posed. This qualitative study sought to garner insights from five Nigerian migrant families and children in southern Manitoba, Canada. It was not a quantitative study and therefore while the results may be transferable, they are not generalizable, thus a delimitation.

The data collection for this study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and furthermore, several of the interview sessions with the families took place during periods of remote learning when the children were at home, meeting with their teachers online and depending on their parents for learning support. As a result, the pandemic and the corresponding health restrictions led to several limitations for the results of this study. First, as the researcher I was unable to access families through the after-school program where I had anticipated that I would be able to recruit participants, so I had to find the African families and children through an online Facebook group. This meant that the group perhaps had fewer common experiences. I was unable to meet and conduct interviews with families in person. All of my interviews took place via the Zoom platform. It was more difficult to build trust and rapport and to conduct successful interviews with young children via the Zoom meetings. Additionally, although the families that volunteered for the study had been in Canada for some time, it was impossible to understand

how their ongoing experiences with the pandemic affected their perspectives of home and their perspectives of schooling in Canada.

Implications Educational Research, Practice, Policy, and Migrant Families

In this section, I will provide the practical implications that are inherent within the findings. The results of this research are important to educational researchers, to leaders and teachers, to policy makers, and to the migrant families themselves. Therefore, I will provide suggestions for research, practice, policy, and migrant families.

Implications for Research

The study also leads to some recommendations for further research in this area. Based on the delimitations of this qualitative study, it is important to broaden the participation to involve more African children and youths who immigrated to Canada with their parents, to involve involuntary migrants and families (i.e., refugees) who are from other African countries, and to extend the demographics to include those who have settled in rural areas. It would be valuable to compare the outcomes of this research to future research if extended to involve more participants overall and to include rural schools and communities. The results from this expanded research may help us to develop a deeper understanding of how home is conceptualized between, among groups, and in different settings.

Future research could also include a quantitative survey utilizing a critical constructivist framework to explore this area of study. This combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches would allow for a different and deeper understanding concerning how African migrants and families within the K-12 school system perceive the ideas of home. This study then could be used to make predictions and the results may be generalized to a wider

population and/or setting. In addition, this initiative may further validate and authenticate the framework as a theoretical and practical guide to investigate the meaning of home for migrants.

An area for future research could be to recruit migrant families and children from a program like the one where I had initially planned to conduct my study, a program that was specifically designed for African migrant children along with their families. These programs seek to accommodate migrant children and families and bring them together to share their growth and their life stories. Moreover, programs that examine how migrants make human connections would be useful in understanding the phenomenon of home. As such, the research, if initiated with a longitudinal approach, might help us to develop a deeper understanding of how migrant children along with their families integrate and adjust over time. The result of the study would deepen our understanding about the processes that migrants experience in realizing a sense of belonging and home in a new environment.

In this study, I was unable to meet and conduct interviews with families in person and all of my interviews took place via Zoom, future research could change the method of the study to bring migrant families together in a series of focus group discussions over the course of a transition year(s). This approach to research would build trust between and among migrant families because the focus group would become important to them. As such, it would also allow the African migrant children and families to believe in the research process and to develop confidence in the researcher, as well. The study may deepen our understanding about the changeability of home and identity that happens over time for migrant families. The research study itself could be analyzed for having possibly contributed to the positive adjustment of the participating families.

Future research could extend to additional interviews with some of the participants, for example a life story approach. This research could focus on the everyday experiences of the participants' social lives and/or meaning in individual lives. An example could be following up with the story of the participant who had a job when he came to Canada, bought a house, and seemed to fit in right away. This exploration through a life story approach might reveal, for example, the differences that living in a house rather than in an apartment made to his positive adjustment to life in Canada. A life story approach might examine this and other aspects of participants' life stories. This study would aim to get an accurate description of the participants' life trajectories in social contexts so as to uncover the patterns of social relations and the special processes that shape them.

An area of future research could also be to examine issues around credentialing for immigrant families who are getting stuck in menial jobs because they lack the necessary support to navigate the system to become credentialed in Canada. One of the participants in this study discussed the difficulties with getting employment in Canada despite obtaining credentials from his home of origin and the UK. Research in this area will critically examine guidelines that may have negative impacts on migrant families as they move to settle into Canadian society. This study would be committed to focusing on the evolving nature of credentialing and making sure there is equity in the process. As well, attention could be paid to researching various programs that mentor prospective employees into careers that fit their skill sets and the employers' needs.

Implications for Practice

Schools play a significant role in assisting and supporting the adjustment and integration of migrant children and their families and the realization of a sense of home. The information gathered in this study demonstrated that schools are doing something right to make the children

feel a sense of belonging. Other research established that teachers play an important role in providing support opportunities for migrant children along with their families (Pumariega et al., 2010). Post-COVID-19, schools and teachers might offer to sponsor school events that would involve migrant children and parents to build personal connections or relationships between and among schools and families so as to ensure that newly arrived immigrant children and their families are welcomed and supported. These school events, for example a ‘diversity dinner’, would also allow families to share their cultures and traditions with individuals within the school community. This understanding would allow the families themselves, as well as teachers and other school staff, to make personal connections with migrant families within the school communities so as to appreciate their culture and understand their approaches to education.

Teachers need to be recognized for their initiatives and to be encouraged to continue their efforts to build inclusive classrooms. The students in this study felt included in their school activities and felt isolated when they needed to stay at home during remote learning. Teachers need support and validation so as to continue to develop creative innovations that encourage students to stay connected to school and to their friends as they attend classes remotely. This research has shown the positive impact of school initiatives and activities on immigrant students. Creative activities will improve migrant students’ motivation to learn, encourage integration, develop social skills and friendship, and allow feelings of safety (see Rossiter et al., 2015). An inclusive environment that fosters engagement in activities is critical to immigrant students’ social integration and adjustment, and to their educational outcomes. As schools and teachers remain committed to creating environments that are safe and inclusive of all students, they are in an ideal position to promote inclusion for migrant children and youth.

As school leaders recognize the role of sport in helping children to find places to fit and feel at home in their new communities, more initiatives may be considered. The school leaders might hold school-wide sport and social events where everyone in the school and communities can come together and realize a sense of belonging. When newly arrived migrant children and their families are involved in these type of community events, they may feel more included and supported. The families in this study as a whole felt like it was difficult to build relationships with White Canadians. Well-planned school-wide events that include sports can bridge the gap between migrant children and families and mainstream Canadians.

The Nigerian migrant children in this study described that they realize a sense of belonging in their schools. Work organizations can learn from what schools are doing well in building inclusivity. For example, the children were celebrated by their teachers, their teachers often reached out to their families, and the children were seen as an important part of the school community. These examples demonstrate that schools considered African migrant children and families as important, that they matter, and that they have something to contribute. These actions and measures have real significance to migrant children's and families' feelings of acceptance, comfort, and home. These ideas and this knowledge can be used so that other workplaces—because school is the 'workplace' for children and youth—might create a culture that is accepting and inclusive of adult employees, as well.

Implications for Policy

The development of policies that consider support programs such as sport for newly arrived African immigrants will aid their social adjustment and integration to life in Canada. Sporting activities would provide migrant families and children with the opportunities to interact and engage with individuals from the majority group and from other diverse groups. Such

involvement in sports and other activities such as clubs, music, drama, art, and public speaking would build intercultural contact between and among groups and would strengthen migrants' social network with the mainstream group within their communities and thus help them realize a sense of home. Policies that are inclusive and responsive to migrants' needs will reduce many of the challenges (i.e., relationship building, social networking) they encounter in their transition to life in Canada. As such, the development of policies and programs that seek to assist families in developing a sense of home can have positive impacts on their social adjustment, integration, and well-being. To that end, programs that include sports, clubs, music, drama, art, and public speaking have the potential to provide a sense of belonging and a sense of warmth and security for African migrants who will arrive in their new home not understanding how to negotiate and navigate the Canadian culture.

Another area of policy development could be to gather information from migrant families based on their experiences in their countries of origin. Policy makers can be open to incorporating these ideas and knowledge in making their decisions to better provide support for migrant families. For example, schools may ask a series of questions from migrant parents to see what they can learn that might help them in working with the children, along with their families, in the school community. Schools may learn something new that can improve schooling for all children. As such, listening to families' perspectives on education and working with their children may improve the school culture. Policies that incorporate the knowledge and understandings that people developed outside of Canada will help stakeholders make informed decisions around practice. With reference to this study, schools can further integrate the knowledge of African migrant families within the K-12 Canadian school system.

This study has demonstrated that schools help students in many other ways than simply academic achievement illustrated by test scores, primarily with their integration into society as well-adjusted, well-rounded citizens. Policy makers and stakeholders might reconsider the purpose of schooling for these young migrant students and their families and revisit the essence of schooling within an increasingly diverse Canadian society. As such, there are implications based on what the Nigerian migrant children have described in this study in relation to the drive in Manitoba to centralize education. The bill that was proposed and later withdrawn by the current government would have centralized provincial control over education, eliminated democratically elected school boards, and replaced them with a single provincial education authority (Manitoba Government, 2021). A centralized system, such as the one described, limits the number of voices represented and, therefore, limits diversity.

There is a need to create policies that would include diverse voices in the process and structure of school governance. It would be valuable to create structures and processes that invite more people, such as African immigrant families, into discussions so we can use their knowledge to inform and improve educational policies. The involvement of migrants in the process and structure of education would help them identify and recognize areas of need for their children and families and the types of support they need to access or deliver so as to ease their challenges within the school system. As such, this kind of policy development would allow individuals from diverse backgrounds to be actively involved and to advocate for acceptance and inclusion in schools and communities.

Implications for Migrant Families

The study leads to recommendations for new African migrant children and families who are arriving in Canada. The Nigerian migrant children in this study claimed that their enrolment

in organized sports helped them to realize a sense of belonging in their schools and communities. Sport integrates by its very nature and can be vital to minority children's transition and integration (Martelli, 2015). Research has shown that migrant children's participation in sport programs can be beneficial to their successful academic and social development (Kanu, 2008; Martelli, 2015; Thurlow et al., 2006). The Nigerian migrant children's engagement in sporting activities have produced many positive outcomes; for example, the children's involvement in sporting activities were effective in their socialization to the values of their new home and in aiding their positive social integration in Canadian society. The Nigerian migrant children in this study engaged in sports with people in their schools and neighborhoods that allowed them to realize a sense of home.

Moreover, participation in sports can enhance migrant parents' experiences as it does for the children. The Nigerian migrant parents in this study noted challenges with building authentic relationships within their new home community and they attributed these challenges to cultural differences that existed between their own culture and the mainstream culture. The parents experienced misunderstandings because of these differences, and the pain of these failed attempts at relationship building led to social isolation and exclusion for some members of the migrant families. Sports can be strategic resources for rebuilding social ties among and between different groups (See Martelli, 2015). Similarly, studies have shown the possibility of using sports as an anti-discriminatory tool for minority groups based on gender or race (Andersson, 2011; Darnell, 2012; Martelli, 2015). Martelli (2015) explained that sports perform many of the functions usually attributed to civil society and that sports provide good opportunities to revitalize the civic commitment in the community. Such participation and engagement in sports will enhance interaction between the migrant parents and the mainstream group in Canada.

Parents' involvement in sports within their communities will help them to achieve a sense of belonging in their new home environment.

The Nigerian migrant children in this study explained that they felt comfortable in the school. They realized a sense of familiarity and felt welcomed into their new school environment. The children were also treated well by some of the students and teachers and as such, the positive treatment made a difference and helped them realize a feeling of comfort, security, familiarity, and thus, home. This assessment sends a good message to the Nigerian parents about the positive role of the school within the community. The Nigerian migrant parents need to be encouraged to be involved and connected with their schools within their communities. This research indicates that the children found a place of belonging in the school. Parents, then, should encourage and support greater engagement for their children within the school environment. For example, parents can volunteer or supervise in their children's schools. As such, schools can be a place of positive socialization and acculturation towards a growing feeling of being-at-home for migrant parents (Pumariega et al., 2010; Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Schools can play an important role in encouraging and supporting migrant parents' adjustment and integration, and in the realization of a sense of home.

The Nigerian migrant parents explained that they were involved in different Nigerian associations, connected with their churches, and established social networks with their African and Nigerian communities in their new home. The bonds and/or relationships that the families have established within their African and Nigerian community helped them to realize a sense of security, comfort, belonging, identity, and ultimately familiarity in Canada. Based on this understanding, newly arriving African migrant families need to establish connections and build relationships within their own ethnic community, churches, and/or association that will keep

them grounded and help them realize a sense of identity in Canada. Research suggested that immigrants can benefit from building social networks with members of the same ethnic group, as they encourage feelings of personal stability by protecting the migrant's identity and personality in the early stage of adjustment in their new environment. (Repke & Benet-Martinez, 2018). This understanding will help African migrant families who are arriving in Canada to navigate and negotiate complexities of their new home environment.

Final Reflections

The findings in this study show how the families negotiated and navigated the complexity that surrounds the concept of home in their migration narratives and experiences. The participant families found ways to build social networks in Canada both with individuals from diverse cultures and within their Nigerian community. The families promoted the concept of community as a big extended family; that is, relationships based within community that keep them grounded in their new home. The families promoted a vision of home as collaboration within community. Participants explained that their experiences in Nigeria suggested that community members should reach out and connect with each other rather than remain isolated within their own spaces. When compared to their experiences in Canada, the participants felt that the Nigerian way of building human connections would support the improvement of Canadian communities.

The migrant children and families developed processes for maintaining their connection to their home of origin, Nigeria, and established new connections to the Nigerian community and community groups in Canada. These connections gave them the stability to nurture the emerging relationships they were developing in Canada, and to navigate and negotiate the experiences of their new home environment. Some of the families endeavored to meld the good part of Nigerian culture and the good part of Canadian culture in their lives that have helped them in Canada. The

families kept in touch with family and friends in Nigeria through phone calls and social media such as WhatsApp, and other platforms that allowed them to stay grounded. Similarly, the children stayed connected to their friends at school and in the community through sport that has helped them to realize a sense of belonging in Canada. These processes and activities have helped the children and families to maintain personal equilibrium and a sense of self in their new environment.

The migrant families in this study exhibited so much tenacity, as well as a strong commitment to adapting to and adopting Canadian cultures and laws. The participant families spoke about the need to learn and follow the laws of Canada. Such understanding might change and/or alter the negative perceptions about immigrants that are sometimes portrayed by the media to the mainstream Canadians (see Esses et al., 2013). The knowledge from this study can be used to inform individuals or groups that have conflicting feelings about migrants' values and beliefs and their good intentions in their new home, Canada.

The migrant families appreciated that children are treated tenderly in Canada. With their growth mindset, they had deconstructed their own learned approaches to parenting and changed their attitudes about using corporal punishment when disciplining their children. In this regard, the families learned positive aspects of Canadian culture, such as speaking kindly to both adults and children. They also acknowledged the positive and polite ways Canadians communicate to people when on the job. The participant families appreciated this understanding and acknowledged that these new ways of communicating and interacting with people have helped them connect better and with empathy with people in Canadian society.

The families kept their identity and pride through their traditional African objects in Canada. Traditional African objects such as food, attire, and paintings have preserved the

identities of the Nigerian migrants in this study. As such, these components were important for the families' concepts of self in their new home. The Nigerian families in this study wore their traditional African clothes, ate their African food, and appreciated their Nigerian heritage.

I am grateful for the insights and knowledge I have experienced in this research work. The participants were open and transparent in their dialogue and allowed me to form a picture of their migration stories and experiences, their lives, and their families. Through the knowledge of these wonderful families, I have developed a much broader understanding of how individuals and families redefine and recreate home in a new country, particularly within a Canadian context.

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Appendix A: Facebook Post for African Migrants: Research Outline and Invitation to Participate Message

My name is Ayodeji Osiname, and I came to Canada from Nigeria. I have been living in Canada for about seven years now. I am also a Ph.D. Candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study, entitled: **Expanding Meanings of Home: A Case Study of Nigerian Families and Their School-Aged Children.** The purpose of this qualitative case study is to build an understanding of how Nigerian migrant children and their families within the Manitoba K-12 educational system think about home with regards to their sense of identity, perception of belonging, and emotional relations. This study might help us understand how migrant children and their families may have come to realize a sense of identity, a perception of belonging, and affirmation in their new home, now and before the current pandemic. You are being contacted to take part in this research study because you emigrated from Africa and your children are enrolled within the K-12 Education system in Manitoba, Canada. I am conducting this research study as part of a dissertation project in partial fulfillment of my Doctor of Philosophy in Education degree at the University of Manitoba. This research study is conducted under the supervision of my advisor, Dr. Clea Schmidt, who can be contacted at clea.schmidt@umanitoba.ca.

I would like to invite you to participate in three 75 to 90-minute interview, observation, and photovoice activity sessions. Photovoice is based on photo interviewing where photographs are used as a part in the interviewing process with collaboration from the participant who

explains the significance of the photograph that they have taken or chosen. These interviews and observation will be conducted remotely via video conferencing (i.e., ZOOM or Skype depending on your choice). Your real name will not appear in the study or in the final report. No one will know which answers are yours as you will receive a pseudonym. I will store your interview on password protected devices and/or in locked drawers. I will separate the identifiable and non-identifiable data for storage. If you are willing to participate in my study, please contact me by email at osinamea@myumanitoba.ca. When I receive your correspondence, I will contact you by telephone to schedule an online meeting at a time that is convenient for both of us. At that time, I can also explain the study in more detail if you have not yet decided if you wish to participate. This study has been approved by the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board. If you have questions about the ethical nature of this study, feel free to contact them via email at humanethics@umanitoba.ca or by telephone on 204-474-7122. I appreciate your consideration of my request.

Ayodeji Osiname, Ph.D. Candidate



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Appendix B: Permission, Invitation and Participation Letter to the Nigerian Migrant Families

Month/Day/ Date

Permission, Invitation, and Participation Letter

My name is Ayodeji Osiname, and I am a Ph.D. Candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study, entitled: *Expanding Meanings of Home: A Case Study of Nigerian Migrant Families and their School-Aged Children*. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to build an understanding of how Nigerian migrant children and their families within the Manitoba K-12 educational system articulate their ideas of home with regards to their sense of identity, perception of belonging, and emotional relations. The aim is to understand how these families negotiate and navigate the complexity that surrounds the concept of home in their migration narratives and experiences. As such, this study might help us understand how migrant children and their families may have come to realize a sense of identity, a perception of belonging, and affirmation in their new home. You are being contacted to take part in this research study because you emigrated from Africa and you are enrolled within the K-12 Education system and also within the peaceful village program in Manitoba, Canada. I am conducting this research study as part of a dissertation project in partial fulfillment of my Doctor of Philosophy in Education degree at the University of Manitoba. This research study is conducted under the supervision of my advisor, Dr. Clea Schmidt, who can be contacted at clea.schmidt@umanitoba.ca or at 204-474-9314.

I would like to invite you to participate in three 75 to 90-minute interview, observation, and photovoice activity sessions. Photovoice is based on a photo interviewing where photographs are used as a part in the interviewing process with collaboration from the participant who explains the significance of the photograph that they have taken or chosen. Your real name will not appear in the study or in the final report. No one will know which answers are yours as you will receive a pseudonym. I will store your interview on password protected devices and/or in locked drawers. I will separate the identifiable and non-identifiable data for storage. If you are willing to participate in my study, please contact me by email at osinamea@myumanitoba.ca. When I receive your correspondence, I will contact you and/or your parents by telephone to schedule face-to-face meetings at a time and place that is convenient for both of us. Please find attached a copy of the formal consent form. If you choose to participate in the study, I will ask you to sign that form just before we proceed with the first interview. This study has been approved by the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board. If you have questions about the ethical nature of this study, feel free to contact them via email at humanethics@umanitoba.ca or by telephone on 204-474-7122. I appreciate your consideration of my request.

Yours sincerely,

Ayodeji Osiname, Ph.D. Candidate,
E-mail: osinamea@myumanitoba.ca

I give permission to Ayodeji Osiname to request the participation of members of my family for his study entitled: Expanding Meanings of Home: A Case Study of Nigerian Migrant families and their School-Aged Children.

Printed name (Both parents):

Signature

Date



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Appendix C: Consent Form for the African Migrant Children and Families

Consent Form

Research Project Title: Expanding Meanings of Home: A Case Study of Migrant Children and Families Within Manitoba's Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education System

Principal Investigator: Ayodeji Osiname, E-mail: osinamea@myumanitoba.ca

Researcher's Supervisor: Dr. Clea Schmidt, E-mail: clea.schmdit@umanitoba.ca

This 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 should give 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 document carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

I am inviting you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to build an understanding of how Nigerian migrant children and their families within the Manitoba K-12 educational system articulate their ideas of home with regards to their sense of identity, perception of belonging, and emotional relations. The aim is to understand how these families negotiate and navigate the complexity that surrounds the concept of home in their migration narratives and experiences. As such, this study might help us understand how migrant children and their families may have come to realize a sense of identity, a perception of belonging, and affirmation in their new home. I would like to ask you to participate in three 75- to 90-minute interviews. I am conducting this research in partial fulfillment of my Doctor of Philosophy in Education degree at the University of Manitoba.

With my signature, I agree with the following statements:

1. **I am participating voluntarily.**

If I choose to participate, I may decide to answer all—or only some—of the interview questions. I may also change my mind and withdraw at any time up to the analyzing of data and its inclusion in the researcher's project document.

2. **There are minimal risks in my participation.**

There are minimal risks associated with my participation in the interview, no more than might be encountered in everyday life. I am aware that by participating that I retain the right to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm. By participating in the research, there is the benefit that my insights on the issue might assist other African migrant children and families successfully transition within the education system in Canada. I understand that there is no direct benefit to taking part in this study; however, my participation will allow me to reflect on my own experiences. If I experience any emotional challenges following my interview, I am aware that I can visit Homewood Health at Suite 1460, 444 St. Mary Avenue or contact them by telephone at 204-943-7717 to help me deal any emotional issues that may arise.

3. **My anonymity and confidentiality will be protected.**

My real name will not appear in the study or in the final report. No one will know which answers are mine as I will receive a pseudonym. The researcher will take all the necessary steps to assure my confidentiality; he will not share the names of interviewees with other participants or

individuals outside the project other than his dissertation advisor. Given that other people from the Peaceful Village program may participate in this study, I recognize that they may guess that I am also participating. I agree to keep their participation confidential, and they will also sign that they agree to keep my participation confidential. Moreover, given the popular recognition of the Peaceful Village program in Winnipeg, Manitoba, it is still possible, despite all precautions, that my identity might become known to the wider educational public. I agree to participate in the study with that knowledge. The researcher will store the data on password protected devices and/or in locked drawers. He will separate the identifiable and non-identifiable data for storage.

4. **I will have access to the results of the study.**

I will receive copies of my transcripts for my review and approval. The researcher will wait two weeks for my approval. After seven days and again after 12 days, if the researcher has not heard from me, he will send me a follow-up reminder to read my transcript. He will assume that I have approved the transcript as he sent it if he does not hear from me within the two-week (14 day) time frame. I will have access to the results once the data collection/interpretation process is completed. A copy of the results will be made available to me via e-mail or mail. If the research results are published or posted online, this information will also be made available to me.

5. **My interview will be audiotaped.**

My voice will be recorded during the interview in this research study. I agree to be audiotaped during the interview for the purpose of this research study.

6. **I can withdraw from this study if I wish, or I can choose not to answer some questions.**

If I choose to withdraw from the study, my contributions will not be used up to the time of analysis of my interview data and its inclusion in the researcher's dissertation document. After the time of the inclusion of my data in the analysis and its reporting, I cannot withdraw. I can refuse to answer a question if I wish, simply by telling the researcher.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time up to the analysis and inclusion of your data in the report, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The University of Manitoba may look at the researcher's records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way. This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact the researcher's project supervisor and/or his dissertation advisor on the above contact information or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 and by email at humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Name (print) _____ Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Please indicate how you wish to receive the summary of this study: Mail delivery ☐ E-mail ☐



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Appendix D: Interview Protocol and Questions for African Migrant Children and Families

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study entitled: *Expanding Meanings of Home: A Case Study of Nigerian Migrant Families and Their School-Aged Children*. As you know, my name is Ayodeji Osiname, and I came to Canada from Nigeria. I am a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Manitoba. This study is my dissertation project in partial fulfillment of my Doctor of Philosophy in Education degree at the University of Manitoba. You have already signed your consent form, but I remind you that you do not have to answer any question if you choose not to do so, and you may withdraw from the study at any time up to the time that your transcripts are integrated into the dissertation document. Are you ready to begin?

First Interviews

1. What does home mean to you?
2. What should home look like?
3. How have you experienced home?
4. Do you stay connected to your home of origin? If so, how? If not, why not?
5. Do you identify with an actual building as a sense of home?
6. What physical components (things or objects) do you feel are essential for developing a feeling of home?
7. How do you view your home outside the physical structure?
8. To create a feeling of home, is physical space necessary? Why or why not?
9. How do you maintain connections with home both in Canada and in your country of origin?
10. Before you left your country of origin, how did you imagine what home in Canada would look like? Do these ideas match with what you have experiences? In what ways have they matched and in what ways have they not matched?
11. How have your day-to-day experiences and/or activities here in Canada a) contributed and/or b) distracted from those memories of home in your country of origin?
12. What impact has COVID-19 has on your family?
13. Has COVID-19 changed how you now think of home? If so, how?

Second Interviews

1. How do you remember home in your country of origin?
2. How have you constructed and negotiated your home now through previous memories and/or now experiences in Canada?
3. How do you distinguish home in your country of origin from home in Canada?
4. Have you built and maintained close relationships with people within your new community that have aided or helped your feeling of safety in Canada? What could help with that process?
5. Have you had any time when home is not a safe and secure space? If so, can you talk to me about that?

6. Many people describe home as a safe and secure space or place. Would you agree with that statement? Explain why or why not?
7. How have the bonds and/or relationships you have established shaped/influenced you in your new home environment?
8. How has your concept of home, both in Canada and country of origin, changed your sense of self?
9. How is your home connected to how you see yourself?
10. Please describe the experiences of your migration process.
11. Please explain your new life in Canada and how you understand it.
12. Describe the journey between your country of origin and your new environment and how you manage to stay connected to both places, if you do.
13. Please describe aspects of your former home including objects that you might identify with, that preserve your sense of identity in your new home.

Interview Questions (Children)

Home Life

1. Tell me about the first two weeks you came to Canada.
2. Do you feel a sense of home in your neighborhood? Why or why not?
3. How would you describe yourself in your new home environment?
4. What part of your new home environment do you like the most?
5. How did you see yourself in your home country?
6. How are you identified with home here? How do you identify yourself?
7. What have you lost and what have you gained from your country of origin?

School Life

1. Tell me about the first meeting and first day at school. What was the experience like?
2. How did things change in the first six months?
3. How have things changed now? Or how are things different now?
4. How are you welcomed in school?
5. What makes you feel not welcomed at school?
6. Do you feel a sense of home in your school? Why or why not?
7. Tell me about your teacher(s). How do you get along with him or her/them? Is your relationship with your teachers in Canada different from those relationships in your country of origin? Explain.
8. Tell me about your relationships with your classmates at school.
9. Do you feel comfortable at school? Why or why not? What is your favorite part(s)? Do you like school breaks/recess? Why or why not? Explain.
10. What is your best part of being at school? Why? Explain.
11. What activities make you feel comfortable at school? Why? Explain.

Third Interviews

1. Is there anything else that you would like to add or address?

Thank you for your time.



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Appendix E: Interview Prompts for Photovoice Activity with the African Migrant Children and Families

Interview Prompts for Photovoice Activity

Photovoice is based on photo interviewing where photographs are used as a part in the interviewing process with collaboration from the participant who explains the significance of the photograph that they have taken or chosen. I will conduct the photovoice activity with specific instructions in three phases during my interviews:

Interview One (First Phase)

1. Take new or select previously taken photographs that will help me to understand, during your subsequent description of the photograph(s), what home means to you.
2. Take photographs of items or scenes in your home or at school that have meaning to you in relation to how you define home.
3. Use the photographs to show me and to talk about how you understand home.
4. Do not include pictures that show the faces (thus the identity) of people in your school or in your neighborhood, as we would need permission from those people to take and include their pictures.
5. Your photographs should help you to tell a story so that I might better understand your ideas and improve the opportunities for your elaboration of home, your lives, and your educational experiences through the explanations of your chosen photographs.

Interview Two (Second Phase)

6. The second phase is intended: To reinforce the prompts from the first interview, and
7. To use the photograph(s) that they have taken and/or selected to initiate a discussion of its importance with the families, as well as
8. To provide an illustration of the photovoice activity for phase three. This illustration may encourage families to work towards selecting or taking photographs that depict their experiences of creating a sense of home in a new environment.

Interview Three (Third phase) The additional questions will emerge from the photographs themselves.?

9. Why did you select this photograph?
10. What does this photograph represent?
11. How does this photograph connect with your understanding of home?

Thank you for your time.



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Appendix F: Observation Protocol

Time:

Date:

Place:

Participants:

Events: Nigerian Migrant Children are Doing

Events: Nigerian Migrant Parents are Doing

Map of the Setting:

Verbatim Quotes of Participants

Appendix G: TCPS 2

