

An Intersectionality Approach to Immigrant Girls' Lived Experiences with Physical Activity

By

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

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Abstract

This qualitative research study used an interpretive phenomenological methodology and an intersectionality theoretical framework. This emphasized the importance of immigrant girls' voices, narratives, and their lived experiences towards an understanding of how these are impacted by the multiple social categories such as gender, ethnocultural background, and immigration. The participants were four high school students from Winnipeg, Canada, who identified as both female and as an immigrant. An array of people and structures involved in the participants' lives such as family, community, friends and physical education were employed to explore the intersections of their lived experiences with physical activity. The findings were comprised of seven superior themes: Attitudes Towards Physical Activity; Barriers to Participation in Physical Activity; Supports for Engagement in Physical Activity; Gendered Physical Education; Social Discourses and Physical Activity; Health and Immigration; and Value and Meaning of Physical Activity.

Keywords: Intersectionality, qualitative, phenomenology, female, gender, ethnocultural, immigrant, physical activity

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my academic advisor, Dr. Jay Johnson. I was fortunate to have Jay as an undergraduate professor, who sparked the idea of graduate studies within me. You provided me with the opportunity and autonomy to explore topics that were meaningful to me, and use education as a vehicle to create impact. I thank you for not only your guidance and support throughout this entire project, but for ultimately fostering and nourishing the starting blocks to my activism, feminism, and social justice work. For this, I am forever grateful, as I leave graduate studies understanding myself and my place in this world a little better as a result of your mentorship, advisement, and support. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Joannie Halas. Joannie has played an instrumental role in my professional growth. She provided me my very first job in Winnipeg Manitoba, working with diverse populations through the Rec and Read Mentorship program. This opportunity ultimately fostered my desire to continue to work closely with diverse youth within Manitoba. It has been an honour to have you be a part of my graduate work as my internal committee member, as a person who I admire for your research and work within the community. I would also like to extend a sincere thank you to my external committee member, Dr. Christopher Fries. Chris' willingness to be a part of my graduate journey has brought a level of much needed expertise to the entirety of the project. Your in depth knowledge and literature contributions regarding health and wellness of diverse populations, and intersectionality theory provided strength and undoubtedly a level of rigour that has raised the quality of my research. A much needed thank you is also extended to the four immigrant girls who participated in this project. This entire project would never have been possible without their insightful participation and engagement. I am incredibly humbled to be the fortunate one who gets to share their stories; so carefully crafted in all of our interviews.

Dedication

I dedicate this body of work to my mother, Palwinder Kaur Deol. Herself an immigrant woman, who migrated to Canada from India in the mid 1980s. A truly resilient woman, who has and continues to overcome life's challenges. That same resiliency that I see that exists amongst our immigrant and diverse communities in Canada. You have continued to provide me unconditional love and encouragement throughout every step of my life. You have taught me strength, perseverance, and compassion for others, while displaying the utmost patience while raising me, your "wild child." Without you, I wouldn't know how to boil an egg, accomplish graduate studies or be a woman who tackles the world and life with confidence and compassion. My love and admiration for you is eternal.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Canada has one of the highest proportions of new immigrants to total residents in the world (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). Since 2015, Canada has processed more than two million temporary resident applications and extensions (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2016a). In 2016, 271 000 new permanent residents were welcomed into Canada, with more than 40 000 refugees. The planned admission for the year 2017 was 280 000 to 320 000 new residents (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2016a). Canada has been praised for its willingness to accept new immigrant and refugee populations, specifically by the United Nations for our resettlement programs (Sanders, 2017).

Unfortunately, research has made it very clear that this population faces alarming health declines in both physical and mental domains that follows after migration, in as little as two years (Newbold, 2009). As the number of immigrants to Canada continues to increase, it has been demonstrated that sport and physical recreation can assist in building positive experiences for new arrivals to Canada, particularly in enhancing a sense of belonging, promoting social inclusion, and promoting physically active lifestyles (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). However, individuals who are visible or ethnic minorities have also had to face multiple barriers that act in concert to restrict their participation in physical activity, and go on to contribute to the exclusion and discrimination they face within physical activity, sport and recreation (Doherty & Taylor, 2007).

Although the trend of research is increasing, there still exists a dearth of studies that focus on immigrant youth's experiences with physical activity. The Canadian government continues to emphasize the importance of successful integration of immigrants into Canadian society, highlighting the need for settlement programs to coordinate with other stakeholders and

services such as child care, health and health services (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2016b). Youth immigrant experiences have begun to make their way into research because educational spaces are experiencing a rise in ethnically diverse students with varying needs, who often face issues involving their main cultural identity and the cultural identity of the mainstream population (Goodwin, 2002). In more recent literature, Asher (2008) and Hamzeh and Oliver (2012) critique multicultural educational approaches that look to address the struggles that diverse students continue to experience in the American school context. However, literature often mistakenly groups immigrant youth with “children of colour,” and specific attention to immigrant youth is both lacking and needed (Goodwin, 2002, p. 159). Newcomer children have been found to experience both resettlement challenges and integration opportunities simultaneously, and report feeling like an outsider, and found to be socially isolated due to the unique circumstances of their life history, and experiences with immigration (Oxman-Martinez, Rummens, Moreau, Choi, Beiser, Ogilvie, & Armstrong, 2012). This lack of attention to immigrant identity that youth bring to larger social structures and institutions, like education, means immigrant children are “rendered invisible” and this results in the very apparent dearth of literature on immigrant children and their experiences (Goodwin, 2002, p. 161).

Research on physical activity experiences has made efforts to focus on the female perspective. Unfortunately, a picture has been painted of young women’s inactivity and dislike for physical activity, even though girls, more than ever are taking part in physical activity outside of the physical education setting (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). Physical activity experiences are a female health issue, and become even more pressing when the focus is placed on females who are situated differently, specifically immigrant girls (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). Research on female’s health has centered on mainstream population experiences; White, abled bodied females

(Flintoff & Scraton, 2001) or very specific ethnic groups. Also, studies have failed to acknowledge the cultural and ethnic makeup of their participants (Thompson, Rehman, & Humbert, 2005; Yungblut, Schinke & McGannon, 2012) or simply conducted their studies from ethnically diverse schools (Azzarito, Solmon, & Harrison, 2006; Dwyer, Allison, Goldenberg & Fein, 2006; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008), where immigrant youth are deserving of specific attention within research. Using White, Canadian-born population's experiences to account for all females' experiences may lead to overgeneralized and assumed notions about female health. This lack of research on the immigrant girl experiences with physical activity means that the very few studies that do focus on race, are left on the periphery of literature (Flintoff, Fitzgerald, & Scraton, 2008). There remains a need and demand for better understanding of ethnically diverse girls' experiences with physical activity, especially when looking at multiple social categories that intersect to effect immigrant females' participation in society. Although girls have been included in research looking at immigrant experiences, their voices have not been central to the discussions. For instance, research that has looked at the sport, recreation and physical education experiences of new arrivals found that the immigrant girls were more affected by feelings of exclusion, but the study did not explore or delve into this gender difference further (Taylor & Doherty, 2005). However, the study did acknowledge that gender was a relevant variable, and particularly meaningful amongst culturally diverse students that needs further exploration in future studies regarding immigrant experiences (Taylor & Doherty, 2005).

Various approaches and theories have been used in an effort to capture and understand girls' experiences with physical activity, as well as endeavouring to understand how girls with diverse cultural backgrounds experience physical activity, however many of these approaches have neglected to take into account the intersecting nature of people's identities, particularly the

intersectionality of immigrant girls' identities. Intersectionality has been used across multiple disciplines as a way to examine experiences outside of the dominant narrative. Therefore, this research used the theoretical framework of intersectionality to understand how multiple social identities at the micro level, such as ethnicity, gender, and immigrant status intersect to reflect the interlocking systems of privilege and oppression at the macro social structural level (Bowleg, 2012). This study applied intersectionality as a theoretical framework to understand how immigrant girls experience physical activity and how these physically active experiences are impacted by larger social structures such as school, community, friends and family. This theoretical framework was used in this research project to address the question of how high school immigrant girls within Winnipeg, Manitoba, interpret the meaning of their lived experiences with physical activity in their daily lives. This intersectionality framework addressed how social inequalities in health are complex and multidimensional, and aid in deconstructing the disparities that exist amongst the population of immigrant females.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This review of literature will summarize, critically analyze and critique the existing scholarly work that has focused on the history and current state of immigrant health, the influence of physical activity on the immigrant and female populations, and ethnic female specific studies. Also a focus has been placed on the various theories and approaches that have been used within the scholarly work, and a thorough review of literature concerning intersectionality theory. This review of literature will demonstrate the already existing information on immigrant girls' experiences with physical activity, and potential avenues of future research.

When performing this review of literature, I used a search string focusing on key words grouped as following: 1) immigrant, ethnically diverse, ethnocultural, or newcomer, 2) adolescent or youth female or girls 3) sport, physical activity, recreation, leisure, fitness or exercise 4) immigrant or newcomer health and 5) intersectional, intersectionality, race and/or gender

Many of the sources are a representation of a very multi-disciplinary range of work, with sources stemming from nursing, sociology, critical race and feminist theory, family social sciences, and kinesiology. Many of sources appeared in the databases EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and Scopus. The sources cited range from 1965 to 2016, with major focus on sources within the 21st century.

Immigrant Health

Exploring the literature that discusses the health and social implications that follow immigration into a new country for families and youth is alarming. The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada has been utilized within research to capture the health and other attributes

of immigrant arrivals to Canada, while examining health transitions at six months, two years, and four years after arrival (Newbold, 2009; De Maio & Kemp, 2010). Although immigrants often report higher health than Canadian-born individuals upon immigration, such as better self-rated health status, less chronic disease, less disability and lower all-cause and avoidable mortality (Segall & Fries, 2017) they often fall victim to the “healthy immigrant effect” (Newbold, 2009, p. 316). The “healthy immigrant effect” is the deterioration of the health advantage new immigrants face upon arrival to Canada, towards the health of native-born individuals (Newbold, 2009, p. 316). Although literature has suggested this decline in health occurs within five to 10 years after arrival, Newbold (2009) conducted research that established that new immigrants face health decline at a much more rapid pace than suggested. In as little as two years, new arrivals reported rapid declines in self assessed health, physical health and mental health (Newbold, 2009, p. 330). Individuals also reported fair or poor health, three times more after four years of residency in their host country, and reported excellent health declined from 36.9% to 19.5% (Newbold, 2009, p. 330). It is also important to recognize the factors associated with declines in health, were influenced by individuals’ social positioning and categories, such as age, gender, origin and immigrant class (Newbold, 2009). Immigrant class has specifically been correlated to health status, as economic arrivals report better health than either refugees or family class immigrants (Newbold, 2009). De Maio and Kemp’s (2010) study also supports the notion that the health of immigrants to Canada deteriorates after arrival in the country, highlighting that factors such as being a visible minority and/or a woman resulted in a decline in self-reported health status. In understanding that new immigrants face the burden and consequences of health declines, it must also be understood that the health of new arrivals exists in complex

multidimensional states, that may be influenced by multiple systems of oppression (Bowleg, 2012), such as being both a female and an immigrant.

New immigrants also face economic disadvantage, and in fact one third of immigrant children living in Canada live in deep poverty, and this state may lead immigrant families to be caught in a cycle of social disadvantage, family breakdown and individual despair (Beiser, Hou, Hyman, & Tousignant, 2002). Although there is a resiliency component, specifically in the ability for immigrant children to experience success and overcome economic disadvantages and display lower levels of emotional and behavioral problems (Beiser et al., 2002), parents and society cannot rely on the assumption of children's resiliency and flexibility to keep them from experiencing the unique psychosocial problems of adjusting to home, school and society, that come with being an immigrant youth (James, 1997).

An important study by James (1997), explored the very unique psychosocial problems that immigrant youth specifically face. This study was instrumental in exploring the assimilation pressures immigrant youth face such as being forced to give up ideas and values of one's identity to be a part of mainstream culture. Also, James (1997) explored the effect of immigrant identity on mental health, and established within literature specific issues immigrant youth encounter, like culture shock, adjustments at home and school, and ethnic identity issues. A particular challenge new immigrants face is adjustment and adaptation after transitioning from an environment of their native country with familiar institutions and customs, to a new country with unfamiliar ways, and confusing networks (James, 1997, p. 99). The acculturation process may also result in immigrants being rendered as "marginal" or "invisible" or "too visible," where they find themselves standing out and being overlooked by society (Goodwin, 2002, p. 165). Research is beginning to look at the effects of acculturation, assimilation and adaption, specific

to new immigrant youth and found that integrating youth, by maintaining the cultural origin of the individual while involving them with larger society, resulted in positive psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry et al., 2006). Psychological adaptation was measured with three scales: life satisfaction, self-esteem, and psychological problems, whereas sociocultural adaptation was assessed using scales for school adjustment and behavioral problems (Berry et al., 2006). Allowing youth to maintain their separation is valued for successful integration that leads to positive psychological and sociocultural adaptation, over complete and total assimilation which forces an individual to give up their ethnic culture and language rights (Berry et al., 2006). Within literature, it has been shown that people are also awarded by assimilating, privileging the mainstream culture, specifically those who adopt the language of the dominant culture, the higher their socioeconomic status will be, and more likelihood of holding a paying job (Taylor & Doherty, 2005).

Immigrant youth are also thrown into a world of ethnic identity issues, where they often find themselves struggling to develop a healthy sense of self (James, 1997). Identity issues arise because of the complicated nature of acculturation and assimilation that the youth face (Berry et al., 2006; Goodwin, 2002; James 1997), and immigrant children will often experience more problems in the new society than in their country of origin, like increased risk for psychosocial programs, school failure, and risk taking behavior (James, 1997). More recently, a study examined the relationship between perceived ethnic discrimination, social exclusion, psychosocial functioning and academic performance of newcomer youth using a subsample from the New Canadian Children and Youth study (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2012). Psychosocial functioning was measured by a sense of social competence in peer relationships and self-esteem. Findings suggest that ethnic discrimination plays an important role in youth immigrant lives,

indicating that psychosocial functioning and academic performance was related to this perceptions of discrimination, and forms of social exclusion. Overall, demographic factors like sex, ethnicity, and region of settlement were all significant factors in feelings of ethnic discrimination and social exclusion (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2012).

Education plays a critical role in facilitating immigrant youths' socialization and integration into their new society, but there is still inadequate programming and resources for immigrant youth, and these students often find themselves without support, particularly in developing their language skills (Goodwin, 2002). Within the American context, Goodwin (2002) conducted a comprehensive review of literature of teacher and immigrant children education. As immigration to Canada continues to increase, this dramatically affects school dynamics, and the complexity of teacher-student interactions, and thus conversations about teaching "seem to be silent when it comes to teaching immigrant children" (Goodwin, 2002, p. 158). Asher's (2008) study focused on 10 Indian-American high school students from two different high schools in New York City, looking to understand how students negotiate their hybrid identities both at home and in school. Youth may find themselves conflicted between the intersection of home and school, where at home they find it difficult to assert the identity of the mainstream culture, and at school they will struggle to identify with their national origin (Asher, 2008). The role of school has been identified in literature as a place which immigrant youth learn English skills, develop friendships, and receive support from adults who play a central role in their lives (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). Physical education specifically has been identified as a site for improving youth's physical activity levels, especially for at-risk populations like students from lower classes, minorities, and females (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005, p. 40).

However, schools have also been described as institutions that produce “racialized, gendered, and classist discourses through physical education and through sports” (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005, p. 30). An American study that focused on youth of immigrant families found that these hybrid identities that youth face, sitting in the intersections of race, culture, class and gender, should be represented in school curricula in a fluid manner, rather than fixed stereotypical identities (Asher, 2008). School-related issues experienced by new immigrant girls specifically were emphasized in a study done by Khanlou and Crawford (2006), which explored the post migratory experiences of newcomer females. The study found that immigrant girls often felt negatively compared with their Canadian born peers, and felt that the Canadian born girls thought they “were better than” (p. 51) the immigrant girls, because they displayed more confidence due to their ability to speak English (Khanlou & Crawford, 2006). These experiences newcomer females face and feel, address how constructs of race and immigration status fall into a system of oppression, as whether intentional or not, ideas of citizenship and nationality reinforces marginalization of immigrant identity (Khanlou & Crawford, 2006).

Goodwin (2002) has informed research that there is a tendency to group all children of colour together, instead of recognizing the experiences of immigrant children as their own. Although it is recognized that children of colour may share similar experiences with immigrant children, such as discrimination and racism, inequity literature must address immigrants as their own social category and that immigrant youth and families bring experiences and issues to organized institutions like school that are unique and deserving of their own close analysis and understanding (Goodwin, 2002). When research uses terms like children of colour, diverse children, and culturally linguistic diverse students, and minority children synonymously with new immigrant children, we strip them of their experiences and understandings, and render them

invisible (Goodwin, 2002). These experiences that are specific to immigrant youth is described as both the resettlement and integration challenges that are unique to their family migration (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2012). As schools increasingly become more diverse, immigrant children bring different needs representative of their unique histories, cultures, value and languages (Goodwin, 2002) which challenges educators to be more informed and conscious of the diversity that exists within their classrooms.

For the purpose of this research, immigrant will be defined as a person who is originally from another country, and now lives in Canada. Immigrant children are more likely to develop friendships with other ethnic groups, opposed to the mainstream population, due to participation in similar social situations like ESL classes, practicing religions, and living in the same neighborhood (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). Also by focusing on immigrants as a whole we can avoid stereotypes and will be able to reach all minority groups and not just the one that is the most predominant in the community. There is literature that recognizes that immigrants are not a homogenous group; that often youth face trials and tribulations differently, but this also captures the diversity amongst immigrants relevant in school and community settings. Just as women do not represent a homogenous group, nor do immigrants, where unique life histories that are shaped by a diversity of factors and experiences like country of birth and social exclusion ultimately intersect to shape immigrant health (Segall & Fries, 2017).

Influence of Physical Activity on Immigrant Youth

The settlement process of youth has been a focal point of Canadian research in looking to understand how youth adapt to their new environment (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). Positive settlement experiences have also been linked to reducing the likelihood of transition into poor health, and experiencing the healthy immigrant effect (Newbold, 2009). Doherty and Taylor

(2007) researched the role of sport and physical recreation on the impact of the settlement process of new immigrant youth. Research that has been conducted in understanding new immigrants and sport and recreation have generally focused on the nature of the participation, such as what they do, where and with who, and how their participation changes after immigration, particularly constraints involving language and money (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). There was an array of positive findings associated with participation which included, a sense of psycho-social wellbeing where new immigrant youth felt physical activity was an opportunity to be fun and social, which made them happy (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). Other positive findings included physical well-being, opportunity to develop English language skills, and opportunity to familiarize themselves with aspects of Canadian culture (Doherty & Taylor, 2007).

Research has also established that people who we characterize as visible/ethnic minorities often face multiple barriers and challenges that act together to limit their access to education, social, cultural and economic opportunities (Taylor & Doherty, 2005). Therefore, Taylor & Doherty's (2005) purpose was to create a better understanding of attitudes and experiences immigrant populations have towards sport, recreation and physical education in attempts to minimize negative outcomes and facilitate positive ones in the future (p. 212). They used a mixed methods approach, in order to collect background data first on the participants in an ESL high school, and then conducted focus group interviews to further explore common themes amongst the participants (Taylor & Doherty, 2005). The negative findings associated with participation included social exclusion, language difficulties, unfamiliarity with the activities, and prejudice related to their cultural difference (Taylor & Doherty, 2005). The positive findings that were discussed as perceived benefits to participation included emotional, social, physical/health, learning English, and learning Canadian culture (Taylor & Doherty, 2005).

Previous research that has looked at immigrant experiences in with physical recreation, physical education and sport has established certain distinctions between young boys and young girls. Work and family commitments were mentioned as a constraint towards participation almost exclusively by girls and they valued having the support of family and friends; this was especially influential on the girls' decision making in whether to participate or not (Taylor & Doherty, 2005, p. 227). There was also a tendency for the young women to participate in sport and physical recreation outside of school, on an informal basis. Specifically, activities like volleyball, swimming and fitness with family and friends, and participate less in organized sport (Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Taylor & Doherty, 2005). Girls were also more effected by feelings of exclusion, and more constrained and challenged by unfamiliarity and language difficulties. Also, using physical recreation as an avenue to alleviate depression and negative feelings was only spoken about by girls (Taylor & Doherty, 2005). All of these factors expressed by the girls highlight the relevancy of gender in discussions concerning youth sport and recreation participation, and the meaningfulness of gender specifically in the context of culturally diverse students (Taylor & Doherty, 2005, p. 235).

Tirone, Livingston, Jordan Miller, and Smith (2010) explored inclusion of immigrants to Halifax in elite and recreational sports, and the multilayered benefits of involvement in sport, as well as the complexity of issues associated with inclusion of newcomers in sport. Research has expressed the need to understand why females have felt more constrained then their male counterparts by the social exclusion experienced by immigrants in sport and physical recreation (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). The differences have resorted back to gender discourses and assuming the males are more motivated (Doherty & Taylor, 2007) and dismissive of what could be the intersectionality of gender and race impact on immigrant girls' experience. Research has

shown that immigrant girls may actually not be afforded the same opportunities as boys to participate in sport due to cultural beliefs that differ from the dominant Canadian population (Tirone et al., 2010). This suggests that the intersection of gender and race has influence on immigrant girls' experiences and participation with physical activity.

Therefore, the existing literature on immigrant and minority youth physical activity establishes a need for future research, which places emphasis on the intersection of racial, cultural and gender processes as the forefront of analysis (Taylor & Doherty, 2005 & Lopez, 2002). Taylor and Doherty (2005) recognize that female specific concerns regarding perceptions and responses to social exclusion, language difficulty, and unfamiliarity and culture in general, could be linked to the intersection of race and gender within larger social institutions including public spaces, school and family life (Lopez, 2002).

Female Specific Literature

Adolescent girls' barriers to participation in physical activity and physical education has been a focus point for previous research. Barriers that have been recognized in a previous study of 73 adolescent girls in the Toronto area, that make it difficult for them to be physically active is lack of time, body centered issues, disliking and feeling anxious towards competition and the influence of peers, parents and teachers (Dwyer et al., 2006). Specific to secondary school, students involvement with organized sport was the most prevalent influence on both physical activity and sedentary leisure, where girls in particular reported insufficient opportunities and discomfort with participation in organized leisure (Thompson et al., 2005). Gibbons and Humbert (2008) focused mainly on grade six and seven adolescent females in a western Canadian city, attitudes towards physical education, their barriers towards participation, physical activity preferences and their knowledge of physical activity contributions to health. The

research was meant to better inform physical education curricula to hold the interest of middle school girls. The results indicate that girls emphasize the need for a variety of activities that include lifetime activities and development of personal competence in skills (Gibbons & Humbert, 2008). Yungblut et al. (2012) looked to fill a gap within current research to create a more detailed understanding of how adolescent girls experience and interpret physical activity within in context of their lives. Five distinct themes were found that influence their physical activity participation levels which were: good or not good enough, friends or don't know anyone, fun or not fun, good feeling or gross, and peer support or pressure (Yungblut et al., 2012).

Often girls have been considered the “problem” with their lack of participation in being physically active, specifically in the physical education and sport context, where they have been considered passive participants, or individuals who simply dislike physical education/activity (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Azzarito, Solomon & Harrison, 2006). Various researchers that have adopted feminist methodologies to explore young women’s experiences in physical education and with physical activity have looked to dismantle the idea that young woman simply do not like to be active. Azzarito et al. (2006) formed their research from a poststructuralist perspective, which views girls as the active agents, who make decisions and choices concerning their engagement in activity by negotiating gender and racial power relations (p. 236).

Poststructuralist analysis also focuses on the discourses that make up social institutions, which influences meanings formed and how power relations are maintained and changed (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001, p.8). One of the most fundamental aspects of the Azzarito and Solomon (2005) study is the notion that moves individuals away from being considered “objects” of oppression but rather subjects, which addresses individuals as active agents who establish their own identities and realities. Physical education classrooms have been noted as an institution where

gendered discourses are created and reproduced through social practices (Azzarito et al., 2006, p. 224). Therefore, within this research, physical education was a major social structure that was closely examined in understanding the immigrant girls' experiences with physical activity, as well bridging outward to other social structures that influence their health practices, like experiences with friends and families.

With a poststructuralist feminist perspective, Azzarito et al. (2006) conducted an eight week observation and informal conversational interviews with teachers, as well as informal conversational interviews with a teacher and a total of 15 students, which was gathered during the observational period (p. 226). The results of this study suggest that girls negotiate complex gender relations in their physical education classes, which end up both constraining as well as facilitating their participation in physical education (Azzarito et al., 2006). This study unpacked and deconstructed gender relations and power imbalances that occur for girls within larger social structure; specifically, the physical education classroom being the main area of understanding how girls actively negotiate gender relations that are embedded in physical education classes and society. Girls' awareness of gender stereotypes would either limit or encourage their participation in physical education (Azzarito et al., 2006, p. 237). Gender relations, stereotypes and the constraints and facilitators for immigrant females will be different than those of Canadian-born females, and an important avenue that needs further exploration and consideration when working with young women.

Research has also explored gender-exclusive physical education environments. One study by Pfaeffli and Gibbons (2010) specifically focused on an all-female physical education class and the experiences of female students' students' motivation towards physical activity in a gender exclusive physical education classroom. The study examined the features of an elective

physical education course that was successful in maintaining a high enrollment of adolescent females. This study found that this physical education course was successful as the participants expressed that they're teacher's support, choices and challenges, and allowing for interaction with friends in class were motivating factors for participation. The class was also found to be affective in benefiting the girls over all well-being b improving their self-confidence and making them feel more energetic. Ultimately, a total of 22 out of 23 participants said they would enrol back in this physical education program due to the high level of enjoyment they experienced in class.

Although a picture is being painted of young women disliking physical education, findings are now suggesting that young women more than ever are taking part in physical activity out of school contexts (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001, p. 5). Also girls are showing they value physical activity, for reasons such as “feeling better”, for health and fitness benefits, and for the opportunity to learn new skills (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001, p. 9). When we start to deconstruct gendering discourses, we can begin to move away from blaming young women for what may be perceived as lack of motivation and lack of participation in physical activity, instead treating them as active agents in the choices they make about their involvement with physical activity (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Azzarito, Solomon & Harrison, 2006). Flintoff & Scraton (2001) conducted in depth individual interviews of 15-year old young women, focused on three key areas: young women's perception of physical education and their position with it, role and place of physical activity in their out of school lives, and views on activity and its relationship to health and fitness. However, the research resulted in the participants being, “mainly white, mesomorphic and able-bodied girls, although from different class backgrounds” (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001, p. 6). With all this research formulating on girls' experiences with physical

activity there is a gap that is failing to acknowledge significant differences between groups of women in their physical activity involvement, and very few studies that acknowledge how ethnically diverse women are experiencing or being marginalized within sport, and physical activity (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). This seems to be a reoccurring issue for research looking at female experiences specifically, either we have an overgeneralized amount of information pertaining to white females, or specific ethnicities, rather than insight into new immigrant girls' experiences.

Specific Subgroups of Female Ethnicities

We know very little about girls' "lived experiences" within physical education, and how girls negotiate an identity surrounding physical activity (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). Despite the growing number of newcomers, especially within Canada, research conducted on this population tends to focus on the geographic aspects, and sub populations of ethnicities (Khanlou & Crawford, 2006). A subgroup of an ethnic minority that has started to make its way to the forefront of research in the physical health context has been Muslim girls (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). A large study conducted by Hamzeh and Oliver (2012) explored how four Muslim girls negotiate opportunities for physical activity, in which data was collected over a time frame of 14 months. Hamzeh and Oliver (2012) described "hijab" discourses that were threatening to the Muslim girls' participation in physical activity, but used interactive methods to understand how the girls negotiated their participation. Hamzeh and Oliver (2012) also elaborated on the girls' experiences by including their parents' perception(s) of physical activity, which was crucial to the researchers' multiple interpretations.

Hamzeh & Oliver (2010) emphasized how future research and those involved in Muslim girls' lives need to listen carefully to them as active agents in their own lives in the same way we

would listen to other girls who are challenged by systems of power and privilege, and gendering and racial discourses surrounding their physical activity experiences. Ultimately, Hamzeh and Oliver (2010) study acknowledged that the lives of Muslim girls is diverse, and not a homogenous understanding, but rather multiple interpretations of the hijab that is negotiable with them and with their parents. This proposed study will use the narratives of immigrant girls to listen carefully to their experiences with the complexities of immigration, and gendered and racial discourses surrounding their physical activity experiences. Understanding how people stress their different affiliations with varying social categories like immigration, race and gender, through life narratives and analyzing the meaning of these narratives (Christensen & Jensen, 2012) is crucial to unraveling new immigrant girls' experiences with physical activity, informing future policy and programming to take a more inclusive approach to providing physical activity opportunities. Focusing on narrative is an important methodological approach that allows research to be informed by complexity of individual's affiliation with their identity and positioning (Christensen & Jensen, 2012).

Research has also explored two other particular ethnic minority groups, comprised of African American and Latino middle school girls, which aimed to identify the girls' determinants of physical activity and in doing so learning more about their perceptions, beliefs and experiences in the United States (Taylor, Yancey, Leslie, Murray, Cummings, Sharkey & McCarthy, 2000). This study recognized that the experiences of girls of colour differ vastly from European American girls, specifically, that parents reported sport as being more important for girls than boys in the African American community, and in order to combat sedentary behaviour (cited as their reason), more understanding of these sub populations of ethnicity is needed, to promote regular physical activity (Taylor et al., 2000).

Thul and LaVoi (2011) explored the voices of East African girls who also practiced the religion of Islam and were all considered first generation, with the understanding that their increased risk of inactivity is due to a multitude of individual, social, environmental, societal and cultural barriers; a focus on the ecological model. The girls addressed both barriers and facilitators that impacted their strategies to be more physical activity. Some of these barriers were lack of time, family support and gender stereotypes. Some of the facilitators the females addressed were having female only private spaces, personal value placed on having fun and staying healthy (Thul & LaVoi, 2011). There are a rising number of adolescent girls whose physical activity is declining, and this is especially apparent amongst ethnic minority adolescent girls (Thul and LaVoi, 2011). Thul & LaVoi (2011) recognized a gap within physical activity research that rarely asked young women about their suggestions for programming, therefore they wanted to listen to the voices of the East African girls to explore their experiences and beliefs about physical activity, along with their suggestion for how to improve programming in terms of creating more culturally relevant settings (p. 216). When researching the participation in physical activity of young immigrant girls, it is also important to understand the complex array of factors that influence participation in and out of school.

These studies reviewed above recognize the importance of considering physical activity experiences from the narratives of specific ethnic populations, with great recognition that dominant culture, and mainstream White norm experiences cannot account from ethnically diverse girls' experiences.

Previous Theoretical Frameworks Used

Different studies that have focused on female and/or immigrant experiences with physical activity, sport, and recreation, have used various approaches in exploring intersecting aspects of

individual's lives, such as the ecological model (Thul & LaVoi, 2011), a macro-micro interface approach (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001), a cultural pluralism theoretical framework (Tirone et al., 2010), and a race-gender framework (Lopez, 2002).

Thul and LaVoi (2011) focused on the ecological theory and were the first to apply this theory to East African adolescent immigrant girls and their physical activity experiences in...., which took in account all of the factors, including personal, cultural, and environmental, that influenced the girls' participation. By using a model that explored different components of the girls' experiences with physical activity, a better understanding was generated to inform culturally relevant physical activity programs, and a better understanding of the complexity of physical activity for this population of girls (Thul & LaVoi, 2011). Amongst the environmental factors the young girls of this study found that there were lack of community spaces that were not a gendered space, but instead taken up by boys and limited or nonexistent opportunities and resources for females to participate in the physical activity they enjoyed (Thul & LaVoi, 2011). Lack of opportunity and accessibility was also a barrier to physical activity addressed by the African American and Latino middle school girls in the Taylor et al. (2000) study, and these girls too addressed how boys interfered with their opportunities to participate. Themes that arose during the cultural domain addressed the girls concerns for privacy and modesty, and a need for female-only programming; two concerns and needs that are ultimately connected by religious and cultural orientation (Thul & LaVoi, 2011),

Although Flintoff and Scraton's (2001) research participants were primarily White females, they have confirmed a gap between physical education classes, and girls' active leisure lifestyle outside of school. A feminist theoretical contribution, to this field of study has had positive impact for informing research and our understanding of female's position in sport, but

Flintoff and Scraton (2001) also wanted to recognize the larger structural and institutional processes that impact young women's lives and their lived experience with physical activity (p. 8). Their research was conducted to explore the micro and macro interface between the individual women's identities and their broader social structures and cultural settings in which they exist (Flintoff & Scraton, p. 8), and resulted in challenging research that considered girls "switched off" to physical activity (p. 17). In actuality, young women are involved in physical activity, both in and out of school while making active choices about their involvement (Flintoff and Scraton, p. 18).

A cultural pluralism theoretical framework was used by Tirone et al. (2010), in which Canada recognizes and supports immigrants in sustaining their cultural practices, specifically in understanding that new immigrants participate in sports for many different reasons, in various contexts. Tirone et al. (2010) focused on research from the individual perspective, but explored sport providers' perspectives and the perspectives of those who support their settlement within the community as well, which provided better insight for how policy can be developed to address the issues related to inclusion of newcomers within sport. This will be essential to physical activity programming for new immigrant girls, as identified in the literature that parents, educators and peers influence their participation greatly.

Lopez (2002) researched the differences between men and women's attainment of higher education, specifically the predominant second-generation minority groups in New York, which included Dominican West Indian and Haitian youth. The research established that the men and women's attitudes stemmed from their "differing and cumulative race-gender experiences, their responses to these experiences, and their perceptions of their prospects for social mobility" (Lopez, 2002, p. 84). Thus the "race-gender" framework was introduced by Lopez (2002), which

takes into “...account the different ways in which men and women from minority and immigrant backgrounds experience, perceive and respond to intersecting racializ(ing) and gender(ing) processes” (Lopez, 2002, p. 84). Lopez (2002) also recognized the value ecological theories and assimilation theory contribute to the understanding of immigration adaptation and ethnic identity, but however misses addressing race-gender experiences as a central phenomenon (p. 83).

With these various approaches to research described above, incorporating intersectionality as a central framework into research would be beneficial to recognizing the voices and experiences of those who are often left out of conversation about young women’s health. Segall and Fries (2017) emphasize that intersectional research is required to tease apart the ways in which intersecting inequalities, such as gender, ethnicity and immigration produce disparities in health, and has direct consequences on the pursuit of health and wellness.

Previous research has acknowledged the gender differences present in the study, but there is still unawareness around the ethnocultural background of participants and whether this was taken into consideration (Thompson et al., 2005; Yungblut et al., 2012). Other studies have expressed the need to take into account young women’s experiences that are located differently, specifically in ethnocultural makeup (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). More specifically, studies that have focused on physical education research that is taken into account gender differences, recognizes the need for future research to take into account intersecting social categories like race, and social class (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005). Research has also situated their study in schools that are ethnically diverse in nature, with a diverse student population (Azzarito et al., 2006; Dwyer et al., 2008; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008), however immigrant youth deserve specific attention, as their experiences differ from that of children of colour (Goodwin, 2002). The next section highlights the importance of an intersectional framework within health research,

and the necessary contribution it will make to understanding physical activity experiences from immigrant girls themselves.

Intersectionality Framework

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that recognizes how intersecting components of social categories effect large macro structures, while also acknowledging multiple intersecting identities, opposed to focusing exclusively on gender, in the first step to understanding the complexities of health and disparities for populations from multiple historically oppressed groups (Bowleg, 2012, p. 1267). Immigrant youth have to negotiate their identity around “dynamic, context specific intersections of race, culture, class, and gender” (Asher, 2008, p. 17). Understanding the link between ethnocultural background and health is further complicated by the fact that this social location of ethnicity intersects with other social categories like class, and gender (Segall & Fries, 2017). In creating understanding around an individual’s experience with physical activity, an intersectionality approach was the main theoretical framework for the purpose of this research. To be able to attain a richer understanding of young girls’ relationship with physical activity, this study strived to recognize and achieve understanding of the complex, interrelationships between different aspects of their lives (Flintoff and Scraton, 2001). Specifically, this study focused on how the immigrant girls interpreted their lived experiences with physical activity, and the very structures that provide them those opportunities, with an emphasis placed on the importance of their social identity as an immigrant female.

Applying intersectionality to multiple disciplines is substantially beneficial to research (Bowleg, 2012). It has been vastly underused, especially in influencing health initiatives in a positive direction. Intersectionality became a part of the conversation in the late 1960s, in response to the limitations of the second wave of feminism, which failed to account for the

coloured woman's experience (Hankivsky & Christoffersen, 2008). Scholars such as bell hooks (1984), Patricia Hill Collins (2000) and Kimberle Crenshaw (1994) contributed to the emergence of the term (Hankivsky & Christoffersen, 2008) with their work that critically thought about gender, race and other numerous systems of oppression that was failing to exist in the literature and movements regarding feminism.

Intersectionality stems from the third-wave of feminism, and it is argued that the third wave of feminism was a result of Black women's critiques of White Western feminism (Mandell, 2010, p. 64). Mandell (2010) explains that the third wave of feminism looks to deconstruct the category of "women" and critique the belief that "being a woman means the same thing for all women across time and space" (p. 65). Intersectionality is based off of this critique and Hankivsky, Reid, Cormier, Varcoe, Clark, Benoit and Brotman (2010) explains intersectionality "resists essentializing any category" (p. 2), which means avoiding treating members of one single group all the same, assuming they all share the same experience. Crenshaw (1991) states that when feminism fails to interrogate race into the conversation, feminism is then just reinforcing the marginalization of people of colour. The phrase, "Ain't I a Woman" was first introduced to American and British feminism by an enslaved woman, Sojourner Truth during her speech given in 1851 at the Women's Right Convention in Akron, Ohio, which fundamentally challenged what it meant to be a woman, and deconstructed major claims about gender (Brah & Phoenix, 2013).

Intersectionality moves research in the direction to expose structures of inequalities, and views immigrant youth as active agents that construct cultural meaning (Kwon, 2015), from the vantage point of this specific population, immigrant girls, in their own context rather than looking at health issues from the norms of White middle class people (Bowleg, 2012; Kwon,

2015), which has often been the case in research that focuses on the physical activity experiences of young women. Factors such as person's skin colour, immigration and refugee status, timing and length of immigration, ethnic origin and identification and social exclusion are described by Segall and Fries (2017) as powerful aspects of social location that influence the pursuit of health and wellness. Often researchers do not take into consideration the voices and positions of those who are marginalized, which results in research that does not benefit anyone who differs from the privileged White norm (Hankivsky et al., 2010). hooks (1984) notably critiqued feminism for the emphasis placed on a White norm, stating that White women dominate feminist discourse, and this often leaves the lived experiences of women who are orientated differently, untold. Research is sounding for "an urgent need for in-depth qualitative accounts of young women, who are located different, specifically ethnic minority women and their physical activity experiences in and out of school" (Flintoff & Scraton, p. 18).

Collins (2000) described intersectionality as a "matrix of domination" (p. 227) in which social organization is where we see intersecting identities formulate, develop and be contained. The matrix of domination is said to happen through large social structures including but not limited to, schools, housing, employment, government and other social institutions that keep the oppressed, oppressed, by regulating patterns of intersecting social categories (Collins, 2000, p. 228). Additionally, intersectionality does not make assumptions regarding individuals interlocking identities, presuming that all those are equally disadvantaged (Bowleg, 2012).

Public health reforms have been specifically criticized for examining social systems separately, rather than recognizing how multiple identities of an individual in actuality intersect, thus creating and maintaining health disparities for oppressed and marginalized groups (Bowleg, 2012). Although we must now push for identities to be understood in an intersecting manner, we

must resist from just adding social categories together, as social categories are not additive and also cannot be ranked (Bowleg, 2012). However, Christensen & Jensen (2012) also explain that certain social categories are emphasized, as those categories may shape the lives of that specific group of people living in that particular context, where power, privilege and identities are anchored to a large degree (p. 113). Bowleg (2012) explains that race and gender both intersect together to explain unequal and disparate advantages within health, which was representative in Sojourner Truth's speech where her notion of being a woman did not fully explain her unjust treatment without including the intersection of race as well.

Hankivsky et al. (2010) described that no one category of social identity is more important than another. For instance, there will be a focus on "immigrant girls" and it is important to establish that we will not be privileging the race, ethnic identity, cultural orientation over the positioning of the individuals as a young female, or vice versa. Rather emphasis will be on analyzing how these multiple constructs intersect to affect the individual's experiences and views of health and physical activity in Canada, through multiple social structures including school, community, and family. Although Christensen & Jensen (2012) discussed how there is a methodical challenge in how many social categories must be employed in order to fully apply and understand intersectionality, there is an advantage within this framework that creates openness towards the unpredictable. Christensen & Jensen (2012) recognized that it is possible to just focus on categories at the time that are deemed the most important for the research question, at that specific time, and that those categories may be the starting point.

The focus of this study is on "immigrant girls" because there is a gap that is failing to acknowledge significant differences between groups of females in their physical activity involvement, and very few studies that acknowledge how ethnically diverse females, specifically

immigrants, are experiencing or being marginalized within health and physical activity (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). By focusing on this specific population, we are acknowledging multiple social categories, like ethnocultural background, immigration and gender have the lives of these individuals in the context of health and physical activity. Christensen and Jensen (2012) describe that the power and privilege these young women face is anchored in between these specific categories to a large degree (p. 113). The focus will be on the ethnocultural background, immigration status, and female gender identity to a large degree. However, this also does not mean that the study did not consider other categories such as class, age, sexuality and (dis)ability (Christensen & Jensen, 2012), but an intersectionality framework will in fact create awareness and openness to any other social categories that may arise. One of the greatest strengths of an intersectionality framework is the quality that it embraces multiple intersecting identities, and multiple interlocking privilege and oppression (Bowleg, 2012).

Intersection of various social categories is starting to be applied in different areas of research and policy, and researchers have started to explore the intersection of race/gender/social class and ability as a theoretical framework to enrich the understanding of the complexity of girls' relations and their engagement to in physical education classes (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005, p 28). The literature presented by Azzarito & Solomon (2005) discussed the historical implications of gendered and racialized discourses, and how they now are present today in sports and physical activity settings; affecting those who are objects of oppression including women, minorities and individuals of low socioeconomic class. Addressing the perceived barriers towards physical activity of specific populations is essential to creating programming that effectively addresses the needs of individuals situated differently. Often those who implement programming want to reach the needs of diverse individuals but do not know how to go about

learning about this information, in fear that they might offend someone (Tirone et al., 2010). However, this also leads to barriers that effect individuals' participation with physical activity, as research has suggested that people perceive programming that does not accommodate their needs related to cultural and diverse ethnic practices, a barrier (Tirone et al., 2010). By framing research to focus on the lived experiences, from the voices of diverse individuals themselves, the development of programming and policies can be more sensitive to the needs and interests of the immigrant girl population.

There is very limited research focused specifically on young women's experiences with physical activity, and even less so when discussing the experiences of ethnically diverse females. Recognizing intersectionality of race and gender issues remains a very marginal area of study when inquiring into the production and interrelations of these categories in physical education (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005, p. 27). An intersectionality approach addresses concerns of focusing specifically on one social category, such as gender, and the risk this carries in treating all women the same, and overlooking the fluid and changing nature of identity (Hankivsky & Christoffersen, 2008). When gender differences and inequalities are combined with other social divisions such as ethnicity, not all women or men will experience those gender-related health problems in the same way (Hankivsky & Christoffersen, 2008). It has also been recognized by feminist scholars, Hamzeh and Oliver (2012) that to find enjoyable physical activity for young women, there is a need to look at the diversity and intersectionality of discourses such as gender, race and class. Although these intersecting systems of oppression can challenge girls' participation in physical activity, once they are identified and critically thought about, it can become possible for young women to negotiate and interrupt them (Hamzeh & Oliver, 2012).

Summary

In reviewing the literature, there is very little research focused on young women's experience with physical activity and even less so when discussing experiences of young women from diverse backgrounds, such as immigrant girls. Young women are being categorized and blamed as individuals who do not care to be physically active (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). The current literature will benefit from research that recognizes the systems of oppression and privilege that exist and influence major social structures, which impact different populations in different ways, rather than blaming individuals for disparities in health. Research is acknowledging a need for future study to acknowledge the intersection of multiple social categories. Current health research must make efforts to move away from using the experiences of White females to generalize for girls of ethnic backgrounds in society, physical education and sports (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005).

The study's methods and methodology is outlined in the next chapter and addressed how incorporating an intersectionality framework was beneficial to understanding how high school immigrant girls interpret the meaning of their lived experiences with physical activity. By using an intersectionality approach to frame the study, the participants' social identity that encompasses and is located within the intersections of immigrant status, ethnocultural background and gender were central to the conversations in understanding the young women's narratives and lived experiences with physical activity.

Chapter III: Methods and Methodology

Research Design and Question

The study was orientated in the qualitative research paradigm, which focuses on the feelings and impressions of individuals or groups of people through words and pictures rather than numerical descriptions (Bassil & Zabkiewicz, 2014). The focus was to explore the voices of immigrant girls to better understand their interpretations of physical activity. The study was centered on the lived experiences of high school, immigrant girls, who live in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This study focused on the voices and narratives that the selected immigrant girls provided, and looked to answer the research question: How do immigrant high school girls in Winnipeg, Manitoba, interpret their lived experiences with physical activity?

A qualitative method was chosen to conduct this research as it most closely aligns with the interpretivist and social constructivist epistemology, which is the philosophical belief that people construct their own understanding with reality based on their interactions with their surroundings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The study focused on interpreting how the girls understood and made sense of intersecting constructs like ethnicity and gender, in relation to their lived experiences with physical activity and health. Interpretivists rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation, and how these subjective meanings are often negotiated both socially and historically, and formed through interactions with others through historical and cultural norms (Cresswell, 2013, p. 24).

The research was also informed by a critical race and feminist background, specifically in the analytical lens and overall theoretical framework of the study, which is intersectionality. Intersectionality takes in account the intersecting nature of individual's identities, opposed to focusing exclusively on one social category like gender (Bowleg, 2012). The voices of the

immigrant girls were a central and necessary component to discussions of female health and physical activity experiences; voices, which are far too often left on the margins of research. Critical race and feminist theories, such as intersectionality theory, recognize the oppressive structures that exist, while looking to also remove those oppressions in hopes of empowerment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), and agency. Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that recognizes the intersecting nature of social identities and its effect on larger macro structures (Bowleg, 2012). By incorporating an intersectionality framework to the study at hand, the social phenomenon of physical activity was examined by recognizing multiple identities of individuals that intersect to impact their interpretation and lived experiences with physical activity. By using an intersectional theoretical framework, the study effectively acknowledged that differences amongst females, whether it was ethnicity, immigration status, class, and/or gender, impacted the ways in which the individuals experienced and interpreted their involvement in physical activity.

The study used interpretive (hermeneutic) phenomenology as its qualitative methodology, as it closely aligns with my interpretivist epistemology, and was concerned with the human experience as it is lived (Dowling, 2007). Martin Heidegger, founder of interpretive phenomenology suggests that all human activity provides a field of interpretation (Stewart, 1974), and that phenomenology is an interpretive process that emphasizes the importance of understanding over description (Racher & Robinson, 2003). Heidegger's philosophical belief of an individual's reality is that it is very much shaped and influenced by the world in which they live, and from the perspective that humans cannot just remove themselves from the world (Lopez & Willis, 2004). My interviewing technique looks to first build context surrounding the participants' lived experience and reality, as opposed to treating all the girls homogeneously, I looked to create understanding around their personal narratives, fitting with Heidegger's

philosophical belief in reality, and how these subjective human experiences are undeniably connected to the influence of culture, society and political contexts (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

Applying phenomenology to social sciences deals not with the question of reality of the world, but rather the relationships within this world (Stewart, 1974). In this case, the relationship that the participants have with physical activity. Phenomenology when distilled down to its essence, simply asks, what is it like to have a certain experience (van Manen, 2016). However, van Manen (2016) explains that it is not enough to merely recall an experience with a certain phenomenon, but rather to do so in a way that the essential aspects and the meaning of the structures in a person's life are not only lived through but brought back (p. 41). This study emphasized the importance of immigrant girls' voices and stories as an essential component to understanding the social phenomenon of physical activity and how these lived experiences were impacted by the intersections of multiple social categories such as ethnicity, gender, and immigration. Phenomenology is also not solely interested in the individual's perspective but also those who are closely involved in the participant's life (Bassil & Zabkiewicz, 2014). The study addressed the various people and structures involved in the participants' lives throughout data collection, such as family, friends, and physical education, and how these factors influenced their involvement with physical activity. In this case, recognizing the influences in the girls' lives, and what it meant to be an immigrant female, were imperative to understanding the phenomenon of lived experiences with physical activity.

Participants

There were a total of four participants, all of whom identify as female, as an immigrant from another country, a visible minority and as youth that currently reside in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The research defined immigrant as simply a person who migrated from a different

country, and now holds residency in Canada. The study was conducted with youth from two high schools in the Winnipeg area that are multicultural and diverse in nature, with a large immigrant student population present. The participants ranged in age from 15 to 18 years old and grade levels ten to twelve. There were a total of four countries, three languages, and two religions represented. The amount of time that the girls had spent in Canada varied, as there was no strict timeline on the amount of time of their residency in Canada, but instead focus was on looking at their experiences as an immigrant and its influence on their physical activity experiences. The amount of time the girls had spent in Canada ranged from seven months to three years. It is important to note that this research did not treat the girls as a homogenous grouping within the population, but rather recognized the differences, as well as the similarities that each brought to the study. *See table below for participant demographics.*

Table 3.1 Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Age	High School Grade Level	Original Country(ies)	Time in Canada	Language(s) spoken	Religion
Ayah	18	12	Syria	Two years	Arabic, English	Islam
Femi	16	10	Egypt	Seven months	Arabic, English	Islam
Reem	18	11	Syria, Jordan	Three years	Arabic, English	Islam

Yeva	15	10	Armenia	Two years	Armenian, Russian, English	Christian
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Sampling

The study used a purposive sampling method, which is often undertaken within qualitative research. Purposive sampling selects individuals who meet the specific characteristics or criteria of the population of interest, in this case individuals who identify as both immigrant and female, to provide more information and insight to the phenomenon of interest being lived experiences with physical activity (Bassil & Zabkiewicz, 2014; Thul & LaVoi, 2011). The appropriateness of the sample and selecting participants who best represent or have knowledge of the research topic, was described by Morse et al. (2002) as a verification strategy for qualitative research to ensure both “reliability and validity” (p. 18). Within phenomenological studies the sampling sizes usually ranges from one to ten participants, focusing on individuals who experience the phenomenon and who can provide a detailed account of their experience (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the focus was on participants who identify as female and as an immigrant, rather than a particular subgroup of ethnic culture. Research has shown that youth who are immigrants are likely to communicate with those from different ethnic groups as opposed to their mainstream population peers, in part due to the shared participation in English as Second Language (ESL) classes, religion, or living in the same neighborhood (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). These often shared experiences by immigrant youth, detailed above, is why I chose to focus on immigrant(s) collectively, but also aided in avoiding stereotypes and

reaching different minority groups and not just the ones that were most predominant in the community.

The participants were recruited from English Secondary Language (ESL) from Winnipeg high schools that ranged from grade nine to twelve. ESL classes have shown to be a forum for new arrivals to Canada (Taylor & Doherty, 2005) and provided an opportunity for access to this specific population. The ESL teachers were contacted to help set up an initial recruitment meeting, where the girls who met the sampling criteria, and the ESL teacher felt could partake in an interview fully conducted in English, were invited to a short presentation on the detail of the projects. They were then each provided with a questionnaire (see Appendix E for Recruitment Questionnaire), and from the questionnaires that were received back, participants were then selected and contacted to be a part of the study.

Ethical Procedures

Most research in the study of physical activity deals with human participants and often children. Therefore, protecting participants from any harm is an ethical concern (Thomas et al., 2015). This research was subject to review by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) and received approval (See Appendix I for Research Ethics Approval).

Before entering any school division, institutional consent was required, and obtained from any school division in which participants were recruited from (See Appendix D for Institutional Consent Form). Two of the participants were under the age of eighteen, which required them to obtain parental consent before being able to contact them to be a part of the study (See Appendix G for Parental Consent Form). The other two participants were eighteen, and able to sign their own consent form (See Appendix H for Youth Assent form). All of the

participants and their parents were given contact information and the opportunity to ask any questions about the project, at any point in time.

It was not possible to guarantee complete anonymity or confidentiality among participants, however all information that may have revealed personal and institutional identifiers was removed prior to data analysis in order to protect the participant. All publications moving forward will utilize pseudonyms when describing participant data in order to protect the confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were also given the opportunity to remove any personal data from the research that they were uncomfortable sharing, including material that may have contained identifying markers (i.e. Participant profiles).

All data (audio files, transcription of interviews, etc.) were stored on a password protected computer, only accessible by myself, the researcher. Additionally, any hard copies of the consent forms and field notes taken were stored in a separate locked filing cabinet, only accessible by myself.

Procedure and Data Collection

All data was collected using personal in-depth semi-structured interviews. The interview guide was constructed using an interpretive phenomenological method (Seidman, 2013), to the qualitative interviewing technique, and focused on the participants describing and making meaning of their lived experiences with physical activity, while I probed for detail and clarity throughout to stay as close to the lived experience as possible (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

The interviews were structured using Seidman's (2013) description of in-depth phenomenological interviewing, which is designed in a three-part series. Although open ended questions are recommended for this type of phenomenological interviewing, Seidman (2013) has stressed that if a guide is used, it should be used with caution and flexibility, which is the way I

structured and conducted each interview. For example, while I had a semi-structured guide, questions and probes were still asked to the participants that were not initially on the guide. Also questions were added or taken away upon reflecting on each interview experience. Since youth were the participants, the interviewing time was reduced from the suggested 90 minutes, to three, 45-60 minute interviews (Seidman, 2013) which did prove to be an effective length of time. All interviews took place in a private space at the high school the girls attended.

The first interview focused on establishing the context of the participant's experience, focusing on their life history and personal biographies. Providing contextualization was described by Bevan (2014) as giving a backdrop of context with a personal biography, and examining this biography from which the experience gains meaning by the participants. I asked the participants to reconstruct their experiences with immigration and what that process was like for them, and their families (see Appendix A for Interview One Questions).

The second interview was focused on the phenomena of the study, in this case the lived experience with physical activity. The second interview was meant to allow the participants to reconstruct the detail of their experience within the context in which it occurs, concentrating on the details of their experience (Seidman, 2013). The questions focused now on the girls' experience with physical activity, asking stories of how they have participated in physical activity, and explored the different forums in which they had partaken in physical activity, like the physical education classroom, and with family and friends (See Appendix B for Interview Two Questions).

The third interview was the "meaning making" component of all three interviews (Seidman, 2013, p. 19). This interview looked to encourage the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences, and what that holds for them, specifically at the intellectual and

emotional connections the participants draw on (Seidman, 2013). The questions were central to exploring what the girls value or do not value with regards to physical activity, in what ways they enjoyed physical activity or did not, and how their biographical background that they described impacted their emotional and intellectual connection to physical activity (See Appendix C for Interview Three Questions).

The interviews were all conducted with approximately a week between each, which allowed for a window of time for the participants to digest and reflect on the interviewing process, but not lose connection from the study between each interview. The repeated conversations also helped to develop a positive relationship between myself and the girls.

Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed and then analysed using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) which is closely aligned with interpretive (hermeneutic) phenomenological epistemology (Larkin & Thompson, 2012) and is interested in understanding a person's relatedness to the world through the meanings they make about what they are talking about (Smith & Osborn, 2004, p. 230). IPA while committed to understanding the world from the perspective of one's participants, recognizes that this understanding cannot be done without the interpretive work done by the research (Smith & Osborn, 2004).

The first step to the data analysis was continued reading and rereading of the interview transcripts. IPA takes an idiopathic approach which meant that the interviews were analyzed individually before a group level analysis occurred across all interviews (Quinn & Clare, 2008). Each interview was transcribed verbatim, where I also logged reflexively during that process my initial impressions of the data set.

Once each interview was transcribed, I used a “free coding” approach initially, which involved taking a copy of the clean transcript and writing all over it, whether it was my own emotional reactions, potential themes, or ideas and concepts that struck me as powerful and impactful (Larkin & Thompson 2012). Free coding also served the purpose of allowing myself, the researcher, to get all of my ideas down before proceeding with a more systematic IPA approach, and also acknowledged my preconceptions and potential biases (Larkin & Thompson, 2012).

Following the free coding process, systematic analysis was then undertaken, which began with a line by line coding process, coded to create themes and categories that were reoccurring amongst the girls’ responses (Bassil & Zabkiewicz, 2014). I open coded by hand, looking of similar patterns as well as implied meanings, connections to cultural context and linkages to other concepts (Morse, 1994). The coding component of the analysis process was not meant to be the analysis itself, but rather an approach to organizing the qualitative data to help identify meaningful data, and set the stage for interpretations and conclusions (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 27).

Once a line by line coding process was complete, a close examination was required to then create themes. I thematically organized similar items together, and each theme was given a heading that was representation of the tone of the item. It was suggested by Quinn and Clare (2008) that the participants own words continue to be used, to ensure that analysis remains close to a reflection of the participant’s experiences rather than assumptions made by the researcher. Therefore, all superior themes are supported by multiple subthemes reinforced by direct quotations from each participant contributing to that subtheme. The constant comparative method was also an important analytical tool for examining, conceptualizing, and categorizing

(Bassil & Zabkiewicz, 2014) all the meaningful responses and narratives the girls had provided. Glaser (1965) described the basic procedure and the defining rule for the constant comparative method as coding one incident for a category, and then comparing it with previous incidents coded in the same category, which helps to generate theoretical properties of the category (p.439). This analytic method was an important tool for understanding the phenomenon, and interpreting the girls' lived experiences and responses to unpack and critically examine the relationships to responses in order to generate interpretation and understanding of how the immigrant girls' experienced physical activity.

An important criteria of IPA is that this research method requires an analysis of interviews first at an individual level before doing a cross analysis between the interviews. This idiographic approach to analysis, directs the researcher to start with a detailed examination of one case before moving to the next one, and ultimately ending with a cross analysis of all interviews (Smith, 2004). Since each participant for this study participated in three interviews each, I analysed each interview individually, and then cross analysed all the interviews together. Themes from the individual interviews were reviewed and then grouped together with similar themes from other interviews (Quinn & Clare, 2008).

Trustworthiness

I used multiple techniques to ensure the trustworthiness of the study throughout data collection and data analysis. The use of multiple methods helps to increase the trustworthiness of the research (Thomas, Silverman, & Nelson, 2015). The first way in which I ensured trustworthiness of the study involved using member reflection described by Tracy (2010) as seeking input during the data analysis process from the participants themselves by producing a research report, and sharing a research report with the participants about the study's findings. All

of the girls also played a role in crafting their participant profiles, as they were each individually provided with the profiles of themselves, and asked for feedback.

Also, I continuously peer debriefed throughout the entirety of the research. Peer debriefing is described by Thomas et al. (2015) as bringing a new set of eyes to the data and the findings, a person who has expertise in the phenomenon and in qualitative methods and data analysis. Peer debriefing also allows the researcher to be questioned which ensures the findings hold up and to help improve the conclusions and how they are presented in the final report (Thomas et al., 2015). My academic advisor was the person of expertise who helped to challenge the research and ensure trustworthiness of the data collection methods and the overall findings throughout the project. Additionally, my thesis committee aided in ensuring that the study was trustworthy by informing the research with constructive feedback from my thesis proposal to my thesis defence.

Clarification of research bias is also a technique I used to help ensure trustworthiness (Thomas, et al., 2015). I have addressed my potential biases through my self-reflexivity component, which is detailed below, where I have established my role as a researcher, and what prior knowledge and experience I have with both the immigrant girl population and the phenomenon of physical activity. I also highlight the multiple influences my own intersecting social categories have had on my own experience with physical activity. Tracy (2010) explained that self-reflexive practises involve being introspective in assessing our own biases and motivations, and asking whether we are well suited to examine the topic of study at the time. All researchers come into a study with biases (Thomas et al., 2015). I am aware of my own personal biases and have addressed it within the self-reflexive section. If we simply try to forget or ignore what we already “know” we might find that the presupposition persistently creeps back into our

reflections (van Manen, 1990, p. 47). By fully acknowledging my social location, my personal investment in both the research project and the participants, serves to provide a strong foundation to the overall project.

Self-Reflexivity

Self-reflexivity has been described as one of the most celebrated practices of qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). Often reflexive accounts are formed by the researcher's ability to recognize the social location and emotional responses one has to the participants of the study, and how this can shape interpretation of their accounts (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). Self-reflexivity has played a major role in my master's thesis, as it is something I have strived for throughout this research process. I have incorporated this technique by reflexively journaling and critically thinking about my role as a researcher; my own intersections and my positioning throughout the project in relation to the participants themselves.

Reflexive thinking within research should begin right from the start and it should involve the researcher examining their motivations, assumptions and interests that could possibly skew the research in certain directions (Finlay, 2002). Examining exactly why I chose my thesis topic was something I carefully thought about, but also a topic that came as a natural choice because I have a deeply embedded personal and social connection to immigrant girls. I have worked in the not for profit sector in providing diverse multicultural youth populations opportunities to be physically active throughout my time as both an undergraduate and graduate student. I have had tremendous experiences working with many grass root immigrant and refugee settlement programs within the Winnipeg and Chicago areas. My work experience has shaped my research interests because I have noticed a need within academic literature and my personal commitments

involving programming with immigrant and refugee girls, to reach and provide ethnically diverse girls with opportunities to freely express and participate in physical activity.

In Fries' (2009) work that focuses on Bourdieu's account of reflexive sociology, he proffers that a social researcher occupies a place in the social world and critical awareness of one's social location in relation to both the research object and process, must be adopted. While I have acknowledged my connection to both the participants and this project, I also look to express how I am positioned in the social world that I am conducting my research in. I identify as a second generation Punjabi-Canadian female, where my cultural and gender influences have always played an important role in my life and have had a great impact on the way my experiences have been constructed, especially with my involvement in sport and physical recreation. My brown skin and dark hair has always characterized me as a visible minority, where I am far too often asked, "Where are you from?" However, I also recognize certain privileges I have been fortunate enough to experience, such as being an English speaking, Canadian born individual, who has had the opportunity to attend a higher institution of education and be a part of academia, with incredible support from my family along the way; both emotionally and financially.

Since I have worked in Winnipeg with an immigrant population in physically active settings, I have gleaned insight and first-hand experience into the phenomenon, however I had never initiated in-depth conversations about their experiences during their physical activity involvement. Throughout the interviewing process, I have found that while I am not an immigrant, I was still able to connect with the girls on a personal level, being another female of colour, and being somewhat relatable to them in age.

Moments of reflection were imperative throughout interviewing all the participants for this project. Throughout the project, I kept a hand written reflexive journal. This journal, occasionally a bit chaotic, as it was a true depiction of my thought process throughout, was meant to keep me as close to the lived experience in which I was examining. A reflexive journal can also bring a sense of sophistication and understanding to one's work, and aspects of research methodology (Watt, 2007) in an interconnected way, from beginning to end. Thompson et al. (2005) describe that the first steps to the analytical process is therefore occurring immediately after interviews were completed, where the researcher would note any details about the interview's success, the rapport established between interviewee and interviewer, how the participants conveyed their stories, and details about non-verbal data. The reflection that would occur post interview for my research was especially crucial due to the three-part interview series that the entire project was designed around (Seidman, 2013). Since each interview was meant to build upon each other, it was important to constantly be reflectively thinking before entering the next interview with the same participant. This ultimately added additional strength to interviewing from a phenomenological structure presented by Seidman (2013). Self-reflexivity is valued in qualitative research, as it brings a sense of sincerity and trustworthiness to your work that takes into consideration your own needs, but also the needs of the participants, the readers and potential audiences (Tracy, 2010).

Limitations/Delimitations

This study focused on immigrant girls within the city of Winnipeg, and it must be understood that a limitation of this small sample size of four participants, as a selected group, is not intended as a representation of all immigrant girls in this area or in Canada in general. Rather, this study using a phenomenological approach, was meant to capture the lived

experiences of particular immigrant girls, while addressing a gap within academic research that is failing to focus on this population's experiences with physical activity.

Another limitation of the study was the heterogeneous nature of the participants, specifically, the number of years they have (or have not) been in Canada, and their experience(s) in their countries of origin. Immigrants are not meant to be treated as a homogenous group, which can result in a range of answers and responses to the interview questions that was influenced by the differences the girls represent.

Another limitation was in how the immigrant girls' responses may have been interpreted, especially cross culturally, amongst myself and the participants. The study was very reliant on the researcher's ability to ask questions, probe for details, interpret and analyze the immigrant girls' narratives from an intersectional lens. There were occasional language barriers which were navigated through, usually with the use of an online translator, and asking for continuous clarification and detail throughout the interviewing process.

The study was delimited to only focus on immigrant girls because often literature had grouped immigrant children with that of children of colour together, instead of recognizing the experience of immigrant children as its own (Goodwin, 2002). Conversation around diversity has been described as "gender" and "undifferentiated" with lack of attention focusing on immigrant youth (Goodwin, 2002, p. 159). Also, within immigrant youth research, differences have been found amongst females and males, but the focus has not been solely on the female experiences themselves.

The recruitment was done through a school division within Winnipeg, because the inclusion of physical education was an important structure the study looked to explore. Therefore, the study was delimited to only recruit from public school divisions rather than

immigrant and refugee organizations or communities within Winnipeg, to ensure that the participants had been involved or exposed to the physical education classes within their high schools.

Summary

The study was designed using an interpretive phenomenology that incorporated this methodology into a three-part semi-structured interviewing technique that addressed how high school immigrant girls, within Winnipeg, Manitoba, interpret their lived experience with physical activity.

An intersectionality framework was included in the research design as a necessary theoretical approach to analyze the data, and understand the complexity of immigrant girls' lived experiences with physical activity. As well, various techniques of establishing trustworthiness were utilized throughout the entire study in order to ensure excellent qualitative research, with a comprehensive and detailed focus on the self-reflexive component.

The next section presents the findings of this research in two distinct ways, through participant profiles and themes analyzed through an interpretive phenomenological analysis. This research was designed in hopes to significantly contribute to providing more information in understanding and creating programming that is culturally relevant and inclusive for immigrant girls, focusing on health from the vantage point of immigrant females.

Chapter IV: Findings

This chapter focuses on the two ways in which the interview data is presented, through participant profiles, and through superior themes that are supported by subordinate themes throughout. All four participants took part in three semi-structured interviews, guided by an interpretive phenomenological interviewing strategy. The seven superior themes are as follows: Attitudes Towards Physical Activity; Barriers to Participation in Physical Activity; Supports for Engagement in Physical Activity; Gendered Physical Education; Social Discourses and Physical Activity; Health and Immigration; and Values and Meanings of Physical Activity. Each superior theme has two to three subthemes that capture the overall superior theme, and is reinforced by direct quotations from the participants. There are a total of four participant profiles of each young woman that took part in the study: Ayah, Femi, Reem and Yeva.

Participant Profiles

One way that I have chosen to share and analyze interview data is through individual profiles of the participants (Seidman, 2013). By creating a profile in the words of the participant, it has allowed me to present the participant in context, and to come to know the experience of the participants through their stories (Seidman, 2013). Within qualitative research, a way to explore intersectionality is by examining how people stress their different affiliations in their life stories, and how their identity is told within the stories they choose to share about themselves in relation to social categories like gender, class, and ethnicity (Christensen & Jensen, 2012). Of the series of the three interviews, the first focused on her life history and in providing a backdrop to her personal biography, specifically with her experiences with immigrating to Canada. Life stories are considered an important way of approaching research to not only construct identities but also the role that social structures play in people's lives (Christensen & Jensen, 2012). Seidman

(2013) expressed that typically only one of the three interviews will be compelling enough to shape into a profile. With that guiding probability, I have created these profiles with a predominant focus on their transcripts from the first interview.

These profiles represent a story that is both the participant's and the interviewer's (Seidman, 2013). Each profile is written in the first person, embedded with direct text from her interview transcript, and crafted based on the passages that were the most compelling (Seidman, 2013). Language that has been inserted and not taken directly from the interview transcript is indicated with a bracket around it. Ellipses were used when omitting material from a paragraph, or a sentence (Seidman, 2013). Ultimately, creating these profiles allowed myself as the researcher to bring a participant alive and provide insight into the complexities of their lives (Seidman, 2013).

Ayah

I'm from Syria, 26 of January, like this Friday, it is going to be my second year in Canada. I finished my second year. It was hard, like really hard. Different language, different ... how the people act, different type of school. The traditions, it's like here you can say no, and the person will never be mad at you. I lived in Syria until 2011, 15th March, cause [then] the war started. Then it get so bad. I'm from Damascus, like the capital. The capital will be [where] the rich people will be... and everything better will be there. It get like so bad one day at night, and we had to [leave] at 4pm. We had to go to Lebanon because it was so bad. We arrived at Lebanon at 12 am. [In] Damascus [people were] running away. From Lebanon we went to Cairo. We stayed there for two months, until it get a little better at Syria. We went back to Syria, 2013, 2014. We also went to United Arab Emirates, like Dubai. We stayed there for a year. We came

with a refugee plane, like a huge plane. When we get in the airplane, we were above Europe, my dad looked at my mom [and asked her], “What did we [do]?” [It] was like crazy.

We had to stay at Montreal for two nights. I didn't know that I was coming to Winnipeg, until [I was in] Montreal. The good thing, I know there is a good education. This is why I accept to come to Canada, because I want a high education. When I study hard I can go to any other place, and work with my education. Maybe Lebanon, Dubai, or Syria. This is why I said yes to Canada. But from my heart, I don't want to leave my home, my friends. You feel happy and sad at the same time, because you feel happy you're going to meet new people, you're going to try new experiences, new language, you're going to learn, [and] maybe a new citizenship with a future. But at the same time, I was thinking of my friends, my family, my aunt, [and] my cousins. When [we] came, we lost everything, work, home, everything. We have to learn everything, even the talking. [After we moved my family was] always angry. Sometimes when you go home, if there's a little small thing, everyone will be mad. Everybody will scream, [because] everybody is nervous. They're not screaming because they want to scream, they're screaming because they're nervous. [They were nervous about] everything, like the country, the language. But now everything [is] okay.

The best thing when I came to school [here] it was spirit week, so you came to school and everybody celebrating. It was a good way to enter school. I don't have a lot of friends now, because most of them know each other from grade six and seven. I don't know how to make friends here. It's really hard. Especially, [because] they're all... Canadian. They [are] all use to each other. They have their own group. It's hard to get into a group. My hijab [is important in my culture]. [I'm] covering myself, wearing a long shirt. You're hiding your hair. Some people try to pull it, or [say] “Oh you don't have hair, that's why you're wearing a hijab?” No, I have hair. I

have really beautiful hair. You're hiding yourself from boys to protect yourself. That's why we wear a hijab.

I hate it [in Winnipeg]. Damascus, it's a really busy country, there is like a few people in [Winnipeg]. There is a lot of coffee shops [in] Syria, things you can do at night, but like here you only have bars. It's not allowed for us as Muslims. When I finish school, I go back home... From 7 pm until the next day... I'm like at home. I'm doing nothing. Just washing the dishes, cleaning the kitchen, then I go to my bed and watch a TV show. I sleep then I come back again to school. That's happening every day. I have a lot of memories from [back home]. My dad's family... every weekend at my grandma's house. We used to go every night with family, friends. We used to go almost every weekend to ... a restaurant or coffee shop. All of us will play cards, and the kids will go to the playground. My home, like almost everything [is] stuck in [my] mind.

It's so much fun talking to you. Sometimes you feel better to talk to a stranger than someone you know. At the end if I told you anything, you're not going to tell everybody.

Femi

I'm from Egypt. I came here about seven months ago. I was in Alexandria. It is more crowded than Cairo, because Cairo is big, it's wider and Alexandria [the] people are just growing more and more. I was in the best place in Alexandria. Good for me and a good place. My whole family was in the same building. We are all together, every day, [once] a week we gather together, always the whole family.

I was so excited. Then I became scared. I will leave my country. I'll leave my friends and my family, but at the same time I'm excited to start a new life, new community, new culture, and traditions. Everyone wants to go to any country out of the Middle East. It's kind of been a journey for my dad to come here, [since] like 2007. He applied three times [and] we waited like

10 years, more than 10 years. We got tired of waiting. We were waiting so long for the...residency. We take the visa and come here. Our flight was so long. We exceeded 40 hours. We had a lot of bags, more than eight bags I think. It was hard on my dad, but... he calm us down, and he [said], "Don't worry, everything will be fine."

I didn't look at my [family when we were moving] as much as myself. I look to myself first. What am I going to do? We're getting serious now, like really moving. We are starting a new life. There will be some problems at first, finding a house or apartment. That was hard. [We] got a small apartment, like really small. It's only two bedrooms, and there's nothing but mattresses. Just two mattresses. It was hard at first because of the money. We didn't have enough money yet. We're not rich in dollars. Turning our coin to dollar is so hard.

Canada [is] is good, I like it. I'm getting used to it quickly. The people, they are friendly, nice, and calm, because in my country people are so aggressive. Everyone is shouting. It's crowded. It's different here, because here you don't have [any] places to go out, in Egypt that's different. But here it's so cold. It's different here. In my country, there was a club. We go everywhere. Here, because of the snow you have to go out to close places. I can't walk in the streets in extreme cold. Here, we don't go out. I don't go out with friends. I used to play with my cousins a lot, and we were always together. [We] would bike, just running, beaches, those memories like a lot. When I was with my cousins, I was really happy. We played different games.

The first day that I came [to school] to take my picture, I was like...all of these people, "woah." There was a lot of students and all of them are from different countries and different cultures, and I'm coming from a culture [where] I'm not used to seeing something like this. There is no immigrants in Egypt. Maybe Syrians came to Egypt because of what happened in

Syria. It was really scary. Weird. I don't know using a laptop and everything. We're doing everything on a laptop. [That] was so weird. When I came here, I kind of decided my career. I want to be a teacher in music. I like all kinds of music but not metal. Education has helped me. If I was in Egypt it will be hard to focus on playing the piano and studying, because there will be a lot of studying.

I'm not used to going to teacher's class and every class I go is different people. In my country we'd stay in one class. It's hard to make friends here because I'm not sociable enough. I think it's good for my culture as a girl...to be shy is good. Something cute about girls. There is things here, a lot of girls are not shy. Kissing boys, kissing in front of people. That's weird. That's not allowed in my country, you have to do this...not in public.

I feel like I'm really getting old. Not being old, but two years to university, and [I'm] growing really fast. I just found myself old. Here everyone is responsible and independent. They don't depend on their parents. In Egypt, our parents do everything for us. That's why it was hard here, [because] you have to go alone.

Reem

I'm from Syria, Aleppo. It's like a large city in Syria but it's not the capital city. I lived in...kind of a village. I was born in Aleppo, and I lived there because we had land. My dad [built] a big house, [with] trees. It looked nice. It was like this big house, and my dad was about to build another two homes. We had this big large door, like when you enter a castle. We had our small village, [with] my grandma and grandpa, and we have a lot of cousins, my uncles, aunts. All had houses together, around. We were in Aleppo, and in [the] village, and we had to leave when the war begins. My friends came to say bye, and I didn't go to school that day. They came to my house, and they were like hugging, crying. I couldn't cry, I don't know why. I was [had]

no reaction. I [had] no comment. I was just staring [at] everything happening around. I [was] trying to focus on everything, trying to see what [the] last moments [going] to be like. We packed up in two days or one day, and then we had to leave the next morning, and we went to Jordan. We only took one backpack, like a bag, a big bag. My mom put for each of us, like two changes [of] clothes, and we left. We had a lot of pictures, but we had to leave them there. We thought we were coming back. [But] never again. Everything [was left there]. [We] had the best house, but it's gone now. They bombed it.

In Jordan, it was so bad, school was terrible and I hated it so bad. I [had] to start grade seven or eight, but in a small school. I was the first Syrian there. People treat me different, like the girls. It was an [all] girl school. It was the way they're like, "You're Syrian, a refugee. That sounds bad. They were acting like... I was an alien or something.

It took us eight months from the time they [asked] us if [we] were interested to go to Canada, interviews and tests. It was the first time I got in a plane. I didn't travel on airplanes because all places I went to was Jordan, that's it. I didn't travel to other countries. We got out of the airplane in Toronto. We slept for a day in Toronto, and then the next morning we came here. It was [a] weird feeling. I don't know how to describe it. Usually people cry [when] they are changing places. I was so quiet. I was just waiting [for] what to happen. I want to know, is it what I imagine? I imagine so much technology, more big. You know, how you expect other countries to be better. I expected it to be kind of like movies you see in America, but it's less than that. The houses look way different. It was cold, [terribly] cold. I was only [minus] 10, and [it] felt like minus forty degrees. I kind of get used to it.

I went to the welcome place first, then we moved to our house. It was not a house though... a townhouse. We stayed for one year, then I moved to my second house. It's a nicer

house. My dad's dream was to live [in] Europe, North American, South America. It was his dream and it became true I think. He always wanted a better life and a better environment around him. He wants to try different stuff. In Syria we lived, but we were normal. You know how there's three kinds of people, poor, rich and normal people? Middle class, we were. Our family got...really busy after we came here. We don't really just sit down together anymore. I'll be so busy with life. But we have this month...Ramadan. I love it. This month all we do a lot of culture stuff. We read Quran, and we fast. After we eat, there is some prayers at the mosque. What I like about it [is] we all sit, same meal, and eat. We don't eat together in usual days. We don't really gather together. [Back in Syria and Jordan we did] a lot more.

I was really really really worried about learning English. It was a terrible thing because I failed my English in Jordan, [and] in Syria. [I didn't speak] a single word. First time, I went and did the language test. I knew I was going to be zero, so I was not panicking about it. I always fail English. I don't know how I learned it. It was so weird. I would come here another English, and English, and English. I spent all day learning English. I didn't work on it, even though they were all places around me. That's why it took me longer to learn English. I didn't understand what people saying or doing. Everything [was] hard. Studying was really hard in English. You have to do math in English. Now I'm doing good. I love math, chemistry, and English. I'm more feel like I relate here. I still remember a lot of stuff [about Syria]. I find it a lot different, school is so different. You feel like there's a lot of space between you and your teacher in Syria or Jordan. But here, teachers are so nice, they talk to you. You tell them I have a good, [or] bad day, but we've never done that in Syria or Jordan.

[When I] first came, I was like, this will take me forever learning English, being with these people who I never saw before. There's a lot of different people. These people I've never

[known] anything about, but slowly knowing other people, you can find good people, different people, bad people. It's just not everybody is the same. I got this point, and I understand it. Here's way more trusting. You come here, there's different people, different religion, different thinking, different culture, but everything works together. It's like back there, everybody is same. All the people same culture. Here, you find that we're different, so it's kind of more interesting. I do love it. Just seeing different stuff, never got to do or see. Just go around the world, you find people from this country and this country who have the same religion, but different culture. I learned that here.

Yeva

I'm 15 years old. I'm from Armenia. I came here two years ago. I have friends from China, like Asian. There is many Asian people here, they can talk their language, whereas I can't really. All the Armenian people that I know are much older than me. I speak Russian, Armenian, and English. I know a little bit of Ukrainian.

We came straight to Winnipeg. I was happy, but I didn't expect that it was going to be so different than in my country. At first I was very excited, I didn't really think that I was going to miss my friends, but then when I came here it was much more different. People's thinking much more different here, and also I knew I was going to miss my friends, but not as much as I actually did. They have other habits than in my country. Sometimes you can talk to someone for a while, that day you are very close. Then the next day, you won't even say hi to them, or they won't say hi to you. Even...in my country, if you smile at someone, the next day you're closer. Here it's not like that, so I was kind of surprised by it.

When I was leaving [Armenia] I was very excited. I had met my friends the last day, and we hung out. [I] was very happy to come here. I wasn't even missing them, really. Even [at] the

airport, I was laughing out of nowhere, because I was happy. It was all excitement. [But] when I came in the beginning, I wanted to go back...like [in] three months. I would imagine that there was so much fun going on [in Armenia] I would feel bad that I'm not there, in fun group. There are times that I still want to go back, when I talk to my friends and they tell me what they're doing, I would want to be there.

I came with my mom. She told me that we were coming to Canada, but it's a process. It [took] longer than three years. I know we were coming, but I wasn't supposed to tell anyone. It was...hard to not tell because I was excited about it. My mom was pretty excited, but from the other side it was hard to find a job, and communicate with others. She knows English pretty well, but here it's like even if you know English very well, it's still not easy to communicate with others. It was kind of hard. When we were coming here, there were many people helping us, so really no problems when coming here. But when we got here it was much harder. There was some Russian people that my mom knew, when [we] were in our country. They helped us. Took us [to] the airport, helped us find [Air BnB]. They helped like that, but there wasn't much emotional support. Moving from somewhere so far, from Europe to Canada is much harder. If there was at least a family member or something, they will help in kind of way, or talk. But there was no one here to help or [any] family. It was emotionally kind of hard.

In my culture, family is in very first place most of the time. Here...people mostly move out when they are done with high school. In my country even if you get married you can live with your parents. Family is still important but not as much as it was in my country. I lived in my country for 13 years, so it's in me already. Two years, can't really change it.

The first day [of school] everyone was very nice to me. Everybody was smiling because it was a new kid coming to school. At first, it was kind of hard, because I didn't understand so

much about what they were talking about. Sometimes they would say nice to meet you, and I would say something, and I had a bad accent. They probably not understand. They would ask each other, what did she say? I would feel kind of awkward, even though, they weren't mean, they were just wondering. In my middle school, there wasn't foreigners, it was more Canadian people. ...In middle school, it was kind of hard because you come in 8th grade, people know each other for like 8 years. I had come in the middle of the year, and I didn't really like it. In middle school...everyone was friends with each other, and they knew the conversations. My English wasn't so good. They talked about stuff and I didn't really understand. But the friends that I had were a year younger than me, so I wasn't in their classes. If we would go somewhere they weren't with me, so I wouldn't feel comfortable.

I studied English for three or four years in [Armenia], so I knew English, but here it was [the] communicating. I understand everything that they saying but communicating, making sentences when they were talking so quickly, was hard. In middle school finding friends was hard, because once again their habits was much different. How their friends think is much more different than my friends think. Communicating with them was hard, to go out with them. I remember once they were inviting me, I didn't understand where they were inviting me. Maybe it was the 7/11. That's very famous here, but I didn't know so I wouldn't do anything. I would just ignore, but I wasn't trying to be mean, I just didn't know what to say.

In high school it was much easier. There are more people [in high school], so it's easier to find people that think the way that you do. The first day [of high school] everyone was going to gym. I was with some Russian friends, not really friends, but people that I know. They were older than me, so they were in higher grades. They knew more people than I did. I didn't really feel comfortable in that group of people. I came to EAL [class] and I met other friends here.

Better friends. They were from other countries, so they kind of felt what I felt coming here. They felt what I felt. It was kind of interesting talking to those people that are there from other countries because you know more about their countries, [and] their traditions. That's what I liked about it.

Last summer, I went back to my country. I was in airport in Toronto, when I was going there and I already wanted to come back. I didn't really want to go back [to Armenia] for some reason. I don't know why. After coming here, I didn't really like people [from home, because...Canadians are nicer. [In Armenia] it's more judgmental, and racist. When I came here, I started thinking about people differently, noticing more stuff. There, people don't really think that far there, like they do here.

[However], Canadians don't really like newcomers. In high school or in schools, they don't really pay much attention to [newcomers]. Maybe they don't really accept them. That's why I didn't really like talking to [Canadians] and their group. I think maybe they don't like that our people moved to their country. They think that it's their country, so others don't have to come here. There are so many newcomers here, maybe they're annoyed about it.

Themes

In this section, interview data is presented that represents the superior themes that were formulated from subordinate themes (Quinn & Clare, 2008). These themes were created from a cross analysis of all interviews, and all data was analyzed using interpretive phenomenological analysis previously described in detail in chapter three. The major themes that emerged from the data include: (1) Attitudes Towards Physical Activity; (2) Barriers to Participation in Physical Activity; (3) Supports for Engagement in Physical Activity; (4) Gendered Physical Education; (5) Social Discourses and Physical Activity; (6) Health and Immigration; (7) Values and

Meanings of Physical Activity. Within each superordinate theme, a range of subthemes were identified. The subthemes are described in detail below each superordinate theme, with supportive quotations from the participants themselves.

4.1 Attitudes Towards Physical Activity

At the beginning of the second interview with each participant, I looked to establish what physical activity meant to the girls. This interview was essential in capturing and formulating the lived experiences of each participant with the phenomenon of physical activity.

This superior theme is composed of the following subthemes below that illustrate the way in which the participants spoke about physical activity and how it was defined by the girls themselves. This section also illustrates the ways in which the participants have experienced physical activity in both Canada and their described country of origin.

4.1.1 (Un)Enjoyable Physical Activity Defined

This study looked to understand how girls understand physical activity and what that looks like in their daily life. Understanding the ways in which the girls viewed and described physical activity, allowed for myself as the researcher to focus on each participant's lived experience with physical activity, by concentrating on the concrete details of their meaning and interpretation of the social phenomenon of physical activity (Seidman, 2013). Physical activity was described as some form of exercise or working out, but in a very prescribed way, which was often associated with something they did not like. Conversely, they also described positive physically active experiences as games and different types of exercises.

Working out. Walking, running. Doing some exercises like push ups, squats, you know, Russian twist. (Femi)

It is about physical sports and games, and gym in total. I don't like it though. (Reem)

Gym, playing games, exercises...I think exercises. Playing games, with energy. (Yeva)

By establishing context within the second interview, I was able to move forward with an understanding of how each participant viewed and described physical activity, and then probe for a reconstruction of their experience with a better understanding of their interpretation of physical activity. Ultimately, the girls would give a very general definition of physical activity, often associating it with working out, types of exercises, games, sports, and physicality. Interestingly enough, although the girls associated physical activity with working out, they also discussed that this form of being active as something they do not like but rather found enjoyment in being active through games.

If she [teacher] said lets go to the main [gym] and play basketball or badminton, I will be so happy and play, because you're playing, you're not technically doing work out. This is the part of active that I like. I don't like the work out, the push ups, the running. That part I don't like. (Ayah)

I do like when we play games. I like to play games, even if they have some kind of physical stuff, but I don't like to be in the weight room. It's not that bad, but just working out and I try out female fitness class, it was terrible. She make us work so hard. I don't like to work really hard. (Reem)

Sometimes we have to really hard work, and I'm tired. Sometimes I don't like to take heavy dumb bells. (Femi)

This subtheme first captured how the girls define physical activity, and what that means, but also established the ways in which they define both enjoyable forms of physical activity, and physical activity that was met with negative feelings.

4.1.2 Physical Activity as a Forced Activity

It became apparent throughout the interviews that participation in physical activity was often something the girls felt they had to do, rather than having an intrinsic motivation to be involved in. This connected back to the forms of activities the girls often found themselves having to participate in like vigorous forms of exercise, rather than the game-like environments they seemed to want to seek out and be involved in.

I want to go to the gym even if I don't have class. It's not something someone forcing me. If I did it by myself, I think I would be better. I'll feel better, and I'll do better. I would be thinking doing workout, by myself, no one watching me, like a teacher. I think I'll do better at it. I'll do it right in this way, because I'm not doing it because someone is watching. I'm just doing it for myself. (Reem)

Here, you're forced to work. Sometimes it's bad because I am really tired. But I think it's good because it's for your health to work. I am a lazy person, kind of lazy, a little bit. (Femi)

In school for example, sometimes when we play something and you have to play, because maybe the teacher won't let you sit down or he put you absent. Even if you tell him, "I don't like this game," it's not really a reason to not play. (Yeva)

Ayah reconstructed her lived experiences with physical activity, specifically within her physical education classes. She described the power dynamics that she felt within her gym classes, between herself, and the physical educator. Ayah was originally asked to detail the meaning of physical activity in her life, her response at first listen was confusing. Given time, her story slowly unfolded as an interesting description of feeling like "a king" was telling her to do something:

Let's say you're the king of the country, and someone did something wrong, and you're going to attention him. (Ayah)

When asking her if she is the king or the person being "attentioned" she responded:

The person whose being attentioned. When I do sports I feel like I'm doing hard stuff. Maybe because I'm not super used to it, that's why I don't like it or enjoy it.

Ayah's also explains where and who is the king and the place and which she feels she is being told to be physically active. When asking her who the king in the situation is she responded

“The teacher”.

When asking where she feels the king is telling her what to do she responded:

Gym class. I don't like the workout, the push ups, the running.

Ayah's description, using the metaphor of a king as a representation of her gym teachers, provided insight into her feelings and perception of physical activity as something she is told to do, and even forced to do, particularly when she does not enjoy or like the activity at hand. This account of her experiences connected with the other participants who also felt like they had to be active in physical education, because they did not want to receive a bad mark, even when they expressed that they did not like the activity.

4.1.3 Comparative Reflections of Physical Activity Experiences Impacted by Immigration

Physical activity for the girls has shifted in comparison to the countries they resided in prior to arriving in Canada. The girls spoke of this in both positive and negative ways, but expressed notable differences.

Gym classes in Syria, like a spare, most of the time. We use to have a teacher, as a gym teacher, but we go to the playground, it's outside. We don't have that cold. We go outside, and the teacher sitting on the floor. We're all talking, we're all making jokes and laugh. We don't work out. It's really weird to work out. (Ayah)

When asking Reem to describe gym class in Jordan and Syria she said:

It was terrible. It was not even good to mention because you run twice, and the teacher see if you are wearing kind of physical clothes and shoes. Once I remember that we did kind of a test. In Jordan you have to jump or kind of like jumping jacks, you just do it one round and then she will mark whatever she sees. (Reem)

Femi expresses the obvious differences for her between physical education in Egypt compared to what she experienced in Canada:

It's way different. We go outside and we just run and play basketball, and there is the volleyball. We play in two teams, and we win, lose. There is no machines, there is no stuff like here. [Here], there are dumb bells, and we don't do yoga. Only balls are available and basketball, the thing you put the ball in. Two times a week you would go outside play basketball or volleyball, or run around. I never went to gym and work out like this in school is way different. (Femi)

Positive responses to physical activity experiences following migration was explained as having more choices, and appreciation for being active now living in Canada.

Well, I think I like physical activity more now, just cause there's nothing interesting about physical activity in my country. It's all soccer, and that's all. But here, there are a lot of choices, so I enjoy it now. It's a big part of my life now. Coming here changed how

I feel about physical activity. There is more choice here. Here, if I don't like soccer, I don't have to go to soccer. (Yeva)

The participants' identities strongly intersected with their immigrant status and had an impact that continues to shape the ways in which they understand their lived experiences with physical activity. Immigration was seen to both positively and negatively influence their experiences, but in all cases, there were clear differences and reflections between those comparative experiences, their home or origin and life in Canada, largely due to the complexities of immigrant identities.

4.2 Barriers to Participation in Physical Activity

The girls emphasized various barriers that acted alone, or together to affect their participation in physical activity. This theme is supported by the various barriers the girls voiced and discussed in detail.

4.2.1 A Lack of Places/Spaces for Physical Activity

Ayah in particular spoke to the difficulties in finding environments and safer spaces in which she could enjoy physical activity. This also connects back to subtheme [insert] where working out, and exercises were not a desired form of activity, but that these types of spaces are what Ayah perceives to be the only type of environment available to take in physical activity.

The only thing we have in Winnipeg, it's the YMCA. Let's say Shapes, it's technically the same thing but a different name. There is only machines there and you just go do whatever you want. There's not a lot of choice to do. It's going to be the same thing. The same machines. (Ayah)

Speaking with Ayah about her childhood in Syria, she described her home as having a swimming pool and of her father teaching her to swim. She also outlined her recent experiences with swimming in Winnipeg, specifically during her high school physical education classes.

I prefer the girls' swimming pool, to take my hijab off, and be more active. It's hard to swim when there's boys and girls. I got the Islamic dressing pool thing, like it's still hard, because let's say you want to go under the water and move, you have to put your hand on hijab. (Ayah)

This is significant as despite Ayah's profound love for swimming she did not take part in the swimming component of physical education class in Winnipeg. Instead, she talked about the barrier(s) that she faced:

We did the aqua thing. They said once you can go, but for me as a hijabi girl I didn't like to go, so I didn't went. I just did the gym at the class. I just stay at school. I wasn't sure if there is male or boys in there. The teacher said she's not sure, she said maybe it's going to be us girls, but maybe there' a boy lifeguard. My dad said it's better for you to just stay at school. (Ayah)

Whether they were perceived feelings of a lack of spaces they deemed to be conducive to be active in, specifically in ways that were enjoyable, or environments that were not culturally inclusive, this was a barrier that was discussed as disrupting the participants' engagement with physical activity. For Ayah, this was particularly telling of cultural insensitivity that exists within

both the physical education context, and in general public places because of the value and meaning swimming had for her in Syria, for her to then disengage with swimming following immigration to Winnipeg. This cultural insensitivity was reflected in the physical educators' unwillingness to take the extra steps to inquire about the space in which the class would be entered to participate in swimming. She also referred to herself as a "hijabi girl," a very distinct description of herself that she identified with when speaking to the cultural relevancy she looked for in spaces to be active within. Therefore, spaces in which she felt she could not move freely in while maintaining her identity as a "hijabi girl" reflected the cultural exclusivity that spaces in Winnipeg continue to reinforce, especially with regards to swimming pools.

4.2.2 Perceived Lack of Physical Competence

This subtheme was especially apparent when initiating conversations with the girls about whether or not they had tried out for any sport teams at their current high schools (in Canada). Some of the participants described their engagement with organized sport in their home of origin. However, the girls expressed that they would never try out for an organized sporting team within their high schools.

Here, I feel it's very different. You have to be like 70 percent good at basketball to be at the basketball team. [In Syria] there's so many different levels, it's open for everybody. It's available for everybody, no matter your age. But here there is specific rules, or a specific thing to do to be a part of a team, or part of physical activity. [It's only open to] the person that use to working out, or train a lot. For me, I've never played volleyball before. How am I supposed to play it at gym class? (Ayah)

Ayah spoke in detail about her playing on a basketball team in Syria, but when asked if she has played basketball since coming to Canada she stated:

I would like to. It's very different here. It's only a school team, and you have to apply. But in Syria, let's say you want to play soccer or basketball, you just go, let's say, YMCA company, and say, "hey is there a basketball team that I can join in?" And you just playing without doing games, you can do that. But here it is so different. (Ayah)

After Reem discussed her experiences playing soccer in the country she had immigrated from, and inquiring if she had ever been on a sports team here in Canada, she expressed the desire to try out, and also the regret she felt in not doing so. Here she elaborated on the reason(s) that stopped her from trying out.

I wish I tried. I would've just be in a team, but I didn't even try out. I was thinking about trying out but I didn't. I was like, I might not be as good as other kids because they've been doing it all life, and I'm just doing it for fun, few times. I'm really don't know all the rules. I was thinking to join badminton and soccer. I didn't think about other teams, but these two I was really wanted to be in. (Reem)

The girls spoke to the perceived lack of competence they felt within the quotations above, but also unpacked their lack of confidence in participating in organized sport may be due to their immigrant identities, and the comparison they find themselves feeling towards their Canadian born peer's abilities.

4.2.3 Lack of Social Support/Social Exclusion

The girls all spoke about the difficulty that they sensed when making friends following immigration. This sense of social exclusion the girls felt with the difficulty of connecting with others upon arrival to Canada, especially within their school environment, ultimately played a significant role in the challenges they experienced with (not) finding a social support system, such as a friend, to be active with.

I don't have a lot of friends now, so, like really hard. Most of them know each other from old school, grade 6 and 8. I tried in my grade, in my science class for grade ten. I start talking with people, like a boy and a girl. We start having fun as friends. But when you seem them at the hallway, they don't even laugh. They don't even smile. They don't even say hi. They're all kind of Canadian. They all use to each other, so they have their own group. (Ayah)

In middle school, it was kind of hard cause you come in 8th grade. People know each other for like 8 years, and I had come in the middle of the year, and yeah I didn't really like it...In middle school everyone was friends with each other, and they knew the conversations and my English wasn't so good. They talked about stuff and I didn't really understand. (Yeva)

Here it's different, kind of like it, but not so much. Because I meet new people the class, I don't know them, so it's hard to talk with them because I'm not sociable. In my old school, it was easy. I see them every day, we talk, we say jokes. (Femi)

For Yeva, she also associated the difficulty in making friends as a perceived discrimination perpetrated by her Canadian-born peers.

I [feel] like Canadians don't really like newcomers. They don't really pay attention to them. Maybe they don't really, accept them. That why I didn't really like talking to [Canadians] and their group. I think maybe [Canadians] don't like that our people moved to their country, and they think that it's their country, so others don't have to come here. There are so many newcomers here that maybe they're like annoyed about it. (Yeva)

This perceived discrimination that Yeva described was not limited to her fellow classmates, but was also a noted behaviour from her physical educators as well. When asking her how she felt about her physical education classes she responded:

Some teacher don't really take serious newcomers. ...The teacher would ask a question about something, and the teacher would laugh at me like I'm dumb. For my friend she was in gym last semester and she would ask questions too, and the teacher would look at her in a weird way. (Yeva)

The difficulty that the girls' experienced in making friends after immigrating to Canada, and the perceived discrimination they felt by both peers and teachers, impacted their level of physical activity. As noted in the quotes below, the girls associate having friends as a necessary support to potentially enhance their engagement with physical activity. However, the challenges they face,

and difficulties with social integration contributed to the barrier of lack of social support to participate in physical activity. They emphasized the importance of social support, more specifically a friend, as a companion that they can enjoy and have fun while being physically active together.

I also think gym is no fun when you're not with your friends. So who I was in gym with, I wasn't really close with them. It wasn't really fun. (Yeva)

We laugh together, with each other. When you are working together it gives you positive energy. You want to do more, but if you are working alone, I just want to finish. With friends, it is better. (Femi)

Reem emphasized that when her friends were in gym class, is when she would make the effort go. She even spoke of the awkwardness that is created by trying to join a new group of peers to be active with.

I would go with them mostly because they are a group, already in the gym. There would be friends, and if I enter them, would be kind of awkward. They are playing soccer and we go standing there, no one pass me the ball, but if I play with my friends and with another group that'll make it better. (Reem)

Ayah connected the challenges she now has with making friends in Canada, by reflectively comparing the social support she previously had in Syria with her cousins. She then emphasized

her desire to have company (friends and family) as a supportive group to enhance her quantity and quality of activity in Canada. She even goes so far as to state that a lack of social support represents the major barrier preventing her from being more active:

Maybe with my cousins like play. We use to play basketball, my home. We have a basketball and play, but it was fun with cousins not with my parents. I wish I can be more active. I almost tried everything, I just need the company to go for it. It's better when you have company, like you're walking, you're talking or you're going to do push ups. It's better if you have a company. (Ayah)

This entire subtheme encompassed the intersectional description of the participants' identities, and how the complexity of relocation that immigrant youth face drastically affected their social integration into a new school. This difficulty that the girls faced with making new friends had severely impacted their lived experiences with physical activity, as they emphasized their desire for a social support system to augment their physical activity levels, but continued to be faced with the perceived hurdle of social exclusion.

4.3 Supports for Engagement in Physical Activity

The girls also discussed various components that facilitated and supported their participation in physical activity. This superior theme details the structures and people that positively influenced the girls' participation in physical activity.

4.3.1 Having Choices

When the participants were presented with choices, they expressed a greater desire to engage with physical education, particularly when those choices were perceived as being more "fun".

Yeah it's more fun, because sometimes we got to choose what we want to do. The teacher says we can choose to go to the wellness center, or badminton or dodgeball. You have options, so that makes it fun. (Yeva)

...in the regular gym class, how you just choose to do stuff. They give you choices, you either play or go to the weight room. First you run, squats... for 50 minutes, and after this 50 minutes we choose what to do after. (Reem)

Having choices also supported greater participation for the girls outside of physical education class, creating pathways for the girls who actively pursued different forms of physical activity outside of the school context.

The fun stuff you get to do outside the school. If you were in regular gym class, you don't get to do. I get more options to [be physically active]. You have more options of skating, playing outside, biking. (Reem)

Having choice(s) of both places to be physically active in and of the types of activities were seen as a support for the participants engagement in physical activity both within the physical education context, and outside of school.

4.3.2 Parental Influence(s)

Parental influence and involvement were supporting factor for the girls. They spoke of how in some cases, their parents were coaches, encouragers of being physically active, providing a familial and social system within which to be active and as active role models.

My dad is a super good coach. He teach me, he teach my sister, and he teach my cousins. My dad is very active. He's very active. He go to swimming every day for two hours. He said, come on, you use weights. You can come just to see people around, even if you don't want to play, just come. (Ayah)

Yes, my dad would make us play games, or like run. He liked to make us do exercise in the morning when he comes for a visit. I mean my parents always wants us to be active. Either it's not sports, there is other stuff, like working out, gym, swimming. That's kind of active too. (Reem)

Oh [my mom] loves badminton, volleyball. Even my mom does sports. We tell her the rules and we start playing together when we go on a family trip. (Reem)

Yeva spoke of her physically active experiences, and described playing tennis with her mother since coming to Canada, an activity that she continues to be engaged with. When asked what it is about playing tennis with her mom that makes it an enjoyable experience she responded:

Well my mom always helps me, shows me tips and stuff, and how to play better. Also because I'm not alone, cause alone will be boring and stuff, just cause I'm with my mom

or someone I know it makes it much more interesting, but most of the time, because my mom helps me to be better at it. (Yeva)

The girls spoke about their parental influence(s) and their experiences with their physical activity, and almost exclusively expressed this in a positive manner. They described looking to their parents for support, guidance, and occasionally as a companion to be active with.

4.3.3 New and Alternative Physical Activity Options

The successful moments that the girls spoke fondly of were the multiple times that they experienced physical activity in new and meaningful ways following immigration. This was often due to trying something new that they were given exposure to because of the accessibility they were exposed to for both themselves and their families to participate in new physical activities. The girls spoke about learning new forms of physical activity in environments such as camp settings and public active centers.

Reem described a camp that she attended that provided her with an exposure to a variety of activities that she enjoyed as well as a time she learned to swim with her entire family when access to a local wellness center was provided.

I went to a camp and for almost two days, or three, but it's like you sleep for two nights there. They had so many options. You could play hockey. They have a gym. It was winter. They had hockey, they have a big gym, everything, even climbing. Then there's outside options. One day they would be like, let's go to the gym. Other day, let's do outside. There's fishing. Today we're going for fishing, ice fishing. Then the other day,

skiing, and skating. I did try skiing and skating, and the one where you wear long stuff on your feet. (Reem)

Yes, I love [swimming]. It's kind of hard to do it, because I just learned a few months ago, but I like to play. The [wellness center] has classes, and we had the whole family was signed up. Everybody almost was learning. (Reem)

The Canadian Leisure Guide was a resource that gave Yeva and her family members an opportunity to try and learn tennis, and continue taking lessons together in addition to the variety of activities her school presented her with.

I go to tennis with my mom. Just started [playing tennis when I came to Canada]. I just thought tennis was like badminton, because I went to badminton too, so I decided to try tennis. (Yeva)

Sometimes the school, we went to a field trips in school, so I liked that. I asked my mom to go there again.

In comparison to her home country she feels her access to physical activity programming, and being given options are more prevalent for her now in Canada.

There's more places to go to do exercises, or it's easier to access. In my country, it's not really. There's not so many wellness centers, and even if there are, they can be full sometimes or too expensive for some people. So, I think it's easier here to access. (Yeva)

Following immigration, the girls experienced successful forms of social integration into sport and recreation, and positive feelings towards physical activity experiences, when they were provided opportunities to try new and alternative forms of physical activity. The girls gave examples of trying swimming, skating, skiing, fishing, hockey and tennis. These moments were successful due to the ease of access the girls felt in those environments, and also being shown and taught various forms of different activities in a comfortable setting.

4.4 Gendered Physical Education

This study aspired to look at the various institutes in which the girls experienced physical activity. One of the major institutions in which this occurred is the girls' physical education classes, and more specifically female (only) fitness classes. Female fitness class was offered as an alternative choice to regular gym classes which were co-ed. This superior theme is supported by the following themes that detail the girls' lived experiences with physical activity within female (only) fitness class.

4.4.1 Gendered Environments Lacking Choices

When discussed previously, the girls associated physical activity with working out, and also that working out for them was not enjoyable. Female fitness classes, from their perspectives, seemed to reinforce these constrained feelings towards physical activity and working out. The female fitness classes were often structured with various stations, or circuits that the girls would move through with allotted time at each station. These stations, described by the girls as working

out, consisted of burpees, Russian twists, and planks. At its core, a class that was very exercise focused.

I'm having female fitness, it's a little harder because it's always a work out. (Ayah)

I do like working out, but it was like more harder, way harder and boring. It was in the same place. I'd like to have more space. It was all of us in one room. It was space of two rooms but because we were doing the physical stuff. It was boring because I don't know, think not all people I know. I really can enjoy working out with some friends. I don't enjoy female fitness. We didn't get to play games, we just do work out. But I like yoga class, that's about it. (Reem)

The preceding quotes are also indicative and supportive where the girls associated physical activity and working out as a non-desirable form of physical activity, but also that female fitness classes lack choices, a previously described barrier to participation the findings in theme two.

The girls also expressed a desire to play games, or to do something outside of just "working out."

The participants indicated previously in theme three that having choices was a supportive factor in engaging them in meaningful ways with physical experiences.

4.4.2 Physical Education Valued for Gender Exclusivity

The female fitness classes the girls participated in, as an option for their physical education high school credit, was often described as unenjoyable because of the type of activities being far too work out focused. The girls however did appreciate the gender exclusive environment. An environment that was encompassed entirely by females, students and teachers,

that provided the girls with a safer space in which they felt they could dress comfortably, and avoid what the girls described as the male gaze, targeting their bodies, and the ways in which they participated.

It's females, so I can wear tight pants and short shirts. Because boys love girls. Let's say you're going to work out, you going to wear a cut short, and a short t-shirt. You going to feel like somebody is looking at you, or they trying to contact with you. Maybe some people don't like it, they feel weird about it. They will prefer a girl space. (Ayah)

My teacher asked me female fitness or regular gym. I didn't know anything about it so I just said female fitness, but I found it fun. We are females, there is no...I don't know how to say it. There is no boys, you can do whatever you want. (Femi)

In summary, problematic barriers exist within the gender exclusive physical education classes and environment that the girls spoke to, that precipitated their disengagement with physical activity. However, a gender exclusive environment also allowed for a safer space for the girls to be active in, and a generated a preference for a gendered space.

4.5 Social Discourses and Physical Activity

This superior theme is representative of the girls' ability to actively negotiate and navigate around social discourses that affect the ways in which they experience physical activity. Additionally, the ways in which the girls spoke about resistance and reinforcement of social discourses, like gendered norms is detailed.

4.5.1 Ethnocultural Influences

The girls were asked to reflect on and describe the connections between their culture and physical activity, and often responded directly by expressing that their ethnocultural background didn't present any barriers or carry any negative impact(s) on their abilities to be physically active, indicating that from their perspectives the two were not related, and that rather their cultures and faiths emphasized the importance of being active.

Ayah when speaking about the important elements to her regarding the interconnections of culture and physical activity she was quick to articulate:

There is no related. You can work out. You can do gym. The important thing is how to protect yourself. You're not allowed to show this part of your body to males, but if it's only girls it's fine. (Ayah)

When asking Reem about her experiences as Muslim girl and whether her culture or religion had any effect on her participation in physical activity she proffered:

I don't think so, because my sister is in a team already. I mean, my parents don't really, or like even in culture doesn't really matter. (Reem)

Yeva engaged in conversation about the intersections of her ethnocultural background and her gender, and what that meant in terms of the norms that exists from her country, and how she actively looks to resist that line of thinking now that she is living in Canada. Her narrative here

provides a clear picture of how she actively navigated around ideas of being a female from Armenia, and how her identity and thinking is constantly changing and shifting due to migration:

It might be my thinking. For example, in a game, in my country, we think that guys are better, they're stronger. They have to be better, that might in my thinking. Although sometimes it's not really right, girls can be much better than guys sometimes. But in my thinking, like from my country, it can...that guys are stronger and better. Better and stuff than girls. But it's not something that I agree with, it's just in my mind that I already think so. First of all in my country there's like a...not rule, but tradition that girls can't work. They're only for raising kids and making food and cleaning the house. The guys are the main part of everything, they have to work, and so it makes everyone think that guys are stronger, smarter and more important than girls. They have more important place than girls. Here its girls are important too, but in my country, it's like no. (Yeva)

The gendered expectations that Yeva experienced that intersected with her ethnocultural background, existed in her everyday life, and also threaded into her physical activity experience. Here, she detailed her thought process, specifically her perception of boys being better at physical activity, and how this impacted the spaces in which she was active in. Here, she connected how this thinking influenced her lived experiences with physical activity:

When I'm playing there's the fear in me that oh it's a guy, I'm against a guy. So he might hurt me or like he might hit stronger, that's in my mind. Even though I don't really think that boys are always better than girls, but it makes me during the game, it makes me

nervous, more nervous than when I'm playing with a girl. When I'm playing with a guy, it's more nervous than a girl. (Yeva)

The ways in which the participants spoke about their ethnocultural influences on their physical experiences was often met with positive or indifferent impacts at best. However, as Yeva articulates, her ethnocultural background was one that was inseparable from an important discussion that was rooted in the intersections of her identity, especially with gender, and the ways in which these social categories intersect to affect her experiences with physical activity. This passage was also one that indicated the multiple ways in which girls look to actively resist gendered norms and expectations.

4.5.2 Social and Gendered Expectations of the Body

All the girls however did feel that being a girl does impact their choices to be physically active. Specifically, with body image, and reinforced gendered stereotypes about male and female bodies. In the quotations below, the girls spoke to the motivations they have to partake in physical activity. This motivation was described as being exclusively connected to body image, and the girls valuing physical appearance as a main focus for participating in activities.

When you want everybody to pay attention for you, you should be in a nice shape, and this is why I want to make that friend to say, "let's go to the gym". (Ayah)

I took female fitness first semester and this semester I don't want to sit like do nothing and get fat. I wanted to work out at the gym. (Femi)

In previous themes, the girls spoke to the various forms of physical activity they enjoy and do not enjoy, and what barriers and supports act jointly to either enhance or discourage their participation in physical activity. Interestingly enough, while working out is not valued as something the girls' do because they enjoy it, rather the value placed on it is externally motivated by body image as well.

We work harder in female fitness more than gym. In female fitness all we do is exercise, exercise, exercise. We don't go play basketball. I don't like this, but I like it for my body, but I don't enjoy it. My stomach place, I want it to be flat, and my whole body to be not weak. (Femi)

I don't like [exercising] but I like it for my body, but I don't enjoy it. My stomach place, I want it to be flat. (Femi)

All of the above quotes reinforced ideologies of both female and male bodies. The girls placed real value on being active, not because they necessarily enjoyed it, but rather that they wanted to avoid being out of shape (fat), and for their bodies to look good. However, there were gendered expectations that also impacted what constituted a "good looking" female body compared to a male body:

I don't like my body... my arm to be muscled. I see that women, girls without muscle in their arm are better. Look better. They look beautiful. Maybe the stomach it can be a little

bit, but not too muscular. Legs the same. For guys, they have to be muscular. You don't need to, but I see girls' body will better if she is not very muscular. (Femi)

Social and gendered expectations were reoccurring social discourses that the girls often spoke about and, when discussing both the male and female bodies, this discourse was often reinforced. Gendered body expectations seemed to be a motivating factor for the girls desire to participate and be involved in physical activity, even when their strongly voiced opinion was their dislike for it. Secondly, there were clear distinctions drawn between the expectations of the outer appearance of both female and male bodies, which impacted what physically active choices the girls participated in.

4.5.3 Gendered Norms

While the girls actively negotiated around certain social discourses, the one that continued to be reinforced by all the participants throughout the interviews were the very obviously gendered norms that play out in the context of physical education, body image, and embodiment. All of the participants felt that girls and boys participate and are involved in physical activity in different ways. Often these differences were characterized by males being more receptive to being involved in physical activity in comparison to girls:

Boys play, play sports every day. They go to the gym, play soccer a lot or hockey for Canada. Not a lot of girls play. (Ayah)

If you were in class, you'll see boys are doing more active stuff, then girls will be talking. Even if the [girls] are just out walking or playing, they are more talking. (Reem)

Reem described the female fitness classes as being boring *because* it was all girls. This provided a counter narrative to that of the participants' desire for gender exclusive environments. Rather, Reem felt that an environment with both boys and girls opened up options for different types and forms of activity. However, she did still reinforce gendered stereotypes that males are just more active than females, simply because they are boys. She then described the differences between having both boys and girls in one environment together:

Because they all do the same stuff, but if there's boys there would be people whose playing with basketball, people whose playing with different stuff. Girls would be just seating all around and talking. It's always boys versus boys, girls versus girls. Everybody knows the reason, because they are probably not as strong as the boys. You always play with who is in your size or your power. [Boys] are more active that's it. They have more energy. They'll be running and shooting balls in the basket." (Reem)

The girls also discussed how the environment of being physically active was disrupted or changed when males were present. This connects back to when the girls voiced their preference for an all-female space for engagement in physical activity. In the previous sections a gender exclusive space was discussed as a safe environment to dress freely in the clothing they wanted and felt comfortable in to avoid the male gaze. Whereas male bodies present in the spaces where they took part in physical activity also reinforced gendered stereotypes, particularly of boys being stronger, and better at physical activities:

If you are playing game, sports, with boys in it, maybe he doesn't mean but he is stronger than the girls. He can run and hit me by accident, harder, like he is stronger. The hit will be bad. (Femi)

It's not really fun with guys playing. I think they are stronger, so they hit the ball stronger. It's fun for them, but not for girls. When I'm playing there's the fear...I'm against a guy. He might hurt me, or he might hit stronger. That's in my mind. (Yeva)

The gendered norms the girls continuously reinforced throughout the interviews was shown to have severe impacts on their physically active experiences. Peppered throughout this subtheme, are depictions in the quotes of the ways in which girls feel that males are stronger, better, and more active than their female counterparts. They also detailed how the space they were active within, was impacted by the presence of male bodies.

4.6 Health and Immigration

The original interview guide was created to explore the phenomenon of physical activity. However, as the interviews continued, conversations and dialogue around the meaning of health, and changes in health following migration began to emerge. The change in way of life following migration was often discussed in relation to the reason for health decline.

4.6.1 Descriptions of Health

Health was often described by the girls in more holistic terms, a feeling or related back to nutrition. Occasionally it was defined as both separate from physical activity, and intertwined. Conversations surrounding health during the interviews often saw the girls focussing their talk towards descriptions of what a "healthy" body is.

It's good to be healthy, flexible. You should, you have to be healthy. You have to be flexible if you want to carry heavy stuff or if you just go for stairs for three or four floors. Don't be tired. That's why it should be value. (Ayah)

Eating vegetables and proteins, things that have proteins and iron. That's health besides exercising. Sleeping early and waking early. (Femi)

I think first of all, health comes from the inside. What your thoughts are to be healthy first. Then what you eat, and what you drink. (Yeva)

Reem's detailed description of the meaning of health was a depiction where the body and the mind are completely intertwined. She associated having a healthy mind with also having a healthy body, one that moves and is active. Her perception of health was also one that was embedded with cultural influence and spirituality, where she spoke about her father's emphasis on cleanliness-not necessarily hygiene- but rather a clean mind, body and spirit. She also viewed health as a holistic concept that required interconnectedness of all components of herself, such as eating healthy, exercising, and thinking healthy. She provided a narrative that voiced the meaning and richness of all aspects of herself, and the meaning of health:

Eating healthy, thinking healthy. Kind of thinking of like positive, I think that means you are thinking healthy. If you have a healthy brain... the healthy brain and a healthy body. Healthy body do exercising, so we used to do running. My dad would make us run and do

stuff. It was kind of part culture. It would be weird me saying it, clean, you know, and healthy. Stuff like this, we had a lot of stuff learning about them, even in Jordan. Health is from the inside, like being in a good body, and looking good, and like it fits perfect. You feel like you look good and you know you feel good about your body, that's what it means. Being healthy, I mean you always need to do some exercising. Even if you eat healthy and never do exercising, is not really healthy. I mean it makes your brain work better if you run. (Reem)

There was a clear dialogue the girls created with their meanings and understandings of health and physical activity, and two concepts that meld and function together for the betterment of themselves. There was also more of an emphasis placed on internal aspects of themselves when discussing health, whereas physical activity was occasionally discussed as a separate entity from health.

4.6.2 Health Declines Following Immigration

Newcomers face alarming health declines within the first 2 years following immigration (Newbold, 2009). Many of these girls have lived in Canada for less than 3 years, and are already dealing with the realities of watching their health decline. The girls spoke to the effects of immigration had on themselves and their families' well-being. Below are important stories and qualitative accounts of their experiences with declining health.

Ayah painted a distressing picture as she discussed the reality of watching her health decline as a result of migrating to Canada due in large part to a change in activity levels and in nutrition. She found herself eating food that was full of chemicals and hormones, which was a drastic change

from the fresh food she had readily available to her in Syria. For Ayah, her weight gain was a major indicator of the health declines she experienced following migration:

I have weight. I'm a little fat, I know. I have to do the gym stuff, the diet stuff, but it's so hard in Canada, like so hard. Because technically you're doing nothing, you're just going to school, you're eating, you're coming back home, you're eating, you're laying down, you're eating. The only thing you're doing is eating. I took 30 kilogram in two years when I came to Canada. I used to be more active. Even let's say the cucumbers, it's got different because they don't have fresh cucumbers all the time of the year. We do have in Syria fresh all the time of the year. I think most of the food in Canada, it's about fast food and hormones food. That's why I think I got a lot of weight here. If you're not going a physical active, you're going to keep taking weight, like I did. (Ayah)

The girls also touched on the impacts of migration and mental health, not just the effect it had on themselves, but their family as a whole.

You feel there is a million things at your head, especially...like I was at war. There's a lot of people for me there. We have every morning, we have to wake up and make sure everybody's okay. (Ayah)

Well...moving from somewhere so far, from Europe to Canada is much harder. If there was at least a family member or something, they will help in kind of way, or talk. But there is no one here to help, or like family. It was emotionally kind of hard. (Yeva)

The changes in health were apparent as well for Reem, especially in terms of diet, due to the abundance of fast food options:

I do eat outside a lot too here like Poutine, Juniors, McDonalds. I do go a lot to these ones, like almost every week and I used to go every day at lunch. For me it's too lazy to just pack up my lunch. I have a sandwich in my back pack, I eat it for lunch because my friend bought something really good, so I didn't eat it. I ate hers. I think it's worse, because I don't really watch what I eat but mostly I think I eat healthy because as long as my mom do food and I eat it. But from general way, I went to the doctor, I need B12, more spinach and meat. I more eat fried stuff, mostly not healthy. (Reem)

While this study focused on the lived experiences with physical activity, the participants spoke about health and physical activity in interconnected ways, and also supported significant immigrant health literature that details significant declines in immigrant health.

4.6.3 Changes in Daily Activities due to Immigration

The participants spoke of changes that have occurred within their daily lives since coming to Canada, which has ultimately affected their health. This connects back to the social exclusion that the girls described since coming to Canada. This social exclusion seemed to exist outside of the schooling context as well, resulting in a form of isolation that the participants perceived feeling. Following immigration, one participant found herself living in a routine that she characterized as unhealthy. She detailed the distress she felt with having the same reoccurring events happening to her each day:

I'm like at home. I am doing nothing, just like washing the dish, cleaning the kitchen, then I go to my bed and watch a TV show, like I sleep and then I come back again to school, like that's happening every day. (Ayah)

When asking Femi to describe physically active experiences with her friends, she was quick to respond that it is non-existent. She then proceeded to reflect on her physical activity experiences with friends in Egypt, enforcing the noticeable difference in daily activities, especially with friends that has suffered and/or changed since immigration.

Nothing here. Not at all. I do go out with friends just one time, we walked around the mall, and we ate at McDonalds, then we went home. In Egypt we walked the streets, we ran after each other, as in not running, as exercise. We were having fun together. (Femi)

The variant changes in the girls' day to day activities, were also representative of the girls perceived change in their daily physical activities, and experiences with movement following immigration. Ayah's expression of her love for basketball, and playing competitively on a team in Syria was apparent throughout her interviews. However, relocation, forced displacement and being constantly uprooted, drastically affected the meaning of physical activity in her life. Below she details the consequences of immigration on her (non) participation with physical activity, specifically playing basketball and exercising, and in turn the negative impact this fragmented experience has had on her health and energy levels ever since:

I used to play basketball, but when I moved from place to another, I didn't work out for a long time. For maybe two or three years, so when I decide to go back, it was so hard to me to go back. I get tired so fast, and then, okay it's better to not do it. Okay I'm done, I'm getting tired so fast, okay, whatever. That what happens to me. (Ayah)

Immigration also impacted time with family, which the girls expressed as being limited now since moving to Canada. This was largely due to separation from extended family members since moving to Canada, and in part because immediate family members are consumed with the business of their new daily lives such as language classes, or increased work demands. Reem explained the structural life differences since arriving in Canada and the impact(s) they have had on the routine of her daily life:

Very much yes, because I had to go and play more with the class and then outside. I would have more time with my family. In Syria, I would do so much physical stuff just being after school, coming back home and I'll play and run and do tag games with my little siblings. (Reem)

Femi discussed how the changes in the daily structures of life in Canada have profoundly impacted the physical experiences of and with her family as well:

We played games. We walked, and do lots of stuff, and my cousins too. [But] not here. Because here it is... you see how cold it is? We don't walk a lot. In Egypt we walk, we move wherever we want. It's easier because of the weather. (Femi)

Changes in daily activities included a shift in the events that happened in everyone's day to day lives, particularly the ways participants interacted with their friendship groups, and a limited amount of time spent with family due to immigration. All of these changes were described as negatively impacting the girls' health and overall wellbeing.

4.7 Value and Meaning of Physical Activity

The context for this subordinate themes is mostly supported by the third interview conducted with each participant, which was meant to be the meaning making component of the interviewing process (Seidman, 2013). Although the girls did describe moments of dislike, and barriers towards being active and healthy, they also expressed a value in having a healthy body, and being physically active. Physical activity was shown to intersect with components of their overall well-being, such as happiness, feeling good, and positive energy. As well, physical activity was instrumental in providing the participants with a sense of accomplishment and presenting opportunities to be challenged and learned new skills.

4.7.1 Interconnections of Physical Activity and Overall Positive Wellbeing

All of the girls spoke of physical activity and its value for being connected to feeling good, happiness and releasing energy and negative feelings. Ayah found meaning in physical activity for an emotional outlet, to help her alleviate feelings of anger, to use physical activity as a coping mechanism, and as a catalyst to change feelings of anger into happiness.

Sometimes I be happy because I have a lot of energy, and I'm really mad at someone, I just do work out. Sometimes when I'm mad, I go to gym class, start moving at the beginning. I like it. I start feel happy and I get more energy. (Ayah)

One participant highlighted the importance of physical activity as a source of happiness and satisfaction. However, it is important to note that these feelings were often connected to activities that she enjoyed. When she enjoyed an activity, she felt more energized to participate and find a meaningful engagement in the activity:

It kind of makes me happier. When I play something that I really like, it makes me feel very...not proud of myself, but happy. It's a source of happiness, and satisfaction. It's important to me. Sometimes I feel energized if it's something that I enjoy, and sometimes I can keep smiling when playing. It's just cause I like what we're doing. (Yeva)

Reem felt that physical activity provided her with a sense of serenity that was often difficult for her to find in everyday life. Physical activity was a forum in which she could channel her excessive energy which rendered her mind ready to focus. Reem provides a descriptive illustration of how physical activity calms her:

For me I'm a really hyper person. I would be jumping all day from foot of the door. If I got excited I would jump. When listening to music, I would be jumping. I'm just this kind of person that sometimes you know, if you get up really fast and do something your head would be spinning. This is what happens to me mostly. If I do something like

volleyball, basketball, I would be tired. I won't be moving like this, I won't be that hyper and then I won't get headaches. I would be more calm. When I'm more calm, I'm more focused. (Reem)

Reem draws connections between the value she finds with physical activity as a source of calmness, and the potential for positive cognitive effects. Here Reem details the importance of physical activity and its inherent value for helping her focus mentally:

It makes your brain work better if you run. When I was really young, if I was running in the morning, and then I would go to school. I would be active before I would go to school. My mom would get me ready, so I would be running and playing. I go to school and I feel like I'm ready to do the study. It feels right. (Reem)

The interconnections that the girls detailed, emphasized the value and meaning they placed on their experiences with physical activity, and the worth they feel physical activity provides them for their overall well-being. The girls spoke to different components of themselves that are “better” because of their direct involvement with being physically active, whether it was a source of happiness, an outlet for both positive and negative feelings, or pure satisfaction.

4.7.2 Interconnections of Learning, Sense of Accomplishment and Physical Activity

Physical activity also provided the girls a sense of accomplishment, where they felt proud of themselves for completing a task, or overcoming a challenge. Physical activity provided them a forum where they could overcome challenges, and learn new skills.

I asked Femi to describe how she felt when she tried the climbing wall, and how that experience was for her. This was an activity that was new to her since moving to Canada, which took place on a field trip with her school. The girls have expressed in previous themes that trying a new activity in general had been a supportive factor in their positive feelings towards participation which also provided her with a sense of accomplishment. She spoke to her intentional feelings of fear that she was able to overcome with feelings of accomplishment:

You try new thing. You are scared at first, but when you go up enough and you find that when you're going back to go down again, it's fun. You feel, oh I did something. I climbed all of this when you look down. (Femi)

I asked Yeva why she enjoyed playing badminton, and while she had voiced earlier that it was an activity that she participated in with her mother, giving her a social support system to engage in a meaningful way, there were also aspects of badminton that meshed with the development and learning of new skills. Yeva voiced how her ability to overcome a challenge, and learn a new skill, especially when playing badminton, provided her with a sense of happiness:

When I do it good or when you start off and you're not so good, and when you play for two weeks and you're better, you are kind of proud of yourself and it makes you happy too ...the fact that I learned something new, or that I like. It was a challenge for me and now I can do it, and it's not really a challenge, and yeah it just makes me happy I like playing badminton, but also challenging, those like challenges. Learning how to hit from very high, or with a lot of power. I think that's interesting to me. (Yeva) `

This entire superior theme was meant to address the value and meaning the girls' placed on their lived experiences with physical activity. Physical activity was shown to interrelate with a multitude of positive emotional responses, cognitive improvements, and an enhanced sense of self through learning and accomplishment.

Summary

Through this qualitative examination and the narratives of high school immigrant girls in Winnipeg, Manitoba, interpreted the meaning of their lived experiences with physical activity; four participant profiles, and seven superior themes were formulated. The participant profiles provided a narrative from the girls themselves, about their life story that focused primarily on their experiences with immigration. Ayah, Femi, Reem and Yeva's stories were all formulated from the first interview they took part in from the three-part interpretive phenomenological interview series (Seidman, 2013). The seven superior themes were as listed: Attitudes Towards Physical Activity; Barriers to Participation in Physical Activity; Supports for Engagement in Physical Activity; Gendered Physical Education; Social Discourses and Physical Activity; Health and Immigration; and Values and Meanings of Physical Activity. Each theme was created with subthemes that provided a meaningful depiction of the girls' spoken word, with direct quotations that reinforced the overall theme. The next chapter will provide an in-depth discussion of immigrant girls' lived experiences with physical activity from the findings presented above.

Chapter V: Discussion

The previous chapter voiced the four profiles of each participant, providing context and understanding to their lives and the phenomena of physical activity that sit at the intersections of, gender, ethnocultural background, and immigration. Also, the data that was generated from the three part-interview series of each participant was represented in seven distinct themes of immigrant girls' lived experiences with physical activity. The seven superior themes were the following: (1) Attitudes Towards Physical Activity; (2) Barriers to Participation in Physical Activity; (3) Supports for Engagement in Physical Activity; (4) Gendered Physical Education; (5) Social Discourses and Physical Activity; (6) Health and Immigration; (7) Values and Meanings of Physical Activity. This chapter will discuss these findings further, emphasizing similarities that have been previously found with young women's experiences with physical activity, a focus on the impact of the intersections of the participants, and a critique of gender exclusive physical education classes. This chapter also provides an in-depth discussion on the interpretation of health and physical activity from the voices of these immigrant girls themselves, in addition to how they negotiate around and within social discourses that play out within their physical activity experiences. Lastly, the results have indicated that the participants place value and meaning on physical activity in their lives, and this is discussed in further detail in this chapter.

Barriers and Supports

Literature has focused on the barriers and facilitators that affect youth participation with physical activity. Similarities emerged throughout the individual interviews with each participant. This study's findings support components of previous research that has focused exclusively on female experiences with physical activity. The second theme which focused on

the barriers that participants faced which impacted their participation were: Lack of Places/Spaces for Physical Activity, Perceived Lack of Physical Competence, and Lack of Social Support/Social Exclusion. Whereas, the third theme expressed the supports that enhanced engagement in physical activities which were: Having Choices, Parental Influence(s), and New and Alternative Physical Activity Options.

One major similarity that has been described in previous literature is a desire for youth to have social support, specifically from friends, to be physically active with. Yungblut et al. (2012) study suggests that adolescent female youth are more likely to try new activities when participating with friends, and friends were viewed as more likely to enhance physical activity enjoyment. All the participants in this study emphasized that if they had a friend to be physically active with, they would be active more often. They also emphasized the reason why the activities they had participated in previously were enjoyable was because of the social company they had during it. And lastly, they stated that the way physical activity could be more enjoyable for them moving forward, is if they had a friend to join them.

While a friend was a consistent social support the girls spoke about, the participants also discussed social support in terms of a parental figure, a sibling and/or a cousin. While some of the girls enjoyed being physically active with a family member, the girls also talked about the support they received from their parents to be active. Parental influence has been found to be either an encouraging or discouraging factor in children's efforts to participate in physical activity/sport (Thompson et al., 2005). Immigrant girls in particular have been found to be more greatly impacted in having the support of family and friends when negotiating their participation in sport, recreation and physical education (Taylor & Doherty, 2005). It was evident throughout this study the emphasis the participants placed on having a social support system that aided in

creating an environment of enjoyment when being physically active. Being active with a friend was described as more fun, being better, and less boring. The participants' parents were people who positively influenced their physical activity experiences, as well. Parents were described as individuals who taught them physical skills, were supporters and encouragers of activity, and who were in various ways, role models.

The girls often expressed their desire and need for a variety of choices to be active. When addressed, what it was that they liked about physical activity in their physical education classes, they spoke about the need to have more options as a bridge to wanting to participate more in physical activity. For the participants, having an assortment of choices ultimately rendered being physically activity more fun. Curricular choice has been shown to be a powerful factor, especially for girls in terms of their decision making in their engagement with physical activity (Azzarito et al., 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). Having a wide range of activities to choose from in physical education continues to be a supportive factor for engagement of girls in physical education (Gibbons & Humbert, 2008). Having choice was also a feature that the participants felt they could only experience outside of the school context as their physical education classes were way too prescriptive and narrow in curricular programming. As described by Reem:

“The fun stuff, you get to do outside the school. If you were in regular gym class, you don't get to do. I get more options to be [physically active].”

Having movement options can provide a supportive base for young girls to engage in physical activity outside of school, yet this is unfortunately countered by the seemingly limited choices that they currently receive within the physical education curriculum in their classes.

The participants highlighted specific physical proficiencies that they felt were necessary to participate in activities here in Canada. This was especially apparent when they discussed trying out for a sports team in their school, or even participating in their respective physical education classes. Thompson et al.'s (2005) study expressed the importance of developing both adequate physical skills and confidence in early childhood, so that being physically active and engaging in recreation and leisure pursuits are viable options for maintaining an active lifestyle across the lifespan, and the role that physical education plays in developing these skills is a crucial platform to ensure confident engagement in a wide array of physical activities. However, the girls expressed perceived feelings of a lack of competence to participate, which was an obvious barrier for them in both sporting environments and the physical education system. Prior research has found that young girls do fear not being good enough to participate in physically active experiences and that this fear was connected to social influences or not being skilled enough (Yungblut et al., 2012). This social influence was a factor as the girls continually compared themselves with other peers, which from their perspective, reinforced the assumption(s) that they were not as good.

The Intersections of Participant Identities and Physical Activity

The participants articulated similar experiences that have also been noted in previous research findings, specifically the barriers and supports girls have expressed that have enhanced their participation in physical activity such as having a social support system, being given choices, and feeling competent. However, the girls described identity as newcomers to Canada, was a very prominent theme which coursed through their discussions of their lived experiences with physical activity. The participants' social location that sits predominantly at the intersection of ethnocultural background, gender, and immigrant status reflects previous findings, specifically

in terms of how young women experience the barriers and support to their participation. While previous research has drawn the connection between immigrant youth and Canadian born youth as facing similar challenges of identity development, and a preoccupation with appearance, immigrant youth also have to face the unique challenges that occur due to resettlement, adaptation and integration into their new society (Khanlou & Crawford, 2006). The diverse set of factors that immigrants are situated within, with unique life histories, shape their health and their lived experiences with physical activity (Segall & Fries, 2017). The immigrant girls lived experiences with physical activity were deserving of focus on their social identity as an immigrant female.

Research has emphasized the importance of female youth having friends to be physically active with as a facilitator to improving girls' physically active experiences, which was also expressed by the immigrant females of this study as well. More specifically, Dwyer et al. (2006) has suggested that a supportive social environment will make it easier for adolescent girls to engage in physical activity, and that future programming should be developed and implemented taking in account the importance that young girls place on being active with their friends (p.86). However, being a girl who has migrated from a different country and entering a new school, results in a level of social exclusion that occurs, and difficulty in forming friendship groups. Previous research has found that one in five immigrant children report feeling like an outsider (Oxman-Martine et al., 2012). This perceived discrimination was especially apparent when Yeva spoke about being a newcomer:

I [feel] like Canadians don't really like newcomers. They don't really pay attention to them. Maybe they don't really, accept them.

This greatly impacted the girls desire to be active both in and out of school, as they expressed the desire to have a friend to go to the gym with, or to be with in their physical education class. Previously, research had indicated that newcomer females are more negatively impacted by feelings of social exclusion, than their male counterparts (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). Although having a friend to engage in physical activity with was described by the girls as a way to make it a more enjoyable experience, this same support was also made challenging due to the relocation they experienced when entering a new school as an immigrant, where the majority of students already knew each other, and the challenges of having to attend classes with a different cohort each time, and English not being their primary language.

Also, a lack of physical competency can be a barrier to girls' participation, especially in their physical education classes. A level of physical competency is further complicated by the lack of familiarity with particular activities in their classes that newcomers face, highlighted here by Ayah:

“...I've never played volleyball before. How am I supposed to play it at gym class?”.

However, all the participants spoke about positive experiences with physical activity in their home countries, whether it was playing on a basketball team, playing soccer, playing games or dancing. Even though they had found a continued or new enjoyment in some form of physical activity following migration, such as basketball or badminton, they never felt comfortable or competent enough to try out for a team within their respective high schools. More than one in ten newcomer youth have been found in previous studies to be socially isolated, and reporting never

participating in organized activities (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2012). Interestingly enough, some of them expressed a desire to do so, and even regret for not trying, but ultimately felt that they were not good enough to be a part of a team when compared to their Canadian born peers who were described as participating in and being exposed in their physical education classes to particular activities their entire lives. Previous findings have suggested that immigrant girls compare themselves to their Canadian-born female counterparts, describing feelings of inferiority in that comparison. Thus, reinforcing the notion of citizenship and national identity as a form of marginalization of newcomers, perpetuating the notion that they do not belong (Khanlou & Crawford, 2006). This comparison was apparent throughout the discussion with the girls and physical activity, especially with regards to how they felt about their lack of physical competencies.

This study revealed a spectrum of positive and negative experiences with physical activity in terms of the accessibility and resources the girls felt were available to them within Winnipeg, to enjoy physical activity. The girls spoke fondly of engaging with new seasonal physical experiences that they otherwise would not have were they not in Canada, activities such as skating and skiing. A previous study suggested that newcomer youth find value in being a part of sport and physical recreation as an opportunity to learn more about Canadian culture, and trying “Canadian” sports (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). One of the participants attended a camp and echoed the findings of Doherty and Taylor (2007) as she described it as a perfect forum within which to engage in a successful and enjoyable way to be able to take part in a myriad of different, and in some cases, uniquely Canadian activities (i.e. ice fishing, skating and skiing). As well, recreation leisure guides, and wellness centers were valuable resources and spaces that provided the girls multiple opportunities to attempt and to learn a variety of different activities,

such as tennis and swimming, which also provided opportunities to be involved with their extended families. However, certain physical experiences were also described as being limited, offering few choices to do anything outside of working out, as defined by the participants, at a different gym with similar machines. Some spaces, like swimming pools were also perceived as barriers that provided little support in the way of cultural sensitivity, understanding, and accommodations, specifically for the girls who wore hijabs.

Gender Exclusive Physical Education

Physical education was one of the major institutions that girls identified where they had participated in physical activity and concentrated most of their discussion about their physical experiences that occurred during their physical education classes. Three of the four participants in this study were currently or had participated in an all-female fitness class. These physical education classes were often a choice provided for the girls as an alternative to the regular gym class, which often constituted a combination of both genders, and had a curricular focus that was more sport/game specific. The female fitness classes were described by the girls as being centred exclusively around working out. The girls associated working out typically with forms of exercises like Russian twists, planks, and burpees. The participants found these forms of exercises to be unfamiliar compared to the more casual nature of physical activity experiences that existed in their home of origin. Ayah highlighted the more casual nature of her physical education class in Syria, and the oddity of physical education now in Winnipeg, below:

“We go outside, and the teacher sitting on the floor. We’re all talking, we’re all making jokes and laugh. We don’t work out. It’s really weird to work out.”

However, Female fitness classes did provide them with opportunities to experience physical activity beyond the classroom such as rock climbing, dragon boating, and dance. Ultimately

the girls had an appreciation for gender exclusive environments where they were involved in physical activity, but the curriculum that was offered in these female fitness classes were described as “not fun”, “boring”, and was met with disdain. These feelings towards their female fitness classes was captured within Reem’s descriptions:

“I don’t enjoy female fitness. We didn’t get to play games, we just do work out.”

While there has been research that has focused on girls’ experiences with physical education, there is little research that has focused on the benefits, and outcomes of gender exclusive physical education. The girls placed value on having a space exclusive for all girls to be active in, and that they described as a safer space within which to participate in physical activity, specifically due to not having to be concerned about the male gaze. Pfaeffi and Gibbons (2010) previous research found that young girls expressed feelings of comfort and being less self-conscious when participating in physical activity in an exclusive all girl environment. Findings have also suggested that young women are hyper aware of gender and that those perceptions directly impact on their disengagement from physical activity, where often young women have expressed the importance of single sex physical education for some activities to avoid scrutiny and body shaming from boys (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). The participants also valued female fitness class as a space where they felt they could wear different types of clothing because there were no boys in the space and there was a general acceptance for a variety of clothes (e.g., tight pants, and short shirts). A gender exclusive space was also valued by the girls as it also seemingly precipitated a fun environment as the power dynamics surrounding gender are diminished or eliminated in the absence of boys. In the presence of other girls and in a space devoid of boys, they expressed a sense of freedom to pursue movement and physical activity that they desired.

However, collectively they did find that the all-female fitness classes were narrowly defined and very work out and exercise focused that offered few opportunities to pursue other forms of movement and activity. This was identified as a major issue within the physical education curriculum that offers female fitness classes, as the girls experienced it as too confining and tied to Western notions of working out and exercising as a form of physical activity that they did not enjoy. In fact, they described it as being both a deterrent and a barrier to engagement. The activity choices that were offered in their physical education classes, and more specifically in their female fitness classes are important vehicles to enhance or dissuade the meaningful engagement of female participants, as previous studies have emphasized that young girls are immensely impacted by curricular choice that is offered within physical education (Azzarito et al., 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). Gibbons and Humbert's (2008) study found that young girls emphasized their desire for a wider variety of physical activities to be offered, specifically lifespan activities such as walking, dance or swimming. The girls felt that working out was purposeful, but more so in terms of the aesthetics of the body, for an external physical appearance focus, a factor that is rooted in harmful and well documented practices of self-harm, which could possibly represent another environment that continues to reinforce body image issues. Seemingly there was a real lack of enjoyment and intrinsic motivation for the girls to want to participate in a more exercise and work out environment as opposed to female fitness classes. In previous studies, providing girls input and autonomy in the activities that are provided within their own physical education classes, has shown to increase their motivation, and made the class enjoyable (Pfaeffi & Gibbons, 2010).

In summary, some of the barriers that the participants addressed throughout the interviewing process, and in previous studies that adolescent female youth have voiced that

negatively impact their participation in physical activity, existed and manifested within the female fitness classes offered to the girls. More specifically, a lack of choices within female fitness classes was described as a major factor in preventing meaningful participation for the girls. Through their interviews, the participants voiced that having choices, beyond simply “working out and exercising”, was described as an important and supportive factor to promote and enhance their engagement with physical activity. In order for physical education classes to foster and encourage young women to be more physically active, in meaningful ways, may require more tactical and complex approaches than by simply providing a gender exclusive environments, as this approach on its own does not seem to be enough to change current behaviours and practices. Rather, these environments must take into consideration the reoccurring feedback embedded in academic research, voiced from the experiences of young girls, describing the barriers and supports that either facilitate or dissuade them from being physically active and engaging in physical education. However, understanding the multiple ways in which different groups of young women and girls experience these supports and barriers is an imperative step towards creating a physical education environment that is both female friendly, and ethnoculturally inclusive. Below, Reem highlights the female fitness environment being unenjoyable as it was with people that she did not know:

“It was boring because I don’t know, I think not all people I know. I really can enjoy working out with some friends. I don’t enjoy female fitness”

Reem’s quotation provided important insight into the impact that social integration, or lack thereof, continuously challenges immigrant girls, profoundly impacting their (un)enjoyment with physical activity in multiple environments and fronts, and here, specifically with gender exclusive physical education.

Health and Physical Activity

The participants discussed health, the meaning of health, and if/how health had changed for them following migration and these results were represented within theme 4: The meaning and changes of health following migration. Health was described by the girls in largely holistic ways, emphasizing mental health, for thinking healthy and positive, and as spiritual concept that emanates from the inside of you. Health was expressed holistically as components of eating good, exercising, fun, spirituality and thinking healthy (mental health). A research study found that adolescent females had a basic understanding of the importance of being physically active and its contribution to overall health (Gibbons & Humbert, 2008). Although the girls placed a heavy emphasis on describing health as being internally motivated towards feeling “good”, they also attributed this emotion as being intrinsic and within their control and as a body that aesthetically and emotionally feels good, that is supported with activity, specifically, “a healthy body doing exercising (that is social and fun).”

The multiple barriers that the girls discussed regarding physically activity, were intertwined with their perceptions about their health following migration. Newbold (2009) described the serious physical and mental health declines that occur amongst newcomer population within as little as two years upon arrival to their host countries. All participants have been in Canada for three years or less, and spoke about the apparent changes in their way of living, and health since migrating to Canada. While there has been little qualitative research that has focused on the healthy immigrant effect (Segall & Fries, 2017), particularly from youth immigrant perspective, these health declines were attributed to multiple factors where one touchstone themes articulated by the girls was nutritional changes, where eating habits in Canada

were described as less healthy than that of their home country, with more fast food options, and less fresh, non-hormonal food choices.

Also, the social exclusion that the girls felt within the school context, was on display outside of the schooling environment as well which they also felt impacted their health in detrimental ways. There was a level of isolation and social change that the girls experienced which affected their participation and engagement activity broadly and with physical activity (as they often desired to be active with a friend) specifically, ultimately negatively impacting their health. This apparent change within their social integration structure, and daily activities seemed to severely disrupted post migration, as they often spoke fondly about the time they would spend with friends and family in their home countries, and the walking and playing outside that no longer occurred in their lives in Canada. The isolation that was verbalized by the girls was a feeling of doing nothing intertwined with a list of unhealthy activities, like TV watching, eating unhealthy foods and not being active.

Negotiations Around Social Discourses

The girls described the consequences their ethnocultural background had on their physical activity in their experiences with confusion and a certain level of opacity. Three of the four participants identified as being Islamic in this study, and from a predominantly Arabic region of the world. Previous studies that have primarily focused on Islamic girls and physical activity have found that Islamic girls have often been characterized in the past as young girls who are prohibited from being active due to their cultural beliefs (Thul & LaVoi, 2011). Due to this overarching characterization of Islamic girls, the participants may have felt it was important to state that their ethnocultural background did not influence their ability to be physical activity. Researchers Hamzeh and Oliver (2012), have critiqued previous physical education pedagogy for

displacing and excluding Muslim students from participating in physical activity due to curriculum being reductive and essentializing Muslim and/or Arab youth. In fact, the girls in this study quickly looked to disassociate any negative impacts their ethnocultural background had on their ability to participate in physical activity, especially the Muslim participants. Ayah supported this idea when she stated:

“There is no related. You can work out. You can do gym.”

Instead, they seemed to resist narratives that they may have been aware of that characterized them as non-active and oppressed due to their Islamic faith. Rather, they created a counter narrative, one that was full of familial support and readiness to be involved and appreciate physical activity. Previous research which focused exclusively on Muslim girls emphasised that physical educators and other stakeholders interested in promoting health and wellness within the Muslim girl population, should be aware and conscious of the diversity that exists amongst Muslim girls and the numerous ways in which they negotiate and interpret their hijab and faith, rather than homogenizing those of Muslim faith, and perpetrating cultural norms (Hamzeh & Oliver, 2012). Where a focal point of previous research (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Azzarito et al., 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001) has been understanding the ways young girls disrupt the gender discourses they are challenged by to be physically active, this study provided new insight into how immigrant girls also have to negotiate around the intersectionalities of the discourses of gender, and ethnocultural background when discussing and participating in physical activity. Ultimately, the young participants demonstrated the agency to overcome the challenges of cultural stereotypes and norms that exist for them that blankets ethnically diverse girls as typically inactive or as individuals who do not value physical activity. Rather, the participants

interrupted these typical narratives, and voiced the meaningful ways they engage in physical activity, and the value their ethnocultural backgrounds place on a healthy, moving body.

Prior research has also demonstrated that when cultural beliefs differ from Western idealizations, immigrant girls are not afforded the same opportunities as boys to be physically active and that children described as ethnic minorities face multiple barriers and a lack of lack of family support (Tirone et al., 2010; Thul & LaVoi, 2011). While these represent concrete barriers that immigrant girls face, the participants within this study felt that they were often encouraged by their parents to be active. In fact, parental influence was a significant support in their physical activity involvement in the form of coaching, role modelling and encouragement. However, one participant, Yeva, engaged in conversation about the intersectionalities of her ethnocultural background, and her gender, and the impact immigration has had on the meanings of her identity. She finds herself now, looking to disrupt and overcome oppressive ideologies pertaining to the intersections of gender and ethnocultural background. Her story was especially indicative of the fluid nature of her identity, and the influence that migration and relocation has had on her mindset, and her ability to actively navigate and be resistant to potentially oppressive influences in her life, and her ability to be physically active. This was apparent as she discussed the fault she found in thinking that boys are better than girls, and how she knows this is not true, but the hangover of these beliefs linger in her thoughts because of the influences of her home country.

All the participants continuously reinforced gendered norms, and social discourses surrounding masculinity and femininity. Gender stereotypes has been described as a form of control over young girls' participation in physical education and their daily lives, which can also limit or encourage their participation in physical education classes and in physical activity across the lifespan (Azzarito et al., 2006). The girls reinforced these stereotypes and power imbalances

especially when discussing their physical experiences, as they all felt that boys and girls experienced physical activity differently. These differences often resulted in how the girls described the ways in which boys can play, that they have more opportunities than girls, and are more active individuals as a result in comparison to girls. The way(s) that boys play and their capabilities were highlighted as being stronger, and more powerful than girls. There were also clear divisions created between the types of games that are played by boys, and those played by girls. Games that required more strength and power were labeled as “guy games,” like football. Whereas, games like badminton were associated with needing less strength, and therefore more enjoyable by girls. While gender stereotypes can negatively impact girls’ participation with physical activity, girls are active agents in their abilities to negotiate gendered structural barriers that they face in society, within physical education, and with physical activities experiences outside of the school context (Azaarito et al., 2006). This agency was especially demonstrated by Yeva:

“For example, in a game, in my country, we think that guys are better, they’re stronger. They have to be better, that might in my thinking. Although sometimes it’s not really right, girls can be much better than guys sometimes.”

Yeva demonstrated the impact of gendered ideologies and norms that play out within her physically active experiences, but more importantly, she also began to shed light on the agency she possesses to overcome that form of thinking, and hopefully, transgress past gendered norms that negatively impact her experiences with physical activity. In fact, teachers and researchers should strive to explore the ways in which young women can disrupt gender discourses, and understand how to create more welcoming and encouraging physical education contexts (Azzarito et al., 2006). By addressing research with not only a focus on gender, but also their

intersections with their ethnocultural background, and immigrant status, a contribution is made to the current literature, to better understand the ways in which immigrant girls negotiate around social discourses, both in forms of resistance, and reinforcement. But ultimately, in the ways that immigrant girls possess the agency to disrupt and challenges the diverse and intersectional discourses of ethnocultural background, gender and immigrant status that impact their lived experiences with physical activity, within and outside of the schooling context.

Meanings and Values of Physical Activity

While there were many moments where the girls expressed their dislike for physical activity, especially when talking about being active in a more prescribed exercise form, the girls also spoke about the value physical activity has in their life. These values and meanings were interconnected with various aspects of themselves, representing components of their overall wellbeing.

All the girls talked about physical activity being of some importance or value in their life for various reasons, but all spoke about physical activity and its association with an overall positive wellbeing. Each of them were asked how their body felt when being active, and they attributed emotions of brokenness and their bodies feeling tired, when associated with activities they do not like, such as burpees, Russian twists, and planks. However, they also attributed positive feelings towards being physically active, as being active was a way to release energy, feel good, and be energized. Being active was also associated with success academically, as one participant described being active in the morning as a way for her “brain to work better” in preparation for the school day. Physical activity also brought about feelings of happiness, particularly when participating in an activity that they liked. Paired with feelings of happiness were feelings of satisfaction, and importance. While girls have been characterized in the past as

being “switched off” to physical activity, research indicates that more than ever, girls are making decisions about their participation in physical activity, both in and out of school, and that they are making active choices about their involvement (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). It is important to recognize that every girl in this study expressed an appreciation for physical activity in the way it made their bodies feel, or a source of value and/or importance that it gave to them for their health and their life. However, in order to provide immigrant females environments where these meanings and values are fostered and created, physical educators, providers, stakeholders, and researchers should consciously and actively look to eliminate the barriers and oppressive structures that restrict the potentially meaningful engagement of immigrant girls in physical activity.

The participants also spoke to the interconnectedness of learning, accomplishment and physical activity. Previously, findings have described how adolescent girls conceptualized and experienced activity as a sense of accomplishment as they were participating in physical activity for a feeling that was good for their body beyond just the external appearance of the body (Yungblut et al., 2012). The girls also emphasized a sense of accomplishment, where they stated feeling proud when they were able to overcome challenges especially when being exposed to a new and alternative form of physical activity following migration. They also placed value on learning new skills, or finishing a task. This finding is significant, as research stresses a specific focus on providing young girls intrinsic motivation for successful and meaningful engagement with physical activity (Pfaeffli & Gibbons, 2010). Previously, choice and autonomy have been found to be a significant intrinsically motivating factor for engagement (Pfaeffli & Gibbons, 2010). Here, we find that the girls value the interconnections of learning, accomplishment and physical activity. Therefore, moving forward, environments and spaces where physical activity

takes place and programming and curricula for said activity, should be supportive in providing girls new and alternative ways to be physically active, while fostering learning and a sense of accomplishment to engage immigrant females with movement. In creating a flexible structure and rubric that melds all of these components can potentially move the motivation of being physical active away from external factors such as body image, and provide young females the interconnectedness of physical activity with a positive overall well-being, learning and accomplishment, that has been shown to add value and meaning to their lived experiences with physical activity.

Summary

This chapter looked to critically examine the results from the three-part interview series that each girl participated in. The findings suggest similarities that exist within previous literature, especially when the focus is placed on the barriers and supports that young girls have identified as affecting their participation and relationship with physical activity, both within the physical education pedagogy and outside of the school context. However, the intersectional identity of immigrant girls, that sits largely within the social positioning of ethnocultural background, immigration status and gender, adds a level of complexity to understanding and deconstructing previous findings about young girls' experiences with physical activity. Findings have also revealed the ways in which immigrant girls both resist and reinforce the social discourses that exist and play out within their lived experiences with physical activity, especially when understanding the ethnocultural influences on their experiences, and gendered norms and stereotypes that exist within the spaces that they are active (and inactive). The girls also provided a detailed account of their experiences with gender-exclusive physical education, which was deserving of attention for the ways in which same-sex classes are valued, but also the aspects of

this form of physical activity not being intrinsically motivating. This discussion section also looked in-depth at the ways in which girls talk and associate health and physical activity, and ultimately how their migratory experiences have effected their health, and the changes in their daily activities. Lastly, this chapter highlighted the value and the meaning that girls place on physical activity. Ultimately, creating awareness around the multiplicity of ways that girls talk about activity for the betterment of themselves, emotionally, physically and mentally.

The next section will provide insight into the overall conclusions, in what ways this research is beneficial and can be utilized and the direction of future research.

Chapter VI: Conclusions

The previous chapter focused on critically examining the narratives and stories of four immigrant female youth and their lived experiences with physical activity. The discussion in chapter five was generated from the seven themes created from a three-part interpretive phenomenological interview series (Seidman, 2012) which were: Attitudes Towards Physical Activity; Barriers to Participation in Physical Activity; Supports for Engagement in Physical Activity; Gendered Physical Education; Social Discourses and Physical Activity; Health and Immigration; and Values and Meanings of Physical Activity. The participants who took part in this study were four high school girls in Winnipeg Manitoba, who identified as immigrant and female. The main purpose of this study was to unpack the research question of how high school immigrant girls interpret their lived experiences with physical activity. In this chapter, the conclusions from the results are presented, which were supported by establishing trustworthiness through member reflection, peer debriefing, and on-going self-reflexivity. Through a series of in-depth interviews with each participant, a meaningful contribution was made to the existing literature of immigrant, female and youth lived experiences with physical activity. Additionally, embedded within this chapter are detailed implications for future research.

Conclusions

This thesis contributes to the current literature in meaningful ways that takes into account an often marginalized segment of the Canadian population; that of female immigrant youth. Based on the findings, there are obvious reoccurring barriers and supports emphasized in past research that young women have had to negotiate (Azarrito et al., 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; Taylor & Doherty, 2005; Thompson et al., 2005; Yungblut et al., 2012). Some of the described barriers include a lack of perceived physical competence to

participate and a lack of social support are reoccurring factors within the literature that address adolescent girls concerns with participation and engagement in physical activity. Whereas, having choices for a variety of physical experiences outside of the restrictive classroom curriculum and parental influences were two supportive factors that the girls within this study emphasized that positively influenced their engagement with physical activity. Having alternative choices was attributed to feelings of fun when being active. Conversely, the girls also discussed their opportunities to engage in physical activity outside of the schooling context where they felt they had more choices to engage in an assortment of activities. The participants also really valued their parental influences as a needed support system that is in place providing the girls with role models and encouragers and supporters of their involvement in a range of physical activity. Moving forward, physical educators, researchers, and those invested in the health and wellness of young women should be developing physical activity programs that are consciously including their voices as the guiding force behind curriculum/policy advancement. This would involve creating new active environments that eliminate a described barrier where the central focus of the physical activity is on sport and skill abilities, to one that offers a wide range of activities designed to provide young girls a variety of choices and autonomy in their physical experiences. The settings for the increased opportunities for assorted physical activities should be available and accessible in both physical education, and outside of school. This could be achieved through an ongoing dialogue between physical education and exposure to various activities outside of school. The girls often spoke about field trips and opportunities to try new activities outside of their schooling environment as more fulfilling to their needs of wanting options and choices to enhance their physical activity experiences. Physical education classes would benefit in engaging adolescent girls with physical activity, if they provided more

opportunities to new and alternative options that may not necessarily be available within the classroom.

This thesis also fills a gap in immigrant youth and female specific literature that has called for a more intersectional approach analyses and research focussed on immigrant girls' experiences with sport, physical recreation, and leisure. By formulating this research study through an intersectional lens, the lived experiences of the participants whose identities intersect largely with gender, ethnocultural background and immigrant status, provided greater detail and understanding to their experiences with larger macro structures. As a result, the physical experiences were viewed from the vantage point of the immigrant girls, a typically marginalized group, positioned as female, visible minorities and being ethnoculturally diverse. This current study provides understanding from the point of view of immigrant girls, adding a level of complexity and depth of understanding in comparison to previous findings specifically in the ways that supports and barriers to their engagement with physical activity was navigated. The support for having a friend/support system to be physically active with is further complicated by the relocation and social exclusion that newcomers face in their new country and society, especially for youth within the microcosm of their new schools (Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Oxman-Martinez et al., 2012). Physical competency is also affected by the girls' familiarity with the new activities (such as volleyball) in Canada, despite having extensive experience in participating in either recreational or organized sports (or both) in their country of origin, they still felt they were not good enough to participate in Canada. They often also found themselves comparing their physical competence to that of their Canadian born peers. Personal competence of adolescent girls has been found previously to be evaluated by girls themselves as a perceived inequity between different students (Gibbons & Humbert, 2008). The participants of this study

too, evaluated their physical competence through comparative measures, but these comparisons were often drawn by privileging the national identity (Canadian born status) of their peers.

Another major finding identified from this study was the way the girls described experiencing gender exclusive physical education classes, often referred to as “female fitness.” The female fitness classes were valued by the girls for being an all-female space, especially amongst immigrant girls who professed to preferring to be active in spaces that they can comfortably dress and move free from the gaze of boys and men. However, gender segregated physical education classes is not a long term solution, whereas Gibbons and Humbert’s, (2008) study found in the past that physical education classes that are segregated into male and female streams are not necessarily what girls want, but rather the female students simply want to show the boys they could do as well as them (p. 180). Instead, the girls described this environment to be far too “workout based”, devoid of games, socializing and “fun”. This form of physical activity was only seen as beneficial for the girls in order to make their outer appearance, specifically their bodies, look aesthetically better, but not find it to be an enjoyable form of being active. Gender exclusive physical education classrooms may be valued amongst girls for being an all-female environment, however, for enjoyable engagement in physical activity, girls require more than just an environment that is all female. Instead, these forums that provide young girls physically activity experiences must take into account the various aspects of physical education that girls have voiced as either being supportive or restrictive of their engagement with physical activity. These concerns are more indicative of curricular choices and the activities that are being offered within physical education. A concentration should be placed on increasing the intrinsic motivation of young girls to engage in physical activity and physical education, by providing spaces that foster choices/autonomy, and engagement with friends and companions to be active

with. Additionally, gendered environments should continuously emphasize a dialogue with females and the varied components of their intersectional identities, such as ethnocultural background. The immigrant girls provided distinct and meaningful narratives that were necessary in understanding the ways they experienced the supports and barriers that effects their lived experiences with physical activity, through an intersectional lens. Specifically, the social integration/segregation of immigrant youth in their school (i.e. physical education) and outside of the school milieu is a direct influence on whether their experiences with physical activity are positive or negative.

Conversations about health were an important component of their narratives that were threaded throughout the interviews, predominantly as the girls talked about a healthy “self” when discussing physical activity. An important finding from the major theme discussing health was the apparent health declines that the girls felt were real and a part of their stories following migration to Canada. The girls provided qualitative accounts of how their health declines were attributed to dietary changes, mental health effects, and overall changes in daily actives. The dietary changes were due to eating out at fast food restaurants, which in turn they contributed to substantial weight gain. The participants described certain mental health effects as “feeling overwhelmed”, especially with regards to concern for family members in their home country of origin. Migration was also described as an emotionally difficult process and transition, due to a lack of support their families had in Canada from family and from the community. Changes in daily activities were described by the girls as less time spent with family and friends playing outside, too much sedentary time and not being active, and also just an overall feeling of isolation. Social exclusion was a central factor of discussion regarding the barriers that the girls identified as impacting their non-participation in physical activity. Additionally, social exclusion

was an apparent influence outside of the schooling environment described as dynamic that impacted their health and wellness, and that was primarily attributed to immigration. This was detailed in the findings chapter that outlined how social integration did exist in their home countries where daily physical activity happened with both friends and families, but suffered, and in most cases ceased due to the post migration landscape.

As this research focused on an intersectional framework, the way in which girls negotiated social discourses that they navigated their physically active experiences was understood as both resistance and reinforcement. Previous research has emphasised the ways that young women challenge and disrupt gendered discourses (Azzarito & Solmon, 2005; Azzarito et al., 2006; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001). This study builds on that foundation by providing valuable insight into the ways that girls challenged both the intersections of gendered and ethnocultural discourses that impacted their physical experiences. The participants practised a sense of agency, especially when attention was on ethnocultural influences and their physical experiences. One participant in particular, was aware of the oppressive gendered ideologies that existed within her home country, of boys being better than girls. She actively looked to resist this thought, and this carried over into her physical experiences as she developed an awareness of this mentality now that she is living in Canada. However, the girls often looked to abolish any idea that their ethnocultural background had any negative impact with their participation with physical activity. This may be due to the (three girls) Islamic background, and the reoccurring stereotypes that exist in Westernized culture about Islamic females, that previous research has emphasized as reoccurring characterizations of Muslim and/or Arab youth (Hamzeh & Oliver, 2012; Thul & LaVoi, 2011). Ultimately, the girls emphasized the importance their ethnocultural background places on being active and healthy, and the tremendous support they received from both

gendered parents to be active, providing a very necessary and important counter narrative to the current literature. This narrative also contributed to understanding the diversity that exists amongst ethnically diverse girls, more specifically girls of Islamic faith, to avoid homogenizing and perpetrating cultural norms and stereotypes that seem to be blanketing ethnically diverse girls as inactive or individuals who devalue physical activity. Instead, the girls demonstrated clear agency in the ways that they negotiated the intersections of gender, ethnocultural background and immigration influences on their physical experiences. Each voiced their strong familial support, and value for physical activity as a necessary component for health.

The girls however all reinforced gender stereotypes, in terms of the way they view male and female bodies, and also the differences in how young girls and boys play and participate in physical activity. They all felt that girls and boys participate and are physically active in different ways. These gendered norms were especially apparent within the physical education context, where this environment would be disrupted or changed when male bodies were present, being described as not fun, or feeling unsafe. There was also reinforcement regarding the abilities of boys, and the way(s) that they played and were physically active, often described as being stronger, or more skilled and seen as something intrinsic that boys do, but girls do not. These gendered ideologies seemed to negatively impact the girls' participation, as spaces became unsafe when boys were present. Lastly, the gendered expectations of the body were another major social discourse that the girls articulated. The girls felt that boys are to be muscular, whereas musculature on girls was not desired, yet they still wanted their body to be appealing in terms of physical appearance, such as a flat stomach and lithe toned arms and legs. Gender stereotypes continue to be a problematic factor over girls' participation, especially within physical education (Azzarito et al., 2006). However, while intersecting discourses in the lives of

females challenge their participation in physical activity, once they are identified and critiqued it becomes possible to interrupt them by the girls themselves (Hamzeh & Oliver, 2012). While many of the participants only spoke to the reinforcement of gendered norms, one participant in particular, demonstrated the agency she possessed in critiquing the very gendered ideologies that manifest themselves within her physical experiences, and her ability to negotiate around those gendered structural barriers. A meaningful dialogue with young women about their lived experiences with physical activity, from the understanding of intersectional discourses, such as gender and ethnocultural background is the beginning steps towards fostering their agency and abilities to transgress the very oppressive structures, such as gender norms, that limit their participation and engagement.

Lastly, a major conclusion drawn from this study, and most importantly from the experiences of the girls themselves, is the overall value and meaning they each placed on being physically active. While they often spoke of their dislike for physical activity, often as a result of the barriers they have had to constantly navigate around; they still clearly find value and meaning in being active, specifically with the interconnectedness of physical activity, over well-being, learning and accomplishment. Physical activity was valued for feeling good, both emotionally and physically. Feeling good was attributed to allowing their body to release energy and negative feelings, feeling happiness, and provided them focus and calmness. Physical activity was also valued for learning and accomplishment where being active was a chance to learn new skills, and a source of feeling proud of one's self for accomplishing a task. The value and meaning the girls placed on being active, was indicative of their desire to want to overcome the very barriers that act in concert to restrict their participation and engagement with physical activity. It also allowed for a deeper understanding for how these immigrant girls valued and

interpreted the meaning of physical activity in their lives. An environment that looks to cultivate learning and provide immigrant girls opportunities to participate in new and alternative forms of physical experiences, also provided them a sense of accomplishment when overcoming challenges. Also an environment that looks to nurture these intrinsic motivating factors, such as participating in physical activities because of the overall betterment of themselves, both physically, emotionally, and socially rather than emphasizing environments that place focus on external factors such as body image, will be beneficial in creating enjoyable physical experiences for immigrant girls.

Implications for Future Research

The conclusions for this study create advancements within research that has previously only focused on adolescent females, or newcomer youth experiences with physical activity. There was and continues to be, a need for immigrant girl voices to be front and centre within current research literature that looks to explore physical activity experiences both within and outside of the physical education context. There are plenty of avenues to explore for future research to expand on the findings, and theoretical contributions of this project, that focused on the voices of four high school immigrant girls, currently living in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Further research needs to focus on the ways that we can integrate immigrant youth successfully into their new environments, specifically into the school setting. Multicultural education movements in many societies have brought about curricular change, so that all people now living in society can find themselves represented in the classroom, without stereotypes or derogation, and adequate portrayal of their way of life (Berry et al., 2006). However, the feeling of exclusion that immigrant youth face and those challenges continues to impact their participation in organized activities (Oxman-Martinez, 2012). While this agenda of multicultural

education has been brought forward in every day classrooms, the same attention is needed in the physical education context as well as more organized sporting forums. This study found that the girls had a craving to be a part of organized sport, and even verbalized their feelings of regret for not participating. However, there continues to be an enduring obstacle that is seemingly perpetually preventing ethnically diverse girls, and specifically immigrant girls, from being involved with organized sport. This obstacle seems to be connected to the social exclusion immigrant youth face in their new society, and their perceived feelings of a lack of competence and unfamiliarity with activities. Previously, policies and programming have been encouraged to enhance the participation of immigrants in their daily lives of the national society, so that they do not remain isolated in their own communities or alienated from the larger society (Berry et al., 2006). Future research in this area would benefit from a focus on the social integration of immigrant female youth that explores what supports and/or barriers that aid/prevent girls of various cultural backgrounds from participating in organized physical activity, especially when there is a real yearning to do so.

The benefits and pitfalls of gender exclusive physical activity classes needs more attention and unpacking. This is a space that is valued for gender exclusivity, eliminating gender power dynamics between sexes, and providing a space for young women to freely participate in physical activity in a way that they do not have to worry about how they dress, or what they do in that space. However, there are still some negative aspects associated with female fitness classes. This may be due to the activities that are being offered in female fitness class, as solely being a described “workout and exercise” environment. While this may be a way to create healthier lifestyle habits, this style of physical activity is considered not enjoyable by the girls themselves, but rather something they have to do for external motivation only, like making their

body look good. Ultimately, gender exclusive physical education classes could and should be assessed more closely, to ensure that our physical education curriculum is providing inclusive physical activity opportunities for all that are beneficial in the long term scope.

Gender stereotypes have also been described as “the most insidious, entrenched and most difficult barrier to change” (Thul & LaVoi, 2011, p. 224). However, these gender stereotype barriers have also been noted to drastically influence girls’ physical activity participation in limiting and negative ways (Thul & LaVoi, 2011, p. 224). For this reason, future research should focus on the ways in which girls are/are not resistant to these gendered stereotypes that limit their engagement and participation in physical activity. All the girls within this study reinforced ideas of male and female participation, but also showed signs of agency in ways in which they could negotiate and offer resistance to those oppressive structures. Young females would benefit from research that focused on the ways in which they are actively resistant to gendered stereotypes in settings where physical activity takes place.

In addition, looking at research from an intersectional perspective, and formulating health research within this framework presents from beginning to end, should and can be applied to not only immigrant female youth, but would be beneficial for looking at other marginalized youth groups within the school context, such as LGBTQ, Indigenous, and varying physical abilities. Research benefits when youth voices are the central component to understanding the phenomena under investigation, as it provides better insight to the very issues that are affecting young people directly. However, understanding the identities overlap in a way that effects our experiences within larger social structure, like health and education, creates advancement in future research to expose structures of inequalities, and positively influence health initiatives in the right direction.

Lastly, although the phenomenon of focus for this study was lived experiences with physical activity, inevitably the interviews also teased out conversations regarding health, as the girls often spoke about being active and healthy in an interchangeable and intertwined way. It will be beneficial for future research, policy and programming to conduct research with youth, and immigrant populations as health as the central phenomenon under investigation to better understand the meaning and changes that occur within health for our newcomer populations.

Summary

This study focused on the voices of four high school immigrant girls in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and how they interpreted their lived experiences with physical activity. There were a total of four countries, two religions, and three languages represented, but all identified as female and as an immigrant. Each of their stories, and participation in a three-part interview series created advancements in current and future research to take voices that are far too often left on the margins, and placed them central to important discussion about their experiences in society, and with regards to health and wellness. While some of the findings are congruent with previous findings that have focused on female youth, or specific ethnic groups of young women, there was a need with current research to focus on the experiences of immigrant girls themselves. By using an intersectional approach, the social phenomenon of physical activity was examined by recognizing the intersecting nature of each participant's identity, and the impact this had on their interpretation and lived experience with physical activity. This study filled a gap that exists in the current research literature that was calling for the voices of young women and girls, who are socially positioned in diverse ways, to be present and central to discussions about physical experiences. Each of their narratives provided a platform of influence on future programming

and policies, and a clarion call for our education system to provide a more inclusive and reflective curriculum of opportunity for our growing Canadian population of immigrant girls.

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Appendix A: Interview One-Semi Structured Guide

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself?

Probe – Tell me more about where you are from, and how long you have been in Winnipeg for.

2. How did you feel when you were moving to Winnipeg?

Probe – What was the process like from you when you were leaving home and coming to Canada?

3. What was it like for your family when you were moving to Canada in the beginning?

Probe – Do you remember how your family felt during the time you moved?

4. What was it like going to school for the first time in Canada?

Probe – How did you feel entering a new school? What were the challenges?

5. Can you tell me important things to you about your culture?

Probe – What does your cultural background mean to you?

6. How do you feel now being in Winnipeg?

Probe: Have your feelings changed from when you first came here?

7. Do you have any favourite or distinct memories from your home country?

Probe: Tell me about a moment that you remember from where you were born that sticks out in your mind.

Appendix B: Interview Two-Semi Structured Guide

1. What does physical activity mean to you?
Probe – How do you define physical activity for yourself?
2. Tell me about a time you participated in physical activity?
Probe – In what ways have you participated in physical activity? What did those activities look like?
3. Can you tell me about physical activity from where you are from?
Probe – Do you feel like physical activity is the same for you in Winnipeg as it is from where you are from? Has physical activity changed for you since you came to Winnipeg?
4. What types of physical activity do you do with your family?
Probe – What does your mom and dad say about physical activity? Does family make physical activity more enjoyable?
5. What types of physical activity do you do with your friends?
Probe – How do your friends influence your physical activity choices?
6. How do you feel about your physical education classes?
Probe – What do you like and dislike about your gym classes?
7. What is important to you about your culture and physical activity?
Probe – Are there certain things about your culture that affect your participation in physical activity?
8. Does being a girl effect the way you participate in physical activity?
Probe – Do you think boys experience physical activity in different ways than someone who is a girl?
9. Are there any ways in which you would want to try something new that is physical activity related?
Probe – Is there any types of physical activity you've never done that you want to try? Why do you want to try this?

Appendix C: Interview Three Semi Structured Guide

1. Given all that you have told me about your experiences with physical activity, is physical activity something you value?
Probe – Is physical activity important to you? Why do you feel this way?
2. How does your body feel when you are being physically active?
Probe – Do you feel good or bad when you are physically active? In what ways do you feel these emotions?
3. After talking about physical activity with me, has how your view on physical activity changed?
Probe – Can you tell me if your definition of physical activity is still the same? If not, in what ways has it changed?
4. Since coming to Canada, what role has physical activity had in your life?
Probe – Has the role of physical activity changed for you since you moved from your homeland to Canada?
5. After spending time thinking and talking about physical activity with me, is there any ways in which you want to change the way you participate in physical activity?
Probe – Have you thought about new or different ways you want to be physically active?
6. What is important to you personally in relation to your background and who you are, and being physically active?
Probe – What about your culture and movement is important to you?
7. If you could create a space or place to be physically active what would it look like?
Probe – What types of activities would you do, and who would be there?

Appendix D: Institutional Consent



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Faculty of Kinesiology
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Immigrant Girls' Experiences with Physical Activity, within Winnipeg, Manitoba: An Intersectionality Approach

Principal Investigator: Simrit Deol

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Research Supervisor: Dr. jay johnson

Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management, University of Manitoba
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(204)-474-8996

Project Overview:

This study will apply intersectionality as the theoretical framework to understand how immigrant girls experience physical activity and how these physical activity experiences are impacted by the multiple areas and larger social structures being school, community and family of this specific populations' lives. The primary goal of this study is to use the theoretical framework of intersectionality to address the question of, how do immigrant girls within Winnipeg, Manitoba, interpret the meaning of physical activity in their daily lives? The study will be emphasizing the importance of the immigrant girls' voices and stories through personal in depth interviews, as an essential component to understanding the social phenomenon of physical activity experiences and how these lived experiences are impacted by the intersection of multiple social categories like ethnicity, gender, and immigration.

The data collected from this research study will contribute to academic literature, and more importantly inform policy and programming in creating culturally inclusive physical activity opportunities.

I am asking that you consider granting institutional consent for this project. In accordance with the University of Manitoba's Research Ethics Board, informed consent from the participants will be sought. This information package is designed to give you an idea of what the research is about

and what participation in the research will involve. If you would like more detailed information than outlined here, or information not included here, you should feel free to contact Simrit Deol, the principal investigator, by email (umdeols@myumanitoba.ca) or telephone [REDACTED]. Please take the time to read and carefully consider the information contained in this form.

Study Procedures

The project involves the following procedures:

1. Individual In Depth Semi Structured Interviews – In the individual interview stage, the participants will be involved in three separate individual interviews that focus on 1) On establishing context of the participants' experience, and focusing on their life history and personal biographies as an immigrant girl, 2) The phenomenon of the study, which is the immigrant girls' lived experiences with physical activity. The participants will reconstruct the detail of their experiences with physical activity, and emphasis detail about this experience and 3) Encouraging the participants to reflect on the meaning of their physical activity experiences, what that holds for them, and looking specifically at the intellectual and emotional connections the participants will draw on. Each interview will be approximately 45 – 60 minutes long, take place a week in between one another, and be audio recorded and transcribed almost immediately afterwards.
2. A workshop that acts as a way for the principle research to say thank you to the participants for their involvement, a way of debriefing and confirming the results of the study. There is also a potential for additional data to be provided throughout this workshop, the workshop will be audio recorded.

Participants can withdraw from the study at any time.

Specifically, I am requesting for the following support for this research:

- 1) Permission to recruit students from your schools that might be interested in taking part in this study.

I am asking that you give me permission to recruit students from your schools that are currently enrolled in English Secondary Language courses from your school, ranging from grades nine to twelve, that identify as both a female and as an immigrant. This will require the principle researcher (Simrit Deol) to attend a session with the ESL teacher for 10-15 minutes, possibly give a class presentation explaining the research project, distribute recruitment questionnaire, informed consent forms, and confidentiality forms to those who are interested in participating. Additionally, participants will be reminded through information packages, consent forms and verbally, that they are in no way obligated to participate. Also, it is important that you know that you can withdraw your institutional consent at any time by contacting the principal investigator (Simrit Deol) by email (umdeols@myumanitoba.ca) or phone [REDACTED] and informing of your withdrawal. There will be no negative consequences to you or your institution for withdrawing your consent. I believe these approaches will limit the potential power relationship issues that may arise.

Do not sign this consent form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers to all of your questions.

Statement of Consent

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and to allow the researcher to have access to recruit participants from your schools. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. Your organization is free to withdraw from the study at any time, without prejudice or consequence.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Principal Researcher: Simrit Deol, University of Manitoba, Frank Kennedy Centre, Winnipeg, MB, Canada, R3T 2N2

Phone: XXXXXXXXXX

Email: umdeols@myumanitoba.ca

Appendix E: Recruitment Questionnaire



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1. Where are you originally from?

2. How long have you been in Canada for?

3. What languages do you speak?

4. How old are you?

Appendix F: Youth Confidentiality Agreement



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I, _____, promise not to tell anyone who attended this workshop or what they said.

Signature

Date

Appendix G: Parental Consent Form



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Immigrant Girls' Experiences with Physical Activity, within Winnipeg, Manitoba: An Intersectionality Approach

Principal Researcher: Simrit Deol

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Research Supervisor: Dr. jay johnson

Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management, University of Manitoba
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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 participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Project overview:

This study will apply intersectionality as the theoretical framework to understand how immigrant girls experience physical activity and how these physical activity experiences are impacted by the multiple areas and larger social structures being school, community and family of this specific populations' lives. The primary goal of this study is to use the theoretical framework of intersectionality to address the question of, how do immigrant girls within Winnipeg, Manitoba, interpret the meaning of physical activity in their daily lives? The study will be emphasizing the importance of the immigrant girls' voices and stories as an essential component to understanding the social phenomenon of physical activity experiences and how these lived experiences are impacted by the intersection of multiple social categories like ethnicity, gender, and immigration. The data collected from this research study will contribute to academic literature, and more importantly inform policy and programming in creating culturally inclusive physical activity opportunities.

I am asking that you consider granting consent for this project. In accordance with the University of Manitoba's Research Ethics Board, informed consent from the participants will be sought. This information package is designed to give you an idea of what the research is about and what participation in the research will involve. If you would like more detailed information than outlined here, or information not included here, you should feel free to contact Simrit Deol, the principal investigator, by email (umdeols@myumanitoba.ca) or telephone [REDACTED]. Please take the time to read and carefully consider the information contained in this form.

Study Procedures

The project involves the following procedures:

3. Individual In Depth Semi Structured Interviews – In the individual interview stage, the participants will be involved in three separate individual interviews that focus on 1) On establishing context of the participants' experience, and focusing on their life history and personal biographies as an immigrant girl, 2) The phenomenon of the study, which is the immigrant girls' lived experiences with physical activity. The participants will reconstruct the detail of their experiences with physical activity, and emphasis detail about this experience and 3) Encouraging the participants to reflect on the meaning of their physical activity experiences, what that holds for them, and looking specifically at the intellectual and emotional connections the participants will draw on. Each interview will be approximately 45 – 60 minutes long, take place a week in between one another, and be audio recorded and transcribed almost immediately afterwards.
4. A workshop that acts as a way for the principle research to say thank you to the participants for their involvement, a way of debriefing and confirming the results of the study. There is also a potential for additional data to be provided throughout this workshop, the workshop will be audio recorded.

Participants can withdraw from the study at any time.

Risks

Risk levels to participants for this project are low and no greater than the risks they will encounter in everyday life.

Benefits

This project will generate new information on how immigrant girls' experience physical activity, and what physical activity means to them. This information may be used to create physical activity programming that is inclusive and culturally relevant to very important group in Canadian population, immigrant girls. This outcome could benefit immigrant children's health in our community in the future.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Information gathered in this research study may be presented at conferences or published in peer-reviewed journals, and used in a Master's Thesis dissemination. It is not possible to guarantee complete anonymity or confidentiality among participants, especially due to the group nature of the final workshop that will take place in April 2017. However, all information that may reveal personal and institutional identifiers will be removed prior to data analysis in order to protect participant confidentiality. Publications will utilize pseudonyms when describing single

participant data in order to protect anonymity and confidentiality. Institutional identity will be concealed using pseudonym and institutional location will also be masked. As mentioned previously, participants will also be given the opportunity to remove any data from research materials (e.g. Interviews) that they are uncomfortable sharing, including material that may contain identifying markers (i.e. stories). All data (i.e. notes, transcripts, audio recordings, photos) will be labeled with a unique anonymous identification code and will only be available to the principle researcher (Simrit Deol). All data (i.e. notes, transcripts, audio recordings) and other materials containing identifying information (i.e. signed consent forms) will be kept in a secure location (i.e. a locked filing cabinet in an office located in the Frank Kennedy Centre, University of Manitoba or on a pass word protected computer in an encrypted folder) and the Principal Investigator, Simrit Deol, will be the only one who has access to these files and documents in their entirety. After the completion of the study, research data will be kept for a maximum of 7 years and then destroyed. Hard materials (e.g. journals, transcripts) will be shredded and electronic files will be deleted.

Feedback

The participants will have the option of receiving feedback or a summary of the results of the study after completion of data collection. The participants have the option of receiving a summary of results via email or a hard copy via Canada Post.

The participants will also be invited to be involved in a group workshop, as a way for the research to say thank you and provide and confirm the study results to participants.

Voluntary participation/Withdrawal from the study

Your decision to allow your child to take part in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to allow your child to participate and you may withdraw the child from the study at any time without penalty and none of the data will be used if the participant withdraws any time before May 1, 2018.

Every child will be asked to provide written assent indicating their willingness to participate in the project. Children will be instructed before each step in the project that they can withdraw at any time and that they do not have to complete the task if they do not want to do it. This will be done immediately prior to the children's participation and they will be reminded throughout the protocol that they do not have to complete any tasks that they do not wish to complete.

Do not sign this consent form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers to all of your questions.

Statement of Consent

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to allow your child to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your child's 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, 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.

Child's name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Relationship to Participant: _____

Child's signature: _____ Date: _____

Feedback Request Form

_____ **Yes, I would like to receive a summary report of the overall study findings.**

Participant signature _____ **Date** _____
(day/month/year)

Participant printed name: _____

Please send me a copy of these reports by:

_____ **email to the following email account:**

_____ **Canada post (mail) to the following address**

Address: _____

City/Town: _____

Postal code: _____

Appendix H: Youth Assent Form



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Health, Leisure & Human
Performance Research Institute

Faculty of Kinesiology
and Recreation Management
102 Frank Kennedy Centre
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2

Immigrant Girls' Experiences with Physical Activity, within Winnipeg, Manitoba: An Intersectionality Approach

Principal Researcher: Simrit Deol

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Research Supervisor: Dr. jay johnson

Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management, University of Manitoba
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(204)-474-8996

This letter will give you an idea about what I am researching and how you can help. If you have any questions, please ask me! Read this letter carefully...

Why you are here?

We are here to explore your experiences with physical activity. This form will tell you more about the study. If there is anything you do not understand, please ask your parent or your guardian, or your ESL teacher, or contact me personally. My number and email is listed above.

Why are they doing this study?

We are doing this study to learn more about how being immigrant girl impacts your physical activity experiences. If you choose to be a part of this study, we will set up times to sit down and have a discussion around this topic, and find a place and time to set up an individual interview.

What will happen?

If you want to be in this study these things will happen:

1. I will contact you, to be a part of three separate individual interviews. These interviews will be about 45 – 60 minutes long. Each of these interviews will take place a week in between each other. Each interview will ask you questions about your experiences as an immigrant girl, and with physical activity.
2. You can also be a part of a group workshop at the end of the study, which will happen

sometime in April 2018, where everyone who has been apart of the project will get together, to talk about the study.

What if you have any questions?

You can ask questions any time, now or later. You can ask me via phone or email, or your teacher.

Who will know what I did in the study?

Any information you give to the researcher will be kept secret. I want you to know that the researcher will not show anyone else the data collected. Only the researcher will be able to look at any of the information you provide us. The researcher will make a report but no one will know who said what because your name will not be on any study paper and no one but the researcher will know that it was you who was in the study. This is to protect you.

If you decide to come to our group workshop at the end of the study, other people who were in the study will know who you are, but will still not know who said what. You do not have to come to the group workshop if you do not want to.

Do you have to be in the study?

You do not have to be in the study. No one will be mad at you if you don't want to do this. If you don't want to be in this study, just say so. We will also ask your parent or guardian if they would like you to be in the study. Even if your parent or guardian want you to be in the study you can still say no. Even if you say yes now you can change your mind later. It's up to you. If you decide to take part and later decide you want to leave the study, you are free to do this AT ANY TIME, this is okay and no one will be mad about this. This is totally your choice. Just so you know, any data that you provided before leaving the study will not be used.

Interview Transcripts

When the study is done, we will type out everything that was said during the interviews, word for word. You will be given a copy of this (called a transcript) and you will have as much time as you need to look it over with a parent(s) or guardian if you want and make any changes. After you have done this, or if you are happy with the way it is, you can send it back to us so we can use it. You can make as many changes as you want and if you read something in the transcript and do not want it to be used, you can take it out completely so it will never be used. You have full control of what you want left in or taken out.

Do you have any questions?

What questions do you have?

Assent

I want to take part in this study. I know I can change my mind at any time.

Name: _____ Verbal assent given Yes
 Print name of child

 Signature of Child

 Age

 Date

Confidentiality Pledge

I will not reveal, say, tell, write, text or tweet anyone else's name who took part in this study or what was said during the interview.

Name: _____ Verbal assent given Yes
 Print name of child

 Signature of Child

 Age

 Date

I confirm that I have explained the study to the participant to the extent compatible with the participants understanding, and that the participant has agreed to be in the study.

 Printed name of
 Person obtaining assent

 Signature of
 Person obtaining assent



 Date

Principal Researcher: Simrit Deol

Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management, University of Manitoba
umdeols@myumanitoba.ca



Appendix I: Research Ethics Approval

 <p>UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA</p> <p>EST. 1877</p>	<p>Research Ethics and Compliance</p>	<p>Human Ethics 208-194 Dafoe Road Winnipeg, MB Canada R3T 2N2 Phone +204-474-7122 Email: humanethics@umanitoba.ca</p>
PROTOCOL APPROVAL		
TO:	Simrit Deol Principal Investigator	(Advisor: jay johnson)
FROM:	Zana Lutfiyya, Chair Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)	
Re:	Protocol #E2017:096 (HS21226) "Immigrant Girls' Experiences with Physical Activity within Winnipeg, Manitoba: An Intersectionality Approach"	
Effective:	November 17, 2017	Expiry: November 17, 2018
<p>Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) has reviewed and approved the above research. ENREB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current <i>Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans</i>.</p>		
<p>This approval is subject to the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application. 2. Any modification to the research must be submitted to ENREB for approval before implementation. 3. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be submitted to ENREB as soon as possible. 4. This approval is valid for one year only and a Renewal Request must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date. 5. A Study Closure form must be submitted to ENREB when the research is complete or terminated. 6. The University of Manitoba may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba <i>Ethics of Research Involving Humans</i>. 		
<p>Funded Protocols:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Please mail/e-mail a copy of this Approval, identifying the related UM Project Number, to the Research Grants Officer in ORS. 		
<p>Research Ethics and Compliance is a part of the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International) umanitoba.ca/research</p>		