

Migration and Mobility: The Social Integration Challenges of Unaccompanied Refugee
Minors & Youth in Canada

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Abstract

Canada has experienced a significant influx of immigrants in recent decades, including unaccompanied refugee minors and youth (URM&Y). These young refugees face unique challenges due to the absence of parental support, making the phenomenon of URM&Y in Canada a prominent concern for immigration services. The purpose of this study is to investigate the specific challenges that URM&Y encounter in their social integration within Canada.

In this study, six former URM&Y participated in open-ended qualitative interviews. The collected data underwent analysis using an open coding method and thematic analysis, with an interpretation guided by critical theory. This study critically analyzed the identified themes, focusing on the institutional and structural dominance present in society. Additionally, the study employed Critical Race Theory to examine the role of race and racial inequalities URM&Y, particularly those which people of black descent experienced. The study findings shed light on how the pre-migration experiences of these youth influenced the social integration challenges they faced in Canada.

The findings also show how 1) systemic racial inequalities contribute to the social exclusion that is experienced by URM&Y; 2) discrimination and prejudice affects the successful integration of URM&Y ; 3) psychological and emotional challenges impede their success in social integration. This study concludes with recommendations and future research areas that should be explored. Major recommendations include: 1) Implementation of a Host-family system, whereby interested Canadian families can be paired with URM&Y refugees ; 2) Organizing cultural orientations for URM&Y; 3) Instituting Translation services to help URM&Y.

Keywords: Social integration, Unaccompanied, Refugee, Culture, Challenge.

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List of Abbreviations Used

ABC	American Broadcasting Corporation
BAT	Bidimensional Acculturation Theory
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CBSA	Canada Border Services Agency
CICS	Center for Immigration & Community Service
CMHC	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
COSTI -	Centro Organizzativa Scuole Tecniche Italiane
CRT	Critical Race Theory
CWICE	Child Welfare Immigration Center of Excellence
ESL	English as a Second Language
GARP	Government Assisted Refugees Program
IRCC	Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada
ISANS	Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
ISIP	Immigrant Settlement and Integration Program
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
MVHM	Metro Vancouver Housing Market
PR	Permanent Residence
PSRP	Private Sponsored Refugee Program
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
SCPS	Service and Care Providers
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
URM&Y	Unaccompanied Refugee Minors & Youth
WIS	Westman Immigrant Services

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Research Preamble

From 2012 until the present day, I have resided in three different countries as an immigrant youth (international student). These countries encompassed the United States, PR China, and Canada. My encounters as an immigrant youth within these nations have greatly influenced my decision to delve into researching the challenges that hinder the social integration of URM&Y (Unaccompanied Refugee Minors & Youth) in Canada.

Having personally experienced various difficulties as an immigrant youth, I became deeply curious about the potential hardships that URM&Y might face in Canada. These young individuals belong to one of the most vulnerable populations, exposed to a multitude of risks and uncertainties. As a researcher, I must shed light on their distinct struggles, advocate for their rights, and strive to enhance their socio-economic well-being.

By joining forces and working collectively, we can forge a more inclusive, supportive, and compassionate society that acknowledges and addresses the unique challenges encountered by URM&Y. It is our shared responsibility to bring attention to their circumstances and actively seek positive change. Through my research, I aspire to pave the way for improved policies, services, and opportunities that will positively impact the lives of URM&Y in Canada.

In deciding to research the topic of URM&Y challenges in Canada, I am driven by a genuine concern for their well-being and a steadfast commitment to social justice. I aim to illuminate their distinctive experiences and obstacles, ultimately catalyzing a positive transformation in society. By doing so, I hope to create an environment that fosters their growth and provides them with better prospects for the future.

Chapter 1: The Research Background

In the last decade, refugees have become critical subjects in the migration discourse of the world. The UNHCR stated that over 103 million people worldwide had been displaced in mid-2022 due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or severe human survival issues (UNHCR., 2022). The *International Organization for Migration* (IOM.) defines a refugee as a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (Sironi, et al., 2019 p.171). This recent refugee crisis is believed to be the biggest since WWII. This crisis can be attributed to several factors, such as the worldwide attacks from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Porter, 2020). An estimated 250,000 people had been killed or captured by ISIS, according to the ABC report on February 2, 2016. This crisis was coupled with eleven million refugees fleeing Syria to other countries for their safety. Other factors contributing to this refugee crisis include the recent Afghanistan conflict, the Russia -Ukraine War, and Earthquakes in Turkey (UNHCR, 2023; *UN agencies launch*, 2023).

According to Porter (2020), the challenges of integrating refugees in today's world are significantly more severe and intricate when compared to those faced during World War II. This assertion is backed by the observation that our global population has substantially increased over time. Moreover, it is crucial to acknowledge that migrants, particularly refugees, do not merely uproot themselves and replant their lives in a new society. Brigham et al. (2018) argue that immigrants, such as refugees, remain attached to their countries of origin through memories, relations, networks, and emotional and physical connections. These

attachments also come with challenges regarding their social integration. There is also political opposition toward refugees today (Porter, 2020). There is the need to study these URM&Y social integration and welfare because of the complexity of experiences in the places they are hosted.

It is essential to add that half of the 103 million internally displaced people worldwide are under 18 years (U.N.H.C.R., 2022) and that, inevitably, some of these enter their host societies without their parents or family, as URM&Y. These unaccompanied children represent 2-5% of the 103 million refugees worldwide (Montgomery, Rousseau & Shermack, 2001). The heart of the present research study is to investigate the integration challenges confronting URM&Y in a 'leading refugee host-country' such as Canada.

Canada is a longstanding host country for these refugees and displaced people. Over the last decade, there has been a rise in the number of migrants, including refugees, entering this country (Government of Canada, 2020). In Canada, a total of 130,125 refugees were granted asylum in 2021 (Canada Refugee Statistics, n.d.) As at January-December 2022, a total of 91,870 asylum claimants were processed by Canada Border Services Agencies (CBSA) and Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2023). The number of URM&Y has also increased drastically, as compared to the period between 1993-2000 (Bryan & Denov, 2011). According to Reisdorf (2021), about 3,000 unaccompanied children arrive in Canada yearly to seek refugee status.

Several factors attract these refugees and other migrants to Canada. They include political stability, the availability of jobs and cultural tolerance. In addition, every immigrant's dream is to feel accepted in their host community. Integration is, therefore, a focal aspect of the welfare of refugees in host countries. In particular, the inclusion of immigrants into the social structures of a host society remains a vital component of a successful integration (Bilodeau et al., 2020; Lelie, Crul & Schneider, 2012).

Küçüksüleymanoğlu (2020) posits that social integration is the process in which newcomers or minorities are accepted and welcomed into the social structure of the host society. This study will examine the challenges confronting the social integration of URM&Y.

Purpose of Study

The growing migration flows from the global south to Canada are resulting in a significant influx of URM&Y. Ensuring their successful social integration is of utmost importance. The conditions that characterize their pre- and post-migration influence their social integration in their new host society. Therefore, this study was designed to understand the challenges that impede the social integration efforts of URM&Y in Canada. This study engaged former URM&Y to share their pre- and post-migration experiences in Canada. The experiences of these former URM&Y highlighted their challenges in their host communities. This study also attempted to find out whether the participants have experienced social exclusion from their host communities.

As integration and settlement services are crucial to refugees' integration, this study further sought to determine the services that are available to help these refugees. Therefore, content analysis was conducted to ascertain the accessibility and availability of these services towards the social integration of URM&Y in Canada.

Research Questions

The research questions for this research were as follows:

1. What are the challenges of social integration of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors & Youth in Canada?
 - 1.1. Are URM&Y socially excluded in their host communities?
 - 1.2. If yes, what accounts for this social exclusion of URM&Y in Canada?

2. Are there available immigrant integration programs that are directed explicitly toward facilitating the social integration of URM&Y?

2.1. If yes, how accessible are these programs to URM&Y in Canada?

Significance of Study

The global refugee crisis has heightened the discourse on the issues of refugees and other immigrants within the public domain in Canada (UNHCR, 2023; *UN agencies launch*, 2023; McKee et al., 2019). URM&Y represent 2-5% of the 18 million refugees worldwide (Montgomery, Rousseau & Shermack, 2001). It is estimated that 3,000 unaccompanied refugee children come to Canada every year seeking refugee status (Residorf, 2021). This has led to a discussion on URM&Y. According to the *Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, URM&Y are "children who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so" (AMERA International, 2022 para.8). URM&Y often leave their countries of origin due to war, famine, discrimination, and sometimes under bizarre circumstances (Rodriguez, Urutia-Rojas, & Gonzalez, 2019).

First and foremost, It is essential to note that refugees are not a homogenous group; hence their experiences of discrimination based on racial identity or ethnic identity can vary. These variations can be based on other factors such as country of origin, age, sex, race and socio-economic status. Certain URM&Y are included among the persecuted individuals from their countries of origin. Reisdorf (2021) explains that children may face persecution for reasons distinct from those affecting adults. These factors, while not necessarily prevalent in traditional forms of persecution, significantly impact the psychological and emotional well-being of children. As time passes, these challenges intensify and contribute to the enduring depression experienced by some of these refugee children (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; Rutter, 2001). This makes it difficult for these children to identify as part of their new society

as they battle psychological and mental health issues resulting from pre- and post-migration experiences. Thus, there is an urgent need for attention to the social integration of URM&Y.

The case of Abdul Abdi, a former child refugee from Somalia, illustrates the formidable obstacles that URM&Y can encounter upon their arrival in Canada. Abdul, who was born in Somalia and spent his early years in a refugee camp in Kenya, faced numerous challenges upon coming to Canada. Despite being taken into provincial care in Nova Scotia as a six-year-old in 2001, the province failed to apply for his Canadian citizenship on his behalf. As a result, Abdul experienced significant disruptions to his education and suffered from deteriorating mental health due to his traumatic experiences (CBC/Radio Canada, 2020).

Subsequently, Abdul became entangled in the criminal justice system, leading to his detention by Canadian immigration authorities in 2017. During his time in immigration detention, Abdul's mental health further deteriorated, culminating in a suicide attempt. Eventually, he was released from detention but was facing a deportation back to Somalia due to his lack of Canadian citizenship. His case sparked widespread public outcry and advocacy for the rights of refugees and immigrant children in Canada (CBC/Radio Canada, 2020; Living in Limbo: International Human Rights Program, n.d.). Former Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil revealed that the province had initiated a review of cases involving children under its care who do not possess citizenship. This decision follows criticism aimed at Nova Scotia for its handling of Abdoul Abdi's case (CBC, 2018). Abdul's situation serves as a poignant example that sheds light on the daunting trials faced by refugee children and underscores the urgent necessity for enhanced support systems and services to aid their integration into their new lives in Canada. Therefore, comprehending these challenges confronted by URM&Y in Canada and implementing policy changes to better support them are imperative.

Thirdly, according to Côte-des-Neiges (2002), the literature that documents URM&Y needs is sparse. These youths are believed to undergo the same psychological trauma, loss of national identity, and integrational challenges that adult refugees go through in general. Therefore, this study provides an opportunity to hear a small group of URM&Y in Canada share their experiences, including their challenges of social integration. This study amplifies the views of a small group of URM&Y in their society.

One study has shown that these children face difficulty articulating their fears due to trauma, fear of authority, lack of education, and sometimes parental instructions from their home countries (Reisdorf, 2021). This difficulty serves as an obstacle to understanding their difficulties in integrating into their new societies. Hence, we need to know what challenges they face as well as to determine how these fears affect their social integration success. Understanding the experiences of refugee social integration and topical issues, such as language, housing, education, and identity, can help address and highlight some research gaps.

In addition, this study seeks to discuss the accessibility of available services rendered by immigrant and integration associations within Canada. Many immigrant associations in Canada run programs and projects for new immigrants, including for refugees of all kinds. How are these programs implemented to benefit most newcomers because the latter have diverse backgrounds and challenges? This study also explored issues surrounding the accessibility of these integration services to refugee minors and youth in Canada.

Finally, this study seeks to help refugee and other immigrant services stakeholders understand the current needs and challenges of URM&Y. It offers new recommendations regarding the day-to-day administration of immigrant services in Canada. It is hoped that understanding the experiences of URM&Y as stakeholders will help to develop better systems, policies, and programs for these refugees.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Integration of Immigrants

Küçüksüleymanoğlu (2020) posits that social integration is the process during which newcomers or minorities are accepted or welcomed into the social structure of the host society. Fokides (2019) also defines the concept of social integration as a process whereby all community members are engaged in a dialogue to realize and maintain peaceful social relations. This means that the receiving society must be willing and skilled in conversing with newcomers.

Although Canada is an immigrant-friendly destination, there are still social norms within the Canadian social structure to which immigrants must adjust appropriately. In their research, Karimi, Bucerius and Thompson (2019) state that, unlike the United States, where immigrants are expected to assimilate into the American way of life, Canada's immigration policy is based on "integration." This means that those immigrants who come to Canada can maintain their cultural and ethnic backgrounds while adhering to Canadian social norms. Although the Canadian Immigration system encourages the integration of immigrants, there are still pertinent issues with the social integration of refugees, or minorities, in Canada. Studies on immigrant youth suggest that integrating individuals or groups change these immigrants' cultural, socioeconomic, and political lives through intercultural contact (ex. Berry et al., 2006). When immigrants first come to Canada, they experience significant practical challenges to their integration. Many immigrants try to manoeuvre out of these challenges in their host societies (Zaami, 2020).

Whether the purpose of social integration involves a true "integration" or a de-facto "assimilation", the reality is that there is currently limited research on the social inclusion of

immigrant and refugee youth and even less on URM&Y. For this reason, the literature that was accessed for this study focus mainly upon the experiences of immigrants in general. I first detail these practical challenges and discuss how they affect the social integration of all immigrants in their host communities. I then extrapolate to young immigrants and URM&Y.

Language

Language is essential for anyone navigating through society or culture during integration. According to Guo (2015), language is one of the most daunting challenges to social integration that adult immigrants encounter in any new society. This makes language a very crucial tool in navigating through any society. The lack of fluency in the dominant language of host communities hinders a person's relationship within the social structures of any community. Therefore, proficiency in the languages used at home, school, and in the larger community is critical (MacLeod et al., 2020). MacLeod et al. (2020) assert that to facilitate sound development of children during integration, it is essential that they interact with individuals across diverse settings. A significant number of URM&Y fall within the teenage range, which poses challenges for language acquisition compared to early or mid-childhood (Yu, 2012). Additionally, teenagers are in a crucial developmental stage where socialization holds utmost significance (Yu, 2012). So, the combination of socialization needs with lack of language fluency can cause problems at this age. This means children who cannot communicate fluently in the language used in their host society risk not having sound development. This can thwart these youth social life as they must engage or interact with their peers. For many youths, it diminishes their confidence level in public, especially in school. On this basis, language proficiency plays a critical role in the social integration success of refugee youths.

A study on newcomer families experiences with programs and services in Canada showed that the ability to communicate effectively with Service and Care Providers (SCPs) and community institutions depends on English language proficiency (Brown et al., 2020). Limited English language proficiency was a barrier in most reviewed studies (Brown et al., 2020). Immigrant parents with poor English proficiency will need assistance helping their children to enrol in such programs. Poor proficiency in English affects not just the academic life of immigrants but their social life as a whole. In the study by Brigham et al. (2018) one of the research participants in this research stated that the ability to develop English language skills was a vital learning experience to boost her settlement experiences in Nova Scotia. This again shows that English language proficiency is indispensable for smoothly facilitating newcomers' social integration.

The lack of settlement services offered in French or English within areas that are not predominantly English or French can also be challenging to newcomers. According to Esses et al. (2012), Francophone immigrants within minority Francophone settlements complain about the absence of settlement services in French and inadequate knowledge of how Canada's bilingualism operates. These Francophone immigrants point out that one needs to know English to succeed in many areas outside the Quebec region. In the case of these Francophone immigrants, their inability to speak English makes them feel like strangers in areas outside of Quebec. This feeling of being strangers due to the language barrier leads to social exclusion, which affects their social integration. This means that Francophone immigrants have challenges adjusting to the social structures outside the Quebec region. Newcomers mostly come to Canada to pursue economic opportunities and better living standards for themselves and their families (Anisef et al., 2010). Therefore, language, the medium of communication, is a vital tool for the success of newcomers searching for economic opportunities in Canadian society (Esses et al., 2012).

A study by Walsh et al. (2011) concluded that, based on their studies on a Roma community with refugee backgrounds living in Canada, the lack of language was an obstacle in nearly all interactions in the new country and not just within institutional structures. In the case of children with refugee backgrounds, it is observed that an early age arrival into host countries aids with their integration (MacLeod et al., 2020). This is supported by Wilkinson's (2002) assertion that children with a refugee background who come to Canada early have more positive educational outcomes. Wilkinson (2002), however, postulates that experiences in the family and school context before and following immigration put young children who are refugees at risk for disrupted language development.

According to MacLeod et al. (2020), children's pre-migratory and post-migratory experiences with schooling primarily affect their language proficiency during social integration. For children with refugee backgrounds, their education before migration is truncated due to the situations that propelled them to leave their home countries. For example, Sirin and Rogers-Sirin (2015) states that many Syrian refugees attended schools before the war erupted in Syria, but the frequent attacks on schools made school-going very strenuous. This affected the language proficiency of these refugee children and youth in their new environment. MacLeod et al. (2020) conclude in their research that "preschool-aged refugee children may possess weaker language abilities than their host country counterparts," which can negatively impact their integration into society. The negative impact of this lack of language proficiency in older children is that some kids fear being ridiculed or teased by their peers, so they shy away from social gatherings in school and other places. This reticence hinders their social integration within the host communities, as they find it difficult to make friends because of the language barrier.

Employment

Employment and underemployment have also become two of the critical issues determining immigrants' social integration success. For many immigrants, the availability of jobs in the host country remains a top reason for emigration. "After ten years of settlement in a host society, where does the employment of new immigrants stand? This question may have serious social implications" (Godin, 2008, p.136). The social implications that are caused as a result of immigrants' underemployment are the nemesis of social integration.

A study was conducted to determine how work linked with social integration saw respondents liken work to participation. "The respondents expressed the view that working, for them, is a way to participate in society" (Cramm et al., 2009, p.517). For many immigrants, being employed offered them the opportunity to build new social networks, make friends, and contribute to the community's growth. This means that not working or being denied employment is a denial of participation in society.

According to Block and Galabuzi (2011), racialized Canadians face discriminatory job barriers compared to non-racialized Canadians. These racial barriers attached to Canadian jobs profoundly impact the health and well-being of racialized Canadians, mostly immigrants (Block & Galabuzi, 2011). Refugees who form part of the racialized populations are victims of these racial barriers to jobs. The long-term effect of these racial barriers regarding jobs is that they accentuate historical racial discrimination in the Canadian labour market. This leads to social and economic marginalization (Block & Galabuzi, 2011). Marginalization in any shape or form in any society affects social cohesion, thereby impeding the social integration of minority groups. Racial Canadians and immigrants alike will not be enthused to participate in a community that marginalizes them actively.

Immigrant women mostly find integration very challenging as compared to male immigrants. A study posited that "Immigrant women generally are less likely to be employed

and more likely to be unemployed than their male counterparts and Canadian-born men and women" (Chui, 2011, p.69). All of the above demonstrate how race and sex affect immigrants' employment participation.

One of the woes of social integration is the unavailability of jobs (Canada Without Poverty, 2015). This situation is even worst for racialized immigrant women. Racialized immigrant women are constantly discriminated against in employment and find it challenging to navigate their integration (Meraj, 2015; Block & Galabuzi, 2011). This situation does not allow racialized immigrant women to assimilate to the new culture, as they are discriminated against in society's labour force. Overall, it does not promote an inclusive society where minority groups feel part of the social structure.

University-educated immigrants still struggle in host countries. For immigrants with a university education, finding jobs in the Canadian labour force is more challenging than for their Canadian counterparts. A study posited that securing employment took much more work for university-educated immigrants than for their Canadian counterparts (Akbar, 2019). How does this influence the social integration success of immigrants? For many university-educated immigrants, not finding the relevant jobs suiting their backgrounds pushes them into areas where they lack the expertise but take it up for survival. This situation does not allow successful integration as immigrants try to adjust to jobs that are below their capabilities and education (Ledent, Chicha, & Arcand, 2017). For example, immigrants with engineering, law, and medicine backgrounds are seen driving taxis and working in warehouses because of the lack of recognition for credentials obtained outside Canada. These immigrants work twice as hard as their Canadian counterparts to fit appropriately into the social structure of host societies.

Housing

Housing plays a critical role in immigrants' lives; hence, the availability of affordable housing is seen as a necessity that newcomers cannot do without. Francis & Heibert (2014) stated that housing is the first and most immediate need for newcomers, providing the foundation for other aspects of the settlement. As housing is deemed the first and most immediate need of newcomers, it serves as the first social structure for integrating newcomers into the host community.

According to Esses et al. (2010), apart from being a critical need, housing is essential because it influences newcomers' abilities to access schools, immigration services, jobs, etc. Having access to housing is, therefore, an integral component of the integration success of a newcomer. In addition, the lack of housing or access can impede newcomers' ability or desire to participate in community events or activities.

For the children and youth, not having proper housing or shelter means not inviting friends home for weekend socialization. No parent will want to drop off their child to a friend whose home is unsafe or unhealthy for living. This tends to distract the social life of immigrant children and youth who cannot have friends over because of housing challenges.

Other notable obstacles make housing a challenge within a society. For example, in their research, Esses et al. (2012) indicate that collecting and utilizing housing information on available housing vacancies can be very stressful for newcomers, mainly because many are financially handicapped and face language barriers in communicating with property owners.

The issue of discrimination is another significant barrier for many immigrants in accessing housing in their host communities. Esses et al. (2012) further explain in their research that some property owners often try to discriminate against immigrants by not giving them in-depth information about vacancies, utilities, and house rent. This means that immigrants trying to access or rent houses could become victims of racism and other forms of

discrimination. When this happens, it makes it difficult for these immigrants to identify themselves with the broader community. These experiences of racism and discrimination further escalate the post-migratory trauma of immigrants, which affects their social life. Furthermore, Esses et al. (2012) posit that some property owners charge immigrants extra money for the rent of the first and last months to uplift the financial bar so they cannot afford it. This poses a significant challenge during social integration, as accessing housing could be very stressful due to racism and discrimination.

Keung (2012) states that the decline in rental accommodation and rising rents make housing very expensive for new immigrants to Canada, especially in Toronto. This situation of increasing rents needs to auger well for the successful integration of newcomers into Canada. The reason is that immigrants will have to save double to be able to pay for house rent. Instead of participating in social and cultural events to familiarize themselves with the new culture, they work more hours to raise money for the rising rents. They end up not integrating properly into their host communities because of rising rents. According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2005) a significant number of immigrants in Halifax face overcrowding in their households, with up to 18% of recent immigrant households experiencing crowded conditions. This issue is more prevalent among households consisting solely of very recent immigrants.

A study by Francis and Hiebert (2014) asserted that newcomers, particularly refugees, found it challenging to get relatively good houses fit for their purposes (i.e., sizeable for a household and security). According to Francis and Hiebert (2014, p.12), "Recent immigrant tenants who arrived at Metro Vancouver between 2001 and 2006 experienced an extremely high incidence of core housing need at 44 percent, compared with 36 percent among those who arrived before 2001". This clearly shows that recent newcomers struggle with accessing housing which is supposed to be the most immediate need of immigrants in any country.

Relinquishing social events and communal activities to take up extra hours at work to pay rent will jeopardize the social life of these immigrants. It is essential to state that immigrants with European backgrounds do not go through the same struggle other minority groups go through in finding houses in Canada (Francis & Hiebert, 2014). This confirms the earlier assertion by Esses et al. (2012) that racism and discrimination are among other factors making racialized people struggle to find housing.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation report for 2021 indicates that the Metro Vancouver Housing Market (MVHM) has been labelled Canada's most expensive housing market (CBC News, 2021). Low vacancy rates, high rents, and high house prices have characterized it. A low vacancy rate means that only few can afford rental housing. When this happens, there is a disconnect between the social structures of the host community and the immigrants since they cannot afford affordable housing. This shows that the rising cost of housing and its accessibility can hinder newcomers' social life.

According to Francis and Hiebert (2014), newcomers mostly rely on family members and friends when it comes to seeking out housing; hence social networks play a pivotal role in helping newcomers navigate the housing market in Canada. Refugees will likely need help navigating the housing market since they lack social networks upon arrival. Even after their arrival, they still will have to take long shifts at work by relinquishing the opportunity to attend community events and make friends. This leaves them with no social networks to help when they need housing for their families. Housing, therefore, plays a central role in the social integration of immigrants.

In their findings, Francis and Hiebert (2014) state that refugees, in general, are more likely than other classes of immigrants to report problems relating to housing caused by discrimination, unhealthy environments, and overcrowding. This reinforces the idea that refugees struggle more to find houses or accommodation in Canada due to racism and

bigotry. As a result, many lose interest in joining to build a society that discriminates against them. This mostly leads to social exclusion as these refugees feel discriminated against. The causal effect of this housing problem entangled with racism and discrimination is that it disrupts newcomers' social integration, especially refugees.

Health Care

Health care has always been a topical issue in developing and developed countries, especially for minority groups. Ahmad et al. (2004) postulate in their research that, although immigrants are always categorized as a healthier group of people than the Canadian population after arrival in Canada, the *healthy immigrant effect* dwindles over time in Canada. According to Esses et al. (2012), there is a low cancer screening participation among newcomers to Canada. This low participation in the cancer screening leads to undetected cancer, higher mortality and morbidity rates among newcomers in Canada. A fundamental question would be: What causes this low participation in cancer screening? According to Esses et al. (2012), it is a lack of knowledge and understanding of cancer screening health benefits and difficulties in accessing cancer screening locations. This shows that the healthcare systems need to be designed better to assist immigrants in overcoming some of these primary causes of low participation. Frequent low participation among these immigrants in cancer screening and other healthcare services separates them from society's social and health benefits. As healthcare remains a critical component of any social structure, immigrants' low participation undermines social cohesion. This poses a barrier to the social integration of newcomers and also jeopardizes their safety and well-being within their host communities.

Immigrants including refugees, are partly shaped by their mental health, which is impacted by their pre- and post-migratory experiences. Their cultural norms and beliefs also greatly influence their mental health (Brown et al., 2020). According to Esses et al. (2012),

most newcomers, especially immigrant youth, lack knowledge about Canada's mental health services. Immigrant youth distrust the mental health services in Canada, especially medication diagnosis, due to cultural and language barriers. Furthermore, many newcomers to Canada go through acculturative stress, which leads to depression (Esses et al., 2012). When immigrants go through this acculturative stress, they separate themselves from society as they battle depression. Suffering from acculturative anxiety by these newcomers excludes them from the larger community and does not make them feel at home. Therefore, a lack of knowledge of Canada's Mental Health Service does affect the social integration of immigrants, especially refugees.

Sexual health is an integral component of health in general. However, the study by Esses et al. (2012) shows that many newcomers in Canada go through barriers before accessing and utilizing sexual health services because of linguistic challenges, misunderstandings, and sometimes embarrassment. Stanbrook (2014) asserts in an editorial that the evidence indicates that the reductions in health coverage have specifically deprived refugees of primary and preventive healthcare. Apart from being medically unjust and inequitable, these cuts are also economically imprudent. This is because refugees are resorting to emergency departments for acute conditions that could have been prevented or treated earlier and at a lower cost in primary care settings.

Finally, Eggertson (2013) reports that Canadian doctors have resorted to a legal battle against the federal government on the cuts of health benefits to government – sponsored refugees as they promise to continue their protest. The argument by the Canadian Doctors for Refugee Care is that, although some of the government-sponsored refugees are accorded health benefits such as drug coverage, limited dental care, counseling, and home care services, other refugees who are not government assisted are seriously deprived of these health care benefits, (Eggertson, 2013). The allocation of healthcare funding for refugees

varies depending on factors such as their refugee status (government-assisted, privately sponsored, or referred by the Visa Office), with both provincial and federal governments providing support. Unfortunately, certain refugees may be left without any health coverage, leading to neglect or oversight. According to Tastsoglou et al. (2014), refugees in Canada can be broadly categorized into two groups. The first group consists of overseas refugees, who are recognized as convention refugees by the UNHCR and undergo their claim processing outside of Canada. These refugees may receive some funding for healthcare from either the government or private sponsors. The second group comprises in-land refugees, commonly known as asylum seekers or refugee claimants, who arrive in Canada seeking protection and subsequently submit their claims for evaluation.

Eggertson (2013) further postulates that "Many other refugees or failed refugee claimants get virtually no benefits, not even vaccinations, unless they pose a danger to public health or are homicidal, even if they have valid work permits and pay Canadian taxes" (para. 4). These health issues are critical obstacles for newcomers, especially refugee youth's successful social integration into their host communities.

Education

Education remains a crucial area for social integration in any society. Apart from enabling individuals to acquire knowledge, it also brings diverse people together for a common purpose. This makes educational facilities the center of social integration in various communities. However, although education plays a vital role in the social integration of people, immigrants, and other minority groups, such as refugees, have challenges within the education sector of host countries. These challenges may interrupt or negatively affect their social integration.

Available research on the education of refugee children shows that the education of refugees is sometimes hindered because of the psychological trauma most of these migrants

go through. According to Aydin and Kaya (2017), the primary difficulty of Syrian children who have experienced hardships due to the trauma of war and migration is that they are not given the appropriate psychological support that will allow them to be effective in school.

How does this challenge in immigrants' education affect their social integration?

Aydin and Kaya (2017) noted in their findings that Syrian refugee students were in a constant state of depression. It significantly affects their social lives as they tend to isolate themselves from fellow students at school. This makes them avoid talking about their past; it also breeds a lack of trust in people and confidence in themselves. The post-migration trauma also affects their participation levels in school events and activities. Aydin and Kaya (2017) argued that as Syrian refugees experienced depression, their engagement in academic activities and extracurricular events significantly decreased. This lack of interest hinders the process of social integration within educational institutions in host societies.

Conclusion

The reviewed literature on immigrants' and newcomers' experiences suggests that integration challenges are imminent now more than ever. These integration issues, coupled with other experiences of immigrants, are widely documented in this literature (Bilodeau et al., 2020; Lelie, Crul & Schneider, 2012; Esses et al., 2012; Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015) (McLeod et. 2020).

While social integration is an essential issue for most immigrants, this is much more important in the case of URM&Y. The vulnerability of these refugees raises concern and demands for urgent research to aid their social integration in Canada (Sadoway, 2012; Reisdorf, 2021 & CBC/Radio Canada, 2020). According to Pelley (2019), young people under 18 who flee various afflictions from their societies, either with their parents or alone, have become overlooked despite their vulnerability. Some of these young people become URM&Y as they escape from these afflictions in their home regions.

More research needs to be conducted about URM&Y in Canada. Therefore, the literature accessed for this study has dealt mainly with the experiences of immigrants in general. For this reason, this research project aims to discover the peculiar social integration challenges that affect URM&Y in Canada.

Social integration could be an inclusionary goal or a solidarity and mutual identification agenda. Social integration promotes inclusivity by fostering a sense of belonging and equal participation for all individuals in society. It aims to eliminate barriers and divisions based on factors such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, or socioeconomic status. It also promotes solidarity and mutual understanding among diverse groups within a society. It recognizes the value of diversity and seeks to create platforms for interaction, dialogue, and cooperation among different individuals and communities. This research, therefore, brings to bear some of the critical issues of social integration in Canada. Feeling welcomed in the host society is not the only factor in a successful integration (Bilodeau et al., 2020; Lelie, Crul & Schneida, 2012). A lot more is required of host communities besides merely welcoming immigrants. Such issues are what this research explores for URM&Y.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research incorporated a qualitative approach in the data collection and analysis, comprising semi-structured interviews (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021), (See Appendix: D) with former URM&Y. Semi-structured interviews are a qualitative research method that combines predetermined questions with flexibility for open-ended and probing inquiries. They enable in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perspectives, and insights. By blending structured and unstructured approaches, these interviews offer consistency and the freedom to explore emerging themes. The data for this study was generated through semi-structured interviews with six former URM&Y in Canada. I conducted online interviews using Microsoft Teams at each participant's convenience. These conversations were recorded and transcribed into MS Word format. The recorded files of the interviews were transferred to a password-protected OneDrive location. I then deleted the recording from my computer permanently. The transcripts were also stored in the password-protected OneDrive location, together with the consent forms filled by participants.

I also conducted a content analysis of the services that are available to these refugee youth. In the content analysis, I systematically collected a large sample of websites and online reports to analyze them using a set of pre-defined categories. The coding scheme was designed to capture specific aspects of the content, such as specific themes, available resources, and accessible programs for refugees. The coding process was done manually.

Qualitative methodology encompasses philosophical views, assumptions, postulations, and approaches that researchers incorporate into their work, which can be analyzed, critiqued, and adapted for their research (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). The goal of qualitative approaches is to comprehend a specific phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it. These approaches also recognize the significance of individuals'

interpretations of the phenomenon within their lived context. Consequently, employing a qualitative approach is considered the most suitable method for comprehending the issues and challenges faced by URM&Y during their integration into a new society (Grundy, Pollon, & McGinn, 2003).

Research Design

The research design of this thesis is based on my experience as a young immigrant and the experiences of the former URM&Y who took part in these studies. The design and methods in this research considered the research questions and ethical considerations with the situation of the study participants. I ensured that every method I employed in this study considered the participant's condition foremost.

I embedded the concept of social integration in all the stages of this research. This laid a clear framework to guide me throughout the research process. In addition, the use of *Critical Theory*, *Critical Race Theory* and the *Bidimensional Acculturation Model* guided the analysis of this study.

Research Participants

Former URM&Y were the target population for this study. The criteria included: 1) 19 or over, who came to Canada without their parents and who had no existing family in Canada; 2) they should have entered Canada as minors; 3) they should have entered Canada more than five years but less than 15 years ago. The rationale behind this time frame was to ensure participants would have had an in-depth experience in Canada. In addition, they had to speak English fluently, since the interviews were conducted in English.

The recruitment of participants was open to URM&Y from all countries. I also strived for a sex ratio parity in recruiting the participants. Although this was not an absolute

requirement, the reason for striving for sex ratio parity was that males and females have different experiences of social inclusion. Therefore, the experiences and perspectives of both sexes helped in understanding their inclusion accounts and views.

Recruitment of Participants

Six (6) former URM&Y were recruited for this research. With a sample size of six (6) participants, I had the opportunity to allocate more time and resources to thoroughly understand each participant's experiences, perspectives, and insights. This allowed for in-depth exploration and comprehensive analysis of individual cases. To begin with this process, I started by sending out information to some selected immigrant organizations for assistance in referring suitable participants: Child Welfare Immigration Center of Excellence – Mississauga, ISANS- Halifax, Westman Immigrant Services - Brandon, Center for Immigration and Community Service - Markham, COSTI - Vaughan which are all in Canada. The main reason for choosing these cities (Mississauga, Halifax, Brandon, Markham, and Vaughan) is the recent multicultural influx of refugees into these areas. I sent out an email with a letter of invitation, introducing them to the importance and purpose of this study (Appendix: B).

I also used social media as one of the selected ways to recruit participants. I created a research poster that was posted on Facebook under my account (Appendix: D). I asked friends on Facebook to help share the link to my Facebook advertisement about the research. The poster was advertised to potential participants living in Canada. The research poster contained details about the study and my contact information. The poster was advertised to potential participants living in Canada. The flyer showed ways to guide interested participants on how to get involved in the research (Appendix: D).

Finally, snowball sampling was also used. *Snowball sampling* "is a design process of selection, usually done by using networks" (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981p.153). This type of sampling (Snowball sampling) is very beneficial to researchers with little information about their target population (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

After finding the 6 interested participants, consent forms were given to those who were selected (Appendix: A). These consent forms were emailed to participants to sign before the interviews. Finally, I added a short questionnaire to gather basic demographic data (See Appendix: E) The purpose of this demographic questionnaire was to ensure that the sample represents the population being studied, which can improve the generalizability of the findings. The demographic questionnaire asked for the participants age, sex, county of origin etc (See Appendix E). This was done before the interviews begun. The demographic questionnaires were also collected and transferred to the password-protected OneDrive location.

Finally, a content analysis was conducted (see full description below) on the websites and reports from selected immigration associations/ organizations' activities (ISANS-Halifax, Westman Immigrant Services- Brandon, Center for Immigrant and Community services- Markham, etc.) The purpose of the content analysis was to ascertain the kinds of available services provided by these organizations where they are located. This further helped to understand the types of support or barriers, in the form of government policies, programs, and practices, that the URM&Y were given or not given, as well as the problems faced by these youths, from the viewpoint of the service providers. The documents used for the content analysis were stored in the password-protected OneDrive location, just like the other files.

In chapter 5, I discuss the implications of the findings of these interviews and their relevance to public understanding, policy-making, and future research around available integration and settlement services for refugees in Canada.

Transcription

For this research, I transcribed all the interviews. This type of transcription allows capturing every word from an audio/ video file the same way it was initially spoken (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). Then, I compared the transcripts to the recordings to the pattern of the conversations. In analyzing the data, I familiarized myself with the recording after transcribing it. Halcomb and Davidson (2006, p.38) state that *transcription* involves “reducing spoken words such as those from the audio-taped interviews into the written text”. Transcription is essential to researchers because it provides a written record of the qualitative data collected during interviews or other interactions with participants. The transcription process allows researchers to analyze and interpret the data more effectively. By having the data in written form, researchers can review and examine the content more closely, identify themes, patterns, and key points, and extract meaningful information for analysis. Davidson (2009, p.37) postulates that transcription can be seen as “theoretical, selective, interpretative, and representational.” Transcription can therefore be acknowledged as understanding what is said and how it is said to make meaning (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006; Azevedo et al., 2017; Grundy et al., 2003). For this research, I transcribed all the interviews. This type of transcription allows capturing every word from an audio/ video file the same way it was initially spoken (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). Then, I compared the transcripts to the recordings to the pattern of the conversations.

Coding

I started coding my data with the open-coding method. It is one of the first procedures used in the analysis of qualitative research (Khandkar, 2009). The open coding method is used as an initial coding pass to sort out relevant information (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Glaser (2016) also posits that open coding allows the researcher to see the research direction under study. This helped me to see the development of patterns of themes essential.

I started highlighting some words and statements made by the participants on the transcripts. Secondly, I grouped similar codes into various categories, known as axial coding. These categories of codes (Axial coding) were then merged into themes through selective coding. Finally, I decided on the type of themes based on the key areas I explored regarding the social integration of immigrants in Canada in my literature review. After I finished with my coding, my supervisor for this thesis (Dr.Fernando Nunes) coded one of my transcripts as a way of showing the validity of common themes. We then compared our codes to make sure it reflected the emerged themes.

Thematic Analysis

After clearly stating my themes, I employed the thematic analysis method in analyzing the themes. Vaismoradi et al. (2016) argue that the thematic analysis helps researchers to understand the phenomena espoused by the participants regarding the social integration situation they experienced upon arrival. Using the thematic analysis also implies that there will be a minimal description of data sets and the interpretation of the various aspects of the research topic, Braun and Clarke (2006). The coding of the data and its analysis aligned with significant themes, essential comments, and supporting statements expressed by the participants during the interview.

Content Analysis

The content analysis for this research was conducted around the available integration and settlement services for refugees and also URM&Y in Canada. Stemler (2015) defines *Content Analysis* as a research method used to analyze and interpret textual, visual, or audio content. It involves systematically examining the characteristics, patterns, and themes in the content, intending to identify and interpret the underlying meanings and messages. Also, Stemler (2001) posits that content analysis is a research technique used to compress many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit coding rules.

My research questions for this content analysis were as stated below:

- i. Are there available immigrant integration programs directed explicitly toward facilitating the social integration of URM&Y?
- ii. How accessible are these programs to URM&Y in Canada?

In the selection of my data sources, I designed search terms and narratives around refugee service provision in Canada. These themes included: language, employment, health, education, and community. I then used these themes to search for websites, reports and articles of integration and settlement services to refugees in Canada. These websites and reports emanated from association and organizations all over Canada. I collected and stored all this information (websites, reports and articles) in a folder in my computer. Since the data was text base, there was no need for transcription. I organized these articles and reports in separate folders based on the publication source and in a chronological order. I familiarized myself with the Data that was gathered by observing the following:

- i. I read all the articles thoroughly, taking notes and highlighting key areas in the passages.
- ii. I identified the recurring themes, key terminology, and any initial patterns or trends.

The open coding method was used to code the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). The open coding method was used as an initial framework based on prior literature and research objectives. This coding framework included categories such as language assistance, employment assistance, policy discussions, refugee community integration, refugee health services, etc.

The data gathered were then coded with relevant segments of the articles and reports according to the predefined categories in the coding framework. Finally, I reviewed the coded segments to ensure consistency and accuracy. I found new emerging themes not captured in the initial coding framework. I then revised the coding framework by adding the new categories.

In analyzing the coded data, I followed these steps:

- a) First, I conducted a quantitative analysis by tallying the frequency of each code/category across the reports, articles, and websites. This tallying helped me to determine the prevalence of different emerging themes.
- b) Secondly, I performed a qualitative analysis by examining the relationships between codes, identifying patterns, and exploring nuances in the data through thematic analysis.

I interpreted the findings within the context of the research questions and existing literature for this study. Finally, I analyzed the dominant themes, patterns, and narratives surrounding integration and settlement services for refugees in the reports, articles, and website publications.

Research Ethics

It was essential to meet my target audience professionally yet be friendly and establish trustful contact with them. In line with the ethics of this research, each participant

was asked to read and sign a consent form before beginning the interview. All participants in this research were conversant with the English language.

The participants were informed about the research purpose and how collected data would be treated and used. In addition, their confidentiality was respected, and efforts were made to protect people's identities in this research. Any data identifying a participant's identity, such as the school's name and the settlement agency trying to help the youth, was stripped out. Participants were also identified in this research with a pseudonym, hyphenated with an alphabet letter indicating male or female and their countries (See Table 1 in Chapter 4). As the experiences of male and female refugees may vary, these labels can help readers situate the text in context. All these also foster confidentiality between this research and the participants.

Risk Management

This kind of research posed mild risks to participants, and I was very cognizant of these risks. I realized that the participants would be discussing their pre- and post-migration experiences which could have posed psychological or emotional discomfort. Therefore, I made available a list of counsellors and mental health advisers to be given to each one of the participants.

The interviews were conducted at a preferred time for the participant. This ensured that the participants felt comfortable throughout the discussions. I also used "supportive expressions" throughout the interviews to help relieve stress from anyone who felt discomfort.

As a worker with the Emergency Health Services in Nova Scotia, I work with paramedics daily. So, I have also been trained and have experience in recognizing and dealing with people who are in distress. So, this was an advantage to me in this research.

During the coding of the data, documents that were printed out were kept in the secured cabinet at my home. For this research, data will be destroyed (Shredded) and permanently deleted (electronically) 5 years after the completion of this research.

Benefits to Participants

This study allowed participants the opportunity to discuss their new society and to suggest ways to improve it for future refugees and immigrants. This research also offered them a voice to speak out and feel part of their contemporary society, since the participants could share their experiences with someone who understood their plight without judgment. Each participant was also remunerated with an Amazon gift card of \$15 for participating in this study.

Their participation and experiences shared in this research have the potential to inform policies and practices toward better social integration of refugees in Canada. This also enlightened the participants on social integration issues regarding URM&Y.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

Critical Theory

The theoretical framework guiding this study was critical theory. *Critical theory* is a social theory designed to critique a society, to change it. It has its underpinnings in the Frankfurt School in Germany in the 1930s, and in Marxism, which has its roots in the economic and cultural theory of Karl Max (The 19th Century German Philosopher) and Friedrich Engles (AbiHanna, 2020). Critical theory states that culture is formed based on fundamental concepts, beliefs, values, and ways of thinking that are fundamentally controlled by existing class structures. Critical theory, therefore, seeks to offer an account of a theoretically possible social transformation. This means there is an identification of a social anomaly that needs fixing, as well as an identification of the mechanisms and agents of change. Social agents motivated to work towards the proposed transformation are identified. These social agents will recognize these refugees' suffering/ social integration challenges in line with critical theory. In consideration of this, AbiHanna (2020) posited that one could only look into the settlement and integration of immigrants into Western culture by delving into critical theory.

Following from this, the present research is anchored on critically analyzing and then making recommendations towards improving the social integration situation of URM&Y in Canada. I assert that my thesis followed a critical approach, in that the voices of URM&Y were gathered, in order to allow them to tell their stories in a new environment and then I conducted a content analysis of the service providers programs and services that are available to these URM&Y (thematic content analysis, outlined in Chapter 3). This process reflects the

aim of critical theory to critique society and its structures for a positive change, as opined by Horkheimer (1973).

This research aims to educate and provide solutions to address relevant social integration challenges concerning URM&Y in Canada. Its focus is on utilizing critical theory, which is specifically designed to enlighten individuals about society and its structures, with the goal of promoting human emancipation.

According to Horkheimer (1973), critical theory should encompass three qualities: be self-explanatory, practical, and normative. Horkheimer posited that critical theory must first explain the challenges associated with current social reality, then, identify the social agents who can help correct this anomaly, with practical objectives with constant checks and criticisms of these objectives. These principles of critical theory have guided this study. Firstly, it has identified those aspects of social integration that are challenging to URM&Y in Canada. Secondly, it has determined that the Canadian government can help solve these issues together with the URM&Y. The URM&Y have first-hand experience of the challenges, obstacles, and needs they encounter during their journey and settlement in Canada. Their perspectives and insights can provide a unique and valuable understanding of the realities they face, which policymakers may not have direct exposure to. By sharing their experiences, they can shed light on gaps in existing policies and propose changes that could lead to more effective and inclusive solutions. Considering this, the testimonies of these youth form a critical component of this research whose stories will help shape the social integration discourse in Canada.

Nickerson (2006) also postulates that critical theory research must combine psychological and cultural dimensions and examine the institutional forms of social dominance. Thus, in exploring the social integration challenges of URM&Y, this research delves into the psychological and cultural challenges of these youth as well as the

institutional structures of dominance, which are perpetuating these challenges. The aim is to understand better post-migration experiences and how they influence social integration psychologically, culturally, and economically.

Critical Race Theory (CRT).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is also theoretical framework used in this research. Adopting the *Critical Race Theory* (CRT) in this study helps to Understand race and racialized inequalities influencing the significant challenges of the former URM&Y, mostly of black descent. *Critical Race Theory* (CRT) is a framework developed in the late 1970s by legal scholars in the United States that seek to understand how race and racism intersect with social, cultural, and legal systems (Dixon & Parker, 2022; Fortin, 2021). It emerged as a response to traditional legal theories that failed to account for how race and racism shape American law and society.

According to Brigham (2013), Critical Race Theory (CRT) is an approach that aims to explore the experiences of racialized minorities and comprehend the impact of systemic racism on their lives. CRT acknowledges the importance of counter-stories, which provide alternative perspectives and narratives that challenge prevailing beliefs and illuminate marginalized experiences.

Within CRT, counter-stories manifest in diverse forms, such as biographies, narratives, parables, family histories, and composite stories. These varied forms enable individuals to share their journeys, experiences, and struggles, presenting a comprehensive view of the effects of racism. By embracing multiple storytelling methods, CRT recognizes that there are different avenues to grasp and convey the lived realities of racialized minorities.

By incorporating counter-stories, CRT assumes a significant role in critiquing liberal ideologies including colour blindness, meritocracy, and neutrality (Brigham, 2013). These

counter-stories disrupt prevailing narratives, offering insights that expose the limitations of such ideologies and their failure to address systemic racism adequately.

In summary, Brigham (2013) argues that CRT ventures into the experiences of racialized minorities, emphasizing the importance of counter-stories in challenging dominant narratives, shedding light on marginalized experiences, and critiquing liberal ideologies that perpetuate inequality.

Brigham (2013) states that the racialization of Canadian society, along with its political and social implications for individuals and groups, is often overlooked. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is highlighted as having significant potential for broadening structural and ideological analyses, ultimately contributing to the pursuit of a more equitable society (Brigham, 2013). It is essential to emphasize one important aspect of Critical Race Theory (CRT), which is its non-prescriptive nature and ongoing evolution in both understanding and application. Brigham (2013) posits that Critical Race Theory (CRT) is not prescriptive and will persistently evolve. CRT recognizes that the complexities of racism and its manifestations in society are continually changing, necessitating a dynamic and adaptable framework for analysis and action. By acknowledging that CRT is not prescriptive, it means that it does not offer fixed or rigid solutions to address racial inequalities. Instead, it provides a flexible and critical lens through which to examine systemic racism and its intersectional effects.

Moreover, CRT recognizes that social and historical contexts vary, and racial dynamics may manifest differently across time and geographical locations. As a result, the theory continues to evolve and adapt to these changing circumstances. This adaptability allows CRT to remain relevant and responsive to emerging issues, new insights, and evolving forms of racial discrimination.

This study embraces and promotes the integration of Critical Race Theory's (CRT) Five Tenets within the field of education (see Table 2, p. 86). By doing so, it aims to foster an educational system that is inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive. The utilization of these five principles is crucial in addressing racial disparities, enhancing educational achievements for marginalized URM&Y students, and cultivating a learning environment that acknowledges and appreciates the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students (Hiraldo, 2010; Patton et al., 2007). The application of CRT in education endeavours to dismantle systemic racism and establish educational spaces where all students, especially those from marginalized racial groups like URM&Y, can excel academically and flourish socially.

In this study, *Critical Race Theory* (CRT) shows that racism is not simply an individual bias or prejudice, but a systemic and structural feature of society embedded in social, economic, and political institutions. It also emphasizes the importance of recognizing and centering the experiences of marginalized communities, particularly Black refugees and other refugees of colour, in analysing and addressing racial injustice (Kalemba, 2021; Dei & Hilowle, 2018; Dei & McDermott, 2013).

Bidimensional Acculturation Model

In this study, I also use the *Bidimensional Acculturation Model* (Ngo, 2008). The Bidimensional Acculturation Model (BAM) is a model that explains how individuals from different cultural backgrounds adapt to each other when they come into contact. The model suggests that acculturation, or the process of adapting to a new culture, is a complex and multifaceted process involving two dimensions: preserving one's original culture and adopting the new culture.

According to Bidimensional Acculturation Model, individuals can acculturate in four ways: integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalization (Ngo, 2008). John W. Berry's

Bidimensional Acculturation Model explains the psychological and sociocultural processes when individuals or groups from diverse cultures interact. It focuses on two dimensions: Cultural Maintenance (upholding the original culture) and Contact with the Dominant/Host Culture (engaging with the new culture). Based on these dimensions, the model identifies four acculturation strategies (See Figure 1): Assimilation (full integration into the new culture), Integration (maintaining cultural heritage while engaging with the new culture), Separation (maintaining original cultural identity while limiting interaction), and Marginalization (feeling disconnected from both cultures). These orientations are not mutually exclusive, and individuals may exhibit varying degrees of each strategy. The model provides insights into acculturation dynamics and their impact on individuals' well-being.

John Berry's Acculturation Model (BAM)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Assimilation	Integration
<input type="checkbox"/> No	Marginalization	Separation
	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes

Table 1: Berry's Acculturation Model (Berry, 1980).

The proposition of the diagram is straightforward: by applying the two questions, the correlation between the yes/no responses can indicate which acculturation process in the table the newcomer individual is likely undergoing (Berry, 1980; AbiHanna, 2020).

In this study, the Bidimensional Acculturation Model holds importance in for several reasons:

1. The model provides a framework to study the acculturation processes experienced by the former URM&Y. It helps to explore how these individuals navigate their cultural identity, heritage, and interaction with the host culture.
2. The dimension of cultural maintenance in the model emphasizes the importance of preserving one's original culture, values, and traditions.

3. The dimension of contact with the host culture highlights the significance of engagement and interaction with the new culture. This study investigates the factors that influence URM&Y level of contact, such as language acquisition, social connections, and participation in cultural activities.
4. By understanding the acculturation strategies adopted by URM&Y, policymakers, practitioners, and educators can develop tailored support and interventions. This can include promoting integration while valuing and preserving their cultural background, facilitating language acquisition, and providing social support networks.

Overall, the bi-dimensional acculturation model offers a valuable framework to study the acculturation experiences of URM&Y, providing insights that can inform policies, interventions, and support systems to enhance their well-being and successful integration into host societies.

Chapter 5: Findings

Profile of Participants

This study interviewed Six (6) former URM&Y who reside in various cities in Canada (See Table 1). These participants migrated from different countries to Canada. Table 1. summarizes the demographic profile of these participants. Among the 6 participants were three females and three males. Their stories reveal the factors influencing their migration to Canada as URM&Y.

The following are some of the characteristics of the participants:

1. The participants came from the following countries: South Sudan, Kenya, Yemen, Venezuela, and Eritrea.
2. All these participants lived with their families as a unit before migrating as refugees to Canada.
3. All these participants were students in their home countries before leaving for Canada as URM&Y.
4. Three participants were female, and the other three were male.

Pseudonym	Country of Origin	Sex	Ages	Years in Canada	City currently residing in.
Bethel- E-F	Eritrea	Female	21	6	Calgary
Suzanne- F-K	Kenya	Female	24	9	Toronto
Saleem - M-Y	Yemen	Male	27	11	Vancouver
Rudy- M-V	Venezuela	Male	22	7	Regina
Johnson- M-S	South Sudan	Male	24	8	Winnipeg
Sheila- F-S	South Sudan	Female	25	8	Saskatoon

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Profile

The Social Integration Experiences

This section deals with the experiences which the former URM&Y who participated in this study shared with me, regarding their pre-migration journey and their social integration in their host communities. The voices of these former URM&Y create awareness of the challenges and experiences faced by URM&Y in Canada.

In this chapter, four sections are presented to outline the participants' migratory and settlement experiences. **Pre-migration experiences, post-migration experiences, adjustment challenges, ethnic identity, and minority status.** The pre- and post-migration experiences are significant in creating a backdrop for the social integration of URM&Y. These experiences reveal the emotional and psychological ordeals that these refugee youth have encountered. The other two sections show the socio-cultural challenges that hinder these refugees' integration into their host communities.

Pre-Migration Experiences

Pre-migration experiences refers to the events and circumstances the participants experienced before leaving their country of origin to settle in Canada. This can include political instability, war, persecution, economic hardship, environmental disasters, or personal reasons such as family separation. Pre-migration experiences can significantly impact the physical and mental health of URM&Y and their ability to adjust and integrate into their new society. For example, refugees who have experienced trauma or violence in their home country may have difficulty coping with new challenges and adjusting to a new culture (Sangalang, 2019). Therefore, understanding pre-migration experiences is essential for developing effective policies and programs that can support the health and well-being of URM&Y during and after their migration journey.

The participants revealed that, for most, life had been good before the conflicts started in their home country. Most of them referenced their families and the strong bond between them and their family members. They all shared how they had experienced happy moments with friends and neighborhoods in their home countries, as children. Suzanne-F-K recounts, "*...I had good moments in this country. I was my parent's first child, so they loved me. My friends would always come to play in my house...*". Similarly, Saleem -M-Y also recounts that "*...life was good before the conflict started. Everything was fine, and my parents were also working...*" These statements are examples that reinforce the connection which the participants had with their families living together. It also confirms the normality of life before conflicts broke out in their home cities. Johnson-M-S also said, "*...I had everything I needed in the house as a child. My family provided all my needs, you know...*". This quote is an example of what other participants said about the quality of connection they had with their family in their home countries. They recount the love, friendships, and support they received from their families. On the other hand, dwelling too much on pleasant memories of home can also exacerbate feelings of homesickness and grief, leading to depression and anxiety. It can also make it more difficult for refugees to fully integrate into their new community and culture, as they may be less likely to embrace their new surroundings fully.

Another critical aspect of the pre-migration experiences of URM&Y were the preparations, anticipation, and anxieties about their journeys. For some, it involved the violence and persecution that they experience before leaving their home countries. For instance, Saleem-M-Y responding to a question about his experiences before leaving his country, recounted that "*...the tension was in Sana'a, Yemen. I was terrified because of the shootings. I left my parents behind and followed my uncle to Cairo. From Cairo, I was helped to come here [Canada].*" Similarly, Sheila -F-S said,

I was fleeing a tribal conflict. There was violence on the streets, and people were getting attacked every day. Our family shop was burned down...it was no longer safe to live in our town again, so we fled to Uganda. Sheila -F-S

These statements reaffirm that some URM&Y pre-migration also included experiences of violence, persecution, and sometimes discrimination that compelled individuals to flee their home countries.

The statements by participants particularly revealed the anxiety and uncertainty involved in their pre-migration processes. Johnson M-S recounted that *"It was a moment of confusion in our lives because we were not fully prepared to leave..."* Rudy-M-V also stated that *"there was fear in us [respondent & sister] because we did not know what was going to happen during the traveling.* Suzanne-F-K stated, *"I had mixed feelings because I had good times in this country as a child, and now things are so bad I have to leave."* The uncertainties associated with pre-migration experiences of URM&Y were prevalent in all of their accounts. This state of fear and confusion about the journey arose from the complexities of their forced migration as URM&Y. Considering their limited understanding and their unpredictable events during migration, anxieties, and uncertainties became a part of their journeys.

It is important to note that difficult pre-migration experiences of many immigrants also occur in refugee camps. In this research, four participants spoke about their experiences living in refugee or unofficial camps before traveling to Canada. In particular, many of these refugee camps were characterized by a lack of privacy, a shortage of resources and inadequate infrastructure. On this note, Johnson-M-S recounts that *"I felt safe in the camp, but it was not comfortable to live there.."* Johnson-M-S also said that *"I noticed there was water shortage...there was no privacy too because we were crowded there..."*. In addition, some camps lacked the proper infrastructure to house these refugees. In the words of another participant Saleem-M-Y, *"Walahi! It was sad seeing people homeless and living in smaller*

rooms..." He goes on to say, "...there was a shortage of food supplies and other items...you have to manage everything you get in the camp because it is not your home..."

These statements about living in a refugee camp show that this experience was psychologically and emotionally draining. These four URM&Y were forced to cope with the lack of resources, lack of privacy, as well as with their previous losses. Speaking about the lack of privacy in the refugee camp Rudy-M-V recounts, "...oh yes, it was a place with so many people. There was no good infrastructure for us in the camp...we were put in smaller rooms, so we had no privacy." It is essential to add that refugee camps are of different sizes and quality, depending on where they are located and the availability of resources. However, these were the experiences of URM&Y before coming to Canada.

The truncation of schooling in refugee camps refers to the reduction or closure of educational facilities in refugee camps. This can occur for various reasons, such as lack of funding, insufficient resources, conflict, insecurity, or natural disasters. The truncation of schooling in refugee camps has significant negative consequences for the education and well-being of children in these settings. Education is a critical tool for refugee children to break the cycle of poverty and displacement and to build skills and knowledge that will enable them to rebuild their lives. Johnson M-S recounted that "*when we arrived, there were no teachers, there were no classrooms in the camp until we left the place. Many of us [Children] were always supporting the elders to work or trade outside the camp.*"

According to Saleem-M-Y "... one of the leaders [volunteers] will always group us [children] in the morning to teach us. It was not a formal school so not all the children participated in it". Children are often forced to drop out or receive inadequate education when schools are truncated or closed in refugee camps. This can lead to a range of adverse outcomes, including reduced future opportunities for employment, increased vulnerability for

exploitation, lack of learning outcomes and reduced access to essential services such as health care.

Despite the challenges in the camps, the four URM&Y were resilient and were able to adapt and navigate their lives within these refugee camps. Below are some of the activities that helped these refugees become resilient:

- Community -volunteer activities
- Starting small businesses
- Participating in education

The above activities equipped these refugees with skills and increased their chances of resettlement. It also instilled in them resilience that often helped them to migrate further to other countries for safety and better lives. Sheila-F-S recounted that *“In the camp, I joined a small group of people [volunteers] to do work in the community for free. We cleaned the neighborhoods and assisted visitors who came to the camp to preach or educate us on health. It was like schooling for me”*. Another participant Saleem-M-Y also stated that *“Over there [at the refugee Camp] I and my friend will buy stuff in the community market and bring them to sell again in the camp. It was like a side business for us as children.”*

Overall, living in a refugee camp was a complex and multifaceted experience that required support from international organizations to ensure that these refugees had access to the necessities, protection, and opportunities they needed to rebuild their lives.

Early Adjustment Experiences

Many refugees face early adjustment difficulties, during the initial resettlement period in their host countries. The early adjustment experiences of URM&Y can be complex, challenging, and stressful for these URM&Y. This is because they are expected to navigate a new culture with different languages, a unique education system, a new financial sector and so on, without the support of their families or networks of friends. The participants in this

study shared their stories regarding their early adjustment experiences. These included the following areas:

1. The time of year and location at which they arrived in Canada.
2. Issues they found most challenging upon arrival.
3. How they managed to solve these issues.
4. Adjustment experience in finding jobs, houses/apartments.
5. Adjustment experiences regarding their schooling.

Regarding the time of year of immigration, it is essential to state that many refugees come from warmer climates and hence are not used to the cold temperatures in which they suddenly find themselves. Some of our participants lived in poorly insulated rooms, upon their arrival in Canada, thereby causing extreme cold. One of the participants, Sheila-F-S recounted that she arrived safely in Toronto and moved to stay with a family friend. When asked about some of the things she found most challenging, She said *"Um, for me, my biggest challenge was the cold. I did not have clothes for the cold weather until I got here."* Another participant expressed how challenging it was to deal with the winter season. Suzanne-F-K said, *"First, the weather was a problem for me because I arrived in January. Never experienced this cold before, you know, it was my first time seeing snow."* Two other participants also expressed their challenges with the winter season.

According to Rudy-M-V, another challenging aspect was securing official documents, which identified him as a government-assisted refugee. He says, *"One of the challenges was that, at the time, I did not have official documents as an assisted refugee... This always gets me worried all the time"*. To explain this further, becoming a government-assisted refugee means the host country (government) gives an official document confirming refugee status and highlighting the kind of assistance you will be provided. This is very crucial for the integration and settlement of refugees in Canada. Without this official

document, staying in some host countries is sometimes tricky. Another participant spoke on the challenge he had at the beginning in accessing health care upon arrival. Johnson-M-S indicated, "*I also had difficulty getting my documents together to visit the hospital.*" This supports the assertion that lack of proper identification can also affect the accessibility of healthcare by URM&Y in Canada.

The case of Abdoul Abdi from Somalia is a case in point in Canada, CBC / Canada Radio (2020). Abdoul Abdi's case received significant attention in Canada and sparked discussions about the country's treatment of child refugees and the immigration system. Abdi came to Canada with his sister when he was six years old, and he was placed in the child welfare system. However, he was not granted citizenship as a child, so he was facing deportation until negative attention from community and media advocates including Abdi's lawyer convinced the government to reverse the decision. Abdi's situation was complicated by his involvement in the criminal justice system. As a result, he served time in prison for various offenses, including aggravated assault, and his deportation order was put on hold until he completed his sentence. However, after serving his sentence, Abdi has expressed a desire to turn his life around and has worked towards that goal. Abdi's case highlights some challenges child refugees face when they are not granted citizenship and the need for more support and resources for these individuals. It also raises questions about the effectiveness and fairness of Canada's immigration and criminal justice systems.

Another issue that was raised, when participants were asked about the most challenging aspects of their early adjustment experiences, was their financial constraints. URM&Y often face even more significant financial constraints than adult refugees, as they lack the support of adult family members and often have limited access to resources and opportunities. In many cases, URM&Y may have fled their homes without any financial resources or possessions, making it difficult for them to meet their basic needs upon arrival in

a new country. Rudy-M-V added, "*..and you know, I did not have enough money on me, without money, to start life is tough*" Bethel-F-E also recounted her experience on financial constraints "*I want to go out with the new friends I made, but if I do, I will spend into my groceries money so I will always decline to go out.*"

The language barrier was cited as another initial settlement challenge that was experienced by a number of participants. For some of these refugee children, their inability to communicate in English or French impeded their access to essential services such as healthcare, education, legal assistance, etc. Also, language barriers affected these refugees' employment, as they needed help in speaking and learning the language of instruction. In his statement, Saleem-M-Y said that "*Okay, I think it was the language. I speak Arabic, you know, it is my language. So, learning English was really challenging for me. Because of this, I cannot find good work*". Another participant made it very clear that speaking English was challenging for her, when she said, "*..also, I could not speak English very well when I came first, I tried to speak, but they cannot understand me well, but I understand them*" Suzanne - F-K. She further said, "*I was always shy to talk to people [Haha] because my English was bad and made school work difficult for me..*" Another participant recounted how difficult it was to access healthcare. He attributed this to his inability to express himself in English. He says that "*...I could not speak English well at that time, so I always found it difficult to talk to the doctors. As a result, I was not going to the hospital again when I was sick*"- Rudy-M-V. This supports the assertion that language barriers can affect refugees' access to essential services such as health care. In addition, it is possible that the language barrier can affect the mental health of refugee children as they are isolated and disconnected from their host community. Thus, for some URM&Y in Canada, this language barrier [English or French] hindered their adaptation to their new society.

Another critical issue regarding the challenges that URM&Y participants faced upon arrival was a lack of family support. The family as a unit is a fundamental aspect of the life of refugee children who are forced to leave their countries, since families provide emotional support for members who are going through difficult moments. Unfortunately, most of the separated refugee children in this study were constantly experiencing trauma and a feeling of disconnection from their social support networks. One participant told me, "*...also, you do not have a family to support you...you have nobody to encourage you when times are bad, it is just you. It can be draining*" Rudy-M-V. Saleem-M-Y made it clear to me that not having a family deeply affected him: "*Another thing; I did not have a family here, so it was lonely most times, you know, when I see families together at the mall or restaurants*". These statements confirm that family units can be crucial to refugees as they navigate the complex and often overwhelming resettlement processes in their new environments. Thus, the lack of connection between URM&Y and their families ultimately affects their social integration process.

I sought to find out from the participants whether these challenges had been solved or still existed. A few of the participants felt they had overcome some of the challenges. Four participants agreed that once in a while these challenges still existed and had not been solved completely. According to Suzzanne-F-K she replied that, "*No, I am fine now. Maybe I am not fluent in English, but I am okay now*". Another participant said, "*So sometimes you will run into some issues but not like the beginning...housing is still difficult for me. That is why I could not settle in Toronto.*" Saleem-M-Y. When I asked Johnson-M-S, he responded that "*...Not all of them are still challenges; for instance, my insurance problem is fixed now. For the winter weather, I am coping with it [Laughing].*" Bethel-F-E also recounted that "*I do encounter some challenges once in a while and it is common with some of my refugee friends too*"

These comments suggest that, from time to time, these challenges still existed in the lives of the URM&Y. However, they also indicated that URM&Y can overcome these challenges, with the proper support and resources. When these support systems and resources are available, URM&Y can overcome these challenges and thus become active and valued members of their new society. Johnson-M-S reiterated that “...*the language center helped me in organizing my resume and recommended a job for me to apply. This was very helpful to me when I came*”.

An essential part of this segment was their experiences in finding jobs, apartments/housing, and school enrolment. Their experience enrolling in school as URM&Y varied depending on multiple factors. These factors included their country of origin, displacement circumstances, financial ability in the host country, etc. Their experiences as URM&Y with finding housing or apartments can also depend on the host country and the resources available to these refugees. In the same light, their experience in finding jobs largely depended on factors such as language ability, credentials and so on. My interaction with these participants in these areas (school, jobs & housing) revealed the following experiences.

Finding employment

According to Suzzanne-F-K, finding a job was very challenging. She said, “*It is tough from the beginning, finding a job? It was hard for me. I never had any job experience, so finding a good job was hard*”. This lack of work experience is a significant factor that negatively affects a refugee’s search for jobs. When I asked another participant Rudy-M-V about his experience in finding a job, he said that the lack of documents made it more difficult for him to find work, “*It is a different experience for everyone. You know, I suffered in the beginning because I did not have proper documentation. This delayed me in getting a job early, but I finally solved this issue*”.

In seeking employment, the need for proper documentation as a refugee challenged Rudy-M-V. Documentation is paramount for URM&Y to prove their identity, nationality, and status. The lack of proper documentation may lead to the inability of refugees to access or apply for employment offers. URM&Y who lack proper documentation may thus face crucial barriers to accessing services such as employment, healthcare and education.

Another participant, Bethel-F-E, commented about her lack of experience in looking for work. She said this about her job-seeking experience.

I struggled because I did not know where to find jobs near me. I depended on friends until I learned how to search for myself online. When I found one, it was okay, but my English was not good, so I did not fit in well Bethel-F-E.

Another participant Johnson-M-S also recounted his experiences finding a job, housing, and school enrollment. When asked about his experience finding a job, he said it was okay. He applied for a job and was given that job. He, however, noted "...*I just was not making enough money to cover my bills*" Johnson-M-S. Poorly paid jobs restrict the earning potential of refugee youth, limiting their financial independence and ability to support themselves. They may struggle to cover basic living expenses and have little disposable income for savings or investments. Engaging in low-paying jobs at a young age can result in long-term economic disadvantages for refugee youth. It may hinder their ability to acquire higher education, develop specialized skills, or access career advancement opportunities. This can perpetuate a cycle of low-wage employment and restrict their prospects for upward mobility in the future.

Finding housing

The reception of refugees upon entering a new country in terms of housing can vary depending on the specific policies, resources, and whether these refugees are Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) or Private Sponsored Refugees (PSR). In this study, some of the participants who identified as (GAR) were housed in temporary accommodations such as hotels upon arrival in Canada. For those who were sponsored by the church, they were accommodated in a mission house upon arrival in Toronto. These arrangements helped these refugees for a short while until they started navigating their way in Canada.

When asked about her experience finding a house or apartment upon arrival, Suzanne-F-K attested to high rents as a challenge. She recounted, *"For housing, it is the rent increase, you can find one [house/ apartment], but the rent will be expensive."* Rudy-M-V described finding a house upon arrival as stressful. Rudy-M-V recounts that *"Um, it was stressful for me. Initially, I needed to figure out where to find less expensive places [apartment]. So, I spend so much time searching and searching for affordable places [apartment]"*. Rudy-M-V added *"...also, my official status was not approved that time, and one landlord, did not want to rent out his place [apartment] for me because of it"*. In a similar fashion, Johnson-M-S recounted that he was denied housing for lack of references:

I found a place, and the owner asked me for references, and I did not have any, so they gave it to someone else. I explained myself to them, but no. You know, I felt they did not want me to move in. Johnson-M-S

The statements from Rudy-M-V show that the lack of knowledge in finding affordable houses hindered his search for an apartment/ house. He also found it stressful due to a lack of knowledge on where to find these affordable houses for rent. It is important to point out that, both in the case of Rudy-M-V, as well as of Johnson-M-S, they were denied housing for lack of official status and also lack of references. This means that landlords are discriminating against them because of their status and lack of history in a particular city and

possibly racism. It is important to note that as newcomers in a host country, it is difficult to have some of these references upon arrival.

It is important to state that URM&Y may struggle to navigate the complex housing market in their host province. It is the case that some may not be familiar with the local laws and regulations guiding house rentals. Others will not have references or even documentation. This can pose a difficulty for them to find a place that meets their needs and budget. In this respect, it is significant to note that, when these youth are given assistance in finding housing, this facilitates this process tremendously. Bethel-F-E illustrated this point, when she recounted how she was helped in her search for an apartment *"My housing was arranged for me by my church. It made it easy for me"* Bethel-F-E.

Enrolling in school

Participants detailed much more positive experiences in navigating their enrollment in schools. The experiences of Rudy-M-V with enrolling in school seemed smooth. Rudy-M-V said, *"...a church helped us to, you know, attend school when we arrived. It was very good to me."* Thus, in school, the experience of Rudy-M-V seemed smooth because, similar to the way in which Bethel-F-E was helped in her search for housing, the enrolment of Rudy-M-V was facilitated by the church that hosted him. When asked about her experience enrolling in school, Suzanne-F-K also said the school supported her. She explained that school is where she got much help upon arrival. She Suzanne-F-K said *"I made friends and joined social networks in school which helped me to know my society. Oh, there were counsellors too that I visited often in school"*. This means that, except for school enrolment, Suzanne-F-K also faced some challenges in finding a job and a house. When asked about her school experience as an URM&Y, Bethel-F-E said *"I loved school; it was amazing. My teachers were always helpful, so the beginning was good. Classes were good too when I started, but my writing was*

bad. I think that was the only difficulty". In a similar fashion, when asked about his experience enrolling in school Johnson-M-S said,

I think a school is a nice place over here [Canada]. I met other immigrants just like me in school...you can talk to people when you have a problem. I made good friends in school, and that helped me - Johnson-M-S.

However, he added that "...sometimes I was unhappy because of the past issues and did not want to attend class some days". Johnson M-S referral of past issues meant losing his home, community, friends, and some family members. He left behind familiar surroundings and separated from his parents during his journey to Canada. Such displacement can lead to a sense of disorientation, grief, and loss of identity hindering his mood and academics.

The experience of Johnson-M-S enrolment in school indicated a place of socialization for him. This illustrates that schooling significantly impacts the lives of URM&Y. The school serves as a place of integration for refugees into their new society. They learn the local language and culture of the place. This can be crucial in helping them find employment and build social networks.

In summary, the early adjustment experiences of the study participants mirror the following general experiences:

- Difficulty in obtaining housing, due to lack of knowledge, high rents, lack of documentation and references.
- Difficulties in finding work due to language barriers, lack of documentation, lack of experience in finding work, lack of previous job experience and low wages.
- The school served as a support system, both in helping them learn language skills, networking for housing and employment and, most importantly, socialization.

For URM&Y, schooling is critical in integrating them into society. It is why schooling is described as a support system for these participants. Regardless of their challenges in school, their fundamental view of the schools indicated how these helped them to socialize and integrate.

Adjustment problems specific to Social Integration in Canada.

Many challenges are encountered in the adjustment processes of URM&Y in Canada. These challenges are connected to cultural differences, language barriers, and discrimination. In the present study, I attempted to investigate the participation of the study participants in the- social structures of their society. I wanted to know whether they were included or excluded, as well as the challenges that they experienced when they tried participating in these social structures. I also wanted to find information about the first social event of their host community in which they participated, upon their arrival. It was essential to ascertain what type of help they received from immigrant associations, if any, towards their social inclusion in their host society. In my conversations with these participants former URM&Y, they highlighted some problems that centered on the following themes:

- Language barriers
- Social isolation
- Lack of access to services
- Cultural differences

These challenges were part of the many obstacles hindering their social integration adjustment processes.

I asked Saleem-M-Y whether he felt included or excluded in trying to participate in the social structures of his new society. His response was, "*No, I did not feel included.*" I sought to find out what, if anything, had happened to make him feel this way. Saleem-M-Y recounted,

I tried to join a group in our community, but the reaction from the team lead was not good to me. She told me they would let me know if they needed new people. I knew it was an excuse to send me away -Saleem-M-Y.

I further asked what challenges he had encountered trying to participate in the social structures of the new society. He responded, *"I think communicating in English was a challenge at the beginning. Also, some people just did not want a foreigner to join their space"*. This revealed the prejudice that is encountered by refugees. I also asked in what community social events he had participated when he arrived. Saleem-M-Y replied, *"I go to Jumah [Mosque] on Fridays. I also played soccer with my friends in the summer"*. I sought to understand the nature of his experience within these social events. He said, *"It was good. Yes, it is always good to meet people and pray together"* Saleem-M-Y. I asked him how much help he has received towards his social inclusion journey in his new society. He said, *"I got help from the refugee mission that brought us to Canada. They provided coordinators to check on us and help us with some house materials we needed"*. He recognized the assistance of the refugee mission in helping him, and others to integrate more successfully. Faith-based organizations and refugee sponsors play a critical role in refugee integration. Their involvement helps refugees navigate the challenges they face when resettling in a new country and assists them in becoming self-sufficient members of their new communities. Faith-based organizations often offer immediate assistance to refugees upon their arrival. They provide basic necessities such as shelter, food, clothing, and medical care. This support helps refugees stabilize their lives during the initial stages of resettlement.

According to Sheila F-S the lack of access to some services was a challenge. For instance, URM&Y may face significant health challenges due to their experiences, including physical injuries, mental health issues, and exposure to disease. In addition, without access to

healthcare services, these individuals may struggle to manage their health and well-being, further exacerbating their challenges. Sheila-F-S recounted that,

...it was difficult for me to visit the hospital; you know my claimant application [Refugee Claimant Status] was under process at that point. So, no insurance, no papers, I did not want to go and be asked of these issues. Sheila-F-S

Undocumented URM&Y may face stigmatization and discrimination in society, including accessing the healthcare system. Fear of being judged, mistreated, or denied care due to their immigration status can discourage them from seeking medical assistance. In some cases, previous negative experiences or misinformation can make undocumented refugees lack trust in the healthcare system. This mistrust can stem from concerns about confidentiality, fear of being reported to immigration authorities, or previous encounters with healthcare professionals who did not adequately address their needs. When I posed the question to Bethel-F-E on whether she felt included or not, she replied,

I will say not so much included, though I left Eritrea very young, Um! I am still used to the culture over there than here [Canada], you know, the food and celebrating festivals with my family in Asmara, that was beautiful. Bethel-F-E

She further indicated the cultural differences she encountered in Canada and how she is still fond of her Eritrean culture. I also asked Suzanne-F-K whether she felt included or excluded in trying to participate in the social structures of her new community. She replied, *"I felt included most times."* Suzanne-F-K added that she was introduced to and welcomed whenever she attended programs. She indicated how some families had invited her over to their homes. This made her feel included.

When asked about what social event she attended upon arrival? Suzanne-F-K responded, *"I went to church. I am a Catholic, and I decided to visit the chapel...there were*

other refugees I met there from other countries". I followed up to know her experience in trying to participate in the church service. She responded, *"At first, I feared for no reason...I walked into the church like I was invited, and they were happy."* I also asked her whether she received any help from any immigrant association regarding her social inclusion. She responded "no" but added, "I did not know such associations until after a while." Although Suzanne-F-K felt included sometimes, cultural differences could have made her afraid when joining the church. Also, her lack of knowledge of the existence and functions of immigrant associations deprived her of seeking help.

Another participant Rudy-M-V was also asked if he felt included or excluded in the social structures of his new society. He responded that *"I did not feel included."* He recounted how he was discriminated at the workplace because he was different [immigrant]. He said, *"...inside the kitchen, we do the same work, but I was paid less among the others".* I asked him Rudy-M-V what challenges he experienced in trying to participate in the social structures of his new society? He responded that *"for me, the documents, [lack of official status] at the beginning was my challenge. I could not go and register for some events because I thought they would ask about it"* He added that *"the discrimination at the workplace was also a challenge for me."* I asked, what was the first social event he attended upon arrival. He responded, *"I went ice-skating downtown at the rink, and I met new people."* He Rudy-M-V said he felt good participating in that sport. He added that he likes to make friends, so it was a good place for him. From his responses, he indicated that he had felt excluded. He cited a bad experience at work where he was mistreated. He called it discrimination at work, as he was paid less among his co-workers after doing the same task assigned to them.

I asked Johnson-M-S the same questions on whether he had been included or excluded in the social structures of his new society. He responded, *"In school, I felt included*

because I participated in programs and also volunteered...outside school, I did not feel connected" Johnson-M-S. He notes that his participation in school events made him feel included. In contrast to the larger community, he says he did not have time to participate in communal activities. I asked the respondent what social event he first participated in after his arrival. Johnson-M-S responded that *"I attended a welcome event for newcomers."* He answered "yes" when asked if he received any help towards social inclusion from any organization. Johnson-M-S stated that *"the immigration association here [Manitoba] sends us updates on job vacancies. It helps many immigrants a lot. I once applied for a job from them and got it"*.

Ethnic Identity and Discrimination

In this section, I ask crucial questions about the ethnic identity and feelings regarding their (former - URM&Y) position in Canadian society. Ethnic identity plays a critical role in the experience of refugees forced to flee their home countries. For URM&Y, their ethnic identity is integral to their uniqueness and sense of self. Unfortunately, when these URM&Y arrive in a new country, they sometimes face discrimination based on their ethnic identity or race. This can occasionally include subjection to stereotypes, prejudice, etc. In addition, one must note that discrimination can manifest in overt forms, such as hate crimes and racism.

It is essential to note that refugees are not a homogenous group; hence their experiences of discrimination based on ethnic identity can vary. These variations can be based on other factors such as country of origin, age, sex, race, and socio-economic status. For instance, refugees from Ukraine may be treated and received differently from refugees from South-Sudan.

All participants in this study agreed that ethnic identity or race is something that they think about. Although the majority stated they do this regularly, a few said they do not think

about it regularly. When I asked how they identified themselves, they all identified with their country of origin. I also asked the respondents, have you encountered instances of prejudice or racism? Again, all participants responded “yes” to the question. In my conversation with participants, they all shared incidents of discrimination and prejudice which they had encountered.

One of the participants Johnson-M-S said, *"Yes, I have; at school, I was snubbed by a group of friends. One of them told me later that one of the guys said I am not like them...that was crazy to think like that"*. I followed up with how he dealt with it. He responded, *"I did not feel hurt, but it made me miss my friends in my country. I just ignored them and made new friends"*. Johnson M-S added that racism is one of the struggles that he has experienced, regarding his ethnic identity.

According to another participant Suzanne-F-K, racism was tacitly present during her search for employment. She recounted her experience *"...I was applying for a job. I had the experience and all that, but they did not take me. I asked a Canadian roommate to apply for it. She did, and they gave it to her"*.

Another participant shared his struggles regarding identity and discrimination. *"I have had a situation; my colleagues at work said something negative about my country"* Saleem-M-Y. They described his country (Yemen) as a violent country. He recounted how he educated them about the subject matter, thus leading to them to apologize to him. This statement reveals the kinds of stereotypes and prejudice that refugees go through daily.

Rudy-M-V said, *"I have seen it many times...I told you earlier about how I was mistreated at work"*. I asked him how he deals with such situations. He responded, *"Whenever I go through something like that, I just take my time. I will just be patient and let it go"*.

Rudy-M-V also indicated that fear of one's position as a refugee could sometimes make one overlook these instances of discrimination. According to Rudy-M-V *"Also, I was afraid to stand up against these discrimination because of fear for deportation"*. Fear can be a powerful emotion that can cause refugees to delay fighting discrimination or mistreatment in their new surroundings. For example, refugees may be willing to accept lower-paying jobs or substandard living conditions, if they feel that speaking out against these issues could lead to further discrimination or even deportation. They may also avoid seeking help or reporting incidents of discrimination out of fear that it could draw negative attention to themselves or their community. This can be seen from the above experiences Rudy-M-V on prejudice and racism. When people are afraid, they may prioritize their immediate safety and survival, including their rights and dignity. When URM&Y arrive in a new country, they may feel a sense of relief and gratitude for escaping their dangerous situation. However, they may also feel vulnerable and unsure of their future. In this context, they may be willing to overlook or tolerate discriminatory treatment if they believe it is necessary to ensure their safety or secure their basic needs.

Content Analysis of Available Services (Integration and Settlement)

In this section, I describe the results of the content analysis of the available services for URM&Y as they settle into their communities in Canada. In addition, this part of the study aimed to ascertain the integration and settlement services that were available in the cities of participants. This will further help understand the types of support or barriers, in the form of government policies, programs, and practices, that the URM&Y are given or not provided.

Refugee integration and settlement services are programs and services provided by governments, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders which help refugees successfully settle and integrate into their new host countries. These services typically include assistance with finding housing, employment, education, healthcare, language training, and other essential needs (COSTI Annual Report, 2022; Afghan Women Organization, 2023; CICS Programs and Services, 2022). They also offer guidance on cultural adjustment, legal rights, and access to community resources.

Refugee integration and settlement services are critical for ensuring that refugees can rebuild their lives after fleeing persecution, conflict, or other forms of violence in their home countries. In addition, these services help refugees to become self-sufficient and independent, contributing positively to their new communities and economies. In Canada, governments and NGOs work closely together to provide refugee integration and settlement services. Depending on local laws and policies, these services can vary from city to city, but they aim to provide refugees with the tools that they need to navigate their new society. In addition, these services help the latter to thrive in their host communities.

Below are the themes that emerged during the content analysis of this segment.

1. Language Services and Training
2. Social and Recreational events

3. Mental Health & Wellness Support
4. Housing & Employment Support
5. Requirements for Accessing Services

Refugees face numerous challenges regarding integration; however, language barriers are among the most significant obstacles. Language is the primary means by which people communicate with one another, and without adequate language skills, refugees can struggle to access essential services, find employment, and form social connections in their new community. Therefore, providing refugees with language support is necessary to help them integrate successfully.

Based on the data gathered, all of the settlement and integration centres which were researched provided some sort of language assistance for refugees. However, these supports varied depending on the type of organization and the resources available (COSTI-Annual Report, 2022; Westman Immigrant Services, 2021). The mode of administering these services or programs is in-person, or online. These language services included language classes, interpretation, translation services, peer mentoring and so on. These language services are critical for URM&Y social integration.

The provision of social and recreational events can provide valuable support for refugees, who often face significant challenges and disruptions due to displacement from their home countries. These events can help refugees build social connections, reduce isolation, and cope with the stress of their situation. Some examples of social and recreational events that were found to support refugees included community gatherings, sports and physical activities, language and cultural classes, and support groups (CWISE Executive Summary, 2021).

In my perusal of the literature, this type of service was common among Canada's integration and settlement organizations. Although it may be available for URM&Y, how

accessible to URM&Y is it? Overall, social and recreational events can play a critical role in supporting refugees adjusting to their new lives in a host country. By providing opportunities for socialization, skill-building, and cultural exchange, these events can help refugees feel more connected to their new community with better prospects for their future (ISAN, 2022).

Refugee mental health and wellness support refers to a range of services and resources to address the psychological and emotional needs of refugees who have experienced trauma and stress due to forced migration, displacement, and resettlement. These services are designed to help refugees cope with the challenges of adapting to new environments, navigating cultural differences, and rebuilding their lives. Some examples of refugee mental health and wellness support which were found included counselling and therapy. This involves providing mental health services such as individual or group counselling, trauma-focused treatment, and psychotherapy to address depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions (Halifax Refugee Clinic, 2021). Additional support includes Psychosocial support, Health education, etc. (Nova Scotia Health, n.d.; Westman Immigrant Services, 2021). There are also centres or organizations that are less funded. These centres provide education and information about mental health issues, such as stress management, coping skills, and self-care practices. These services are available to immigrants, including URM&Y. However, it is essential to note that the availability of some of these services comes with conditions. These conditions require one of the below-requested details:

- A PR (Permanent Resident Card)
- A Permanent Resident confirmation letter from IRCC
- A work permit with the above specifications

In this study, the above conditions hindered some former URM&Y who lack proper documentation to access healthcare services, including mental health services which is

essential for ensuring refugees' overall health and well-being. Overall, refugee mental health and wellness support is crucial for ensuring that refugees can rebuild their lives and thrive in their new communities despite their challenges.

Housing and employment services are two critical components of refugee integration, as they help refugees to establish stable and productive lives in their new communities. Housing services for refugees typically involve providing temporary or permanent housing assistance to refugees who were displaced from their homes due to conflict or persecution. This may include help with finding and securing affordable housing and providing resources and support for refugees to navigate the local housing market and access necessities like utilities and furniture (COSTI-Annual Report; ISIP online, 2022; 2022; Afghan Women Organization, 2023).

Employment services for refugees focus on helping them find and retain meaningful work aligned with their skills, education, and experience. These may include job training programs, assistance with job searching and applications, language and communication skills development, and ongoing support for workplace integration and career advancement (CICS Programs and Services, n.d.).

Combined, these above services can help refugees to overcome some of the critical challenges they face in their host communities, including language barriers, cultural differences, and a lack of social and professional networks. In addition, by providing access to safe, stable housing and meaningful employment opportunities, refugees can more easily establish themselves in their new communities and become active, contributing members of society. Although these organizations and centres offer these services, the housing and employment challenges remain dire for refugees. A noticeable challenge is always the accessibility of these services by refugees URM&Y upon arrival in Canada.

The above services and programs are available for immigrants, including refugees. Most of these services are offered in person and online to clients. A critical aspect of this analysis was to find out how accessible these services and programs were to URM&Y. These services are accessible to refugees with status (Government Assisted Refugees, Privately Sponsored Refugees). This assertion is in tandem with an observation made from the analysed literature. Most centres and organizations had requirements to meet before accessing these services. These requirements are mostly one of the below-requested details as stated earlier:

- A PR (Permanent Resident Card)
- A Permanent Resident confirmation letter from IRCC
- A work permit with the above specifications

A classical case is when Rudy-M-V stated that he struggled in the beginning because of the lack of documentation (immigration status). Some of these youth, just like Rudy-M-V would not have been able to use these services due to their lack of documentation. One of the participants in this study Bethel-F-E indicated that she did not know about some of these services. The lack of knowledge of these services can hinder refugees UMR&Y integration.

A few agencies and centres did not require some of these details from clients—for example, the Halifax Refugee Clinic. By inference, the eligibility requirements can hinder Refugee Claimants who lack proper documentation from accessing these services and programs.

In summary, Canada provides various integration and settlement services for URM&Y. These services as discussed above, aim to support refugee's successful integration into Canadian society and facilitate their overall well-being. For instance, the Government-

Assisted Refugee Program (GARP) helps URM&Y with financial support, housing, and access to settlement services. These services include language training, orientation to Canadian society, help with school enrollment, and assistance in accessing healthcare and social services. Other integration and settlement services discussed above provide supportive living arrangements, access to education, healthcare, ongoing guidance from caregivers, mental health and trauma Support, Legal Assistance, and Immigration Support.

It is essential to note that specific services and their availability may vary across provinces and territories in Canada. For instance, URM&Y who are part of the government assisted refugee program (GARP) accessibility to these services is simple. However, URM&Y who lack proper documentation or legal status finds it difficult to access these services. Canada's integration and settlement services are typically provided through collaborations among government agencies, settlement organizations, schools, healthcare providers, and community-based initiatives.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Sociocultural factors characterize the social integration processes of URM&Y.

Sociocultural factors are beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices that define a society. These sociocultural factors of both country of origin and host country can impact the integration successes of URM&Y in Canada. In understanding the experiences of the participants of this research, their pre- and post-migration must be analysed. The issues raised in the previous chapter are among the themes that will be examined.

The former URM&Y recounted their pre-migration journey. In their post-migration experiences, they talked about their earlier adjustment experiences and their challenges regarding social integration. In their post-migration experiences, they shared their experiences on ethnic identity and discrimination. In all of these areas discussed, sociocultural challenges emerged from the discussions.

In this chapter, I will examine the themes that emerged from my discussion with the former URM&Y. Analysing the identified themes will be based on a *Critical Theory*, *Critical Race Theory* (CRT) and *Bidimensional Acculturation Theory*.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has influenced many fields beyond the law, including education, sociology, and political science. It has been used to analyse issues such as affirmative action, police brutality, immigration policy, and the criminal justice system (Fortin, 2021).

The use of CRT has uncovered the hidden or implicit biases that influence how refugees are perceived or treated by institutions such as government agencies or healthcare providers. For example, CRT revealed how racial stereotypes and prejudices might lead to differential treatment or inadequate refugee access to services (Kalemba, 2022; Taylor et al., 2015).

This will lead me to *Bidimensional Acculturation Theory* (Ngo, 2008). Bidimensional Acculturation Theory (BAT) is a theoretical framework that explains how individuals from different cultural backgrounds adapt to each other when they come into contact. The theory suggests that acculturation, or the process of adapting to a new culture, is a complex and multifaceted process involving two dimensions: preserving one's original culture and adopting the new culture.

According to Bidimensional Acculturation Theory, individuals can acculturate in four ways: integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalization (Ngo, 2008). Integration involves adopting aspects of the new culture while maintaining ties to one's original culture. Assimilation involves fully adopting the new culture and letting go of the original culture. Separation involves maintaining ties to the original culture while rejecting the new culture. Finally, marginalization involves not adopting either the new or original culture.

My conversations with these participants showed how many of these youth experienced emotional and psychological challenges. According to NeMoyer et al (2019), cumulative adversity that is experienced during youth can increase the risk of developing not only Post Traumatic Stress Disorder but also other mental health conditions and impairments in adulthood. For example, risk factors for developing PTSD in youth include exposure to violence and other traumatic events, pre-existing mental health or developmental vulnerabilities, the meaning attributed to events, external locus of control, and exposure to daily stressors. It is also argued that family factors such as family conflict, separation from parents, loss of a parent or the threat of losing a parent, and poor parent mental health and coping can also increase the risk of developing PTSD in youth (Bonanno & Mancini, 2008). In this study, many participants had escaped conflict or violence in their home regions for peace and security. One participant Saleem-M-Y emphasized the tension in Yemen at the time of his departure. A couple of participants also revealed how they had been attacked by

opposing factions in their country, leading to their forced migration as URM&Y. These attacks were identified as ethnic conflicts or political clashes. Another such person is Sheila - F-S who stated that she had fled her country due to tribal conflict. She described how the intensity of the conflict had been so high that their family shop was burned down, which prompted them to flee for safety. For these children to have experienced such scenes of violence could have caused them trauma, leading to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It is important to note that these participants were not attacked while traveling. However, they mentioned the anxiety and fear that had engrossed them. One of the participants described it as a state of confusion, as he had not prepared to travel alone. According to the findings from McCoy et al. (2016), the statements put forth by the participants indicated that refugees experience fear, anxiety, and confusion during the pre-migration phase, which has a detrimental impact on their emotional and psychological well-being.

The Bidimensional Acculturation Model provides insights into how an individual's acculturation process can have profound implications for their psychological well-being, social relationships, and overall adaptation to a new culture. According to this model, acculturation for minorities, including former URM&Y, involves two dimensions of behavioral changes: the maintenance of their heritage, culture, and identity, and the involvement with or identification with aspects of their societies of settlement (Berry, 1980).

By maintaining their heritage, culture, and identity, the participants strived to preserve and uphold their roots and values from their country of origin. This included practices, customs, language, and traditions that provide a sense of belonging and connection to their cultural heritage. This dimension of acculturation allowed some participants to maintain a strong sense of identity and roots. This can contribute to their psychological well-being and resilience during the process of adapting to a new culture.

The issue of 'loss and grief' also negatively affected these refugees psychologically and emotionally. These former URM&Y left behind family and loved ones when they fled their countries. The disruption of contact between them and their loved ones deprived these refugees of emotional support. Sometimes the feeling of loss and grief, as well as displacement and disorientation, affected these refugees profoundly. Like Reisdorf (2021) mentioned, other issues hinder refugee children's emotional and psychological well-being. Other studies confirm refugees' emotional and psychological challenges (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; Rutter, 2001). The assertions made by the participants in the present study highlights fear, anxiety, and confusion. This impacted negatively on them emotionally and psychologically.

My research also revealed that the conditions in the refugee camps do not support the sound development of children. A lack of privacy, shortage of supplies, inadequate housing facilities and so on, characterized the conditions in the camps experienced by the participants of this research. For those who lived temporarily in the refugee camps, these were uncomfortable for living purposes. However, they stated that they felt safer in that environment than they felt about returning to their original homes. The interruption of schooling for some children who went through these camps also needs be acknowledged. The adverse conditions characterizing the refugee camps left to no alternative but to make the refugees resilient to these challenges.

In this study, the experiences of former URM&Y males and females differed slightly due to factors influenced by cultural expectations and societal dynamics. Regarding safety and security, female participants had specific concerns, such as gender-based violence and discrimination, influenced by issues like cultural norms and limited awareness of available support services. On the other hand, male participants faced challenges related to perceptions of threat or discrimination based on appearance or religious affiliation. For instance, Saleem-

M-Y noted how he was perceived as a violent person because there was an ongoing conflict in his country of origin (Yemen). It is crucial to acknowledge the wide variation in individuals' experiences based on personal background, education, language proficiency, family support, and access to resources. Taking a nuanced approach and addressing gender-specific challenges through tailored support can contribute to more effective integration outcomes for both male and female URM&Y in Canada.

The research findings highlight the significance of language acquisition, specifically the English language, for URM&Y. The Bidimensional Acculturation Model supports this conclusion by emphasizing the importance of engaging with and adopting elements of the new culture, including language, as part of the process of integrating into the broader society. This involvement enables individuals to develop relationships with people from diverse backgrounds and take advantage of social, educational, and economic opportunities available in the new culture. It also recognizes the need for individuals to navigate and adapt to the social norms and expectations of their new environment. Language proficiency, particularly in English (or French), poses a significant barrier for refugees, as observed in the experiences of the majority of participants in this study. All participants agreed that language was crucial for their social integration journey. Similar to the findings of MacLeod et al. (2020), participants shared the challenges they faced due to their limited English fluency upon arrival. Suzanne-F-K, one of the participants, mentioned that her inability to speak English fluently affected her social life as she felt too shy to engage in conversations. Saleem-M-Y, another participant, expressed that his limited English proficiency made it difficult for him to find employment. Despite having proficiency in Arabic before coming to Canada, he had to learn English upon arrival. Other studies conducted by Wilkinson (2002), Brown et al. (2020), and Sirin & Rogers Sirin (2015) also confirm the language obstacles encountered by URM&Y in their daily integration experiences in Canada.

It is also important to note that most of these participants had been students before forcibly migrating out of their home countries. This means that their schooling was truncated due to the conflicts or violence that caused their forced migration as refugees. As schools were closed due to these conflicts, learning became extremely difficult for these children. This explains their difficulty in speaking and understanding English fluently upon arrival. The study of Sirin and Rogers Sirin (2015) confirms how the truncation of schooling can similarly negatively affect the language ability of refugees. The formative years of education play a vital role in the development of language skills, encompassing the acquisition of vocabulary, grammar, and proficiency in one's native language. However, when refugees encounter schooling truncation, they are deprived of the chance to pursue education in a consistent and structured manner. Consequently, this disruption hampers their language development and gives rise to various adverse outcomes.

In the present study, the issue of discrimination was also accentuated throughout our interviews. Prejudice, stereotyping, and racism were highlighted among the other forms of discrimination that were spoken about. From education, housing, and employment, some participants recounted their experiences regarding discrimination. Bethel F-E stated, at her job place, she experienced racism from a colleague. She spoke on how her co-worker would not allow her desk to be near hers before an intervention by their supervisor. Another participant Rudy-M-V also stated how the business owner where he was employed mistreated him at work. He explained how he was paid less among his colleagues but was assigned the same task that had been ascribed to them. He Rudy-M-V attributed this to the fact that he was a newcomer.

Utilizing Critical theory necessitates a comprehensive examination of the social reality within society, providing insight into the prevailing challenges. Scholars such as Horkheimer (1973) and Freire (2018) emphasize the importance of this approach. In the

context of former URM&Y, the issue of discrimination emerges prominently across domains like employment, housing, and education, unveiling the social reality they confront. A case in point is the experiences of Rudy-M-V and Bethel-F-E, which shed light on discriminatory practices they encountered.

An examination of the integration of refugee students in schools raises pertinent questions regarding the responsibility placed solely on the students themselves. While inclusive policies and programs exist within educational institutions, it is crucial to foster open communication, particularly among refugee students. The participant who expressed feeling discriminated against among their peers brings attention to the role of schools in facilitating the integration and acculturation processes. Given the challenges faced by URM&Y, such as those highlighted by Aydin & Kaya (2017) and Alpak et al. (2015), additional support is imperative to encourage these individuals to share their experiences of discrimination.

In summary, by employing Critical theory, the social reality of society can be effectively examined to comprehend the challenges faced by former URM&Y. The case of Rudy-M-V and Bethel-F-E exemplifies discriminatory practices, prompting reflection on the role of schools in facilitating integration. Rather than solely relying on refugee students, schools should encourage open communication and provide additional assistance to URM&Y who have endured discrimination before and during their migration journey.

The bidimensional acculturation model sheds light on the housing discrimination experienced by participants in this study based on their status, race, and ethnicity. Individuals who are not fully integrated into society may encounter various challenges and barriers, including discrimination, particularly in housing. Landlords and property managers, influenced by their own cultural biases, may engage in discriminatory practices such as

refusing to rent to refugees or charging higher rents. This aligns with the model's concept of marginalization, where individuals are excluded from society.

As a result of such discrimination, some former URM&Y often ended up living in overcrowded and substandard housing, reflecting the negative outcomes associated with marginalization. For example, Suzanne-F-K was forced to reside in a dangerous neighbourhood due to limited access to housing resulting from discrimination based on her refugee status.

These experiences of housing discrimination have significant implications for the health and overall well-being of URM&Y. Living in inadequate housing can lead to increased stress, compromised physical and mental health, and limited personal growth and development opportunities. The bidimensional acculturation model emphasizes the importance of integration into society to access social, educational, and economic opportunities. However, systemic factors sustain housing discrimination against URM&Y, highlighting the need for structural changes to effectively address this issue.

In summary, the bi-dimensional acculturation model reveals that housing discrimination faced by URM&Y based on their status, race, and ethnicity stems from systemic barriers within the housing market. Rectifying this issue requires comprehensive structural changes to ensure equal access to safe and affordable housing for all individuals, regardless of their background (Esses et al., 2013; Francis & Hiebert, 2014).

In addition, as applied in Nickerson (2006) and Procyshyn (2022), research that uses critical theory must inhabit psychological and cultural dimensions and examine the institutional forms of dominance in societies. Since I am looking into the social experiences of former URM&Y, I will touch on *Critical Race Theory* (CRT) and its impact on this study. As mentioned earlier, *Critical Race Theory* (CRT) shows that racism is not simply an individual bias or prejudice, but a systemic and structural feature of society, that is embedded

in social, economic, and political institutions. It also emphasizes the importance of recognizing and centering the experiences of marginalized communities, particularly those of Black refugees and other refugees of colour, in analysing and addressing racial injustice (Kalemba, 2021; Dei & Hilowle, 2018; Dei & McDermott, 2013). CRT recognizes that race intersects with other social categories, such as sex, class, and ethnicity, to shape experiences of discrimination. The discrimination against participants of African descent in this study cannot be understood in isolation but must be examined with other intersecting identities and systems of oppression. For example, CRT emphasizes that in structural and Institutional racism, it is not just about individual acts of prejudice, but racism is embedded in social structures and institutions. The discrimination against individuals of African descent is a result of historical, systemic, and ongoing practices that disadvantage and marginalize them in areas such as education, employment, housing, criminal justice, and healthcare (Kalemba, 2021; Dei & McDermott, 2013).

In counter stories and narratives, CRT values the lived experiences and narratives of the participants of this study who are individuals of African descent as important sources of knowledge and understanding. By centering their voices and stories, CRT seeks to challenge dominant narratives that perpetuate stereotypes and misinformation, while shedding light on the diverse experiences and impacts of racism. This means developing policies that promote affordable housing for all, with easy access by non-natives will help change this narrative of discrimination against African refugees.

It is essential to note that stereotypes can bring about discrimination against refugees in several ways. Firstly, stereotypes can lead to negative attitudes toward refugees, resulting in discriminatory behaviour. For instance, when refugees are perceived universally as criminals or prone to violence, it can lead to a decreased willingness among Canadians to hire them or provide them with rental accommodations. Also, stereotypes can perpetuate

prejudice and bias toward refugees, resulting in institutional discrimination. Also, when policymakers or law enforcement officers believe that refugees threaten national security, they may implement policies that make it harder for refugees to enter or remain in a country.

Stephan and Stephan (2013) support this assertion by highlighting the relationship between prejudice and perceived threats. They posit that several factors make the perception of a particular group as “threatening” and of these factors included negative stereotypes (Stephan & Stephan, 2013). In this study Saleem-M-Y cited how he confronted stereotypes about his country from his colleagues at work. For example, Saleem-M-Y stated how his co-workers described his country (Yemen) as a violent country. This can cause disaffection for him at his workplace. Finally, stereotypes can create barriers to integration and acceptance of refugees, leading to marginalization and social exclusion. Therefore, it is crucial to challenge and dismantle negative stereotypes to combat discrimination and ensure that refugees are treated fairly and with dignity.

In the area of education, one participant recounted the discrimination that existed in his school. According to Johnson M-S, he was snubbed by a group of friends, one of whom later indicated he did not look like him. This, he stated, was racist. According to Patton et al (2007) it is important to incorporate Critical Race Theory (CRT) perspectives in the daily practices within education. These CRT perspectives help in initiating anti-racism education policy and practices. CRT can be used as a reference for institutions striving to become more inclusive through changes in diversity initiatives, the infrastructure of institutions, and the analysis of hostile environments. When thinking about these possible changes, administrators need to ask themselves how these potential changes continue to promote a racist structure. Utilizing CRT’s five tenets is essential to help reveal racial inequity within educational sector. Given that all five tenets address different yet interconnected themes, they help

unearth how institutions reinforce racism. For example, Table 2 shows these five tenets of CRT in Education that can be used in drafting the anti-racism policies and practices within education institutions. This recommendation comes on the back of the assertion that there is a deep-rooted racism in the education settings and the systemic complexities that disadvantage racialized students in North America (Hiraldo, 2010; Patton et al., 2007).

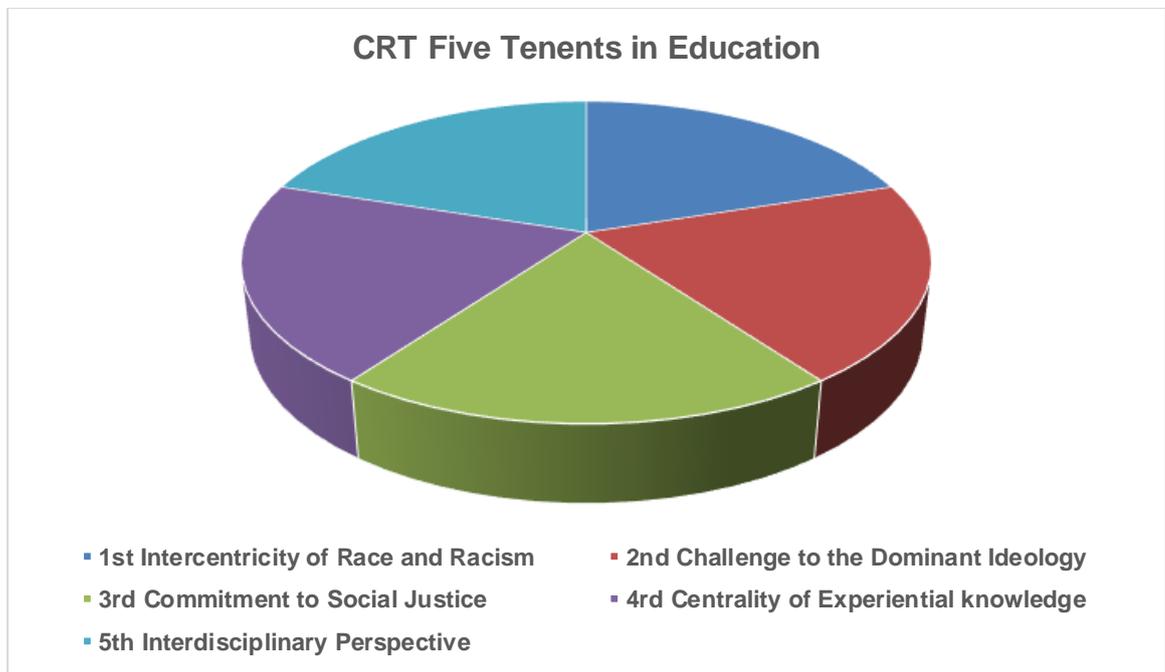


Table 2: CRT Tenet’s in Education (Patton et al., 2007)

The five tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT) can help educational institutions in Canada in several ways:

1. Intercentricity of race and racism helps to recognize and address systemic racism. CRT emphasizes the existence of systemic racism embedded in societal structures and institutions. By embracing this tenet, educational institutions can acknowledge and confront how racism operates within their policies, practices, and curriculum. This recognition allows for the implementation of strategies to dismantle discriminatory systems and promote equity.
2. Challenging the dominant ideology in CRT encourages critical examination of dominant narratives and knowledge that often reinforce racial hierarchies and

stereotypes. Educational institutions can adopt this tenet by promoting a more inclusive and comprehensive curriculum that addresses the contributions, histories, and experiences of diverse racial and ethnic groups. This can help challenge biased perspectives and foster a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the world.

3. Commitment to Social justice and activism in CRT emphasizes the pursuit of social justice and the need for collective action to challenge racial inequities. Educational institutions can embrace this tenet by fostering an environment that encourages critical thinking, civic engagement, and activism. This can involve supporting student-led initiatives, creating opportunities for dialogue and reflection on social issues, and empowering students to become agents of change in their communities.
4. Centrality of experiential knowledge in CRT emphasizes the importance of centering the voices and experiences of marginalized individuals and communities, particularly racialized groups. Educational institutions can apply this tenet by amplifying diverse perspectives, incorporating multicultural content, and creating inclusive learning environments that validate and empower students from all backgrounds.
5. Interdisciplinary perspective in CRT recognizes the intersectionality of race with other social identities, such as gender, class, and sexuality. Educational institutions can benefit from this tenet by adopting an intersectional approach that acknowledges the complex and interconnected ways in which various forms of discrimination intersect. This approach can inform policies, teaching practices, and support systems that address the unique needs and experiences of students with multiple marginalized identities.

By incorporating the five tenets of CRT, educational institutions in Canada can promote equity, inclusivity, and social justice within their campuses and contribute to a more equitable and just society at large.

Another instance of discrimination is when Sheila F-S indicated that she was asked to pay a higher rent deposit. Unfortunately, she only realized this after moving in when she cross-checked with other tenants. As Esses et al. (2013) described, some participants in their study also encountered discrimination in their search for affordable housing. Esses et al. (2013) further explain in their research that some property owners often try to discriminate against immigrants by not giving them in-depth information about vacancies, utilities, and house rent. This means that immigrants trying to access or rent houses could become victims of racism and other forms of discrimination. Although there are several reasons why URM&Y face discrimination, other main issues are triggering this discrimination. One such issue concerns the perception that URM&Y are a burden on society (De Haen, 2022; Legrain, 2016). There is also the notion that URM&Y take away the host country's resources (Legrain, 2016; Forced Migration Review, 2012) All these perceptions lead to resentment from the host communities towards the refugees, leading to discrimination.

In the case of this study, CRT helps us to understand how refugees from certain racial or ethnic backgrounds may face different barriers or opportunities in resettlement based on intersecting factors such as sex, race, age, or education. Bell (1980), in reviewing *Brown v Board of Education*, posits that the persistence of racial inequality in the United States is evidence of the ongoing impact of systemic racism, which continues to shape the experiences and opportunities of people of colour. Inferring from the assertion of Derrick Bell, one of the originators of *Critical Race Theory*, the racial inequalities experienced by the participants continue to shape their experiences and opportunities in Canada (Bell, 1980). Moreover, as long as these racial inequalities are systemic, the perspectives and experiences of the URM&Y need to challenge the dominant narratives and structures that perpetuate racial inequalities in Canada.

One cannot look at the challenges these URM&Y face in isolation. The role of established institutions and organizations in interacting with these refugees is also called to question. In as much as URM&Y may be facing other challenges, institutions, and organizations must rise to the occasion. From the experiences of the former URM&Y, language/communication was an obstacle between them and agencies and many sighted language barriers as challenges. However, some had a good experience with the settlement agencies. For instance, Johnson-M-S stated that the language center helped him to write his resume and recommended a job for him to apply.

Additionally, it is worth noting that several participants emphasized the role of schools in their lives, as they found their first friends and received support for housing and employment through these educational institutions. However, it is important to acknowledge that in many jurisdictions, communication can pose a significant challenge for officers within these institutions and agencies who interact with refugee children. This raises the question of whether these authorities truly comprehend the genuine challenges faced by URM&Y.

According to Statistics Canada (2022), the proportion of black people in Canada who have experienced discrimination due to race or skin colour has nearly doubled since 2014. This assertion highlights the historical conditions relating to how the host communities of these refugees understand race.

In summary, I drew on these theories (CRT & Critical Theory) to showcase the social, cultural, and historical consequences of being racialized as a URM&Y from the participants' experiences of this study. The former URM&Y in this study faced numerous barriers that resulted in their social exclusion in Canada. These individuals, who have already endured the hardships of forced displacement and family separation, encountered additional challenges rooted in systemic discrimination, racial biases, and prejudice. Systemic discrimination erects structural hurdles that hinder the integration and inclusion of URM&Y.

These discriminatory practices manifested in their limited access to education, healthcare, housing, and employment opportunities, perpetuating marginalization and impeding their ability to thrive and contribute to Canadian society.

Moreover, racial biases and prejudice also exacerbated the social exclusion experienced by these participants. They often endure stigmatization, social isolation, discrimination, and unequal treatment due to their racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Negative stereotypes and biases created a hostile environment that undermined their sense of belonging and hampered their ability to form meaningful connections with their communities.

Addressing these challenges necessitates comprehensive efforts from various stakeholders, including governments, policymakers, educational institutions, community organizations, and society.

Overall, applying critical race theory in this study has highlighted how race and racism shape the experiences of URM&Y and thus provided a more comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to their marginalization and social exclusion.

Research Implications

There are several implications that arise from this study and that are worthy of mentioning. The research will enable policymakers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by the URM&Y in Canada. Through this study, policymakers will acquire valuable insights into various aspects of the lives of URM&Y, identifying the obstacles they encounter across educational, social, economic, and mental health domains. This research provides policymakers with data and analysis pertaining to the educational needs of URM&Y. It involves identifying language barriers, evaluating their access to education in Canada, and recognizing the necessary support systems to facilitate their integration into local educational systems. With this information, policymakers can

effectively develop targeted policies and programs to address these educational needs. This research examined the experiences of discrimination, isolation, and cultural adjustment difficulties by the URM&Y. By understanding the social dynamics and barriers encountered by URM&Y, policymakers can design policies that foster social inclusion, promote intercultural understanding, and provide appropriate support networks to facilitate their integration in Canada.

Secondly, this study provides insights into the unique needs and challenges faced by URM&Y during their social integration. It can help integration service providers understand the cultural, linguistic, educational, and social background of these URM&Y, enabling them to tailor their services accordingly. For example, this research revealed the need for specialized language support programs, trauma-informed services, or targeted educational initiatives. This study shed light on the barriers faced by URM&Y in accessing settlement and integration services. It also highlighted gaps in service provision and suggested ways to improve accessibility, such as addressing language barriers and cultural sensitivity. Additionally, this research suggested proper coordination among various service providers, ensuring a more holistic and streamlined approach to supporting URM&Y in Canada.

This research delves into the educational requirements and obstacles encountered by the former URM&Y population. It investigates various factors, including language proficiency, previous education, trauma, and discrimination. By comprehending these factors, schools can formulate specific support strategies and utilize resources efficiently.

Moreover, this study explores the cultural backgrounds, values, and experiences of URM&Y individuals. Understanding these elements helps schools in cultivating culturally responsive teaching practices that honour and appreciate students' diverse backgrounds. It promotes the integration of culturally relevant materials, teaching approaches, and community engagement to foster an inclusive and inviting learning environment. The CRT

five tenets in education used in this study can help improve the diversity and inclusion in educational institutions.

This study encouraged collaboration and coordination among different community organizations working with URM&Y. By practicing collaboration and coordination, community organizations can work together to develop integrated and comprehensive support systems that facilitate the successful integration of URM&Y.

This study can also serve as evidence for advocacy efforts aimed at improving policies and programs related to URM&Y integration. Community organizations can use the research findings to advocate for policy changes that address systemic barriers and promote more effective integration strategies.

The results of the study points to the importance of exploring the role of faith-based organizations in the settlement and integration of URM&Y in Canada. Many participants easily identified with these organizations and received assistance as well. A similar implication is to examine the role of schools, as places of support toward the integration of URM&Y. Several participants mentioned these institutions as places of both integrations, as well as discrimination.

Future Research

1. The void of family in participants' lives affected their being in their new communities. Therefore, future research on the role of URM&Y host-family systems in fostering integration will be helpful to the lives of refugees in Canada.
2. For future studies, it will be useful to conduct a quantitative study with a distributed or online survey.

3. I suggest conducting a future research project that focuses on understanding and addressing the experiences and needs of URM&Y aged 19 and below.
4. Resilience was eminent in the participants' experiences; hence future studies should further explore the role of resilience in refugee URM&Y integration.
5. Also, due to URM&Y psychological and emotional difficulties, there must be easy access to mental health services. Mental health services, including counselling, therapy, and support groups, can help refugees process and manage their experiences. Thus, another recommendation is that future research focus on how and when URM&Y can access mental health services would be important.
6. Immigrant settlement agencies may lack a comprehensive understanding of the distinctions among the three groups of refugees (Brigham, 2013). Therefore, it is recommended that future research be conducted to explore and investigate the variations between the different groups of refugees.
7. There is a need to conduct a comprehensive and large-scale study to examine the gender differences in the integration experiences of URM&Y, with a focus on understanding the unique challenges, coping strategies, and psychosocial outcomes associated with their integration process.

Research Limitations

The study encountered limitations primarily stemming from the scarcity of literature on the social integration of URM&Y in Canada. Although there is existing literature on URM&Y in general, it lacks specific insights into the Canadian context of social integration. Consequently, the study had to rely on more generalized literature to inform its findings.

Furthermore, the limited sample size of research participants poses a limitation on the generalizability of the study's findings to the broader URM&Y population in Canada. The

findings may not fully capture the diverse experiences and perspectives of all URM&Y due to the small sample size.

Ethical considerations played a crucial role in this research, given the involvement of vulnerable populations such as URM&Y. Efforts were made to ensure ethical practices, including obtaining informed consent, protecting privacy and confidentiality, and addressing potential harm or distress. It is important to note that more time was dedicated to explaining these ethical issues individually to the participants than may be reflected in the final documentation, underscoring the sensitivity and care taken in conducting the research.

Recommendations

This study offers several recommendations for policymakers, settlement agencies, schools, community organizations, and other stakeholders to aid in supporting the social integration of URM&Y in Canada.

1. The issue of the family was dominant in my conversation with the refugees. The absence of a family unit has been a significant challenge. I would thus recommend the creation of a host-family system, to pair these refugees with interested families in Canada.
2. Enhance Family Reunification Processes: It is essential to prioritize and bolster initiatives to expedite the reunification of URM&Y with their families. This will help URM&Y with the significant benefits of family support for their well-being and successful integration in Canada.
3. Strengthen mental health and psychosocial support in Canada. It is important to establish inclusive and comprehensive mental health and psychosocial support services customized to address the unique difficulties encountered by URM&Y in

Canada. These services should encompass counseling, trauma-informed care, and culturally sensitive interventions to ensure URM&Y well-being and resilience.

4. Legal aid and advocacy services for URM&Y who are asylum claimants in Canada: Provincial governments must secure access to essential legal aid services and advocacy support for URM&Y, empowering them to navigate intricate immigration and legal systems, safeguard their rights, and prioritizing their best interests.
5. Enhance Interagency Collaboration to help URM&Y in Canada. I recommend fostering collaboration and coordination among different government departments, settlement agencies, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and community organizations to ensure a holistic and coordinated approach to supporting URM&Y in Canada.
6. Promote cultural sensitivity and training to professionals working with URM&Y. I recommend delivering cultural sensitivity training to professionals working with URM&Y, including policymakers, settlement workers, educators, and healthcare providers, to enhance their understanding of cultural backgrounds, trauma-informed care, and the unique challenges faced by these URM&Y.
7. To solve the issues regarding language barrier hindering URM&Y access to essential services, Canada must initiate these steps:
 - Organizing cultural orientations for URM&Y.
 - Instituting Translation services to help URM&Y.
 - Providing free English as a Second Language course (ESL) to new URM&Y in Canada.

Undertaking these initiatives will help URM&Y learn English faster and thus adapt quickly to their new environment. This will help harness the potential of these refugees for an inclusive and diverse society.

Conclusion

The experiences shared by former URM&Y shed light on the pre-and post-migration challenges they encounter, as revealed in previous studies (Esses et al., 2013; Francis and Hiebert, 2014; Brown et al., 2020; Meraj, 2015; Sirin & Roger Sirin, 2015). This study aimed to explore the challenges of social integration for URM&Y in Canada, investigating whether they experience social exclusion and identifying the factors contributing to this exclusion. Additionally, the study examined the availability and accessibility of immigrant integration programs specifically tailored for URM&Y.

The findings of this study highlight the significant obstacle posed by the language barrier in the social integration of former URM&Y. Their limited proficiency in English negatively affected their education, socialization, and employment prospects, leading to social exclusion for some participants. Moreover, the study revealed the psychological and emotional challenges faced by these youth, stemming from pre-migration experiences marked by fear, anxiety, and confusion.

Discrimination emerged as another key factor hindering the social integration success of former URM&Y. Participants encountered bias in their workplaces, schools, and attempts to secure housing, facing visible prejudice and racism. Additionally, the study uncovered the existence of available services for integration and settlement, but these were not specifically designed for URM&Y and eligibility requirements posed challenges for some refugee claimants due to lack of proper documentation.

Furthermore, the study highlighted the unfavorable conditions in refugee camps, negatively impacting the development and mental health of children and youth refugees. It also emphasized the instrumental role of schools and religious organizations in the social integration of refugees, with many participants' initial social engagement occurring at their

church or mosque. Future research is encouraged to examine the role of religious organizations and schools in the integration of URM&Y in Canada.

As the principal researcher, I hope that these findings will influence the discourse surrounding the social integration of URM&Y in Canada and guide policymakers in addressing the concerns and challenges faced by these youth. It is crucial to consider their experiences and needs when formulating policies and initiatives aimed at facilitating their successful integration into Canadian society (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; Rutter, 2001).

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Appendix A: Research Consent Form

Investigator: Daniel Mac Dabara

Department: Department of Child & Youth Studies

Title of Study: Migration and Mobility: The social integration challenges of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors and Youth in Canada.

Participant Name:

- I understand and agree that I will be participating in a research project investigating the experiences of social inclusion of unaccompanied refugee minors in Canada. This study will help researchers better understand the social inclusion of unaccompanied refugee minors and how this can be improved.
- I understand and agree that I will participate in an interview, which will last approximately one and a half hours. You will be asked questions about your experiences of social inclusion as a former unaccompanied refugee minor. In addition, you will receive a small amount gift card for participating in this research.
- I agree and understand that my participation in the interview is entirely voluntary, and I may choose to stop participating at any time. However, my decision not to volunteer will not influence the outcome of this study, nor the nature of my relationship, either now or in the future, with any agency with which you are receiving assistance towards social inclusion.
- There is minimal risk associated with this research. However, we will share a list of agencies available for participants who may need counseling and mental health support in one way or the other before beginning the interviews.
- Your anonymity cannot be guaranteed, but we will try to maintain your confidentiality by law to the fullest extent possible. Therefore, all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence, and your name will not appear in any report or publication of the study. Also, any mention of specific details that

could lead to your identification will be altered (ex., Names of schools, places of residence, etc.).

- My interview will be video recorded and transcribed. My data will be safely stored in Microsoft One Drive, and only the *Principal Researcher* and his Supervisor will have access to this information. All the recordings of interviews and transcripts will be immediately destroyed five years after the thesis defense.
- I understand and agree for my interview to be video-recorded.
- I understand and agree that the researcher will not identify me by name in this thesis nor any reports using the information derived from this interview and that my confidentiality in this research will be maintained to the fullest extent possible.
- I understand and agree that data from my interview may be included in publishing an article in a scientific journal or presented at a scholarly conference.
- I understand and agree that the researcher may use direct quotations of comments that I have made, during the interview, in his thesis or any published work that arises from this study. However, I also understand that any direct quotations that provide identifying information (ex., names of schools, etc.) will be changed to protect my identity.
- This research has been reviewed by the Ethics Review Board of Mount Saint Vincent University and conforms to the standards and guidelines of the *Canadian Tri-Council on Research Ethics*. If you have any questions about this process or your rights as a participant in the study, please feel free to contact my Thesis Supervisor, Dr. Fernando Nunes, at XXX-XXX-XXX or Fernando.nunes@msvu.ca.

By signing this form, I agree to the above terms and conditions regarding this research.

Participant's Signature

Date Signed

Researcher's Signature

Date signed

Appendix B: Email Invitation to Refugee Settlement and Integration Organizations

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Daniel Mac Dabara, a graduate student of Mount Saint Vincent University. As part of a master's thesis in Child and Youth Study, I am currently researching the issues and challenges that disrupt the social integration success of unaccompanied refugee youth in Canada. Social integration is the process during which newcomers or minorities are accepted and welcomed into the social structure of the host society. Social structure herein refers to the social patterns through which a society is organized. This study is designed to learn about the first-hand experiences with integration, of former unaccompanied refugee youth in Canada. The overall aim is to better understand the factors that affect the social integration success of young unaccompanied refugees in Canada.

I would like to ask the assistance of your organization in helping to recruit participants for this study. I would first ask your help in sharing the attached research poster to potential participants (i.e. adults 19 and over, who entered Canada as unaccompanied minors). Please ask potential participants to contact me directly. These participants will contribute to this study, by participating in a short interview. A potential participant must have come to Canada as a refugee without or guardian before the age of 19. The participant must have lived in Canada for atleast 5 years but less than 15 years. A gift card of \$15 dollars will be given to each participant. A participant can refuse to answer a question that appears uncomfortable to them.

I welcome your organization to participate in this research by helping to recruit potential participants. This will go a long way to improve upon refugee integration and settlement in Canada.

Thank You,

Daniel Mac Dabara

(XXX) – XXX- XXXX

Principal Researcher.

Appendix C : Research Interview Questions

Migration and Mobility: The Social Integration Challenges of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors & Youth in Canada.

Pre-Migration Experience

1. When did you first leave your home country?
 - a. Tell me your experiences about leaving your home country?
 - b. How did you leave?
 - c. Did you stay in a refugee camp?
 - d. If so, what was it like to stay in this camp?

Early Adjustment Experiences in Canada

1. When and where did you first arrive in Canada?
2. Can you tell me about your arrival?
 - a. Did anyone meet you?
 - b. Where did you go?
2. What type of things did you find most challenging when you first arrived in Canada and most importantly your host community?
 - a. Please tell me is this/ are these still difficulties for you?
 - b. How did you manage to solve these challenges?
 - c. What was your experience in getting a job?
 - d. What was your experience in finding a house/apartment?
 - e. What was your experience in enrolling in school?

Adjustment Problems Specific to Social Integration In the host province.

1. When you tried to join or participate in the social structures of your new society, did you feel either included or excluded?

- a. What, if anything happened to make you feel this way?
2. What type of challenges (if any) did you experience in trying to participate in the social structures of your new society?
- a. In what community social events did you participate when you first came to Canada?
 - b. What has been your experience like trying to join or participate in these events?
 - c. What type of help, if any, did you get towards your social inclusion in your society from the immigration association and organization?

Ethnic Identity and Minority Status

4. Is ethnic identity or race something you think about or question, on a regular basis?
- a. How do you identify yourself?
 - b. Have you encountered instances of prejudice or racism?
 - c. If any, how did you deal with it?
 - d. Please tell me what are some of the struggles that you encountered regarding identity (Where you come from)?

Recommendation

5. Imagine that you were in a privileged position (ex. in government), what would you do differently to make social integration better for unaccompanied refugee youth?

Thank you for participating in this interview session. As the principal researcher, I am grateful for your time and contributions to this research. Your experience shared and contributions will help shape the discourse of refugee youth and immigrant social integration in Canada.

Appendix D: Research Poster

Research Participants Wanted

STEP 1
Did you come to Canada as a refugee without a parent or guardian before the age of 19?

STEP 2
Have you been a resident of Canada for at least 5 years but less than 15 years?

STEP 3
If you said "yes" to the above questions, I will like to invite you to participate in an interview to understand your experiences in your community in Canada

STEP 4
The Interview is a part of a research study to understand the social inclusion experiences of unaccompanied refugee youth.

STEP 5
A gift card of \$15 dollars will be given to each participant.

CONTACT
Please contact the researcher Daniel Mac Dabara via phone : [REDACTED], Email : daniel.dabara@msvu.ca

Appendix E: Demographic Questionnaire

Former Unaccompanied Refugee Minors & Youth

How old are you? _____

- 19 – 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 – 49

Do you have children?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please indicate your sex.

- Male
- Female
- Other (Specify)...

What best describes your marital status?

- Married
- Never Married
- Single
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Engaged
- Common Law

What is your country of origin?

What is your province of residence?

- ON
- QC
- NS
- NB
- MB
- BC
- PE
- SK
- AB
- NL

Year of entry into Canada?

What age were you when you entered Canada?