Learn English, go to school, get a job… and play sport? Immigrant Youth Recreation and the Settlement Service Agency

By

Robyn Smith

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Graduate Department of Exercise Sciences
University of Toronto

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Abstract
This community-based study explored the experiences of immigrant youth in Toronto who participate in recreational programming at a settlement service agency, CoalitionTO*. To guide my findings, I applied a variety of transdisciplinary theoretical frameworks, such as cultural capital, social inclusion, critical race theory, and modern assimilation theories. I utilized participant observation and interviews with youth participants and staff members. My results found that despite strong multiculturalism narratives, assimilation into dominant institutions was viewed as expectation of migration and White, Canadian physical culture was perceived by all stakeholders as an effective means of facilitating the settlement of youth. However, youth were not passive within this process; they exerted agency to reflect on their positionality and made decisions to enhance their social mobility. This study unpacks the complex tensions between assimilation and social inclusion and calls for a greater examination of the broader socio-political context surrounding sport/recreation.
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1.0 Personal Narrative

I feel somewhat like an imposter. I technically meet the eligibility criteria for immigrant youth who can attend recreational programs delivered through settlement service agencies in Toronto. As such, many youth and service providers assume that I am a program participant and that we share similar experiences and struggles of being a young immigrant in one of the most multicultural cities in the world. My British accent differentiates me from Canadians; it brands me as an outsider and leads to comments, often from grocery check-out clerks, such as “by that accent, you’re definitely not from around here” and “welcome to Canada, prepare yourself for a cold winter.” But the Whiteness of my skin, my Western values, and the historical preference for my accent position me as an insider; these characteristics allow me the invisibility to go unexamined. I feel like an imposter immigrant. I did not struggle to make friends with Canadians and I did not experience discrimination based on the colour of my skin, or my knowledge of cultural norms. I did not spend two years isolated in an ESL classroom with students who were six years younger than me forced to lie about my age due to shame, nor did I live in a social housing project surviving off benefits because my parents’ credentials were not recognised and they could only get work as cleaners, despite possessing master’s degree.

I have spent nearly two years volunteering at a settlement service agency facilitating recreational programs for immigrant youth primarily aged between 14 and 24 years old. During that time, youth have shared many stories about their settlement in Toronto, some of them are stories of struggle, such as the snippets above, but these are not stories of passivity and dependency. These are stories about resilience, optimism, and agency. These are stories about
youth making courageous decisions, fighting injustices, and giving their all to achieve success for themselves and their families. Despite entering Canada at a similar age, my own immigration and settlement story is very different. I never intended to come to Canada; I had my place to study at university in the UK, then at the last minute my high school awarded me a fully-funded scholarship to study for my undergraduate degree in Kinesiology. My mother encouraged me to apply for the scholarship in a bid to save money as 2012 was the year the Conservative party came into power and tripled university fees. I ended up staying in Canada to complete my MSc and am unsure whether I will end up staying here post-graduation. Despite experiencing initial homesickness and culture shock when friends commented on how they thought my dry British sense of humour was actually rude, my settlement story was relatively straightforward. I did not have to learn a new language or navigate a seemingly alien culture, but I was confused about the definition of home and I was determined to settle as quickly as possible. My experiences inspired me to want to find out more about the experiences of other youth from diverse backgrounds. I could not relate to many of the youths’ experiences, and they may not be able to understand mine because ultimately our immigration stories are uniquely ours. This thesis is dedicated to the diverse stories of these youth.

Immigrant youth in Canada often experience many social, economic, and cultural challenges regarding their settlement; these challenges are well-documented within the literature (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; FSA, 2000). However, there is a lack of research which investigates how immigrant youth exert agency to negotiate these challenges. There is also a growing body of literature that investigates the use of sport as a tool to facilitate the settlement of immigrants, despite the growth of this field, there is minimal research that explores the experiences of immigrant youth who participate in holistic recreational programs or that investigates the
settlement service agency itself as a sport and recreation provider. Therefore, this project utilized ethnographic methods to explore the settlement of immigrant youth in Toronto and their experiences of participating in recreational programming delivered through a large settlement service agency. This thesis argues that despite the presence of strong multiculturalism narratives in Canada, immigrant youth are still expected to undergo a process of assimilation into Whiteness and sport/recreation is utilized in this process by settlement agencies.

1.1 Context
We are currently living in the “Age of Migration” which is characterised by vast flows of people and knowledge, both internally within countries and across state borders (Castles, de Hass & Miller, 2009, p. 1). Immigration in the global north and south increases each year (OECD, 2014). These immigration flows are also highly politicised (Castles, de Hass & Miller, 2009) as they are heavily influenced by social and economic policy in the source and destination country and past relationships between countries. Many people make the conscious decision to migrate in search of greater economic opportunities, family reunification, and enhanced quality of life; however, for others, migration may be a matter of necessity due to conflict, natural disaster, or persecution on religious, social, or political grounds. Unresolved conflicts in countries such as Somalia, Syria, and Afghanistan have led to a high displacement of people and the largest global refugee crisis in history (United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2015). In the midst of this refugee crisis and high immigrant flows, immigrant selection, settlement policies, and border security have become increasingly important, but also controversial topics of discussion in Western politics and feature heavily within party manifestos (Hansen, 2014). Tensions over border protection and anti-immigrant rhetoric have become more prevalent since the 9/11 terror attacks in New York City, USA (Hansen, 2014). This rhetoric has been demonstrated by recent
far-right populist movements such as the Brexit referendum, where the British public voted to leave the European Union in 2016 and Donald Trump’s Executive Order 13769, which is often referred to as the Muslim ban, and issued in 2017, tried to halt refugee flows and prohibited persons entering the USA from several Muslim-majority countries.

Canada is one of the top immigrant receiving countries with 20.6% of the population born outside of the country (Statistics Canada, 2011a); as such, immigration is viewed as a key component of the government’s economic policy (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2017). After the release of the government’s most recent immigration plan in 2017, Ahmed Hussen, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship stated:

This historic multi-year immigration levels plan will benefit all Canadians because immigrants will contribute their talents to support our economic growth and innovation, helping to keep our country at the forefront of the global economy.

This economic discourse has, in fact, been prevalent since the end of World War I, and has led to an increasing number of temporary and permanent residents entering Canada every year since then, with significantly more immigrants entering annually since the beginning of the 21st century (Statistics Canada, 2016). The highest number of immigrants to Canada reside in the province of Ontario. The number of temporary migrants entering Ontario each year has nearly doubled the number of permanent residents; in 2014, 94,700 permanent immigrants and 195,835 temporary migrants moved to the province (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2015a). These economic motives for migration are reflected in the dominance of temporary immigration agreements, such as the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP), aimed at meeting the short-term labour market demands (Nakache, 2010). Nearly half of the immigrants entering through the permanent residence stream can be classified as youth. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2015b), 146,075 youth between the ages of 15 and 25 immigrated to
Canada in 2015; this was comprised of economic migrants (68.8%), family sponsors (22.3%), and refugees and protected person (7.9%).

The demographics of immigrants entering Canada has shown increased heterogeneity since 1967; at that point, ethnicity was officially removed as a criterion for entry to Canada, and the point system, which evaluated applicants on the basis of their human capital, was established. The point system led to more visible minority immigrants entering Canada from non-traditional source countries, such as China and India, and decreased the numbers of White, European immigrants entering (Castles, De Hass & Miller, 2014). This transformation in the demographics of immigrants led to greater concern over immigrant integration outcomes. Although most visible minority immigrants entered Canada with high human capital, they experienced discrimination and prejudice, which then led to declining economic, social, political outcomes in comparison to the native-born population and previous cohorts of European immigrants (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). Indeed, despite official multiculturalism policies, assimilation is still the favoured dominant settlement approach. Existing immigrant capital is heavily devalued in favour of learning the national languages and contributing to the economy (Hansen, 2014).

Toronto is one of the most diverse cities in the world; half of the population is foreign born and 50% of that immigrant population is aged less than 25 years old (City of Toronto, 2016). According to the City of Toronto (2016), the largest immigrant groups in the city include South Asian, Chinese, and Black and over 140 languages are spoken. Vertovec (2007) defines Toronto as a super-diverse city due to the great diversity among the origin, entry status, and intra-ethnic characteristics (gender, age, and human capital) of immigrants. Across the City of Toronto, there are nearly 90 settlement service agencies; many of these agencies cater to the needs of specific ethno-cultural groups (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, 2017).
such as Arab, Somali, and South Asian. The number of agencies has grown considerably within the past decade; in 2009, there were only 23 active organizations within Toronto (Ngo, 2009). The majority of settlement service agencies within Toronto are not-for-profit and are funded predominately through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, with other funding sources including the Government of Ontario, City of Toronto, and various non-governmental organizations.

The settlement needs of immigrant and refugee youth are often more complex than those of adults. Youth from visible minority backgrounds, many of whom experience high levels of social exclusion, are particularly at risk of dropping out of school, experiencing substance abuse, and engaging in crime (Oxman-Martinez & Choi, 2014). Therefore, many settlement agencies offer specific services for youth such as placing settlement workers in school, offering community-based academic support, delivering counselling, facilitating employment training, and providing workshops on topics such as social justice and volunteering (Ngo, 2009). Several large multi-ethnic settlement agencies in Toronto, such as CoalitionTO*, Access Alliance, and Costi Immigrant services, also run recreational and sports-based programming for youth as a means of facilitating immigrant settlement.

I initially intended to investigate the experiences of ‘newcomer youth’ in Toronto who participated in these programs. In line with settlement agencies, I defined newcomers as economic immigrants or refugees who have resided in Canada for less than five years. However, after short immersion in the field, I quickly began to understand that many of the participants accessing these services did not meet this criteria, yet, they were often the most in need of support. Within the settlement sector among government funders, staff, and clients, the term ‘newcomer’ is commonly used to describe a person who is eligible and deserving of accessing
these services. Indeed, many of the participants who were accessing these services could not be defined as newcomers, many were racialized second-generation immigrants, of whom were born in Canada and experienced numerous integration challenges due to enduring systemic discrimination. The term newcomer is, therefore, highly politicized and exclusionary as it is linked to immigrant status, connotations of deserving and undeserving, and suggests that settlement and integration is a short-term process. For the purposes of this thesis, I describe the participants as immigrant youth. However, it is important to note that ‘immigrants’ are not an homogenous group; the differences in legal status and lived experiences between permanent residents, convention refugees, students, and asylum claimants heavily impact settlement trajectories.

Alongside this increase in migration, the use of sport as a tool for development (SDP) within community youth programming has also become increasingly popular, and has been utilized in government policy as a cost-effective tool to combat a variety of “societal ills” including poverty and crime (Coalter 2007). Sport has been positioned as a significant site for socialization into the dominant society through developing knowledge of norms, practices, and ideologies (Donnelly & Young 1988). Indeed, sport and recreation has been used as a tool to assimilate immigrants (Amara, Aquilina & Henry, 2004). Research suggests that sport and recreation may provide a safe, socially inclusive space for young people (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002; Walseth & Fasting, 2004) and may assist in the integration and settlement process of immigrants (Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Olliff, 2008; Spaaij, 2012). But the use of sport to facilitate immigrant settlement immigrants has also been challenged due to the exclusionary nature of sport and its role in reproducing Whiteness (Krouwel, Boonstra, Duyvendak & Veldboera, 2006). Immigrants are often expected to conform to existing mainstream sporting
structures which can be intimidating and may not meet unique cultural needs (Cortis, 2009; Taylor & Toohey, 1998; Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfrey, 2014). Immigrants may also experience high levels of discrimination and ‘Othering’\(^1\) in sport, and as a result many prefer to spend their leisure time with people from their own ethno-cultural group (Stodolksa & Walker 2007; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000).

It is important to note that in some instances, I use the terms sport and recreation interchangeably, this is, in part, because the definitions can be vague, politicized, and are used interchangeably within sport for development literature. For the purpose of this project, I defined sport as a competitive and often formalized recreational activity that people may choose to participate in during their leisure time; whereas, I defined recreation as a broader and more inclusive concept that spans a wide variety of formal/informal activities that people participate in during their leisure time for the purposes of fun and relaxation e.g. sport, games, art, drama, and fishing.

1.2 Rationale

There is a dearth of research investigating the experiences of youth in sport and recreation. In large survey by Messer and Musto (2014), the scholars surveyed 757 articles across three major sports sociology journals between 2003 and 2013 and found that only eight of these articles discussed youth in sport. Unsurprisingly then, there is minimal research investigating the experiences of young immigrants in sport and the majority of the existing literature focuses on their experiences within mainstream sport and/or the dominant culture (Doherty & Taylor, 2007); does not adequately capture the diversity of sporting experiences as

\(^1\) Othering is a process of identifying persons who are thought to be different or alien from oneself and/or the mainstream society. This process may reproduce hierarchies of domination and subordination, thus contributing to the oppression and social exclusion of certain groups or individuals (Fine, 1994).
many youth choose to participate in sport within their own ethnic group or with other immigrant youth. There has also been limited research conducted on the role of settlement service agencies as a provider of sport and recreation. The few studies that have been completed were conducted in Australia (Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfrey, 2014; Olliff, 2008) and predominately relied on interviewing youth workers and outlining barriers to participation. This work has tended to overlook the experiences of program participants. As sport becomes an significant area of youth programming offered by settlement service agencies, it is increasingly important to investigate the experiences of program participants and how the youth utilize their agency to shape both their settlement and sporting/leisure experiences. Immigrant youth are often positioned within migration studies as passive and lacking agency (Hashim, 2006); through this research project, one of my biggest aims was to dispute this narrative by sharing the stories of the youth.

Influential literature investigating the sports participation of immigrant and diasporic communities has been produced by scholars such as Joseph (2012), Forde, Lee, Mills and Frisby (2015) and Nakamura (2012). However, within the discipline of sports sociology and leisure studies, more interdisciplinary research is needed to investigate the use of sport as a tool to enhance immigrant settlement. This is an emergent area of research but the theoretical frameworks and typologies utilized have often been limited to outdated theories that were more relevant to a homogenous population (Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Stodolksa, 1998, 2007; Walker et al., 2015). Vertovec (2007) argues that the increased diversity and magnitude of immigrant flows has shifted the minority-majority divide, therefore, using outdated typologies such as classical assimilation (Gordon, 1964) or the acculturation framework (Berry, 1974) are no longer as helpful in explaining the diversity of immigrant integration outcomes. Furthermore, these
frameworks were not developed from a social justice approach and fail to pay attention to the social structures which reinforce the dominance of Whiteness.

In addition, the majority of the recent scholarship emerging from the sport for development field focuses on using sport as a tool to bring about development in the global South. This is an important field of research. However, with the number of permanent and temporary migrants entering Canada consistently increasing each year, coupled with decreased integration outcomes for visible minorities, attention also needs to be paid to sport for development interventions within global North communities and in cities like Toronto. This research is particularly important for exploring alternative means of facilitating immigrant settlement. Finally, many sport for development programs continue to use traditional Western sports-based interventions as a means of engaging the target audience (Coalter, 2010). More research is needed to investigate diverse recreational programs. This research project is unique because it investigated recreational, not just sport-specific programming. The activities that the youth participants engaged in were diverse and inclusive, ranging from tree planting, to ultimate Frisbee, rock climbing, and yoga. Youth are not a homogenous category and as a result have diverse interests and hobbies. Some participants may not be interested in traditional and competitive sports-based programming; therefore, better understandings of holistic programming for more diverse participation is called for.

1.3 Research Questions

This thesis was exploratory in nature and aimed to examine the experiences of immigrant youth who participate in sport and recreational programming through a large immigrant settlement service in the super-diverse city of Toronto, Canada. The main research questions that guided the study were:
1. What are the experiences of youth participants who take part in recreation-based settlement programs?
   - How do they experience settlement and integration and exert agency within this process?
   - What is the impact of recreation within the youth’s settlement process?
   - What are the differences and similarities in the experiences of youth from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds and immigrant statuses?

2. What is the role of the settlement service agency in the settlement and integration processes of youth?
   - How do various stakeholders within settlement services interpret and experience recreation programs?
   - How do staff and funders understand the relationship between assimilation, integration, and social inclusion?

3. Which theories or framework(s) from migration studies literature best explain the implementation/experience of recreation within settlement services?
   - Are these services assimilationist, as seen traditionally in Canada? Why or why not?
   - What are the effects and implications of the current approaches?

1.4. Chapter Overview

This thesis is divided into seven chapters, each of which includes several sub-sections organized around key themes. Chapter two (Literature Review) is organized into three key sections: political context, theoretical frameworks, and previous literature and aims to provide a summary of current thinking while identifying gaps in the literature. Chapter three outlines the
research methodologies and methods used during this project, namely participant observation and interviews. The findings of the study are then presented over three chapters. Chapter four investigates the social structures which impacted the settlement of immigrant youth and tended to promote assimilation. Chapter five examines the role of the settlement service agency, the place of recreation programming in encouraging assimilation, and the experiences of youth participants. Amidst this pressure to assimilate, Chapter six explores how youth exerted their agency within the settlement process. Chapter seven then discusses the findings in relation to policy, theoretical frameworks, and literature, and outlines key implications for practice and policy. The main argument of the thesis is that despite the strong prevalence of multiculturalism narratives in Canada, assimilation into the dominant, White culture is the prevailing approach taken towards the settlement of immigrant youth and recreation is perceived as an important tool to facilitate this process.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current field of research by exploring, synthesizing, and integrating policy, theory, and migration studies alongside the relevant sports sociology literature. I both summarize and identify gaps within the literature. The chapter is divided into three key sections: political landscape, theoretical frameworks, and literature review.

2.1 The Political Landscape

This section explores the evolution of settlement and immigration policies in Canada from the end of the 19th century to the present day. Immigrant selection criteria has historically been exclusionary and restrictive towards people deemed to be undesirable (García, 2017). Through the use of racist policies, such as the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885, which imposed a head tax on Chinese labourers constructing the Canadian Pacific Railway, visible minority immigrants have been restricted from entering Canada. Entry was initially limited to White, northern Europeans as southern and eastern Europeans were deemed inferior by the state (Feagin, 1997). However, many northern European immigrants experienced high levels of discrimination when they first arrived, and were often subject to overt assimilationist policies. After World War II, immigrants were needed to populate Canada so flows were expanded to include southern and eastern Europeans. In 1967, a point system, which assessed applicants on the basis of their human capital, was implemented, and opened up immigration to visible minority immigrants. At this time, overt assimilationist policies were dropped in favour of
multiculturalism policies that promoted integration as a two-way process of change (Kymlicka, 2012).

2.1.1 Multiculturalism policies: Canada was one of the first nations to implement multiculturalism as an official policy, doing so in 1971. Many other countries followed suit in developing similar policies. The federal government established the Multiculturalism Directorate, which oversaw programming related to ethnic diversity, including academic research, anti-racism education, and heritage language schools. The directorate also promoted the commitment to multiculturalism across all government departments through programming and policy implementation (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010). Multiculturalism, as a policy, aims to promote equality and ensure ethnic diversity is recognized within laws and institutions. As a philosophy, multiculturalism is often based on the ideology that liberal democracies should be a cultural mosaic, whereby immigrants are free to preserve their home culture (Bradley, 2013). Within the Canadian government, multiculturalism policies aim to recognize and accommodate cultural diversity, remove barriers to participation, promote interchange between groups, and endorse the acquisition of official languages (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010). Many of these policies and programs have trickled down to provincial and municipal governments. The federal multiculturalism initiatives are referred to as Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives and according to the Government of Canada’s website there are three key funding components including: events that “promote intercultural or interfaith understanding”, capacity building projects that “will contribute to the recipient’s ability to promote diversity and inclusion” and projects that “encourage positive interaction between cultural, religious, and ethnic communities in Canada” (Government of Canada, 2018). As will be discussed later, these
programs are poorly funded and heavily focused on the ethno cultural individual/group, not broader society.

Within Canada, public support for multiculturalism is still strong today (Adams, 2008); many Canadians view multiculturalism as a means of supporting liberal democratic values and differentiating themselves from the United States (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010). However, beyond supporting expansionist immigration policies and tolerating ethnic diversity, many Canadians are unclear about what multiculturalism entails (Reitz, 2014).

2.1.1.1 Critiques: Academic interest in this topic peaked after multiculturalism became an increasingly neoliberalized, and controversial topic, in the 1990s (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010). Kymlicka (2013, p. 99) a leading multiculturalism scholar defines neoliberalism as:

A set of changes in economic policy and in economic relationships, many of which created new challenges and insecurities for individuals…. In the name of emancipating the autonomous individual, neoliberalism has eroded the social bonds and solidarities [including those forged in the family] upon which individuals depended, leaving people to fend for themselves as “companies of one” in an increasingly insecure world.

Multiculturalism and neoliberalism connect at numerous intersections including immigrant selection policy, social services, and decreased economic outcomes. Shapaizman (2010, p. 20) asserts that: “The neo-liberal concepts of self-sufficiency and personal responsibility have had the most influential impact on the immigrant privatization policy. The privatized Canadian immigrant policy was designed for the self-reliant immigrant”. Indeed, Canada’s immigrant privatization policy is both expansive, yet restrictionist; increasingly high numbers of immigrants enter Canada each year and contribute to the economy, yet only the applicants with the highest levels of education, work experience, and national language proficiency, and thus greatest perceived potential for self-reliance, are selected. The rise of neoliberalism also led to the Canadian state reducing their direct provision of resources for social services which negatively
impacted immigrant families and led to increased challenges in the labour market, decreased economic outcomes, and less publicly-funded support for settlement services and multiculturalism (Shields, 2004). In the 1990s, the federal multiculturalism program was placed in a minor department and funding was cut by 30% (Winter, 2015). The responsibility for cultural maintenance and advocacy was instead placed at the responsibility of the ethno-cultural community. The neoliberalism of multiculturalism is reflected in Canada’s $12 million a year multiculturalism budget (Government of Canada, 2016), while $1.3 billion is spent on settlement each year. This sentiment reflects the government’s priority of ensuring new immigrants become contributing members of society as quickly as possible (Li, 2003).

Multiculturalism policies within liberal societies have been heavily critiqued as symbolic, their role to romanticize and commodify soft aspects of culture, such as food, dress, and physical cultural, in ways that do not threaten the liberal democracy (Joppke, 2012). Critics argue that these symbolic multiculturalism policies are not anti-racist in nature; they do little to challenge the dominant White institutions and systemic oppression within Canada (Breton, 1987). The discursive constructions of Canada as a multicultural and inclusive society are also problematic as they do not centralize the systemic oppression of visible minorities in Canada. In addition, Multiculturalism policies were also developed by politicians (the majority of whom were White, males), with minimal consultation of visible minorities, thus reinforcing the dominance of Whiteness.

Despite the numerous critiques of multiculturalism, it is vital to consider that despite the lack of anti-racism initiatives, the federal government publically encouraging and funding soft facets of culture is positive and we cannot underestimate the ability for these facets of culture, such as physical culture, to encourage social transformations that may challenge institutions.
Furthermore, would the alternatives to Canada’s multiculturalism model result in a more equitable system? Support for multiculturalism is not universal and many countries such as the Netherlands, the UK, Australia, and Germany, who previously championed multiculturalism policies, have recently retreated from them due to beliefs that multiculturalism leads to “communal segregation and mutual incomprehension” (Council of Europe, 2008, p. 10). Since the late 1990s, fears amongst the mainstream community regarding colour-coded neighbourhoods and immigrant’s possessing non-liberal values have come to the forefront due to the prevalent belief that accommodating diversity has gone “too far” and social cohesion is at risk (Kymlicka, 2012). This discourse can be demonstrated in the increased popularity of civic integration policies across Europe, which focus on facilitating national identity and social cohesion (Joppke, 2007).

2.1.2 Settlement policies: This section aims to define settlement, describe the structure of settlement services, and explore some of the policy critiques around settlement. The terms settlement and integration are often used interchangeably by policy makers, settlement staff, and immigrants themselves, but in fact, have contrasting meanings. Settlement can be defined as the initial process when immigrants first arrive in the destination country, and the concept is often broken into three distinct stages: adjustment, adaption, and integration (Mwarigha, 2002). During stage one, adjustment, immigrants are often heavily reliant on settlement services for language training, temporary housing, and orientation services. The second stage of settlement, adaption, is concerned with immigrants gaining long-term access to employment, education, housing, and health care. The last stage, integration, is an ongoing process that involves striving for equal participation in society (Mwarigha, 2002; Shields, Drolet & Valenzulea, 2016). Integration can be defined as two-way process of change on behalf of the individual and the
destination country (OCASI & COSTI, 1999) and should ideally provide the opportunity for active participation in all aspects of society (economic, social, cultural, and political) while mitigating systemic barriers to participation (Shields, Drolet & Valenzuela, 2016). The term Assimilation, is often positioned in contrast to integration; as the process is seen as a one-way process of change and can be defined as the immigrant becoming more similar to the dominant culture (Parks & Burgess, 1921).

Since the 1970s, Canada’s settlement policies have been widely regarded as a best practice examples across the world. The delivery of Canada’s settlement services is unique in comparison to other countries. Settlement services are delivered by not-for-profit community organizations but funded predominately (approximately 70%) through federal, municipal, and provincial governments, in addition to charities and private organizations (Richmond & Shields, 2004). The community-based model is intended to allow for increased efficiency and the provision of services which best cater to the needs of the local immigrant population. However, there are challenges with this delivery system. The biggest funding source for settlement services comes from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), a federal government department. The relationship between the IRCC and settlement agencies altered in the 1990s, when the spread of neoliberal ideologies restructured social welfare governance across North America, including settlement services (Richmond & Shields, 2004). Community organizations now compete for contract-based funding from the IRCC, which is highly competitive, unstable, and restrictive (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). Funding cut backs, imposed restructuring of settlement services, and increased evaluation measures has reduced the autonomy of service providers and led to the closure of many smaller agencies aimed at ethnospecific populations (Richmond & Shields, 2004).
2.1.3 Integration: This section describes integration frameworks and investigates discourses of integration policy in Canada. The term integration is commonly used by policy makers, NGOs, academics, and the public. However, the term can be fraught; Robinson (1998, p. 118) describes integration as a “chaotic concept” as the term holds multiple meanings for different people and there is no set definition or framework. Ager and Strang (2004, p. 2008) were among the first scholars to construct an operational definition of integration which has been widely accepted amongst academics and practitioners. Their conceptual framework, which defines the core domains of integration, is described below in Figure 1:

![Diagram of integration framework]

In the diagram above, the conceptual framework is pictured as an inverted triangle across four levels, featuring ten core domains of integration. At the tip of the inverted triangle is rights and citizenship, this domain carries across time, and the state are highly influential in determining immigration policy. Second, facilitators are viewed as potential barriers to immigrant integration and these domains are either facilitated or prevented through state policy. Social connections are
perceived in this framework as the “connective tissue” between the foundational rights and public outcomes. This is similar to Putnam’s (1993) social capital framework, and is split into social bridges (connections outside of one’s ethnocultural group), bonds (within one’s ethnic community), and links (relationships with civic and state structures). Social capital frameworks will be described in extensive detail in section 2.2.3. At the top of the inverted triangle, the markers (employment, housing, education, health), or public outcomes, are understood to be indicative of successful integration.

The point here is that government funders have been criticized for focusing singularly on promoting employment and educational public outcomes through their settlement programming (Richmond & Shields, 2004). On the other hand, many sports for development programs have been criticized for focusing too heavily on the development of social networks for the belief that this alone will facilitate integration and social change (Sherry, 2010). In this study, by analyzing a settlement service agency delivering recreational-based programming, I examined how youth workers, government funders, and immigrant youth participants understood and conceptualized integration and sought to understand which elements of integration were deemed most important. Ager and Strang’s (2004) conceptualization of integration was useful in this regard.

2.1.3.1 Integration policy. Integration is a core term used by policy makers in Canada to describe “the desirable way in which immigrants should become members of the receiving society” (Li, 2003, p. 315). The Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2002) also define integration as a two-way process of change on behalf of both the immigrant and Canadian society. Policy makers are quick to emphasize differentiation between the previous assimilation-based policies and the present-day integration policies. The Deputy Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada expressed that integration “allows immigrants to adapt without requiring
them to abandon their cultures” (Doralis, 2004, p. 4). However, the policy document below from Employment and Immigration Canada (1993, p. 5-7) reflects the contradictory approach towards integration, whereby cultural differences are emphasized while insisting on conformity to shared values:

We can begin with the assumption that those who have chosen to come here [Canada] respect the basic values that underlie Canadian society…. Immigrants who are successfully integrated into all aspects of Canadian life should compare favourably to other Canadians in measurable aspects of social and economic life

This quote highlights the expectation for immigrants to abandon aspects of their culture that do not conform to Canada’s liberal democracy. The reward for undergoing this process of change is positioned as economic and social success; thus non-conformity is not rewarded. This policy document is now heavily outdated, but it was written at the peak of multiculturalism popularity. This contradiction is not only displayed by policy makers, but also the general Canadian public; Reitz (2014) analysed public opinion polls to argue that despite the majority of the public possessing favourable attitudes towards expansive immigration policies, they nevertheless expect immigrants to blend into the Canadian culture.

Despite the numerous measures and conceptualizations of immigrant integration as described by Ager and Strang (2004), it is economic integration and financial independence that is commonly emphasized by policy makers as the most important measurement of successful integration (Shields, Drolet & Valenzuela, 2016). The focus on facilitating the economic productivity of immigrants as quickly as possible is reflected within the integration discourse. As such, economic integration is at the core of many settlement programs, and agencies have been criticized for facilitating short-term settlement at the expense of long-term integration (Richmond & Shields, 2004). Indeed, the majority of settlement funding is allocated towards enhancing the national language proficiency and employability skills of immigrants.
2.1.4 Policy comparisons: This next section draws comparisons between settlement, multiculturalism, and assimilationist policy to tease out some of the tensions and similarities between these key political ideologies. Despite the removal of overt assimilation narratives from settlement policy, and the popularity of multiculturalism, research findings suggest that assimilation is still the normative expectation for immigrants in Canada. The integration discourse celebrates certain facets of cultural identity, while simultaneously maintaining that conformity is the ultimate desirable outcome.

A harsh critic of multiculturalism, Hansen (2017, p. 712), argues that “Canada has never had anything other than a rhetorical multiculturalism policy” and assimilation has consistently been the dominant approach to settlement. Hansen (2014, p. 74) also suggests that assimilation is still the dominant process, it is just “masqueraded as a multicultural policy.” Thus, the assimilation process will continue to dominate as long as immigrant parents are sending their children to public school (which most do), and large amounts of tax dollars are spent on settlement programs such as host country language training, while multiculturalism programs are poorly funded. Jarem (2014, p. 248) concludes his book on the evolution of multiculturalism by suggesting that within the age of neoliberalism, settlement policies focused on facilitating economic integration are favoured by both immigrants and the Canadian public over multiculturalism policies because “extensive spending on song, sari, and samosa is not likely to find renewed support in Canada, if it ever had support in the first place.”

Overall, this analysis of Canadian policy and the relevant literature shows that despite the presence and popularity of multiculturalism and integrative policies, assimilation is still an expectation for immigrants. In turn, and simultaneously due to the high socio-economic benefits of assimilation, many immigrants consent to this process.
2.2 Theoretical Frameworks: Part One

This section is divided into two parts. Part one explored theoretical frameworks that have been commonly applied to sport and immigrant settlement, such as classical assimilation, acculturation, and social capital. In contrast, part two explores current and popular migration studies frameworks such as new assimilation theories, critical race theory, cultural capital, and social inclusion theories, that to date, have not been readily applied when examining the experiences of migrants in and through sport and recreation.

2.2.1 Classical assimilation: Assimilation theory, in its various iterations, has dominated migration studies for the past century. Classical assimilation theory was one of the first frameworks to explore how immigrants become incorporated into the destination society. This section describes the origins, evolution, and pitfalls of classical assimilation theory and then discusses how the framework has been applied within sport/leisure/recreation domains.

In 1921, Parks and Burgess were among the first scholars to provide an operational definition of assimilation; they defined assimilation as “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments and attitudes of other persons and groups, and, by sharing their experiences and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life” (p. 735). Parks and Burgess (1921) conceptualized assimilation as the last component in the race-relations cycle; the four-step cycle was intended to describe the stages that an immigrant experiences when they enter the destination country and included contact, competition, accommodation, and assimilation. Over the past decade, Parks has been heavily criticized for positioning assimilation as a process that involves the genocide of an immigrant’s home culture; however, more recently scholars such as Kivisto (2004) and Alba and Nee (1997) have revisited Parks’ work to suggest that his readings may have been misinterpreted and his
conceptualization of assimilation does not necessarily require an erasure of ethnic identity. Rather the process is functional and intended to maintain social stability.

Gordon (1964) built on Parks’ work to argue that all immigrants will eventually incorporate into the dominant society and experience the same social, cultural, economic, and political outcomes as the mainstream population. He positioned the assimilation process as irreversible, suggested that there were seven stages, and that it was important to differentiate between cultural and structural assimilation (into dominant social structures). The second stage of Gordon’s (1964) process was structural incorporation and he argued that if immigrants achieved this stage, that they would undergo the other stages. Unlike Parks, Gordon believed that complete assimilation into the mainstream culture involved relinquishing one’s ethnic identity and adapting to “middle-class cultural patterns of, largely, White Protestant, Anglo-Saxon origins” (Gordon, 1964, p.72), and that once assimilation had occurred, race would no longer be a key marker of stratification (Morris, 2015). Classical assimilation theories have been criticized for promoting the superiority of Western culture and ethnic erasure, constructing culture as a monolithic entity, and viewing the process as unilateral (Ngo, 2008). Classical assimilation frameworks also paved the way for state-sponsored policies which proposed that if immigrants wanted to succeed, anglo-conformity was required (McKee, 1993)

2.2.1.1. Sport & assimilation theory: In addition to dominating the migration studies literature over the past century, classical assimilation was one of the first frameworks that was utilized in interpreting the sporting and leisure experiences of immigrant populations (Floyd, Borarro &Thompson, 2008; Stodolksa, 1998, 2007). Many of these studies utilized the framework as a means to investigate immigrant leisure participation patterns, preferences, and constraints. Studies provided evidence that involvement in mainstream sport was often viewed as an
indicator of assimilation into the mainstream; thus it was hypothesised that the greater the length of time an immigrant had resided in the destination country, the more similar their leisure preferences to the mainstream population and the higher the rates of participation (Crespo, Smith, Carter-Pokras & Andersen, 2001; Walker, Caprachione, Mummery & Chau, 2015; Wolin, Colditz, Stoddard, Emmons & Sorensen, 2006). These research findings can be attributed to limited leisure time, lack of accessible leisure opportunities, and a preference for participation among co-ethnics (Stodolska, 1998). Many of these studies investigated a specific ethnocultural groups, studied second-generation participants, and have been criticized for homogenizing immigrant experiences and neglecting the broader social context (Allison, 2000; Stodolksa 2018).

Since the 1990s, there has been an abundance of discussion surrounding the usefulness of classic assimilation theories. The general consensus within academia is that classical assimilation frameworks do not account for structural factors and thus were more applicable in explaining immigrant incorporation when immigrants were from White, European countries. However, despite overwhelming critiques, many scholars argue that assimilation is “not dead” and modern assimilation theories provide useful insights when interpreting the experiences of immigrants (Alba & Nee, 1997). In the next section, I will discuss the acculturation framework. This framework was closely derived from classical assimilation theory and has been readily used to investigate the leisure patterns of immigrant groups.

2.2.2 Acculturation: The acculturation framework is a popular social psychological framework that has been heavily utilized when investigating immigrant sport participation (Crespo et al., 2001; Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Stodolksa, 1998; Walker et al., 2015; Weedon, 2011; Wolin et al., 2006). The framework aims to explain the process of change experienced by
a person or a cultural group as a result of contact with a different cultural group. Berry (1974) developed a bi-dimensional model of acculturation which differentiates between four distinct modes: (a) assimilation, the desire to be absorbed fully into the mainstream culture while abandoning one’s cultural heritage; (b) integration, the desire to be part of the mainstream culture while simultaneously maintaining one’s cultural heritage; (c) separation, the desire to maintain one’s cultural heritage and not to be part of the mainstream culture; and (d) marginalization, the desire to not be involved with the mainstream culture and to not maintain one’s culture heritage (Berry, 1974). A later study conducted by Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder (2006) found that integration was the most favoured mode of acculturation for immigrant youth as they desired to possess a hybrid identity and experience the best of both cultures.

However, this social-psychological theory has major shortcomings regarding its static and dichotomous use of ‘culture’; in modern, multicultural societies, culture is considered dynamic, hybrid, and plural (Joseph, 2012; Fletcher, 2012). With shifting immigrant demographics and increased diversity within ethnic groups, it is ignorant at best to assume that cultural adaption fits neatly into four categories. This framework also dismisses the role of social factors such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity, all of which can shape an immigrant’s experience within dominant social structures, thus ignoring the unequal power relations mediating immigrant experiences.

2.2.3 Social capital: Social capital is another prominent sociological framework which has been widely utilized by policy makers, academics, and organizations in the domains of both immigration and sport. The development of social capital is often cited as a key program outcome in settlement and sport programming. This section describes both Bourdieu’s and Putnam’s conceptualizations of social capital. I then explore the role of social capital in
immigrant integration, and summarize studies investigating the role of social networks in the sport/recreational participation of immigrants.

In the 1970s, Pierre Bourdieu was one of the first scholars to popularize social capital frameworks. He defined social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (Bourdieu 1986, p. 248). Bourdieu explored the intersections between social networks, resource acquisition, and power, and considered how different forms of capital such as social, economic, and cultural interact with each other. He argued that the establishment of social capital is transactional and requires an investment of economic and cultural capital; therefore, due to political economic constraints, not everybody is able to gain equal access to the positive benefits.

Towards the end of the 1990s, Putnam developed his conceptualization of social capital which has its roots more heavily in functionalist theory. Putnam (2000, p. 20) defined social capital as “connections among individuals, such as social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them”. Through his definition, Putnam separated social capital into three key areas - social networks, moral obligations, and norms/social values (such as trust). Putnam asserted that there are three main types of social networks: bridging, bonding, and linking; the impact of these social networks has been heavily studied by immigration (Boyd, 1989; Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2012) and sports scholars (Spaaij, 2012; Walseth, 2008; Vermeulen & Verweel, 2009). Bridging can be defined as forming heterogeneous social connections across different ethnic or cultural groups. Bonding can be described as developing networks with like-minded people in an homogenous group, such as within an ethno-cultural group. Whereas, linking social capital is forming connections with civic associations or
structures. Putnam asserted that the norms and networks of civic engagement (voting and participation in a community organization) can have highly influential effects on the success of the economy and institutions such as education, housing, and health care, while he suggested that social values, such as trust, underpin the foundations of social networks and moral norms.

Putnam connected social capital to social cohesion. Within communities that possess a high level of social capital, he suggested that there will be lower levels of crime and conflict, and higher social cohesion and civic engagement. Putnam’s (2000) popular book *Bowling Alone*, investigated declining social capital within the USA. He asserted that the “vibrancy of civic society has notably declined over the past several decades” (p. 65) and that, increasingly, levels of ethnic diversity and urbanization have contributed to this phenomenon.

2.2.3.1 Immigration: Many immigration scholars have utilized both Bourdieu’s and Putnam’s conceptualizations of social capital. First, social networks have been found to be influential in determining migration patterns. Boyd (1989) posits that social networks decrease the risk of migration as immigrants can share information, financial resources, employment connections, child care assistance, etc. Second, many studies utilizing Bourdieu’s social capital framework found that the highest educational attainment and labour market outcomes are derived from bridging social networks with the mainstream population (Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2012). These findings may help to explain why governments place emphasis on developing bridging social capital within integration programming.

2.3.3.2 Sport: Many policy makers now believe that sport plays a role in developing aspects of social capital, such as volunteering, developing social trust, and facilitating social networks (Putnam, 2000; Walseth, 2008). Research investigating immigrant integration and
sports participation tend to either investigate co-ethnic sporting spaces, such as leagues and teams and the development of bonding social capital (Long, Hylton & Spacklen, 2014; Spaaij, 2013) or investigates the effects of mainstream sports on the development of bridging social capital (Vermeulen & Verweel, 2009; Walseth, 2008).

Bridging social capital is often viewed as the ideal type of such integration. As such, it is developing bridges with the mainstream population that is positioned as the key objective in many sports programs. Co-ethnic sporting spaces that facilitate bonding social capital may be perceived as controversial by policy makers, practitioners, and the general public due to concerns over ethnic segregation (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). As such, sports organizers often possess a narrow conceptualization of what constitutes integration and inclusion (Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfry, 2014). However, co-ethnic sporting spaces have also been found to provide a space of belonging and safety for youth and adult immigrants and this has been found to have a positive effect on settlement (Brady, 2005; Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014). Jeanes, O’Connor and Alfrey (2014) investigated the sports participation of refugee youth and found that when refugee youth first arrived in the destination country they typically preferred to participate with other refugees outside of mainstream sports clubs because they felt more comfortable and supported by their peers. In Walseth’s (2008) study investigating immigrant women in Norway, she similarly found that sports clubs often promote bridging social capital among immigrants from various ethno-cultural backgrounds, however, they were ineffective in promoting bridging social capital between immigrants and non-immigrants. Long, Hylton & Spacklen (2014) explain this further, by stating that bridging social capital and constantly trying to “fit in” is exhausting and instead immigrants tend to use their leisure time to seek belonging within ethno-specific groups. Long, Hylton & Spacklen (2014) also suggest that spending leisure time with immigrants who are more
settled in the destination country can contribute to integration by allowing people to feel more comfortable within their surroundings.

This section aimed to provide a brief summary of the literature investigating social capital, immigrants, and sport. These findings suggest that there are tensions between sports organizers/ policy makers and the needs of the immigrant program participants. Many of the participants in this previous literature desired to spend their leisure time with co-ethnics and develop bonding social capital; however, due to beliefs that bridging social capital is the ideal type of integration and outcome, there was scepticism from sports organizers and policy makers about facilitating such programs. These findings provide some evidence that sport and recreation is an effective space to develop bonding social capital, which may, in turn, be influential in immigrant settlement. However, the literature does not adequately explain how the acquisition of bonding social capital through sports programs converts into other integration outcomes such as education and employment.

2.4. Theoretical Frameworks: Part Two

The section above summarized and critiqued some of the theoretical frameworks which have commonly been applied when investigating the sport/recreational experiences of immigrants. As seen above, these frameworks have offered some influential insights. However, the field of migration studies has progressed immensely in the past twenty years. In this section, I explore current frameworks such as new assimilation theories, critical race theory, social inclusion, structure/agency, and cultural capital that contribute to better understandings of how immigrant settlement is influenced by factors such as race, ethnicity, and class.
2.4.1 New assimilation theories: In the section above, I discussed some of the pitfalls in applying classical assimilation theory to the experiences of immigrants. Within migration studies, classical assimilation theory has been heavily discredited. However, over the past twenty years, there has been a resurgence and remodelling of modern assimilation theories, the insights from which were useful for this study. I begin by discussing Brubaker’s work, then move onto segmented assimilation theory.

Compared to classical assimilation theory, Brubaker (2001, p. 534) utilizes more abstract definitions of assimilation, emphasizing that assimilation is a “process of becoming similar, or of making similar or treating as similar”, and that there is ambivalence with regards to the degrees and desirability of assimilation. Within Brubakers’s conceptualization, the desirable outcome is not as Gordon (1964) described, complete absorption into the dominant society. In suggesting that we are seeing a return of assimilation, Brubaker (2001) suggests that we are not seeing a return to state-sponsored assimilationist programs promoting the normative expectation of Anglo-conformity, but rather that we are seeing a return to the “normative and analytical concern with the nature and extent of emerging similarities in particular domains between populations of immigration origin and ‘host’ populations” (p. 535). This distinction between classical and modern definitions of assimilation is meaningful, especially considering that abstract definitions of assimilation do possess merit in explaining immigrant settlement. Nevertheless, and rightly so, as a result of state-sponsored assimilation advocating colonization and genocide, the adverse connotations attached to the word assimilation are enduring.

2.4.1.1 Segmented assimilation: Portes and Zhou (1993) were among the first scholars to develop a segmented assimilation framework which proposed that assimilation is not a linear process, but rather the experiences of second-generation immigrants’ in the destination country
may be dependent on characteristics such as source country, race, class, the conditions in the
destination country, and immigrant capital (human, social, cultural). The framework has
predominantly been applied within the United States and asserts that immigrants assimilate into
an already stratified society and this can lead to various patterns of adaptation: upward
assimilation, downward assimilation, and upward mobility. The purpose of this framework is not
to reinforce ethno-cultural stereotypes but rather to provide a means of explaining patterns in
second-generation integration outcomes. Portes and Zhou (1993) suggest that ethno-cultural
groups who have historically experienced oppression and domination are more likely to follow a
downward assimilation pattern. Reitz, Zhang and Hawkins (2011) found that Chinese and South
Asian second-generations experienced the highest educational achievement, whereas those from
other Asian origins did not perform as well, and persons from Afro Caribbean or African origins
experienced the lowest educational achievement. The segmented assimilation theory posits that
not all second-generation youth will achieve social mobility, and that Black youth may in fact
experience downward mobility as a result of the intersectionality of factors listed above. This
framework provides some insight into why second-generation youth are accessing the services of
settlement agencies and why the majority of these youth are from an Afro Carribean or African
heritage.

2.4.1.2 Modes of incorporation: Sharing some similarities with the segmented
assimilation theory, the modes of incorporation model aims to explain variation between
different ethnic groups. Portes and Borocz (1989) suggest that factors such as immigrants’ source
country, the political conditions in which somebody exits the source country (fleeing political
persecution/ leaving for economic purposes), entry status (economic migrant, dependent,
refugee, entrepreneur), and class (human capital, socioeconomic class, and skills) can all affect
the context of reception (how the immigrant is received by the native population, employers, host
government etc.)

Classical assimilation and acculturation theories did not pay attention to the role of
immigrant characteristics, such as diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds and immigrant statuses;
nor the political context of the destination country. Stodolska and Walker (2007) argue that a
major shortcoming of the existing scholarship on immigrant leisure is the lack of focus on
immigrant characteristics and broader social issues; this is where segmented assimilation and
modes of incorporation may be useful. To date, these new assimilation theories have not readily
been applied to investigating the recreational experiences of immigrant youth from diverse
ethno-cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, these frameworks are helpful in contesting dominant
narratives around the homogeneity of the immigrant youth experiences and in highlighting the
impact of immigrant characteristics on the diverse settlement trajectories.

2.4.2 Critical race theory: The new assimilation theories pay greater attention to the role
of race and racism in preventing the assimilation of some ethnic and racial groups. They also
encourage critical discussions about the pressures to assimilate, and the desirability of
assimilation, while emphasizing a trans-disciplinary approach to investigating race, ethnicity,
class, and gender. However, beneath the surface, most assimilation theories also tend to reject the
equal value of cultures and to privilege Whiteness through making it the norm that immigrants
should aspire to if they wish to achieve social mobility (Martinez, 1999). Thus, critical
reflections on race, racism and Whiteness are also called for. In this section, I briefly discuss
Hylton’s (2005, 2009) five tenants of critical race theory (CRT): (1) centralizing race and racism
as it is normalized throughout social structures, (2) challenging dominant ideologies, (3) being
committed to social justice, (4) centralizing marginalized voices, and (5) utilizing a trans-disciplinary approach.

CRT is an effective framework for exploring the evolution of immigration and settlement policy, both in terms of who is deemed to be a desirable and deserving immigrant, as well as the expectations placed on immigrants to assimilate to the social structures. Throughout their settlement process, immigrant youth in this study were heavily engaged in a variety of social structures such as education, labour markets, the settlement agency, and sport. These social structures and processes are often racialized in ways that maintain White dominance; if immigrants wish to achieve social mobility they are expected to conform to these structures. At the same time, immigrants often experience high levels of systemic racism, which makes it difficult to conform or ‘succeed’ within these institutions. Within sporting and leisure spaces, Whiteness goes unexamined and is normalized, whereas, Blackness is often viewed as exotic (Hylton 2009). The dominance of particular ideologies, such as multiculturalism, meritocracy, and neoliberalism, also often means that racism goes unexamined in Canada — especially, when the Canadian context is compared so frequently to the United States (Henry, 2017). The current framing of the assimilation process puts the emphasis on the individual to undergo a process of change, but does not question the status quo of White privilege or the oppression of racialized groups (Romero, 2008).

Moreover, when framing immigrant integration outcomes and sporting experiences, it is important to consider that Whiteness is not a homogenous identity, it is “historically, geographically, and socially contingent and made up of various gradations and meanings” (Satzewich, 2000, p. 276). Long, Hylton and Spacklen (2014, p. 1784) argue that “there are centres and peripheries of Whiteness”; some White identities, such as Polish immigrants in the
UK and southern/eastern Europeans who previously entered Canada, were only seen as peripherally White.

In addition to Hylton’s (2009) first two tenants of CRT, he also stresses the importance of advocating for social justice, incorporating marginalized voices, and utilizing a transdisciplinary approach. Hylton (2005) calls for the use of a social justice paradigm to counter oppression. Similarly, Allison (2000) and Stewart (2014) assert that an increased focus on social justice will transform leisure studies and allow the field to move beyond describing immigrant leisure patterns and towards investigating the reasons for these differences between immigrants while possibly providing solutions to facilitate social change. Hylton (2009) also outlines the importance of incorporating marginalized voices into research and policy. As described earlier in this chapter, many previous studies investigating immigrant leisure have neglected marginalized voices through either only utilizing quantitative methods or asking sports organizers or parents to talk on the behalf of youth participants (Floyd, Borarro & Thompson, 2008; Stodolksa, 2018). Excluding marginalized youth from the process of knowledge production, further reproduces Whiteness within dominant institutions such as academia and sport. In a bid to centralize marginalized voices within my research, I opted to utilize ethnographic methods and to primarily interview youth participants. I have also shared my findings with participants to receive feedback and have worked (and continue to work) alongside CoalitionTO* to use my research data to bring about changes within the organization.

Finally, Hylton (2009) suggests that researchers should utilize a trans-disciplinary approach. In comparison to the breadth of frameworks being applied in the migration studies to understand immigrant settlement experiences, sports sociology and leisure studies are utilizing somewhat outdated frameworks to understand the leisure and sporting experiences of
immigrants. In line with Hylton’s (2009) approach, one of my research questions was to explore which migration studies frameworks, if any, can be applied to help interpret the experiences of the youth participants in this study. Throughout this literature review, I have also collated a variety of literature from numerous disciplines including sports sociology, sports management, sociology, political science, and migration studies.

As displayed above, Hylton’s (2009) five tenants of CRT has influenced my research questions, methodology, and dissemination of findings. I return to Hylton’s (2009) critical race theory in the results and discussion sections to argue that despite the popular ideologies of multiculturalism, immigrant youth have very few options other than assimilating to dominant, White institutions.

2.4.3 Cultural capital: Cultural capital has been an insightful and influential concept in the social sciences, particularly in sociology (Lamont & Lareau, 1988) and has strong applications within both sport and migration studies. The framework is relevant to this project as settlement service programs tend to focus on developing aspects of cultural capital that are valued in the destination country, in this case through the use of sport and recreation. This framework can also be linked to CRT, as the formation of cultural capital is often a racialized process. This section summarizes the evolution of the concept of cultural capital, then explores how the theory has been applied to migration studies and sport/leisure.

The concept was first developed by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977); their initial definition of cultural capital described an individual’s competence within a high status culture. Bourdieu (1986) outlined three forms of cultural capital: embodied, institutionalized, and objectified. When investigating the relationship between cultural capital and immigrant integration, embodied and institutionalised forms are most relevant. Embodied cultural capital, or habitus,
refers to how cultural capital is physically embodied, for example, one’s accent, taste (food, clothes, art), or mannerisms. Institutionalized cultural capital is perceived as a principal measure of cultural capital and is displayed through credentials and qualifications. Immigrants are expected to conform to the Canadian educational system; therefore, when immigrants are from non-traditional source countries, their credentials are often devalued and they are expected to undertake formal education in the destination country. As discussed in Bourdieu's definition of social capital, emphasis is placed on how cultural capital can be converted into other forms of capital, such as social and economic, to reproduce hierarchical structures. Stempel (2005, p. 412) describes Bourdieu’s conceptualization of the hierarchical reproduction through cultural capital:

Cultural capital makes explicit the social processes of reproducing race and class privileges and exclusions in societies that are far along in the historic process of individualizing exclusion, a process that entails the development of institutions that carry out class and race exclusions in impersonal and individualizing ways (Murphy, 1988; Bourdieu, 1996a)

Many immigrants, especially racialized immigrants, arrive in Canada with limited economic capital; this can often be a barrier to the conversion of social capital (limited leisure time as working multiple jobs), and cultural capital (lack of time and resources to upgrade credentials and learn English).

Lamont and Lareau (1988) take a Bourdieusian approach to cultural capital and argue that different forms of cultural capital can be implicated in direct or indirect social and cultural exclusion. Forms of cultural capital that privilege Whiteness are often related to inclusion and social mobility. As such, different facets of cultural capital are not equally transferable across international borders and when migrants arrive from a non-traditional source country, they may face barriers in leveraging their existing cultural capital, thus leading to social exclusion and poor socio-economic outcomes (Erel, 2010). Within Canada, immigration policies and the labour
markets assess the desirability of an immigrant’s existing cultural capital in relation to Whiteness. This is evident as facets of cultural capital, such as education, values, norms, and languages acquired from White, Western countries are often transferable and valued in Canada.

Bourdieu has been criticised for focusing heavily on the exclusionary structures that reproduce cultural capital and dismissing the agency of individuals to activate and transform cultural capital for resistant purposes (Bennett, Savage, Silva, Warde & Gayo-Cal, 2009). Building off this conceptual approach, Erel (2010) developed a framework of migrant cultural capital that critiqued ‘rucksack’ approaches, whereby an immigrant’s existing cultural capital either hinders or facilitates integration. Instead, he suggests that migration often results in new ways of producing and reproducing cultural capital and immigrants have the ability to validate their cultural capital through negotiating with the ethnic majority. Sport and physical activity may be used as a space to facilitate new forms of cultural capital and maintain migrant-specific cultural capital, thus offering a space which may help mitigate social exclusion. However, within the literature, what this space looks like has rarely been explored.

2.4.3.1 Cultural capital and sport: Cultural capital is also an interesting lens through which to study sport and recreation; these activities can offer a space to increase different forms of capital, while capital can also be denied (Spaaij, 2011). Bourdieu described society as being split into different fields of practice such as art, school, sport, education and each field as having its own set of rules, norms, and rules. He suggested that agents mobilize their capital to become powerful within that field. From a Bourdieusian approach, various scholars have examined how sport, a field that is heavily stratified by gender, class, and race, can itself become a form of cultural capital (Eitle & Eitle, 2002; Spaaij, 2011; Mackin & Walter, 2011). First, the competitive structure of sport allows for the display of status through ranking participants.
Second, the dominating group often participates in sport and recreation as a means of asserting status and power, as represented by increased participation in “ascetic bodily practices” (shaping and improving the body), and “civilized” sports that require a high level of economic capital and status, such as golf and polo (Stempel, 2005, p. 411). In comparison, the consenting group often participates in sports such as boxing and soccer as a means of displaying physical strength and violence.

An immigrant’s habitus can also constrain their leisure activities, thus impacting their ability to develop social and cultural capital through sport. If immigrants participate in mainstream sporting activities, they are often expected to develop new forms of cultural capital such as language, norms, and values that are recognised in the destination country, but during this process they can experience discrimination (Long, Hylton & Spacklen, 2014). Social class also impacts leisure and can result in low participation levels. Racialized immigrants often lack economic capital due to credential recognition and overrepresentation in the secondary labour market, which also limits resources and time (Kofman, Lukes, D’Angelo & Montagna, 2009). Due to a lack of cultural and social capital that is valued in Canada, participants may experience exclusion in mainstream sport and instead engage in sport with people of the same ethnicity, with whom they are more likely to share cultural capital (Long, Hylton & Spacklen, 2014).

Long, Hylton and Spacklen (2014) conducted one of the first studies that integrated cultural and social capital frameworks with tenants of CRT to explore immigrant leisure. They investigated how the formation of capital can be constrained through processes of racialization in relation to Whiteness and the role that sport and leisure spaces may play in this process. They conducted research in the UK and drew comparisons between two large migrant groups in London: Polish and sub-Saharan African. They found that the Polish migrants felt more
comfortable in public leisure spaces as their Whiteness afforded them the invisibility that the African migrants did not possess. The Whiteness of the polish immigrants enabled easier integration into the dominant culture and they utilized their leisure time to facilitate this process. Meanwhile, the scholars also found that Black immigrants recorded more experiences of racism in leisure spaces, which constrained participation.

2.4.4. Social inclusion
Social inclusion frameworks are applicable in both settlement and sport studies; however, they have been most commonly utilized within sport studies. Social inclusion is a complex and multifaceted framework that has been heavily misunderstood by policy makers and social service practitioners (Laidlaw Foundation, 2002). Scholars posit that social inclusion has been defined as the absence of social exclusion and/or inclusion into the dominant society, while neglecting other spaces of belonging outside of the mainstream community (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002; Omivdar & Richmond, 2005). With this in mind, as a component of the strong multiculturalism rhetoric in Canada, social inclusion of all persons is often assumed, this belief is despite the sustained levels of social exclusion among groups such as visible minorities, indigenous, and LGBTQ providing contradictory evidence to suggest otherwise. Furthermore, the declining socioeconomic outcomes of visible minority immigrants in Canada present the demand for the integration of social inclusion frameworks within settlement policy (Omivdar & Richmond, 2005).

As part of their initiative on building inclusive cities and communities, the Laidlaw foundation (2002) proposed five cornerstones of social inclusion including: valued recognition, human development, proximity, material wellbeing, and involvement and engagement. At the heart of the Laidlaw foundation’s social inclusion framework is the ideology that 1) everybody is
able to participate as respected members of society and 2) there is investment to proactively facilitate inclusion through closing social, physical, and economic distances between people.

Omidvar and Richmond (2005) wrote a report for the Laidlaw foundation on immigrant social inclusion and exclusion. The scholars assert that high levels of immigrant social exclusion can be contributed to 1) the government’s singular focus on short-term settlement needs, which often comes at the expense of supporting immigrants in their long-term integration process and, 2) the current settlement system not actively mitigating social exclusion within institutions. The scholars found that settlement policy is more deeply rooted within traditional assimilationist frameworks for social exclusion which are based on the premise that immigrant youth prefer to be included rather than excluded.

Outside of migration studies, numerous sports sociology scholars have utilized a social inclusion framework when investigating the impact of recreational programs (Amara, Aquilina & Henry, 2004; Donnelly & Coakley, 2002; Long, Hylton, Lewis, Ratna & Spracklen, 2011; Ponic & Frisby, 2010; Forde et al, 2015). Under the right conditions, physical recreation may be a site for the social inclusion of youth (Amara, Aquilina & Henry, 2004; Donnelly & Coakley, 2002). For newly arrived immigrants, leisure is often perceived as a potential site for integration into the mainstream culture through providing the space for intercultural contact (Amara, Aquilina, Henry, 2004); however, this idea can be problematic as inclusion does not have to occur within the mainstream society, the space can be exclusive, yet still inclusive to some groups (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002). Alongside the more generic social inclusion frameworks, there are also several social inclusion frameworks that are specific to sport and recreation. Ponic and Frisby (2010) in Forde et al (2015, p. 2) define social inclusion as:
An ongoing relational process whereby people and organizations are active and collaborative agents in the co-creation of spaces and structures that enable community members to make decisions about how and when to participate in society, including in physical activity and sport.

Similar to the Laidlaw Foundation (2005), the scholars above also define social inclusion as a long-term process whereby the skills and talents of people are recognised and nurtured, and they are given the opportunity to realize their full potential and participate in all aspects of society (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002; Ponic & Frisby, 2010). Social inclusion intertwines with the discussions surrounding structure and agency. The greater the inclusivity of social structures, the more easily people able to utilize their agency to participate in all aspects of society, however, people are also able to use their agency to transform social structures to increase inclusivity.

As displayed in this section, social inclusion frameworks have become more prevalent within sports sociology, but have not yet readily been applied within youth migration and settlement studies. Amongst settlement and recreation practioners, narrow and assimilationist definitions of social inclusion are endorsed. This research study aimed to explore how social inclusion and assimilation intersect within the lives of immigrant youth and the role of recreational programs within these processes.

2.4.5 Youth agency: Understanding the affiliation between structure and agency has been a pervasive topic of discussion in a social sciences, especially when investigating reasons and outcomes of migration. Structure can be understood as the foundational building blocks in society that organise and influence social relations (Scott & Marshall 2009). In comparison, agency can be described as the ‘free will’ which is exerted by individuals. Bakewell (2010, p. 1694) describes agency as the “capacity for social actors to reflect on their position, devise strategies and take action to achieve their desires.” Giddens’ (1976) structuration theory
highlights the duality between structure and agency, stressing that they are not separate entities, rather, they influence each other; agency can only be exerted within the parameters of social structures and social agents have the ability to challenge and transform social structures. Due to their psycho-social developmental stage, youth are often characterized as lacking agency within their own lives and society in general; their experiences believed to be shaped by the social structures they find themselves in and their families. In comparison to adults, the roles of youth are often marginalized in society and this may be attributed to their limited labour market position and perceived immaturity. When describing youth in society, Wyness (2000. p. 1) said their roles are typically “restricted to subordinate and protected social roles.” Indeed, immigrant youth are often left out of migration decision-making processes and research tends to focus on forced child migrants and refugees, thus neglecting the stories of other diverse groups of migrating youth. Youth are often portrayed as lacking agency within their own settlement process and as a homogenous group they are viewed as vulnerable, passive, dependents who lack agency (Hashim, 2006). This discourse is reproduced not only in the media but also by settlement services. For example, in the Family Service Association’s (2000) report on immigrant youth settlement, they state:

We are fully aware that our work with these youth is unfortunately a difficult one, being full of pain, confusion, feelings of depression, anxiety, isolation, marginalization, racism, discrimination, impaired socio-economic adjustment, minority-status related stress. (p. 6)

Indeed, immigrant youth face numerous structural challenges during their settlement, but they also exert some degrees of control “to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion.” (Long 2001, p. 16). Several scholars have called for greater discussion surrounding how youth both exert agency within their migration process, for example, exploring how youth actively seek migration opportunities; and
within their settlement process, including how youth reflect on their settlement experiences respond to settlement challenges, and actively make decisions to further their life chances (Hashim, 2006; Punch, 2002). Punch (2002) coined the term negotiated interdependence in a bid to describe how young people exert agency to navigate social structure and family expectations while balancing their own desires, she asserts that the term:

reflects how young people in the majority world are constrained by various structures and cultural expectations of family responsibilities yet also have the ability to act within and between such constraints, balancing household and individual needs. (p. 132)

This research project did not seek to downplay the settlement challenges that immigrant youth experience in Canada, because they are plentiful, arduous, and deeply engrained in systemic discrimination. However, through this project, I also sought to investigate how these youth participants exerted different levels of agency within their own settlement processes.

In the section above, I aimed to provide a thorough overview of the field. I summarized a wide array of theoretical frameworks including frameworks that had been readily applied to interpret the recreational and sporting experiences of immigrants, such as classical assimilation, acculturation, and social capital. I then went on to describe and apply a variety of theoretical frameworks that have been less commonly applied to the field, such as modern assimilation theories, critical race, cultural capital, and social inclusion. As discussed below, within this research study, cultural and social capital frameworks were most useful in helping to interpret and understand the experiences and aims of the numerous stakeholders involved in the recreational programs at CoalitionTO*. Modern assimilation theories, social inclusion, critical race frameworks, and structure/agency were utilized when investigating the settlement experiences of youth, in particular their interactions within social structures and the negotiation between structure and agency in their assimilation process.
One of the biggest findings in this literature review was the current lack of transdisciplinary research when exploring the leisure/sporting experiences of immigrant youth. Many of the frameworks which were utilized within sports sociology/leisure studies were somewhat outdated in comparison to migration studies and failed to pay attention to the broader socio/political/economic climate in which sport operates e.g. there was limited discussion regarding the tensions of political integration and multiculturalism and the role of social structures/ immigrant agency in shaping leisure experiences. Later in the discussion section, I will discuss the usefulness of the various theoretical frameworks, unpack some of these political tensions, and provide policy recommendations for settlement and recreational practitioners.

2.5 Literature Review

The literature review is divided in three key sections: immigrant youth settlement, sport for development, and sport/immigrant integration. In each section I aim to summarize and analyse key literature and showcase gaps that this research project aimed to fill.

2.5.1 Immigrant youth settlement & inclusion: There are large contradictions surrounding the realities and expectations for immigrant social inclusion in Canada (Omidvar & Richmond, 2005). Despite the prevalence of official government policies intended to promote inclusion, e.g. multiculturalism and employment equity legislation, social science research shows that when immigrant youth arrive in a destination country, they can experience high social exclusion within the destination country. Various forms of social exclusion can include economic, social, and cultural, which may be exacerbated by unemployment, discrimination, language proficiency, mental health, existing cultural capital, and poverty (FSA, 2000; Ngo, 2009). These factors may, in turn, negatively affect settlement and long-term integration to the destination country and can also increase the probability of immigrant youth dropping out of
school, turning to crime, or experiencing substance abuse (Ngo & Schleifer, 2005). With that in mind, throughout this section it is important to note, that 1) the settlement trajectories of immigrant youth vary greatly depending on immigrant characteristics and 2) immigrant youth utilize their agency to shape the settlement process. The settlement challenges that immigrant youth face are well documented within the literature; however, settlement is not simply something that happens to them. This section will briefly summarize the literature regarding the economic, educational, and social integration of immigrant youth.

2.5.1.1 Economic: Immigrant youth often struggle to integrate economically and this can impact many other aspects of their social and cultural integration. Shields, Kelly, Park, Prier and Fang (2011) conducted a major study investigating rates of poverty among immigrants in Canada and found that within the major cities in Canada, immigrants are most likely to live in the lowest income neighbourhoods. The scholars analysed census data in Toronto and found that 45.5% of recent immigrants live in poverty; this is in comparison to 13.3% of the mainstream population. They also found that child poverty was most prominent within immigrant communities; children of immigrants were three times more likely to live in poverty than the White, Canadian born population.

Immigrants also experience numerous challenges within the labour market. Despite newer cohorts of immigrants entering Canada with significantly higher human capital than the White, Europeans immigrants of the 1960s, immigrants earn significantly less than the native-born population (Liu & Kerr, 2003). This significant disadvantage within the labour market can be attributed to discrimination and devaluation of credentials (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Block & Galabuzi, 2011; Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). Immigrant youth often struggle to enter the labour market, have the highest unemployment rates in Canada for their age group (Statistics Canada,
are more likely to work in the precarious secondary market (Block & Galabuzi, 2011) and to earn 35% less than the native-born population (Statistics Canada, 2016). In a bid to support families, many immigrant youth balance full-time work with high school or college (Magro, 2009). In summary, many immigrant youth, upon arrival in Canada, experience economic challenges and these are well documented within the literature. The abundance of literature exploring the economic outcomes of immigrants is not surprising given that economics features prominently in migration flows, reasons for migration, and immigration and settlement policies in destination and source countries.

2.5.1.2 Education: There is a plethora of research investigating immigrant youth and education. Education plays a large role within the lives of immigrant youth; they spend the majority of their time in school, it is an important site of socialization, and is viewed as the key to social mobility as immigrants develop institutional cultural capital that is valued in Canada (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003). Education was often perceived by both youth and parents as the key to social mobility, as a result many youth spent their leisure time engaging in academic activities (FSA, 2000). This section explores the educational challenges that immigrant youth experience and the diverse educational attainment of second-generation immigrants.

Immigrant youth experience numerous challenges in navigating the Canadian school system. First, ESL students are often segregated within schools, which can lead to bullying and discrimination from other students and limit the social networks of youth (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; FSA, 2000) Other challenge include: inaccurate placement tests, unqualified and unmotivated teachers, a lack of ethnic diversity within ESL programs (overrepresentation of Filipinos, Latinos, and Chinese students), limited funding and resources, and a lack of recognition of existing qualifications from the immigrant’s source country (Anisef & Kilbride,
2003; FSA, 2000; Rossiter, Hatami, Ripley & Rossiter, 2015). In addition, public schools have been critiqued for being sites of assimilation due to the lack of ethnocultural schools and recognition of languages other than English and French, which marginalizes ESL speakers (Gourd, 2007). Further, curriculum that promises diversity and multiculturalism can, in practice, reproduce White, settler culture (Thompson, 2006).

Despite all of this, immigrant youth in Canada typically experience high educational outcomes in comparison to the White/native-born population (Rossiter et al, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2015). Second-generation youth tend to attain higher educational credentials than youth with Canadian born parents (Reitz, Zhang & Hawkins, 2011). However, despite immigrant youth achieving high educational outcomes, their high human capital is often not reflected in their income (Abada, Hou & Ram, 2008) and educational outcomes are divergent depending on the ethnicity of the immigrant. Chinese and Korean immigrants tend to achieve the highest educational credentials and outperform the White/native-born population (Abada, Hou & Ram, 2008), whereas, Black, Vietnamese, and Filipino youth often underperform in comparison to the native-born population and are more likely to drop out of school and experience downward mobility (Abada, Hou & Ram, 2008; Kelly, 2014). James (2017) conducted a large study investigating the educational attainment of Black high school students across the Greater Toronto Area and found that second-generation Black youth experienced high levels of systemic discrimination which led to significantly higher suspension rates, lower academic attainment, and fewer academic opportunities. These findings demonstrate that, on average, immigrant youth experience high academic achievement; however, high school experiences and academic attainment is heavily influenced by race, ethnicity, and class.
2.5.1.3 Social inclusion: When immigrants arrive in the destination country, often their social capital is devalued and they have to start from scratch, as such many immigrant youth experience feelings of social exclusion. The literature suggests that immigrant youth may experience difficulties within their social life including loneliness, limited access to peer mentors and positive role models, and difficulties in forming cross-cultural friendships (Oxman-Martinez & Choi, 2014). Many immigrant youth only have co-ethnic or other immigrant friends (FSA, 2000) and can experience high rates of social isolation which can be perpetuated by poverty, low language proficiency, mental health challenges pre- or post-migration, intergenerational conflict, educational barriers, and perceived or actual discrimination (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Rossiter et al., 2015). Indeed, the mainstream community is often a space of exclusion for many immigrant youth; high levels of discrimination have been reported. Over 35.9% of visible minorities in Canada have reported that they have experienced discrimination (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). Berry et al (2006) found that experiences of discrimination hindered the integration process of youth.

2.5.1.4 Cultural: The literature also shows that immigrant youth experience challenges in adapting to the dominant culture. Socialization processes take place through school and intergenerational conflict may arise if youth adapt to the culture more quickly than their parents (Ngo & Schleifer, 2005). Some scholars suggest that young immigrant adapt to the new culture more quickly than adults (Hiebert, 1998; Portes and Rumbaut’s (2001); however, many scholars have suggested that this is a stereotype and immigrant youth often experience difficulties when navigating a new school, and learning the values of the dominant culture (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Seat, 1997). Reitz and Banerjee (2007) found that second-generation youth often experience lower levels of belonging in comparison to their parents and White youth. Similarly,
the FSA (2000) reported that youth experienced feelings of non-belonging and alienation from the Canadian culture.

The high levels of social exclusion experienced by immigrant youth — economic, educational, social, and cultural — are heavily cited in the literature and are comprehensive. However, despite the prevalence of these systematic challenges, the literature often neglects the fact that youth exhibit agency and resilience in shaping their experiences and overcoming these challenges (Rossiter et al., 2015).

2.5.2 Sport for development: This next section will provide a brief overview of the literature and critiques on sport for development, whereby sport is used to facilitate wider social change (Coalter, 2007). This literature is relevant to the project because settlement service agencies are funding sport and recreation programs for youth as a means of achieving the broader goal of facilitating integration to the destination country.

Due to the mythopoeic value of sport, it is often and popularly viewed within dominant culture as a universal and integrative social practice and as a tool to achieve social objectives such as empowering young people, neighbourhood renewal, community cohesion, and social integration (Spaaij, Magee & Jeanes, 2014). Sport for development programs are often categorized by their intended outcome(s), and commonly focus on social issues, health and education, economic development, or peace and conflict resolution (United Nations, 2003). Thus, sport programming has been heavily featured on the government agendas of Western countries (Coalter, 2007). Darnell (2007) critiques the perceived universality of sport and the high profile organizations such as the IOC and the UN who have dubbed sport a universal language. Within the global North, many of these sports-based interventions are targeted at high-
risk youth with the intention to reduce gang violence and youth unemployment (Hartmann, 2016). Programs are often funded by governments due to the ideological pull of sport as a source for good, and the low-cost nature of these interventions compared to the cost of fixing real social problems such as exclusion, poverty, lack of education, and crime. Taken to its logical conclusion, “the potentially positive benefits of sport are regarded as almost inevitable outcomes of participation” (Coalter, 2007 p. 22) and this has led to a wide variety of stakeholders, such as governments, NGOs, and the private sectors, delivering sport for development programming (Giulianotti, 2004). This overrepresentation of sports programming within youth social services is problematic as sport is often used as a Band-Aid solution, thus ignoring the wider socio-political contexts within which these organizations have to operate (Coalter, 2010). Further, from the perspective of sport sociology, under the right conditions, physical recreation may be a site for the social inclusion of youth (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002), however, sport is also a prominent site of social exclusion and can reinforce dominant structures (Jarvie, 2006). For example, Donnelly and Coakley (2002) and Coalter (2007) argue that sports-based interventions targeted at high-risk youth are often developed with the goal of gaining social control and this paternalistic top-down programming can lead to further alienation of vulnerable urban youth.

These findings were important in framing this research project, especially regarding the intended outcomes of the recreational programs. As discussed in the political landscape section of this chapter, settlement agencies are non-profits that are funded predominantly by different levels of government to support newly arrived immigrants. Settlement service agencies are often under resourced and priorities are focused towards immediate settlement needs such as housing, education, and employment (Richmond & Shields, 2004). Yet, even though sport and recreation is not an immediate need, it has been found to be overrepresented within youth programming
(Ngo, 2009). The literature reviewed here may help to explain why sport, an institution characterized by Whiteness, heteronormativity, and masculinity and an unproven tool for social change (Coalter, 2007) is being used to facilitate broader social outcomes. In turn, to date only a handful of studies have discussed the delivery of recreational and sport-based programming through the settlement agency (Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfrey, 2014; Ngo, 2009; Olliff, 2008) or have critically assessed the role of sport within the settlement process of immigrants.

2.5.3 Leisure, race, and ethnicity: As discussed in the theoretical frameworks section, there has been an accumulation of research on race, ethnicity immigration, and sport participation since the 1960s. The majority of this scholarship is derived from leisure studies, not sports sociology. In 2008, Floyd, Borarro and Thompson conducted one of the first large literature reviews on race and ethnicity in leisure. The scholars found that in 2005, 4.5% journals published in popular leisure studies journals explicitly investigated race and ethnicity and concluded that research in this field has rarely moved beyond describing differences and variations in leisure participation. In 2018, leading immigration and leisure scholar, Monika Stodolksa, edited a special edition journal on race, ethnicity, immigration, and leisure and writing ten years after Floyd, Borarro and Thompson (2008), drew similar conclusions regarding the evolution of the field over the past forty years. Stodolksa (2018) critiqued the limited scope of the field, in particular the exclusive focus on barriers and how this contributes to the limited framing of immigrant sport participation. As a basic requirement for facilitating social inclusion, it is imperative for sports organizers to be aware of the structural, inter-personal and intra-personal barriers and to actively try to mitigate the effects through programming. However, there is a need to move beyond the deficit-model and explore how immigrants can utilize their agency to shape their sporting experiences. Similar to Floyd, Boracco and Thompson (2008), some of
Stodolksa’s other concerns regarding the field include the overrepresentation of acculturation and classical assimilation theory, the lack of holistic research that integrates broader social justice issues such as institutional racism (Allison, 2000), and the overreliance on quantitative methods such as surveys.

In the midst of the current political climate, where far-right policies and anti-immigrant sentiments are gaining traction, the role that certain activities may play in facilitating integration and social cohesion is both a timely topic and a key area that governments are directing their resources towards. Many policy makers and sports organizers suggest that sport can assist in integration and/or settlement processes for immigrants (Allen, Drane, Byon & Mohn, 2010; Amara, Aquilina & Henry, 2004; Bergin, 2002; Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Hancock, Cooper & Bahn, 2009; Olliff, 2008; Taylor, 2001); however, due to the mythopoetic value that is commonly assigned to sport (Coalter, 2007), the value of sport within the settlement process is seldom questioned (Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfrey, 2014). The next section will summarize the literature investigating the role of sport within the settlement process of immigrant and identify gaps and critiques.

2.5.3.1 Sport and immigrant settlement: The literature provides contradictory findings regarding the effectiveness of sport within the settlement process of immigrant youth. This section summarizes studies utilizing qualitative methodologies to investigate the impact of sport within immigrant settlement. Olliff (2008) investigated the role of sport and recreation in facilitating the settlement of refugee youth in Australia and found that sports programs helped to (1) build trust with young people and to encourage youth to seek help in other areas of their settlement (2) facilitate settlement in Melbourne (3) act as a bridge for mainstream sports participation at a later date (4) mitigate the effects of trauma (5) build capacity (6) help avoid
risk taking behaviour (7) promote wellness and (8) build links with youth from other cultures. Similarly, Doherty and Taylor (2007) examined the role of sport in the settlement process of immigrant school children. They found that sport plays a meaningful role in youth settlement through the development of cultural capital, such as improving English language proficiency, and providing the opportunity to learn about mainstream culture (sporting rules, dress, etiquette etc.). They also found that sport allowed youth to put aside the stresses of everyday life and promote family relations. Hage (1998) and Long, Hylton and Spacklen (2011) found similar findings and argued that leisure can provide a space to develop knowledge of language skills and cultural practices which may facilitate the process of fitting in.

Some studies also found that immigrants actively decided to participate in sport due to the belief that it would aid in their integration process (Long, Hylton & Spacken, 2014; Stodolska 1998, 2007; Taylor, 2001). Taylor (2001) examined the leisure experiences of culturally diverse women in Australia and found that their attitudes towards leisure and their behaviour was derived from the belief that immigrants should adopt the cultural values and language of the destination country. Taylor (2001) found that the participants desired to take part in netball because they believed it to be an expected part of the Australian culture and they wanted to adhere to the Australian norms. Similarly, in Stodolska’s (1998) study investigating Polish and Korean immigrants in the United States, the middle-class participants used sport as a means to acculturate to the White American middle-class life, as they believed sport was popular in the USA, associated with a higher social status, and they desired “to live normal lives” (1998, p. 397). In addition, the participants believed that participation in sport provided a platform to develop their knowledge regarding the ways of life in the USA and to interact with the dominant culture.
That said, there are numerous critiques of the value of sport in the settlement process for immigrants, which serves as a reminder that sport is not as popular or effective as some policies would suggest (Amara, Aquilina & Henry, 2004; Spaaij, 2011). Sport is a form of leisure; a space where activities are meaningful and are not necessarily participated in for the sake of an ulterior motive. Vermeulen and Verweel (2009) are cautious about using people's leisure time as a means to address inclusion and integration in society as they believe it can be counterproductive and lead to further exclusion. Indeed, Doherty and Taylor (2007) collected mixed findings regarding the value of sport and recreation within immigrant youth settlement. They found sport may enhance feelings of social exclusion due to a lack of cultural capital - language difficulties, unfamiliarity with the rules of mainstream sports, and discrimination from peers. Due to low levels of economic, social, and cultural capital, sport and recreation is often not viewed as an immediate settlement need; therefore, its value in the initial settlement process may be limited (Long, Hylton & Spacklen, 2014). Despite this, many governments continue to see value in utilizing sport as a tool to promote the settlement of newly arrived immigrants (Amara, Aquilina & Henry, 2004; Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Jeanes, O'Connor & Alfrey, 2014; Walseth 2008).

The literature above provides evidence that sport has commonly been used as a tool for immigrant settlement. Many of the studies above sampled their participants from community sports clubs. As a result, one of the biggest gaps within the literature is the lack of research investigating recreational programs delivered through settlement service agencies. Many settlement agencies across Canada now offer recreational-based programming for immigrant and refugee youth (Ngo, 2009). OCASI (2005) suggested that to meet the unique recreational needs of immigrants there has been an increase in initiatives through immigrant settlement agencies.
and these settings can a prominent site of social inclusion. However, only a handful of studies discuss the delivery of sport through the settlement service agency and many of these programs were aimed at refugees (Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfrey, 2014; Ngo, 2009; Olliff, 2008). Other studies interviewed settlement providers as part of a bigger project investigating sport and refugee resettlement and interviewed sports organizers (Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfrey, 2014, Olliff, 2008). In addition, only a handful of the studies above specifically investigated the experiences of immigrant youth; from these studies, the majority investigated the experiences of refugee youth (Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfrey, 2014; Olliff, 2008). Immigrants/refugees are not a homogenous group and experiences vary greatly depending on a variety of factors such as immigrant status and age.

2.5.3.2. Sport and immigrant integration policy: Another key finding from the literature is that among policy makers and sports organizers, sport is utilized as a tool to facilitate integration, but the kind of integration that is supported tends to be closely aligned with assimilation. Taylor and Toohey (1998) were amongst the first scholars to investigate the link between immigrant sports participation, policy, and integration. They suggest that leisure can also be used as a space to reproduce dominant cultural ideologies and power relations, as such sport policy often reflects broader discourses in which constructions of integration can be closely aligned to those of assimilation. They suggest that policies may appear inclusive on the surface but organized sport and its participants are still expected to ‘fit’ into existing sporting practices that conform to dominant hegemonic, ablest, Anglo-Saxon structures (Forde et al. 2015; Taylor & Toohey, 1998). Ponic and Frisby (2010) argue that programming must also attend to the diverse needs of the community as immigrants’ cultural needs may not be addressed through existing mainstream structures.
However, Taylor and Toohey (1998) found that sports organizers seldom questioned the existing structures that were in place, despite being aware of the numerous barriers that visible minorities faced in accessing sport. In addition, they argued that sporting institutions and structures in Australia promote assimilation, thus reflecting the discursive shift away from multiculturalism. Indeed, this study was conducted almost twenty years ago; since this time there has been a greater push away from the multiculturalism rhetoric. Jeanes, O’Connor and Alfrey (2014) conducted a more recent study investigating the role of sports programs in the resettlement process of refugee youth and found that conceptualizations of integration were closely linked to assimilation. The scholars interviewed staff who worked in sport development or resettlement. Findings showed that participants were sceptical of mainstream sports clubs accommodating refugee youth, and were highly critical of ethno-specific or refugee sports clubs due to the belief that they do not facilitate settlement/integration into broader society. Participants also noted the distinct lack of funding from municipal governments to ethno cultural sports clubs. Many national sport bodies and organizers are reluctant to promote or fund ethno-specific sports clubs due to beliefs this will interfere with the integrative nature of sport and lead to further segregation (Hughson, 1997). The participants in Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfrey’s (2014) study asserted that integration must occur in a particular fashion and they were unwilling to accept an alternative model of sports participation outside of mainstream structures. The sports organizers in the study were reluctant to challenge dominant institutions and also held narrow conceptualizations of what constitutes effective integration. These conceptualizations influenced the aims and outcomes of sport-based programing and, also, reflected broader policy discussions and debates. For example, the government of Canada’s multiculturalism guidelines no longer support exclusively ethno-cultural organizations in a bid for public agencies to remain culturally
neutral in the delivery of social services (Biles, 2008). Donnelly and Nakamura (2006) investigated multiculturalism within sport policy in Canada and found that barring general statements of inclusivity, there were no specific multiculturalism policies in place. These findings had significant implications for this research project because I was keen to explore how the numerous stakeholders at CoalitionTO*, including government funders, settlement staff, and immigrant youth participants, conceptualized integration and assimilation and the perceived role of recreation within this process. These findings are discussed in Chapter five.

Overall, the literature investigating the role of sport in facilitating immigrant settlement and integration is divided. Many scholars believe that sport has the ability to support integration, but there is a) a lack of evidence regarding the efficacy of such processes, and b) it is reasonable to suggest that sports-based interventions will only be effective if other structural barriers are attended to and/or mitigated. In addition, many of these studies argue that sport is being used a tool by policy makers and sports organizers to promote assimilation to the destination country and their constructions of integration are narrow; this is a key tension that I explored throughout this research project.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter was split into three sections — political context, theoretical frameworks, and literature. As part of my commitment to the facilitation of trans-disciplinary scholarship, I aimed to provide a detailed overview of the field to ensure that literature, policy and theoretical frameworks were being utilized from various disciplines such as migration studies, sociology, sports sociology, and leisure studies. First, the political context section provided an overview and an analysis of multiculturalism and settlement policy in Canada and argued that despite narratives of integration, there were many flaws within settlement policy and the assimilation
process was dominant as immigrants were expected to conform to dominant institutions. The theoretical frameworks section began by describing frameworks that had commonly been applied to immigrant integration and sport, and then outlined prominent frameworks such as cultural capital, newer assimilation theories, CRT, and social inclusion which have not yet readily been applied. One of my key research questions was to assess the usefulness of these less applied theories in explaining the settlement and leisure experiences of the immigrant youth participants at CoalitionTO*. Finally, the literature review explored immigrant youth settlement, sport for development, and the role of sport in immigrant integration.
Chapter Three: Methods

3.0 Introduction
In conducting this study, I utilized participant observations and semi-structured interviews, two popular ethnographic methods, to conduct fieldwork with immigrant youth at a large settlement service agency in Toronto. To protect the identity of the organization and the participants, I created the pseudonym, CoalitionTO*, when referring to the settlement agency, and allocated participant’s individual pseudonyms.

Chapter three is divided into two main sections; methodology and methods. The methodology section explores my rationale for utilizing community-based approaches. The methods section is divided into two parts. Part one describes how I gained access to the research site and my involvement in the organization prior to conducting fieldwork. Part two is further divided into five sections and describes A) an overview of procedures, B) the process of conducting participant observation, C) the process of conducting semi-structured interviews, D) my reflexivity, and E) the data analysis process.

3.1 Methodology
At the core of my methodology was the desire to conduct community-based research shaped through a mutually beneficial relationship between myself and CoalitionTO*. I was privileged to be able to gain access to this space and to be able to work in such close contact with the young participants and youth workers. Participant observation allowed me the opportunity to utilize my skills as a community sports organizer and researcher by taking on a variety of volunteering roles. I spent nearly two years volunteering at CoalitionTO*. During this time, I delivered a variety of needs-based programming for youth and assisted youth workers in planning/setting up/taking down. As part of my research proposal, I also offered to conduct
program evaluations at the agency. In the end, I collaborated with youth workers to develop and complete two evaluations. As part of this process, I designed surveys for participants and facilitated focus groups. Through conducting these evaluations and volunteering, I was able to utilize my research and facilitation skills to give something back to the organization in return for allowing me to access this research space.

Additionally, it was a priority for me to disseminate my research findings and to share them with the settlement service agency in an accessible format. Settlement staff often do not have the resources or experience to conduct thorough evaluations; therefore, often the voices of youth remain unheard and programs may not meet the needs of young people. It was never my intention to speak on behalf of youth but rather to create the space for their voices to be heard. Therefore, I took steps such as meeting with youth and youth workers, sharing my findings, and writing reports. Further details about this are provided in the discussion.

3.2. Methods: Part 1

I made the choice to employ both participant observation and interviews because “the data from each can be used to illuminate the other” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). This combination also meant that I was able to ask follow-up questions regarding my findings collected during fieldwork. With that in mind, this methods section is divided into two sections. Part one outlines how I gained access to the research site and my involvement at the agency prior to conducting fieldwork. Part two provides a rationale for the methods that I used and describes how I conducted my fieldwork.

3.2.1 Accessing the research site: This section describes in chronological order how I gained access to the research site. I describe my reasons for wanting to undertake this project, my
experiences of volunteering at CoalitionTO* prior to conducting fieldwork, and the development of my thesis proposal in relation to this context.

Prior to beginning my MSc at the University of Toronto, I knew that I wanted to study the sporting experiences of immigrant youth. I had taken several migration studies courses during my undergraduate degree and had worked as a research assistant conducting a systematic literature review investigating the sporting experiences of migrants. When I first started studying for my Masters in September of 2016, I spent the majority of my time immersed in literature and theory. This was a large adjustment from my more applied undergraduate program and I felt disconnected from my initial reason for applying to the program, which was to work with youth in a community setting. I missed both the challenges and gratification that came from working with young people. In a bid to gain experience working with immigrant youth and to spend time outside the classroom immersed within the community, I contacted several large, multi-ethnic settlement service agencies in Toronto and enquired as to whether they had any volunteer opportunities. I only contacted multi-ethnic settlement service agencies because I desired to work with youth from diverse backgrounds, and I acknowledged that I lacked the cultural capital required to work within a singular ethno-cultural settlement agency. Additionally, multi-ethnic agencies receive a greater proportion of their funding from the federal government; which influences the aims and types of programming. The first settlement agency to return my email was CoalitionTO*. I took part in an interview and was then offered a position volunteering with the YouthClub*, an after-school recreation program for racialized second-generation youth.

CoalitionTO* is a large, multi-ethnic settlement agency that is based in Toronto. The youth division offers 12 different programs for young people aged 6 to 24 years old. The programs are aimed at different participant groups; some are specific to first-generation,
immigrant youth who are permanent residents or convention refugees, other programs are open to all youth, regardless of immigrant status. The majority of the programs are aimed at participants older than 14 years and are offered on a drop-in style basis. Recreational programs are diverse and can include activities such as gardening, sport, games, art, fieldtrips, and outdoor activities. Many of these recreational activities are also combined with skills-based training. CoalitionTO* also offer two programs that are not recreational in focus and these aim to increase high school attainment and develop employability skills.

Every week for eight months, I volunteered with YouthClub* and approximately six to ten girls consistently attended the program. I would help plan sessions, conduct set up/take down, and facilitate activities. Each week a different recreational activity was delivered; activities included art, scavenger hunts, workshops, and yoga, among others. Volunteering prior to conducting fieldwork allowed me the opportunity to develop rapport with youth in a more informal setting, over a length of time. From my initial experiences of volunteering with the youth, I was aware that developing rapport is a complex and dynamic process which often occurs slowly (Spaaij, 2013).

Three months into volunteering at the agency, my role began to transition into researcher for the first time. I participated in a research methods course as part of my degree program requirements and decided to undertake a project investigating social inclusion within immigrant recreation programs delivered through the settlement sector. I spent one month conducting participation observation at the girls’ recreation program and also conducted four interviews with youth workers who deliver similar recreational programs at settlement services agencies across Toronto. The greatest limitation of this project was the absence of local voices. I desired to undertake interviews with youth to find out more about their lived experiences. However,
because of the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education’s restricted ethics approval for research-based courses, I was limited to interviewing youth workers. Yet, youth workers cannot accurately talk on behalf of youth who utilize their agency to actively shape their own experiences. Brydon-Miller and Coghlan, (2004) argue that incorporating marginalized voices into research may help interrogate, redefine, and transform power relationships with marginalized populations. These experiences influenced participant selection for this thesis project and led me to conduct more interviews with youth than youth workers.

3.2.2 Proposal: Prior to writing my proposal, I asked the youth workers about the possibility of conducting my research at one of the youth recreation programs. I explained in depth my tentative research questions, the methods that I would use, and their expected roles in this research. The staff agreed to support this project and later provided a letter of support, which I submitted alongside my ethics application. Due to having been a volunteer at the settlement agency, the participatory methods that I had suggested in my proposal did not differ substantially from the actual methods used. The major difference was that I proposed to recruit interview participants from different settlement services agencies across Toronto, but ended up conducting my research only at CoalitionTO*. Having multiple research sites would have allowed me to compare the experiences of youth who participate in recreational programs at different settlement services in Toronto. However, despite decreasing the generalizability of the study, only having one research site was beneficial as it allowed me to focus my time solely on CoalitionTO* and develop strong levels of rapport and trust with staff and participants. Depth was prioritized over breadth.

Overall, accessing the research site was a fairly smooth process. This can be attributed to the length of time that I had spent volunteering at CoalitionTO* prior to conducting fieldwork
and also the support of the youth workers and youth participants who were open–minded and eager to get involved in this project.

3.3 Methods Part 2: Fieldwork

3.3.1 Overview of procedures: This section is split into five distinct segments. (1) Ethics: an overview of the ethics review process, including the risk assessment (2) Participant observation: rationale, recruitment and consent procedures, and fieldwork processes (3) Interviews: rationale, recruitment and consent processes, and the interview process, including details of the interview guide and rapport. (4) Reflexivity: insight regarding my reflexivity throughout the research process (5) Data analysis: details of the thematic analysis process that I undertook.

3.3.1.1 Ethics: I received full-board ethics approval from the University of Toronto in August 2017 and began data collection in September 2017. This study was identified as medium risk by the Research Ethics Board because of the age of the perceived vulnerability of the participant demographic; I was working with many young immigrants under the age of 18 years old who had limited English language proficiency (see Appendix A, Research Ethics Approval Form). The research risk was also increased due to the potentially sensitive nature of the migration/settlement topics. To address these issues, I utilized my prior knowledge of the participant’s migration experiences and adapted my questions accordingly to individual participants; I discuss this process in more detail during the interview section. If necessary, to provide further support and referrals to youth who expressed difficulties during the interviews, I familiarized myself with local resources available to immigrant youth, including counselling, immigrant advocacy organizations, and settlement agencies. I compiled an information sheet that listed the organizations’ contact information and brought this list along to the interviews, to
enable me to refer youth to additional resources. I developed two distinct recruitment and consent procedures for participant observation and interviews; these are described in detail later in the participant observation and interview sections.

Many of these youth have limited leisure time due to attending school, working, and taking on additional family commitments. In order to participate in this study, youth took time out of their busy schedules. To provide compensation, I provided TTC tokens, $10 gift cards of the participant’s choice, and refreshments/snacks during interviews.

3.3.2 Participant observation: Participant observation “commonly gathers data through casual conversations, in-depth, informal, and unstructured interviews, as well as formally structured interviews and questionnaires” (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 2). The method allows researchers to examine peoples’ lives in situ (Smith & Caddick, 2012) and gain a greater contextual understanding of people’s behaviour and emotions, which is especially important because “what people say they do is not always the same as what they do. What they do varies with circumstances and setting” (O’Reilly, 2012, p. 14). Participant observation also allows youth to express their agency through both their voice and body (Bickford, 1996). According to Morrison (2002, p. 31) another key advantage of participant observation is that “you get fresh impressions, right as things are happening. You can see how the experience evolves, how the impressions change, how people navigate a situation”. In this project, some of the young people possessed a low level of English language proficiency and were unable to verbally articulate themselves through the English language, however, they were able to express themselves and interact with others through body language, gestures, and movement. Participant observation allowed me the opportunity to witness these interactions in a more informal setting. I spent three
and half months engaged in participant observation. During this time, I was still volunteering at
the organization. I started conducting interviews towards the end of the third month.

The researcher’s level of involvement in participant observation tends to fall on a
continuum from one to five; one is complete involvement, two is active involvement, three is
moderate involvement, four is passive involvement, and five is non-participation (Spradley,
1980). My roles as a researcher and volunteer needed to be explicit to all participants and staff,
especially due to the fact that I had an existing rapport with many of the participants. Prior to
conducting fieldwork, I would spend approximately one afternoon a week at the agency and
would be there for a few hours; Spadley (1980) would define this as moderate involvement. As a
researcher, I had more free time to spend at the agency and desired to become more immersed. I
assisted on multiple programs, working with different participant groups, and taking on
additional volunteer roles. I spent approximately 12-15 hours a week at the research site, and
using Spadley’s (1980) scale, my involvement would fall on the scale at number two (active).

3.3.2.1 Consent: As part of the participant observation recruitment and consent process, I
created a list of the different youth recreational programs that I was interested in observing at
CoalitionTO*, I then contacted youth workers to ask for permission to conduct participant
observation (all of the youth workers had extensive knowledge of this project beforehand). At
the beginning of the different programs, I explained my research project to youth participants,
volunteers, and staff. See Appendix B for a copy of the recruitment script. I then outlined the key
ethical implications of this study. I specifically highlighted that all data would remain
confidential and that their participation in the observation was optional and would not affect their
involvement within the recreation program. There were a handful of participants who attended
the programs most weeks. I handed out an information letter to these youth and their parents. All
information provided was written in accessible language and I offered translation services to youth and their parents, if necessary. The information letters contained details about the purpose and significance of the study, research questions, methodology, role of the youth, key ethical information and contact information for myself and my supervisor. I informed youth that I would be around after the session to meet and answer any questions, and provided my email and phone number so that youth or their parents could ask any questions. The programs were also delivered on a drop-in basis with different participants attending each week, I would ensure that these youth were aware that I was observing. For ease, I typically only collected and utilized group level data during participant observation.

3.3.2.2 Fieldwork process: During fieldwork, I continued taking on volunteer roles at the agency. Throughout the participant observation, I held multiple roles including program facilitator, advisor, participant, and program evaluator. Due to possessing multiple roles throughout my fieldwork, the line between observer and participant was blurred (Spadley, 1980). When I was the primary leader facilitating programs for youth, I was responsible for delivering high quality programming and for the wellbeing of participants. At these times, my role as researcher came secondary and there were times when I was unable to engage in or hear important conversations because I was focused on my other roles. Holding various roles during research can create conflicts of interest and pose ethical concerns (Shuttleworth, 2001). One of my paramount ethical concerns was that youth may have felt obliged to participate in this research due to our participant / program facilitator power dynamic. To minimize these concerns, I stressed to participants that my research was separate from my other roles that I held at the agency and that our relationship and their participation in the program would not be affected by their decision to take part in research.
Taking on these additional roles was an effective means of building relationships with participants, staff, and volunteers and also provided opportunities for informal conversations regarding youth settlement and experiences of taking part in these programs. Many of these informal conversations also occurred during program times or when travelling to the program/hanging out. I believe that taking on these active roles, in comparison to passively observing, allowed me greater insider status and was an effective discussion point. As an experienced youth recreation programmer, I was also able to contribute to the delivery of these programs.

The programs were diverse in nature and occurred during week nights and after school, as well as fieldtrips that occasionally took place at weekends. The program that I spent the most amount of time volunteering on, RecU*, was a recreation and outdoors program aimed specifically at immigrant youth, who have been in Canada for less than five years and were convention refugees or permanent residents. The program was funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and offered a variety of outdoors, cultural, volunteer and skill-based activities that would take place at multiple sites including the settlement service agency, downtown Toronto, and across the Greater Toronto Area. Active recreational programs included: ice skating, tree-top trekking, beach volleyball, rock climbing, and canoeing. Cultural activities included: museums, scavenger hunts downtown, and cultural festivals. Skill-based workshops included first aid, sports coach certifications, and healthy lifestyles workshops. Volunteering activities included tree planting and running activities for young children such as games and face painting. Other recreational activities were diverse and included icebreakers, team games, and documentary/discussion. I also assisted on an intergenerational gardening program, called GreenHands*, with immigrant youth and seniors.
I did not write notes in the field; I wanted to be in the moment and thought bringing out my notebook in the field would impede rapport building with the youth. Occasionally, I would take pictures of the space to record events for later notetaking. The youth workers also took pictures/videos of every session and posted them online; I would often refer to these for my notes. Sometimes after important conversations, I would discreetly write notes on my phone. As soon as possible after spending time in the field, I would write up detailed and reflexive field notes which would normally take about 45 minutes to one hour to complete. At the end of fieldwork, I had written over 100 pages of typed field notes. Throughout the duration of fieldwork and whenever I felt it was necessary, I would also write reflexive journal entries about subjects such as my own positionality and authentic relationships. Each week I would re-read recent fieldnotes and journal entries to re-jog my memory and highlight any key points of observation for future fieldwork sessions. As described in more detail later in this chapter, during data analysis, I coded my fieldnotes using a thematic analysis. Upon reflection, the fieldnotes were most helpful when 1) exploring and analysing social network development between youth and youth workers 2) helping to develop a clearer picture regarding the tensions and settlement challenges experienced – snippets of information were often given over time as relationships progressed 3) unpacking/providing background information to better understand the nuances of interview transcripts.

3.3.2.3. Participant observation participants: Throughout the duration of my fieldwork, I interacted with over 80 different youth participants who attended various CoalitionTO* recreation programs. These participants ranged in age from 14 to 24 years old and came from over 20 different countries. The most prominent ethnic backgrounds for participants were Chinese, Latino, and Arabic. The youth had diverse immigrant statuses in Canada and included
permanent residents, convention refugees, international students, asylum seekers, and Canadian citizens. Due to strict funding requirements, some programs were open to youth who possessed a specific immigrant status. Approximately 60% of participants were male and 40% were female. As many of the programs were offered on a drop-in basis, different youth attended programming each week and various youth attended multiple programs.

3.3.3 Interviews: Collecting qualitative data by conducting interviews can allow the researcher to develop a greater understanding of how people attach meaning to their experiences, particularly at pivotal life points (Denzin, 2001). During the third and fourth month of fieldwork, I conducted nine semi-structured interviews; seven with youth participants and two with youth workers. Interviews lasted between 39 and 122 minutes in duration. One of the interviews was conducted over the telephone; the others interviews were conducted face-to-face and took place in a variety of locations and venues across Toronto depending on participant preference and convenience. To maintain informality, I met the participants for either coffee, dessert, or brunch and spent at least 15 minutes at the beginning of each interview chatting about non-related topics and catching up. All of the participants consented to being recorded and to maintain informality I did not take notes during the interview. However, after each interview, I wrote detailed field notes.

3.3.3.1 Consent: In the third month of participant observation, I began to recruit interview participants. Participant eligibility included either 1) youth under the age of 24 years old who actively participate/ who had previously participated in recreational programming at CoalitionTO* or 2) volunteers or staff members who facilitate recreational programming at CoalitionTO*. I initially sent a recruitment email to all RecU* youth recreational participants; a list-serve containing approximately 120 young people. (A copy of the recruitment script can be
found in Appendix C.) However, I received few replies, so I decided to engage in purposeful sampling and personally contacted youth and youth workers who were actively engaged in the settlement agency and who I had formed strong connections with during my fieldwork. I had known the majority of these participants for about six months. I recognize my bias in selecting participants that I had an existing strong rapport with. These participants are commonly referred to as ‘key informants’ and are often selected because they are active members of the culture and can produce information-rich data (Tremblay, 1957).

I approached the key informants after participating in recreational programs, provided details of the project, and enquired whether they would be interested in finding more information. If the participants expressed interest, I arranged to call/meet the participants in person to describe the project in detail and provide an information/consent package. All of the potential interview participants were over the age of 16 years old, and were able to consent for themselves. Appendix D is a copy of the informed consent document, I did not have to use these forms though. Therefore, I handed out assent forms to be completed by youth and another copy of the information letter for youth and their parents (Appendix E) that contained the same information given to participants during the participant observation consent process. The participants were also provided with my contact information to ask any questions.

At the beginning of the interview, I explained the information letter to participants and used accessible language to communicate key ethical information. I emphasised to the young participants that their involvement in the project would not be disclosed to CoalitionTO* and that I would remove all personal identifying information to uphold their confidentiality to the best of my ability. For the staff participants, I highlighted that I would remove all personal identifying information and that I would protect the anonymity of the settlement service agency. I then gave
participants time to ask questions prior to signing the consent forms and then described the structure of the interview.

3.3.3.2 Interview process: I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews as they provide a flexible means of collecting data (Smith & Caddick, 2012). The interview guide (Appendix F) provided me with a template regarding the basic structure of the interview; however, it was not a rigid template and I allowed the discussion to be guided by the participants. As I had an existing rapport with all of the participants, there were many times when discussion went off-topic, but this allowed for a more conversational and informal tone. Additionally, some of the youth participants used photos, videos, or social media to help answer the questions. For example, during her interview, one of the participants showed me, in chronological order, the different posts on her Instagram profile to help her explain her settlement story, social networks, and involvement in CoalitionTO*.

Three different themes were covered throughout the interview: youth settlement, participation with the settlement agency, and sports/recreation participation. Prior to entering the field, I possessed strong theoretical knowledge regarding immigrant settlement; thus my interview questions and informal conversations that took place in the field were influenced by existing theoretical models such as cultural capital, social capital, and modern assimilation. I typically began by asking questions about the participant’s settlement in Toronto; the challenges they experienced, how they overcame these challenges; and attitudes towards multiculturalism in Canada. Secondly, I asked participants about their experiences of participating in recreational programs at the settlement service agency. Lastly, I asked about the youth’s experiences of taking part in sport and recreation. The general structure of the interviews were similar, but the discussions were diverse; ultimately the participants led the direction and pace of the interview.
If I believed that the participant could shed more light on a certain topic, I would gently ask probing questions such as: “Moving to a new country by yourself must have been difficult, would you mind telling me more about your experiences”. As I became increasingly confident in conducting interviews, the topics flowed more naturally.

My interview style was conversational and fluid. I tried to create a “conversational partnership” which is defined by Rubin and Rubin (2015) as meaningful conversation and high levels of rapport facilitated by active involvement and listening. I would also adjust my interviewing style and level of formality depending on my existing relationship with participants. The topic of migration was a sensitive topic for some of the young people who were forced to flee their country due to war or conscription. Settlement was also a sensitive topic for many of the youth who had experienced factors such as social isolation, discrimination, and family separation. I possessed basic knowledge of the youth’s migration stories, which I believe was beneficial, as I was aware of the some of the potentially sensitive topics and could adapt my questions accordingly. For the youth who had fled war torn countries, I did not directly ask them about their migration experiences of leaving their home country, but allowed youth to bring up this topic if they wished.

3.3.3.3 Interview participants: The youth participants who were interviewed ranged from 16 to 24 years old and the average age was 18 years old. All but one of the youth could be classified as a newly-arrived immigrant, as they had lived in Canada for less than five years. The average time spent in Canada was 14 months. Youth had immigrated from different source countries – including from predominant source countries, such as China and the Philippines, where there are high levels of immigration to Canada and also from less-predominant source countries, such Iran and Chad, where immigration levels are lower. All of the youth who were
interviewed were able to speak at least conversational English. Five of the youth participants were enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, while one of the youth spoke English as a first language and another spoke fluent English but was enrolled in an English for post-secondary studies course. Many of the youth had moved to Canada with their family unit (parents and siblings), but several of the youth experienced family separation and moved to Canada by themselves, with siblings, or with only one parent. The majority of the youth had permanent residency; one was an international student, and another had Canadian citizenship. I had hoped to interview second-generation youth as well, but the participants did not indicate interest in being interviewed and did not agree to sit for an interview. Six of the youth participants were taking high school credits, the other young participant was in his first year of college in Toronto. Four of the youth participants were female, three were male and both of the youth workers that I interviewed were female. To maintain confidentiality, I cannot provide any additional details about the youth workers. However, what follows are short biographies of the youth participants:

*Rahman*: Is from Iran and moved to Canada three years ago with his father to avoid military conscription. He migrated when he was in his mid-teens. His mother and brother still live in Iran and are hoping to migrate within the next couple of years. His parents possess a high level of human capital; however, his father’s qualifications were devalued in Canada, so he is currently re-training as an immigration consultant. Rahman* found it difficult to make friends when he first arrived due to the language barrier and the lack of co-ethnics in Toronto. Rahman* is a skilled computer programmer who is in the process of setting up his own business. He is very sociable and loves “causing mischief with his friends”. He enjoys playing basketball and soccer and is highly skilled at both.
Valeria*: Is from Venezuela and moved to Canada two years ago with her family to flee political and economic instability. She was in her late teens when she migrated. Back home she had finished high school and one year of University. Upon arrival in Canada, she spoke no English and enrolled in an adult school to gain her high school diploma. Her family has become involved within the small co-ethnic community in Toronto. She works part-time as a babysitter and is an addicted runner who loves exploring Toronto and spending time with her family.

Ade*: Was born in Chad, moved to Sudan, and then migrated to Canada two years ago. He migrated when he was in his early 20’s. His siblings are older and settled in Canada a few years prior in search of greater economic prosperity and increased opportunities. He had finished high school in Chad, but spoke no English when he arrived in Canada and went back to school to gain a Canadian high school diploma. He works part-time in a grocery store. Ade* used to play professional soccer at home, and now enjoys taking part in a wide variety of sporting activities such as rock climbing and Moi Thai.

Jacko*: Is from the Philippines and moved to Canada with his siblings and father when he was in his mid-teens. He has lived in Canada for five years now. His mother had lived here for eight years prior as a live-in caregiver (part of a bilateral labour agreement between the Philippines and Canada). The family migrated due to the declining auto-mobile industry in their hometown and high levels of unemployment. The Philippines is a prevalent source country and his family is highly engaged with the co-ethnic community in Toronto. Jacko* is currently enrolled in college while also working full-time at a coffee shop. He enjoys drinking coffee (apparently, the free coffee is the best perk of the job!) and hanging out with his buddies.

Mia*: Has mixed Albanian and British heritage. She was born in England, migrated to Albania when she was eight years old, and then migrated to Canada while she was in her mid-
teens, approximately a year and half ago. There is a small Albanian co-ethnic community in Toronto and the majority of Mia’s* friends are Latino. Mia’s* parents possess a high level of human capital and were able to quickly return to their professional careers when they arrived in Canada. Mia* enjoys annoying her little brothers, seeing her friends, and creating Instagram videos.

Sassanna*: Half Syrian/ Lebanese heritage. She moved to Canada with her parents and siblings one year ago and is now in her late teens. The family used to live in Syria, they left for Lebanon when the country started to become unstable, and later migrated to Canada. In Lebanon due to the high levels of out-migration from Syria, economic instability is rife; levels of poverty has risen by 66% since the Syrian conflict began (Oxfam, 2016). Sassanna* and her siblings spoke fluent English when they arrived in Canada. Her parents are also highly educated but their credentials were devalued in Canada. Sassanna* is highly ambitious and has dreams of becoming a judge. She is in her last year of high school at an adult high school.

Yin*: An international student from China, who is now in her late teens. She moved to Canada two years ago by herself and spoke no English when she arrived. She has been living with host families in Toronto Yin’s* parents are highly skilled professionals. She goes back to visit China twice a year and is very close to her family. She hopes at attend the University of Toronto to study engineering. Yin* enjoys eating traditional pizza and Chinese food (not from Mandarin restaurant!), playing badminton, and shopping.

3.3.4 Reflexivity: As a participant observer, the researcher’s presence has an impact on the space and the relationships that occur within that space. The etymological root of the word reflexivity means to “bend back on oneself” (Finlay & Gough, 2003, p. ix). This suggests that
lived experiences and emotions are inseparable from the research process. Researchers have often been criticized for the lack of focus on their positionality and scholars suggest that “critical ethnographers must explicitly consider how their own acts of studying and representing people and situations are acts of domination even as critical ethnographers reveal the same in what they study” (Noblit, Flores, Murillo, 2004, p. 3). The motives and legitimacy of social science research conducted by non-group members on their lives are questioned on a regular basis (Shuttleworth, 2001) and my lived experiences of migration and settlement stood in significant contrast from those of the youth participants. Eliassi (2013) suggests that this cycle can result in marginalizing and reinforcing White-racialized, North-South, or non-indigenous-indigenous, hierarchical power relations. Within this research project, it was important to step back and to put myself in the position of the young participants when examining myself; however, up until the first half of my fieldwork, I was unable to think critically about my own positionality within this project. I was reluctant to acknowledge the power that I held; both as a volunteer facilitating programs, and as a researcher who has the ability to share the youth’s stories. It was not until the second half of my fieldwork that I sought to employ reflexive ethnography techniques through consistently undertaking introspection and challenging my biases and privilege. Adopting a reflective stance has been far from easy and has been somewhat of an emotional process. Below is a quote taken from my reflexivity journal that describes me grappling with the power I held as a researcher and questioning whether I should be conducting this research:

I am in a position of power as a researcher. It leads me to question why I am doing this project. Am I writing the stories of the other, of these youth, for my own gain? Am I doing it just to further my academic career and to graduate with my masters degree? Even more worryingly, it’s taken two months of fieldwork, and over a year of working with these youth to even begin to articulate this
Furthermore, in my introduction, I described my positionality as straddling the realms of both insider and outsider; I dubbed myself an imposter immigrant. I have lived in Canada for six years, have White skin, a desirable British accent, and emigrated from a Western country which values similar facets of cultural capital. However, as an international student under the age of 25 years who possesses a heavy British accent (and fails dramatically at putting on a ‘Canadian accent’), I technically met the eligibility criteria to participate in CoalitionTO* programming and many youth thought that I was a participant. My Whiteness allowed me invisibility and insider status in a multi-ethnic space. Bonnet (1999) argues that White privilege tends to remain undetectable as it is rendered as neutral. Below is a personal excerpt taken from my field work journal at the end of October 2017 discussing my relationships with participants and my positionality within this research:

I have just finished a late night conversation with my roommate, she conducts research on refugee resettlement and education. She asked me how I view my relationship with the young people that I work with and how they see me. In the midst of my fieldwork, I think I have forgotten about the meaning attributed to these relationships. It feels weird I guess, when youth confide in me or ask questions, I sometimes draw off my own experiences of homesickness or making cultural fax pas. But these are unimportant. You see I am an imposter, I cannot relate to many of these youth’s experiences of settlement in Canada. The first thing many of the youth say to me is that they love my accent and they try to imitate it, this has happened most days since I arrived in Canada five years go and even by fellow graduate students who study decolonization. At first I was flattered, but then I thought more about why my accent is desirable and it’s because my accent and my story is one of Whiteness, power, privilege, and colonization…It makes me wonder whether I taking advantage of my insider status as an immigrant in this space to collect rich data? How would my relationships be different with these youth if I was born in Canada?

These tensions that I described above involve me grappling with my own Whiteness and privilege and exploring the impact that this has on the formation of (in)authentic relationships. Exploring my reflexivity is an ongoing and dynamic process and one that I am pleased has begun.
3.3.5 Data analysis: I transcribed the interviews in full throughout December and attached interview field notes to the transcripts. During data analysis, I undertook a thematic analysis which “minimally organizes and describes the data in rich detail by identifying, analysing, interpreting, and reporting patterns within the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006 in Sparks & Smith, 2014, p. 124).

I decided to utilize the five-step thematic analysis model as described in Sparks and Smith’s (2014) book: *qualitative research methods in sport, exercise, and health*. The model was utilized by Braun and Clarke (2006) and the stages are: immersion, generating initial codes, searching for and identifying themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes. I have applied this model to my stages of data analysis:

(1) **Immersion:** I read through the interview transcripts and field notes two times and made notes in the margins/highlighted interesting findings. At the bottom of the transcripts, I also added field notes which involved personal conversations with that individual about their experiences.

(2) **Initial themes:** The third time I read the transcripts and field notes, I generated initial themes, recorded these in the page margins, and generated a list of codes on a spreadsheet. Codes were broad and included examples such as family separation, language, discrimination, etc. To help aid in organizing, I assigned each code to one of the three different interview topics – immigrant settlement, the settlement agency, and sport and recreation and colour coded accordingly.

One of my research questions was to explore which (if any) modern migration studies frameworks, such as cultural capital, social capital, and modern assimilation, could be applied to
understanding the leisure experiences of immigrant youth. Therefore, some of my codes used throughout the analysis process were developed in relation to these theories e.g. ‘bonding social capital’, ‘bridging social capital’, ‘reproducing cultural capital valued within the home country’. However, many of my codes were unrelated to theoretical frameworks and were created because they best described the data extract, these codes utilized more of a ground-up analysis approach.

(3) Searching for and identifying themes: I went through the codes and tried to identify broad themes e.g. I organized the codes ‘accent’ and ‘language’ under the theme ‘settlement process’. Secondly, I gathered the data extracts from transcripts and field notes that fell under the identified themes. See figure 2:

![Thematic analysis process](image)

(4) Reviewing themes: I then considered the extracts of data that I had coded and organized by theme and reviewed the data’s suitability within the assigned theme. I rearranged codes to other themes and also altered some themes to make them broader or more specific, e.g. ‘education’ was initially its own theme, but I later merged the category with ‘settlement process’. Secondly, I was wary of missing any important data extracts, so I went through my entire data set and ensured that coding was thorough and I had not missed any relevant extracts. I then assessed whether the themes worked in relation to the data set and how these themes were distinct, yet fitted together to form a cohesive argument.
(5) **Defining and naming themes:** the final stage in the thematic analysis process involved “identifying the essence of what each theme is about and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures” (Sparks & Smith, 2014, p. 125). At this stage, I removed themes that contained interesting information but that did not contribute to answering my research question. I stored these coded extracts for future reference and possible publication. I then defined and named the themes.

3.3.6. **Dissemination of findings:** After engaging in the thematic analysis process, I was keen to share my findings with youth participants and youth workers. I met with the majority of the research participants in an informal setting and shared with them key findings and quotes, as well as asking for feedback, and their interpretations. This feedback was incredibly helpful at times and became valuable data.

Moreover, as discussed in the methodology section, one of my key priorities when conducting community-based research was to disseminate the findings of this research project in an accessible way for the settlement sector, thus hopefully leading to the development of change at CoalitionTO*. After producing the first draft of my thesis document, I met with settlement workers to share my findings and wrote several reports for CoalitionTO* outlining my findings and suggestions for improvement. Shortly after publication of this thesis, I will develop a report on settlement services and the delivery of recreation programs for immigrant youth, which will be accessible to local settlement agencies in Toronto and policy makers. The dissemination of research findings is explored further in the discussion section.
3.4 Conclusion

This chapter began by outlining community-based research methodology. I then described my research methods used throughout this project including (1) my involvement prior to conducting fieldwork (2) methods used to collect data - participant observation and interviews (3) reflexivity in the research process and (4) techniques used for data analysis.
Chapter Four: Navigating Social Structures

Er yeah! I wanted to be part of the society. So that’s why I assimilated. That’s why I got the accent because having my own authentic accent would be repulsive you know (Jacko*, Youth)

4.0 Introduction

The results of this study show that many of the youth captured in the research desired to assimilate when they arrived in Canada; however, the hegemonic social structures meant that if youth wanted to achieve social mobility, there were few alternatives or options available other than assimilating to the White, dominant society. In the chapter, I aim to unpack the dynamic relationship between migration and social structures and the impact that this has on the young participants. Migration heavily impacts demographics in both the destination and the source country and, is therefore, indirectly connected to social structures such as religion, labour markets, the economy, and political system (Goldscheider, 1987). At the micro and meso level, the impact of migration on these social structures has a direct influence on young immigrants and their family’s settlement experiences. This chapter explores (1) the complex relationship between migration, age, and social structures and the role of these structures in producing and constraining the agency of youth as they migrate (2) societal and family expectations of immigrant youth settlement (3) the role of White, dominant institutions, such as the education system, economy, and the settlement agency in youth settlement (4) youth’s experiences of systemic discrimination within these institutions, and (5) how linguistic and cultural assimilation was seen as a response to structural challenges.

4.1 The Migratory Process

Due to migratory structures and immigration policies in both the youth’s source country and Canada, youth possessed differing levels of decision-making abilities and capabilities within the migration process. This section explores the variety of reasons that youth migrated to Canada
and the impact of social structures, such as the economy and the political system, on constraining or facilitating agency.

Some of the youth who arrived in Canada possessed high levels of agency within the migration process. These findings correspond with findings in Punch’s (2002) study; many of the youth participants migrated in search of increased livelihoods. Ade* and his siblings had completed high school in Sudan and made the decision to migrate in search of better post-secondary educational and economic opportunities for their family. Yin* made the conscious decision to come to Canada to study; from a young age, she had desired to attend a top university in Canada and persuaded her parents to allow her to study in Toronto. Similarly, Hashim (2006) found that many youth in his study made the decision to migrate and that they often exerted their agency to negotiate the migration with their families if they were unsupportive of the decision to migrate. Many other high school-aged international students did not possess the same level of autonomy though; several youths at CoalitionTO* said their parents sent them to study in Canada without their consultation.

In comparison, other participants were more impacted by migratory structures which limited their agency. Many of the participants at CoalitionTO* were children of economic migrants and their parents left in search of enhanced livelihoods for their families. However, several of the youth were forced to migrate due to political issues and instability. Valeria* and her family were forced to flee Venezuela due to immense political and economic instability. She described how in her hometown there were daily, violent protests against the government, institutions such as schools and hospitals were closed, and due to falling oil prices, levels of poverty had skyrocketed among the professional, middle-class. Sassanna* and her siblings are half Syrian and Lebanese. They were initially forced to flee Syria when the civil unrest began
and sought sanctuary in Lebanon. They had dual nationality and spent a lot of time in Lebanon while growing up. However, last year, the family left Lebanon in search of a better quality of life after the imminent terror threats and economic instability which had resulted from a high number of Syrians seeking asylum in Lebanon. Rahman* migrated from Iran in an attempt to avoid military conscription that his father and grandfather had previously had to undertake, however, his cousin lived in Canada and after hearing about his cousin’s success as a computer programmer, he had desired to migrate for years. Rahman* is limited in his agency though; he is unable to return to Iran without first completing conscription. He said “Unfortunately I can’t [go back], because if I go back I am a soldier and have to go to military.” Poverty and lack of economic opportunities were also cited as reasons for outmigration. The automobile industry was the main source of employment in Jacko’s* community, but over the past 20 years, the industry has diminished and there has been high unemployment. As such, his mother has been working abroad as a domestic caregiver since Jacko* has been a toddler and the family have been separated for most of his life. Jacko’s* mother was the key financial provider of the family and sent remittances every month. The migration story of Jacko* and his family is commonplace in the Philippines. The fragile economy and high levels of unemployment in the Philippines, stimulated a pervasive culture of migration among young professionals, families, and low skilled workers; approximately 10% of the population is working overseas (Asis, 2017). Remittances have helped to facilitate the development of social structures in the source country; however, high levels of outmigration among the skilled, further constrain immigrant agency as immigration is positioned as the most desirable means of achieving financial and social success (Asis, 2017).
Restrictive immigration policy in Canada also impeded the agency of immigrant families through causing significant delays in family reunification (Tungohan, Banerjee, Chu, Cleto, de Leon, Garcia, Kelly, Luciana, Palmaria & Sorio, 2015). Jacko’s mother worked in Canada for eight years before she was able to bring the rest of the family to Canada. His mother arrived through the live-in caregiver program (LCP), a bilateral labour agreement between the Philippines and Canada, which was created to meet the short-term care demands in Canada. After two years of employment, the program was marketed as a pathway to permanent residency (Tungohan et al. 2015). However, despite many immigrants fulfilling the requirements for permanent residency, there were significant delays in processing applications for permanent residency, which prolonged family separation and led to deportations due to visa expirations. Due to numerous instances of worker exploitation (Spitzer & Torres 2008) and outcry from advocacy groups, the program was abolished in 2014 and has since been restructured (Government of Canada, 2017). The LCP is a prime example of an exploitive immigration policy which aimed to restrict permanent migration. Migration pathways programs, such as the live-in caregiver program, also demonstrate how migration is a gendered process (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Many of the Filipino live-in caregivers are the main breadwinners for their families (Tungohan et al. 2015), which further constrains their agency. Jacko described his experiences of being separated from his mother for most of his childhood as “heart-breaking” and very difficult on the family. He also expressed boundless gratitude towards his mother for her sacrifices in bringing the family to Canada.

Other youth experienced challenges with the long processing times for family reunification. Rahman migrated with his father, but his mother and brother still live in Iran while waiting for their permanent residency cards. He often talked about how much he missed
his family (especially annoying his little brother) and how excited he was for them to come to
Canada. The findings suggest that restrictive and gendered immigration policies in both the
source and destination country can facilitate or constrain agency.

There are important comparisons to be drawn between the impacts of the migratory
structures on the settlement outcomes of first versus second-generation immigrant youth. Portes
and Borocz (1989) posits that factors such as immigrant status, relationship between destination
and source country, human capital, context of reception in the destination country, and context of
exit in the source country can all impact settlement experiences. For the second-generation
youth in Portes’ study, it was their parents or grandparents who made the decision to migrate;
however, due to unfavourable conditions of exit in the source country, many of these parents
possessed low levels of agency in the migratory process. They were often Black refugees fleeing
poverty, conflict, or persecution and due to low human capital and high levels of racism,
predominately worked within the secondary labour markets in Canada. In comparison, the
majority of the immigrant youth at CoalitionTO* and their parents had increased agency within
the migratory process; they were middle-class, high-skilled economic migrants, who entered
Canada under more straight-forward circumstances. These insights can be applied to the
participants in this study and were evident when comparing the settlement experiences of the
newer cohorts of economic migrants, of whom were from increasingly diverse ethnocultural
backgrounds, to those of the earlier cohorts of Black low-skilled immigrants and refugees.

Age also impacted the youth’s involvement within the decision-making process. These
findings align with the current literature which suggests that immigrant youth, under the age of
20 years, are often left out of migration decisions as the parents make the choice to migrate
(Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Hashim, 2006). Farrow (2007) argues that children and youth are
rarely viewed as independent migrants possessing agency, rather they are perceived as dependents. Mia* was one the younger participants when she first migrated at the age of eight years old, as such she possessed minimal agency in the family’s migration decision and was very surprised when her parents broke the news (her parents did buy her a dog to make up for it though). She said:

I came home and everybody was sitting by the counter and I was like ‘what is going on?’ Someone was missing from there, grandma wasn’t there.’Where is grandma?’ Then I hear a bark bark. Close your ears and sit down. My mum is like ‘we have a surprise for you’ and that is where bootsie number one [a dog] came in, and I was like ‘ahh’, then they said ‘we are going to Albania’ and I said ‘if you are going to Albania, why did you get a dog?!’

In the example above, Mia* and her younger siblings lacked agency in the migratory decision process — their parents made the decision to migrate. Mia* later disclosed that she felt as though she had minimal control within the decision and that this was upsetting, but ultimately, she trusted her parents’ judgement. In comparison, as discussed earlier in this section, Yin* and Ade* actively made the decision to migrate in search of better social and economic prospects for themselves and their families; however, they did not possess complete agency. Punch (2002) coined the term “negotiated interdependence” to explain immigrant youth autonomy; youth are often making migratory decisions in response to structures and family expectations but also have the ability to act within these constraints to achieve their individual goals. As discussed in the literature review, narratives of youth displaying agency are often underrepresented and discounted in favour of stories that position immigrant youth as vulnerable or victims (Hashim, 2006). The point here is that the findings of this study demonstrate that age and youth status can both constrain and/or facilitate agency within the migration process.
4.2 Societal Expectations

In comparison to adults, immigrant youth experience the dual challenges of cultural adaptation and psycho-social development (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2002). This section describes how the youth status of the participants, along with societal and parental expectations, led to the immigrant youth experiencing increased pressure to assimilate quickly in Canada.

4.2.1 Youth status: Many of the youth participants in this study were 16 or 17 years old at their time of arrival in Canada and believed that they were expected to assimilate quickly due to their age. Similarly, Anisef and Kilbride (2003) assert that mainstream service providers for immigrant youth often perpetuate these views that immigrant youth adapt quickly and require less specialized assistance than adults. Moreover, the majority of youth in this study were at a unique in-between age for experiencing settlement; they were expected to settle more quickly than adults due to their youth status and were simultaneously subject to high expectations from society and their parents regarding their educational and future labour market success.

In comparison to their parents, immigrant youth are typically viewed as more adaptable and able to conform to norms and values quicker (Hiebert, 1998; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). These assumptions were experienced by both the staff and youth participants in this study. Hara*, one of the youth workers, discussed the popular stereotype surrounding immigrant youth settlement: that settlement is easier for youth than adults and youth adapt more quickly because they are young. Hara* said:

I feel like sometimes youth are viewed like it shouldn't be that hard to settle, it’s harder for adults to settle but that’s not true at all obviously. I think that is how people see it as that you are still young, it should be fine, give it a few months and you will be settled in, but it doesn't work that way...I think the perception is that people expect them to adapt faster and pick up on things quicker because you are still young.
Many of the youth believed that because they were still young, they were expected to learn English, upgrade their qualifications, make friends and get a good job as quickly as possible after arriving in Canada and that similar expectations were not placed on adults. I asked the interview participants about the expectations placed on immigrant youth and several of the youth said it was to assimilate quickly and to be successful. Sassanna* said:

Well some people expect them to take their time to do things, others, the ones I have met, expect them to change the world in like two months. ‘Like you are only 19 you should do that and that and that’. I try to make everybody happy but I cannot fit everything into my schedule. ‘Other people did this that and other people did that’, but they have been here 40 years.

Sassanna* was frustrated because her parents frequently cited her young age as a reason to adapt quickly to life in Canada. The unfounded assumptions that immigrant youth adapt more quickly, not only places unrealistic expectations on youth, but also minimizes the challenges that immigrant youth experience during the settlement process. Youth are at a unique psychosocial stage in their lives, which is often difficult to navigate for native-born youth, but immigrant youth also have to undergo a new process of socialization (Seat, 1997). The youth participants believed that settlement was more challenging for them than it would be for younger children. Valeria* believed it was more difficult for youth as they had already formed a strong identity, set of values, and social networks in their home country; therefore, moving to Canada felt as though they were forced to start from scratch, rebuilding their lives:

For people of my age, it’s more difficult to assimilate when moving to a new country, to find new friend, it because it’s like a big change and you are like somehow you’re an adult, who is like in the second stage of your life and everything you have built up when you’re kid, is somehow, you transform it and you have to start all over again since you were a baby.

Several youths also believed that migrating at a younger age was more beneficial. Valeria* said: “My sister she assimilated way quicker, she’s still young.” Similarly, Jacko* and Rahman* were
happy that they migrated at 15 because they believed they were able to adapt more quickly than if they arrived when they were older. The FSA (2000) also reported similar findings. The teenage participants found the migration process more challenging than the younger participants because they had already made friends and spent time at school.

However, when reflecting on their experiences, Jacko* and Rahman* also perceived quick assimilation as a double-edged sword. They experienced internal conflict regarding the degrees and desirability of assimilation and expressed regret at assimilating so quickly. They also believed that if they came to Canada when they were older they would not have assimilated so quickly and would be more connected to their home culture. I asked Jacko* whether he believed his settlement experience would be different if he came to Canada later. He said:

I think I would change way more gradually. I would still change my values. I quickly changed. I was very flexible when I came here you know. But if I were a bit older, still change but more gradually. For high school I went to a public school, different people things. So I think I was still young and knowing who I am so I shaped myself. I shaped myself too quickly.

Regardless of age at time of migration, adapting to the Canadian cultural values was perceived as a non-negotiable aspect of settlement by Jacko*; however, he stated that if he were older the assimilation process would have been more gradual because he would no longer be in high school (a key site of socialization), his identity would be more stable, and he would have developed increased resilience to peer pressure. Jacko’s* experiences align with the findings in Portes and Rumbaut’s (2001) study that youth adapt to cultural norms more quickly.

4.2.2 Parents: Many of the first-generation immigrant youth expressed how their parents also had high expectations for them to settle quickly. The FSA (2000) reported similar findings whereby youth felt pressure by their parents to achieve social mobility for the family. Sassana* expressed how her parents have unrealistic expectations for her career, and that this can be
frustrating because they do not understand that the settlement process takes time and the
Canadian education system is different. She said:

They just do not understand that I can’t do it this fast. Like I really want to. My father
want me to be a minster. He really want me to be a minster. I am like I am studying law
and politics and he is like ‘why are you not in university yet?’ I am like ‘I didn’t even
finish grade 12 yet.’

Sassanna* is the oldest sibling and is responsible for obtaining a high-income generating career
to ensure the family’s economic security. In Lebanon, her parents were successful professionals;
in Canada, her father is unemployed, and her mother works part-time in retail. They gave up
their professional careers, middle-class lifestyle, and social supports to generate a safer
upbringing and increased economic opportunities for their offspring. Valeria* also described
how she felt indebted to her parents because of the vast economic costs of migration and fact
they had given up so much to provide her with educational opportunities and keep her safe in
Canada. She said:

Then you’re expected to achieve your goals because you have plenty of time to live. I
mean your parents they did all they had to do, they just give you this opportunity to
develop yourself into a new country.

Several of the youth described how their parents would often bring up the migration hardships
that they had endured as a way to encourage them to get good grades, work hard at school, and
obtain a high-income generating job. These youths felt a sense of obligation to give back to their
parents through attaining social mobility. For both immigrant parents and youth, the key to social
mobility was perceived to be education and the majority of youth were determined to excel
academically.

In contrast, second-generation youth at CoalitionTO* and their parents did not place as
much emphasis on educational attainment. Many of the second-generation youth’s parents had
low levels of human capital due to their immigrant status when they arrived in Canada and since
this time, had held low paying jobs and lived below the poverty line. Due to the intersections of human capital, class, race, and systemic discrimination, youth were limited in their ability to achieve structural assimilation. One of the youth said that their parents “did not care” how they did at school and that they could not wait to leave school and get a job. This could be attributed to a number of factors — the youth and their parents acknowledging the flaws in the merit-based society due to the presence of systemic barriers, and also the socio-economic need for youth to work to support the family instead of going to school. Many of the second-generation youth had to work throughout high school to support their family and after graduation were expected to find full-time employment. However, there were also youth participants who placed a lot of value on education and believed it was their ticket to social mobility. Mary*, was in grade 11, she was constantly studying during the program, and was applying to a top-tier university to study medical sciences.

In addition to attending school, due to their age and status within the family, many of the first and second-generation youth also took on increased responsibilities within their families, including financial provider and domestic carer. Phinney and Vedder (2006) and Schleifer and Ngo (2005) found that immigrant youth often take on increased household and family responsibilities during settlement, a finding corroborated in this study. Sassanna* was the oldest sibling and her parents were unable to speak English. She said:

Everybody was expecting me to do it for the entire family, it was so hard….I am the one who pays the bills, takes them places, appointments, whatever they want to do. I do everything at home

Sassanna* acted as translator, managed the family’s finances, and escorted her parents to important meetings — these activities consumed her already limited leisure time. Sassanna*
disclosed to me that these additional responsibilities, which came as a result of migration, were often overwhelming and she occasionally wishes that she had more time to spend with her friends and engage in normal teenager activities, such as shopping. These findings provide evidence that the numerous roles and heavy demands placed on immigrant youth’s leisure time can be overwhelming and constrict opportunities for the development of social capital.

4.3 Role of Institutions

Dominant institutions also played pivotal roles in the settlement of immigrant youth because these were often key sites of socialization. In this section, I discuss the education system, as interaction with this institution was most prevalent with immigrant youth and there were few alternatives to attending public school. I then discuss the economy and labour markets and the impact this had on youth and their families before briefly introducing the role of the settlement agency.

4.3.1 Education: Education undoubtedly plays a key role in the lives of immigrant youth; it is a space in which they spend the majority of their time, are exposed to Canadian values, and develop social networks (Anisef & Kilbride 2001). Due to the lack of educational alternatives, many immigrants have few alternatives than to send their children to public schools. Through school, youth develop social, human, and cultural capital that is valued in Canada; therefore, it is an important site of socialization – and assimilation – for youth.

The youth in this study discussed many challenges they faced when navigating the Canadian education system; these challenges align with those stated in the literature (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; FSA, 2000; Ngo & Schleifer, 2005) and include: inaccurate placement testing, unmotivated and unskilled teachers, segregated ESL programs within schools, and experiences of bullying. In line with the findings from the FSA’s (2000) report, one of the biggest challenges
reported by youth participants was the lack of ethnic diversity within ESL programs. Classes were predominantly formed of students from China, Philippines, and South America; this led to ethnic cliques and youth from other countries struggling to make friends. Due to issues such as the ones listed above, four out of the seven youth in this study ended up switching schools after just one year.

Upon arrival in Canada, many of the older immigrant youth’s existing human capital was devalued and if they wished to attain social mobility they were required to attend public school to gain Canadian qualifications and improve their English. For example, in Venezuela, Valeria* had completed her first year of University and her eldest brother had nearly finished his professional accountancy program, but neither of these qualifications were recognized in Canada; they both had to go back to high school. Valeria*, who attended an adult high school, described some of the difficulties of adjusting to a new education system:

But for us, me and my sister it was hard to be in another system in society. We don’t work the same, people don’t socialize the same. Even enrolling in a new school, doing your high school again, going to university.

Valeria* and Ade* also discussed how the devaluation of their credentials created feelings of shame and embarrassment because it felt as though they were regressing from their goals.

In comparison to the first-generation immigrant youth, the second-generation Black youth at CoalitionTO* discussed other challenges at school, such as suspensions, low grades, and limited academic opportunities. These findings align with a project led by James (2017) entitled *Towards Race Equity within Education: The Schooling of Black youth in the Greater Toronto Area*. The study found that Black students in Toronto are subject to “an opportunity and achievement gap” (p. 22) due to high levels of systematic racism. More specifically, the results showed that Black students were overrepresented within applied programs and more likely to
have been suspended from school; 39% of Black youth were in applied programs in comparison to 18% for other racialized students and 16% for White students. Many of these findings align with those of the Black youth participants at CoalitionTO*. Similarly, at CoalitionTO*, second-generation Somali students, were the only group to be offered an after-school attainment program. Many of the Black second-generation youth participants attended the same low-performing school, were placed in applied classes, and had experienced suspension at least once. Several of the youth discussed how they felt their futures were limited by being placed in applied classes and how it demotivated them further. As described in the section above, many of these youths did not aspire to attend university, several had plans to attend college and others were looking into full-time work/apprentices. These findings can be attributed to high levels of anti-Black systemic discrimination within the Canadian school system (James, 2017), which in turn, limits the educational attainment and social mobility of the second-generation youth.

4.3.2 Economy/labour markets: Upon arrival in Canada, immigrants are expected to learn English and gain Canadian credentials as quickly as possible in a bid to become productive members within the dominant labour markets. As such, the majority of settlement funding is allocated to developing immigrant employability (Richmond & Shields, 2004). However, many of the youth and their parents experienced significant challenges to entering the primary labour markets. Many of the young immigrants experienced economic challenges due to the high economic cost of migration, combined with discrimination, and devaluation of credentials. This section explores the challenges that youth faced in entering the primary labour market, the youth’s role in providing for their families, and experiences of living in poverty.

Many of the youth’s parents possessed a high level of human capital and held middle-class professions in their source country such as academic, lawyer, or teacher. During the
restrictive Canadian immigrant selection process, applicants were selected as economic migrants on the basis of their human capital. During this selection process, potential immigrants are allocated points based on national language proficiency, education, age, and professional work experience. The applicant must also display financial independence and stability. As the immigration process is restricted to those who are high-skilled, middle-class professionals in their home country, prospective applicants were often fed unrealistic expectations by the Canadian government that they would be able to utilize their skills, qualifications, and work experience in Canada. However, upon arrival in Canada, many of the parents were forced to undertake further education as their existing credentials and work experience were not recognized, and they were learning English. This process often placed a significant economic burden on families. Rahman’s* father went back to school to retain as an immigration lawyer and Ade’s* sister, who was a qualified nurse in Chad, attended college to gain professional accreditation in Canada. This devaluation of immigrant credentials and experience has been well documented within the literature (Krahn et al, 2000; Reitz & Banerjee 2007). Meanwhile, Valeria’s* and Sassanna’s* parents did not possess sufficient economic resources for them to go back to school and upgrade their qualifications. Therefore, to make ends-meet and support the family they worked low-income and precarious jobs.

In a bid to support themselves and provide extra income to their families, many of the first and second-generation immigrant youth were obliged to work full-time in addition to attending school, and performing additional domestic responsibilities. Jacko* attended college from 9am-3pm every weekday, had a two-hour break, and then worked until 10 or 11pm at a coffee shop, in addition to working weekends. Other youth held minimum wage positions such as babysitter, grocery store clerk, and catering assistant and these jobs consumed the majority of
the youth’s leisure time. This finding corresponds with Wilkinson* (2008) who found that immigrant youth often worked up to 30 hours a week alongside attending school or post-secondary education and performing additional domestic duties. Margo’s* (2009) study also noted that immigrant youth faced challenges in balancing these responsibilities, which can lead to lower academic achievement. Despite many Canadian youth also working part-time, the youth in this study believed that their Canadian counterparts enjoyed significant privileges and did not have to make the same sacrifices. For these youth, the need for economic capital decreased the opportunities for developing other types of capital, such as social capital. In this way, youth had limited leisure time, which restricted the development of their social capital. In addition, low economic capital also limited the activities that youth could participate in within their leisure time, which is why the settlement agency became one of the key providers for recreation opportunities.

Many of the CoalitionTO* youth participants also described their experiences of living in poverty; racialized, often Black second-generation youth were typically overrepresented within this category. Indeed, immigrant youth are three times more likely to live in poverty than White/Canadian born youth (Shields et al, 2009). Youth discussed difficulties such as working long hours to support their families, experiencing barriers when trying to access fresh food, public transit and recreation, and residing in low-income neighbourhoods in Toronto. The majority of the second-generation youth participants lived in subsidized housing in the West end of Toronto and often discussed how there were high rates of crime, open drug use, and that they did not feel safe walking at night. Several youth also discussed how their apartments were not well-maintained and posed a safety hazard. One youth participant disclosed to me how she lived in a high-density social housing apartment block next to an industrial factory and hated waking
up every morning seeing the pollution from the factory; her family were reluctant to open the windows and spend time on the balcony due to the possible negative impact on their health. However, the first-generation youth perceived living in poverty as temporary and believed that they would have a middle-class lifestyle when they were older. At the same time, many of the second-generation youth normalized these living conditions and believed they were permanent because they had always lived like this.

4.3.3 Settlement agency: Given the challenges discussed above, the settlement agency became an important institution in the lives of immigrants and immigrant youth, and was often the initial point of contact upon arrival in Canada. Unlike more generic social services, the settlement agency programs were tailored to meet the complex needs of newly arrived immigrants (Shields, Drolet & Valenzuela, 2016). The youth described how through their participation in the program, they formed strong relationships with the youth workers, which in turn, facilitated access to various settlement services such as employment, labour markets, and educational assistance. The settlement agency was therefore a key space of socialization for the youth and many of the participants’ developed social networks through the recreational programs offered there. Youth described feeling a sense of belonging at CoalitionTO* and discussed how this helped to facilitate their settlement in Toronto. Prior to participation in the programs, many of the youth were not taking part in sport or recreation — the settlement agency became a key provider of this service.

However, due to the top-down funding structures from various levels of government, there were also challenges at CoalitionTO* such as exclusionary eligibility criteria, unequal allocations of funding, and the narrow constructions of integration. Definitions of integration were more closely related to assimilation and there was a strong emphasis on teaching the
immigrant youth to become good Canadians. In Chapter Six, I describe the role of the settlement agency in the lives of immigrant youth; here, I simply acknowledge the importance and significance of settlement agencies as an institution.

4.4 Discrimination/Racism

The previous section explored the role of influential institutions within the settlement of immigrant youth. It is important to note that the majority of the youth in this study also described experiencing some form of discrimination within these institutions. This section explores youth’s experiences of discrimination and stereotyping in Toronto.

4.4.1 Overt discrimination: A couple of the Arabic speaking youth described instances of overt discrimination in public; these were heavily intertwined with Islamophobia. Indeed, within the popular media, characteristics such as Middle-Eastern appearance, Arabic language, and Islam continue to be associated with fear-ridden images of terror attacks (Silva, 2017). The discourse of fear, post-9/11, has led to a significant rise in Islamophobia within the West; such findings are reflected in the fact that hate crime against Muslims increased by 253% between 2012 and 2015 (Statistics Canada (2017b). Sassanna*, who is half Syrian and Lebanese, recounted a time when she encountered Islamophobic hate speech from a White male while walking down the road:

I was walking with a friend and somebody was like ‘as if Canada needs more Arabs’, then he was like ‘you are coming here stealing our food and our money.’

The discrimination described above is both racial and class-based. The perpetrator suggested that Canada should limit immigration from Arabic speaking countries as he believed these immigrants posed a threat to the civil order of dominant society. In addition, the perpetrator situated his logic in the immigrant “welfare queen” narrative, whereby the media presents images
of “hyper-fertile and lazy Black women” who migrate to a Western country in a bid to live off the state (Brown, 2013, p. 587; Hancock, 2004). After Sassanna* recalled this experience, she described her reaction to the racist behaviour:

But like it’s okay, that’s the limit of their understanding…but I don’t have to do anything about it, because they said I am arrogant it doesn’t mean that I am…. I don’t even reply back, I just laugh.

Sassanna* exerted a high level of agency in response to this racist incident and she displayed maturity and resilience. She tried not to take the racism personally by emphasizing that it was the individual who was narrow-minded and by laughing it off. She said that incidents like this occur often. Racism was a normalized component of Sassanna’s* lived experiences. She acknowledged that to be labelled an immigrant, Arabic, and Muslim means that she is non-White and therefore Other. Sassanna’s* reaction to these incidences of racism reflects her high level of maturity and the ways in which she exerted agency to protect herself. Moreover, her reaction also demonstrates the troubling reality that racism is a normalized component of her life in Canada.

Sassanna* was not the only Arabic speaker to experience racism. During fieldwork, I overheard two Arabic speaking youth, who spoke fluent English prior to migration and who had just met, having a conversation about feeling uncomfortable speaking Arabic in public:

Person 1: “Where are you from?” Person 2 replied “Syria, what about you”, Person 1 “You speak Arabic too…do you speak it when you’re out?” Person 2: “no, no, always English, even with my family. People look uncomfortable when they hear Arabic and my friends always make terrorist jokes.”

Due to previous negative experiences, whereby people had passed judgement after hearing these youth speaking in their native tongue, they no longer felt comfortable speaking Arabic in public, so opted to converse in English. This policing of cultural markers reinforces White hegemonic culture while also offering immigrant youth social and cultural rewards for speaking in English. In this sense, speaking English becomes a way not to be bullied and to make and keep friends. In
this instance, the youth’s agency in deciding which language to speak was heavily determined by racism. In the last section of the quote, the youth describe how other people associate their Arabic identity with terrorism. This islamophobia had a significant impact on the daily lives of immigrant youth in Toronto.

That said, some youth in this study felt that racism was more prevalent in their home country than in Canada and they were surprised by the low levels of overt racism. When drawing comparisons with the levels of racism in Canada and other countries, Leviit (1997, p. 47) suggested that “The largest Canadian cities have become functioning and tolerant multi-ethnic communities, the envy of most urban areas elsewhere.” Due to the popularity of multiculturalism rhetoric in Canada, the belief that racism is not prevalent in Canada is wide spread among the dominant, White population (Henry, 2016). When I asked Rahman* to draw comparisons between the levels of racism in Canada and Iran, he expressed that there are higher levels of racism in Iran, especially against persons of Afghani and Turkish heritage. Rahman* mentioned that while growing up, he regularly experienced racist remarks in school because he had darker skin. He said that his teacher would often publically refer to him in class as “Blackie” and this would make him feel embarrassed. When I asked Rahman* if he has personally experienced racism in Canada he said:

Not that much. I have seen some, I am not going to say that I haven’t, (but) not that many and every time I would see some, people would stand up if it’s in public. While on the subway and witnessing racial slurs, Rahman* described how he saw bystanders intervene, and how he was surprised to witness this as he did not believe that people would intervene in Iran. These findings align with Henry (2016) who found that hate speech is seen by most Canadians as socially unacceptable, but systemic discrimination is rife within institutions. The next section will describe some of the youth’s experiences of systemic discrimination.
4.4.2 Systemic discrimination: Unlike Sussanna*, many of the youth said that they had not openly experienced hate speech in Canada. However, various youth participants had experienced discrimination which is often invisible to the dominant culture but serves to oppress visible minorities. For example, Jacko* described how his friends have not been victims of overt hate speech, but that systemic racism is still prevalent in Canada. He said:

My friends are very diverse and then again I never heard of them being fronted like ‘you’re this you should get out this country’. Canada is quite nice about us but it’s [discrimination] happening all round.

Jacko’s* quote, especially the use of the adjective ‘quite’, describes how he believes Canada to be a tolerant, but not an inclusive society. While describing the high levels of systemic discrimination in Canada, he refers to himself and his ethno-culturally diverse friendship group as ‘Other’, as separate from ‘Canada’, which is defined by the dominant, White culture.

The strength of the multiculturalism discourse in Canada often emerges when drawing comparisons to the United States and condemning racist policies, such as the Muslim ban and the USA-Mexico wall. However, as a result of this rhetoric, many White Canadians do not believe that racism is a problem in their own country. Sassanna* said that “people like to think that this type of thing [racism] does not happen here and only in the USA.” Valeria* discussed that she has never overtly experienced racism as a Latino in Toronto, but she knows that many of her Black and Muslim-looking peers have and it really “frustrates her when Canadians believe that they live such a nice country that racism does not occur here.” She later said “why can’t people talk about it [racism] openly?” In these instances, multiculturalism policies tout inclusivity and diversity beneath a façade of colour blindness and meritocracy (Henry, 2016), thus leading to ignorant beliefs, such as the denial of racism in Canada.
In turn, several of the youth described how these experiences of discrimination within institutions increased their desire to assimilate to the dominant culture. These findings align with Berry et al (2006), who found that discrimination can increase a youth’s desire to assimilate.

Jacko* said:

Systematic discrimination was [the] main thing when I was in high school. People didn’t want to deal with me. Maybe that’s the main reason why I decided to assimilate. I was trying to blend in, you know fade into the background

As a visible minority, Jacko* was seen as the ‘other’ by his peers and experienced discrimination as a result. He decided to assimilate in a bid to decrease these negative experiences. Similarly, during an informal conversation, Ade* described how when he first started at school in Canada, he felt heavily excluded. He said that his peers would stare at him and nobody spoke to him; he believed this was because he looked different and there was only a small Black population in his school. These feelings of exclusion motivated Ade* to want to blend in more through learning English, and developing knowledge of cultural norms.

The settlement agency itself was also a site of discrimination and racial stereotyping at times. During participant observations, I witnessed second-generation Canadian-Chinese students refusing to take part in programming with first-generation Chinese students as they were “FOBS [fresh of the boat- a derogatory term for newly arrived immigrants]”. Instances such as these demonstrate the stigma assigned to newly arrived immigrants and the perceived superiority of being born in Canada. The second-generation youth used xenophobic language as a means of othering the immigrant youth; through bullying youth who were not yet assimilated, they aimed to separate themselves and demonstrate their own assimilation. I also witnessed Black second-generation youth bullying first-generation youth and attempting to distance themselves on the basis of their class/race differences.
Racial and class stereotypes were also reproduced by funders and some staff at CoalitionTO*. Diverse meanings were assigned to the first and second-generation youth. Second-generation youth were often labelled by some staff as rowdy and unappreciative of programs. By contrast, first-generation youth were perceived to be more passive and deserving. Indeed, some staff disclosed that they preferred to work with the first-generation youth because they were polite and appreciative. These narratives are discussed more in Chapter Six.

4.4.3 Stereotyping: Youth also discussed instances of being stereotyped² by their peers and teachers due to their ethno-cultural identity. Jacko* described how he frequently experienced stereotyping of his Asian, non-heterosexual body. He said:

Being stereotyped, yes. ‘You’re Asian, yes. You’re smart’…It was that time when I felt discriminated against. I just wanted to be invisible and in the background. Definitely being stereotyped and systematic discrimination and sexual racism. Being objectified as an Asian, especially culturally, being subjected to sexual norms, definitely that.

In the quote above, Jacko* said that he has experienced sexual racism due to the meanings often prescribed to his homosexual, Filipino body. Jacko* disclosed how his co-ethnic friends and family were less accepting of his homosexuality due to the strong Roman Catholic influence in the Philippines and some of the people he met in Canada were surprised to see a “gay Filipino”. Jacko* also said that he was stereotyped by peers and teachers as intelligent because of the perceived meanings attached to his ethno-cultural background. Similarly, Yin* said that her peers at school assumed her to be smart because of her Chinese background. As a result she explained how, despite her reluctance, her teachers pushed her into taking triple sciences. Asians are often assigned the racial marker of model minority (Thangarj, 2015). Rahman* played high

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² Stereotyping can be defined as a fixed, over generalized belief regarding a specific group or class of people (Cardwell, 1996)
level competitive basketball in Iran, however, in Canada he said his body felt out of place in comparison to the tall, more muscular White, Black or Latino players and he experienced some discrimination as a result.

Youth from Middle- Eastern and African countries also encountered racial and class-based stereotyping stemming from the dominant culture viewing their source countries as economically and technologically inferior. Sassanna* said:

 Somebody asked if I have computer and TV back home, like excuse me, we live in the same planet. We have everything you had.

Sassanna* said that she has experienced several instances such as this, where White Canadians believed the Middle East to be poor, technologically lagging, and oppressive to women. She said that Canadians were often surprised when she said that her parents were more focused on pushing her to go to a top tier university and become a judge than raising a family. While she was describing these instances, she looked incredibly frustrated about people believing Western culture to be superior. These findings demonstrate the diverse meanings assigned to youth based on the intersections of class, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality, and the impact that this had on settlement experiences.

4.4.4 Whiteness and Blackness: The next section explores the impact of race on the settlement experiences of youth. Portes and Borocz (1989) assert that race plays a large role in influencing immigrant integration including the context of reception, educational attainment, and economic integration. Mia’s* migration and settlement experiences were contrasting to many of the other youth, of whom were visible minorities. Mia* is White, has one British parent, no ethnic accent, and was born in England. Her parents received their educational credentials from England, thus their qualifications/ work experience was not devalued in Canada. The family did
not have to undergo linguistic and accent discrimination and these characteristics combined with their White skin, allowed them the invisibility to often go unexamined within the dominant White culture. Therefore, Mia* described how her family were able to settle quickly:

   So my mum and dad leave first, they had to buy a house, get a job, fill the house, it’s too much for all of us to do that. Me school, brother school, them jobs, it’s horrible. Me, my brothers and my grandma we came over [after] 6 months, I mean 6 weeks, so in six weeks they had found jobs, house, everything.

As a result of Mia’s* identity markers, she was able to pass as White in many public spaces in Canada. However, according to Long, Hylton and Spacklen (2014) she is still on the periphery of Whiteness. When Mia* was living in the UK, she experienced bullying at school due to her Eastern European background. Albanians, alongside many Eastern European immigrants, are heavily stigmatized in England. Many Albanian immigrants live below the poverty line and are overrepresented among the prison population (King, Mai & Dalipaj, 2003; Markova & Black 2007). In Canada, Mia* and her family were more easily able to pass as White and this allowed for a quicker settlement process.

   Many of the racialized second-generation youth participants had contrasting experiences to Mia*. Despite the fact that the second-generation youth participants spoke English as their first language, possessed a generic Canadian accent, and had knowledge of Canadian values, they still experienced systemic discrimination and exclusion within institutions due to the meanings proscribed to their Black bodies. The majority of the second-generation youth participants at CoalitionTO* were Black and attended the same partner school. I argue that the youths’ shared experiences of oppression and systemic racism within the mainstream society provided a motivator to participate in CoalitionTO* programs — this exclusive space away from the dominant culture was inclusive to these participants. The programs facilitated the
development of bonding social capital and were perceived by youth as an inclusive space of belonging to connect with other Black youth who had similar shared experiences. Compared to the high levels of ethnic diversity and human capital amongst the first-generation participants, the second-generation youth were more homogenous and typically experienced the most barriers to achieving social mobility and economic assimilation, thus providing evidence as to why such a high number of Black second-generation youth utilized these services. These findings will be applied to the segmented assimilation theory in the discussion.

4.5 Assimilation
To this point, this chapter has explored how immigrant youth navigated various social structures, such as dominant institutions and systemic discrimination in Canada. This section focuses specifically on how youth culturally assimilated as a response to such social structures. The results show that due to the devaluation of the youth’s existing cultural capital, there were few options for immigrant youth other than developing a generic Canadian accent, learning English, and conforming to liberal values.

4.5.1 Accent: Accent was an important marker of cultural identity that was discussed by several of the youth. The majority of youth expressed a desire to lose their ethnic accent in favour of gaining a dominant generic ‘Canadian’ accent. Jacko* and Rahman* disclosed that they were determined to lose their ethnic accents and utilized their agency to achieve this goal within two years of living in Canada. The basis for this decision was both to improve communication skills and to conform to their peers and mainstream culture. Jacko* discussed how much he wanted to lose his accent when he initially arrived:

Er yeah! I wanted to be part of the society. So that’s why I assimilated. That’s why I got the accent because having my own authentic accent would be repulsive you know.
Jacko* associated speaking in a Canadian accent with inclusion into the mainstream and saw it as a necessary component of the assimilation process. He perceived his ethnic accent as a barrier to achieving social mobility; it was something to be overcome. These findings correspond with Derwing’s (2003) study, whereby the vast majority of ESL participants desired to gain native-speaker pronunciation.

Youth also expressed how they believed people treated them differently because of their accent and did not make an effort to understand them. Yin* said “But some people are not patient, [some] people like if they can’t understand you very well, they don’t talk to you”.

Derwing and Munro (1997) found that native speakers can typically understand even the heaviest of accents, but they may lack patience and choose not to understand due to prejudice. In the quotation below, Ade* describes an experience of asking for directions in downtown Toronto and being ignored because the individual assumed he was asking for money:

I had an experience in downtown Toronto. It was very bad. I came to ask a person about directions and they thought I was asking about money. He told me ‘no no no’, he don’t even listen to me…He made my day awful, I [thought I] am going home.

Ade’s* experiences may have been the result of accent discrimination, whereby native speakers attach negative connotations to certain accents and allocate stereotypes such as unintelligent, un-credible, and low income (Derwing, 2003). The accents of immigrant youth, especially from non-traditional source countries, are heavily devalued and seen as ‘Other’ in comparison to the dominant culture. Immigrant youth consent to this dominance by dropping their ethnic accent in favour of acquiring a generic Canadian accent.

Rahman* was also eager to lose his accent because he did not want people to know that he was not born in Canada. Rahman* said:
I didn’t like my accent. It was because I was afraid, I was like I didn’t want anybody to see that I wasn’t from here, right. So like, I really tried to lose my accent. Rahman* perceived his ethnic accent to be undesirable and inferior to the generic Canadian accent. As a visible minority, Rahman* may have feared his accent as another factor that differentiates him as ‘Other’ within the dominant society. Due to the perceived/actual negative consequences of being seen as ‘The Other’, he desired to assimilate to the dominant society.

In addition, youth assigned different meanings to various geographical accents. When I initially met new participants at CoalitionTO*, youth and staff would often make comments such “Are you from England? I have always wanted to go there” and “Oh my god, I love your accent.” Rahman* had said how much he liked my accent (strong, Southern English accent) and how it made me sound “smart”. Youth also said that they liked the Australian and Irish accent because they sounded exotic. At first, I was flattered. Then I began to question why youth were ashamed of their own ethnic accent, yet complimented me on my accent. I started to realize that the desirability of accents in Western countries is heavily intertwined with Whiteness, and thus can facilitate/impede inclusion. Accents are a highly influential facet of cultural capital, closely intertwined with power and social mobility (Bourdieu, 1986). A standardized British accent is often viewed as desirable due to the historical implications of power and colonialization and thus is often considered national and symbolic capital (Goldstein 1999). By contrast, accents from non-traditional source countries are often assigned more negative connotations. One of the CoalitionTO* participants, Harrison,* was 17 when he arrived in Canada as an international student from Hong Kong (an ex British colony) and he is proud of his British accent. Harrison* consistently brings up his accent in conversation and when he is introducing himself to new people he often makes comments such as “I am an Asian dude who has no idea why his accent is so British”. These findings correspond to the accent hierarchy framework (Derwing, 2003),
whereby different accents are viewed as desirable or undesirable on this basis of their ethnic origin and the associated stereotypes.

That said, Mia* assigned different meanings to the British accent. She had a British accent when she arrived in Canada and made a conscious effort to lose it. Mia* explained:

When you watch like an American movie, and then all of a sudden a British person pops out and you can hear the difference. I was like, I do not want to sound like that in school, it would be the worst thing ever.

These findings suggest that youth place emphasis on possessing the same accent as their peers in a bid to fit in. When Jacko* and Rahman* first arrived in Canada when they were younger, they wanted to lose their ethnic accent to fit in with dominant culture, but when looking back on their experiences now, they regretted losing their ethnic accents as it comprised a component of authenticity. Jacko* said: “But yeah to this day, I want to somehow get my authentic accent back. It made me, me, now I blend in the background.” I later showed Valeria* a draft of this chapter to hear her feedback. When she had finished reading Jacko’s* quote above, she looked shocked and said “wow, that is sad, that is like a lot”. Valeria* moved to Canada when she was 18. I asked her whether she had experienced pressure to lose her ethnic accent, she said “not really”. I explained that Rahman* and Jacko* moved to Canada when they were 15 years old and she replied by saying that if she had moved at that age, she believes that would have felt more pressure to lose her accent due to being in high school and wanting to fit in among her peers. In the case of Jacko*, Mia*, and Valeria*, these findings provide evidence that the younger youth are at the age of migration, the less stable their ethnic identity, thus strengthening their desire to assimilate their accent.

4.5.2. English language: With the exception of two participants, Sassanna* and Mia* who both spoke fluent English in their source countries, learning English was one of the most
urgent concerns for the youth participants upon arrival in Canada; it was seen as necessary for success and was non-negotiable. The FSA (2000) also report that English language concerns were cited as the largest challenge amongst immigrant youth in Ontario. All of the youth who were interviewed expressed how they desired to learn English as quickly as possible when they arrived in Canada. Ade* said:

I put myself in punishment, like locked away. I said to myself if I am gonna stay here, I need to learn English. If I want to learn English, I have to try myself.

From the quote above, it was evident how much pressure Ade* put on himself to learn English and how he perceived it as necessary if he was going to permanently reside in Canada; he exerted his agency by working hard and spending his free time learning English. Language proficiency heavily limited social capital formation. Ade* experienced social isolation when he first arrived in Canada; he perceived his lack of English proficiency as a barrier to social capital formation but he also isolated himself until his proficiency was more advanced.

Upon arrival in Canada, immigrant youth participating in this study found their home language was devalued, in favour of learning English. This finding was especially prevalent when youth were from non-traditional source countries and there was a small co-ethnic population in Toronto. Prior to arriving in Canada, Ade* spoke fluent Arabic and local dialects from Chad and Sudan, while Rahman* spoke Persian and Arabic; however, these languages were perceived as insufficient to facilitate social mobility in Canada. If youth desired to attain their high school diploma, attend university, and make friends, there were limited alternatives to learning English. Ade* expressed “I said to myself, if I am gonna stay here, I need to learn English.”
Youth who migrated from non-traditional source countries had increasing difficulties in maintaining aspects of their home culture, such as the mother tongue. Youth also experienced increased challenges if they migrated without the whole family unit. Family members often play a large role in protecting ethnic identity (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003). Rahman* disclosed that, with the exception of his father who works long hours and is rarely home, he does not know any other Persians in Toronto and his ability to speak in the mother tongue has deteriorated as a result:

Well I, I mean it’s great that I speak English right now [but] like it’s literally I can’t speak my first language. I don’t care, but I don’t care if I speak Persian or English right now, it’s the same thing for me.

Since Rahman’s* home culture was not actively encouraged in Canada, he lost touch with Persian culture. This provides evidence for the assimilationist discourse, whereby immigrants are expected to become more similar to the dominant culture, even at the expense of maintaining their home culture. Rahman’s* school has a high population of Latino students. He disclosed that he often felt jealous when he heard his peer’s converse in their home language:

I see people speaking in their own language like from South America, and they speak Spanish the whole time and I am like I am really jealous, kinda jealous.

Mia*, who is Albanian, also said that she missed communicating in her home language with her peers. Moreover, English proficiency was seen as essential by youth as a means of developing friendships with mainstream peers and undergoing social assimilation. Yin* said “I have some friends from other countries because now my English is better”. This finding suggests that bonding social capital and conversing with co-ethnics was perceived to be less influential in facilitating social mobility as it was not conducive to inclusion and success in the mainstream society. This finding correspond with Blackshaw and Long (2005) who found that policy makers and the general public often devalue immigrant bonding social capital.
Interestingly, dependent on context, languages other than English were also seen as a tool for inclusion and exclusion. There were no co-ethnics at Mia’s* and Rahman’s* school; however, there was a large ESL program with a dominant Latino population. Mia* disclosed that the majority of her school friends are Latino and speaking Spanish was seen as a tool for inclusion:

I am so lucky they let me into their group without speaking [Spanish], but the reason is the three girls and I we were at [a school orientation program] together... If I had just come myself and be like ‘I am Mia*, I wanna join your group’ they would be like ‘no.’ So I feel so lucky apart from that.

Mia* expressed gratitude at being accepted into this exclusively Spanish speaking group without being able to speak Spanish, but admitted she was also slightly frustrated as her friends predominantly speak in Spanish and she cannot understand. This situation led to Mia* being somewhat concerned about possible exclusion from the group and utilizing her agency to start learning Spanish. During our interview, Mia* brought out a crumpled piece of paper brimming with tiny handwritten Spanish phrases and keywords and recited them to me in her most authentic Spanish accent. However, Mia’s* family believed that it would be more beneficial for her future to learn French, one of the dominant languages in Canada. With increasing levels of migration from South America and a large co-ethnic population in Toronto, Spanish is a facet of cultural capital which is held in high regard in Mia’s* school; the language is associated with inclusion and popularity. Despite being born in England, Mia* did not pass as White within her school and was not accepted into the dominant, English speaking White clique. Therefore, for Mia*, learning Spanish was a way to fit in and make friends. Similarly, there are many Filipino students at Valeria’s* school and she expressed that this encouraged her to want to learn Filipino so she could communicate with her peers and feel less isolated. These finding suggest that different components of cultural capital are valued differently in diverse contexts and that
languages other than English can become ways for people to identify and build up resilience against the dominant culture. In a super-diverse city such as Toronto, where there is statistically no majority culture (Vertovec, 2007), this finding had interesting implications for inclusion and integration.

4.5.3 Cultural values: This section describes how conforming to dominant, liberal values was also perceived to be essential in the integration of immigrant youth, and how they felt there were few alternatives or options. In line with the literature (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Berry et al., 2006; Taylor & Krahn, 2015), many of the youth from non-Western source countries described difficulties in adapting to Canadian culture. Several of the youth said that they had experienced culture shock when they came to Canada, even though they now felt as though they have assimilated and are in a superior place. Jacko* said: “Yeah, I was culture shocked. Quite surprised by the amount of diversity racial wise, sexuality wise, gender wise. But yeah, I soon came over that though.” Jacko* viewed adapting to liberal values as an expectation. I asked him if he thinks assimilation is an expectation in Canada, he replied “[I] think so, coming here you still have to adapt to certain things. Maybe it could be bad, [or a] non-bad thing.” In this quote, Jacko* describes his attitudes towards assimilation as ambivalent, he does not see it as inherently bad or good, but rather, an essential process that immigrants have to undertake. Sassanna* described difficulties that her friend encountered when navigating the cultural norms in Canada:

So she came and she wasn’t really okay with everything going around. Like how people dress, how people behave, so it was really hard for her. She was afraid to do things because she didn’t want people to judge her, so it has really taken us long time to get her to have fun and get rid of this in her.

Sassanna* described cultural differences in dress and behaviour and how her friend was anxious about being judged on these cultural differences. At the end of this quote, Sassanna* suggests
that it was an expectation for her friend to adapt to the cultural values in Canada and she perceived no other alternatives. Similarly, Valeria* expressed difficulties in adapting to Canadian society and after she had finished describing some of her settlement challenges she later said: “It was tough but we had to accept it”. Valeria* indicated that there were a lack of alternatives to assimilating and that it was seen as a necessary process of change. These findings suggest that youth did experience difficulties adapting to the cultural values, but after having undergone assimilation, they believed they are in a superior position within dominant society in comparison to other immigrants. This narrative also suggests that there is perceived shame if immigrants decide not to undergo assimilation. Cultural assimilation was often perceived by the youth as non-negotiable and an expectation of settlement and migration, the youth learnt this through their interactions with other immigrants and Canadians. These findings provide evidence of the cultural and racial hierarchies that exist in Canada. Newly arrived immigrants are perceived to be at the bottom of the hierarchy until they undergo assimilation; after they have assimilated they are perceived as more acceptable, and superior to those who have not yet assimilated; however, due to racial markers, even after they have assimilated in some areas, they are still positioned as ‘Other’ in comparison to the dominant culture.

The pressure to assimilate connects to multiculturalism. As discussed, multiculturalism is a prominent liberal value in Canada and viewed as an important component of Canadian identity and a means of differentiating Canada from the USA (Adams, 2008; Kymlicka, 2012). Five of the youth who were interviewed said they were surprised by the levels of racial and ethnic diversity in Toronto, especially in comparison to their home country. Valeria* said: “You find so many people from so many different places, that is not just Canadian peoples but it’s like maybe
Asian people, Asian culture, and you see African culture.” Many of the youth said that they liked the fact Toronto was more diverse as they could learn about and explore different cultures.

During the interviews, several of the youth articulated the belief that multiculturalism is important to Canadians. Jacko* discussed how Canada and the United States are different due to their conceptions of ethnic diversity:

Jacko*: Canada is known as Cultural Mosaic, and the US, what is that? A culture pot? A melting pot!

Robyn: Yep, it’s like how far can you deviate from the norm

Jacko*: Actually, in the US you just melt in all of the ways. ‘You have to be this, you have to be same as us, same culture as us.’ So there are positive aspects of it. But I do like the cultural mosaic, still be yourself just have to adapt yourself to fit in the picture. Have to cut yourself you know. You have to like change, it be [a] good thing, [if] the norm you had before was bad, if, killing people was the normal.

Similar attitudes towards Canadian multiculturalism were also found in other participants. This quote demonstrates the paradox between expectations for assimilation and understandings of multiculturalism within Canada. Hansen (2014, p. 74) describes this paradox well by stating that “If multiculturalism means anything other than assimilation, then a migrant’s culture is not merely passively tolerated, it is actively encouraged and fostered.” Multiculturalism is a widely-held ideology in Canada and a point of differentiation between Canada and their Southern neighbours. Moreover, in comparison to the United States, youth believed they had greater agency to retain their cultural identity in Canada. The youth’s conceptualization of Canada as a cultural mosaic and the United States as a melting pot was learnt through their interactions with the dominant culture and exposure to the media. In their short time living in Canada, youth could articulate how deeply engrained this ideology was within Canadian identity. Jacko* believed that he possessed some agency in the decision to assimilate but was simultaneously aware that he was
expected to undergo a process of change upon arrival in Canada. Jacko* viewed conforming to shared liberal values as a necessary part of settlement and a positive change if the immigrant’s existing values were negative, thus suggesting the perceived superiority of liberal, Western values and how assimilation is a functionalist process intended to maintain stability in society. Interestingly, youth did not seem surprised by this tension and acknowledged that they were moving to a new country and that change would be required. However, in a truly multicultural society, immigrants would not have to “fit themselves”. This paradox will be explored later in the discussion.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to explore immigrant youth’s experiences of navigating various social structures in Canada and how these structures both limited and necessitated the exercise of their agency. The chapter began by investigating the social structures that impacted the migratory processes – such as restrictive immigration policy and political economic unrest in the source country. It then explored some of the perceived expectations of immigrant youth settlement and found that due to the participants’ age and youth status, they were perceived as adapting much faster than adults and took on many additional responsibilities within their families. The chapter then went on examine the role of various dominant institutions, such as education, labour markets, and the settlement agency and found that the youth participants in this study were expected to assimilate to these dominant institutions. The majority of participants experienced high levels of systemic discrimination within these institutions and these instances were a normalized part of their lived experiences. Finally, the last section examined how these factors provided youth with few alternatives other than assimilation — which led to many of the youth developing a generic Canadian accent, learning English, and conforming to liberal values.
However, despite successfully assimilating in these areas, immigrant youth were always aware of their positioning within racial hierarchies and acknowledged their presence as ‘Other’ within a dominant White society, which placed limitations on their ability to achieve social mobility. The results displayed in this chapter provide evidence that despite the presence of multiculturalism narratives in Canada, if immigrant youth wished to succeed within the dominant institutions and be successful, then they were expected to assimilate to the dominant White social structures.
Chapter Five: The Settlement Service Agency and Recreation Programs

5.0 Introduction

The settlement service agency was found to be an important institution within the lives of many of the youth participants and their families. The agency provided access to many vital services for the youth including language classes, employment workshops, and also recreation. The majority of the youth programs at CoalitionTO* were recreation-based. This chapter explores the delivery of youth recreational programs through CoalitionTO* from the perspectives of the government funders, settlement staff, and the youth participants. These stakeholders often have vested interests in the aims and outcomes of these programs, which can lead to tensions as these interests are often contradictory.

The research results presented in Part One demonstrate the tensions around the delivery of recreation programs from the perspective of funders and CoalitionTO* staff and management. Due to the top-down funding structure, the staff at CoalitionTO* were limited in their ability to dictate the aims, eligibility, and outcomes of the program; these were typically determined by the government funders, who often assigned assimilationist value to these recreational programs by promoting dominant Canadian norms, values, and pastimes. However, the staff did exert some agency against the funder’s assimilationist ideologies and placed greater emphasis on creating an inclusive space for youth to make friends and have fun. Part Two explores how the youth participants experienced and interpreted these recreation programs. The results show that the youth assigned less integrative value to the programs and took part primarily because they enjoyed participating in the activities in an inclusive environment with other immigrant youth. That said, youth also assigned integrative value to the dominant Canadian recreational activities
that were included in the programming at CoalitionTO* and believed that participation in these activities would lead to inclusion among peers and “being more Canadian”.

The main argument presented in this chapter is that knowledge of and participation in dominant Canadian recreation activities was viewed by all stakeholders – funders and youth alike – as possessing value within the settlement process. These results are somewhat contradictory; on one hand, I present evidence that recreation was an effective way of appealing to the youth participants and the youth felt a strong sense of belonging and inclusion within these programs. While, on the other hand, the recreation programs were used as a means to promote assimilation and inclusion into the dominant culture through promoting facets of cultural and social capital recognized in Canada.

**Part One**

**5.1 Structure**

This section examines the organizational structure and aims of the CoalitionTO* recreational programs through the perspective of the funders and CoalitionTO*. Similar to the organizational structure at other settlement agencies, the recreational programs at CoalitionTO* are delivered by agency staff, but funded through municipal, provincial, and federal governments. Settlement agency management and staff create proposals for potential programs and compete against other agencies and NGOs for short-term, contract-based funding. Funding may span a few months to several years. In line with the short-term program funding, many of the youth workers are on short-term employment contracts. Various staff disclosed how the precarious nature of their work created anxiety over potential unemployment and led to feelings of demotivation due to beliefs that the program would not be sustainable. Hannah* said:
Short term, precarious working, being like an employee. This is a big issue too, we as social workers, we don’t have the stability or I don’t know if I will have my job next year. Do you think that makes me want to stay on and develop relationships with these kids? You are always thinking ‘where am I going next?’

At the time of writing this thesis, Hannah* had recently handed in her resignation as she had been offered a permanent job contract elsewhere and said that one of her main motivations for accepting the job was because she would be able to form meaningful relationships with the youth and make a long lasting change in their lives, which she was unable to do when working on a short-term contact. This finding corresponds with Shields, Drolet and Valenzulea’s (2016) who described similar challenges with the short-term, precarious funding of settlement services in Canada.

This finding structure impacts the eligibility requirements, program aims, autonomy of the youth participants, and types of programming. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the different programs at CoalitionTO*, as well as their aims, activities and eligibility. The names of the programs and some details have been changed to maintain the anonymity of the settlement agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of program</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Populations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RecU*</td>
<td>Outdoor recreational program aimed at promoting friendships, cross-cultural integration, and knowledge of Canadian history. Funded by the federal government.</td>
<td>Outdoor recreational activities, skills-based workshops, volunteering opportunities, and drop in sessions.</td>
<td>CoalitionTO* and the community.</td>
<td>First-generation youth from across Toronto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouthClub*</td>
<td>After school drop-in program. Promoting the positive</td>
<td>Art, excursions, recreation and</td>
<td>CoalitionTO*</td>
<td>Second-generation, racialized females from a partner school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Partner School</td>
<td>Participants</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PeerLead*</td>
<td>After school, peer led drop-in program jointly delivered with another settlement agency. Aimed at promoting the integration of ESL students within the school.</td>
<td>Games, excursions, and soccer once a month.</td>
<td>Partner school</td>
<td>First- generation and ESL youth participants from a partner school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GreenHands*</td>
<td>A gardening program to increase knowledge of urban gardening. Funded jointly by federal, and provincial funding and the partner organization.</td>
<td>Gardening and cooking. Participants get to take home the harvest and gain volunteering hours.</td>
<td>Partner community organization</td>
<td>All youth participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball*</td>
<td>To provide students with the space to play pick-up basketball. Funded by the provincial government.</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>Partner school</td>
<td>Second- generation, racialized males from a partner school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hangout Zone*</td>
<td>Drop-in after school recreational program. Funded by the provincial government.</td>
<td>Games, workshops, excursions, and recreational activities.</td>
<td>CoalitionTO*</td>
<td>Second-generation, racialized youth from a partner school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ArtAttack*</td>
<td>Drop-in after school program focused on arts-based activities. Funded by the federal government.</td>
<td>Digital design, video production, and visual arts.</td>
<td>CoalitionTO*</td>
<td>First-generation immigrant youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Employed*</td>
<td>Pre-employment</td>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>CoalitionTO*</td>
<td>All youth participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Target Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework club*</td>
<td>After school program. Aimed at preventing youth from dropping out of school by raising high school attainment.</td>
<td>CoalitionTO* Youth of Somali descent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KidsClub*</td>
<td>An after school program which aims to provide an inclusive space for children who reside in a Toronto Housing Community.</td>
<td>Community centre First and second-generation children who live in a Toronto social housing community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girlsfun*</td>
<td>After school program in which middle school girls can participate in a wide variety of recreational activities. Funded by the federal government.</td>
<td>Library Second and first-generation girls aged from 10-14 years.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to Bike*</td>
<td>Lunch time program aimed at teaching racialized young women bicycle skills. Funded by the federal government.</td>
<td>Partner school Second- generation and first-generation females who attend the partner school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: CoalitionTO* youth recreation programs
5.1.1 Eligibility: This section describes some of the tensions between settlement staff and funders regarding eligibility and demonstrates how staff exerted their agency to challenge the system in a bid to create inclusion. Youth workers often discussed the expectations held by funders and noted that although federal government funding was more generous, municipal and provincial government funding was preferable because these funding sources enabled the settlement agency to have greater decision-making capabilities with regards to the structure of the program (target population and aims). YouthClub*, one of the programs where I volunteered prior to conducting fieldwork, was funded by the municipal and provincial governments and there were less funding stipulations in comparison to federal funding. Youth workers frequently commented that with these funding sources there were minimal restrictions regarding eligibility and less report writing. As such, many of the participants were racialized second-generation Canadians. In comparison, one of the main sites where I conducted fieldwork was the RecU* program. This program was funded through the federal government (specifically Immigration and Citizenship Canada - IRCC) and despite being the most well-funded youth program, there were strict eligibility criteria. Hannah*, a youth worker at CoalitionTO* describes some of the restrictions of IRCC program funding:

You cannot have an integrated program when you block people off of a certain status. And the big issue with that is they only accept two statuses, PR and convention refugees. Which is a huge blockage. Missing out on so many kids who need services. Like kids on student visas, completely forgotten in system, refugee claimants. These kids need more than anybody. Many of these kids are without their families. It’s absurd they should be excluded from any kind of programming. Same with people applying for PR [permanent residency].

In line with funding requirements, the RecU* program was technically restricted to conventional refugees and permanent residents who were further defined as a newly arrived immigrant (and had resided in Canada for less than five years). Through this practice, Hara* believed that the
federal government was “just telling you to not serve them [youth with other immigrant status] because you can't count them anyway.” Youth workers believed that these eligibility requirements furthered the government’s own agenda by investing most heavily in the youth that were perceived to yield the greatest return on investment – namely the children of economic migrants and conventional refugees. Youth workers occasionally joked about how “poor” Hara’s* programs were because they were catered towards second-generation youth. Hara* frequently expressed disappointment towards the inequitable funding guidelines and believed that “when it comes to kids there should be no such thing as an eligible kid or not eligible.” These funding stipulations for specific populations impacted the types of programs that could be delivered and led to inequality in opportunities across the youth participants, with the second-generation youth being most disadvantaged.

Typically, the youth workers adhered to the eligibility requirements set forth by funders and this was demonstrated by designing programs for specific populations. However, the youth workers also exerted agency to challenge these requirements in a bid to increase equality for the youth. At the discretion of management, youth workers with federal funding (aimed at first-generation immigrant youth) often allowed other youth to participate, such as racialized second-generation, international students, and asylum claimants. For example, at the beginning of 2018, RecU* received large amounts of federal funding for the first-generation immigrant youth to participate in popular Canadian winter activities, such as skiing and curling. The agency staff did not believe it to be equitable for only the first-generation youth to participate; the second-generation participants had also never skied before. Therefore, the youth workers divided the number of spots between the other programs and allowed equal numbers of first and second-generation youth to participate.
As a means of the youth workers resisting the strict eligibility requirements, when writing reports to the funders, staff typically only reported the numbers of eligible youth participants and excluded other youth. According to youth workers at other settlement agencies, this practice is common in Toronto. More recently, in response to this common practice, youth workers mentioned that the federal government has further restricted their eligibility requirements and demanded greater accountability. The federal government recently cut funding to GirlsFun*, a program for second-generation girls who live in a low-income neighbourhood.

These findings provide evidence of the tensions that exist between funders and the settlement agency – especially regarding who is perceived to be a deserving youth participant. I argue that this judgement is based on the perceived benefits for the funders, particularly the presumed economic benefits of integrating newly-arrived permanent residents and the positive representation for the Canadian government as a humanitarian nation playing their part in the refugee crisis. These findings demonstrate how the unique needs of out-of-status youth – such as second-generation racialized youth, international students, and asylum seekers are often neglected by government funders because they are believed to be unassimilable, or not worth assimilating due to their precarious immigrant status. However, many CoalitionTO* staff embodied a social justice and “no child gets left behind” approach (Hara*) and frequently exerted their agency to challenge the system because they wished to provide all youth with equal opportunities.

5.1.2 Program aims: Due to the top-down funding model there were also tensions surrounding the aims of recreational programming. When the funding came from the IRCC, funders provided staff with a description of program aims. These aims were incorporated by CoalitionTO* management and youth workers into the structure of the programming. Aims
typically focused on using recreation programs to promote integration through learning the
English language, developing knowledge of Canadian values, and building connections with the
mainstream community. Hannah* explains:

You don’t have to report anything for those other programs, but with IRCC, first off they
gave us a description. Has to be around integration, community connections, language
skills, leadership skills. That kind of stuff. But mostly integration.

The funding requirements were targeted towards promoting integration. To achieve this,
Hannah* said that she was required to run a predetermined number of specific activities such as
cultural excursions, employment workshops, drop-in programs, volunteer, and sports-based
activities per quarter. She was also required to write frequent and detailed reports to the federal
government outlining the different activities they had delivered, the number of participants,
survey evaluation data, and the demographics of participants.

The research findings show that the aims set forth by federal funders were heavily
focused on promoting integration into the dominant culture. As previously discussed in the
theory section of the literature review, integration is commonly defined as a two-way process of
change, which affects both the immigrant and the destination country (Ager & Strang, 2008).
However, the type of integration being emphasised in the first-generation youth programs, aligns
more closely with assimilation. For example, these programs were designed to bring about
changes in the young immigrant, helping them to become ‘more Canadian’ by developing facets
of cultural capital that are valued in Canada e.g. English language proficiency, knowledge of
Canadian values, popular pastimes, norms, attitudes, and etiquette. Some examples include
taking the youth on cultural excursions to historical places of interest for settler populations,
facilitating workshops on subjects such as sexual diversity, LGBTQ rights, high school etiquette,
and Western healthy eating habits, and engaging in winter activities that are popular in the
dominant culture such as skiing and curling. However, this process of change often came at the expense of providing youth with a space to reproduce facets of their existing cultural capital e.g. their first language, accent, norms, practices, and values recognized in their source country. Throughout fieldwork, I did not see any programs which allowed youth to maintain or share aspects of their home culture.

Overall, there were three main ways in which integration took the form of assimilation. First, as discussed in the section above, the programs which received federal funding were targeted towards the youth who were seen to be most able to assimilate – the children of economic migrants and convention refugees. Second, in a bid to “promote cross cultural integration”, funders stipulated the delivery of multi-ethnic programs for immigrant youth; this stood in comparison to many of the seniors and adult programs that were targeted at a specific ethnocultural groups. English language learning was also facilitated because the diverse backgrounds of youth meant that English was the common language spoken. Third, the programs were focused on promoting dominant Canadian culture and its values, history, national languages, and pastimes. There were limited opportunities for youth to maintain or celebrate aspects of their home culture. Hannah* said that the funders deliberately structured the programs in this manner and stipulated that the youth workers organized dominant Canadian activities such as ice skating, skiing, and hiking. She did not believe that cultural maintenance-based activities such as ethnic dance workshops, would receive funding. There was one occasion where the agency provided a space for select youth participants to showcase aspects of their home culture. The CoalitionTO* youth division held an open house for private partners, parents, funders, and participants. Youth had been asked by staff prior to the event to perform various cultural dances and there was a steel drummer present. These findings provide evidence that the program
provided minimal opportunities for youth to maintain aspects of their home culture and when youth were provided with a platform, the aims may have been somewhat superficial, such as providing entertainment to impress the audiences at the open house.

Another program illustrating this tension was RecU*. According to the CoalitionTO* website, one of the stated aims of the RecU* program, is to “enhance knowledge of Canadian history”. CoalitionTO* received funding to take the youth on field trips to visit local museums/art galleries, and participate in organized scavenger hunts in old town Toronto. These activities typically showcased White settler Canadian history, while excluding content, such as indigenous-settler relations, that did not position Canada as a multicultural country. Hannah*, one of the youth workers, is a passionate advocate for social justice and possesses strong knowledge of Indigenous issues. She mentioned to me several times that many of the first-generation participants at CoalitionTO* have no or only limited knowledge of Indigenous issues and she would like to run an educational workshop. But, she believes that if she facilitates such a workshop, she may upset program funders because she is not delivering programs that fit their desired aims. Hannah* suggested the workshop idea to agency management and she said that they initially disapproved of the idea due to the potentially negative impact this could have on funding. Through only showcasing certain aspects of Canada, government funding serves to strengthen the discourse of Canada being a welcoming, inclusive, and multicultural country; the realities of post-colonial Canada do not fit this discourse so are actively excluded from knowledge transmission. In addition to Indigenous issues being excluded from settlement agency curricula, youth and youth workers at CoalitionTO* suggested that immigrants in Toronto were not learning about Indigenous issues in other institutions, such as school. For students enrolled in ESL classes, it is mandatory for students to take a Canadian history class; participants mentioned
that the class only covered the past 150 years of history. These findings suggest that not only is an inaccurate image of Canada being portrayed, but discussing the effects of colonization is actively avoided in favour of teaching White settler histories that reproduce the desired multiculturalism discourse. However, more recently at CoalitionTO* there has been increased resistance against the aims of funders and their interpretations of multiculturalism, which has been encouraged by Hannah*. She recently helped organize an Indigenous cross cultural awareness workshop for staff and Neena*, the youth worker who runs ArtAttack* is planning on collaborating with an Indigenous youth organization to facilitate a workshop series on Indigenous Art.

### 5.1.3 Aims of CoalitionTO*:
Both funders and settlement staff valued recreation programs and believed they were an effective means of facilitating youth settlement. But the stakeholders differentiated in their aims. The staff at the agency were less focused on using recreation to promote integration – they perceived value in recreational programming beyond simply using it to achieve another purpose. Hannah* believed that access to recreation was a “right for the youth”. She said:

> Recreation is a settlement need. They need a space to make friends in a safe environment where they had advice and people around that they trust and won’t judge them. Recreation takes a load of the kids and gives them the chance to blow off steam.

In comparison to funders, youth workers often emphasised that their aims for programming were less focused on integration and more focused on creating a safe space for youth to facilitate friendships, learn new skills, and have fun. When I asked Hara* why she runs the programs, she said:
To promote peer relationships within the program. Yeah, give them something to look forward to in their week. Something they do every week. They see people, they interact with people, they try new things, that why they come to programs.

The heavy emphasis on recreation at CoalitionTO* is reflected in the statistic that 10 of the 12 youth programs were recreational. The other two programs focused on employability skills and high school attainment. Other large multi-ethnic settlement agencies in Toronto similarly delivered high levels of youth recreational programs. The high number of youth recreation programs suggests that both settlement staff and funders believed in the power of sport to bring about social change, such as facilitating the settlement of immigrants. The overrepresentation of recreation and the lack of alternative programming, illustrates the positive values that are often assigned to sport. This overrepresentation may be problematic as recreational programs are increasingly utilized as a low-cost tool in place of broader social services (Coalter, 2010). There is also often a lack of evaluation surrounding the effectiveness of these recreational programs (Ngo, 2009).

However, the recreation and sports-based programs were appealing to youth and an effective means of developing trust with participants and facilitating outreach into settlement services. This finding is similar to Olliff’s (2008) study which investigated the use of the recreation in refugee resettlement. At CoalitionTO*, the outdoor recreation program RecU* and the Basketball club were effective at recruiting male youth, the population that youth workers believe are the hardest to reach. Through attending recreational programs, building relationships with the staff, and becoming familiar with the settlement services, findings suggest that participants were more likely to confide in staff and ask for support with other aspects of their settlement, such as skills training and employment. After attending several recreational sessions, I saw youth ask for assistance with their resumes, homework, and access to employment.
workshops. The youth workers believed that many of these youth would not have accessed these settlement services if it was not for the participant’s first attending sport and recreation programs. Similarly, Hartmann (2016) investigated the use of sport programs to access hard-to-reach youth within social services and found that recreational programming can be an effective means of reaching vulnerable youth, even if the programs that reach youth are based on social control.

5.1.3.1 Contrasting program aims: As discussed in the eligibility section above, the federal government often funded the programs for newly arrived immigrant and refugee youth, whereas, the programs for other youth participants were typically funded by provincial and municipal governments. Depending on the target population and the corresponding meanings that have been assigned to the youth, different program aims were assigned. As a part of the volunteer training at CoalitionTO*, I took part in an orientation workshop. One of the first slides outlined CoalitionTO’s* aims for the recreational program and included points such as: “To help integration, reduce unemployment, learn English, mitigate risky behaviours, combat loneliness and social isolation, learn new skills, and make friends with mainstream community”. In this section, I provide evidence that the program aims for different populations were based somewhat on the reproduction of stereotypes about Black urban youth and first-generation immigrants. These representations led to immigrant youth being perceived as deserving and model minorities, while second-generation youth were viewed as more undeserving and thus problematized.

I witnessed several youth workers discuss how they preferred to work with the first-generation youth because there were less behavioural problems, and they were more appreciative of their efforts. In comparison, when describing the first-generation youth, a staff member said:
They are so polite and appreciative they don’t get rowdy apart from regular teen drama. Especially with refugee families. Like they are over the top thankful and sometimes I wonder, I would be thankful too, if I was a refugee and going to a new place. There is also the belief that we are shoving it down their throat.

First, the differentiation of participants as appreciative versus unappreciative is problematic and reproduces saviour complexes surrounding social services and vulnerable young people. It also promotes the notion that some youth participants are deserving of programs and others are not. These ideologies were reflected in immigration policy and in the unequal distribution of funding. When Hannah* and I were discussing the funder’s attitudes towards first and second-generation youth, Hannah* said that the restrictive immigration system reproduced ideologies about who was a deserving immigrant. She said:

Even if you just look down to our immigration laws, Canada is very focused on bringing in wealthy and well-educated [people]. Which I think there is a problem inherent there…

Hannah* believed that the second-generation youth received less funding as a result of their lower human capital and socioeconomic class, in comparison to the newer cohorts of highly skilled immigrants who were admitted through the point system. These constructions of deserving and undeserving immigrant are reflective of Canada’s restrictive immigration selection policy, whereby only prosperous economic migrants and the neediest of refugees are seen as deserving of admittance to Canada.

In turn, substantially less funding was allocated to second-generation youth programs as the federal government perceived the first-generation youth as more deserving recipients. Throughout my time volunteering at CoalitionTO*, I witnessed instances where the second-generation youth participants were problematized – that is, they were seen as a social problem. I witnessed instances of staff discussing the youth’s bad behaviour during activities, their difficult family life, and using terms such as “rowdy” and “trouble makers” to describe the participants,
all the while their achievements were rarely discussed. However, Hara*, has worked predominantly with the racialized second-generation youth and has formed strong connections with many of the participants. The first time I met Hara* in my volunteering interview, she said that the participants at YouthClub* were lovely, but difficult to work with, and often scared off volunteers quickly. She also asked me to describe my experiences of working with challenging youth. Since this time, I have volunteered with both the first and the second-generation youth groups and from a recreation programmer perspective, there were fewer behavioural challenges at the first-generation youth programs. However, I argue that restrictive immigration policy and top-down funding racializes these second-generation youth and influences who is deemed to be deserving and undeserving of programming.

The first-generation youth programs focused on facilitating integration while the programs for racialized second-generation youth often aimed to “mitigate risky behaviours”. Social control has been cited as a common aim of sport and recreational programs for vulnerable youth, especially racialized inner city youth. In his book, *Midnight Basketball*, Hartmann (2016) describes how sport programs are often positioned as a positive response to youth crime. In this study, many of the racialized youth were of Afro/Caribbean heritage, from a lower socioeconomic class, lived in the inner city, and attended a poorly performing school. When I first met Hara*, she said that the YouthClub* program — aimed at racialized Black, African, Caribbean, inner-city, females - allowed the girls to be safe, keep out of trouble, and for their parents to be aware of their whereabouts. Encompassing these stereotypes, CoalitionTO* delivered a weekly basketball program at an inner-city school where the majority of participants were second-generation Somali males. Other settlement agencies in Toronto also ran weekly basketball programs for racialized, inner-city males and some of these programs were delivered
in partnership with local police. Many of these programs aimed at urban racialized youth were viewed as a means to mitigate the potential risks of anti-social behaviour and criminality by taking part in a socially acceptable activity. By contrast, social control aims were not prescribed to the first-generation youth programs, instead these participants were perceived as deserving.

I argue that these research findings can be attributed to the social constructions of immigrants and Blackness which, in turn, impacts the structure of the program and the attitudes of funders and staff. The first-generation youth participants (the children of economic migrants and refugees) were perceived as model minority immigrants due to their immigrant status, increased racial homogeneity, socioeconomic status, and parental human capital. Meanwhile, the second-generation youth were racialized as a result of the meanings ascribed to their Blackness, socio-economic class, and human capital.

5.2 Interpretations and negotiations of the program

The section above investigated the structure of CoalitionTO* programs, specifically how different aims are assigned to youth programming dependent on the population. The following section explores the interpretations of programming, including autonomy, programming, and social networks.

5.2.1 Autonomy: The level of autonomy that youth possessed within the program was highly dependent on the target population. In many of the programs, youth had minimal decision-making opportunities. This narrative was increasingly prominent in the programs aimed specifically at first-generation youth; second-generation youth typically possessed more autonomy. Various programs aimed at first-generation youth rarely asked for the youth’s input in
programming. As such, many of the programs did not meet the needs of young people.

Throughout fieldwork I saw several examples of youth being afforded minimal autonomy:

(1) Due to staffing placements, the health workshop and GreenHands* programs were delivered in place of regular drop-in programs, such as RecU* and YouthClub*, as these programs ran on the same days. Youth had minimal choice regarding their participation as their existing program was replaced and they were taken to the new program by the youth workers. For the first few weeks of the GreenHands program* many of the participants from YouthClub* attended. However, the majority of this group detested gardening – they did not see the relevance within their lives nor did they enjoy the taste of vegetables. The youth typically spent ten minutes out of the two-hour session gardening and the remainder of the session chatting, seeking out some “cute guys” nearby, or eating McDonalds to mitigate the potential effects of the nearby vegetables!

(2) In the two weeks leading up to the open house at CoalitionTO*, the activities delivered at RecU*, ArtAttack*, and YouthClub* were replaced by making decorations to help “brighten the centre up”. However, many of the youth were reluctant to participate and they wanted to do something active. Volunteers and staff were the only people who were engaged in making decorations. Youth spent two RecU* sessions spinning each other around on swivel chairs and keeping a balloon up in the air.

The programs aimed at second-generation youth typically allowed more autonomy; however, this was also dependent on the staff member delivering the program. Youth workers had learnt from prior experiences that if they did not allow youth decision making capabilities and plan programs accordingly, then the participants would likely be unwilling to take part and become disruptive. From my experiences of conducting fieldwork at YouthClub*, autonomy was
a prerequisite to youth engagement. I witnessed several instances where activities were organized for the second-generation youth without their input, and as a result youth did not enjoy the activities and openly expressed disapproval. However, allowing youth autonomy within programming did not appear to be as necessary when engaging first-generation youth. Regardless of whether the first-generation youth enjoyed the activities, they were less likely to speak out, disrupt the session, or ask for more agency. Because of the youth’s reactions, youth workers may have assumed that first-generation participants enjoyed the activities and that the youth did not desire more agency. Hara* describes some of the differences between the autonomy of the first and second-generation participants:

Some of the biggest differences are that newcomer youth are a little more open and they are sort of more eager to learn, to try things; whereas, with Canadian youth you have to really basically take in what they want to do, what they want to see as the program. They take a little more ownership on things that they do because they know so much more, like they have been here, they know the system, they know their city, what they like more.

The differences in participant autonomy suggest that immigrant youth may have been perceived as more passive than the second-generation youth due to the short amount of the time that they had been in Canada, and their corresponding lack of knowledge and immigrant status. These findings argue that the first-generation immigrant youth were viewed through a more paternalistic lens than the second-generation youth.

5.2.2 Programming: As discussed previously, the funders had a large influence over the types of programs and activities that were delivered, and at the core of these programs was an assimilationist focus. In this section, I describe in detail the types of recreational programs that were organized through CoalitionTO* and how these activities promoted assimilation into the dominant culture.
Similar to other recreational agencies, the majority of the CoalitionTO* youth programs were delivered on a drop-in basis. Jeanes, O’Connor and Alfrey (2014) found that drop-in style programs were vital to engaging refugee youth populations. Many sport for development programs are highly structured and utilize traditional sports e.g. soccer or basketball. However, youth workers were conscious that many of the participants, especially the female participants, did not enjoy traditional sports activities, so they offered a wider variety of more unstructured, recreational activities. The types of programs offered at CoalitionTO* included a wide variety of sport, art, games, cultural excursions, field trips, outdoor activities, and workshops. Sport only constituted a small portion of programming, such as the weekly Basketball program, PeerLead* offering soccer once a month, and RecU* and YouthClub* offering occasional sports such as yoga, dance, and indoor ball games.

CoalitionTO* made a conscious decision to offer a mixture of both novel and accessible activities that were popular within dominant Canadian culture. Accessible activities were low/no cost, took place locally, and were intended to increase the youth’s knowledge of nearby opportunities and promote accessible physical activity. Activities included: beach volleyball, hiking routes, and ice skating. As discussed in Part Two, after participating in these activities with CoalitionTO*, many youth did go back to these local venues and participate with their friends and family. On the other hand, the incorporation of novel activities into the program was less focused around promoting physical activity and more focused on providing opportunities for participants to try new activities that, due to barriers such as transportation, stereotyping and cost, may not have been accessible to immigrant or minority communities. These activities included ice skating, canoeing, skiing, camping, tree top trekking etc. Many of the novel activities were also outdoor activities which were popular in dominant culture and commonly
associated with the Canadian identity, the implications of which will be described in the section below. The youth workers were aware that due to the various barriers, youth would more than likely not be able to participate regularly in these so-called novel activities, but they believed that if youth possessed knowledge and/or experience of these popular recreation activities, that this might increase their feelings of inclusion within the dominant culture.

As discussed above, many of the recreational programs incorporated aspects of outdoor recreation. Both workers and funders also saw value in organizing outdoors activities and believed that these activities played a beneficial role in the integration of immigrants. Due to the high cost and geographical location of outdoor activities, many of the programs were limited in their ability to offer regular outdoor recreation programming; a couple of opportunities were typically offered per year. To facilitate the delivery of outdoor programs, most CoalitionTO* programs sought funding from outdoors recreation NGOs and private sports-based companies. In comparison, due to the presence of federal funding, RecU* had the funds to offer between one and two outdoor activities per month, including more expensive activities such as Tree Top trekking and skiing. Hannah* said that the intended program description from the funders outlined a sports-based program with a heavy focus on dominant sports (soccer and basketball) and winter sports; however, due to Hannah’s* professional and personal interest in outdoor education, she proposed a greater outdoor recreation focus. The funders endorsed this idea and since this time have allocated the most funds towards the delivery of outdoors activities. Hannah* discussed why she incorporated outdoor recreational activities into the program:

[I] took it upon myself to make it more of an outdoors rec program just because like without the idea of trying to push Canadian culture down people’s throats but also being like this is something that is enjoyed by Canadians and new Canadians and it’s a part of Canada that is like a big part of the first nations and Indigenous culture.
These outdoor activities are commonly engaged in by the dominant culture and are often deeply ingrained in the dominant Canadian identity. In a survey on patriotism and Canadian identity, national parks were voted by 60% of respondents as very important to national identity (Environics, 2003). However, indigenous and visible minorities are often excluded from outdoors spaces due to socioeconomic inequalities, diverse cultural capital, or discrimination (Johnson, Bowker, & Cordell, 2004); there are significantly lower levels of participation in outdoor recreation for visible minorities (Byrne & Wolch, 2009). The staff at CoalitionTO* suggested that participation in and/or knowledge of these outdoor activities may have the ability to integrate immigrants by helping them to fit in with dominant Canadian culture. Outdoor and winter activities were also viewed favourably by funders as an integration tool. The IRCC recently awarded CoalitionTO* a large grant to allow the first-generation youth to take part in winter outdoors activities, such as curling and downhill skiing. As displayed in the popularity of hockey, winter sports are popular pastimes in the Canadian dominant culture; therefore, it is unsurprising that many of the CoalitionTO* programs were winter activities. Youth workers commonly emphasised to participants how most Canadians learnt to ice skate at a young age and that it was an important skill. The perceived assimilationist value of these activities suggests that participation in recreational activities is a facet of cultural capital that is heavily valued in Canada and may facilitate social mobility. However, the outdoors is a heteronormative space of Whiteness, able-ism, and masculinity (Bryne & Wolch, 2009) and participation in these activities may promote integration into the dominant culture at the expense of an immigrant’s home culture. These findings provide evidence that the choice to focus on outdoor recreation was connected to the Whiteness of Canada and expressions of Canadian identity.
In Hannah’s quote, she also described how outdoors activities are connected with Indigenous culture and could provide a space for reconciliation and learning. However, outdoor recreational activities can also “reproduce Whiteness through the dominant discourse of colonial innocence, uninhabited wilderness, and the erasure of indigenous people” (Gress & Hall, 2008:115). The types of outdoor activities that received funding were typically activities that were enjoyed by White Canadians. As a White Canadian, Hannah* was engaged in these activities regularly and wanted the youth to experience similar enjoyment. However, Hannah* was also cautious of promoting dominant White ideologies through outdoor-based programming:

Because I am a White Canadian, it’s definitely one of those things where I don’t want to push my own things on these kids but they are also kids so you kind of do, you want to be the adult that is like ‘try new things’ but I always have to like check in with myself like am I promoting this colonial Canadian agenda.

The research findings presented in this section suggest that due to the association between outdoor recreation, and White Canadian identity, outdoor recreation was utilized by CoalitionTO* and funders as a means to integrate youth into the dominant culture.

5.2.2.1. Teaching values: The section above provides evidence that outdoor recreation was utilized as a tool for integration because it was perceived as an important expression of White Canadian identity. The findings also suggest that liberal democratic values were perceived as a manifestation of Canadian national identity. The CoalitionTO* programs were seen by funders as a site to promote liberal democratic values, a facet of cultural capital highly valued in Canada. The youth workers recognized the importance of liberal values and believed that it was important to teach these values to facilitate the integration of youth and promote social cohesion. The first-generation youth participants were from diverse ethnocultural and religious backgrounds and possessed some beliefs that did not conform to the liberal democratic values
which so heavily underpin the Canadian identity. For example, some youth were from countries where homosexuality is punishable by death and where domestic and sexual violence against females is more culturally accepted. Many of the RecU* participants were relatively new to Canada and, therefore, some youth lacked knowledge of dominant understandings of Canadian norms and values, such as multiculturalism, gender, and sexual equality. Through programming, youth workers aimed to create a safe space for youth to be curious and ask questions, while also addressing sexist, homophobic, or racist remarks/behaviour. The extract below was taken from my field notes after an incident at the gardening program:

One of the staff members, Jackson*, who volunteers at the partner organization is transsexual and has transitioned to male. Jackson* came along to the garden to weigh the harvest that had just been collected. After Jackson* had left, a Syrian/Lebanese, Muslim youth, Mustafa* asked Hannah* bluntly if “that was a boy or a girl?” Hannah* then calmly explained that “gender is fluid and dynamic, and Jackson* has made the decision to now identify as a male and that is his decision and is okay”. Mustafa* jokingly replied “why can’t we just call them he/she?” Hannah* replied “that was not appropriate and those kind of homophobic remarks are not tolerated here in Canada as it’s okay for people to not identify with their assigned sex”.

I also witnessed several other instances during fieldwork, such as when a male youth said “girls and boys should not play sport together”. Hannah* and I had a discussion about using the recreational program to teach Canadian values and she said that during programming she will always correct the first-generation youth if they use sexist or homophobic language because she wants to create an inclusive environment and show the participants that one of the greatest things about Canada is the value placed on liberalism, However, she said that she also recognises that these youth come from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds and may hold values which contradict liberalism, differences that are to be respected. These example reflect how the program emphasised liberal values which are highly regarded in Canada, while actively discouraging behaviour that does not conform to these values. These findings also demonstrate how deeply
liberalism underpins Canadian identity and how conformity to these values is perceived as non-negotiable for newly arrived immigrants.

These findings provide evidence that the programs were designed by funders to promote and teach the dominant version of Canada, namely enjoyment of outdoor recreation and abiding by liberal values. The CoalitionTO* staff endorsed and promoted these values within their everyday lives and through their programs because they perceived them to be meaningful expressions of Canadian identity. However, these findings also suggest that youth workers were cautious of pushing a particular version of Canada onto youth because they did not believe it was in the best interests of youth and their settlement. These findings highlight some of the tensions that occur when defining integration into the mainstream culture, especially in a multicultural city, such as Toronto, where there is statistically not a majority culture and people hold diverse values.

5.3. Social networks:

This section describes how the CoalitionTO* recreation programs influenced the youth’s social networks and the impact of these networks on the settlement process.

Youth workers commonly said that it was important for them to form solid relationships with youth. Staff had strong knowledge of the participants, their school life, families, and friendship circles and regularly checked in with the youth. Youth workers were often a first point of contact if youth wanted to speak to an older non-family member. I witnessed youth asking for long-term support regarding serious mental health issues and I was in the presence of youth workers when they have received phone calls from youth in distress. Many former participants also kept in contact with or visited youth workers at the centre.
In addition to youth workers building strong rapport with participants, another stated aim of the program was cross-cultural integration. This aim was apparent as the first-generation programs were aimed at youth from diverse backgrounds. Another listed aim of the funders was to help participants “make friends with the mainstream community”. However, this was not actually evident in programming; youth were not offered opportunities to develop relationships with non-immigrants. Hara* and Hannah* said that promoting friendships within the mainstream community was not one of their key priorities for the program; instead their emphasis was on promoting friendships among immigrant youth. The youth workers often discussed the exclusionary nature of mainstream leisure spaces. These results suggest that the programs were structured exclusively for first-generation youth in a bid to create a safe space, free from racism. The emphasis appeared to be on immigrant youth developing networks with other immigrants, with whom they were presumed to share similar experiences of migration and settlement. The programs were viewed as a space of belonging for participants who may have experienced social exclusion in other leisure spaces. Hannah* said:

So, I do think that connecting with other newcomers who have those struggled and stuff. I think about if you go back to high school if you were feeling intimidated by the popular group. What did you do? You make a group of your own nerdy friends and you felt like, you felt stronger, like you are okay to be yourself, just being accepted by a group that’s important.

These research findings provide evidence that the settlement agency was a site of bonding and linking social capital, and CoalitionTO* valued these types of social capital in the integration process of migrants. These program aims also differed from many immigrant sport programs that typically define integration as bridging social capital with the dominant culture. Furthermore, the findings suggest that youth workers acknowledged the prevalence of racism in society and
wished to deliver programming exclusively for immigrant youth in a bid to protect the youth and to help participants build capital with other immigrant youth.

Exclusive programs were also delivered for first and second-generation youth participants, this was aimed at promoting bonding social capital. The youth workers cited conflicts between the first and second-generation youth participants as reasons for the delivery of separate programs for different populations. This quote from Hara* discusses some of the challenges of working with these different populations:

I have had some experiences, some challenges where um you know the Canadian youth and the newcomer youth do not interact they don't like being with each other. Sometimes I have to be mindful depending on the group of kids. I have to like not do this together or it will not end well, or nobody will benefit from this.

As Hara* noted, due to previous negative experiences, which will be discussed in Part Two, many of the programs are now separated for first and second-generation youth, though mixed programming still occurs during special workshops, volunteering events, and field trips. When I asked Hannah* what were the challenges with delivering mixed programming for first and second-generation youth, she said that “there is pressure for second-generation, there is pressure to distance themselves from newcomers because they are different.” These research findings provide evidence that youth workers acknowledged the prevalence of racial hierarchies based on levels of assimilation into the dominant White society. These findings also reflect broader societal attitudes whereby assimilation into the mainstream culture is viewed as the desirable end product of immigration to Canada.

Part Two: Participant Experiences

The second half of this chapter investigates the experiences of the youth who take part in recreational programming at CoalitionTO*. Similar to the structure in part one, which
investigated the perspectives of funders and the settlement agency, part two explores both the structure and outcomes of the program. To provide further context, this next section briefly describes some of the youth’s experiences with sport and recreation in Toronto, before describing their experiences within the settlement agency itself.

5.3. Sport experiences

Upon arrival in Canada, many of the first-generation youth participants in this research said that their physical activity patterns changed. Similar to the Polish and African adult migrants whose leisure experiences in London, England were explored in Long, Hylton and Spacklen’s study (2014), many of the immigrant youth disclosed that their leisure experiences were less pleasurable in comparison to their source country. Reasons typically stemmed from a lack of financial, cultural, and social capital. Various participants stopped participating in physical activity due to a lack of social networks in Canada. Rahman* said: “Like when I came here, I didn’t have anybody to play basketball with, I didn’t have support and my dad didn’t really care.” Similarly, Yin* and her parents used to play multiple sports in China, but when she migrated here, she no longer had anybody to play with, so she stopped. Alongside a lack of social capital, many youth also lacked economic capital and knowledge of local recreational facilities, which became barriers to participation.

By contrast, some youth believed that there were increased recreational opportunities in Toronto in comparison to their home countries because recreation was more affordable and geographically accessible. Several youths participated regularly in community sports such as soccer, basketball, and badminton; they discussed how much they enjoyed playing and how they were able to develop their social networks. For example, Emily* played badminton at school
three times a week and competed on the varsity team; she said that playing with her friends is one of the highlights of her week. Ade* previously played professional soccer in Sudan and Chad and through joining a soccer club in Toronto, he said that he was able to utilize his high skill level to make friends. He said: “I am a good player which means that they like you, talk to you.”

However, not all of the youth’s experiences of taking part in mainstream sport in Toronto were so positive. These findings align with other scholars who found that mainstream sport can be an exclusionary space for newly arrived immigrants, thus many immigrants prefer to spend their leisure time with other people in their ethnic-cultural group (Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfry, 2015; Spaaij, 2014; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000). Rahman* played basketball at a high level in his home country and tried to join a team when he arrived in Canada. He said:

So I came here and was like basketball is obviously better here so I started playing basketball here. It wasn’t that great. Like I was better than most of the people but on the team I couldn’t beat tall guys...They were just too tall. They were super tall. So I gave up. Rahman* is Persian and spoke several times in the interview about the juxtaposition between his “skinny, short” brown body and the basketball court. He expressed that he was often the only brown body on the basketball court and many of the players were Black or Latino; he felt out of place in comparison to other players. Rahman* said that he was often seen as a “brown nerd” and these meanings contrasted with the hypermasculine space of the basketball court. After these experiences, Rahman* said that he later tried to join a community soccer club, so that he could still play competitive sport; however, he experienced a negative reception from the other players:

I miss sports back home…I tried to join a soccer club here, it didn’t really work out. I didn’t really like the people, they were not friendly but like right now got community centre and play soccer sometimes.
In the quote above, Rahman* described how much he missed playing competitive sport and that he had negative experiences participating in mainstream sport in Canada. He later said that the other players did not make an effort to include him. Rahman’s negative experiences led him to seek sports opportunities outside of the mainstream and now he participates during CoalitionTO* programming or rents community spaces with his immigrant friends. Many other youth participants such as Yin* and Valeria* were also uninvolved in community or school sport and their main provider of recreation were settlement agencies. These findings highlight the exclusive nature of mainstream sports clubs and the need for inclusive immigrant and co-ethnic sports and recreation providers.

5.4 Structure

The following section explores the youth’s experiences of participating in different types of programming at CoalitionTO*. Reasons for participation which were most cited included having fun, making friends and facilitating stress relief. The youth also described how the recreational programs helped facilitate their integration in Toronto; however, there were few opportunities for youth to maintain aspects of their home culture.

Youth generally expressed satisfaction with the drop-in style of programming as it allowed them flexibility with school, work and family and they did not have to worry about making a weekly commitment. With the exception of a handful of participants, different youth typically came each week and would pick the sessions they wished to attend based on the activity offered. The highest number of participants showed up for active and novel programs. In addition to enjoying the active opportunities, the results show that participants also enjoyed learning new skills and trying novel activities.
5.4.1 Youth reasons for participation:

In Part One of this chapter, I examined the perspectives of funders and the settlement agency and suggested that the program aims for first-generation populations were typically focused on promoting aspects of integration, such as learning English, developing knowledge of Canadian norms, and facilitating cross-cultural integration. However, these aims were not as recognized explicitly by youth and the majority of participants did not commonly cite integration or settlement as a key reason for participation. Both first and second-generation youth typically cited making friends, relieving stress, trying new activities, and having fun as reasons for taking part. However, I believe that these factors positively influence settlement.

The majority of youth revealed that they initially felt isolated when they arrived in Canada and that this was a motivator to participate in programming. I asked Ade* why he thinks youth attend programming and he said “The main thing is friends. I think by involving in these programs and making new friends, it’s gonna be a reason for them to go”. Later in this chapter, I elaborate on the different social networks youth developed through programming. Here, suffice it to say that the majority of participants asserted that taking part in the programs was fun and allowed them the opportunity to escape some of the stressors of settlement and school. Jacko* said: “The thing [this program] it’s just different. It’s fun… it’s a relief, to get away from the real world, have fun for like an hour or a two, spend time with your friends”. Overall, interviews with youth and participant observations indicated that the youth participants enjoyed the structure of the recreational programs at CoalitionTO®. Rahman* expressed:

I loved it. It was so fun! They give us pizza and everything it was so fun and made a lot of friends and it was so good, so yeah I started going every Tuesday after school, having fun and we will play soccer once a month all together. I love it, if it was up to me I would go every week, every single week. So like yeah and then I became a peer leader because I love the program so much.
In the quote above Rahman* describes how he attends the program every week because he finds it fun and he made many friends. Prior to attending CoalitionTO* recreation programs, Rahman* found it difficult to make friends, especially since he had not met any other people of Persian ethnicity and his ESL program was not ethnically diverse. Through programming, Rahman* made many other immigrant friends. He later said that he become a peer leader so that he could help other immigrant youth and “show them the way”.

Participants seemed to like the fact that despite the constant change in their lives, the program occurred at the same time every week and became part of their routine. Jacko* said: “There were the usual’s which were us, we never stopped, we never stopped coming there, I guess grade 12 [we] graduated, but, grade 10 until grade 12 we were avid goers”. In addition, various youth believed that taking part in the program was good for their mental health and helped to relieve stress, which may be beneficial within settlement as previous research suggests first-generation youth are at an increased risk of mental health issues (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003). Valeria* said: “I don’t know, you let go of your mentality problems, everything that build up during the day, you just let it go when you are at program”.

Clearly, migration and settlement can be a stressful process for young immigrants due to high levels of change and adjustment. Recreation was also previously utilized by many of the youth in their source country as an outlet to relieve stress, make friends, and have fun; the findings of this study suggest that providing similar leisure spaces for first-generation youth in Toronto was beneficial. In this sense, recreation had a somewhat less obvious, yet positive effect on integration. This aligns with Doherty and Taylor (2007) who found that recreation can provide opportunities for immigrant youth to have fun and escape the stressors of daily life. It is important to note that many of the second-generation youth also led stressful lives; they lived in
poverty and worked part-time to provide for their families, alongside attending school and additional domestic and childcare responsibilities. The programs allowed these youth opportunities to escape some of these stressors as well.

5.4.1.1 Integration: Despite first-generation youth not explicitly stating that the programs helped facilitate their integration/assimilation, English was the dominant language spoken at youth programs and youth were exposed to Canadian values through programming. As a result, youth were able to develop facets of cultural capital valued in Canada. This occurred in several ways. Firstly, at the program, youth were able to practice their English with other ESL learners. When I interviewed Valeria*, I asked her whether she had gained any skills from the program and she said “Well, one of them is yeah my skill of, my skill of English, communicate like quickly in this way”. Throughout fieldwork, the English language proficiency of many of the young people did improve; however, this was more of an outcome, than an explicit reason why youth took part and it is difficult to isolate the variables. Moreover, some youth noted that their lack of English proficiency was a barrier to full participation in program.

Secondly, the CoalitionTO* programs were used as a space to teach dominant values in Canada, from high school etiquette, to gender equality, and knowledge of popular pastimes. These programs were often separate from the weekly drop-in programs, were delivered in partnership with other organizations (e.g. schools and NGOs), and took the format of a one-off event or workshop series. If the workshop coincided with the drop-in program, youth workers often brought along drop-in participants. A couple of years ago a program was formed in partnership with several ESL schools and was targeted at immigrant youth who were about to begin high school in Toronto. During our interview, Jacko* who has been in Canada for five years, recounted his confusion during his first day of high school “When I first came to school,
they were playing the national anthem and everybody is standing up and I was so confused, I was like what are they doing?!”. The program aims to provide students with an overview of the Canadian education system and classroom etiquette. Rahman* experienced the program as a newly arrived immigrant and later as a peer mentor for Mia*. He said:

We help them and then answer their questions and teach them simple things like lock and unlock their lockers and stuff, like showing them how to dress for school and everything. It was quite cool time. I met a lot of people in the program too.

The aim of the program is to facilitate a smoother transition for youth and minimize disruption to other members of the school community by teaching immigrant youth about the expected social norms. The program taught first-generation youth facets of cultural capital that are valued within Canadian high schools such as lockers use, school attire, appropriate classroom behaviour, and the structure of the school day. High school transitions programs for ESL students were seen as valuable by youth in helping them adapt to Canadian high school. Both Mia* and Rahman* attended this program, said that it was highly beneficial, and later went on to volunteer as peer mentors.

Yin* also mentioned that she took part in a six-week workshop series in conjunction with a public health organization. The program allowed first-generation youth to expand their knowledge of healthy relationships and learn more about sexuality. When I asked her to describe the program Yin* said “It’s about sexy [sex], like the 7 colourful flag [pride flag] and what different people like [sexuality] and they show you photos and stuff about your body”. Many of the first-generation youth were from conservative, religious countries; this program taught liberal values which are generally respected in Canada, such as gender equality and LGBTQ awareness.

Through the program, youth were also able to participate in and develop their knowledge of winter activities such as skiing, ice skating, and curling, which are facets of cultural capital.
valued by the dominant culture in Canada, but not in many of the youth’s source countries. This finding demonstrates how capital formation is often racialized (Long, Hylton & Spacklen, 2014). The majority of the first-generation youth had limited experience of these activities; no first-generation participants had been camping or skiing before and the youth said that these activities were not popular within their home cultures. Within Canada, Whiteness is normalized in these leisure spaces and participation in these activities is much lower for visible minorities (Byrne & Wolch, 2009). However, prior to migration, Mia*, a British-Albanian, possessed greater sport-related cultural capital that was valued in Canada. While living in England her parents taught her to ice skate and she had been skiing. In addition, due to their levels of cultural capital and Whiteness, Mia* and her family regularly participated in these activities in Canada and their entry within these spaces typically went unexamined.

As discussed above, the funders and settlement staff believed that participation in these activities would help youth develop knowledge of popular activities in Canada and increase feelings of inclusion. Doherty and Taylor (2007) found that a lack of knowledge about popular mainstream sports can further promote the social exclusion of immigrant youth. These views were also held by the youth and they saw these activities as forms of cultural capital which were influential in their inclusion to the dominant culture. During the first session at the ice rink after seeing all of the young children skating confidently, Sassanna* said “I feel like all Canadians can ice skate, I wish that was me”. Then, after a few sessions when the youth felt more comfortable on the ice, I heard a group of participants say that being able to ice skating makes them feel more Canadian. Similar to the funders and settlement staff, youth associated these popular winter activities with the dominant mainstream culture and, through taking part, believed that they were able to assimilate through developing a facet of cultural capital that it valued in Canada. These
findings display the strong desire that youth possessed to be and feel Canadian and that they associated a Canadian identity with sport and physical culture. Simultaneously, the findings show how youth acknowledged and accepted that the relationship between physical culture and Canadian identity is proscribed by the mainstream culture. The youth were aware that they should participate in specific recreational activities if they wanted to be Canadian and they believed that to be Canadian was to ice skate. These findings display the impact of dominant physical culture in national identity formation and provide evidence that it can both facilitate and impede inclusion into the mainstream.

5.4.1.2 Barriers to maintaining home culture: As discussed in Part One, due to the integrative aims of programming, no youth activities at CoalitionTO* were designed to promote or allow youth to share aspects of their home culture; instead the aims were to reproduce dominant culture, which is more closely aligned with assimilation. However, I also regularly witnessed youth sharing aspects of their source countries physical culture with other youth, in an informal setting, even though this was not part of programming. These findings correspond to Joppke (2012) who argues that in line with multiculturalism, it is seen as more accepting for immigrants to share soft aspects of their home culture, such as song, dance, and food, because unlike aspects of hard culture, such as values, religion, and language, they were not perceived as a threat to the liberal democracy. In my research findings, youth commonly shared games, dances, and recreational activities from their source country. For example, at the drop-in program one day, a couple of girls were dancing to popular chart music when Mia* asked myself and another girl if we would like to learn an Albanian folk dance. We said yes and she proceeded to teach us the steps. I have also witnessed youth teaching each other games and songs that are popular in their source countries. These findings suggest that, at an informal level, first-
generation youth felt comfortable sharing aspects of their home culture with other youth during CoalitionTO* programs. In addition, this sharing process was often centred on physical culture, thus providing evidence for the significance that immigrant youth assign to their source countries physical culture. However, immigrants’ home culture was not actively encouraged through programming, thus demonstrating assimilationist programming aims.

5.5 Interpretations

This next section explores the outcomes of youth participation in the recreational programs. The section addresses youth autonomy, social networks, conflicts and separation between different participants, volunteering, and the experiences of sport/recreation after participating in CoalitionTO* programs.

5.5.1 Autonomy: As discussed in Part Two, first-generation participants were typically given minimal autonomy within the structure of the program and were less likely to request more autonomy compared to the second-generation youth, who spoke out and demanded more autonomy. The top-down structure seen within the first-generation youth programs at CoalitionTO* is a common attribute of many sport for development programs, which are often characterized by a lack of youth autonomy and even paternalistic ideologies (Coalter, 2010). Depending on the youth worker who delivered the program, the levels of autonomy did vary; participants at Peer Lead* and YouthClub* tended to have the most autonomy, while RecU* and ArtAttack* participants typically had less. One of the youth workers recounted a story from a session at YouthClub*, she had decided she wanted to bring in a yoga instructor. When the girls saw the yoga mats, they initially refused to take part. It took the youth worker over 10 minutes of bribing the youth (with poutine!) during the next field trip to get them to take part. When the yoga positions started to become more difficult, the girls started to become frustrated with
themselves and the teacher as they were unable to perform the positions. They ended up being disruptive which caused the teacher to become frustrated. The girls’ reaction was to get angry and shout at the instructor, which caused the session to finish early.

In comparison, many of the immigrant youth commented that they did not mind having less autonomy and would not alter programming. The lack of autonomy was viewed as problematic by several youth though, Yin*, who is an ArtAttack* and RecU* participant, desired to have more input in decision making. She said: “Ask us what we want to do, not like them, they just design the program before like asking us which games or something”. In the instance of GreenHands* and RecU*, low autonomy often led to decreased attendance as programs did not meet the needs of youth. Youth autonomy varied heavily depending on the youth worker.

These findings do not necessarily suggest that immigrant youth lacked the desire to possess increased autonomy; rather, they did not speak out to request more autonomy and cause disruptions in programming. By contrast, the second-generation youth demanded more autonomy; it was a necessity for them to willingly participate and enjoy the program. In this way, differences in autonomy were connected to length of time spent in Canada. Second-generation youth possessed stronger knowledge of their city and of local opportunities and were typically less afraid of speaking out against authority figures. In contrast, the first-generation participants seemed reluctant to challenge youth workers because they perceived them to be experts and to know what was in their best interests. Mia* said: “[the youth workers] just like telling us like, this is what we are gonna do and this is supposed to be fun for you.” These findings correspond with those discussed in Part One and the literature; some staff viewed first-generation youth through a paternalistic lens and assumed that they knew what was in their best interests.
5.5.2 Social networks: As discussed briefly in the youth recreation section, many of the participants joined as a means of making friends; this was itself an outcome of programming. Sassanna* said: “My friends [joined] too so I wasn’t alone. I joined with two friends.” When I asked Mia* what she took away from program she said: “Friendship probably. I have never had a really good a really good friendship, I created really good friends and they made me not shy.” Before programs, youth would commonly message each other to see who was attending and if their closest friends were not going, they were often less likely to attend. With this in mind, in the next section, divided into three parts, I argue that through programming, first-generation participants were able to develop stronger bridging social capital and second-generation youth were able to create stronger bonding social capital. In this section, I utilize Putnam’s and Bourdieu’s conceptualizations of social capital.

5.5.2.1 First-generation youth: Many of the participants described their experiences of being a racialized immigrant in Toronto and said that they had experienced discrimination with Canadian youth at school or within local community. Youth also discussed feelings of isolation due to leaving their friends at home and experiencing difficulties making friends in Canada. Many of the first-generation youth when they arrived in Canada had to start from scratch rebuilding their social networks. Ade* said “I had my family. But friends very lonely. Back home [I] had many friends all beside me and here I feel lonely sometimes. My family have different lives”. Many of the youth stressed that it took them between several months and one year to begin making friends and that despite initially experiencing difficulty in making friends in Canada, they were able to build friendships and develop a sense of belonging through the CoalitionTO* recreational program. Valeria said*:
[what] I like about CoalitionTO* if you feel like you don’t have friends, they offer the opportunity to make new ones (laughing). I mean, I have never found any mean person at CoalitionTO*. I mean new participant or new member are like ‘let’s be friends.’ They start talking and they even start telling you their lives, you’ll be there like but that’s cool, because that’s the way you open to others, you like it makes you feel I can be open to that person.

In the above quote, Valeria* described how the program was a safe space from discrimination and racism and how this was a motivation to participate. The first-generation youth group who took part in RecU* and ArtAttack* programs were heterogeneous and included males and females, from 14-24 years old, from diverse ethno-cultural and religious backgrounds. Youth were able to develop high bridging social capital as they were building networks with other immigrant youth from diverse cultures. From my observations, the high levels of ethnic diversity (there was no ethnic majority) and inclusivity of the program, contributed to friendships not being built on racial lines. The space was not exclusive, new participants were warmly welcomed by existing participants and youth workers into the program. Participants tried to engage new members in conversation and involve them in the activities. However, many of the participants who were in their late teens onwards tended to separate themselves from the younger ones. Ade* said: “I know people, but not friends really, they are so young. You know them, I am not looking down at them, but I want people of my age, I don’t want to hang with them”.

Despite diverse ethnocultural backgrounds, first-generation youth were also able to develop bonding social capital. Bonding can be described as developing networks with like-minded people in a homogenous group (Putnam, 2000). Regardless of the diverse ethnocultural backgrounds of youth, they possessed the commonality of being a young immigrant in Toronto and the associated settlement challenges. The majority of participants were learning English as a second language, adapting to the Canadian educational system, navigating a new city and
undergoing intense change in their lives. Through my observations, youth commonly discussed their settlement experiences during each program and supported each other through sharing their challenges and achievements. Participants highlighted both the role of certain individuals and the group in facilitating these feelings of belonging. Mia* discussed the importance of having one good friend to help you to navigate your new life, support you, and help you make new friends. On her first day of program, Mia* met Leslie*, who had been in Canada approximately a year and they exchanged phone numbers. Leslie* then took Mia* to explore the city and showed her how to use the subway and bus. Other participants saw the value in becoming part of a group to facilitate feelings of belonging in Toronto. Valeria* said: “One way they can adapt is by involving themselves into a group. That’s the one thing, you identifying within a group, so you can keep going”. These findings are similar to Long, Hylton and Spacklen (2014) who found that bridging social capital and constantly trying to “fit in” is exhausting and instead immigrants can use their leisure time to seek belonging within ethno or immigrant specific groups, which can provide a safe space for newly arrived immigrants. These findings provide evidence that the bonding social capital developed among the youth allowed for a sense of belonging and inclusion, which is important in the settlement process.

5.5.2.2 Second-generation: In comparison to the first-generation youth, the social networks of the second-generation youth facilitated stronger bonding social capital; however, there were fewer opportunities to develop bridging social capital. To provide further explanation, I will draw on my experiences of working with the participants at YouthClub*. This program has consistently been delivered by Hara* and is one of the longest standing recreation programs at CoalitionTO*. The majority of the ten participants attended each week throughout the past two years. The high bonding social capital was evident in the homogeneity of the participants. The
participants were female, attended grade 11 at the same school, and the majority were second-generation Afro-Caribbean and Muslim. Given these participant demographics, the gender-segregated nature of this space allowed for higher bonding social capital. For example, while participating in intense physical activity at YouthClub*, participants felt comfortable removing their hijab.

However, as a result of the high bonding social capital, the space was highly exclusive and unwelcoming to new participants who did not share some of the group commonalities mentioned above. When I first started volunteering, Hara*, who runs the girls group said to me “they do not take well to new people, they have scared away other participants before”. I saw these dynamics for myself when Yin*, a Chinese international student, from a higher socio-economic class, who possessed a low level of English started attending the program. The existing participants made minimal effort to engage Yin* in conversation, they only spoke to her when they mocked her accent or encouraged her to say rude slang words that she did not know the meaning of. The findings provide evidence that this space was inclusive to youth, but to facilitate these feelings of inclusivity for participants, others first had to be excluded from this space: inclusion came at the expense of those who were not included.

Through the high levels of bonding social capital and the exclusionary nature of the space, I argue that the YouthClub* program was seen as a safe space for participants to reproduce Black culture. As a White, British Immigrant, and Masters student, I was very much an outsider in this space, and found it hard to build rapport due to our diversity of our lived experiences. Many of these young women used street slang, rap music, fashion, and promiscuous booty dancing to reproduce aspects of Black culture. Similar to Thangaraj’s (2015) findings on co-ethnic basketball spaces, race-based insults and ‘banter’ were commonly used by participants
as a way to build fraternity and feelings of belonging. The participants would regularly discuss who was the “most Black” and these debates would compare topics such as who went to the most parties, got the worst grades, did the most slutty dancing, and who’s mum ‘pages’ (confronts/disciplines) them the most. These findings provide evidence that the high bonding social capital reduced the potential for the development of bridging social capital between the youth and the mainstream society. However, simultaneously, the high bonding social capital facilitated feelings of inclusion and belonging among the youth, and YouthClub* was seen as an insulated and controlled space to develop resilience and reproduce Blackness. The findings provide evidence that the youth’s desire for this homogenous space was a result of the participants’ understanding themselves as outsiders within dominant White society and not being readily able to reproduce Black culture freely. Through their lives experiences and histories, the youth acknowledged that Blackness carries negative connotations in the context of Canada and the dominance of Whiteness.

5.5.2.3 Rapport with youth workers: Youth spoke highly of their relationships with the youth workers and this rapport was evident through youth hugging the youth workers, joking and camaraderie, and the offering of support. Ade* said: “Hannah*, she help me with everything, she’s the best”. Data collected through fieldwork and interviews suggests that for first-generation immigrants with limited social networks, building strong connections with an adult outside of school or the family can be a positive influence and create opportunities. Jacko* said: “I get comfortable with Mary* [and] Hara* they make you feel comfortable in this country and that level of support from them guys”. The youth workers possessed strong knowledge of immigrant resources, had awareness of local support opportunities, and were able to refer youth
appropriately. I saw many instances of all youth asking for referrals to other services including employment, leadership and skills training. For example, Valeria* said:

Hannah* has offered us many opportunities, she is constantly telling me of other people who can help. I am thankful that there was a women that went to the school and she started like giving business cards and was like ‘give me your email, you’re going to receive more information.’

The youth workers were thus seen as a valuable knowledge source for youth in terms of local opportunities and for referrals to other professionals. Through these social networks, youth were evidently able to develop useful forms of linking social capital. Access to linking social capital was made accessible through the recreational programs – youth were able to develop connections with youth workers in more informal settings and may not have sought out this support otherwise.

5.5.3 Conflict and separation: As discussed in Part One, the majority of programs for first and second-generation youth are now separated, due to previous negative experiences and conflict. However, some larger events, such as field trips or workshops, were mixed although there were often high degrees of participant separation during these activities. In addition to separation, I also witnessed some discrimination and bullying. In the section above, I described how Yin* was actively excluded from YouthClub*. When describing her experiences in an interview she said: “I get laughed on and I don’t know why and whenever I want to laugh they [YouthClub* participants] don’t.” Sassanna,* another first-generation youth participant, also described a negative experience during a mixed volunteering event. She is now reluctant to attend events if she knows the second-generation youth will be there. Sassanna* said “[Second-generation participants] picking on newcomers, making fun of them. Erghh I hated it so much”
The desire for the second-generation youth to separate themselves from the first-generation youth could be a means of separating themselves from their parents’ culture and showcasing their superiority of being born here in Canada and having undergone assimilation. These findings provide evidence that the second-generation youth have inserted themselves within the racial hierarchy alongside the first-generation youth and the White mainstream. Cohen (1995, p. 36) suggests that national identity and belonging is “continuously constructed and reshaped in its interaction with outsiders, strangers, foreigners and ‘aliens’ – the ‘others’ and you know who you are only by knowing who you are not”. These interactions occasionally manifested in second-generation youth participants being discriminatory against first-generation youth. For example, the final session of the health and nutrition workshop series was a cooking workshop held at a community kitchen. A group of second-generation Chinese youth arrived first and asked who else was coming. The youth worker replied the “Chinese ESL students from ….. school” and they responded “not those f**cking chinks”. In this instance, the second-generation youth were policing the inclusion of the first-generation youth from the same ethno-cultural and contending that the first-generation youth were unwelcome within this space. Through this act, the second-generation immigrants were asserting their superiority over the first-generation youth through placing themselves higher on the racial hierarchy. These findings provide evidence for the strength of the assimilationist discourse in Canada; youth have learnt to police who can be classified as an insider or an outsider based on racial hierarchies and markers of assimilation.

On the other hand, although the first-generation youth did not explicitly discriminate against the racialized second-generation, the majority of the youth also desired to separate themselves physically from this group and often made no effort to get to know them. This may have been due to previous negative experiences, but I also suggest that it is due to racial and
class prejudice. Sassanna* said “….I met them [second-generation participants] one time, they were rude and another time Hannah* told us there is another event, and I said I am not going. I met them one time, I really don’t want to see them again”. As previously discussed, despite currently experiencing economic hardship due to migration, many of the first-generation youth are offspring of economic migrants, grew up in a middle-upper class household, possess high human capital, and have high expectations for social mobility. The first-generation youth may have believed themselves and their families to be more superior than the Black second-generation youth due to these characteristics. The first-generation youth’s attitudes are a product of an assimilationist culture where one has to consistently prove oneself as superior to others. The first-generation youth acknowledged that they were less assimilated than the second-generation youth who were born in Canada, therefore, they asserted superiority through other markers such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, and human capital.

5.6. Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter explored some of the tensions regarding the delivery of immigrant youth recreational programs through the settlement service agency. I specifically focused on how the different stakeholders negotiate and experience the structure and outcomes of these programs. Part One explored the perspectives of both the funders and settlement agencies and Part Two examined the experiences of the first and second-generation youth participants. The findings suggest that all stakeholders perceived sport and recreation as a means of developing facets of cultural capital valued in Canada, and that sport-related cultural capital was seen as a tool to promote inclusion into the mainstream society. There were numerous tensions between stakeholders and their aims. The funders utilized recreational to assimilate specific youth – the youth perceived to yield the greatest return on investment – through
promoting English Language proficiency, teaching liberal values, and delivering activities that
reproduced popular dominant culture. In turn, the youth workers exerted agency to challenge the
restrictive eligibility and assimilationist narratives because they believed it was in the best
interest of youth. However, they were restricted by precarious employment, short-term, contract
based funding, and high levels of accountability. For their part, many youth took part in
programming as a means to participate in novel activities, make friends, have fun, and escape the
stressors of settlement, and the findings suggest that these aspects of the program did help
facilitate settlement. Moreover, the research findings illustrated the high levels of separation
between the first and second- generation youth participants, thus highlighting the strong
assimilationist context in Canada and the ways in which youth constructed and negotiated their
identities in relation to racial hierarchies.
Chapter 6: “Tougher than any hockey player”: Immigrant Youth Agency

A lot of them they have all gone through so much, but they are resilient. [The] best example of resilient, awesome kids…. immigrant youth always look victimized and all this stuff. It’s like they are tougher than any hockey player I have ever met (Hannah*, youth worker)

6.0. Introduction

This chapter examines how youth utilized their agency to navigate social structures within their experiences at the settlement services centre. Chapter four argued that despite strong multiculturalism narratives in Canada, immigrant youth in Toronto are expected to undergo a process of assimilation through learning the national languages and abiding by liberal democratic values, while simultaneously losing facets of their cultural identity. For these reasons, if youth wished to achieve social mobility in Canada, there are few alternatives. Chapter five explored the role of the settlement agency and recreation within the process. This chapter argues that youth are not passive vehicles of change within the assimilation process; rather they exert different levels of agency in an ongoing effort to improve their futures and those of their families. I am aware that the relationship between structure and agency is complex and deeply intertwined at numerous intersections; therefore, when showcasing findings, the overlaps between structure and agency are embraced.

During this chapter, I explore: (1) the youth’s attitudes towards assimilation, pre-and post-migration (2) how youth [re]produced and negotiated forms of cultural capital that were valued in Canada (3) how youth navigated cultural maintenance (4) the role of social networks with co-ethnics, other immigrants, and the mainstream community in the lives of youth. For the remainder of this introduction, I outline why I decided to frame the chapter in this way.

6.0.1 Context: I chose to frame this chapter around the agency of immigrant youth in negotiating their assimilation into Canadian institutions. My motivation for starting the
conversation in this manner is because immigrant youth are often positioned within dominant discourses as a homogenous category, and one defined by their vulnerability, dependence, immaturity, and lack of agency (Ensor & Gozdziak, 2010).

My findings suggest that this discourse is problematic and does not accurately portray how young immigrants frame their experiences. I do not wish to neglect or refute the fact that immigrant youth have few alternatives to assimilating to the social structures in which they find themselves; as examined in chapter four, youth are certainly limited as to their alternatives, but they are keenly aware of this fact, reflexive of their position, and make decisions to further their life chances. Indeed, Bakewell (2010:1694) describes agency as the “capacity for social actors to reflect on their position, devise strategies and take action to achieve their desires.” After spending the last two years getting to know these young people, I think it paramount to acknowledge that while they do discuss settlement difficulties, immigrant youth did not frame their stories as ones of hardship and pity. Rather, they utilized their agency and resources to frame their stories as ones of resilience and hope. These heavily nuanced stories are often neglected, so I attempt to share them in this chapter.

6.1 Thoughts on Assimilation

This next section shares some of the youth’s migration and settlement stories. Within these stories, assimilation was a prevalent topic of conversation among many of the participants. Here, I discuss the youth’s attitudes and expectations about assimilation pre-and post-migration, and explore some of the youth’s experiences of [re]producing and negotiating their cultural and social capital.
6.1.1 Pre-arrival: Youth discussed feelings of anticipation, fear, and excitement when their parents told them that they were migrating, and many of the youth were eager to experience what they believed to be the enhanced prospects of living in Canada. These findings reflect the prevalence of Whiteness within the dominant discourse of migration, which focuses on movement from the Global South to the Global North and romanticizes a superior quality of life in the West, while neglecting internal migration within borders and between neighbouring countries (Castles, de Hass & Miller, 2012). Jacko* was excited to move to Canada because he thought it would lead to superior economic opportunities and because it meant he could finally be reunited with his mother, who lived in Canada:

We were shocked and quickly thinking this is a really good opportunity for us...But really I was curious and happy to go here.

Jacko* was reflective of his experiences and believed that the assimilation process began prior to him stepping foot in Canada. He said: “When I was young, I used to look up to it [North American culture]….I think beforehand [before coming to Canada] I start to assimilate myself in the culture and upon knowing I was gonna come here. I thought I have to be this.” Jacko* appeared to embrace the possibility of change; he both desired to assimilate due to beliefs that North American culture is superior and because he perceived assimilation as an expectation of migration. Expectations of assimilation were often based on the youth’s existing knowledge of North American values and popular culture. As a result of increasing globalization, many of the youth had strong knowledge of North American popular culture. Sassanna* expressed that popular culture was similar in Syria, Lebanon, and Canada.

Jacko* and Yin* expressed that due to a lack of employment and educational prospects in their home country, it is often seen as a rite of passage for young families to migrate to North America or Europe; this is an example of chain migration – a process driven through an
immigrant’s social networks, whereby immigrants follow their friends and family to a new destination city (Boyd, 1989). These findings point to the presence and significance of Whiteness as youth believed that dominant, White Western culture provided an enhanced quality of life and opportunities in comparison to their source country. The perceived superiority of Western culture may have contributed to the youth’s desire to assimilate. In addition, for some youth, conditions of exit were challenging due to factors such as conflict, natural disaster, and poverty in their source country; these youth were grateful that were now living in a safe country and perceived assimilating as preferable to remaining in their source country under these conditions.

6.1.2 Post-migration: This next section displays a large tension; youth were actively streamlined into assimilation upon arrival in Canada but they were not passive within this process. First, youth were conscious and reflexive of their assimilation process, and exerted their agency to make decisions because they wished to actively participate and succeed within Canadian society. To achieve this goal, the youth conformed to neoliberal notions of responsibility and upward mobility. Youth possessed differing levels of agency; when applying Portes and Borocz (1989) modes of incorporation framework, these levels of agency can be impacted by factors such as age, socioeconomic class, context of reception, immigrant status, race, and human capital.

Many of the immigrant youth discussed how much they wanted to assimilate into the dominant Canadian culture when they first arrived in Canada. As a result of state-sponsored assimilation programs for Indigenous and immigrant populations resulting in high levels of cultural genocide, the term assimilation carries acutely negative connotations. However, Valeria*, Jacko*, Sassanna* and Rahman* explicitly used the term assimilation in their interviews to describe their process of change since arriving in Canada. I later spoke with
Valeria* to ask her how she describes assimilation and she said “It means to fit in.” In contrast to dominant discourse, assimilation was not viewed as inherently negative by youth; many participants had ambivalent attitudes. Jacko* said: “Yeah, but I don’t think it’s not bad or good thing, neutral I guess”.

Various youth described how, despite experiencing numerous settlement challenges at first, they were later able to reap some of the positive benefits after assimilation. Ade* and Jacko* described how they had enjoyed the process of change. When I asked Sassanna* what it was like moving to Canada she said “Like obviously exciting, but at first to was so so hard to fit in and get to know things, so many people that [are] expecting you especially to fit in and figure everything out so it was really hard. But now it’s great”. The quote above suggests that Sassanna* experienced pressure to assimilate and it was perceived as an expectation, but after she had assimilated to some degree into the White, dominant culture, she was able to enjoy various benefits of assimilation. Many of the youth discussed how when they initially arrived in Canada, they were socially isolated, possessed low English language proficiency, and experienced culture shock. Through undergoing assimilation, youth were able to experience positive benefits. For example, through learning English, youth were able to make friends; through wearing the latest Western fashions, they were able to blend in more; through developing knowledge of norms, youth could avoid making social faux pas, and through losing their ethnic accent they were able to achieve higher levels of social mobility. These findings provide evidence for the dominance of Whiteness in Canadian society; the youth were aware that if they underwent assimilation into Whiteness they would have to act a prescribed way to try and pass as White, only then would they stand a chance at receiving any of the benefits listed above.

Many of the youth participants did participate in and conform to Whiteness, and the benefits of
doing so were tangible, but simultaneously existed within a racial hierarchy. Take into consideration Jacko*, he assimilated quickly into Whiteness — losing his accent and learning to act White. However, after Jacko* had undertaken this process, he was still ‘Othered’ and experienced systemic discrimination, albeit less than if he had not undergone this process. As a means of displaying agency in the assimilation process, these findings demonstrate how youth negotiated power relationships with different people, in multiple contexts, over time (Punch, 2007). In the discussion, these findings will be unpacked in relation to Hylton’s CRT.

That said, assimilation was an active process, not a passive one. The majority of youth said that they exerted agency when deciding to assimilate and saw the process as their responsibility. All of the first-generation youth who were interviewed valued and conformed to the neoliberal ideal of meritocracy and believed that through exceeding in the Canadian education system and entering the dominant labour market, they would be more likely to have a successful future. Meritocracy is a dominant ideology in Canada that underpins Canada’s social structures and is believed to facilitate a multicultural and inclusive country; however, this neoliberalist ideal is deceiving as it does not address deeply rooted inequalities (Young, 1958). All of the interview participants also said that they desired to attain post-secondary education and discussed potential career paths such as doctor, psychologist, and lawyer. Yin* regularly asked me questions about university life and the application process. She disclosed to me that since she had been a young child she has dreamed about attending the University of Toronto to study engineering. Sassanna* has dreams of pursuing a dual bachelor’s degree, with Juris Doctor then working as a federal judge. She said: “Well I am going to study law and politics, going to take me in 10 years, if [I am] smart enough six years...In ten years, start tenure as a lawyer, making my way to being a judge.” These findings were similar to those found in the 2000 Youth in
Transition Survey; 79% of racialized immigrant youth in Canada wanted to attend university, for Canadian-born youth, this statistic was only 57% of youth. Similarly, Sassanna* is highly determined to achieve her goals and has limited leisure time as she dedicates the majority of her time to studying. In this way, she also upholds strong liberal and even neoliberalist ideals. She said: “Like my path is tough and hard and brutal and everything but eventually I will get there, I will do what I want.” Youth utilized their agency to work hard at school and gain high grades. This was often despite the fact that some youth attended poorly performing schools with peers who they believed to be disruptive to learning and ESL teachers who they thought to be unsupportive. In these instances, youth made the decision to work hard, even if that meant them being bullied by their peers or seeking additional academic help, because they believed it would further their life chances. Through this act, youth were actively resisting some of the negative influences of their peers. In chapter four, I utilized Punch’s term **negotiated interdependence**, to describe how young people were confined by their social structures and family expectations, but exerted agency within these structures. In the case of the youth participants, the youth negotiated their agency to balance the high educational expectations of their parents and their individual desires for a fruitful career and social mobility. These findings demonstrate how, throughout their short time in Canada, the youth participants were actively streamlined into assimilation, but that they perceived it as a process of participating in Canadian society. As such, the youth have come to respect and conform to the dominant neoliberal discourse of meritocracy, whereby if they work hard, they will be successful, and attain upward mobility.

6.2 Cultural Values

As discussed in Chapter four, many youth discussed difficulties in adapting to life in Canada and Canadian values; however, many youth also described how after they had spent
some time in Canada, they enjoyed enhanced freedoms. These findings correspond with Punch’s (2002) research where she found that upon settlement in the destination country, immigrant youth experienced various positive benefits of migration such as skill development, employment opportunities, social and economic independence, and novel experiences; these factors were seen as empowering to many of the participants. This section begins by looking at some of the youth’s experiences in adapting to liberal values and living in a secular country.

When I asked Jacko* what were some of the biggest differences between Canada and his source country, the Philippines, he said:

Ermm Culture wise, very open. Very liberating, liberal. Filipinos are quite conservative people, yeah in cases like religion. Philippines is very Roman Catholic society with its laws and way of living. It’s like back from olden times. Colonized by Spanish for a great number of years. So our culture was mainly from that. So it would be traditional things like traditional gender, men and women. Pants for guys skirts for girls….basically a model of traditional Filipino society. Men and women, husband and wife.

In the quote above, Jacko* noted how values in Canada and the Philippines differ depending on the secularity of state. He believed that his source country was traditional and increasingly conservative due the strong Roman Catholic influence derived from Spanish colonization. Both Rahman* and Jacko* appeared to associate their religions with lower levels of agency, and desired to separate themselves when they arrived in Canada. Jacko* believed that Canada was more liberal and that this led to increased racial diversity, LGBTQ awareness, gender equality, and diverse family structures. He described some of the stereotypes surrounding the LGBTQ community in the Philippines:

If [you] proclaim as gay you are a drag queen. If you say you are gay you will be dressed as a girl, or you’re trans. There was no gay guy dressed as a guy. Don’t look like straight guys. Careers will be comedians, drag queens. Pretty stereotypical. Not shy away from media.
The increased liberalism in Canada, specifically regarding LGBTQ rights, enabled Jacko* to feel more comfortable with his sexuality and after living in Canada for three years, he began to publicly self-identify as gay and participate in LGBTQ organizations. Jacko* described how he was initially nervous because of his family’s/community’s conservative and religious values, but as a result of the more active LGBTQ community, popular culture representation, and advocacy for inclusion in Toronto, he was able to build up resilience and self-identify as gay. Jacko* said how much enjoyed this enhanced freedom that came from living in Canada and explained that if he still lived in the Philippines he probably would not have come out as gay.

Rahman* who from Iran and lived in Mashhad, an Islamic city of holy pilgrimage, also believed he had increased agency to make decisions for himself and less restrictions due to living in Canada. He said: “Canada is literally it’s completely different from my country...Like everything is different like in my country it is an Islamic country right, and it’s [Islam] like right in literally everything.” Raham* was describing the impact of Sharia governance on the daily lives of citizens; he disclosed that he felt as though his freedoms were limited by the state in Iran and described an experience where he was arrested for holding hands with his girlfriend. In contrast, Rahman* enjoyed the enhanced freedoms of living in Canada, such as being able to make the decision to access popular culture, drink, and openly date “chickas”. When referring to Canada, he said: “I could do everything that I wanted and I have my rights, and the freedom was literally the best thing, literally the freedom that you get here is incredible.” Rahman* also told me how due to state censorship in Iran and frequent website closures, he believes his career prospects are enhanced in Canada as he hopes to go to university and become a computer programmer. If Rahman* had remained in Iran, his decision-making capabilities would be limited and he would be completing two years of military conscription after finishing high
school. These findings demonstrate how youth are critically reflexive of their levels in agency in relation to their career and leisure time, and how they make decisions in a bid to increase their autonomy.

In addition, many of the international students from China also perceived increased agency in Canada due to decreased educational demands allowing them more leisure time. Yin* said:

In China, I have lots of homework, very much stress, lots of academics, writing lots, in one day I use 7 pens...This year is much better in Canada (points at growth on middle finger from pen use) its much dangerous, it always hurts, it always bleeds and also here (shows another growth)

Many of the international students were also away from their parents for the first time so experienced increased agency regarding how they spent their leisure time, their friendships/relationships, diet etc. On the other hand, youth disclosed how they were surprised to see behaviour such as fighting, smoking marijuana, and cursing at teachers occurring on school grounds and that this type of behaviour would not have been tolerated at their previous school. Valeria* and Ade* were also surprised by the increased levels of freedom that people had to engage in activities such as marijuana smoking, binge drinking, and sexual promiscuity. These findings provide evidence that youth initially found it challenging to adapt to some of the more liberal cultural norms and they actively reflected on the differences between their source and destination country. Similar to Punch’s (2002) findings, after initially experiencing culture shock, many of the youth did experience some positive benefits of migration and enjoyed having enhanced freedoms and agency to try new experiences and shape their identity in Canada.

Moreover, the youth’s positive experiences of migration to the West and enhanced freedoms may
also reproduce the superiority of Whiteness and Western culture within migration discourse and decrease the likeliness of return migration.

6.2.1 Maintaining home culture: The previous section explored how youth desired to develop facets of cultural capital that were valued in Canada, such as a generic accent, English proficiency, and liberal values. Similar to the results found by Anisef and Kilbride (2003) and the FSA (2000), despite youth undergoing a large process of change in the destination country, none of the youth wanted to assimilate completely to the mainstream culture; they still desired to retain some aspects of their cultural capital which were valued in the source country. Many of the youth would describe their identities as hybrid. This finding corresponds with Brubacker (2005) who found that there are varying degrees of desirability regarding the extent and forms of assimilation. Some youth maintained aspects of their home culture such as values, mother tongue, and traditional dress because they believed these characteristics were core components of their identity. Jacko* said:

I said to myself years ago to not blend into the background. To be your authentic self you know and yeah I still have my traditional Filipino values. Values involve me.

Despite wanting to become part of the mainstream society and assimilating in other aspects, such as language, accent, and liberalism, Jacko* assigned high importance to upholding and retaining his traditional cultural values. He has now lived in Canada for five years and still maintains a strong Filipino identity. Some youth retained more aspects of their home culture than others, and assigned different levels of importance to diverse facets of culture. These findings suggest that the age at time of migration and co-ethnic community can impact the extent and types of cultural maintenance.
Youth described that their cultural maintenance activities mostly occurred through conversing in their mother tongue at home, socializing with friends from the same ethnic group, participating in cultural Facebook groups, attending cultural/religious holidays, and being a member of an ethnocultural organization. Youth who lived with family members all spoke in their mother tongue while at home and the youth who resided with parents discussed how their parents cooked delicious traditional food at home. Other youth went out of their way to find ethnic food within Toronto.

Due to increased bonding social capital, findings suggest that it was easier for youth to retain aspects of their home culture when there were existing social networks and a larger co-ethnic community in the destination city. As Toronto can be defined as a super-diverse city with no clear statistical majority culture (Vertovec, 2007), the high levels of ethnic diversity facilitated cultural maintenance. There is a large Filipino community in Toronto and Jacko’s* mother and several family members already lived in Toronto prior to migration; they had strong connections with a Filipino Christian church and various ethnocultural organizations. In our interview, Jacko* discussed how his family maintained aspects of their traditional culture in Toronto. He said:

In our village [in the Philippines], festivities are always tied to Roman Catholic beliefs. During holy week [we] have a grand festival. When happens in Philippines, [we] do it here. Cook authentic food, Dad cooks authentic Filipino food, Mum and Dad both cook, invite friends, and church goers. Do bible studies at home, go to people’s birthdays, buffet style food, go to church every Sunday

Interestingly, despite converting to atheism since arriving in Canada and describing to me how his parents try to persuade him relentlessly each week to attend church, many of the traditional cultural values that Jacko* still deems to be important, are deeply ingrained with religion. These include going to a Filipino church, participating in weekly bible studies, and attending religious
festivals. Jacko* later described to me how he had met many Filipino friends through the church. In the quote above and throughout my interactions with Jacko*, whenever he described Filipino culture, he blamed Roman Catholism for the conservative culture. Rahman* also found it difficult to separate Islam from Persian culture and similar to Jacko*, turned away from his religion — Islam — after settling in Canada. However, due to the lack of social networks and co-ethnic community within Toronto, Rahman* found it more difficult to maintain aspects of his home culture. These findings display the interconnectivity between religion and the cultural maintenance of home culture.

When Valeria* arrived in Toronto she disclosed that she was surprised to discover a small Venezuelan community in Toronto: “Like I didn’t know, we are a small community, I guess surprising like ohh okay, your country, yay. We have people of your culture here.” Valeria* and her family initially connected to other co-ethnics in the Greater Toronto Area through a Facebook page and now meet up regularly to celebrate cultural holidays and festivals. When I asked her about the importance of continuing to celebrate cultural festivals in Toronto, she said: “I think it’s the way you can preserve it [Venezuelan culture], keep doing the holidays that you have back home in your new home”. These results show that youth were effectively able to balance their desire to assimilate while maintaining certain aspects of their home culture, such as food, music, etc and they exerted agency within the process. Youth were aided in their efforts by the fact that Toronto has such high levels of ethnic diversity and an abundance of ethno-cultural organizations, and cited the high level of ethnic diversity in Toronto as a facilitator for cultural maintenance.
6.3 Social Networks

In the previous section, I discussed how many of the youth utilized their agency both to assimilate to a certain degree and to retain aspects of their home culture. Due to transferability between cultural and social capital, the social networks of the youth played an influential role in this process. This section will explore the role of the youth’s social networks — between co-ethnics, other immigrants, and the mainstream culture — within their settlement process.

Throughout the interviews and fieldwork, the importance that youth assigned to their social networks was evident. For many of the young immigrants, they discussed how it was not until they moved to Canada and experienced social isolation that they began to realize how important these connections were within their lives. Ade* moved over with his siblings and said:

I had my family. But friends very lonely. Back home had many friends all beside me and here I feel lonely sometimes. My family have different lives...That’s one of the most difficult things to leave your best friends, nobody understands you.

When youth moved to Canada, they left behind their closest friends and their support system and had to start from scratch rebuilding these connections with peers; this process took longer than many of the young people thought it would, and often led to feelings of social isolation. Similar findings regarding the initial social isolation of immigrant youth were also reported by Anisef & Kilbride (2003); FSA (2000). In this section, I describe how youth sought various social networks that they believed would benefit themselves, the factors that facilitated/impeded social network development, and the impact of these networks on the youth’s settlement process.

6.3.1 Bonding social capital: This section will describe the importance of bonding social capital within the settlement of the youth participants and provide evidence that these social networks are invaluable in creating feelings of belonging within the destination country. Similarly, the immigrant youth in the FSA’s (2000) study believed that affiliations and
friendships with other co-ethnics provided the most assistance with settlement and integration challenges.

Prior to migration to Canada, the majority of the youth had existing social networks within Canada and said that these networks played an important role in the decision to migrate. For example, Ade* said that he would not have migrated to Canada if his siblings did not already live here. These findings correspond with the research on social networks and migration which suggests that existing connections in the destination city is often a motivator for migration as it decreases the risk through sharing information and offers support in the form of friendship, employment help, childcare, and accommodation (Boyd, 1989; Massey, 1993).

Valeria’s* aunts and cousins lived in Hamilton and when she first moved to Canada, her family lived with them for several months while they were waiting to find an apartment, enrol in school, and gain employment. Valeria* said that it would have been much more difficult moving to Canada if they did not have family here because it would have put more pressure on settling quickly. Rahman* also had family members living in Toronto prior to him migrating which prevented him from feeling as homesick. He expressed “First time in Canada, I was like okay it’s a really good country and have family members here, like my cousin. I have three cousins and my aunt in Toronto. So like I didn’t feel lonely, just missing my mum.” Jacko’s* mother had lived in Canada for eight years prior to the rest of the family gaining permanent residency and had existing connections in Canada. He said:

Yes, my mum she goes to a Filipino ran church, she converted from being a Roman Catholic to born again Christian. She would go to that church and become friends with one of our neighbours, she has been my Mom’s friend for so long then we have some family members one is in Alberta. We also have my Dad’s former classmates, also from my village. So we do have connections, then we got some friends of friends.
Jacko’s* existing social networks meant that he was able to integrate into the Filipino* community in Toronto much more quickly. These findings align with Massey (1993) and provide evidence that the presence of existing social networks in the destination country can ease the settlement process by providing access to social support, the co-ethnic community, housing, and job assistance. The social networks within the co-ethnic community are a source of social inclusion, and a site to develop resilience and feelings of agency by acting as a larger group to represent the needs of the community and challenge social institutions.

Many of the youth who were from prevalent source countries said that when they first arrived in Canada, they actively sought out co-ethnic friends and spent their leisure time with this group, as this contributed to feelings of belonging. The FSA (2000) found that one of the most useful resources for immigrant youth settlement is having co-ethnic peers who speak the same language. These youths also described how they liked the fact that Toronto was diverse and that there were large co-ethnic communities here. Sassanna* described how she has met many Arabic speakers: “I meet [Arabic speakers] at CoalitionTO* or people have this habit if they hear people speaking Arabic, they speak to them. So, have met a lot of Arabs on the subway or at school the gym I go to.” Yin* expressed how co-ethnic friends have decreased her feelings of homesickness. Several youths also described how when they first arrived in Toronto, they actively sought out co-ethnic peers through school or community organizations because these networks created a sense of belonging. Jacko* said:

[When I] went to school, [I] quickly looked for other Filipinos, like ‘where are you guys, I need some friends’…..It was very nice, I felt part of something. I didn’t felt by myself. I felt yeah yeah, over the years I garnered more to other races. I made people from other parts of the world.
After Jacko* had been in Canada for several years, his English proficiency had improved and he felt a sense of belonging. These factors contributed to Jacko* later gaining the confidence to develop social networks outside of his co-ethnic community. Findings suggest that high bonding social capital can act as a protective factor and allow youth to develop resilience, which may later facilitate bridging social capital. However, some of the youth expressed frustration at the high levels of bonding social capital at school because they believed it was the reason for ethnic segregation among their immigrant peers. High bonding social capital can make segregated immigrant spaces, such as ESL classes, exclusionary to youth from non-prevalent source countries. Valeria* who goes to a highly populated Filipino school said:

Like it’s difficult to build relationships because they are just focused, like they get to their group where can they speak their own language...Maybe they don’t want to talk in English, just want to talk in own language, so they move where they feel comfortable.

Valeria* recognized that people spend their time where they feel a sense of belonging and for newly arrived immigrants, this is most often within the co-ethnic community, where they can speak their home language and reproduce facets of cultural and social capital that are recognized in their source country. But, she was also frustrated and felt socially isolated because she was not part of one of these dominant immigrant groups in her school. Valeria* is now learning Filipino because she believes it will help her to make friends. These findings suggest that bonding social capital can increase feelings of agency in immigrant youth through facilitating social inclusion, but there are potentially positive and negative effects to creating high levels of bonding social capital for newly arrived immigrants and that immigrants from non-traditional source countries are most likely to be disadvantaged.

6.3.3 Bridging social capital: The results displayed in the section above show that when immigrant youth first arrived in Canada, they actively sought out social networks with co-ethnics
in a bid to facilitate feelings of belonging. This process was seen as important in the initial settlement of newly arrived immigrants. After the youth participants had become more established in Canada, they later discussed their experiences of developing bridging social capital. These findings align with Ager and Strang (2008) who found that social bridges were an indicator of integration outcomes such as national language proficiency and economic integration. The youth said that as they felt more settled in Toronto, they began to step outside of their comfort zone and enjoy the process of meeting people from diverse backgrounds. Jacko*, who has been in Canada for five years now said:

My list of friends is a spectrum. Basically a rainbow of people from this to this. Now I go out of my comfort zone to make friends from different cultures. So at first just Filipino, because that’s what my comfort zone is, but then I started going out.

Youth also discussed how they have benefitted from meeting people of diverse cultures and how they believed that these social bridges may facilitate their social mobility. Ade* said: Actually, I see a lot of people on the street, different society and different behaviour. All this makes me more wise to other people. You know how to behave with them.” Mia* discussed how her numerous migration experiences led to her attending different schools and developing bridging social capital:

We have an expression in my language, you have been punched by life, not in a painful way, [but] meaning like you’ve seen all four walls of life. So when you get into your life outside of school, you know these types of people and you know what they want from me, so however good they are, or however bad they are, I know how to keep my distance to get what I want for me, so basically that. This has really helped me, because these four schools have shown me so many different types of people and if I just stayed in England my friends would be exactly the same people.

Mia* was incredibly reflexive about how her social networks had shaped her experiences, and through migration, Mia* believed that she had increased her emotional intelligence. She said that now she can better understand people’s behaviour and is more skilled at handling interpersonal
relationships with people from different ethnocultural backgrounds. Mia* utilized her agency to develop these social networks as she believes that the experiences that she has gained from interacting with people from all walks of life will benefit her in the future and in her career. Similarly, Sassanna* described how she aspires to develop social networks beyond the co-ethnic community to develop intercultural competence. She said: “I get along with everybody and try and learn from people about their culture and stuff. So Arabic people I already know their cultures.” The findings suggest that in a bid to enhance social mobility, these youth are utilizing their agency to seek opportunities for the development of diverse social networks. The youth recognize that the labour markets are becoming increasingly globalized and that bridging social capital can have professional and personal benefits.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the settlement experiences of immigrant youth in Toronto and discussed how youth utilize their agency to: (1) shape their assimilation process (2) [re]produce, resist, and navigate facets of cultural capital such as accent, language, and values that are valued differently in the destination and source country, and (3) navigate bonding and bridging social capital in Toronto. The main argument presented in this chapter is that despite dominant narratives, immigrant youth are not simply passengers in the settlement process, they were conscious of their position in society and exerted agency in an effort to shape their experiences and maximize their life chances. The youth participants utilized their agency both to assimilate in Whiteness in a bid to reap the positive rewards and to maintain aspects of their home culture that they believed to be important to them. This process of cultural maintenance was heavily influenced by the youth’s existing social networks and co-ethnic community but youth actively
sought out opportunities for social network development to initially increase feelings of belonging, and later, to further their social mobility.

These findings should be read in relation to Chapters four and five, which argued that due to a lack of alternative avenues to social mobility, assimilation was an expectation. These findings illustrate the reproduction of dominant discourses in which immigrant youth are often portrayed through a deficit lens which over-emphasizes how social structures act on and create barriers for immigrant youth. This discourse is problematic because too often the voices of the youth and their agency to bring about change are ignored. The findings presented in this chapter aimed to step away from this discourse by presenting a more holistic picture of immigrant youth settlement.
Chapter Seven: Discussion and Conclusion

7.1 Introduction
This study was exploratory and aimed to investigate the settlement of immigrant youth and their experiences of participating in programming through the settlement agency. This discussion provides a recap of the results. Second, I describe some of the limitations of this project. Third, I explore three main themes that emerged throughout this research: the contradictions of Canadian multiculturalism, tensions at play regarding inclusion and assimilation, and the importance of examining the broader socio/political surrounding leisure and sport. Within these sections, I also reflect on the usefulness of the theoretical frameworks employed, and provide recommendations for future research, policy, and practice. In the final section, I discuss some of my reflections from conducting community-based research with youth.

7.2 Recap of Results
Chapter four investigated how youth experienced social structures in Canada. These structures, such as the migratory process, societal and parental expectations, and institutions were found to be highly discriminatory and to promote social exclusion. Indeed, youth had few alternatives other than assimilating to these dominant structures. As a result of their age, youth were assumed to be to assimilate more quickly than adults and there was a large expectation that they would contribute to the labour market. Within these social structures, youth were also taught a set of rules when they arrived in Canada — learning English, changing their accent, gaining Canadian credentials, and adapting to cultural values. In turn, they were aware that if they desired to be successful, they were expected to ‘act White’ and not stray too far from these rules. Despite following these rules, many immigrant youth participants did not pass as White
and were aware of their subjugated position within the racial hierarchy. Immigrant youth also learnt to police others on the basis of assimilation markers and race.

Chapter five investigated the role of the settlement agency and recreation. The findings provided evidence that White, Canadian physical culture was perceived by all stakeholders as a means to facilitate settlement and an influential form of cultural capital to promote inclusion into the dominant society. The top-down funding structure of the agency itself led to numerous tensions between the assimilationist and restrictionist ideologies of the government funders versus the youth workers who aimed to create an inclusive environment for youth to make friends and have fun. The findings provided evidence for the explicit connection between inclusion and assimilation. Indeed, assimilation was viewed by all stakeholders as an effective means for developing inclusion, this was because definitions of inclusion were typically restricted to inclusion into the normative dominant culture. Despite the critiques, both groups enjoyed the recreational programs and were able to build strong bonding social capital, which created feelings of inclusion and belonging, and in turn, facilitated integration.

Chapter six explored how immigrant youth utilized their agency to navigate the social structures. Contrary to dominant discourses, youth were not passive within the assimilation process; they acknowledged the role of social structures in limiting their social mobility and actively exerted their agency to assimilate into the dominant culture because they desired to reap the positive sociocultural and economic rewards. Youth utilized their agency to retain aspects of their home culture, which they understood as valuable within their lives. Building on these results, the next section explores three key contributions of this research project, in relation to the current literature, theory, and policies.
7.3 Limitations

I begin by discussing several limitations of the project and ideas for future research. First, there were limitations that resulted from the participant sample. Despite conducting fieldwork with second-generation youth, due to a lack of interest, I was unable to recruit any youth to participate in interviews. Through my interactions with the youth and informal conversations, second-generation youth were included within this study, but their voices may have been somewhat lost in my interpretation of their experiences. According to Hylton (2009) it is imperative to centralize marginalized voices. To further examine their experiences and the social control narrative, it would be beneficial to conduct further research both at a CoalitionTO* and other settlement agencies in Toronto. In addition, one of my research aims was to examine the experiences of refugee youth, but due to numerous resettlement challenges, and recreation not being an immediate need, few of the youth participated in these recreational programs and I was unable to interview any refugee youth.

Another limitation of this project was the generalizability; I conducted a case study of one settlement service agency in Toronto, their recreational programs, and participants. As displayed in the findings, youth settlement experiences are incredibly diverse due to a wide variety of factors. Therefore, it would be beneficial to conduct a similar case study at other settlement agencies who offer recreational programs, both within Toronto and in other Canadian cities, and to compare the results. Furthermore, to investigate the impact of political context, settlement policy, and assimilationist narratives on youth settlement experiences and sports participation, it would be interesting to conduct a cross-cultural examination, possibly between the USA, UK, and Australia.
In addition, I acknowledge that I took minimal risks with regards to my choice of methods; I opted to engage in interviews and participant observation because these were the only methods that I was familiar with at the time. If I were to repeat this project, I would challenge myself to use more innovative and youth-friendly methodologies and to actively engage the youth within this process. Throughout our interview, Mia* used Instagram as a tool to share her migration and settlement story; she showed me pictures of her friends from Albania/ Toronto, her life at school, and different activities she had taken part in through CoalitionTO*. Social media played a pivotal role in Mia’s* life and she appeared to be most comfortable sharing her story through this medium. Potential social media-inspired methodologies for investigating youth and immigrant settlement could include: youth creating an Instagram account and posting pictures or filming short daily videos over a span of time to document their social, educational, recreational, work, and cultural experiences in the destination country. Simply conducting a discourse analysis of youth social media accounts and exploring how youth document their settlement experiences to their social networks in the destination and source country would be interesting.

Furthermore, my positionality was also a limitation of this study. In Chapter One, I described feeling like an imposter at the settlement agency. Because of my age and strong British accent, many of the youth saw me as another participant. However, I was afforded the luxury of cultural capital recognition; my Whiteness and Western-ness set our settlement experiences apart. Due to our contrasting experiences, the responsibility of authentically telling the youth’s stories weighed heavily on me; I tried to mitigate this through sharing my analysis with youth and settlement workers. However, upon reflection, utilizing a participatory action research methodology may be an effective means of engaging immigrant youth as co-producers of
knowledge. The following sections will explore three main themes: The contradictions of Canadian multiculturalism, assimilation and inclusion tensions, and the broader socio-political context surrounding recreation.

7.4 The Contradictions of Canadian Multiculturalism

One of the main findings from this thesis is that despite the presence and popularity of multiculturalism narratives, there are numerous contradictions regarding the multiculturalism model, and there is an expectation for immigrants to conform to the dominant social structures by assimilating into Whiteness. As discussed in the literature review, multiculturalism is both an ideology that asserts immigrants should be free to retain their home culture within Canada and a set of policies that aims to promote inclusion and diversity (Bradley, 2013). Youth acknowledged and internalized the popularity of multiculturalism as a core liberal Canadian value but, simultaneously, felt trapped in a paradox between their understandings of multiculturalism, lived experiences of systemic discrimination, and expectations for assimilation. This section discusses multiculturalism in relation to cultural maintenance, racial hierarchies, and systemic discrimination.

Similar to the findings collected by other scholars (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Berry et al, 2006; FSA, 2000), the results collected in this research study provide evidence to suggest that while many immigrants utilize their agency to retain some aspects of their source culture, they are simultaneously aware of the need to undergo a process of assimilation in a bid to conform to neoliberalist ideals. Thus, there is still a heavy expectation that youth will develop facets of cultural capital that are valued in Canada and actively engage within White dominant institutions. CoaltionTO* did not actively promote cultural maintenance through programming, but the focus was on facilitating inclusion into the White, dominant culture. Moreover, similar to
Joppke’s (2012) findings, many of the aspects of home culture that youth maintained were soft facets of culture that did not threaten the liberal democracy. These findings align with the critique that with the rise of neoliberalism, multiculturalism has become increasingly rhetorical (Winter, 2015). As discussed in the literature review, neoliberalism lies at the core of multiculturalism, settlement, and immigration policy and has led to increasingly restrictive policies, significant funding cuts, decreased socio-economic outcomes for visible minority immigrants, and the responsibility for cultural maintenance and integration being directed towards the individual/ethnocultural community (Winter, 2015). Instead, the privatized Canadian immigration model aims to facilitate quick labour market integration and promote the economic self-sufficiency of immigrants (Shapaizman, 2010). Therefore, funding is increasingly directed towards language and employability programs. Hansen (2014, p. 84) argues that “Canadian multicultural policy is really a settlement policy; settlement is about integration, and it is nestled in a Canadian public school system and a labour market that encourages assimilation”.

The findings of this study align with and support Hansen’s conclusion.

As discussed in the literature review, Canada’s unique point system for immigrant selection and multiculturalism frameworks that promote diversity and social inclusion have received worldwide praise; however, these neoliberal policies are also contradictory as they serve to reproduce social exclusion among immigrant and racialized populations and fail to operate within an anti-racism framework (Omidvar & Richmond, 2005). Due to the dominance of Whiteness, many of the first-generation immigrant youth participants described high levels of social exclusion or poor integration outcomes, and these findings also extended to the second-generation. However, due to the strength of multiculturalism in Canada and the high levels of ethnic diversity within the major cities, this presence of racism was and is often disguised. Henry
(2016, p. 1) explains this dichotomy between the dominant ideologies of multiculturalism and the lived experiences of visible minorities well by describing it as “the mythical Canadian narrative of inclusivity and diversity”, in which “Canadians widely believe their country to be a peaceful, multicultural country without racism”. This process of denial is also facilitated by comparisons between Canada and the USA on the basis of multiculturalism (Adams, 2008), understood within the cliché that Canada is a cultural mosaic and the USA is a melting pot with overtly racist policies.

In line with Hylton’s critical race theory (2005), these dominant ideologies of multiculturalism in Canada need to be questioned. Implications from this research suggest that: 1) Whiteness is dominant and immigrants are expected to assimilate into White, dominant culture in order to achieve social mobility, 2) immigrant youth often insert themselves into a racial hierarchy to achieve social mobility and learn quickly to police others through markers of assimilation and racial characteristics, and 3) the current neoliberal model for immigrant settlement is ineffective because socio-economic outcomes for both first-generation and Black second-generations are significantly lower in comparison to the native-born, White, population due to the prevalence of systemic discrimination.

These findings regarding immigrant youth’s reproduction of racial hierarchies also have implications for the relationship between first and second-generation immigrants, a finding that has rarely been discussed within the settlement literature. Despite many of the first-generation youth undergoing assimilation, they were aware that they were still perceived as ‘Other’ in comparison to the dominant White society. In turn, despite understanding themselves as inferior to the dominant society, they simultaneously believed that they were superior to newly-arrived immigrants who had not yet undergone assimilation. In this way, second-generation youth saw
themselves within a racial hierarchy alongside first-generation youth and the White mainstream. They desired to separate themselves as much as possible from first-generation youth, which led to instances of bullying. The first-generation youth also separated themselves on the basis of race, class, and ethnicity. In these cases, through their lived experiences, the immigrant youth learned to police the inclusion of others on the basis of assimilation markers and learned racial hierarchies, just like others had done to them. These findings have important implications for understanding how immigrant youth from visible minority backgrounds position themselves within the broader dominant society and amongst other immigrants. From the perspective of settlement policy and programming, recommendations for settlement practitioners include: 1) developing training for settlement service providers, especially providing greater awareness to the unique needs and challenges of second-generation youth, 2) enforcing a zero tolerance anti-discrimination policy, which could be promoted through setting ground rules at the beginning of the each program 3) increasing funding allocations towards second-generation youth programs, and 4) advocating for the delivery of separate needs-based programming for first and second-generation youth or joint programming which is mediated by a qualified staff member.

In sum, and as discussed in the literature review, in comparison to the native born, White population, immigrant youth are more likely to live in poverty (Shields et al, 2011), to be excluded from school (James, 2017), to experience social isolation (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003), and to be subjected to high levels of systemic discrimination (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). Thus, providing evidence that the current neoliberal model for immigrant settlement in Canada (as described on p. 17) is ineffective in combatting social exclusion, and is, in fact, contributing to the emergence of an immigrant underclass (Mwarigha, 2002) and the racialization of urban poverty in Toronto (Shields et al, 2011). These integration challenges are well documented
within the literature; however, they are inconsistent with the mythical constructions of multiculturalism and integration, and thus, rarely acknowledged by White Canadians or policy makers. Toronto is a super-diverse city (Vertovec, 2007); 50% of the population was born outside of Canada (City of Toronto, 2016) and integration in Canada is positioned by policy makers as a two-way process of change on behalf of the immigrant’s source and destination country (Li, 2008). However, the findings from this study suggest the need for a more nuanced and critical understanding of the limitations of multiculturalism. Despite high levels of ethnic diversity in Toronto, institutions rarely changed as a result of immigration; Whiteness was normalized and even after immigrants conformed, they still experienced discrimination (Omvivid & Richmond, 2005). Long, Hylton and Spacklen (2014) summarize this process when they say that racialized immigrants are given few options except entering dominant White institutions, but they are constantly waiting for the call to remind them that they are a different racialized status. Or, in Li’s words (2003, p. 315) Canadian settlement policy operates this way: “It preaches tolerance in the abstract but remains intolerant towards cultural specificity deemed outside of the mainstream...the process is centred around becoming more similar to Canadians.” This study confirms such results by showing that the dominance of Whiteness, poor integration outcomes, and high levels of systemic discrimination, all described above, contradict the ideals of multiculturalism and meritocracy but remain topics often neglected from the dominant narratives of settlement processes.

7.4.1 Assimilation frameworks: The results of this study also have implications regarding the applicability of assimilationist frameworks within super-diverse cities (Vertovec, 2007). Classical assimilation frameworks are no longer as applicable in many western countries due to increased heterogeneity of the dominant society. However, the findings suggest that
despite this increased diversity in the mainstream population, youth viewed assimilation to dominant structures as an expectation of immigration to Canada, which in some ways provide evidence for the applicability of classical assimilation theories (Gordon, 1964). This finding is somewhat ironic because it highlights that as a result of racism and assimilation, out-dated theories are still relevant even in a super-diverse society. Other tensions exist as well. According to the classical assimilation theory, over time all immigrants will undergo intergenerational mobility and become incorporated into the dominant society. However, this linear approach to assimilation heavily neglects structural factors and the negotiation of youth agency. Furthermore, it does not explain why Black youth are overrepresented within programming. Newer assimilation theories such as segmented assimilation and modes of incorporation are more trans-disciplinary and aim to account for factors such as race, ethnicity, and class. For example, the segmented assimilation framework suggests that due to factors such as the ones listed above, Black youth typically experience lower academic attainment, and socio-economic outcomes in comparison to native-born and/or White immigrant population (Portes & Zhou, 1993). This provides some indication of why, despite being born in Canada, second-generation are still accessing settlement services aimed at newly arrived immigrants. Therefore, despite the numerous flaws associated with the segmented assimilation theory, the frameworks are useful when exploring the diverse trajectories of second-generation immigrants.

Moreover, despite immigrant youth wanting to undergo structural assimilation, the findings suggest that they were ambivalent with regards to cultural and social assimilation because they desired to maintain aspects of their home country and culture. At the same time, many youth did not see assimilation as inherently negative, and in fact enjoyed the benefits of living in an ostensibly more liberal country with enhanced freedoms. These findings correspond
to Brubaker’s (2001) abstract definition of assimilation. Brubaker (2001) acknowledges the negative connotations related to the term assimilation as a result of cultural genocide and state-sponsored Anglo-conformity, and posits that abstract definitions of assimilation are increasingly ambivalent with regards to outcomes and desirability. He argues that assimilation, is therefore, a functional process of becoming more similar. However, critiques remain, namely that assimilation-based theories privilege Whiteness and assimilation into the dominant culture is still positioned as the ideal outcome for immigrants if they wish to achieve social mobility. The assimilation frameworks also focus heavily on the individual, not the social structure which prevents the occurrence of social change.

In contrast, Hylton’s (2005, 2009) five tenants of CRT offers a more nuanced and holistic analysis of how visible minority immigrants navigate the broader social, political, and economic climate and experience dominant social structures. One of the key findings from this research was that regardless of immigrant youth possessing high levels of agency, they were still expected to conform to Whiteness. Therefore, despite the usefulness of assimilation theories in explaining patterns of change amongst individual immigrants, I argue that critical race frameworks were most applicable when exploring the settlement experiences of immigrant youth in Toronto. Unlike assimilationist frameworks, CRT advocates for social justice. This approach is most advantageous in facilitating social change and tackling the oppression of racialized groups as it requires us to look beyond the individual and interrogate the existing social structures and the dominance of Whiteness. Allison (2000) and Stodolksa (2018) also argue that within sports/leisure studies, there needs to be a greater emphasis on advocating for social justice to reduce systemic barriers.


7.4.2 Policy recommendations: These findings suggest that in order for change to take place, a more integrative model, one that values the diverse cultural capital of immigrants and actively tackles systemic discrimination, is required within settlement services and institutions. This should have several components. Against the neoliberalist tide, increased funding should be allocated towards settlement services and is necessary in order to provide greater support to first and second-generation immigrants and remove barriers to social inclusion. For example, more assistance could be offered with school, counselling, housing, and financial support in the form of low-interest loans to help immigrants upgrade qualifications. In addition, the delivery of cultural maintenance programming would help the reproduction of non-White cultural capital and provide opportunities for cultural sharing. To reduce discrimination within the labour markets, suggestions include: mandatory diversity and anti-prejudice training for management, affirmative action programs, systems for increasing the transferability of non-Western credentials, and greater advocacy for immigrant workers who are often un-unionized and overrepresented in secondary labour market. Within the education system, suggestions include: integrating non-academic ESL classes, increasing opportunities and funding for marginalized Black youth, enforcing bullying protocols, and increasing cultural awareness and anti-discrimination training for teachers. In the next section of this thesis, I propose a new theoretical approach to studying assimilation and social inclusion amongst immigrant youth.

7.5 Assimilation and Inclusion Tensions
The second key finding that emerged from this research were the tensions at play between inclusion and assimilation. In this section, I argue that a new theoretical framework that encapsulates the interconnection between both inclusion and assimilation is required. This
section begins by exploring sport/recreation as a tool for social exclusion and investigating how bridging and bonding social networks can both facilitate and/or impede inclusion.

Dominant, Canadian physical culture was viewed by all stakeholders as intersecting with White, Canadian identity and therefore was understood to be a valuable facet of cultural capital to help facilitate assimilation into the dominant culture. Youth also believed that participation in these popular activities would facilitate their inclusion into the dominant culture. Ironically, the tool that was used to facilitate inclusion into the dominant culture was at the same time heavily exclusionary and inaccessible to many of the youth participants. As discussed in the literature, the use of sport to facilitate settlement may serve to reproduce social exclusion because mainstream sport is often a site of Whiteness, masculinity and heteronormativity (Taylor & Toohey, 1998) and immigrants may lack the social/cultural capital and material resources necessary to participate (Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Long, Hylton & Spacklen, 2014). These findings suggest that recreational programs which aim to facilitate inclusion may unintentionally perpetuate social exclusion, thus bringing into question the mythopoeic value of sport as a tool for social change. In the case of this study, CoalitionTO* and the funders opted to deliver recreational activities for immigrant youth that were associated with the Canadian White identity; however, opportunities for participation did not occur within the mainstream culture, participation was restricted to immigrant youth because the youth workers privileged the development of capital between immigrants. The section below discusses the role of social networks in facilitating/impeding inclusion.

7.5.1 Social capital and inclusion: Social capital frameworks can provide useful insights when interrogating the relationship between inclusion and assimilation. Within settlement policy and sport programming, inclusion is often defined exclusively as bridging social capital with the
mainstream population (Donnelly & Donnelly, 2002; Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfrey, 2014). However, at CoalitionTO*, bridging social capital with the mainstream population was not a program aim. Youth workers acknowledged that the dominant culture was not a safe space for the youth, and that for this space to be inclusive to the youth participants, they had to exclude White, Canadian youth. These findings suggest that through participating in programming, first and second-generation youth were able to develop strong bonding social capital with other immigrants and co-ethnics, which was successful in creating feelings of inclusion and belonging. However, connections to White, mainstream culture were not sought. The findings support the work of other scholars such as Spaaij (2013) who suggest that leisure spaces which promote bonding social capital can have a positive impact on immigrants by creating feelings of belonging and inclusion. The benefits of bonding social capital were also discussed by Long, Hylton & Spacklen’s (2014) who suggest that bridging social capital and constantly trying to fit in is exhausting and instead immigrants can use their leisure time to seek belonging within ethno-specific groups and that this can provide a safe space for newly arrived immigrants. The implication is that within the context of immigrant youth, it is imperative to differentiate between inclusion and integration. An inclusive space does not necessarily have to be a communal space whereby immigrant youth are interacting with the mainstream population; it can also include the development of an exclusive niche where the participants feel a sense of belonging (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002).

However, the perceived value of bonding social capital in facilitating this kind of inclusion is not universal amongst policy makers, sports organizers, and NGOs. Based on Bourdieu’s conceptualization, this could be because bridging social capital is often perceived as more easily convertible into other forms of capital (economic and cultural), and thus possesses
the ability to increase status and power. Scholars have noted public scepticism about co-ethnic sporting spaces based on beliefs that they promote segregation or are not conductive to integration (Hughson, 1997; Jeanes, O’Connor, Alfrey, 2014). Therefore, many programs that utilize sport as a tool for immigrant integration tend to promote bridging social capital with the dominant culture. Within sport policy and amongst practitioners, scholars have shown that such constructions of integration and inclusion are narrow and can be closely aligned to assimilation (Taylor & Toohey, 1998; Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfrey, 2014).

Throughout this research, the tension between government funders and settlement staff regarding definitions of inclusion and assimilation was prominent. Regardless, all stakeholders believed that assimilation would facilitate inclusion into the dominant society. These findings illustrate how assimilation and inclusion are understood within settlement and sporting contexts. Particularly given the top-down funding structure of settlement services, the policies and politics of the settlement agencies influenced the inclusion/exclusion of participants. The eligibility requirements for funding were exclusionary to most immigrants, especially those who were deemed unassimilable or not worthy of assimilation. Both the government funders and the settlement staff believed that assimilation into the mainstream would lead to inclusion, but the intentions were contrasting. The settlement staff promoted assimilation because they cared for the participants and believed the process to be in the best interests of the youth; they acknowledged that if the youth wanted to succeed within institutions and experience social mobility, that assimilation was an expectation. However, government funders were clearly more focused on facilitating assimilation and inclusion to increase the economic productivity of youth within the labour market, thus fulfilling the neoliberal purpose of immigration. These tensions regarding inclusion and assimilation reflect broader public policy debates and illustrate the
politics regarding who is perceived as worthy of social inclusion and who is not. They also serve as a reminder that immigration policy in Canada is heavily restricted, and the point system selects applicants with the highest levels of education, work experience, skill, and national language proficiency. Only the most desirable applicants who meet these criteria are eligible for social inclusion in Canada. When immigrants arrive in Canada, they are then subjected to settlement policies which posit that they must assimilate and become more similar to the Canadian population if they desire inclusion. However, these same settlement policies often fail to address exclusion within institutions, offer minimal welfare support, and are restricted to newly arrived immigrants who possess permanent residency or convention refugee status, thus representing a hierarchy of rights with implications for social exclusion (Omivdar & Richmond, 2005). Following Saloojee (2003), the results of this study serve as further evidence that effective social inclusion must include a commitment to anti-racism, and an acknowledgment of the limits of multiculturalism amidst the lived experiences of visible minority immigrants in Canada.

7.5.2 Theoretical frameworks: structure and agency: To analyse the youth’s experiences of assimilation and inclusion, Chapter Four explored the structural barriers that immigrant youth experienced, and Chapter Five investigated how immigrant youth exerted agency in response to these barriers. This section assesses the usefulness of cultural capital and classical assimilation theories in developing understanding of the interplay between the structure/agency of immigrant youth.

This research project considered a cultural capital framework in analysing settlement services, and indeed this framework proved useful in explaining racialization and racism within settlement and recreation. When youth arrived in Canada, their existing cultural capital was
devalued and if they desired to attain social inclusion and mobility they had to produce new forms of cultural capital that were valued in Canada. Youth recognized that becoming more similar to dominant Canadians, by developing facets of cultural capital valued in Canada, would promote inclusion into the dominant society and provide benefits such as reduced discrimination and more friends. For example, they believed that participating in popular Canadian activities – including those in sport and recreation – would enhance their Canadian identity. As discussed in Chapter Six, youth were not passive within this process; they acknowledged that if they wanted to achieve social mobility they would have to assimilate and they exerted agency within this process. In line with a Bourdieuseian framework, facets of cultural capital were viewed by youth as powerful tools for social inclusion and exclusion into the dominant society. The Bourdieuseian cultural capital framework tends to view immigrant capital through a backpack metaphor, meaning something that the immigrant either does or does not possess (Erel, 2010). The results of this study show that this approach is, at best, limited and, at worst, problematic as it neglects the ability of immigrants to negotiate and transform their cultural capital and shape their settlement experiences. In addition, within classical assimilation frameworks, assimilation into the mainstream culture is perceived as a key to social inclusion. Many youth believed that assimilation would lead to inclusion within the dominant society, however, due to the normalization of Whiteness, even after undergoing this process, the inclusion they experienced was limited or denied. The youth utilized their agency to conduct a cost/benefit analysis and acknowledged both the presence of systemic discrimination and the vast socio, cultural, and economic benefits of assimilation. These findings therefore show that the cultural capital framework is limited when it fails to account for the effects of Whiteness and racial hierarchies. These findings also provide evidence that contradicts the dominant discourse of immigrant youth
lacking agency and being passive dependents (Hashim, 2006), and illustrates the importance of better understanding the experiences of immigrant youth and how they negotiate structural barriers and agency.

7.6 Policy Implications

Considering the implications within this discussion, and my desire to conduct community-based research with practical applications, in this section I outline three key recommendations regarding recreation and immigrant settlement, the limited scope of inclusion, and the redesign of settlement policy.

Recruitment and immigrant settlement: The findings suggested that the delivery of recreational programming is an effective means for social service providers to recruit participants and that settlement agencies are well positioned to meet the recreational needs of immigrant youth. Recommendations for social services providers include: delivering inclusive programming away from the mainstream society, engaging youth in the decision-making processes, offering a variety of recreational-based activities (not only sport), and facilitating workshops/skills-based training in conjunction with recreational programming. Furthermore, to encourage participation, barriers should be actively mitigated e.g. providing transport tokens, gender-segregated programming, flexible drop-in programming, and low/no cost activities. Due to the perils of funding and lack of recreational space at agencies, it is often vital for settlement services to create partnerships with community recreation providers, such as YMCA and local businesses. Within SDP, I suggest expanding programming from traditional-sports interventions to provide a greater variety of more holistic recreation-based interventions including art, outdoor education, casual sport, dance etc.
Within sport policy and programming, outcomes are typically geared towards utilizing sport and leisure as a means of promoting opportunities for interchange between immigrants and the dominant culture and facilitating bridging social capital. The findings from this study and from other scholars such as Long, Hylton and Spacklen (2014); Spaaij (2012); Vermeulen and Verweel (2009) suggest that sporting/leisure spaces can be spaces of social and capital formation, which, in turn, may be utilized to help facilitate immigrant integration; these spaces do not necessarily promote feelings of belonging and inclusion though. Indeed, mainstream sport needs to be adapted to meet the diverse needs of visible minorities, this can be aided through delivering cultural awareness training to practitioners, exposing all youth to a variety of diverse physical culture, mitigating barriers to participation, and actively tackling systemic discrimination.

The findings presented in this research provide evidence that more awareness is needed among sports practitioners, policy makers, and settlement workers regarding the ways in which dominant physical cultures can be sites of social exclusion. In turn, this speaks to the irony of using popular physical culture to promote inclusion into the White dominant society. As such, within sport and recreation policy, greater recognition and funding is need to promote non-White physical cultural forms and leisure opportunities outside of the mainstream society, such as ethno-cultural sports clubs, dance organizations, and leagues. These spaces provides immigrants with the opportunity to reproduce facets of cultural capital valued in their home culture, develop resilience, and enable social transformations that may have the ability to challenge institutions. Increased awareness and research regarding how immigrants actively shape and contribute to Canadian physical culture is needed. Within settlement services, this would include the provision of training for service providers to allow them to develop culturally appropriate
programming for immigrants to maintain and share aspects of their home culture. I suggest that settlement service agencies should form stronger partnerships with local ethno-cultural organizations to aid in the delivery of these services.

The limited scope of inclusion: Within policy, recreation, and settlement services, the results of this study demonstrate the need for increased awareness of the positive impact of co-ethnic and immigrant only spaces, which can facilitate the development of bonding social capital and support inclusion. Within settlement services, this would include recognition that the dominant culture is often not a safe and inclusive space for first and second-generation immigrants, and therefore, promoting inclusion into the dominant society may not be beneficial for newly arrived immigrants. Rather, immigrant and co-ethnic spaces may offer increased feelings of inclusion and belonging for youth. As such, I suggest that there is the need for programming that is exclusive to immigrant youth, and in some cases, services should be offered that are aimed at specific ethnic groups who experience high levels of oppression in the mainstream society. These suggestions contrast the current model of inclusion, whereby many recreation and settlement programs view inclusion as simply inclusion into the dominant society and thus aim to develop bridging social capital with the mainstream population.

Restructuring of settlement services: As discussed above, the politics of settlement funding led to highly restrictive eligibility criteria, the prohibited access of many vulnerable youth from settlement services, and program aims which promoted assimilation into the dominant society. Similar to the results collected by Shields, Drolet and Valenzuela, (2016) investigating settlement services, the contract-based funding model led to precarious funding, reduced autonomy, short-term employment contracts, and high levels of competition among service providers. To facilitate opportunities for out-of-status youth and to deliver more
inclusive, multicultural programming, settlement staff and youth participants deserve greater autonomy and freedom to choose and organize the aims and outcomes of programming. The results suggest that the high levels of state control over third-party settlement services is contradictory to the facilitation of social inclusion and impedes the ability for settlement services to operate within an anti-racism and anti-discriminatory framework. Thus, the findings of this study support those of Richmond and Shields (2004), who argue that a new funding structure which emphasizes a ‘bottoms-up’ approach to settlement services is required. Seeking external funding through private sponsors and greater collaboration with community recreation service providers may also allow increased agency and facilitate inclusion.

7.7 Broader Social Political Context

This section discusses the importance of: 1) examining the broader socio-political context surrounding leisure/sport, rather than simply focusing on leisure patterns and experiences, and 2) conducting trans-disciplinary research.

When I set out to conduct this research, the intention was to explore the sporting and recreation experiences of immigrant youth in Toronto. I was determined to contribute to the wealth of knowledge investigating how recreation/leisure can aid in the settlement of immigrant youth. My goal was to write about sport and recreation – more specifically, immigrant youths’ experiences and the impact of sport-based programs. Upon reflection of this 200 page thesis, I now recognise that I wrote in detail about many aspects of settlement….but not in detail about sport! As a result, and considering the requirements for a Kinesiology degree, I was concerned; there is a certain expectation that the topics of sport/leisure/recreation will feature extensively within a thesis document in this department. However, one of the major takeaways from this study is the realization that I could not effectively articulate the leisure and recreational
experiences of the immigrant youth in this study without first gaining an understanding of the broader socio-political processes that shape their lived experiences every day. I naively set out to study sporting experiences, yet 200 pages later, I have come to appreciate the suggestion of Silk, Francombe, and Andrews (2014) that the effective and engaged study of sport is in practice the study of the social and political context around sport and in which it is produced, situated, and contested.

As discussed in the literature view, many of the existing research projects conducted in the field of leisure studies investigating race and ethnicity have examined the leisure patterns of immigrants and their barriers to participation (Floyd, Borarro & Thompson, 2008; Stodolksa, 1998, 2018). Within sports sociology, various studies have examined how sport/leisure can be used as a tool for settlement/inclusion (Doherty & Taylor 2007; Jeanes, O’Connor & Alfrey, 2014; Spaaij, 2013). As part of their comprehensive literature reviews, Floyd, Borarro and Thompson (2008) and Stodolksa (2018) asserted that the biggest knowledge gaps within this field could be found in the lack of trans-disciplinary research and the minimal emphasis on the socio-political contexts that shape immigrant’s leisure and sporting experiences in Canada.

I argue that within sports sociology and leisure, it is vital that we continue to look beyond how leisure/sport/recreation can be used as a tool to facilitate social change, and continuously turn our attentions to the broader socio/political/cultural climate in which sport and leisure is organized and operates. As displayed in the literature, due to the evangelical nature of sport, it can be uncritically utilized as a tool to bring about social change, despite the limited evidence regarding its effectiveness (Coalter, 2010). The overrepresentation of youth recreational programs at the settlement agency is emblematic of this, and, in turn, problematic if funding is being directed towards Band-Aid programs that fail to recognize or attend to the root causes of
social problems that affect the everyday lives of youth. Indeed, it is a reasonable conclusion of this thesis that funding being directed towards sport and recreation programs may be better spent on developing employability and language skills or on social advocacy or even anti-racism. In this sense, and using the words of Long and Spacklen (2011) as quoted in Long et al. (2011, p. 9), “we need to question the naive construction of sport as an unproblematic force for good”. As noted at the beginning of this discussion, the use of sport/recreation, a space of Whiteness where various forms of capital are often denied for racialized immigrants, can further facilitate exclusion (Long, Hylton & Spacklen, 2014). The mere development and delivery of sport programs is clearly insufficient for responding to the complexities of youth immigration.

Indeed, before scholars study the use of sport, recreation, and leisure as a tool for change, they would do well to investigate both the broader social structures and policies at play, and, as this study has shown, to consider the various ways in which immigrants exert their agency and negotiate social structures. Andrews and Loy (1993, p. 269) argue that sport should “be viewed as a site of ideological struggle where individual lives and experiences are involved in a process of interpretive negotiation with the surrounding social structures”. Similarly, as part of Hylton’s five tenants of critical race theory, he calls for greater trans-disciplinary research within the study of sports sociology. And in her comprehensive literature review of race, ethnicity, and leisure research, Stodolksa (2018) asserts that although the application of frameworks within the field have become more diverse and innovative, increased interdisciplinary measures are needed to explore new areas of research and to increase knowledge production. All of this suggests the need for trans-disciplinary work.

When designing this project, I was intentional in utilizing a trans-disciplinary approach and incorporating migration studies literature, theoretic frameworks, and policy. This was, in
fact, one of the key reasons why I chose to participate in a collaborative degree with ethnic and immigration studies. Considering the relative age of sports sociology, I argue that it is vital to seek knowledge from outside of the field and utilize a trans-disciplinary approach that integrates knowledge of diverse theoretical frameworks, literature, and policy documents. For example, the literature review for this project found that many previous studies which investigated leisure, sport, and immigration commonly utilized theoretical frameworks such as classical assimilation (Crespo, et al. 2001; Stodolksa, 1998; Walker, et al. 2015; Wolin, et al. 2006, acculturation (Crespo et al., 2001; Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Walker et al., 2015; Weedon, 2011; Wolin et al., 2006), and social capital (Long, Hylton, Spacklen, 2014; Spaaij, 2013; Vermeulen & Verweel, 2009; Walseth, 2008), but neglected the inclusion of alternative frameworks which had been commonly applied in migration studies. For example, with the exception of Long, Hylton and Spacklen (2014), cultural capital had rarely been utilized when examining the leisure experiences of immigrants, but provided useful applications in this study for understandings of capital denial/inclusion and the use of sport as a well-recognised facet of cultural capital. This study, therefore, offers further corroboration of the importance of connecting the sociology of sport/leisure to other bodies of literature within the social sciences.

7.8 Reflections

This final section of the thesis describes some of my personal reflections on this research project. One of my biggest takeaways from this experience is that when conducting research in a community-setting, especially with youth who may be defined as vulnerable, the emphasis should be on establishing long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. This project took place over two years and throughout this time I spent on average about 5-8 hours a week at the agency
performing a multitude of roles. As a busy Master’s student, making this time commitment was challenging at times. However, both prior to and after fieldwork, my engagement at CoalitionTO* was a priority within my schedule. Volunteering as a recreational programmer prior to conducting fieldwork allowed me to gain familiarity with the variety of programs offered at the agency and more importantly, to develop strong rapport with youth and youth workers. After data collection, I also continued volunteering with the agency. My decision for long-term engagement within the research site stemmed from several reasons:

1. When I initially started volunteering, I made a commitment to CoalitionTO* and the youth. Many volunteers come and go and I have seen first-hand the negative impact this has on youth and their desire for stable role models. CoalitionTO* is also a not-for-profit organization, and I was able to utilize my recreational programmer experience.  
2. I did not want to collect my data and then just leave. I was cautious of using the youth and their stories to further my own agenda (graduating with an MSc). This potential guilt cast a heavy shadow over me and is one of the reasons why I desired to create a long-term partnership.  
3. As part of the community-research process, the relationship was grounded in trust and reciprocity. CoalitionTO* and the youth allowed me access to the research site and shared with me their valuable insights. In return, I delivered recreational programs, conducted program evaluations, and disseminated the findings of this project in an accessible way though informal conversations and reports.  
4. Spending time at the agency with youth was one of the highlights of my week and was a sought after escape from the monotony and often solitude of graduate student life!
Finally, when conducting fieldwork over an extended period of time, I found that roles became confusing and ‘participants’ often turned into friends. These multiple roles were at times difficult to navigate, for both myself and the youth, as often my role as researcher took on secondary importance. Patience and flexibility were two invaluable skills that helped in navigating this process and were necessary when working with youth in the community — facilitating programming and research for youth can be frustrating, unpredictable, and rarely goes to plan. The process has been challenging both physically and emotionally; however, it has been incredibly rewarding.

My biggest achievement will not be the completion of this thesis document, but my minute role in facilitating changes at CoalitionTO*, for example helping to establish a young adults group, and working with staff to re-design and transform the GreenHands* program. As researchers, I am convinced that we have the ability to work alongside community organizations and generate change, but often we perceive change as mass action and something that is out of our reach. This study shows that meaningful change is not limited to transforming institutions and government policy; it can take place at the grassroots level, and these small changes should not be underestimated.

This experience gave me the motivation to reflect on my own settlement experiences and critically examine both my White, Eurocentric privilege and the neoliberal system that has served me so well over my lifetime. This has been a life-enriching, perspective-shifting experience that would not have been possible without the kindness of the youth and youth workers in allowing me to enter their lives and share their stories with me. Thank you to all of them for sharing their stories with me. I would like to end on a quote by Sassanna* which seems
to encapsulate nicely the resilience and determination of the youth participants that I had the

pleasure of working alongside:

“Like my path is tough and hard and brutal and everything but eventually I will get
there, I will do what I want!” (Sassanna*, 2017)
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Appendices

Appendix A: Research ethics approval

Dear Dr. Damell and Ms. Robyn Smith,

Re: Your research protocol entitled, “Learn English, go to school, get a job...and play sport?”

ETHICS APPROVAL

Original Approval Date: August 23, 2017
expiry Date: August 22, 2018
Continuing Review Level: 2

We are writing to advise you that the Health Sciences Research Ethics Board (REB) has granted approval to the above-named research protocol, for a period of one year. Ongoing research under this protocol must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Research Oversight and Compliance Office - Human Research Ethics Program as soon as possible.

Please ensure that you submit an Ethics Renewal Form or a Study Completion/Closure Report 15 to 30 days prior to the expiry date of your current ethics approval. Note that ethics renewals for studies cannot be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date of expiry.

If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Please note, all approved research studies are eligible for a routine Post-Approval Review (PAR) site visit. If chosen, you will receive a notification letter from our office. For information on PAR, please see http://www.research.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/documents/2014/09/PAR-Program-Description-1.pdf.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Yours sincerely,

REB Chair
Appendix B: Participant observation script for youth

Hello everybody,
For those of you I don’t know, my name is Robyn Smith and I am studying for a Master’s degree at the University of Toronto. I am researching the experiences of youth who take part in recreational programming through a settlement service agency. I want to find out more about your experiences of taking part in the program and your settlement in Toronto.

I am hoping to spend around six weeks observing the different youth recreational programs that take place. During this time, I will carry on volunteering and helping with the program as I have been doing before. I will be observing the activities and social practices. But more importantly, I will also be trying to engage in you conversations to find out more about your experiences.

I will be using the data I collect from this in my Master’s thesis. A pseudonym (a fake name) will be used in all scholarly and non-scholarly publications; people will not be able to determine who did or said what or which organization the program was delivered by. In addition, all of the information you provide about CoalitionTO* will remain confidential, your participation in the program will not be affected.

If you would like to take part, please return a signed assent form, this will be signed by you. Also, as many of you are under 16, I am asking that if you would not mind taking part in the participant observation you take home a consent form for your parents to sign. If you would like to take part, please return these forms. I will hand out the observation consent forms now. If you would like the forms to be translated into another language for yourself or your parents, that is not a problem, just ask me. I am going to phone up all of your parents to let them know about the study and to give them the chance to ask any questions, if you think your parents would like this conversation to be in another language, please let me know. If you have any questions you can ask me now, email me, or we can book a meeting. If you would not like to be included in the participant observation, that is not a problem, just let me know and I will try my hardest to ensure that I do not use any information about you in this study.

Later on in the program, I would also like to hold interviews to find out more in depth about your experiences of taking part in this program and of your settlement. Interviews would be if you would be interested in taking part in an interview in a few weeks time, that you come and see me after the session in room 102 to pick up the other consent form for your parents.

You are under no pressure what so ever to take part, it will not affect your participation in the program and I completely understand. I just want you guys to feel comfortable!
Thank you very much,
Robyn
Appendix C: Introduction for recruitment of interview participants

Hello. My name is Robyn Smith and I am studying for a master degree at the University of Toronto. I am exploring the experiences of newcomer youth who participate in recreational programming through a settlement service agency. I am hoping to conduct interviews to find out more about your experiences of participating in youth recreational programming delivered through CoalitionTO*. You are under no pressure to participate in this interview, it is completely your decision, and either way your participation in the program will be not affected. Here is a bit more information about what the interview would look like.

The interview will have three parts to it. I will first ask questions about your background for example, your ethnicity, how long you have spent in Canada. Secondly, I would like to discuss your experiences of sport and recreation in Canada and your home country. Thirdly, I will ask questions on your settlement in Toronto, and accessing settlement services. Four, I would like to finish off by hearing about your own experiences of participating in the program.

You can lead this conversation as much as you like and go off on tangents, after all we are discussing your own experiences so we can discuss anything that you believe to be important. I will be analyzing this interview data for my Master’s thesis. A pseudonym will be used in all scholarly and non-scholarly publications; people will not be able to tell what you have said and all information that you provide about CoalitionTO* will remain confidential, CoalitionTO* will not know that you have taken part in an interview and your participation in the program will not be affected. After I have finished analyzing the data, I will create a report of my findings which I will share with you.

If you have any questions my email is........... You can also contact my supervisor, Professor l on ...........You can contact the Research Ethics if you have any comments or concerns regarding how the research was conducted, including questions about your rights as a participant.
Appendix D: Informed consent form

(To be given to parents of youth under 16 years old)

Exploring the experiences of youth who take part in recreational activities delivered through the settlement service agency in Toronto

If you would like this form translated into another language, please speak to Robyn.

Your child is invited to take part in a research study as part of Robyn Smith’s Master’s thesis at the University of Toronto. The following information is intended to provide you and your child with an overview of the study so that you can make an informed decision whether you would like your child to participate in the research.

The research study you are participating in may be reviewed for quality assurance to make sure that the required laws and guidelines are followed. If chosen, (a) representative(s) of the Human Research Ethics Program (HREP) may access study-related data and/or consent materials as part of the review. All information accessed by HREP will be upheld to the same level of confidentiality that has been stated by the research team.

What is the purpose of the study?
There has been very little research conducted investigating youth experiences of participating in recreational programs through a settlement service agency. A lot of research looks at newcomer youth’s barriers to participation in sport and settlement. This is an important area of research, however, newcomer and second generation youth are also very creative and use their power to shape and influence their own experiences in both sport and other aspects of settlement and this is what I want to investigate further! In addition, a lot of research looks at how newcomer and second generation youth experience recreation/sport with peers who were born in Canada, however, we know that first and second generation youth take part have diverse recreational experiences and like to also participate in sport with other newcomers or friends/family from their own ethnic background.

I hope to find out more the experiences of youth who take part in these recreational programs and how they experiences settlement/integration here in Canada. I am also interested in how these experiences vary depending on a variety of factors such as time spent in Canada, and ethnic background.

Who is conducting the research?
This research is being conducted by Robyn Smith, she is Masters Candidate at the University of Toronto in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education and has spent the past year volunteering with youth programs at CoalitionTO*. She is supervised by Assistant Professor, Simon Darnell, who investigates how sport can be used as a tool to facilitate social change.

What are some of the benefits?
There are benefits to both your child and the community by taking part. Participating in interviews and informal discussions may allow your child the space to reflect on their own experiences of settlement and integration and to tell their story. This reflexivity may help young people when it comes to thinking critically about their experiences. In addition, the feedback from this project about your child’s experience will be delivered anonymously to the organization and suggestions will be given, thus, allowing the opportunity for an enhanced experience and greater benefits for all participants.
This project, will hopefully also benefit the greater community, including other youth who participate in recreational programming through the settlement service agency. I am going to create a report for youth workers who deliver recreational programs through the settlement service agency. The report will include findings from the project and best practice examples from youth workers who run similar programs. I am also planning on working with your child and other participant to run a community driven program evaluation of the program. This will hopefully provide feedback for youth and youth workers which in turn may feedback and help develop the program and allow it to better meet the needs of newcomer youth through recreational programming.

**Can my child participate?**
If your child is under the age of 24 years old and participates regularly at a CoalitionTO* youth recreation program they are eligible to participate.

**Will my child be compensated for their time?**
Food/snacks and TTC tokens are currently provided during CoalitionTO* recreational programs. However, if you and your child decide to participate within interviews, food/drinks will be provided in addition to TTC.

**What are some of the risks to participating?**
The risks to participating in this study are minimal, this may include risks to your child’s reputation if any comments are critical of the program. However, all effort will be made to ensure confidentiality. Your child’s experiences of settlement and integration will also be discussed, this may be a sensitive topic and bring back emotions.

**How much time will this require?**
For the participant observation, minimum time should be required outside of the current programming hours. However, if you decide that you would like your child to participate in an interview, this will be held either after the program at CoalitionTO* or at a time/location convenient to you. The interview may last between anywhere from 30-90 minutes.

**What personal information will need to be collected?**
Some background information will be collected from yourself your child and this will include information such as their age, ethnic background, amount of time spent in Canada. This personal information is useful to the study and exploring how experiences may vary.

**Will the identity of my child remain confidential?**
To ensure confidentiality, all participants will be provided with a pseudonym when analyzing data. Only Robyn will have access to the Master spreadsheet with this information and this will be stored on a secure server on a password protected computer in Robyn’s office at the University. This pseudonym for your child will also be used in the MSc thesis and any report/presentations to protect their identity. A pseudonym will also be used in the MSc thesis when referring to CoalitionTO* and the name of the program. In addition, all field notes, interview recordings and transcripts will be stored in a locked draw at Robyn’s desk in her university office. Only Robyn will have access to this material, Professor Darnell may also help to analyze the data but will not be given any identifying information regarding your child. After five years of holding onto the data in this secure manner, all data will be destroyed.

**What if I no longer want my child to participate within the project?**
That is not a problem at all. Please let Robyn or Simon know and all personal information that has been collected about your child will be not be used within my thesis or any further publications. Further steps will also be taken to ensure that new information will not be used within data collection or analysis. Up
until Robyn submits her thesis to her advisory committee you can change your mind about participating in the study.

What if I do not want my child to participate in the participant observation?
If you would not like your child to participate, that is your right to do so and it will be respected. It will not affect in any shape or form, your child’s participation within the program. As a volunteer at the program I will still have contact with your child. However, I will not include any personal information collected about your child within the research study. For example if we are having an informal group conversation regarding the program, I will inform your child beforehand and if they choose to participate I aim to erase all of the information contributed by your child.

What will they be asked to do?
For the participant observation, the program will run as normal. However, Robyn may have informal discussions with your child in a group setting or one on one regarding their experiences of participating in the program, sporting experiences and settlement. If you and your child decide to participate later in an interview, it will be a one off and will take place after the program or a convenient time. Your child will be asked questions about their background, their sporting experiences, their experiences taking part in the recreational program, and about their settlement/integration in Canada e.g. their experiences regarding learning English, going to school, making friends etc.

What will happen with the results of the study?
The data will be collected from both the participant observation and interviews and will initially be analyzed to identify any key themes. Data may then be included within Robyn’s Msc thesis or used in subsequent academic publications. No identifying information or personal information will be included and if direct quotations are used, participants will be first be contacted and pseudonyms will be used.

Who do I contact if I have further questions?
If any have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch, at any time. NB: Contact information removed for confidentiality.

Who do I contact if I have concerns about how the research was conducted?
You can contact the University of Toronto’s Office of Research Ethics if you have any comments or concerns regarding how the research was conducted, including questions about your rights as a participant.
Exploring the experiences of youth who take part in recreational activities delivered through the settlement service agency in Toronto

By signing this form, I acknowledge that:

I. The researcher has given my child and I the opportunity to ask questions about the study and its procedures and that these questions must be answered to my satisfaction.

II. At any time during the study, I may request further clarification from the researcher. I can do this by contacting the researcher.

III. My child’s participation in the research is voluntary and they are under no obligation to participate in the study. In addition, I acknowledge that my child is free to withdraw from the study at any time, without explanation.

IV. I have been told that my child’s personal information will be kept confidential, except where release of information is required by law. The only exception to this is the supervisor of the interviewer with whom data might need to be discussed in the analysis process. Where sharing data with the supervisor (Professor Simon Darnell) is necessary, for example to gain his assistance with analysis, the interviewer (Robyn Smith) will ensure that he will not have access to personal identifying information.

V. No information that would identify my child will be released or printed.

VI. The possible risks and benefits (if any) of this study have been explained to my child and I and in no way does signing this consent form waive my legal rights nor does it relieve the researchers or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities.

VII. I may obtain a copy of this consent form (and the appended letter) for my records.

I, ____________________________ (print name) consent for my child to participate in the study exploring Newcomer Youth Recreation Experiences at the University of Toronto.

Legal Guardian’s signature ____________________________ Location
Date
Telephone: E-mail:
I, the undersigned, have, to the best of my ability, fully explained the nature of this study to the participant. I believe that the person whose signature appears above understands the implications and voluntary nature of his/her involvement in the research procedures.

Researcher’s signature ____________________________ Location
Date
Sincerely,
Robyn Smith
Appendix E: Assent form
(To be given to all participants)

[Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education letterhead]

_Exploring the experiences of youth who take part in recreational activities delivered through the settlement service agency in Toronto_

If you would like this form translated into another language, please speak with Robyn.

You are invited to take part in a research study as part of Robyn Smith’s Master’s thesis at the University of Toronto. The following information is intended to provide you and your child with an overview of the study so that you can make an informed decision whether you would like to participate in the research.

The research study you are participating in may be reviewed for quality assurance to make sure that the required laws and guidelines are followed. If chosen, (a) representative(s) of the Human Research Ethics Program (HREP) may access study-related data and/or consent materials as part of the review. All information accessed by HREP will be upheld to the same level of confidentiality that has been stated by the research team.

**What is the purpose of the study?**
There has been very little research conducted investigating youth experiences of participating in recreational programs through a settlement service agency. A lot of research looks at newcomer youth’s barriers to participation in sport and settlement. This is an important area of research, however, newcomer and second generation youth are also very creative and use their power to shape and influence their own experiences in both sport and other aspects of settlement and this is what I want to investigate further! In addition, a lot of research looks at how newcomer and second generation youth experience recreation/sport with peers who were born in Canada, however, we know that first and second generation youth take part have diverse recreational experiences and like to also participate in sport with other newcomers or friends/family from their own ethnic background.

I hope to find out more the experiences of youth who take part in these recreational programs and how they experience settlement/integration here in Canada. I am also interested in how these experiences vary depending on a variety of factors such as time spent in Canada, and ethnic background.

**Who is conducting the research?**
This research is being conducted by Robyn Smith, she is Masters Candidate at the University of Toronto in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education and has spent the past year volunteering with youth programs at CoalitionTO*. She is supervised by Assistant Professor, Simon Darnell, who investigates how sport can be used as a tool to facilitate social change.

**What are some of the benefits?**
There are benefits to you and the community by taking part. Participating in interviews and informal discussions may allow your child the space to reflect on their own experiences of settlement and integration and to tell their story. This reflexivity may help young people when it comes to thinking critically about their experiences. In addition, the feedback from this project about your child’s experience will be delivered anonymously to the organization and suggestions will be given, thus, allowing the opportunity for an enhanced experience and greater benefits for all participants.
This project, will hopefully also benefit the greater community, including other youth who participate in recreational programming through the settlement service agency. I am going to create a report for youth workers who deliver recreational programs through the settlement service agency. The report will include findings from the project and best practice examples from youth workers who run similar programs. I am also planning on working with you other participants to run a community driven program evaluation of the program. This will hopefully provide feedback for youth and youth workers which in turn may feedback and help develop the program and allow it to better meet the needs of newcomer youth through recreational programming.

Can I participate?
If you are aged under 24 years old and participate regularly at a CoalitionTO* youth recreation program, you are eligible to participate.

Will I be compensated for their time?
Food/snacks and TTC tokens are currently provided during CoalitionTO* recreational programs. However, if you decide to participate within interviews, food/drinks will be provided in addition to TTC.

What are some of the risks to participating?
The risks to participating in this study are minimal, this may include slight discomfort. However, all effort will be made to ensure confidentiality. Your experiences of settlement and integration will also be discussed, this may be a sensitive topic and bring back emotions.

How much time will this require?
For the participant observation, minimum time should be required outside of the current programming hours. However, if you decide that you would like participate in an interview, this will be held either after the program at CoalitionTO* or at a time/location convenient to you. The interview may last between anywhere from 30-90 minutes.

What personal information will need to be collected?
Some background information will be collected from yourself and this will include information such as your age, ethnic background, amount of time spent in Canada. This personal information is useful to the study and exploring how experiences may vary.

Will my identity remain confidential?
To ensure confidentiality, all participants will be provided with a pseudonym when analyzing data. Only Robyn and her supervisor, Professor Darnell, will have access to the Master spreadsheet with this information and this will be stored on a secure server on a password protected computer in Robyn’s office at the University. This pseudonym for you will also be used in the MSc thesis and any report/presentations to protect your identity. A pseudonym will also be used in the MSc thesis when referring to CoalitionTO* and the name of the program. In addition, all field notes, interview recordings and transcripts will be stored in a locked draw at Robyn’s desk in her university office. Only Robyn will have access to this material, Professor Darnell may also help to analyze the data but will not be given any identifying information regarding your child. After five years of holding onto the data in this secure manner, all data will be destroyed.

What if I no longer want to participate within the project?
That is not a problem at all. Please let Robyn or Simon know and all personal information that has been collected about your child will be not be used within my thesis or any further publications. Further steps will also be taken to ensure that new information will not be used within data collection or analysis. Up until Robyn submits her thesis to her advisory committee you can change your mind about participating in the study.
What if I do not want to participate in the participant observation?
If you would not like to participate, that is your right to do so and it will be respected. It will not affect in any shape or form, your participation within the program. As a volunteer at the program I will still have contact with you. However, I will not include any personal information collected about you within the research study. For example if we are having an informal group conversation regarding the program, I will inform you beforehand and if you choose to participate I aim to erase all of the information contributed by you.

What will I be asked to do?
For the participant observation, the program will run as normal. However, Robyn may have informal discussions with you in a group setting or one or one regarding your experiences of participating in the program, sporting experiences and settlement.
If you decide to participate later in an interview, it will be a one off and will take place after the program or a convenient time. You will be asked questions about your background, sporting experiences, experiences taking part in the recreational program, and about your settlement/integration in Canada e.g. your experiences regarding learning English, going to school, making friends etc.

What will happen with the results of the study?
The data will be collected from both the participant observation and interviews and will initially be analyzed to identify any key themes. Data may then be included within Robyn’s Msc thesis or used in subsequent academic publications. No identifying information or personal information will be included and if direct quotations are used, participants will be first be contacted and pseudonyms will be used.

Who do I contact if I have further questions?
If any have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch, at any time.

Who do I contact if I have concerns about how the research was conducted?
You can contact the University of Toronto’s Office of Research Ethics if you have any comments or concerns regarding how the research was conducted, including questions about your rights as a participant.
Appendix F: Interview guide

These are general guiding questions for the interview. Semi-structured interviews may lead to unexpected avenues of discussion beyond the questions listened. This is a normal event in qualitative in-depth interview research. Herein I provide an overview of topics that I intend to explore in interview. I also intend to conduct participant observation prior to my interviews, so these questions may change depending on data collected.

Background information
- Name, age, ethnocultural background, time spent in Canada

To explore the sporting experiences of youth in their home country and in Toronto
- How often do you participate in recreational activities? What type of activities? Who with
- What were your experiences of taking part in sport in your home country?
- Have you ever felt excluded from participating in sport in Canada because of your identity? If so, would you mind sharing some experiences?

To explore youth’s experiences of settlement/integration in Toronto
- What was it like when you first arrived in Canada? Finding a house, school, learning English
- Which aspect of your settlement are you most proud of?
- What were some of the biggest challenges regarding settlement and how did you overcome them?
- What are some of the expectations that people have of you in terms of your settlement?
- How do you think immigrant youth are portrayed in Canada?
- How would you describe your cultural identity?

Youth experiences of accessing settlement services and participating in the program?
- Tell me more about your experiences of using settlement services
- Has the settlement service agency helped you to maintain aspects of your home culture?
- How did you hear about the program?
- Tell me more about some of your experiences of taking part in the recreational program
- What types of activities? How do the youth help to shape the program? Friendships you have developed?
- Has the program helped to influence your settlement/integration in Toronto?