Exploring Ethnocultural Diversity in Canadian Parks: Perceptions and Experiences of New Canadians

by

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Abstract

The overall purpose of this dissertation was to gain a better understanding of how Canadian parks are experienced by New Immigrants. To achieve this goal three studies, each focusing on a different aspect of Canadian parks, were conducted. The first study examined how public policy and programs within Canadian parks address and support ethnocultural diversity and how park staff operationalize these policies and programs to better support Racialized people and New Canadians. Interviews were conducted with 11 park staff (from provincial and national park organizations), and 14 national and provincial policies, frameworks, and mandate directives were reviewed. Results revealed that few policies exist and those that do are either vague in their definition of diversity or incredibly detailed and prescriptive. None of the documents provided details in terms of measurement or success metrics related to increasing visitor diversity. However, park managers and all levels of staff related to visitor experiences felt passionate about supporting diverse visitors and welcoming all Canadians to parks (especially those who have never visited before or would traditionally face barriers). Interviews with staff further revealed that while policy can be helpful the mandate from the federal government and provincial level strategic planning documents allowed for creativity and flexibility that prescriptive policy cannot. Programing and partnerships appeared more relevant than formal policy, and yet local direction such as park management plans were integral. The final theme of staffing needs related both to the lack of policy and failures of current policy and the lack of diversity within parks staff but also to the overwhelming need for more clear policy to support diversity.

The second study focused on better understanding the motivations, constraints, and negotiations to park visitation experienced by New Canadians. Results revealed that constraints, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural factors negatively influence New Canadians' ability to visit National Parks. These constraints were partially mediated by various

negotiation strategies and positively influenced by motivations. Motivations did have a positive effect on negotiation strategies but did not have a direct effect on park visitation. The overall influence of nature relatedness was positive and significant on both motivations and negotiations, but, similar to motivations, did not have a direct effect on park visitation. Overall, the model was a good fit to the data ($\chi 2/df = 1.469$, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .93, TLI = .91, SRMR = .06.) and accounted for 39% of the variance in nature-based recreation (visiting national parks) behaviours of New Canadians.

The third study examined the lived experiences of New Canadians visiting National and Provincial Parks. The purpose of understanding Newcomer's experiences in parks was to gain a better understanding of how their experiences in parks may or may not have contributed to a sense of belonging and sense of place in Canada, as well as their overall connection and relationship with nature (i.e., nature relatedness). Interviews were conducted with 14 New Canadians from seven different countries, who had visited a national or provincial park in the past 12 months. The main themes included (1) parks as places for New Canadians to connect with their own identity (or multiple identities) and (2) provide spaces to build community with other Newcomers as well as Canadian born networks. Parks provided an opportunity to (3) learn how to be “Canadian” and (4) develop a sense of belonging while also evoking strong emotions of loss and grief, but also joy and memories of being back home (5). Finally, the opportunity to spend time in nature was incredibly healing and acted almost like medicine (6); however, not all parks and park experiences provide the same “dose”. The narrative of Newcomers predominantly seeking urban park experiences was strongly challenged by participants describing the need for and benefit of immersive nature. The overall findings, theoretical and practical implications,

limitations of these studies, and future research opportunities are summarized in the final chapter of this dissertation.

Preface

This dissertation is an original work by Clara-Jane Blye. This dissertation is formatted in three publishable papers (Chapter Two, Three, and Four). I was the lead author and solely responsible for data collection, data analysis, and manuscript composition for all the three studies in this dissertation. Dr. Elizabeth A. Halpenny, Dr. Glen Hvenegaard, and Dr. Nancy Spencer were involved in the conceptualization of the theories and methods and contributed to manuscript edits. The interviews in Chapter 2 received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Understanding ethnocultural diversity in park policy, management, and programming. What does it mean to serve all Canadians?", ID: Pro 00097540. The study outlined in Chapter 3 received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Leisure constraints and negotiations of New Canadians visiting Canadian National Parks: Does nature matter?", ID: Pro00094492. The final study included interviews with New Canadians, also received ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Parks are for everyone, but do they mean something to everyone? An interpretive hermeneutic study of park and nature-based recreation experiences of New Canadians.", ID: Pro 00122199. Study 1 will be submitted to *the Journal of Parks Recreation Administration*. Study 2 was submitted to the *Leisure Sciences (An Interdisciplinary Journal)* and is currently under review. Additionally, study 2 was accepted as an oral presentation at 12th International Conference on Monitoring and Management of Visitors in Recreational and Protected Areas and will be presented in September 2024. Finally, Study 3 will be submitted for peer review to the *Journal of Leisure Research.*

Acknowledgments

Completing a dissertation is not an easy task and cannot be undertaken by one individual without the guidance, support, and knowledge of very important people. For me, that means I have a great number of people to thank for influencing my decisions and for my success in completing this project.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Elizabeth Halpenny for the countless hours of work you have put in to my research and development. I have learned more over the past six years than I ever thought possible, and I look forward to continuing to learn and work together. Without your knowledge and expertise combined with your patience and compassion I would not be the scholar I am today. Thank you.

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Additionally, this research would not have been possible without the willingness of my participants. Thank you for taking the time to share your stories with me, for completing my surveys, and to all the park staff for being open and honest with me about the agencies for which I know you hold very dear to your hearts.

To my friends and family, a heartfelt thank you for all the late-night phone calls, coffee breaks, dog walks, and horse rides. Specifically, to those who helped me collect data, visit a park, or just had to listen to me talk about parks for the past 10 years – you are all truly special humans. To Trudy and The Gar, I am honoured to be your daughter, thank you for always believing in me and supporting me. Patrick and Dave, remember what I told ya!

Last, but certainly not least, thank you to my other half and best friend, Steve. Without your love and support I never would have been able to complete this degree (or any others for that matter!). Thank you for spending countless hours in parks, venturing onto trails, and seeing the importance of our protected spaces. Thank you for believing in me even when I did not always believe in myself, I hope I will continue to make you and Bruce Wayne proud.

In addition to those individuals who were instrumental in my success I must also thank the funding bodies for the financial support I received. Financial support for this thesis was provided by The Social Science Research Council of Canada, the University of Alberta, and the Government of Alberta.

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Introduction

Nature, parks, and wilderness are places I value, places I have fond memories in, and places to which I have strong emotional connections. However, as we age, we seek knowledge and understanding and sometimes are confronted with learning that makes us uncomfortable. For many years, I believed nature was something everyone enjoyed (or had the opportunity and choice to enjoy), that parks were managed for all citizens to access, that wilderness was somewhere to travel to, and that wilderness was separate from humans. I sit here today reflecting on the many parks I have had the privilege of camping in, the lakes I have had opportunities to canoe on, and trails I have had the benefit of hiking. My experiences in nature have shaped, and continue to shape who I am as a person, a friend, a scholar, a teacher, and more. Anecdotally, as a young person, I knew these were positive and beneficial recreational activities for my physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. As a researcher, I know empirically that nature can have enormous benefits for overall well-being and quality of life. However, I also know (now) that these places and experiences have historical and systemic barriers for many people; I know that nature and parks have been places of deep rooted racism comprised of exclusionary practices.

I want to acknowledge the history and exclusionary practices of settler colonialism in the creation and maintenance of parks and the concept of wilderness in Canada. I would like to thank many excellent individuals for their writing and work illuminating this history and speaking honestly about realities that are sometimes very hard to hear (Baldwin et al., 2011; Campbell, 2011; Thorpe, 2012). While I recognize their work, the focus of this project is not on the injustices of settler colonialism in relationship to parks. However, I would be remiss not to acknowledge the significance of this work and my responsibility to be respectful of and accountable to it.

Acknowledging difficult truths within Canadian history is important, and through this research journey I have begun a process of combating my own ignorance and increasing my awareness. At the same time, I also want to articulate my love and passion for the Canadian parks system. For me, nature can offer a deep sense of connection that allows humans to flourish in ways they may not have otherwise. Parks are a colonial institution but in modern Canada they can also serve as point of connection to nature for many urban residents, offer spaces to experience Canadian culture, and function as places of important conservation and preservation work. Parks are places to share time with family, to be alone with your thoughts, to see the strength of diverse ecosystems, and marvel at the harmonious ability of plants and animals to create and sustain life. It is for these reasons that I began this journey. This is a venture that seeks to question why I had the depth of nature experiences I was afforded, when many others do not. What about my privileges as a white European settler, woman, from a middle-class family in Southern Ontario made accessing parks seem so easy and part of my identity? How do individuals and families who were not born in Canada and do not share my same experiences and privilege access parks? Are parks fulfilling their mandate of protecting and presenting nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and fostering public understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations?

The following dissertation acknowledges my place as a researcher, who is deeply tied to parks and the concept of wilderness.

Philosophical Orientation

Research Paradigm

The formal concept of a research paradigm was first introduced by Kuhn (1962) and has since evolved into a broad understanding that researchers within a community, or field of practice, typically hold worldviews which govern research and the researcher. Our chosen research paradigm is often referred to as the net that holds our ontology, epistemology, and theoretical perspectives (Guba, 1990; Mayan, 2016). However, I prefer Morgan's (2007) understanding of paradigms as a set of "shared beliefs within a community of researchers, who share a consensus about which questions are most meaningful, and which procedures are most appropriate for answering those questions" (p. 53). While I am comfortable stating my research paradigm for the scope of this work, as noted by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) our assumptions can and should change based on the research question and the research design.

As a researcher is it essential to clearly state my research assumptions as they do not neatly fall into one traditional paradigm as laid out by scholars such as Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Mayan (2016). Rather, I am guided by Dewey (2008), and those who have written and expanded on his philosophy of pragmatism (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Greene, 2007; Hall, 2013; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; and Morgan, 2014). For Dewey, pragmatism is a philosophy that should help develop ideas relevant to actual life and the crisis of living our daily lives; the knowledge and intelligence we generate should therefore be used to liberate action (Dewey, 1976). Pragmatism is a philosophy based on common sense, that simultaneously is dedicated to the transformation of culture, and to the resolution of the conflicts that divide philosophers and researchers alike (Sleeper, 1986). The conflict that Dewey's pragmatism attempts to address is the separation between post-positivism and constructivism. In many

accepted texts, post-positivists claim that the world exists apart from our understanding of it, while constructivists insist that the world is created by our conceptions of it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). For Dewey (2008), these two assertions are equally important claims about the nature of human experience. On one hand, our experiences in the world are necessarily constrained by the nature of that world; on the other hand, our understanding of the world is inherently limited to our interpretations of our experiences. We are not free to believe anything we want about the world if we care about the consequences of acting on those beliefs (Morgan, 2014). Dewey believed that experiences always involve a process of interpretation. Beliefs must therefore be interpreted to generate action, and actions must be interpreted to generate beliefs (See figure 1).

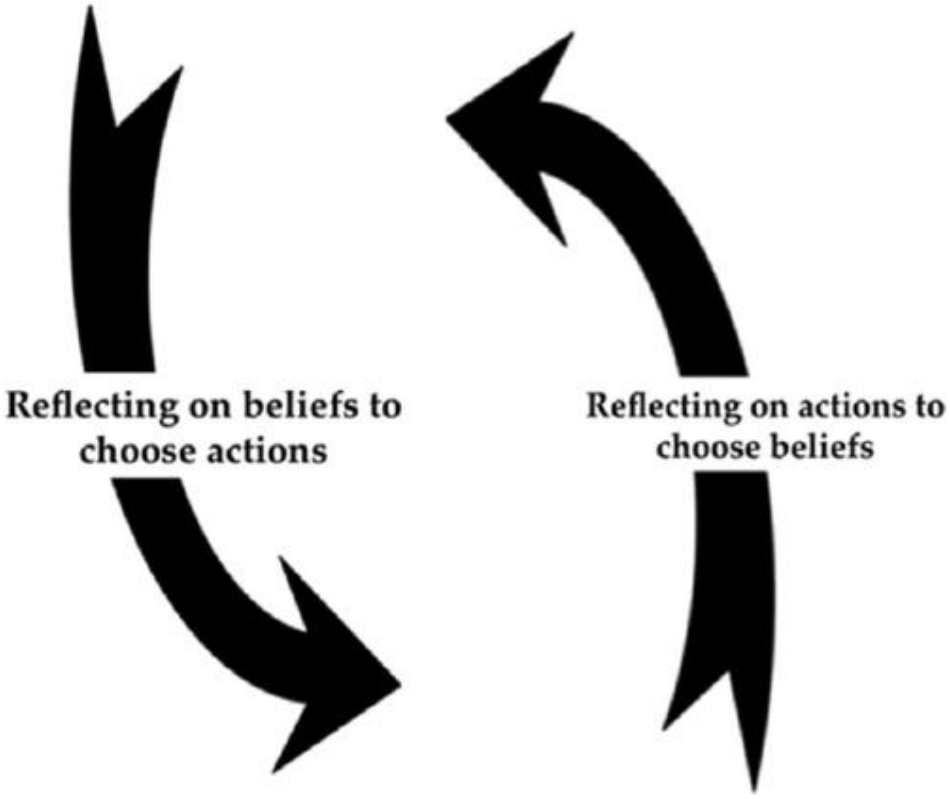

Figure 1. Dewey's model of experience (Morgan, 2014).

Dewey's Pragmatism does not consider inquiry in service to establishing universal or absolute truths. Dewey's theory of truth states that truth is neither discovered nor claimed; instead, it is constructed as a by-product of solving problems (Hickman, 2007). Truth, like knowledge, is temporal and embedded in and generated through our experiential transactions. Truth is linked to action and has to be tested continuously and substantiated. Therefore, in order to understand "truth" or knowledge as researchers, we can look to Dewey's model of inquiry in Figure 2.

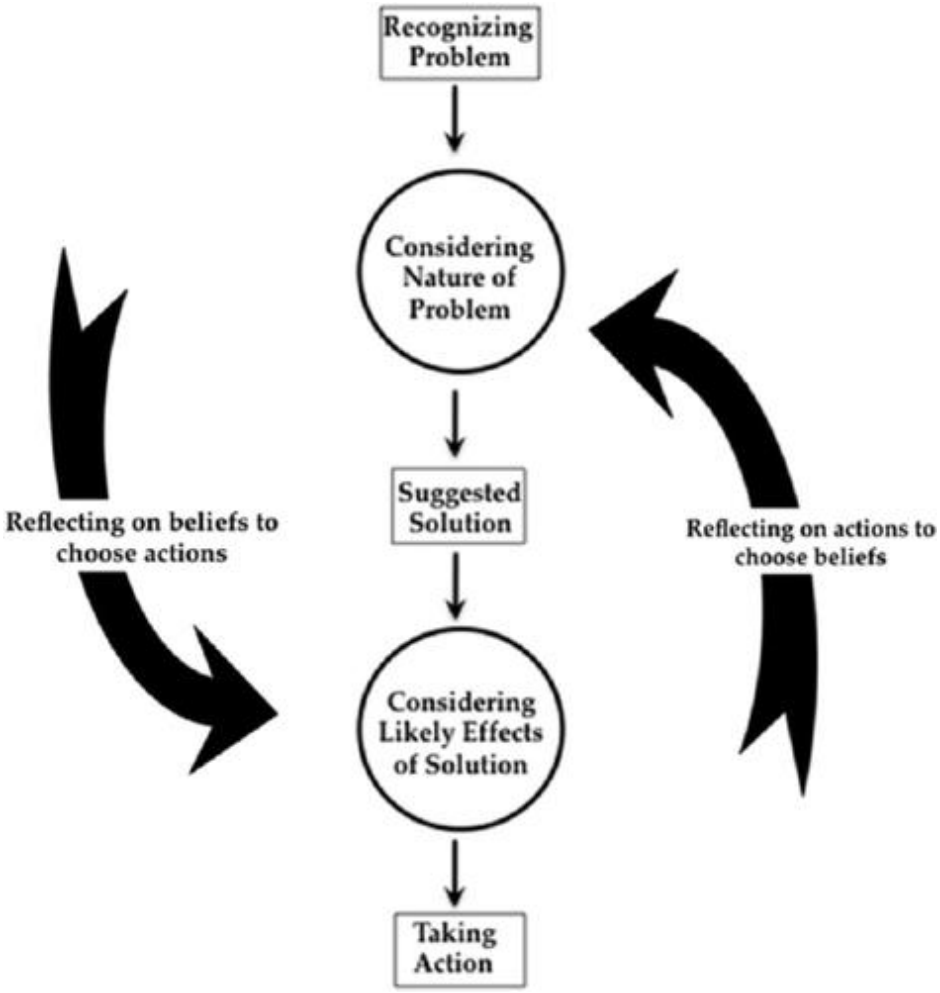

Figure 2. Dewey's model of inquiry (Morgan, 2014).

It is important to point out that while pragmatism allows for the concept of truth it is essential to understand that truth is and can be dynamic. Dewey believed that truth is better

understood as regulative principles (such as moral truths, physical truths, and mathematical truths) that are typically so well understood they are unlikely to be revised. However, as they are not absolute truths, they undergo shifts and changes; for example, our understanding of the universe and earth's place within it has changed since Galileo. What is most important in pragmatism is being open to change. Truth can be objectively proven, until it is not, and then we must change our understanding of that truth, therefore making it not absolute (Hickman, 2007).

The use of Dewey's Pragmatism allows me as a researcher to situate myself within an emerging paradigm that values middle ground between two communities of research that I see immense value in, post-positivism and interpretivism (or constructionism, as they are commonly interchanged according to Creswell and Poth, 2017). I believe that we exist within the natural or physical world, but that we each hold our own subjective understanding of that world as it is shaped by our culture, history, and experiences. As I believe in the single reality of the world with multiple perspectives and experiences of that reality, knowledge is therefore constructed and based on that reality (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Dewey's model of inquiry explains that knowledge consists of warranted assertions that result from taking action and experiencing the outcomes (Dewey, 2008; Morgan, 2014). I value the use of theory and believe theory has truth based on how well the theory is currently working, knowing that all truths such as theories are subject to change based on time and circumstances. Overall, as a pragmatic researcher, I view research as a holistic endeavour that requires prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005).

Earlier, I turned to Kuhn (1962) and Morgan (2007) to elaborate on the concept of paradigms in which we as researchers situate ourselves. I would like to further elaborate that within this understanding of paradigms the given research community decides what questions are

most important and which methods are most appropriate for answering those questions. Within recreation, tourism, park management, and leisure as broad communities of research, both qualitative and quantitative methods are widely accepted and practical research questions surrounding the dynamic nature of park visitors are considered important. However, pragmatism reminds us that research questions are not inherently "important," and methods are not automatically "appropriate" (Morgan, 2007). Instead, it is we as researchers who make the choices about what is important and what is appropriate, and those choices inevitably involve aspects of our personal history, social background, and cultural assumptions. A pragmatic approach reminds us that our values (i.e., axiology) and previous experiences are always a part of who we are and how we act.

Positionality

Pragmatism as a research paradigm takes an explicitly value-oriented approach to research that is derived from and enhanced by our (myself as the researcher) cultural values and experiences (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007; Morgan, 2014). As researchers we bring with us preconceptions and assumptions that are inherent to who we are, and these beliefs play a large role in shaping our research. Conceptualizing the researcher as a research instrument allows us to accept these assumptions, even embrace them, but also requires us to be transparent and open about them as well. This is known as positionality (Haraway, 1988). Haraway offers a different concept of objectivity, one that attempts to situate knowledge by making the knower accountable to their position and that states objectivity is not about disengagement.

It is therefore important that I acknowledge my position within this research. This research focuses on ethnic minorities and New Immigrants, of which I am neither. I am (in no

particular order) a Caucasian, Settler Canadian, cisgendered woman, who does not experience a disability. Further, I have Ukrainian, Polish, British, and Irish immigrant grandparents, and I am of Jewish cultural heritage. I was raised in Toronto, Ontario, attended private school, and was offered privileged opportunities to interact with and connect to nature. My family rented a cottage in North Hatley Quebec, I went to summer camp in Long Lake, New York, I participated in multiple Outward Bound trips though middle and high school, and I studied outdoor recreation and leisure studies in university. I consider nature-based recreation activities my passion and have travelled the world in pursuit of connecting to nature. The culmination of my life experiences thus far, have led me to hold strong environmental worldviews, in which I consider nature to be essential to my identity. Finally, I feel it is important to acknowledge that I do not have children. While this might seem an odd statement, I believe our values and worldviews shift when we become parents; it is also relevant as many of my participants are parents and some experienced nature in the role of a parent and grandparent – something I cannot relate to.

The overall goal of this research is to inform policy and provide an opportunity for the lived experiences of New Immigrants to be meaningfully shared and ultimately influence park policy. While I hold no direct position of power in the park management field that this research hopes to inform, I recognize that as a PhD student conducting research with traditionally marginalized people in Canada, I hold a position of power in some capacity. In speaking with both park staff and New Immigrants, this work did not formally disrupt power imbalances, but my hope is that it does potentially highlight the need for emic understandings of immigrant experiences for park policy and guidelines focusing on inclusion and equity.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Immigration policies in many western countries have shifted in the last forty years to allow for the influx of immigrants from non-traditional source countries (Liston & Carens, 2008). Changes in immigration policy have contributed to high levels of diversity within Western countries, leading to changes in park visitation, park management, and our knowledge of park visitors (Bain et al., 2008; Lopoukhine et al., 2014; Lovelock et al., 2012). International migration worldwide has continued to grow rapidly in recent years, reaching 258 million in 2017, up from 220 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000 (United Nations, 2018). Canada has among the highest percentages of immigrants in all G7 countries; an estimated 8.3 million people or 23% of the total population are foreign-born (Statistics Canada, 2023). A landed or recent immigrant is typically considered a person who has come to Canada up to 5 years prior to a given census year (Statistics Canada, 2016). Research on the experiences of immigrants new to Canada over the past 10 years, reveals a wide spectrum of ethnic cultures, countries of origin, factors prompting emigration, as well as economic and social status. As changes occur and ethnocultural diversity increases, so too must our understanding of the dynamic nature of populations and nationality.

In the context of this research, ethnoculturally diverse populations are populations in which many different ethnicities are present. Ethnicity can be defined as, "a group having a real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood" (Bahr et al., 1979, p. 6). While diversity can and does hold different meaning to different people or in different settings, the Oxford English Dictionary (2021), defines diversity as “the practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different

genders, sexual orientations, etc.". Taken together these terms have guided this dissertation to better understand how people who have immigrated to Canada and therefore hold diverse ethnicities, experience parks and nature-based recreation in Canada.

The changing demographics of Canada and increasing ethnic diversity, are especially relevant for park management, planning, and policy development as literature indicates that ethnic minority groups and immigrants participate less and experience significant constraints to nature-based recreation than other ethnic majority groups or non-foreign born residents (Blattel, 2011; Buijs et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2004; Santucci et al., 2014). These constraints include but are not limited to: lack of time, socio-cultural prioritization of work over leisure, language barriers, reduced transportation options, lack of knowledge, financial costs, lack of opportunity, and social networks that lack experience in accessing protected areas (Johnson et al., 2004; Lovelock et al., 2012; Lovelock et al., 2013; Rishbeth & Finney, 2006; Stodolska et al., 2017; Wright & Matthews, 2015). While much is known about the various barriers to parks visitation, little research has been conducted to provide a detailed understanding of how constraints can be and have been negotiated by New Immigrants, diverse visitors, as well as current and potential new day use park visitors. This is especially true for those who are typically day use visitors, as there is a dearth of research on this particular group of park visitors (Papenfuse et al., 2000; Wilcer et al., 2019). Overwhelmingly, New Immigrants and ethnoculturally diverse park visitors in western countries are day-use visitors (Bain at el., 2008; Lovelock et al., 2012). In addition, there is a lack of understanding of diverse populations' needs and motivations related to park visitation (Wilcer et al., 2019). It can no longer be assumed that park visitors have the homogenous desire to visit parks for nature immersion, solitude, or traditional outdoor recreation activities. Within Canada, parks are committed to increasing diversity of park visitors, through

programming, outreach, and education specifically focused on new Canadians and non-traditional park visitors such as ethnic minorities (Parks Canada, 2017). However, to date no formal policy exists and no empirical data has been generated to support these initiatives.

The history of the Canadian Parks system began in 1885, with the creation of Banff National Park in the northern Rockies. Banff was formed shortly after a Canadian Pacific Railroad employee reported the scenic beauty and uniqueness of hot springs located in the area, and inspired the establishment of a national park. In the beginning, national parks were not imagined as a way of preserving nature from people, but as reserving nature for (certain) people's use. Selected sites favoured both the visually sublime and the geographically convenient (with regards to the rail line) (Campbell, 2011). By 1911, the first parks department in the world was created (Dominion Parks Branch), and the first Commissioner was named. James B. Harkin oversaw the creation and expansion of Canadian National Parks for 25 years, and under his management, parks became places of scenic beauty, conservation, idealism, as well as exclusion and racism. Parks have a long history of being created and managed for a white, masculine ideal, with examples of exclusionary hunting practices in Kluane National Park Reserve, and expropriations in Cape Breton Highlands National Park (Neufeld, 2011; Sandilands, 2011). Thorpe (2012), provides an example of how power dynamics and racism fuelled the creation of Ontario's wild lands and Temagami Lake into an area devoid of Indigenous culture and history and a landscape for western, masculine, bourgeois to reflect their own cultural values of wilderness.

Canada is of course not the same place it was 150 years ago, but nevertheless, the history of a hegemonic patriarchal style of park management continues to influence its current practices. Park visitors in North America are predominantly white, highly educated, middle class, and more

often male (versus female; while females do visit parks, they do not visit as frequently as men or alone) (Pease, 2011). Parks are often cited as playgrounds for the [white] middle class (Meeker, 1973; Pease, 2011), and are being criticized for not reflecting the changing demographics of the country. Park managers and policy developers in Canada are working to change this narrative through programming, outreach, creation of new parks, and other initiatives targeting diversity and non-traditional park visitors. However, Wright and Matthews (2015) point out that there lacks a significant body of empirical research to support park managers and policy developers on best practices for connecting non-traditional park visitors to nature and increasing ethnic and cultural diversity in Parks.

Research focused on the complex relationship between nature-based recreation (such as park visitation) and ethnicity, race, immigrants, and diverse populations has been conducted for over 35 years (Stodolska, 2018). Attempts to increase diversity in nature-based recreation sites, such as national parks, have been fuelled by this very research (Jay et al., 2012; Santucci et al., 2014). However, as a field of practice, we have failed to increase ethnic diversity within parks and therefore have potentially missed the opportunity to strengthen connections to nature for immigrants and ethnic minorities (Baas et al., 1993; Jay et al., 2012; Johnson et al., 2004; Pettebone & Meldrum, 2018; Santucci et al., 2014; Stodolska et al., 2017; Virden & Walker, 1999).

Connections to nature are essential for all humans, as time spent in nature can have health, well-being, social, and emotional benefits (Hartig et al., 2014; Romagosaa at al., 2015). The health benefits of nature are of significant importance to New Immigrants, as research has shown immigrants face stressful experiences during pre-migration, migration, and post-migration phases, as well as experience isolation in their new host countries, leading to significant

decreases in physical and mental health (De Maio & Kemp, 2010; Kim et al., 2013). Nature-based recreation experiences (such as visiting parks) can increase social cohesion, and mitigate disconnection and isolation through the development of sense of belonging (Hordyk et al., 2015; Louv, 2011; Romagosaa, et al., 2015). Experiencing a sense of belonging includes social, historical, and geographical connections to a particular place and may also be influenced by feelings related to sense of place (Miller, 2003). Our sense of place combines our emotional connections with our experiences in a place, and allow us to feel connected or at home in place. In a time of globalization and postmodernism our sense of place has become a combination of local and extended places (Relph, 2008). Both sense of belonging and sense of place contribute to our connections with our surroundings and the environment and therefore influence stewardship, or our willingness to want to protect the environment for future generations (Chapin et al., 2011; Kudryavtsev et al., 2012). Our connections to nature or our ability to relate to nature influences our likelihood to act in ways that are beneficial to the environment and increases our desire to protect it (Halpenny, 2010; Nisbett et al., 2009). The ability to connect to nature has been linked to the concept of nature relatedness, the measure of one's relationship with the natural world (nature) and includes our understanding of humans' interconnectness with nature (Nisbett et al., 2009). Providing access and opportunities for New Immigrants and ethnic minorities to connect with nature through parks (as they currently do not visit parks as frequently as their non-foreign born or Caucasian counter parts) allows for more touch points with nature and increases possibilities to foster stewardship.

While much is known about ethnic minority groups and specific groups of immigrants within the United States and Europe, there lacks a substantial body of literature focusing on immigrants to other western and commonwealth countries and their nature-based recreation

pursuits (Floyd & Bocarro, 2008; Floyd & Stodolska, 2019; Shinew et al. 2004; Stodolska & Walker 2007; Stodolska, 2018). Therefore, this research is focused on how New Immigrants and ethnic minorities perceive and experience parks and nature-based recreation in Canada.

Purpose and Overview of Studies

The three main areas of focus for this thesis include: (1) policies and programs park agencies currently have in place and or implement in order to achieve ethnic and cultural diversity of park visitors (i.e. New Immigrants and Racialized Canadians), (2) constraints to visiting parks, as well as how those constraints are negotiated by ethnoculturally diverse park visitors (i.e. New Immigrants), and finally, (3) how New Immigrants and ethnoculturally diverse park visitors perceive parks (both national and provincial) and how visiting parks may (or may not) contribute to a sense of place, sense of belonging, and nature relatedness in Canada (their new host country). As parks are managed by governments and thereby governed by polices, bylaws, and guidelines, through this research, this dissertation investigated how policy is currently understood and implemented to increase ethnic and cultural diversity in parks by engaging with international leaders in the field of park management. Establishing an understanding of park policy and park management lead to study two, which focused on the constraints New Immigrants and ethnoculturally diverse visitors face and how they negotiate or overcome (or don't overcome) those constraints, their motivations for visiting parks, and their connections to nature. Finally, to better inform future policy, programs, park planning initiatives, and park development, study three sought to understand how new Canadians who visit parks perceive parks, and what their experiences visiting parks mean to those individual's sense of place, sense of belonging, and connections to nature in Canada. This work increases our understanding of how parks and protected areas are being experienced by immigrants and

ethnoculturally diverse populations. A deeper consciousness of how immigrants and ethnoculturally diverse populations connect to nature will allow park managers to increase access and equity to nature by drafting supportive, informed, and reflective policies, reduce barriers both at an individual and systems level, better tailor programming and opportunities to the needs and motivations of individuals, and ultimately foster stewardship promoting conservation behaviours and parks protection.

Research Questions

This dissertation was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does public policy within park agencies and their supporting organizations in Canada define, refer to, and include notions of diversity as it relates to ethnocultural diversity of park visitors? and (2) How do public policy documents influence park agency staff in supporting visitor diversity?
2. What are the leisure constraints experienced by New Canadians who seek to engage in day-use park visitation (to national parks) and engagement with nature? (2) How do New Canadians negotiate constraints to national park access/visitation and engagement with nature? And (3) How do motivations and nature relatedness affect New Canadian park visitor's ability or willingness to negotiate leisure-constraints (to park visitation)?
3. How do New Canadians perceive and experience national and provincial parks? and (2) How does visiting national and provincial parks influence nature relatedness, sense of place, and sense of belonging within their new host country?

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Chapter 2: Park Policy, Management, Programming, and Decision Making for Diversity in Canada

Study 1: Understanding ethnocultural diversity in park policy, management, and programming. What does it mean to serve all Canadians?

Introduction

As the Canadian population becomes more diverse, there is an increasing need to better understand how public institutions and public policy support Canada's population in its entirety. Immigrants account for 23% of Canada's population, and 25% of the country's population identify as being Racialized (Statistics Canada, 2023). Close to 98% of the recent population growth was as a result of immigration and Canada is on target to receive more than 500,000 New Immigrants annually by 2025. This influx of immigrants is not new. Canada is a nation founded on migration (and Colonization), however, the way in which governments plan for and support immigrants has changed over the past 50 years. In 1971, then Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau announced multiculturalism as an official government policy, which started more than 20 years of constitutional review, ultimately culminating in the 1988 passing of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (and renewal in 1997). This was in stark contrast to the restrictive immigration policies prior to the 1960's and the long-standing assimilationist approach to Canadian policy (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010; Palmer, 2002). The original goals of the policy have been adapted slightly, with the focus of the current Act being an acknowledgement and promotion of cultural and racial diversity in Canada and the freedom to preserve, enhance, and share cultural heritage (Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1988, 2014).

With the official Multiculturalism Act also came funding and dedicated government programs and policies to support New Canadian's integration into Canadian society. This funding while modest, continues today through the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. In addition, there is also a government wide commitment that all departments are expected to

consider multiculturalism (now referred to as diversity) in designing and implementing their own policies, programs, and plans. Given that national parks are a division of the federal government (Parks Canada) it is expected that parks address ethnic diversity within their policies and programs as well. While this policy is federal in nature there are versions of the policy that have been adopted by provincial and municipal governments across Canada (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010).

There is growing pressure to ensure that the Canadian Parks system is not only relevant to an increasingly urban population but also welcoming of all Canadians (Canadian Parks Council, 2014, 2017). While limited data is available in Canada there are numerous indicators that parks, especially more remote or expansive systems such as national and provincial parks, continue to be dominated by "traditional" visitors. This includes Caucasians, highly educated, middle class, and more often male (versus female; while females do visit parks, they do not visit as frequently as men or alone) (Pease, 2011). Parks are often cited as playgrounds for the [White] middle class (Meeker, 1973; Pease, 2011), and are criticized for not reflecting the changing demographics of the country. Additionally, as Canada progresses with meaningful Truth and Reconciliation work and responds to the 94 Calls to Action put forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, parks too must move forward (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). This requires shifts in management approaches, visitor experience practices, and policies to support this work. Park leaders, managers, and policy developers in Canada are working to change the exclusionary narrative through programming, outreach, creation of new parks, and other initiatives targeting diversity and non-traditional park visitors (Canadian Parks Council, 2017; Jager & Halpenny, 2012; Lemieux et al., 2022). However, Wright and Matthews (2015) point out that there lacks a significant body of empirical

research to support park managers and policy developers on best practices for ensuring equity, diversity, and inclusion within parks and increasing ethnic and cultural diversity in parks. This research is focused on the current policies, programs, and management of Canadian Parks to better understand how parks will, and in some cases are, achieving their goals of ensuring parks are welcoming spaces for all visitors. While full inclusion requires parks to better understand the needs of all people and their intersectional identities, this work is specifically focused on how parks can be welcoming spaces for ethnic and culturally diverse visitors (e.g., immigrants, Racialized individuals, and ethnic minorities).

Literature Review

Parks and Diversity

Diversity is a complex term, and not without critique. Language is fundamentally a social construct (Burr, 2015) which allows for multiple understandings, applications, and actions. In this way, it is important to first view and provide space for the critique of the term cultural diversity while also thinking about the value of the term and the power it can hold when actioned. Leading scholars in feminist and postcolonial theory posit that multiculturalism or cultural diversity in their very definition suggests that differences are something other than the norm (Stratton & Ang, 1994). Within this understanding cultural diversity becomes something a nation (in this case Canada) can be or can have through acceptance, and integration of multiple cultures. However, our use of the term in this way further commodifies the differences in cultural "others" as something they are and therefore something "we" (the nation of Canada) can have or be (Ahmed, 2007). This exploration offers insight into how "diversity" can be problematized, but this also discounts the ability of ownership and action of the language. For the diversity scholar Sara Ahmed, the power of the term diversity within public institutions such as universities and

governments is particularly relevant and possible. For Ahmed (2007) the terms diversity and cultural diversity can offer currency, can be actioned, and demonstrate the value of the very thing the term problematizes – *the other.* We offer this critique and begin this dialogue as this study navigates the complexity of how important valuing differences (i.e., diversity) is within public institutions while simultaneously investigating colonial state apparatuses– parks, for their efforts to increase the cultural diversity of visitors.

Research focused on the complex relationship between nature-based recreation (such as park visitation) and diversity – including ethnicity, race, immigrant status, people living with disabilities, Indigenous People, LGTBQIA2S+ and other overlapping identities - has been conducted for over 35 years (Stodolska, 2018). Attempts to increase diversity in outdoor recreation sites, such as national parks, have been fuelled by this very research (Jay et al., 2012; Santucci et al., 2014). However, as a field of practice, we have failed to meaningfully increase ethnic diversity within parks and therefore have potentially missed the opportunity to strengthen connections to nature for immigrants and ethnic minorities (Baas et al., 1993; Jay et al., 2012; Johnson et al., 2004; Pettebone & Meldrum, 2018; Santucci et al., 2014; Stodolska et al., 2017; Virden & Walker, 1999). Recent research suggests that during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, visitation to parks and natural areas globally has increased exponentially (Parks Canada, 2022; Ferguson et al., 2022). Conversely, this data also suggests that many of the visitors (both new and returning) are still disproportionately Caucasian, non-foreign-born, able-bodied, and above average earners (Rice et al., 2021). It is important to note that while statistics highlight the over representation of White people visiting parks, this is by no means an indication that diverse individuals (People of Colour, Immigrants, Indigenous people, People living with Disabilities) are not interested in nature-based recreation. This is a false and highly problematic

narrative that persists in many Western countries and is perpetuated by traditional "White," ableist, and colonial norms of what it means to engage in nature-based recreation (Lee, 2023; Scott & Tenneti, 2021). Many immigrants and people of colour in fact participate in some nature-based recreational activities at higher rates than White people and Canadian born residents (Environics, 2018). Lovelock et al., 2012) found that immigrants to New Zealand participated in mountaineer/climbing, nature photography, and freshwater fishing at higher rates than New Zealand-born residents. These results combined with Lee's (2023) recent work calling the narrative of Black under-participation/representation a myth must lead us to view diversity in parks with a more critical and less White hegemonic lens. There is an apparent disconnect between our collective understandings of what nature-based recreation is and should be.

While there is clear evidence to suggest diverse identities are passionate about nature-based recreation and conservation/environmental values there are still barriers (including systemic) for many diverse individuals to visit parks and participate in (some) nature-based recreation (Blye & Halpenny, under review; Schell et al., 2020; Stodolska et al., 2020). These include but are not limited to time, finances, knowledge, family obligations, fear, and exclusion (Stodolska 2015; Kloek et al., 2015; Gentin, 2011). Additionally, as more and more people are living in urban environments and have become disconnected from nature, recent statistics suggest that 90% of Canadians prefer to spend their time indoors and 30% of all Canadians do not participate in meaningful nature-based recreation (Scott & Tenneti, 2021). For Racialized people, and Indigenous people in Canada, increased experiences of discrimination, harassment, and racism further exclude them from park spaces (Park People, 2021). These barriers and perhaps differences in nature-based recreation preferences highlight the need to better understand

the needs of diverse individuals and to examine the role of public policy and institutions such as parks to meet these needs.

Parks in Canada Committed to Diversity (and Equity, Inclusion, and Reconciliation)

Parks Canada is committed to ensuring that all national parks (and historic sites) are enjoyed and protected for all Canadians. This commitment includes an acknowledgement of Canada's diverse population, and requires Parks Canada to consider how in fact the agency is achieving this mandate. While there is a vast list of policies, programs, and attempts to accomplish inclusion of all Canadians it is worth noting the outcomes and statements made following a recent Ministers Roundtable in 2020 (held virtually with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change). More than 500 participants reflected on the following two questions: What principles for inclusion and diversity are the most important for achieving full participation of Canadians in the conservation and enjoyment of national parks, historic sites, and marine conservation areas? And, what does an inclusive national park, historic site, or marine conservation area mean for you? Through this roundtable Canadians shared that they do not feel national parks are always welcoming to those who identify as Racialized, Indigenous, members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, or Canadians who are living with Disabilities. Furthermore, participants suggested that costs and transportation were significant barriers and that programs should be developed, delivered, or continue to be supported that work to reduce barriers and make people of all identities feel safe and welcome in national parks. The final outcome of this meeting was the recommendation that diversity must also be achieved from within. Visitors from diverse backgrounds feel safe and welcomed in places where they see

themselves reflected in the management and workforce, and Parks Canada must accomplish diversity from all factions (Scott & Tenneti, 2021).

Working to achieve diversity, equity, inclusion, and reconciliation is complex and requires cultural shifts as well as dedicated staffing, programming, and funding. Currently, Parks Canada (and some provincial park agencies) champion connecting diverse and non-traditional park visitors through programs such as *Learn to Camp.* This program consists of free or subsidized overnight camping trips for new Canadians by Parks Canada designed to facilitate access to and understanding of national parks (Parks Canada, 2016). In addition, *Learn to Camp*, provides educational sessions with groups, organizations, and within education centres to support increased access to National Parks. The program aims to teach New Canadians, Racialized Canadians, urban Canadians, and others new to parks in Canada how to be safe and enjoy parks and nature-based recreation (such as camping, hiking, etc.). Identifying a need to reduce barriers and engage new audience members in park operations, the program was created in response to decreased visitation to parks in conjunction with rising immigration and urban migration rates. More specifically the 2015 Minister of Environment and Climate Change's mandate letter stated that:

> Parks Canada will develop programs and services so that more Canadians can experience National Parks and learn more about our environment and heritage. Through an expanded Learn-to Camp program, Parks Canada will ensure that more low- and middle-income families have an opportunity to experience Canada's outdoors (Government of Canada, Office of the Prime Minister, para. 29, 2015).

The Program was launched in 2011 with a refocus on urban areas in 2017 to include "hubs" in Edmonton, Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Halifax, and Ottawa. To date, the program has seen

more than 19,000 Canadians participating in overnight camping experiences and hundreds of thousands participating in events and workshops nationwide. In 2023 alone, almost 100,000 people attended an event or workshop both onsite in parks and in community or school based event (Parks Canada, 2023). These experiences are highly subsidized or free for participants. Program elements include camping (camp set up), building and lighting a fire, cooking outdoors & meal planning, and participating in recreational activities (Parks Canada, 2016). Parks Canada (2023) has outlined the following objectives for Learn to Camp programs:

- Provide opportunities for Canadians to learn new skills that will allow them to create memorable outdoor experiences and build awareness of Parks Canada.
- Promote camping experiences and related activities available to families in Canada.
- Foster meaningful connections to nature and heritage places through outdoor activities and gained knowledge.
- Increase visitation to sites administered by Parks Canada, especially by those arriving from urban locations.

As the Parks Canada Learn to Camp Program aims to connect participants, including a focus on urban Canadians, New Canadians, and Racialized Canadians, to Canada and its natural environment as well as increase park visitation and reduce barriers to accessing and enjoying national parks and historic sites, this program and its policies are integral to this study.

Public policy

Policy acts as a key guiding force for much of what occurs in recreation and leisure practice (Veal, 2017). Policy is linked to philosophy, in that it deals with fundamental issues related to people, such as how we find meaning in life and how we process decision-making.

Typically, policy development is a process focused on problem-solving and solution creation. Most policies have technical content and require people with multiple viewpoints, varying perspectives, and interests to achieve solutions through the process of enacting polices and (ideally) measuring outcomes (Clark & Clark, 2002). Policies are extremely value-laden, led by those in a community who hold strong values (or opinions) about a particular issue. Policy is rarely purely scientific or empirical, but rather, influenced heavily by organizational culture and the dynamics of interest groups. However, those who create and develop policy are not always those for whom the policy is written (Veal, 2017).

In the context of parks and outdoor recreation, it is generally accepted that people in positions of power (i.e., park staff) value healthy ecosystems and the natural environment, but those same individuals may have very different understandings of how natural resources such as parks should be accessed and used by humans (Clark & Clark, 2002). Within park policy, Clark and Clark (2002) suggests that the framework widely adopted relies on integrating the social process, the decision process, and the problem orientation. In addition, Clark and Clark (2002) states that all policy developers should be guided by the moral goal of "a commonwealth of human dignity" and focus on democracy, human rights and security (p.10). Due to the fact that policy guides access to parks and protected areas, that it is value laden, and typically developed by actors other than the individuals and groups that are directly affected by them (i.e., White, middle class, western, planners creating policies focusing on ethnic diversity in parks), an opportunity to better comprehend park policy and programming in Canada may provide park staff with a more in-depth understanding of how immigrants and ethnic minorities access parks and outdoor recreation.

Policy analysis is an applied discipline within social science and is focused on problem-solving. Policy research, within policy analysis, is typically more academic in nature, seeks to understand the policy at hand, and explain reasons for the adoption and effects or outcomes of a particular policy. Policy research in the social sciences has focused largely on health care, politics, and to some degree sport policies, but there lacks a solid body of research focusing on parks, protected areas, and nature-based recreation, in particular with a focus on human dimensions.

In the United States, the National Parks Service [NPS] has recognized that immigrants and ethnic minorities are underrepresented in their national parks and recreation areas (National Parks Service, 2016; Santucci et al., 2014). In addition to changing demographics due to migration, Western countries' populations are predominately urbanized (Jager & Halpenny, 2012; National Parks Service, 2016). Recognizing that much of the population lives in urban areas and therefore has access to urban parks and National Recreation Areas, the NPS has developed policies and strategic management directions to help encourage diversity within urban parks. The Urban Parks Programs and Partnerships Affinity Caucus outlines how the NPS is striving towards park visitor diversity. With the guiding policy documents in mind, Santucci et al. (2014) investigated the efforts undertaken by the NPS to promote diversity in urban parks through two case studies of urban National Recreation Areas. In-depth interviews were conducted with NPS staff members ranging from visitor use assistants to park superintendents with a focus on staff who had the most contact with visitors. These staff were selected as they were directly responsible for the creation and implementation of programs developed to encourage diversity. Emerging from this research were three main themes: (1) the need to engage youth beyond simply threshold or one-off experiences, (2) the limitations of the hiring for

diversity policy and other diversity policies within the NPS traditions, and (3) the lack of organizational support to achieve strategic directions goals (Santucci et al., 2014). Findings suggest that while policy can support change, historical, institutional and political influencers are indeed barriers to action.

The policies and strategic or management directions of many European countries' parks and nature-based recreation providers do not appear to be in line with the immigration trends and little documentation exists to help support immigrants and ethnic minorities' access to nature. Jay et al. (2012) highlighted European policy and academic research related to immigrants' access to nature in four European countries: Denmark, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. Unlike within Canada and the United States, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands have no formal policy promoting diversity or inclusion of immigrants and ethnic minorities in their parks and protected areas (or any natural areas) (Jay et al., 2012). Within the United Kingdom, policy is scarce but an "equality and suppression of discrimination against ethnic minorities act" is included in public policy through the Equality Act, 2010. Therefore, in the UK, access for ethnic minorities to public places and natural areas has become an increasingly important consideration for nature and green space managers and policy developers. The diversity action plan called "Outdoors for All" focuses on social inclusion for underrepresented groups including ethnic minorities. The document singles out those from Asian countries as that is the United Kingdom's largest ethnic minority group (Jay et al., 2012). While the United Kingdom has some policy documents that support equitable access to parks and nature-based recreation for ethnic minorities, the paucity of evidence regarding the implementation of these strategies provides challenges for researchers to conclude how and if they are effective.

To date, no studies focusing on diversity policies and Racialized People, including New Canadians, in parks and nature-based recreation have been conducted in Canada.

Current Study

According to Schultz et al. (2019), the most common conceptual approach to understanding diversity in parks and nature-based recreation research has been to focus on visitor experiences and participation or lack thereof. While these are valid and important topics (see chapters 3 and 4), these perspectives are limited in scope and do not provide meaningful insights into public agency management and organizational shifts needed to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion (as well as reconciliation and decolonization). Without a detailed understanding of the public institutions themselves (e.g., parks), we are unable to fully contextualize the experience of visitors. As public service agencies, parks and protected areas have a responsibility to act in accordance with federal and provincial laws and policies. It is for these reasons, and the work of Schultz et al. (2019), Santucci et al. (2014) and Lee et al. (2020), that this study focused on park agencies within Canada and the national and provincial level policies that guide their work of diversity, equity, and inclusion. To do so, this research was conducted in two phases. Phase one was focused on the policy documents, including mandates, management directives, strategic plans, and other guiding documents of National and Provincial Park agencies in Canada. To guide this phase, we asked how does public policy within park agencies and their supporting organizations in Canada define, refer to, and include notions of diversity as it relates to ethnocultural diversity of park visitors? Phase two applied the learnings from phase one and sought to (1) better understand how park agency staff engage with, understand, and

operationalize the term diversity as it relates to visitors and (2) how do public policy documents influence park agency staff in supporting visitor diversity?

Methodology

Research Paradigm and Positionality

This study was approached from a pragmatic paradigm and worldview (Dewey, 1976; Hall, 2013; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2014). Pragmatism is a philosophy based on common sense, that simultaneously is dedicated to the transformation of culture, and to the resolution of the conflicts that divide philosophers and researchers alike (Sleeper, 1986). Central to this approach is the understanding of truth. We approached truth with the belief that it can and is dynamic, and open to change[1]. Truth can be objectively proven, until it is not, and then we must change our understanding of that truth, therefore making it not absolute (Hickman, 2007). According to Morgan (2014), pragmatism can serve as a philosophical program for social research, regardless of the methodology used (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approached). Rather it is the research goals and questions that guide the researcher's approaches and methods. The approach to reality in the research is guided by Dewey's (2008) assertion that reality is constrained and shaped by both our experiences and the very nature of the world. I do not believe we are not free to believe anything we want if we also want to live within the socially constructed world (reality). Rather we must view our reality and knowledge as the opportunity to take action and experience the outcomes. In this work we considered the opportunity for parks systems in Canada to better serve ethnocultural diversity and support Racialized and New Canadians through policies, programs, and management directives and thus sought to inquire to create new knowledge.

[1] The use of I refers to the lead author in this work and the use of we refers to the lead author working in collaboration with the supervisory team/committee in the research process.

As researchers we bring preconceptions and assumptions to the research that are inherent in who we are, and these beliefs play a large role in shaping our research. This research focused on park polices and our collective understanding of ethnic cultural diversity withing Canadian parks. In this regard I, as the lead author and lead researcher, have extensive experience in park management and park policy development[2]. I have worked as a park and nature-based recreation consultant for many years and developed lasting relationships with park professionals across Canada in both my consulting and researching pursuits. I consider nature-based recreation activities my passion and have travelled the world in pursuit of connecting to nature. The culmination of my life experiences thus far has led me to hold strong environmental worldviews, in which I consider nature to be essential to my identity. However, at the same time I am also critical of a system that I know has not been created for all to experience in equal ways. I want to ensure that parks are more inclusive and welcoming of all Canadians.

Study Design/Setting

This study focused on Canadian national parks and Alberta's provincial parks -- as representations of Canada's park and protected area systems. National parks were chosen for a multitude of reasons. To begin with Parks Canada has an active mandate from the Prime Minister of Canada to increase visitor diversity and the park agencies delivers the national Learn to Camp program (largest national program focusing on increasing visitor diversity to parks). This policy direction and national program warrants further understanding and evaluation. Additionally, National Parks are a representation of not only the natural environment but also of the history and culture of the people who live (and travel to) in Canada (Government of Canada, 2022). This representation is relevant for all Canadians but especially the experiences of New Canadians and

[2] The use of I refers to the lead author in this work and the use of we refers to the lead author working in collaboration with the supervisory team/committee in the research process.

diverse visitors as parks are potentially one mechanism for sharing Canadian indemnity and culture and yet as previously stated national parks visitors are still disproportionately White (Caucasian) older, middle class and non-foreign born.

Alberta Parks, which manages Alberta's provincial park system, was selected based on the agency's stated intent of supporting inclusion through its Plan for Parks. The Plan incorporates an Inclusion Plan --Everyone Belongs Outside -- which is the first inclusion plan among Canadian park systems and currently the only provincial plan that focusing on diversity with reference to ethnicity (among other factors) (Canadian Parks Protected and Conserved Areas Leadership Collective, 2023). Alberta Parks also offers programs through their Nature as a Second Language program and similarly has a mandate to increase environmental and recreational literacy among newcomers[3]. Both park systems have dedicated policies, mandates, and strategic plans and both have staff and management dedicated to visitor services, whose focus is to operationalize these various guiding documents with the goal of increasing visitor diversity. Additionally, the Canadian Parks Council was included as they are a national non-profit organization which exists to connect and coordinate action among Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial park agencies. Since 1962, park agency leaders have served the Canadian Parks Council as board members to convene and advance collective action for the purpose of making each park agency more effective at achieving their respective goals. Together, the Canadian Parks Council represents the interests of 14 governments, over 2,700 parks, and a shared mandate to enhance the environmental, social and economic values of national, provincial and territorial parks throughout Canada (Canadian Parks Council, 2020)

[3] Alberta Provincial Parks was selected as a representative Canadian Provincial Park system as analyzing and comparing all 13 provincial and territorial system was outside the scope of this study.

Data Collection

Phase one of data collection began by collecting relevant national and provincial-level policies. This was done through internet searches as well as personal relationships with park management staff and in-depth knowledge of Canadian park systems. As previously mentioned, I have worked in the field of park management and nature-based recreation for more than 10 years. However, as described earlier policy is a broad term and as such, we chose to include a variety of documents in this phase; the full list is contained in Table 1. The documents gathered included the Parks Canada Agency Act and the Alberta Provincial Parks Act as well as strategic plans, departmental plans, evaluation plans, mandate letters, and discussion papers. This broad definition of public policy documents follows the Government of Canada's definition of policy as a set of statements of principles, values, and intent that outlines expectations and provides a basis for consistent decision-making and resource allocation with respect to a specific issue. Policies are one of the primary tools of governance for an institution (Government of Canada, 2021).

Table 1

Park Policy Documents Reviewed

Public Policy Document	**Park Agency or Governing Body**	**Date**
Parks Canada Agency Act	Parks Canada	1998
Parks Canada Charter	Parks Canada	2002
Parks Canada Evaluation Plan 2018- 2023	Parks Canada	2018
Learn to Camp Handbook	Parks Canada	2019
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Mandate Letter	Parks Canada	2021
Toward a National Urban Parks Policy — Discussion paper	Parks Canada	2023
Toward a National Urban Parks Policy — Backgrounder	Parks Canada	2023

Parks Canada Departmental Plan	Parks Canada	2023
Living out Values: Values and Ethics Code	Parks Canada	2023
Parks for All: An Action Plan for Canada's Parks Community	Canadian Parks Council	2018
Plan for Parks: 2009-2019	Alberta Parks	2009
Everyone Belongs Outside: Alberta's Plan for Parks: Inclusion Plan	Alberta Parks	2014
Alberta Provincial Parks Act	Alberta Parks	2023 (updated)
Minister of Forestry and Parks Mandate Letter	Alberta Parks	2023

During Phase two, in-depth interviews were conducted with 13 park staff (7 Parks Canada Staff and 5 Alberta Parks Staff) to better understand what the term diversity means to park managers and staff, and how policy does or does not support ethnocultural diversity, in the context of nature-based recreation and park management in Canada. Participants were sampled using a combination of connivence and snowball sampling methods, some staff were known to the research time and others were informed by their colleagues who also participated. Park staff were recruited via email and personal communication. At the time of this research the Canadian Parks Council was in a state of transition and had no paid staff. Alberta Parks and Parks Canada are both represented on the Canadian Parks Council Board of directors. This theoretical sampling approach followed Tossutti (2023), Santucci et al. (2014) and Reis et al. (2012) who conducted similar research, seeking to understand park agency management and policy.

Interviews took place over Zoom, as they included park staff from 5 provinces (Alberta, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, and Ontario) and took place during COVID-19 Pandemic related restrictions which limited in-person interaction. The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions such as: *Tell me how you see diversity represented in parks, both visitors to parks and staff? Can you describe how diversity is mentioned in policy documents within your agency?* and, *What are the factors that make increasing diversity of visitors easy or challenging?* Interviews ranged from 55 minutes to two hours. The employees

from the two park agencies represented a variety of positions but all had a specific focus on visitor experience/visitor services including the management and delivery of the Parks Canada *Learn to Camp* program and Nature as a Second Language Program in Alberta. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim and the transcripts were sent back to participants to review and confirm for accuracy.

Considering the limited scale of national and provincial programming specifically focused on New Canadians and Racialized People and the public nature of park staff employment, only generic identifiers of study participants were used in this study. This is to ensure confidentiality and support the ongoing trust and reciprocity of social science research in Canada. No single park agency or staff member is solely responsible for ensuring inclusion and diversity and it would be negligent of this research to call attention, good or bad, to any individual thoughts or approaches to this important work. Staff were primarily female, with 3 identifying as male, and there was mix of tenor with the various park agencies. Some staff were only 1-2 years into their careers, while others had worked for parks for ten years or more. It is worth noting that all but one park staff participant identified as White (Caucasian); similarly, only one participant self-identified as a member of the LGTBQ2S+ community, and none were considered New Immigrants (residing 5 years or less in Canada), however one participant did identify as an Immigrant. While this lack of diversity in staff may be seen as a limitation it is also worth noting that this is reflective of parks and protected area staff across Canada as noted by the recent Canadian Parks Protected and Conserved Areas Leadership Collective study on equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization (2023).

Data Analysis

All data was analyzed using NVivo 14. This software program is used for qualitative and mixed-methods research. The software was used as a tool for organizing and working with multiple data sources (policy documents and interview transcripts). The software is a tool that facilitated the research team's efforts to conduct analysis, but did not perform the analysis.

The data analysis was conducted in two phases. Phase one involved an in-depth reading of all available policy documents, including high level strategic plans and practice-focused management plans and techniques. In total the I reviewed 14 documents; each were read, re-read, and coded inductively using Content Analysis methods (Bengtsson, 2016; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Schreier, 2012). Krippendorff (2004) defined content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (p. 25). Specifically, this phase was approached with the goal of "manifest analysis", as the intention of this phase was to determine what has been said regarding visitor diversity across public policies (Bengtsson, 2016). While much has been written on the various approaches to content analysis, and the paradigms for which it is appropriate, we were guided by the notion that content analysis is more than a counting process. Rather, the goal was to link the results of the analysis to the larger social context and environment in which they were produced.

Following phase one, transcripts of all 13 park staff interviews were analyzed based on the methodological guidance of Downe-Wamboldt (1992) and Schreir (2012) following Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). While a similar methodological approach to phase one, this phase had the goal of latent analysis. Schreir describes this process as more context and data-driven with a focus on understanding and interpreting the meaning within the text, or the underlying meaning of what has been said. We again took an inductive approach, building from a specific observation towards a broader understanding and an interpretive lens to extend the

description of the phenomenon but with a practical viewpoint to make sense of something. QCA takes inspiration from both qualitative and quantitative paradigms, and integrates convergences of both approaches (Mayring, 2015). In doing so, it blends together modern hermeneutical approaches with more critical rationalism to both assign meaning and themes to text while also understanding those parts in the wider global and social context of the phenomenon (Kvale, 1983; Mayring, 2015). Given that this research was focused on applied or "real world" issues, this methodology was determined to be both in line with the my research paradigm and approach as well as the goals of the study. Applied research should not only focus on "pure" description, but rather seek to discover associations, relationships, and patterns within the phenomenon that has been described (Patterson & Williams, 2002; Thorne, 2016). This approach required a careful and systematic analysis of the phenomenon and an equally pressing need for putting that analysis back into the context of the practice field, with all of its inherent social, political, and ideological complexities. Thus, our approach sought to challenge the our assumptions, to look beyond the self-evident within the practice phenomenon under consideration, and to document patterned and thematic insights (Thorne, 2016).

Schrier (2012) describes multiple data coding techniques that apply to QCA and discusses the strategy of adapting the steps put forth in grounded theory as a helpful framework for developing inductive coding frames. Therefore, the constant comparative method of coding, developed by Glaser et al., (1968) was used to guide data analysis. By comparing, I was able to categorize, code, delineate, and connect categories to inform larger themes and better interpret the data (Boeije, 2002). This was done through a systematic process of generating initial categories (known as open coding), combining categories to better inform categories and themes (axial coding), and finally describing the themes through selective coding (Creswell & Creswell,

2018; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Conclusion and theme development were done by combining axial codes from both park systems.

Trustworthiness (Rigor), Reliability, and Reflexivity

While there is much debate surrounding the concept of rigour, trustworthiness, and reliability of qualitative research (Denzin, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Morse et al., 2002), this study followed best practice guidelines as described by Rose and Johnson (2020) Schreir (2012), Downe-Wamboldt (1992) and Morse et al. (2002). Strategies for ensuring rigour must be built into the qualitative research process rather than conducted post hoc; therefore, methods to ensure rigour included investigator responsiveness and reflexivity, methodological coherence, theoretical sampling and sampling adequacy, and an active analytic stance.

We begin by addressing methodological coherence as it relates to reliability (Rose & Johnson, 2020). As a pragmatist, this research was approached with the underlying assumptions that knowledge is developed through both our experiences and the reality of the world we live in and that knowledge and truth are dynamic and change over time (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Social inquiry and the meaning of human experiences are found in the intersection between objective "real world" experiences and the subjective internal mind of the knower (Biesta & Burbules, 2003). From here, we approach the understanding that we all live in one reality but that each individual actor or agency will have their own meanings and experiences of that reality. These individual and agency experiences and understanding of realities are therefore understood and interpreted in their social context. This interpretation was guided by the use of QCA, which has explicitly been described as the ideal method for those who approach research from a pragmatic stance (Bengtsson, 2016; Mayring, 2015).

Reflexivity, as described by Creswell and Creswell (2018) includes past experiences with the research problem or participants, and how these past experiences shape future interactions throughout the research process. It is essential for us as researchers to be critical of how our own experiences influence the interpretation. I have worked in park management, policy development, and park and nature-based recreation planning, and developed relationships with park agency staff in various agencies across Canada. These experiences and prior knowledge are, however, not an inherence but an enhancement to the research process. This awareness allows the researcher to better understand nuances and seek deeper meaning in public documents.

Rather than seek saturation we approached sampling with notions of theoretical sampling and sampling adequacy (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). The purpose of a qualitative sample is to explore a range of opinions and different representations of an issue; thus, the number of participants can not be known, and saturation could perhaps be considered counterintuitive. Our sample included two distinct park systems, reviewed policy documents and conducted interviews with staff in various positions and experience levels (coordinators, supervisors, and managers). The breadth of information gathered was the focus and the best representation of the research topic (Morse et al., 2002). The use of multiple park agencies and the two-phase approach was intentionally constructed to address trustworthiness and reliability. Data triangulation provided a plurality of techniques to best ensure an accurate description and presentation of a given situation (Rose & Johnson, 2020). We included both public policy and interviews with park staff to deepen our understanding and seek converging coherence of the phenomenon (namely, understanding how ethnocultural diversity is understood and operationalized within Canadian parks).

Finally, the researchers worked together to agree on the coding scheme, discuss themes, commonalities, and critical perspectives throughout the iterative research process. We, as a research team, met regularly to discuss the participants, the policy documents gathered and approaches to gathering material. We considered our role within the Canadian parks system and our interpretation of policy and programming based on our collective experiences. Lastly, as I was the primary researcher, I led the data analysis and the second author (supervisor) provided feedback and further insights into our understanding of visitor diversity.

Findings

Phase One: Policy Analysis

A review of all public policy documents provided a better understanding of how the Canadian park system (both at the federal and provincial level) define, refer to, and include direction for supporting ethnocultural diversity in parks. Commonalities amongst policies suggest that diversity is incredibly complex and amongst many documents, none have a clear or consistent definition of the terms. While some refer to differences being valued, others highlight views and experiences that are different from our own (as non-foreign-born Canadians who work in park management). Park agencies in Canada promote diversity and inclusion and support this through values statements, ethics, and guidelines. These values are reflected in explicit statements of respect for differences, integrity, and safety, as well as more implicit references and direction for being welcoming and inclusive of all Canadians. The importance of creating safe, welcoming, and inclusive spaces for all Canadians is paramount. Park mandates are clear, these are spaces protected and provided for *all* Canadians. Statements reflecting these ideas and values were made across the various documents 15 times. While the term "diversity" was used more than 125 times throughout the 14 documents, only 39 of those instances are referencing

visitors and staff within park agencies. Ecological integrity also requires diversity, as does economic and management success so this is not a critique of the frequency of the term in reference to visitors, however, the lack of a clear or consistent definition is concerning. Table 2 highlights the main themes across policy documents. The following provides a brief discussion of each theme.

Table 2

Public Policy Analysis Themes and Meaning Units

Theme	**Meaning units/ Quote from Policy Document**	**Frequency of theme reviewed in the text**	**Number of policy documents**
Park management is values based and ethics driven.	"*Respectful and responsive – We respect and respond to the diverse needs of parks visitors, stakeholders and communities throughout the province"* Alberta Plan for Parks, 2009	14 mentions	4
Parks are to be delivered and managed for *all* Canadians, diversity is therefore implicit and explicit.	*"National urban parks will create a welcoming public space for all visitors and users to connect with nature, learn about natural and cultural heritage, and enjoy the benefits of spending time outside year-round. Urban parks will be places where visitors and users can explore how people and the environment in which they live interact and affect one another, seeing humans as a part of nature, not separate from it. National urban parks are a unique opportunity to bring people together, within some of Canada's most culturally diverse areas. National urban parks have the capacity to highlight the diverse narratives that shape the country's past and present, ensuring that cultural sites bring to light the histories, cultures, and contributions of Indigenous peoples and all people living in Canada."* Toward a National Urban Parks Policy — Discussion paper, 2023	69 mentions	11
Inclusion and increasing diversity requires adaptation/changes in the system not visitors adapting to the system.	*"For the purposes of this plan, inclusion is defined as: Ensuring facilities and programs are designed so that everyone's needs are considered regardless of age, ability or disability, economic standing or other factors."* *Ensuring everyone's needs are considered requires more than just a checklist to ensure accessibility, especially if natural landscape features may make barrier-free design impossible. There can be many approaches to involving diverse people in Alberta's park experiences. Inclusion occurs when there is no boundary or barrier between participants of any experience or program."* Everyone Belongs Outside: Alberta's Plan for Parks: Inclusion Plan, 2014	43 mentions	9

Collaboration and partnerships are the cornerstones of achieving inclusion and diversity.	*"We must continue to address the profound systemic inequities and disparities that remain present in the core fabric of our society, including our core institutions. To this effect, it is essential that Canadians in every region of the country see themselves reflected in our Government's priorities and our work. As Minister, I expect you to include and collaborate with various communities, and actively seek out and incorporate in your work, the diverse views of Canadians. This includes women, Indigenous Peoples, Black and Racialized Canadians, newcomers, faith-based communities, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ2 Canadians, and, in both official languages."* Minister of Environment and Climate Change Mandate Letter, 2021	32 mentions	8
Programs, initiatives, and innovation are supported and developed to increase visitor diversity.	*"As more and more Canadians are choosing to live in urban centres, we are finding a large percentage of the population living further away from national parks, national marine conservation areas and in some cases, national historic sites. In addition to this, research has suggested that both families with young children and new Canadians are facing many barriers to visiting and camping in Canada's outdoors. These barriers include a lack of equipment, difficult access, and insufficient knowledge and understanding of outdoor opportunities.* *The Learn-to camp Initiative aims to address some of these barriers by developing activities targeted at families with young children and new Canadians living in urban centres. Learn-to camp activities aim to increase these audiences' knowledge and ability to plan and enjoy a Canadian camping experience while introducing them to the opportunities available when visiting Parks Canada locations."* Parks Canada, Learn to Camp Handbook, 2019	21 mentions	6

Park management is values based and ethics driven

The values of the government and the park agency shape the direction of policy, funding, and management. Park agencies are clear that valuing differences (diversity) are core values and respect for those differences are fundamental to welcoming diverse (and non-traditional) park visitors. Within values statements, respect and integrity are paramount. Parks Canada outlines respect in its *Values and Ethics Code* as "*Treating each person we meet with respect, fairness, dignity, empathy, sensitivity and kindness contributes to a healthy and respectful workplace and a welcoming environment for the partners we work with and the public we serve*." (Parks Canada, 2023). Having a formal values and ethics code influences other policy documents as it is referenced (although somewhat sporadically) but provides agency level guidance and accountability to all other policy and guiding documents.

Statement of values seem significant, however, the tangible actions on those statements are less clear. Parks Canada referenced drafting and implementing a workplace Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Strategy since 2022 and yet to date the strategy has not been made public. It is unclear if this strategy is in development or working through government approval processes at this time. Similarly, Alberta Parks references training for both full time and seasonal staff, however, no metrics or details have been provided since the 2014 *Inclusion Plan* was adopted.

Parks are to be delivered and managed for *all* Canadians

Canadian national parks have a clear mandate to prioritize increasing visitor diversity and welcoming new visitors to national parks and historic sites. This was clear across almost every Parks Canada document. In particular, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Mandate letter in 2021 states that all Canadians must see themselves reflected in Government

priorities and the expectation of working with diverse Canadians is made clear. Additionally, the Canadian Parks Council's guiding document *Parks for All* provides direction for increasing access to nature for all Canadians and to consider opportunities to welcome new audiences to parks across the country. Alberta Parks also provides strategic direction through their *Plan for Parks* and *Inclusion Plan* to ensure that parks are welcoming for all Albertans and notes the increase in population and visitors to parks. The *Alberta Parks Plan for Parks: Inclusion Plan* states:

> *This document strives to create a foundation for the inclusion of all Albertans into park experiences and landscapes - from their first "experience of a lifetime" to a lifetime of experiences. This inclusion plan is a commitment that everyone is welcome in Alberta's parks – and that everyone belongs outside (2014, p.2)*

Diversity was described in various ways and yet never fully or explicitly defined. Mentions of underrepresented people, New Canadians, inner-city youth, urban families, and others that are different from ourselves, were connected to and referenced diversity. The notion of diversity is therefore implicit and explicit, as throughout the various documents it is almost assumed that the reader is "not" diverse. As the statement from the Parks Canada President and Chief Executive Officer suggests…

> *being open and sensitive to lived experiences and the realities of others, particularly those that may be different from our own. It means listening with respect, curiosity, open-mindedness, self-reflection and a desire to understand and genuinely connect with others. Expanding opportunities for equity-seeking groups makes us stronger (Living our Values; Values and Ethics Code, 2023, p. 6)*

Parks are therefore acknowledging the narrow viewpoints and hegemonic culture that has persisted for many years and suggesting that diversity at all levels (management, staff and visitors) is needed to ensure parks are relevant to Canadians (and a reflection of the true Canadian population).

Changes are needed in the system

Enhancing inclusion and increasing diversity requires adaptation/changes in the system not visitors adapting to the system. Park amenities, infrastructure, and programming are critical for welcoming all people. These must be considered with an inclusion lens and universal design approach, reducing barriers through policy, planning and investment. Examples include free admission to national parks and historic sites for youth 17 and under and free admission to any adult who has become a Canadian citizen in the previous 12 months. These opportunities are available through *Canoo App* (https://canoo.ca/), which is managed by an independent Canadian NGO, the Institute for Canadian Citizen Citizenship, to facilitate newcomer's access to quintessential Canadian experiences. The National Urban Parks program is another fundamental shift in how Canada's national park system is adapting to support the needs of Canadians. One of the criteria for establishment of any new national urban park is that a:

> *national urban park can be accessed by public transportation, or other modes of affordable and accessible mass transit services or there is an approved plan for achieving this requirement within a defined period.*

Further, these parks also differ from the traditional national parks model in their fee for entry:

> *Organizations responsible for administering the national urban park commit to ensuring that access to the grounds of the national urban park will remain free (2023, objective 3)*

Inclusion may require innovation and adaptation of the park (infrastructure, amenities, programming, and equipment) and park management rather than people needing to adapt to what has been or is being offered. It is worth noting that Alberta Parks also outlines numerous actions in their inclusion plan such as developing accessibility audits, developing collaborative community networks, and supporting existing programs to reduce costs and barriers such the former Canadian Citizenship Cultural Access Pass – now the Canoo App. However, these are statements of aspiration and there is no follow-up policy or mention of these actions in subsequent documents. Furthermore, Alberta Parks participation in the Canoo App has been reduced to a handful of specific free offerings in select parks and no longer provides free overnight camping opportunities for New Canadians.

Diversity and inclusion may not be well understood by all park agency staff; therefore, training and direction are also needed. Alberta Parks is explicit that diversity and inclusion training will be provided, but this is unclear in Parks Canada policy documents. Parks Canada does make mention of the upcoming Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Strategy, but this strategy is still in draft stages (Parks Canada, 2023). Both agencies also recognize the need for dedicated staff, creating new roles focusing on equity, diversity, and inclusion to ensure there is oversight and support for the policy statements.

Collaboration and partnerships

Collaboration and partnerships are the cornerstone of achieving inclusion and diversity. This goal can be summed up as a park agency's awareness and acknowledgement of 'nothing for us without us'(referenced in the 2020 Ministers Roundtable Report) – working towards diversity and inclusion requires diverse voices and lived experiences as well as the expertise of

organizations working in community to better achieve meaningful inclusion. According to the Canadian Parks Council's guiding document *Parks for All*:

> *Collaboration is central to the Parks for All vision. The development of shared goals, mutual respect, and collective action depends on successful collaboration. The goal is to create more opportunities to work together—to share our strengths across the park continuum. In this way, we can elevate everyone. Just like in Nature, diversity holds the key to success (2014, p. 16).*

Partnerships are also paramount to national and provincial parks, as both recognize the expertise of community organizations and the lived experiences of Canadians. This is done through planning, implementing, and evaluating of agency-wide and park-specific decisions and actions. The 2023/2024 Parks Canada Departmental Plan acknowledged the need to consult through the following statement:

> *...with diverse groups in the development of the national urban parks policy to better understand who might be impacted by national urban park design and implementation. Through this work, Parks Canada will identify how it can tailor the policy to help national urban parks meet the diverse needs of the people most impacted, and ensure national urban parks are inclusive and welcoming to people of diverse backgrounds (2023, p.29).*

Alberta Parks was committed to collaboration at the inception of their policy renewal process; the Government of Alberta's *Plan for Parks* (2009) was a collaborative process, with extensive consultations with Indigenous governments and communities, community organizations, stakeholders, park visitors, elected officials, government staff, experts and more. The plan is

therefore thought to be more reflective of Albertans and was a shift in how park planning, and policy creation had been conducted previously.

Innovation, initiatives, and programs

Programs, initiatives, and innovation are supported and developed to increase visitor diversity. Given the clear mandates to increase visitor diversity, create more inclusive and welcoming parks, and work more collaboratively to do so, it is worth noting that park agencies recognize the need to support these statements with innovation and new ideas. Parks are more than spaces on a map, and do not inherently mean something positive to all people (for various complex reasons). Canadian park agencies have outlined clear programs and activation approaches to ensure new audiences and future generations of Canadians feel connected to parks and want to act as stewards to these places in the year to come. Parks Canada's Learn to Camp program is the most prominent example. The Learn to Camp program was referenced more than 100 times across the various documents and is the only program specifically targeting diversity with evaluation and funding associated or committed. The Parks Canada *2018 - 2023 Evaluation Plan* (2018) highlights the program in the following way:

> *Targeted at families with young children and new Canadians living in urban centres, the Learn-to-Camp Program aims to increase these audiences' knowledge and ability to plan and enjoy a Canadian camping experience while introducing them to the opportunities available when visiting Parks Canada locations. Launched in 2011, the program now includes four key components: (1) national season launch event; (2) overnight and day activities; (3) website; and (4) App. Parks Canada and MEC, Parks Canada's national partner for the event, jointly present the Learn-to-camp activities.*

Provincial parks also host similar "learn-to" events and providing interpretive and educational programs to target new and diverse populations. Programs are specifically designed to be barrier-free and invite participation. Alberta Parks' Inclusion Plan is intentional in the use of language so that park visitors have information to support their decisions and that a range of programs and experiences are provided. This is different from "prescribing" programs that are labelled "barrier-free or "new Canadian" focused. The policy states that parks should focus on clear descriptive information so that individuals and communities are free to determine for themselves what parks and programs will suit their abilities and needs.

Phase Two: Interviews with Park Staff

The second phase of this research focused on how park agency staff understand and use the policies, mandates, and guiding documents reviewed in phase one and explore what visitor diversity means to park agency staff. Four major themes were produced from the interview data:

(1) Diversity is complex but supporting Diversity is essential. Defining and understanding diversity varies based on lived-experience but salient themes are shared among staff in park agencies;

(2) High level direction and local level management. Top-down mandates and direction from strategic plans are influential but local level park management plans appear the most utilized;

(3) The challenge of looking inwards to influence the public. There is consensus amongst all staff that diversity should be increased internally at the staff level and current policies that support this intent can ultimately hinder the hiring of diverse people; and,

(4) Innovation and activation. The results of government mandates have spurred creative ideas and allowed park staff to intentionally develop programs or entire park systems to support diversity. Further discussion of these findings follow below.

Diversity is complex but essential

When considering what visitor diversity means park staff reflected on the various ways they understand the term and how they have come to know how their agency defines the term. Some suggested that flexibility is key to how government agencies should represent diversity, others felt it was about safety and openness. However, all staff interviewed spoke of the importance of visitor diversity. Diversity can be focused on the way a person identifies, as one participant suggested,

> *…your sex, your abilities in terms of like what you can and can't do, your religion. Like maybe (park) is not accessible always for people who have, you know, are visually impaired or can't walk, things like that. Religion is a big part of diversity and in the culture that we experience here in (park). So yeah, I mean diversity means a lot. It's a very loaded word.*

Others understood the term with less literal examples but focused on the notion of uniqueness and valuing differences.

> *Diversity is about allowing folks to still maintain that which makes them distinct. And it's not about that sort of melting pot idea or what have you. Diversity is about the embracing of the fact that things are different, people are different, perspectives are different, and that they're they all carry weight and that they all have a place.*

Parks are fundamentally public spaces for all Canadians and there was a recognition that previous mandates and management had perpetuated the hegemonic worldviews of able-bodied,

European settlers (Colonizers), who were also typically male. The shift in values motivates people and many park staff feel a great sense of pride and love for the parks and protected places in Canada. They want parks to be welcoming, to be places where people feel safe, and staff feel compelled to support diversity not only because it is viewed as a "buzz" word or the right thing to do, but also because is it essential for maintaining the future of parks.

As the demographics of Canada shift and communities become more and more urban, there is a real risk of parks losing their significance in Canadian's lives. The same is true when considering the rate of immigration, New Canadians may have strong environmental worldviews and connections to nature in their home countries, but parks and historic sites need to feel relevant for them in Canada. Additionally, staff suggests that if youth are provided transformative nature-based experiences perhaps they are more likely to grow up and be future stewards of the land. People tend to increase support for places such as parks when they have made meaningful connections to them. Staff reflected on the creation and ongoing support of programs such as Learn to Camp:

> *A lot of the people who come to Parks Canada spaces and in particular people who take advantage of camping amenities, whether that's front country or backcountry are repeat customers. They're like people who've been coming since they were kids. They are even people who've gone all over the country exploring our spaces. And it is (was) really difficult for new people to get in on that because it was sort of set up to support these particular people who have been here for 50 years and people who didn't know how to navigate these spaces didn't necessarily know how. So Learn to Camp was created to say, OK, diversity is going to be important because these people are going to die and we want to make sure that we still have people, that people are able to come to our spaces*

and enjoy them. I mean it is not just about warm bodies, we really want to share them with more people, create safe and welcoming for people who aren't like me or the people who've been around Parks Canada sites for 50 years and are the repeat customers, it really lets us get a better sense of what our spaces are, how we care for nature, what the value of the nature that we care for is.

Not only is increasing visitor diversity valuable, important, and morally just but potentially essential for the future of parks.

High level direction and local level management

Phase one highlighted the lack of specific direction and formal public policy outlining visitor diversity and overall visitor experiences in parks. There is not a clear or consistent perspective and definition for what exactly diversity means and how to achieve it. However, this was not seen as overly problematic or a hindrance to staff. Rather, the importance of high-level statements such as a Minister's Mandate Letter, the Plan for Parks, and on-going commitment to value and respect all levels of diversity in the Parks Canada Ethics and Values Statement is felt as enough for some staff. The main reason for this was freedom; staff feel that without prescriptive policies they are more able to try new things, be collaborative, and respond to the needs of visitors, including diverse community members and organizations. Staff highlighted this what? through statements such as:

I feel like I've been given a lot of agency, potentially even just handed down to me from my manager, like you could you dream it? Like make it happen? And of course she'll let me know if I'm totally off base.

The connection to high level or top-down mandates and a sense of freedom however was specific to national parks, as there is funding and specific support for these initiatives. As one participant noted:

> *When it comes down like that and there's a little bit more public focus and Federal funding going specifically into this program, I mean on one hand it's kind of like being given responsibility, and with that responsibility there's an expectation to deliver, right?. But I think overall I think it was just very enabling to just think big, really do things we've never done before like break out of the parks like you say and build some strong relationships with the cities and really try to build relationships and access an audience the right way by building a relationship with that they themselves with their gatekeepers to their organizations that work with them and understand them best so. I think that's what comes to mind is probably the most, um, enabling little bit of policy and I mean I'm already feeling optimistic to see Learn to Camp in this yesterday's budget again buried way down there but it's in there and I like it's kind of in there, over and above really any other specific parks program.*

This opportunity to think big, develop relationships, and try new things is enabled by top-down mandates. However, to help support everyday work most participants noted their reliance on local park level management plans to guide their daily practice. Some folks really needed local level vision and guidance to ensure their work falls within their park's vision and is accomplishing park-specific goals and objectives. A lack of policy direction other than to increase visitor numbers and experiences can result in staff not knowing if they have achieved success at the local or park specific level.

Not all parks have the same top-down support for diversity and inclusion work as demonstrated by the national parks system. This results in little to no dedicated funding and staffing. Alberta was the first province in the country to have a plan for increasing diversity and supporting inclusion work across the provincial parks systems, but staff noted that this document is now 10 year old, and has no funding attached to it and is not reflective of the current government mandate; the most recent Mandate Letter for the Minister of Forestry and Parks there was no mention of diversity, inclusion, or increasing opportunities for Albertans to access parks and protected areas. The irony of a park system with a formal plan for increasing diversity and yet no funding or top-down support was frequently observed by Alberta Parks staff. One staff member noted that for every single program that is outside the "norm" or regular interpretation and education programs, they must gain approval and must partner with local non-profit and community-based organizations to support the delivery. This includes learn to camp-type programs or one day events that are specifically focused on New Canadians and Racialized Canadians experiencing parks. In this case, staff would like more formal policy or direction: "*Policy would help, we used to meet with key stakeholders twice a year and we would have people help with strategic planning, but we haven't had a plan or direction since 2015."*

There is perhaps a perfect balance of having the correct amount of policy or legislation to support park management efforts, but that perfection is subjective and highly specific. Staff would like to ensure diversity programming and initiatives have funding and direction, so they feel empowered to work with community to develop lasting, meaningful, opportunities. It is also worth noting that that any direction and policy should be very clearly developed in collaboration with community and the "diverse" audiences they are intended to support. Participants were keenly aware of how important working with individuals and communities is to co-developing

programs, planning and building park amenities, and creating welcoming environments. They expressed how we can no longer mandate parks to be managed with White, hegemonic, paternalistic, colonial world views and expect anything different than the previous 150 years of visitors who fit these norms.

The challenge of looking inwards to influence visitation

As mentioned previously the participants of this study reflect multiple levels of park staff, work in different regions and different park systems, and yet all but one were Canadian born and White (Caucasian). This is by no means a critique of these individuals but participants themselves noted the significant lack of diversity within Canadian park agencies. The significance of this is well represented in a statement from a participant:

> *I haven't really looked behind the curtain much on the machinery of the agency maybe could use and doesn't really encouraging diversity in staff. The diversity in our staff is extremely exceptionally low. And, I don't know and certainly, yeah, more so in management than it is in operations to my observation. That's not to say that like it's not at all. But the staffing of Parks Canada Agency is absolutely not representative of the Canadian population.*

Participants reflected on the challenge of working to increase visitor diversity when they themselves wanted to increase the hiring of more diverse staff. Those that did work with or hire Racialized or New Canadians specifically noted how significant this was and important in working with diverse visitors. These staff could speak multiple languages and seemed to better understand the needs and perspectives of the visitors whom they were working to support. However, participants equally noted that the burden of increasing diversity should not be felt by diverse staff themselves. This was made very clear, none of the park staff wanted to support

tokenism or increase workload on Racialized staff members. Rather, the notion of representation and wanting diversity within leadership and park management to foster new ideas and value differences was expressed repeatedly.

Policy can and does exist to support equity, diversity, and inclusion hiring across all government agencies in Canada. However, these policies can also be limiting and bureaucratic, thereby not allowing for the very thing they are intended to do. Examples include language requirements (e.g., bilingual French and English but not valuing the multiple other languages candidates may speak), education requirements, length of prior work experience, or even small nuances such as formatting a job application to pass through systems. These requirements are often rigid and many New Canadians or ethnically diverse candidates might not meet each one exactly. One participant spoke about wanting to hire more diverse staff, but the policy requires certain education or training that many diverse candidates do not have. They noted:

> *But there's always, always restrictions that are out of our control, but we're looking to do that. So I think if there was one thing that I could do is like just hire be more reflective of the GTA* [Greater Toronto Area]*, but I can't right? Um, just because of different circumstances."*

This of course points to a larger societal problem or lack of training and education opportunities for Racialized or New Canadians, but having EDI hiring policy in place that fails to reduce barriers to increasing employee diversity is very frustrating for park staff.

Innovation and activation

The innovation fostered through dedicated and passionate staff who fundamentally believe in sharing their love for parks with others, combined with various forms of strategic direction and mandates to increase visitor diversity, is quite notable. Staff have developed

relationships and partnerships with local libraries, settlement service agencies, faith-based organizations, adult learning centres, and more. Participants were very clear that welcoming visitors into parks cannot simply be done from within the park and cannot rely on traditional Western and colonial approaches to nature-based recreation. Diverse visitors also bring with them new and diverse needs, as one participant noted how picnic tables were a turning point for them. "*This was a big, big deal for me. When I showed up I was like Oh my God. We need bigger picnic tables."* Noticing large and small changes that are needed in parks to make them welcoming and inclusive can sometimes feel trivial but when staff reflected on the significance of their various actions they noted how much more there still is to do.

Other key factors in activating park spaces include partnerships and collaborations with community organizations and local champions. Some parks are offering new programs in partnership with mental health and wellness organizations, disability advocacy groups, Newcomer societies, and Indigenous Communities. This was highlighted by a participant with the National Urban Park program:

> *We also have our Mood Walk program that is in partnership with the Scarborough Health Network where partnering with the youth who are suffering from mental health illnesses and we bring out to the park because that's part of their healing journey to get outside, be active. So, you know, study after study of like being outside enjoying the outdoors, plus that activity of being social as well as getting out and being in nature and getting active is something that we want to promote through that program. So it's that's been going as well. We brought it back since the pandemic. So that's great!*

Not everything works, and that is a natural part of growth processes; having the space to try and fail is also important. The work of inclusion, diversity and reconciliation is not always easy, but

staff feel like they are supported to try new things and be innovative. It is notable that this was not something many felt that their colleagues in other park departments experience. A participant reflected by stating "*I don't know if all the coordinators have as much freedom to build and create as maybe I have and I've been really grateful for that."* The freedom to create must also be combined with resources and training. Many passionate staff still need frameworks and metrics to measure success, otherwise folks begin to feel like they are floundering or lack purpose. Furthermore, trying new ideas can be challenging and the thought of failure is intricately tied to larger societal issues of disrespect, racism, and other negative connotations. Staff need to be provided the best training and education as well as access to experts in this vital work.

Discussion

Park agencies across North America have noted the changing demographics, the rise of immigration, increased urban populations, and societal disconnection from nature as reasons for needing to improve relevancy and increase diversity (Lee et al., 2020; Santucci et al., 2014; Xiao Xiao et al., 2022). Using QCA this study focused on the public policies (including mandates, management directives, strategic plans, and other guiding documents) of agencies in Canada as well as in-depth interviews with park agency staff from across the country to better understand park visitor diversity (specially ethnocultural diversity). The findings provide awareness of how diversity is defined, valued, and operationalized in two Canadian parks systems.

Results suggest that Canadian parks are still working to define diversity and reflecting on how the relevancy of a system that is founded on exclusionary colonial tenants can become inclusive and welcoming to all Canadians. However, diversity is discussed and understood in various ways. Policy speaks to celebrating differences by being open and sensitive to lived

experiences and the realities of others and acting with respect, curiosity, open-mindedness, self-reflection and a desire to understand and genuinely connect with others. Park agencies view visitor and staff uniqueness as a strength of the system to be celebrated. Interviews with park staff provided much more personal definitions of diversity, highlighting that diversity in parks means focusing on those who have been left out, those who have traditionally not visited parks, or not been represented in the parks system (planning, managing, and visiting). Diversity meant both demographics like ethnicities, gender, ability, but also how folks visit parks. There was a recognition of new and "diverse" ways of using parks, increases in larger group sizes, using parks as celebration sites, emphasizing food and culture, the need for wider trails to support families walking together, more front country and days use experiences, and communication styles.

Canadian parks have faced calls to focus on decolonizing, increasing visitation, and removing barriers to access parks so that more Canadians can experience these public benefits (Reid-Hresko, & Warren,2021; Wright & Matthews, 2015; Youdelis et al., 2020. Park agency policy, values, and government direction feel, to staff, to be supportive of innovative and meaningful efforts to change the system (even if slow and bureaucratic). Programming and new National Urban Parks are highlights of this work and the continued funding of these initiatives must be met with ongoing collaboration and dialogue with diverse Canadians. McCown (2013) brought forward the concept of "deep engagement" in which she outlines six processes through which park agencies can engage diverse audiences successfully. Core tenants include skilled staff, supportive leadership, working with communities, giving back to communities, recruitment of park stewards, and knowledge of local culture (McCown, 2013). Many of these elements were discussed by staff in this study. Some factors, such as supportive leadership and working with

communities, were referenced in relationship to the work they are doing and others such as recruitment of park stewards and knowledge of local culture are items staff would like to see increase in Canadian parks. Similarly, Khazaei et al. (2017) provided a case study investigation into the planning of the Rouge, Canada's first National Urban Park to provide recommendations on engaging immigrants and Racialized individuals in the parks planning process. They provided five principles including collaborating with community (leaders), customized engagement tactics, flexibility and openness to new ideas, short and long-term learning, and ongoing, long-term communication approach. Again, these recommendations that are somewhat reflected in the ongoing work of park staff who are focused on park visitor experiences and working to increase visitor diversity.

While this study provided bright spots in terms of agency support and passionate and innovative staff, there are critiques that must also be addressed. To begin with, there lacks clear metrics or measurements for success, and policy is somewhat unclear as to what diversity means for parks and nature-based recreation. How can staff, park agencies, or government leadership truly know if visitors to Canadian parks are new, more diverse, and non-traditional? One staff member defined diversity not in terms of skin colour, ethnicity, gender, or ability but rather openness and flexibility, a willingness to change and be welcoming. Perhaps as Ahmed (2007), suggests, diversity is about cultural change, not about counting visitors. Lee (2023), discussed the White saviour complex in nature-based tourism and the problematic notion of Racialized people being "underrepresented" in parks. He suggests that given the paternal settler colonial history of parks in North America, the issue is more about the system and not visitors. Parks need to shift at a systems level rather than focus on programs that provide the same experiences that have been traditionally offered. However, as noted by Santucci et al., (2014) parks in North

America struggle with the role traditions in their management and culture. They found that National Parks in the US are limited in their ability to meaningfully support diversity within the organization and as visitors because of traditional or conservative views on how parks should be managed. However, as older generations retire their study also noted the possibility of significant transformation over the coming years. This may be a similar outcome in Canada, however, given the passion understood by staff in this study and the promising programs and policies such as Learn to Camp and the National Urban Parks Program, this shift appears to have started in Canada.

The notion that nature is for solitude or time to "get away" is largely a White, Western worldview and studies have shown that these nature-based recreational pursuits are often in stark contrast to the recreation goals of many People of Colour or New immigrant cultures. Recent studies suggest that many Racialized people tend to seek more collectivist and community building activities (Lee, 2023; Scott & Tenneti, 2021). Therefore, camping or hiking alone or even with just your immediate family might not be as relevant to diverse park visitors (Lee, 2023; Walker et al., 2001; Whiting et al., 2017). The success of the Learn to Camp program relies on finding a balance between celebrating a Canadian tradition and pastime while also ensuring diverse and new cultural perspectives are integrated. Examples from Hurly and Walker's (2019) study with refugees participating in winter camping at a Canadian provincial park include the joy of music and singing around a campfire, sharing food and cultural dishes with new friends and family members, being in community and participating in the experience with other newcomers.

Finally, the importance of sustained funding was mentioned many times by staff across both parks systems; federally this was experienced positively, whereas provincially this was

more of an issue or constraint to supporting diversity. Santucci et al. (2014) found that many US National Park Service staff felt that diversity initiatives did not come with adequate support, policies were not clearly communicated, and funding was very rarely provided. Additionally, training and other bureaucratic limitations left staff feeling at times erroneous. Canadian parks appear to have in some ways avoided common "diversity" traps of statements with little follow through or meaningful change (Nishii et al., 2018). However, as highlighted through this research there is still much work to be done in shifting the parks system and the workforce to reflect the diversity of the Canadian population.

Conclusion

Overall, this study demonstrates that staff across Canada agree on the value and significance of increasing visitor diversity. Canada is officially a multicultural society (as outlined in the constitution) and as such our public institutions should better reflect the needs and shifting demographics of the population. While staff are passionate and committed to diversity, there lacks clear policy to ensure that this critical work is ongoing and embedded into the core functions of both national and provincial park systems. The programs, collaborations, and initiatives occurring in parks should continue to evolve and ensure more diverse voices in the planning and implementation of park activation and nature-based recreation planning.

This research provides valuable insights into the Canadian park management system and creates new knowledge where that has been a dearth for many years. Much is known about the US National Park Service, but little is known in regards to diversity planning in the Canadian context. However, there are also limitations which we would like to address here. First, the study sought to include both provincial and national parks to provide a more fulsome understanding of Canadian parks systems. This was both a hindrance and a strength. The two systems are

operationally different and in recent years the schism that exists between the Federal government and Alberta Provincial government may have also influenced policy at the provincial level. As noted by Sayers et al., (2023) there is a long-standing political influence of alienation in Alberta, which as grown significantly since 2014. This alienation is motivated by feelings that the federal Liberal government is unresponsive to Alberta and at times creates economic and environmental policies that are perceived to be unfair. By this we mean, there are many other provincial park agencies who are engaging in similar programs to Parks Canada's Learn To Camp (e.g., Ontario Parks, Parks New Brunswick), and yet Alberta has seemingly divested from this focus. Given that the federal government has made it explicitly clear in multiple Minister's Mandate Letters that they are committed to this program and to the overall task of increasing visitor diversity to National Parks, we question the blatant absence of these statements from the Alberta Government. Additionally, including only one provincial park system may not provide an accurate representation of provincial parks across Canada. Especially given that other provincial park systems offer similar programs to Parks Canada's *Learn to Camp* program. Staff across the two park systems held similar positions, however, there was little variation in staff seniority as only one director or senior manager level employee participated. There was also limited diversity amongst staff, many participants were White (Caucasian) and not foreign born. Future research should seek to include a more robust contingent of participants with a special consideration for interactional identity and experience. Finally, given the nature of power dynamics related to New Canadians, Racialized Canadians, and government institutions there are also opportunities for future research to investigate public policy documents with a more critical lens such as feminist theory or Foucauldian discourse analysis.

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Chapter 3: Leisure Constraints and Negotiations

Study 2: Leisure constraints and negotiations of New Canadians visiting Canadian National Parks: Does nature matter?

Introduction

Canada has seen an influx of New Immigrants in the past ten years. From 2016 - 2021 more than 1.3 million New Immigrants settled permanently in Canada, marking the highest number of newcomers ever recorded in a Canadian census (Statistics Canada, 2022). Immigrants to Canada come from diverse countries, bringing with them a rich blend of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious heritage. Historically, many immigrants came from Europe, with over 80% originating from Britain prior to the immigration reform of 1967 (Harper, 2008). However, in the last 50 years, there has been a decline in the proportion of European immigrants, with Asia (including the Middle East) emerging as the primary source region for New Immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2022). The relevance of the country of origin is of great interest to researchers and managers of parks and protected areas as there are both perceived and empirical differences in nature-based recreation trends across the world (Kloek et al., 2015; Lovelock et al., 2013; Peters et al., 2010). In 2023 Canada plans to welcome more than 500,000 New Immigrants and with forecasts projecting that more than 30% of the total population will be foreign-born by 2041, understanding the leisure needs, motivations, interests, and constraints of newcomers becomes imperative.

Nature-based recreation has recently garnered more interest, with visitation numbers to parks and conserved areas rising from 10-60% in the past three years (Ferguson et al., 2022) and camping nights have set record highs in National parks across Canada (Parks Canada, 2022). While the increases in participation are largely attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and the

many restrictions placed on indoor leisure activities, (amongst many other public health guidelines) other factors include accessible and inclusive recreation opportunities, an increase in public health communication regarding outdoor recreation benefits, and the rise in social media promoting destinations (Beery et al., 2021; Freguson et al., 2022; Lemieux et al., 2022). Despite increased visitation to parks and conserved areas across the United States, park users remain predominantly white (Caucasian), non-foreign-born, and above-average income earners (Rice et al., 2021). Within Canada, these trends are likely similar, however, no empirical data on this trend exists at a national level to support this. Several Canadian studies suggest that there is an underrepresentation of foreign-born and racialized visitors (as well as Indigenous people and people living with disabilities) who participate in nature-based recreation in national parks (Bain et al., 2008; Canadian Parks Council, 2014; Shultis & More, 2011; Floyd, 2001; Parks Canada, 2017). Research suggests that although interest in nature-based recreation is high among New Immigrants to Canada and other Western countries, systemic barriers and additional constraints have created and perpetuated this disparity (Stodolska et al., 2020; Scott & Tenneti, 2021; Lovelock et al., 2012; Reis et al., 2012).

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the following research questions: What are the leisure constraints experienced by New Canadians who seek to engage in day-use park visitation (national parks) and engagement with nature? How do New Canadians negotiate constraints to national park access/visitation and engagement with nature? How do motivations and nature relatedness affect New Canadian park visitor's ability or willingness to negotiate constraints (to park visitation)?

Literature Review

Leisure Constraints

A constraint can be understood as anything that inhibits or reduces an individual's leisure/recreation participation and subsequent satisfaction (Jackson, 1988). Constraints limit us but do not prohibit participation in leisure; rather they may prompt individuals to overcome barriers. Unlike barriers constraints can be considered on a continuum, in that some constraints might apply to the binary of leisure participation vs non-participation while others affect leisure choices among those who were already participating (at varying levels) (Crawford et al., 1991). Constraints can restrict participation, limit time spent on leisure, or simply act as a limiting factor in fully achieving desired leisure outcomes (Petrick et al., 2001).

Crawford and Godbey (1987) are credited with the proposition that constraints can be categorized into three main assumptions: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Structural constraints are best understood as factors that typically occur after leisure preferences and motivations are formed but before leisure participation occurs (Walker et al., 2019). These factors influence leisure participation and include time, financial considerations (associated costs), distance required to travel, location of leisure activities, climate, and seasonality. (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Crawford et al., 1991; Walker et al., 2019).

Intrapersonal constraints involve individual psychological states and attributes that interact with leisure preferences, rather than intervening between preferences and motivations (Crawford et al., 1991; Walker et al., 2019). These individual constraints include one's perceptions of ability, fear, stress, depression, prior experiences and socialization into specific leisure activities, and more (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Crawford et al., 1991).

Interpersonal constraints are the combinations of interactions within personal relationships. Most of the time, these social factors occur after leisure preferences are formed, but can also influence leisure participation before an activity is engaged in (Crawford et al., 1991; Walker et al., 2019). Examples include friends who prefer other activities, life cycle differences, etc. The concept of interpersonal constraints applies to social relationships beyond leisure participation.

Previous research on constraints has investigated these factors and sought to increase our understanding of their functions, relationships, and interconnectedness. Crawford et al. (1991) shifted the field by suggesting that leisure constraints are experienced hierarchically. They suggested that individuals who encounter constraints would first experience intrapersonal level factors such as social norms and the belief that a certain leisure pursuit is not "for" them. Next, if that person was able to overcome the intrapersonal level, they might encounter interpersonal constraints such as who to participate in their chosen leisure activity with. Finally, when both these levels have been surpassed, we may still face yet another level of constraint, the structural element. Perhaps the given activity is too expensive or is located outside of the individual's place of residence, transportation zone, or time allowed. This assumption has been challenged and the hierarchal nature of constraints may not be a universal truth. For example, Bizen and Ninomiya (2022) investigated the role of motivations for volunteers participating in a marathon event and demonstrated people appear to control constraints in advance based on past experiences and motivations. These results are consistent with Jun and Kyle (2011) who looked at the role of identity and golf participation and found a negative effect of leisure identity on perceived constraints. As the significance of golfer identity decreased, constraints were less frequently

experienced. These findings suggest that constraints can be experienced in varying orders and degrees based on our perceptions of ourselves, leisure, and past experiences.

Leisure Negotiations

Constraints are believed to be mitigated or influenced by a variety of factors; these include negotiations, motivations, self-efficacy of our ability to negotiate (efficacy-negotiation), social identity, and possible culture, (Chun et al., 2022; Jackson, 1988; Jun & Kyle, 2011; Loucks-Atkinson & Mannell, 2007; Mueller et al., 2019; White, 2008). However, there is still an incomplete understanding of exactly how constraints are overcome. The first factor, and one that has received significant attention, is the process of negotiation. This is essentially the method or manner in which an individual responds to an encountered constraint through personal and social resources (Loucks-Atkinson & Mannell, 2007). Raymore (2002) better described negotiations as facilitators, defining them as "factors perceived or experienced by individuals to enable or promote the formation of leisure preferences and to encourage or enhance participation" (p. 39). These negotiation strategies or facilitators can be better understood through a variety of archetypes or strategies related to specific domains. Kuehn et al. (2013), in a study of angling participation, introduced the concept of facilitators as a counterpoint to constraints – measuring them with the same scale and organizing them using the same three categories: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Guo and Schneider (2015) proposed that two of the most frequently measured dimensions are financial resources and interpersonal coordination, followed by time management and skill acquisition. In their study investigating constraints and negotiation measurement properties related to outdoor recreation (and cross-cultural comparisons), they concluded that 4 items best fit their data. These include structural negotiations, interpersonal negotiations, skill acquisition, and cognitive strategies. Similarly, Chun et al. (2022) measured

interpersonal negotiations, skill acquisition, cognitive strategies (changing leisure aspirations), and financial strategies. In an effort to further understand the complexities of negotiation strategies, Kono and Ito (2021) included nine – subcategories of physical activity leisure time, arguing that traditional three-item factor models are not as robust.

Some scholars have also found support for negotiation strategies acting independently from constraints (Kono et al., 2020; Schneider & Wynveen, 2015; Son et al., 2008), however, it is unclear if this is due to parsimony in the models or a better understanding of the independent role of negotiation facilitators. This lack of consensus warrants future testing.

Leisure Motivations

Motivations were introduced into constraint negotiation theory by Jackson et al. (1993) who highlight the importance of motivations stating: "both the intention and outcome of the negotiation process are dependent upon the relative strength, of, and interactions between, constraints of participating in activity and motivation for such participation" (p.9). They can be understood as an internal force that influences an individual to act in a way that helps them achieve a certain desired experience or outcome (Driver et al., 1991; Whiting et al., 2017; Wilcer et al., 2019). Within the context of outdoor recreation, scholars draw from the Recreation Experience Preference [REP] literature to explain motivations (Manfredo et al., 1996). This work approaches motivations in an experimental manner to better understand recreation as more than the activities themselves and rather focuses on the psychophysiological experience that is self-rewarding and intrinsically motivated (Manfredo et al., 1996). The experiential approach to recreation motivation research offers insight into how recreation participation may benefit individuals, and how this information "could be used in a wide array of planning and management tasks such as clarifying supply and demand, developing management objectives,

avoiding conflict, and identifying recreation substitutes" (Manfredo et al., 1996 p. 190). The focus of REP scales is to measure the different types of psychological goal states desired by recreationists (Manfredo et al., 1996). To this end, factors such as autonomy, risk-taking, learning, enjoying nature, fitness, and achievement are examples of items measured.

Motivations are frequently thought to influence leisure behaviours in both direct and indirect ways. However, there lacks a clear agreement on this assumption. Hubbard and Mannell's 2001 study that investigated four competing models (see Figure 1, discussed below), which all included a measure of motivation, found that within two of the four models, only motivations were significant when mediated by negotiation. However, others such as White (2008) and Evans and Gagnon (2019) have found motivations to be significant predictors of leisure participation as both directly and indirectly (mediated by motivations). Schneider and Wynveen (2015) found Hubbard and Mannell's (2001) independence model fit best with their hiker-derived data. Thus, motivations appear to have a direct positive influence on outdoor recreation participation. Recently Chun et al. (2022) found additional support for motivations influencing outdoor recreation behaviours, but for only half of their sample. In their study of hiking participation, the effect of Canadians' hiking motives was fully mediated by negotiations; however, a similar effect was not observed for South Koreans' hiking participation. Interestingly, the significant positive impact of hiking motivations on negotiations was the most influential among study variables, suggesting that motivations are the most significant factor in negotiating constraints. Similar to Hubbard and Mannell, the direct path from motivations to participation was not significant for both Canadian and Korean hikers. Finally, when looking at the outdoor recreation activity of gravel cycling, Mueller et al. (2019) found support for Hubbard and Mannell's constraint-effects-mitigation model. While there is no consensus on exactly how

motivation impacts leisure participation, particularly in outdoor recreation, it is clear that motivations are influential in decision making.

Theories of Leisure Constraints, Negotiations, and Motivations

As more insights are gained regarding the various factors that contribute to leisure participation, so too does our understanding of relationships, models, and theories. Three empirical studies exist that compare five theoretical models to determine path relationships between variables, providing both explanatory and predictive power (Figure 3) (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Kono et al., 2020; Son et al., 2008).

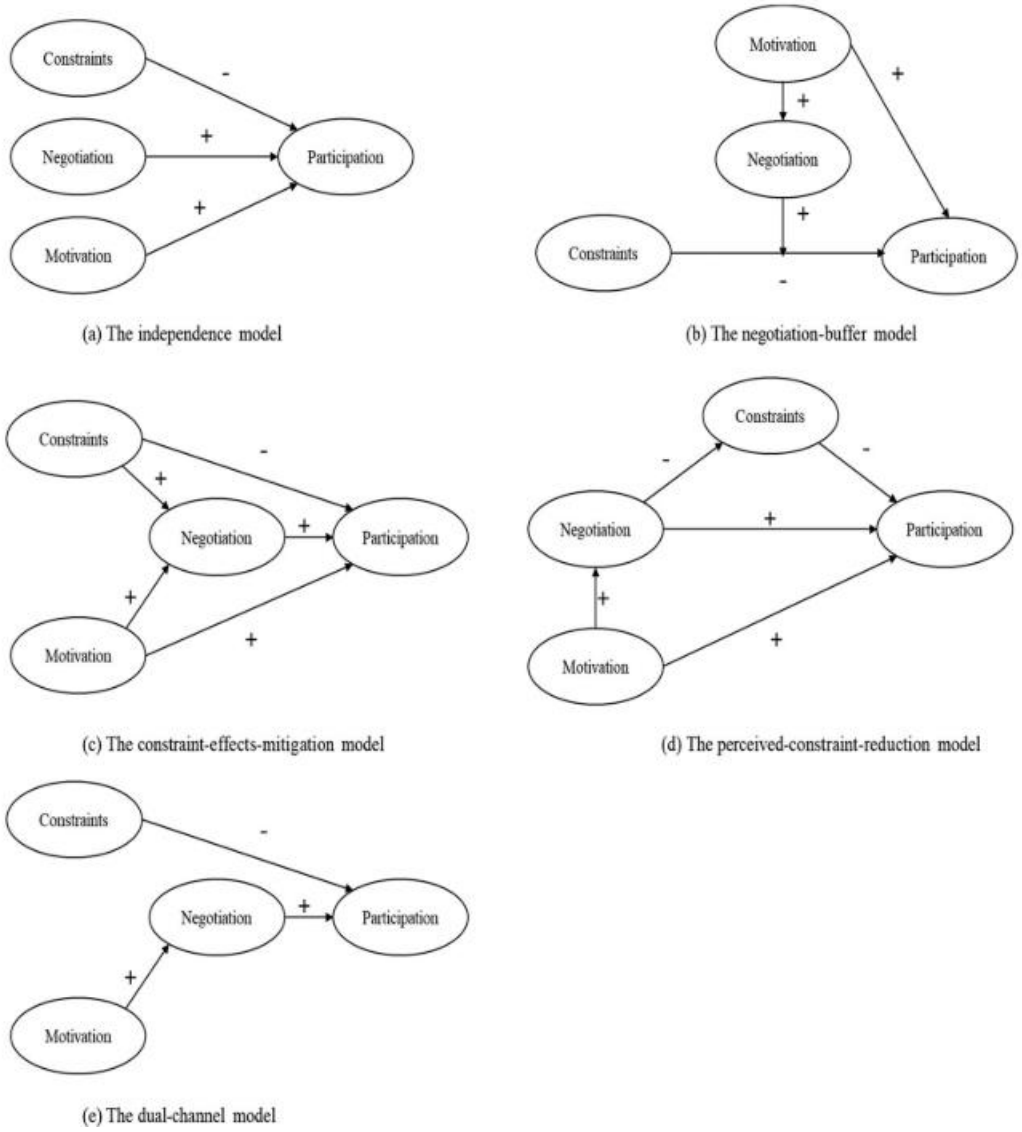

Figure 3. Model comparisons from Hubbard and Mannell (2002) and Son et al. (2008).

To begin with, Hubbard and Mannell (2001) compared four models with alternative pathways and relationships between constraints, negotiation, and motivations. Their study established that the constraint-effects-mitigation model (Figure1c) best fit the data. The constraint-effects-mitigation model indicates that constraints influence negotiation strategies, and as individuals

employ more negotiation strategies, leisure participation increases. The model also suggests that motivation was an important factor; when highly motivated to achieve leisure outcomes individuals increase negotiation strategies to overcome constraints. (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001). However, as opposed to Hubbard and Mannell's (2001) proposition, Son et al. (2008) found that constraints do not have any effect on negotiation, rather they act independently suggesting the need for a new fifth model, the dual channel model (Figure 1e). Furthermore, this study also removed the non-significant (direct) pathway between motivations and participation, and similar to Hubbard and Manell, found the relationship was fully mediated by negotiation strategies (Son et al., 2008). More recently, Kono et al. (2020), investigated all five models to better understand the predictive properties of each model, providing the field a detailed explanation regarding the importance of understanding the predictive properties of theory compared to explanatory models. They suggest that "explanatory models are used to identify underlying causal mechanisms of related variables, while predictive models serve as a tool to better forecast new or future observations regardless of underlying mechanisms" (Kono et al., 2020, p. 326). In this study, they found that Hubbard and Mannell's (2001) independence model best fit the data, which implies that constraints, negotiation, and motivation directly and separately predict time spent participating in a leisure physical activity. While there are clearly mixed results in these comparisons, the constraints-effects-mitigation model does appear to be favoured in the literature, specifically when looking at nature-based/outdoor recreation focused studies (Bizen & Ninomiya, 2022; Chun et al., 2022; Evans & Gagnon, 2019; White, 2008). Based on these previous studies, we chose to employ Hubbard and Manell's constraints-effects-mitigation model to determine if there was support for the most widely used model. However, our objective was not only to validate this well used model, but also to expand our understanding of leisure

participation and the impacts of constraints through the addition of a fourth measure, nature relatedness.

Nature Relatedness

As previously mentioned, there is still much we do not know about how and why individuals overcome barriers to leisure participation. Negotiations, self-efficacy, motivations, identity (social identity), and other factors have all demonstrated influence; however, given the focus of this research is on nature-based leisure specifically, there is an opportunity to better understand how our relationship with nature influences leisure participation. This research, therefore, proposes the addition of a fourth factor, nature relatedness, into the leisure constraint negotiation theory model (Nisbet et al., 2009). Nature-relatedness is a psychological measure of individual differences in the way people view the natural world and their connection with nature. How people identify with the natural environment is an important aspect of the person-nature relationship. Along with identity, emotions and experiences interact to explain individual differences in the knowledge of interconnectedness with other life on the planet (Nisbet et al., 2009; Nisbet & Zelenski, 2013. Nature relatedness influences tourism and leisure choices and is highly correlated with environmental behaviours (Forstmann & Sagioglou, 2017; Groulx et al., 2016; Nisbet et al., 2009). These relationships suggest that an individual's level of nature relatedness influences decisions regarding recreation and leisure choices.

Furthermore, nature relatedness is similar to the concepts of self-construal and identity theory. While self-construal and identity theory refers to how people think about themselves in relation to others (Walker, 2009), nature relatedness measures how people think about themselves in relation to nature and the environment (Nisbet et al., 2009; Nisbet & Zelenski, 2013). Identity is shaped by the meanings we define for ourselves and we in turn use these

meanings as a set of guidelines for decision making (i.e. behaviour choices such as spending time in nature). Identity has been shown to have direct and significant effects on behaviours (Stets & Burke, 2000) and also on leisure constraints and negotiations (Jun & Kyle, 2011). Jun and Kyle (2011) hypothesized that those with stronger golf identities would experience more constraints, however in reality their data suggested the opposite). Those who held stronger "golfer" identities were perhaps better able to create narratives in line with their view of themselves in relation to golf participation. Mueller et al. (2019) followed Jun and Kyle's (2011) study and applied the theory of social identity to the outdoor pursuit of ultra-endurance gravel cycling and found similar results. This suggests that how we define ourselves may influence how we perceive constraints, increase our motivations to participate in leisure, and increase our likelihood of negotiating constraints.

Leisure Constraints and New Immigrants

Our understanding of the role immigration status and ethnic diversity play in leisure choices has expanded greatly over the past 50 years. According to Stodolska (2018), much of that research has been inspired by the growth in immigration and ethnic diversity across America (and Canada). However, the increase in migration and immigration is a global phenomenon. According to the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), as of 2020, the global number of international migrants was estimated to be 281 million, marking the highest amount of people living in a country different from where they were born (United Nations, 2020). These changes have led to humanitarian crisis and influenced exclusionary policies and social injustice. Leisure is not without exclusion and barriers; compared to non-foreign-born individuals, immigrants may face significant and additional constraints as well as intersecting constraints and identities, resulting in less leisure participation.

Lovelock et al. (2011) revealed the many constraints New Immigrants to New Zealand face in regards to nature based recreation such as time, transportation, lack of information, not having people to participate with, lack of money for leisure, and fear of the "wildness" of national and regional park spaces. Immigrants, racialized people, and those who identify as visible minorities or ethnic minorities have also expressed discrimination and feelings of exclusion or being unsafe in many leisure settings, parks included (Kloek et al., 2013; Floyd, 2001). This combination of factors highlights the complexities of understanding constraints to leisure within immigrant communities. It is essential to note that immigrants are not a homogenous group and therefore do not experience the same constraints, motivations, leisure preferences, etc.

The lack of leisure participation is also compounded by our lack of understanding and dearth of research on newcomers and immigrants as it relates to motivations, constraints, and leisure identities, specifically in Canada. While the literature put forth by scholars such as Floyd et al., (2008), Stodolska (1998; 2000; 2018), Peters (2010) (and more) is robust, our understanding of the leisure patterns of New Immigrants to Canada is still in its infancy. Hurly and Walker (2019) and Hurly (2019) provide a deeply empathetic view of what nature-based recreation experiences mean to refugees and how they support newcomers in relating to their new host countries through leisure. Curtin et al. (2018) help to explain physical activity and inactivity behaviours of New Immigrants and discuss the role of leisure motivations and constraints to physical activity, although they do not distinguish leisure time physical activity with other forms of physical activity (such as active transportation). Finally, research that took place in Eastern Canada by Luackner et al. (2022) highlights the importance of connecting with nature for newcomers but also described personal and structural constraints to leisure. They

found that information regarding recreation was hard to find, only available in English and or French, and overall, not very accessible due to costs and location.

There have also been several reports and conference presentations highlighting the role of parks and nature-based recreation in Canadian leisure, providing a better understanding of immigrants' experiences of constraints to engaging in these opportunities (Bain et al., 2008; Stamnes, 2016). However, there lacks an empirical quantitative investigation into the constraints, motivations, negotiation facilitation techniques, and a measure of how nature relatedness influences these factors.

Study and Hypotheses

Drawing on previous leisure constraints-negotiations theory research (Bizen & Ninomiya, 2022; Chun et al., 2022; Evans & Gagnon, 2019; Godbey et al., 2010; Jun & Kyle, 2011; Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Lyu & Lee, 2016; Mueller et al., 2019; White, 2008) and Nisbett et al.'s (2009) concept of nature relatedness, this research tested 8 hypotheses as illustrated in Figure 4. The hypothesized structural equation model testing leisure constraints negotiations can be seen below (Figure 4, structural model only). Ovals indicate proposed latent variables (factors). Straight arrows represent regressions (influences). Pluses and minuses indicate the predicted direction (positive or negative) of regression coefficients and correlations.

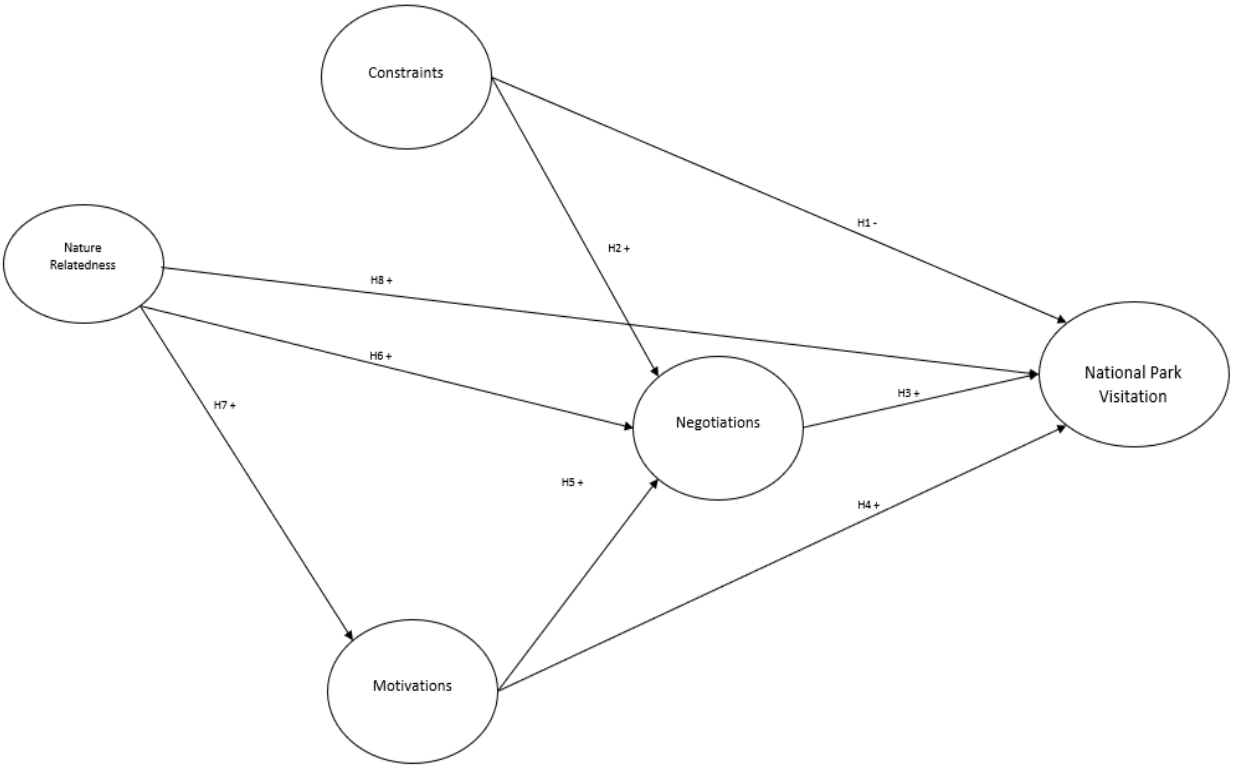

Figure 4. Proposed hypothesized structural equation model of leisure constraint negotiations for day-use visitors.

This research hypothesizes the following:

When considering immigrants to Canada and their nature-based leisure…

H_1: Constraints have a direct negative effect on park visitation

H_2: Constraints have a direct positive effect on negotiations

H_3: Negotiation has a direct positive effect on park visitation

H_4: Motivation has a direct positive effect on park visitation

H_5: Motivation has a direct positive effect on negotiations

H_6: Nature Relatedness has a direct positive effect on negotiation

H_7: Nature Relatedness has a direct positive effect on motivation

H_8: Nature Relatedness has a direct positive effect on park visitation

Methodology

Study Site

This study took place in Elk Island National Park [EINP] (Figure 5). Including reserves and urban national parks, it is one of the smallest of Canada's 49 national parks. Initially created as a wildlife sanctuary for elk in 1906, EINP became a national park in 1913. In 1943, the preservation of plains bison was designated as a national historic event, recognizing the park's role in the history of wildlife conservation in Canada. Elk Island is located within Treaty 6 territory and the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 4 and oral histories link many Indigenous communities to the area (Parks Canada, 2023). The area where the park now exists has been a meeting ground for many nations since time immemorial and holds importance as a seasonal fishing, hunting, and communal food gathering area (Parks Canada, 2023). This park was selected for its' close proximity to urban areas and high proportion of ethnic cultural diversity amongst visitors (Parks Canada, 2023). Elk Island is less than a 45-minute drive from Edmonton and less than 30 minutes from Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. Visitation to EINP has nearly doubled in the last decade from 198,000 visitors in 2008 to 360,000 in 2018 (Parks Canada, 2019), and now as a four-season park, welcomes up to 530,000 visitors annually (Parks Canada, 2023).

More than 80% of visitors to EINP come from Edmonton or the surrounding area (Parks Canada, 2018). The population of the Greater Edmonton Economic Area is 1,462,041, of which 367,250 are immigrants to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2021). The region is very culturally diverse and local governments facilitate this diversity through policy and programming aimed at supporting and retaining immigrants (Tossutti, 2012). Edmonton ranks third among all Canadian cities in the retention of New Immigrants from 2015 – 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2021). During

the peak season, EINP is accessible by bus through a partnership with TD Bank Group, Mountain Equipment Company, and Parkbus.

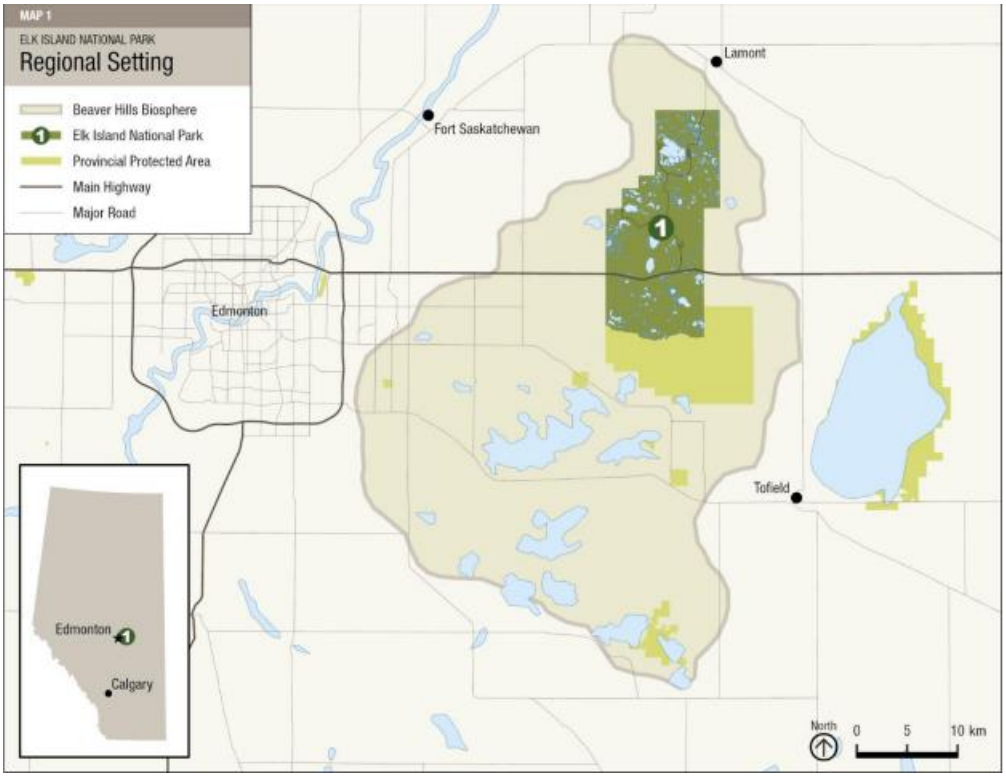

Figure 5. Map of Elk Island National Park in Relation to Regional Setting.

Data collection and sample

Using convenience-based sampling, the researcher team approached park visitors randomly at various locations throughout the parks. These included trailheads, outdoor theatres, permit offices, visitor information centres, boat launch areas, picnic areas, and other day-use sites. Sampling was randomized by interviewing the next available visitor; it is important to note that all park visitors were included in this approach, participants were stratified by immigration status through the survey questions "were you born in Canada?" and if yes, "how many years have you been in Canada". This temporally stratified sampling strategy resulted in a total sample

size of 272 participants (completed surveys), of which 167 indicated that they were New Canadians (in Canada 5 years or less as per Statistics Canada, 2016). Regarding respondents' characteristics (Table 3), all respondents were day-use park visitors who were predominantly female (63%), with an average income of less than $100,000 CAD and highly educated, with almost 80% having completed some form of post-secondary education (college, bachelor degree, or graduate degree). While respondent profiles are in line with typically high levels of education of park visitors, the average household income is much lower than previous park-based studies in Alberta (and Canada) (Blye & Halpenny, 2020; Cook et al., 2021; Mock et al., 2022). This discrepancy, however, is typical of immigrants to Canada, who commonly have high levels of education and yet face poverty at higher rates and earn less in wages than Canadian-born individuals (Picot, 2020; Preston et al., 2010). In addition, respondents were primarily under the age of 50, with a mean age of 39. Ninety-eight percent of participants were visiting the park with family and friends, and group sizes were relatively large, with the average group size being six adults and two children. Group sizes are larger than in previous Canadian park visitor research, with averages normally being five or less (Blye & Halpenny, 2020).

Researchers used Android tablets (with Qualtrics offline survey application) and paper-based questionnaires to collect all data on-site. The use of tablets has been shown to increase response rates and provide financial and time savings for researchers (Couper, 2005; Leisher, 2014). The questionnaire included measures of park visitors' constraints, negotiations, motivations for visiting, nature relatedness, needs, activity engagement and preferences – including park programming (i.e. interpretation), conservation behaviours, preferred media channels, park awareness (i.e. where did they learn about the park), levels of satisfaction and demographics.

Table 3

Respondents' characteristics

	New Canadian Park Visitors (N = 167)	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	59	35
Female	104	63
Other	4	2
Age		
50 years old or less	136	81
More than 50 years old	31	19
Median (in years)	38	
Education		
Elementary school	2	1
High school	22	13
College diploma	33	20
Some university	6	4
University bachelor degree	57	34
University graduate degree	42	25
Other	5	2
Income (CAD $)		
Prefer not to answer	28	17
Under $50,000	45	26
$50,000-$99,999	46	27
$100,000-$149,999	24	15
≥ $150,000	24	15

Measurement/Questionnaire/Survey instrument

As discussed earlier, multiple models, scales, and studies have been developed and tested to better understand leisure constraints and constraint negotiations (Kono et al., 2020). The survey instrument development and items (Table 2) were based on previously tested scales and research focused on leisure constraints. Constraints and negotiations were drawn from White (2008), Crawford et al. (1991), and Jackson et al. (1993), and Chun et al. (2022). Items were

modified to address specific constraints and negotiation strategies related to park visitation (e.g. national parks are too expensive). Motivations were measured using items from the REP literature and based on Manfredo et al.'s (1996) meta-analysis of REP scales and re-worded to best fit the context of park visitation (e.g., I visit parks to learn about nature). The six-item nature relatedness scale, developed by Nisbet and Zelenski (2013) has been used internationally to measure the influence of nature relatedness on health, happiness, pro-environmental behaviours, tourism decisions, and self-determination (Groulx et al., 2016; Lawton & Weaver, 2008; Zelenski & Nisbet, 2014). Other factors such as demographics, conservation behaviours, and park experience were measured as well however, these outcomes are not the focus of the current study.

Considerable debate exists among methodologists regarding the optimal number of points to use on a Likert-type scale; a comprehensive review and study by Dawes (2008) suggests small differences exist, but no one approach is perfect. Items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), with the exception of frequency as per Hughes (2011), which was measured using a 5-point Likert scale as per previous research.

Using SPSS 27, data was cleaned and screened for errors and assessed for normality, outliers, multicollinearity univariate and bivariate statistics. Of the total new Canadian participants (n=188) 21 surveys were removed due to incompleteness (less than 75% of the survey was completed, resulting in n = 167). To confirm internal consistency of all scales, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were generated; an alpha coefficient of 0.7 or above indicates good scale reliability (Nunnally, 1978); this was achieved by only three constructs (Table 4). As the coefficient alpha is a function of the number of items within a scale and multiple constructs were only measured using three items, we reduced our threshold for minimum alpha Cronbach

values to α=0.5 given the low number of scale items (Cortina, 1993). As described in the following section the internal validity of items used in the measurement model was examined by calculating the composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). These measurements are considered better estimates of reliability in comparison to Cronbach's alpha as the latter does not directly measure whether the indicators depend on a single factor (Kline, 2016)

Prior to data collection, the Qualtrics programed survey was piloted with 10 graduate and undergraduate students and potential visitors to parks to test the validity and user-friendliness of the questionnaire. Based on their feedback final edits were made to the survey. A copy of the survey instrument can be found in Appendix II.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Survey Items in the Structural Models (N=167)

Constructs	Scale Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	
				Statistic	SE
Nature Relatedness	α = .875				
	My ideal vacation spot would be a remote wilderness area	4.59	1.65	-.395	.188
	I always think about how my actions affect the environment	5.95	1.24	-.687	.188
	My connection to nature and the environment is a part of my spirituality	5.01	1.72	-.530	.188
	I take notice of wildlife wherever I am	5.68	1.44	-.401	.188
	My relationship to nature is an important part of who I am	5.46	1.526	-.925	.188
	I feel very connected to all living things and the earth	5.25	1.63	-.794	.188
Motivations					
Escape	α = .597				
	I visit national parks to have fun and relax	5.69	.457	-2.098	.188
	I visit national parks to observe the scenic beauty	5.59	.598	-1.924	.188

		I visit national parks to have quiet time and reflection	4.94	1.370	-.972	.188
Enjoy	Nature	α = .685				
		I visit national parks to enjoy nature	5.70	.396	-1.943	.188
		I visit national parks to learn about nature	4.65	1.358	-.971	.188
		I visit national parks to experience natural history and local culture	4.57	1.444	-1.05	.191
Social		α = .675				
		I visit national parks to spend time with family and friends	5.77	.374	-1.851	.188
		I visit national parks to be with people who share my values	5.10	1.475	-1.670	.188
		I visit national parks to feel connected to others	5.18	.667	-1.490	.188
Leisure Constraints						
Intrapersonal		α = .776				
		I don't visit national parks because I don't have the time	3.85	1.962	-.078	.195
		I don't visit national parks because I am afraid of wildlife	2.1	1.139	1.139	.192
		I don't visit national parks because I do not feel welcome	2.06	1.378	1.300	.196
		I don't visit national parks because I am just not that interested	2.00	1.447	1.655	.191
		I don't visit national parks because I lack information about parks	2.45	1.554	1.977	.192
Interpersonal		α = .755				
		I don't visit national parks because my friends and family prefer other things	2.61	1.559	.787	.193
		I don't visit national parks because the people I know live or work too far away	2.80	1.559	.787	.193
		I don't visit national parks because I don't have friends/family/people to go with	2.51	1.505	.821	.195
Structural		α = .495				
		I don't visit national parks because admission fees are too high	3.01	1.846	.607	.191
		I don't visit national parks because I don't like being exposed to inclement weather	2.69	1.814	.873	.191
		I don't visit national parks because I do not have transportation	2.46	1.957	1.181	.193

Leisure Negotiations					
Relational (interpersonal)	α = .630				
	I organize visits to parks with my family and friends	5.85	1.272	-1.761	.192
	I bring other people to parks to make me feel safer	4.02	1.847	.054	.191
	I try to find people with similar interests	5.13	1.532	-.900	.194
	I try to visit parks with people who share a similar ethnic background with me	3.96	1.885	-.138	.191
Personal/financial	α = .675				
	I set aside time for visiting parks	5.24	1.416	-.787	.191
	I choose parks that are less expensive to travel to	4.61	1.696	-.477	.191
	I buy the equipment necessary for visiting parks	4.45	1.633	-.414	.192
	I look for information about parks	5.64	1.122	-.534	.195
Leisure aspirations	α = .489				
	I try to visit my favourite park when it is less crowded	5.09	1.509	-.622	.192
	I go to parks that are closer to home	4.75	1.467	-.506	.192
	I go to parks where I feel more comfortable	5.30	1.461	-1.070	.192
National park visitation					
	How often do you visit National Parks? (in a given year)	3.48	.943	.039	.188
	How many times have you visited this national park? (this year)	2.05	.877	.526	.188

Results

Analysis

Mplus 8.4 (Muthen & Muthen, 2019) was used to analyze the data with full information maximum-likelihood (FIML) estimation. Following Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach, first, a measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis was estimated to ensure that discrete variables in the study address distinct underlying constructs that cannot be combined into one dimension. Subsequently, the adequacy of each multi-item scale was

examined for capturing its respective construct. Thus, the internal validity of the measurement model was examined by calculating the composite reliability (CR), which should have a value greater than 0.7, and average variance extracted (AVE), which should be greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2009). Factor loadings should exceed the minimum recommended values of 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), however, as Little et al. (1999) point out low factor loadings should not be interpreted as poor indicators and thus removed. Rather, using a combination of theory and thresholds is preferred. As such, no indicator variables were removed.

Power analysis was calculated using Soper's (2020) a-priori sample size calculator for structural equation models (power = .8, p = .05). Calculations suggested a minimum sample size of 150 participants. This number is substantially lower than many "accepted" norms (Brown, 2015; Kline, 2016) of a 20:1 ratio or a minimum sample size of 200. However, according to Kyriazos (2018) such strict rules are changing in favour of a-priori calculations and rules based on Monte Carlo simulation studies. Based on these findings SEM models with N=100-150 are thought to be adequate, small sample sizes are also found to be less problematic when there are three or more observed variables for each latent factor (Muthén & Muthén, 2002), which this study satisfies. For these reasons, the small sample size has been deemed adequate for this study. In addition, this study is exploratory in nature as no studies to date (to the best of the authors' knowledge) have focused on modelling the relationships between nature relatedness, leisure motivations, leisure constraints, and leisure negotiations of New Canadians (and more broadly other populations) to better understand visitation to national parks.

However, given the complexity of the model and the relatively small sample size the use of parcelling was deemed to be most appropriate (Little, 2013). Parcelling refers to the process of averaging two or more indicator items together to create a "new" item that is then used as the

manifest indicator of the latent construct. This process is conducted prior to both confirmatory factor analysis (e.g., measurement model) and the full structural regression model. Item parcelling divides a scale into subsets of items, to each be summed or averaged together to create a composite "parcel". However, Little (2013) highly recommends averaging items rather than summing them, allowing the parcels to have similar metrics with similar and comparable means and variances. Additionally, they suggest the parcels will also better reflect the scale that was originally used to record item-specific information. As such the averages were used for each item parcel in this study. For example, as discussed below, the five indictors used to measure interpersonal leisure constraints were packaged together and averaged to create the parcel "CON1".

Item parcelling allows for latent variable modelling and the advantages that come with it (correction for measurement error, etc.), without resorting to path analysis (analysis by composite, and/or measured variables only). According to Little (2013), the psychometric advantages of parcels versus individual indicator items include high reliability, greater commonality, high ratio of common-to-unique factor variance, lower likelihood of distributional violations, and tighter and more equal intervals. In this study, the use of parcelling allows for the modelling of multiple factors in the same model, without having to estimate an extraordinary number of parameters and provide lower indicator-to-subject ratios. In addition, parcels are more likely to be normally distributed than individual items (Little, 2013), one essential assumption required of data to conduct SEM (Kline, 2016).

Kishton and Widaman (1994) present two alternative methods of item parcelling. Using the first approach, items from an overall scale are randomly assigned to a total of either three or four parcels. As long as each parcel is unidimensional (i.e., represents only one factor)

and has reasonably high reliability, then it may be entered into the CFA. This process also assures that each parcel has its share of high-loading items onto the general factor, such that each parcel is well-represented when it comes to the SEM analysis. As an alternative, Kishton and Widaman (1994) suggest the creation of domain representative parcels or parcels that are theoretically based; that is, parcels that stand for different dimensions within the same factor. For example, as described below, parcels may be assigned to the "Interpersonal" and "Structural" factors from the Leisure Constraints Scale, to most accurately represent the overall Leisure Constraints factor. Then, all items are assigned to parcels within each dimension. Given the assumption that indicators are only congeneric, it made sense for all indicators measuring a given sub-scale to be parceled together.

For the current analysis, item parcelling was done as follows. Motivations were represented by three dimensions, enjoying nature, escape, and social factors. The parcel “MOT1” represents the dimension of escape as a motivation, the items include: I visit national parks to have fun and relax, I visit national parks to observe the scenic beauty, and I visit national parks to have quiet time and reflection ($\alpha = .597$). Enjoying Nature is represented by “MOT2” and includes the items I visit national parks to enjoy nature, I visit national parks to learn about nature, and I visit national parks to experience natural history and local culture ($\alpha = .685$). The final motivation dimension was social factors and is represented by the following items: I visit national parks to spend time with family and friends, I visit national parks to be with people who share my values, and I visit national parks to feel connected to others ($\alpha = .675$).

Leisure Constraints were represented by three dimensions, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. The parcel “CON1” is represented by the items measuring intrapersonal constraints, including: I don’t visit national parks because I don’t have the time, I don’t visit

national parks because I am afraid of wildlife, I don't visit national parks because I do not feel welcome, I don't visit national parks because I am just not that interested, and I don't visit national parks because I lack information about parks (α = .776). The parcel "CON2" is represented by the items measuring interpersonal leisure constraints, including: I don't visit national parks because my friends and family prefer other things, I don't visit national parks because the people I know live or work too far away, and I don't visit national parks because I don't have friends/family/people to go with (α = .755). The final Leisure Constraint parcel "CON3" is represented by the items measuring structural constraints, including: I don't visit national parks because admission fees are too high, I don't visit national parks because I don't like being exposed to inclement weather, and I don't visit national parks because I do not have transportation (α = .495).

Leisure Negotiations included three dimensions, relationships (interpersonal), personal/financial, and leisure aspirations. The parcel "NEG1" represents the interpersonal dimension and items include: I organize visits to parks with my family and friends, I bring other people to parks to make me feel safer, I try to find people with similar interests, and I try to visit parks with people who share a similar ethnic background with me (α = .630). The personal and financial dimension is represented by the parcel "NEG2" and includes the following items: I set aside time for visiting parks, I choose parks that are less expensive to travel to, I buy equipment necessary for visiting parks, and I look for information about parks (α = .675). Finally, leisure aspirations were represented by the parcel "NEG3" and included the following items:
I try to visit my favourite park when it is less crowded, I go to parks that are closer to home, and I go to parks where I feel more comfortable (α = .489).

It is important to note that the latent variable, Nature Relatedness, was not represented by parcelled items. This decision was made as the study utilized the already condensed NR-6 (Nisbet & Zelenski, 2013). The NR-6 is a reduced scale from the original 21-item scale, however, it has been demonstrated consistently to be reliable and valid (Groulx et al., 2016; Nisbet & Zelenski, 2013; Pritchard et al., 2020). This was also a new introduction of nature relatedness into the constraints and negotiation literature and as such the study was also interested in how individual items performed in the structural regression model.

Multiple indices to assess goodness of fit for measurement and structural regression models were used as recommended by Kline (2016) and Byrne (2001). The first and most commonly cited value is the chi-square test of model fit (χ^2) in which *p-value*> .05 signifies a good fit (Kline, 2016). However, achieving a non-significant chi-square statistic is difficult because of its sensitivity to sample size and the assumption of perfect fit as opposed to close fit (Byrne, 2001). Therefore, a ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom has been suggested with ratios of three or less recommended (McIver & Carmines, 1981) Next, the comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) were investigated, where values greater than a 0.9 cut-off indicate acceptable to close fit (Bentler, 1990; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Tucker & Lewis, 1973). Following these values, I evaluated two absolute indices of fit, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and The Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). These measures, unlike CFI and TLI scores, decrease when model fit increases and therefore, values less than .05 signify a good fit (Kline, 2016; Byrne, 2001).

Bootstrap procedures were conducted to derive bias-corrected standard errors and 95% confidence intervals for parameter estimates. All models were estimated with 1000 draws.

Measurement Model (confirmatory factor analysis)

Results of the CFA indicated that the measurement model had an acceptable/good fit to the data (based on the criteria and fit indices discussed above). Model fit is ($\chi 2/df$ = 1.53, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .94, TLI = .92, SRMR = 0.05.) Table 5 outlines the factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted for each observed variable. Bryne et al. (1989) and Kline (2016) suggest that model fit should be used to further interpret how well the model fits the data. As such local areas of misfit were investigated, including residuals and modification indices. Modification indices suggested that model fit could be improved by permitting covariance between two error terms falling within a similar dimension (e.g., Nature relatedness NR1 with NR3). The model was re-specified with the assumption that error among the items related to method-related effects in the sample data, such as similar language among survey items (Byrne et al., 1989).

Table 5

Reliability and Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Proposed Model

Paths	Scale Items		
Indicator	Indicator loading	CR	AVE
Nature Relatedness		.869	.553
NR1	.683		
NR2	.626		
NR3	.866		
NR4	.575		
NR5	.869		
NR6	.769		
Motivations		.767	.543
MOT1	.743		
MOT2	.863		
MOT3	.543		
Leisure Constraints		.765	.530
CON1	.897		
CON2	.743		
CON3	.543		
Leisure Negotiations		.705	.495

NEG1	.527
NEG2	.857
NEG3	.326

Structural Regression Model

After testing the adequacy of the measurement model, Structural Regression Modeling was used to test causal relationships. The practical fit indices suggest an acceptable to close model fit (Table 6) based on the above presented global fit indices ($\chi 2/df$ =1.469, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .93, TLI = .91, SRMR = .06.). A visual representation of the relationships and hypotheses is provided in Figure 4. Factor loadings of all indicators were significant (p = < .001) and exceeded the minimum recommended values of 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), with the exception of one item parcel, NEG3. According to Little et al. (1999), based on classical measurement theory more items lead to better construct representations, as with more indicators, the centroid of the sampled indicators will lie closer to the true centroid of a given domain. Therefore, one indicator (NEG parcel 3) was retained even with a low factor loading (<.5). Finally, AVE and CR values were above thresholds of 0.5 and 0.7, respectively (Hair et al., 2009).

As hypothesized (H1), when participants reported higher levels of constraints, they also reported less frequent visits to the park (β = -.362, p =.005). The path between constraints and negotiation strategies was negatively significant (β = -.256, p =.005), which was the opposite direction of H2, therefore not supporting the hypothesis. As hypothesized in H3, the relationship between negotiation strategies and park visitation was positive and significant (β = .393, p =.01), however, motivations did not have a direct effect on park visitation as this relationship was not significant and therefore H4 was rejected. Motivations did in fact have a direct positive effect on negotiation strategies (β = .225, p = .03) supporting H5. Results of the influences of nature

relatedness were both expected and unexpected: H6 was supported (β = .201, p = .05) as was H7 (β = .378, $p \leq .000$), however, H8 was rejected as the relationship between nature relatedness was negative (and not significant, although it was significant at p = 0.1, which is trending towards significance according to White, 2008).

Table 6

SRM Results for Direct and Indirect Associations

					Bias corrected bootstrap 95% confidence interval		
I.V.	D.V.	β	*z value*	SE	Lower	Upper	R^2
Direct Effects							
NR	Motivations	.378	*4.65***	.08	.221	.536	.14
NR	Negotiations	.201	1.89*	.13	.109	.394	.19
Constraints		-.256	-2.75**	.09	-.458	-.053	
Motivations		.225	2.11*	.10	.111	.451	
NR	NP Visitation	-.207	-1.43	.14	-.338	.125	.39
Motivations		.151	.967	.15	-.181	.483	
Negotiations		.393	2.36*	.15	.170	.717	
Constraints		-.362	-2.76**	.13	-.492	-.133	
Indirect Effects							
NR	NP Visitation	.170	2.10*	.05	.054	.395	
Constraints		-.101	-1.81*	.05	-.315	-.021	
Motivations		.089	1.55*	.05	.113	.401	

Note. Goodness of fit statistics: $\chi 2/df$ =1.469, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .93, TLI = .91, SRMR = 0.06. *$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$; ***$p \leq .001$.

Direct and Indirect Effects

To test the indirect effects, bootstrapping procedures were used in place of the Sobel's test, which requires a large sample size to assume normality in *B* and the SE (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). In total, 1000 bootstrap samples were requested and the significance of the indirect effects were examined using bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals (Table 7). The analysis revealed all indirect effects were significant as the bias-corrected confidence intervals were not zero. The

significant indirect effect of motivations on park visitation was fully mediated through negotiations (β = .089). The indirect effect of nature relatedness was significant and mediated through motivations and negotiations (β = .170) and the relationship between constraints and park visitation had a significant effect mediated through negotiations (β = -.101). The total model accounted for 39% of the variation in New Canadian immigrants' visitation to national parks (R2 = .392). Figure 4 illustrates SRM results of both direct and indirect associations among variables.

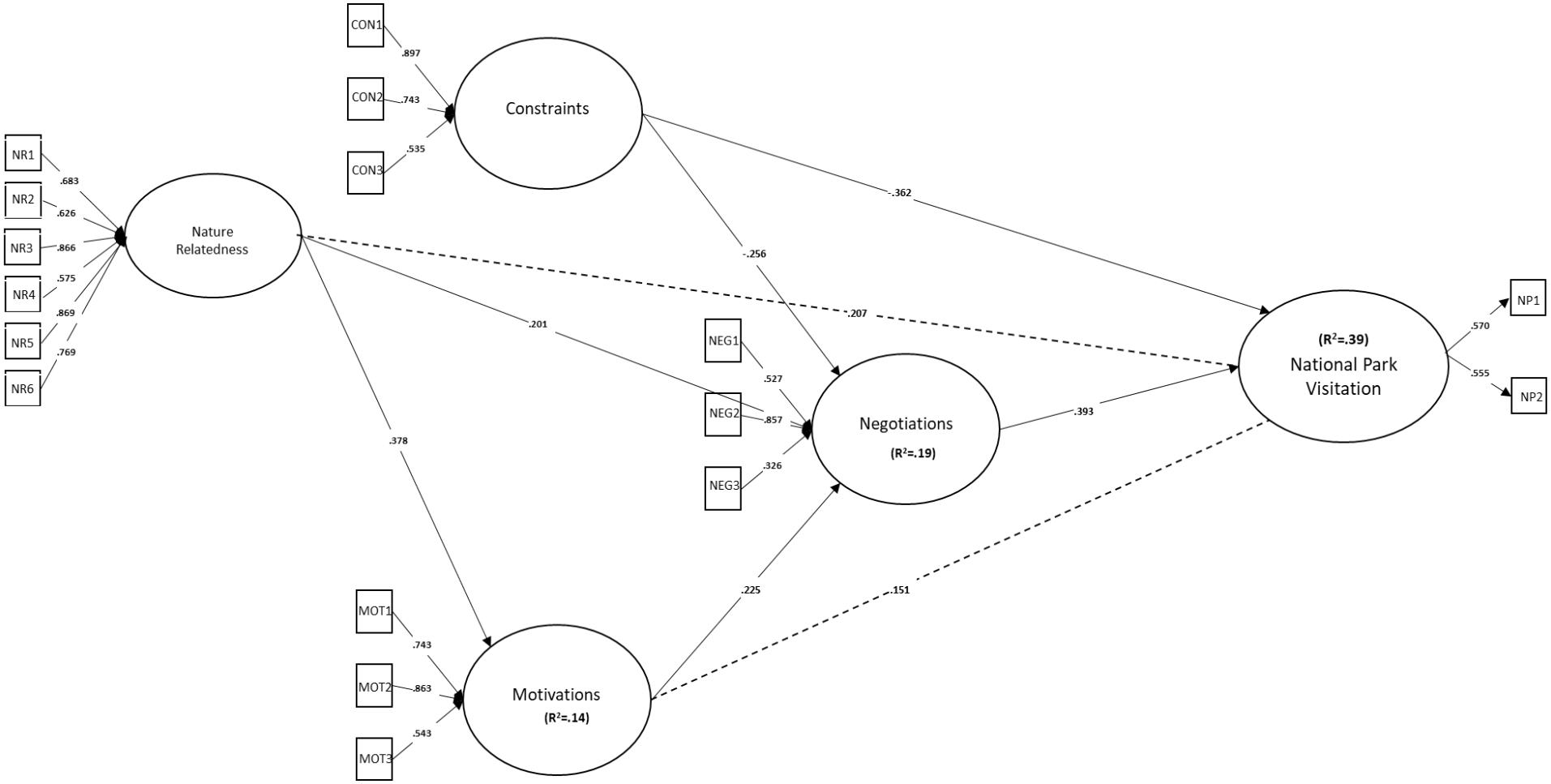

Figure 6. Structural Regression Model.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research provides an investigation into the leisure constraints, motivations, and negotiation facilitation techniques, of New Canadians visiting national parks. As outlined previously, we started with Hubbard and Manell's (2001) constraints-effect mitigation model and extended our understanding of these relationships by including a measure of how nature relatedness influences these factors. In order to better understand each individual effect of the different latent variables on leisure participation, this study also incorporated multiple dimensions of each factor. Leisure Motivations were represented by three dimensions, enjoying nature, escape, and social factors as per REP scales (Manfredo et al., 1996). Leisure Constraints were represented by three dimensions, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Leisure Negotiations also included three dimensions, relationships (interpersonal), personal/financial, and leisure aspirations. The Nature Relatedness short scale (NR-6) is considered unidimensional (Nisbet & Zelenski, 2013).

Overall, results provide partial support for the proposed theoretical model and demonstrated that constraints to leisure negatively influence park visitation for New Canadians. Negotiation strategies such as personal choices and financial dimensions had a direct positive influence on park visitation, while motivations did not. However, the role of motivations did have a direct positive relationship on negotiation strategies. Finally, the role of nature relatedness had a significant positive impact on motivations and negotiation strategies, although unlike the proposed theoretical model, it did not have a direct positive influence on park visitation. Important to this model, this study revealed that the relationship between motivations and park visitation was fully mediated by negotiation strategies. This supports the previous work of Son et al. (2008), Bizen and Ninomiya (2002) and Chun et al.'s (2022) examination of Canadian hikers

(though not Korean hikers in the same study). Further, the relationship between constraints and park visitation was also partially mediated by negotiations, in line with Mueller et al. (2019). The indirect relationship between nature relatedness and park visitation was mediated through motivations and negotiations. While there are no studies comparing these relationships, it is similar to how social identity was mediated through motivations and negotiations in Mueller et al.'s study of cyclists' social identity where our need to belong and align our beliefs influences our leisure motivations, constraints, and negotiations (2019).

The role of leisure constraints negatively influencing leisure participation (including outdoor recreation) is a common theme in the literature, with many studies in the past two decades finding a similar result (Bizen & Ninomiya, 2022; Chun et al., 2022; Evans & Gagnon, 2019; Jun & Kyle, 2011; Kono et al., 2020; Mueller et al., 2019; White, 2008). For our study of New Canadian park visitors, this was no different. While other studies have identified individual constraints to nature-based recreation (Khazaei et al., 2017; Lovelock et al., 2013; Schell et al., 2020; Zanon et al., 2013) these factors are nested within the parcels in this study. While we cannot tease out the specific types of constraints, we were able to see that the item (parcel) "intrapersonal constraints" had the highest factor loading on the overall construct of "constraints" which also suggest the strongest correlation or association.

Intrapersonal constraints include not having the time, skills, information, or confidence to visit parks, as well as the sense of feeling unwelcome. These constraints are particularly interesting for park managers, recreation practitioners, and settlement services agencies as these organizations can design programs and policies that can address some of these challenges. One example of a successful program is Parks Canada's Learn to Camp Program, which provides participants the opportunity to learn how to plan and enjoy safe and successful camping trips,

day use park visits, and nature-based recreation across Canada (Parks Canada, 2016). The program is facilitated through a variety of formats from one-hour workshops to all day and overnight events in national parks and historic sites, they include a repository of information both online and through a mobile app. This program has evolved over time to not only focus on "camping" but rather is designed to increase awareness and access to National Parks for all Canadians to participate in nature-based recreation. While participants are not required to be New Canadians many participants are Newcomers and primarily live in urban areas (Parks Canada, 2016). Sullivan (2015) interviewed participants of the program and found that participants were highly satisfied with their experiences and felt better prepared to both camp and visit parks again in the future. Similarly, Hurly and Walker (2019) interviewed refugees who were new to Canada and participated in a Learn to Camp weekend facilitated through Alberta's provincial park agency and a settlement service organization. Their research found similar positive experiences. New Canadians described the event as giving them new skills, information/knowledge, confidence, and a sense of belonging – seemingly addressing some of the most significant constraints participants in this study experienced.

While the role of constraints on participation was in line with the hypothesized relationship in this study, the influence of constraints on negotiations was negative, although it was still a significant relationship. A positive relationship was initially hypothesized. A small number of studies have reported similar results (Chun et al., 2022; Lyu & Lee, 2016; Powers & Trauntvein, 2019). Chun et al. (2022) looked at hiking in participation in parks by both Canadians and Koreans and found this negative relationship in both samples. They also found that intrapersonal constraints had the highest correlation (factor loading) on the latent construct (as did this study) and they suggest this likely had the most influence in why facing increased

constraints did not motivate negotiations, but rather reduced participants' willingness to activate these strategies (Chun et al., 2022). The same assumption was made by Powers and Trauntvein (2019) when looking at college students' use of an on-campus recreation centre. Students who faced more constraints related to self-efficacy were less likely to negotiate that barrier to participation. This result is therefore not surprising for New Canadians facing constraints to visiting parks. It suggests that perhaps some constraints are beyond the negotiation abilities of individuals and more structural and systemic supports are required.

Negotiation strategies are central to how individuals navigate constraints to leisure (Jackson, 1988). This research found that negotiations have a direct positive influence on park visitation and partially mediate the role of constraints. This result is in line with Bizen and Ninomiya's (2022) work of understanding gravel cyclists. Their research found that all factors related to negotiation strategies showed significance, including setting aside time for leisure and learning new skills. However, these results are far from consistent. White (2008) and others have not observed negotiations having a significant effect on leisure participation (Chun et al., 2022; Evans & Gagnon, 2019). Previous work has suggested that negotiation efficacy (the belief that you can overcome barriers) is more influential than understanding the facilitators or strategies on their own (Loucks-Atkinson & Mannell, 2007; Evans & Gagnon, 2019; White, 2008). Given that this model included both motivations and nature relatedness, and both demonstrated direct and indirect positive relationships with negotiations, perhaps those factors also shape how negotiation strategies are operationalized by New Canadians. There is also the possibility that previous research, which focused on specific activities (hiking, gravel cycling, mountain climbing, etc.), may measure different, activity-specific leisure engagement. Our study looked at visiting a park (not specific activities that may occur within the park) and therefore negotiating

constraints may be easier (more influential) in overcoming the felt constraints associated with a generalist (less technical) leisure endeavour such as park visitation.

Examining the role of motivations and nature relatedness was a major objective of this study. Research is still inconsistent on the direct effect motivations have on leisure participation and the findings here suggest motivations have the most significant effect (largest effect sizes) and consistently appear to positively influence negotiations, mediating participation through negotiations, and to a lesser extent influencing leisure participation directly (Chun et al. 2022; Kono et al., 2020; Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Schneider & Wynveen, 2015; Son et al., 2008; White, 2008). Consistent with previous studies (Bizen & Ninomiya, 2022; Lyu & Lee, 2016) testing the constraint-effects-mitigation model, these findings suggest that stronger motivations to visit parks are able to activate more willingness or more effective negotiation strategies. These motivations may, in part, be related to past experiences in nature and visiting parks both in Canada and in their home countries. Participants may also have been influenced by the central role that nature plays in our human lives (Godbey et al., 2010; Hurly & Walker, 2019).

Finally, to extend our understanding of the psychological processes that influence leisure choices, this research extended previous models to include nature relatedness. Nature Relatedness is best understood as our appreciation and consideration of how interconnected humanity is with all other living beings on earth (Nisbet et al., 2011). Scholars suggest that nature relatedness influences human emotions and may explain why some people feel strongly and positively about nature, whereas others are unmoved, and subsequently unmotivated to spend time in nature, or to protect it (Kals & Maes, 2004; Milton, 2002; Nisbet et al., 2009). Furthermore, it is described as trait-like and tends to be relatively stable and constant across time and situations (though not completely fixed) (Nisbet et al., 2009). The idea of connection to

nature is not unique to a locale, geographic location, or cultural background. Nature relatedness and other ecological values are cross-cultural and certainty not exclusive to western countries or world views. Lovelock et al (2013) found no differences based on ethnicities or countries of origin in terms of environmental values (both New Zealand born residents and immigrants held eco-centric worldviews). Hurly and Walker (2019) described the connectedness refugees felt while on a camping trip in Canada and highlighted participants' overwhelming value of nature (both for human and more than human species and ecosystems). Based on this understanding of nature relatedness, it was surprising to not see a direct pathway to park visitation and yet it was highly influential on motivations and negotiations. Perhaps Jun and Kyle's work with leisure identity helps to explain this result (2011). They discuss the idea that our desire for verifying our identity(s) is a key motivator for leisure engagement and therefore when faced with constraints, our understanding of our own identity influences motivations and negotiation strategies. Essentially, when we believe we are something, we look to reinforce that identity. For New Immigrants in this study, nature relatedness scores were quite high and therefore a strong motivator for wanting to be in nature (going to a national park), however, the lack of a direct relationship may simply be that visiting a national park is not the only way they are able to express that identity. Participants may choose other locations that are easier to access such as local parks, trails, backyards etc. and the constraints to a national park require more negotiation strategies (which is supported in this research).

Limitations and Future Studies

Despite the significant contributions to the field of leisure-constraints research and a better understanding of New Canadians' nature-based leisure patterns, there are limitations to this study. First, the relatively small sample size and the use of only one national park (in a

system of 49) limits the generalizability and reliability of the findings. Future work should seek to expand sample size, study sites, and include multi-group comparisons based on ethnicity or country of origin as New Canadians are not a homogenous group and individuals from different countries or cultural background may experience leisure constraints and motivations to participate differently.

Secondly cross-sectional survey design is often cited as a flaw in social science research. Longitude survey design would provide a better understanding of true population parameters and would enhance the findings by looking at behaviours over time and with repeated measures. Next, there are opportunities to improve constraint and negotiation variable measurements. Kyle and Jun (2015) have critiqued leisure researchers long time (mis)conception of leisure constraints measurement models as reflective. Reflective measures assume that causality or explanatory moves from the observed items to the latent variable, essentially each observed measure is a function of the same underlying cause (Markus & Borsboom, 2013; Kyle & Jun 2015). However, they have proposed that leisure constraints are more appropriately understood as formative measures, in that each observation are the indicators that define the latent construct. This would mean that constraint indicators are not in fact all measuring the same underlying phenomenon and that items are not required to be correlated (as they are each measuring a distinct observation that is impacting the larger construct) (Kyle & Jun, 2015). The field has been slow to adopt this assumption, as there is still ongoing debate regarding conceptualization and analyses of formative measures (Edwards, 2011). Kono et al. (2020) did provide partial support for formative indictors among two of the three subcategories of constraints (structural and interpersonal). Future research should look to consider this debate further. Finally, this research focuses on participants who were already in a national park, which in its very essence suggests

they either experience fewer constraints to visitation, have higher levels of motivation, and or have successfully used negotiation strategies. Future work should include New Canadians who are both park visitors and those who do not or have not visited a national park.

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Chapter 4: Lived Experiences of New Canadians Visiting Parks

Study 3: Parks are for everyone, but do they mean something to everyone? An interpretive hermeneutic study of park and nature-based recreation experiences of New Canadians.

Introduction

Visiting national and provincial parks feels like part of who we are as people, as Canadians. Venturing out into nature has been tied to nation building and patriotism since the time the first Canadian national parks were created under James Harkin (MacEachern, 2011). However, as these places were once envisioned as inherent to what it meant to be Canadians it is now equally important to understand that New Canadians do not visit parks as frequently as those who were born in Canada (Bain et al., 2008; Canadian Parks Council, 2014; Shultis & More, 2011; Floyd, 2001; Parks Canada, 2017). At the same time, many newcomers hold high environmental values, enjoy nature-based recreation, and when they do visit parks and natural areas experience many mental, physical, and social benefits (Charles-Rodriguez et al., 2022; Hordyk et al., 2015). For New Canadians that do visit parks, their personal experiences have not been well documented or understood (Drolet & Teixeira, 2022).

Connecting to nature provides physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being benefits to humans across the world (Baxter & Pelletier, 2019; Maller et al., 2006). These well-documented benefits are more relevant now than ever before. Not only has the COVID-19 pandemic affected many peoples' mental and physical health but prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, many have expressed fear over humanity becoming increasingly disconnected from nature (Louv, 2008, Nisbett et al, 2020; Parks Canada, 2017). However, parks offer an opportunity to connect with nature. The nature-based leisure setting that parks provide also offers an opportunity to connect with our ourselves, our friends and families, and potentially the society

in which those parks exist (Hordyk et al., 2015; Smale, 2006). Furthermore, connections are a strong predictor of stewardship behaviours (Whitburn et al., 2020), which is paramount given the earth's climate and biodiversity crises.

The focus of this study is to understand how New Canadians perceive Canadian provincial and or national parks and how their experiences in parks may or may not contribute to a sense of belonging and sense of place in Canada as well as their overall connection and relationship with nature (i.e., nature relatedness). New Canadians are particularly relevant as Canadian park agencies are committed to increasing the diversity of park visitors, through programming, outreach, and education specifically focused on New Canadians and non-traditional park visitors such as ethnic minorities (Parks Canada, 2017). Simultaneously, immigrants and ethnic minorities face significant constraints to participating in outdoor recreation and accessing nature (Khazai et al., 2017; Schell et al., 2020; Zanon et al., 2013).

Literature Review

Canadian Immigration Context

Canada has among the highest percentages of immigrants in all G7 countries; an estimated 8.3 million people or 23% of the total population are foreign-born (Statistics Canada, 2023a). A landed or recent immigrant is typically considered a person who has come to Canada up to 5 years prior to a given census year (Statistics Canada, 2016). Research on the experiences of immigrants new to Canada over the past 10 years reveals a wide spectrum of ethnic cultures, countries of origin, factors prompting emigration, as well as economic and social status. According to Statistics Canada (2016, 2021), there are three primary categories of immigrants to Canada. Economic immigrants, which include professionals with degrees and certificates in their

chosen field, business people, and to live-in caregivers, represent 50-60% of immigrants to Canada in 2019. The second category is immigrants sponsored by family, which make up 25-30% of Canada's immigrants in 2019. The third category, refugees, accounted for approximately 20%. In addition, Canada accepts a small percentage of other persons selected on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, this number was less than 1% for 2019 (Statistics Canada, 2021).

The majority of New Immigrants to Canada are economic immigrants, who are well-educated professionals and business people attracted to Canada as a land of opportunity. They come for better work, education, and security, particularly for their children (Lange, 2011). In contrast, refugees often come from precarious circumstances and may live with painful and terrifying memories of war and challenges associated with leaving their home country, as well as harsh living conditions in refugee camps (Steel et al., 2002). Across all immigrant types, expectations for life in Canada are high. Yet, the settlement experience – from application, acceptance, landing, the process of establishing and finding a new home, learning a new language, and making a cultural transition – is a long, rigorous, and stressful experience (Crooks et al. 2011). The daily encounter with values, beliefs, and norms, sometimes profoundly different from their own, adds to the stress levels of new immigrant families. Similarly, each person, and families together, must struggle to redefine relationships and personal identities in their new host country (Ngo, 2008). New Immigrants may express a range of responses – rejecting the new culture, resisting specific elements in the new culture, selectively integrating, or completely assimilating – depending on personal, familial, cultural, and religious characteristics (Berry & Hou, 2016). Canada has been described as a multicultural society where both society and public policy support pluralism and diversity (Berry & Kalin, 2000). Within multicultural societies, many immigrants attempt to integrate into society using leisure; leisure can help establish

connections to their homeland and former way of life while increasing place attachment to the new host country, and helping immigrants become familiar with new cultural practices (Stodolska et al., 2017).

Not surprisingly, one of the most pressing and commonly recognized issues that immigrants face is not finding work in their area of expertise, as professional qualifications are often unrecognized and even treated as suspicious or inferior (Frank, 2013). Further, New Canadians lack information on the accreditation procedures that do exist (Guo, 2006). Frank (2013) found that obtaining accreditation, the process of credential recognition, and or certification that is required for many high-status occupations (e.g., physicians, engineers) takes additional time; thus, immigrants are pressured into unskilled or under-skilled jobs (Frank, 2013; Guo, 2006). Immigrants also face wage discrimination in the work they do obtain. Combined with rising inflation and cost of living these factors account for the rise in poverty and an increase in social assistance applications among New Canadians in recent years (Drolet & Teixeira, 2022).

Overall, across all types of immigrants, their economic well-being tends to decline after arrival, due to a host of external factors resulting in their unemployment or underemployment (Lange, 2011). Further stress is added to the settlement process when the new host country is experienced as unwelcoming – through racialization and discriminatory, exclusionary practices (Tan, 2004). However, leisure, social connections, and nature-based recreation can significantly reduce stress, increase well-being, facilitate interracial/intergroup contacts, create opportunities for cultural exchange, and support socio-economic advancement (Stodolska, 2015)

New Immigrant Leisure Experiences

Currently, there is a well-developed body of literature focusing on the role of leisure in the immigration and settlement process across Europe, North America, and other Western Countries. Leisure can aid in coping with the stress of dislocation, support social relationships, increase cultural understanding, reduce racism, enhance diaspora connections, and improve physical and mental health for newcomers (Li et al., 2015; Stodolska, 2015; Stodolska, 2018; Walker et al., 2011; Stodolska & Walker, 2007). Lauckner et al. (2022) sought to better understand the meaning, experiences, and perspectives of newcomers related to their recreation participation and choices. They found that recreation provided newcomers a source of fun, opportunities to make new friends, and connect with others, and key moments of relaxation leading to wellness. Certain activities brought a sense of connection to their homes as well as the chance to feel more "Canadian". Gardening, and spending time outdoors (foraging, fishing, as well as walking and biking), allowed participants to feel connected with their past life and reminisce while still appreciating the uniqueness of Canada (Lauckner et al, 2022).

In Canada, Suto (2013) investigated the leisure experiences of (im)migrant women and found that socializing was a key element to leisure, and even more so with people of similar backgrounds and languages as the newcomers. Leisure provided a chance to make friends, relax, and take care of themselves. However, leisure activities that were once commonplace in the women's home country were highly variable in Canada. Examples such as downhill skiing being relatively inexpensive in the former Yugoslavia or symphony concerts being subsidized by the government in Ukraine were both expensive and somewhat elitist/exclusionary in Canada. Many of the women described adopting alternative leisure pursuits or seeking to better understand more "Canadian" forms of leisure such as canoeing or hiking (with no purpose other than simply being outside) (Suto, 2013).

"Canadian" forms of leisure have been connected to nature-based recreation, suggesting that participating in specific "Canadian" leisure activities such as camping, hiking, or canoeing are linked to identity, belonging, and becoming Canadian (Hurly & Walker, 2019; Ono et al., 2023). Hurly and Walker (2019) described how settlement agencies presented a camping experience as a pastime that many Canadians like to do with the goal of compelling newcomers to adopt a leisure behaviour that is popular with many Canadians or as an exemplar of the Canadian ideal of citizenship and belonging. Similar sentiments have also been shared across New Zealand (which shares a similar geography and colonial history with Canada), as Lovelock et al. (2011) describe the outdoor lifestyle as central to society. It is worth noting that these national identities and ideologies of nature and nature-based recreation as "Canadian", are intertwined with colonialism and a national narrative founded on fetishized stories of the nation (Erickson, 2013). This narrative is layered in gendered, racialized, and false histories of Canada as a nation; however, it is also the dominant discourse (Erickson, 2013). Kaufmann and Zimmer (1998) define nations as the "cultural order composed of certain values, symbols and ethnohistorical myths" (p.485). They go on to explain how national identity is shaped through the construction of continuity with a nation's alleged ethnohistorical past and a sense of naturalness (naturalization). The collective past and references to significant features of the natural environment act to buttress the cultural community and history with the significant natural features of the nation (homeland) (Kaufmann & Zimmer (1998). This (re)production of Canada is inherently connected to nature-based recreation, parks, and environmental education, thus extending to leisure narratives and experiences of newcomers (Erickson, 2013; Purc-Stephenson et al., 2019).

However, nature-based leisure experiences may also come with fear – fear of the unknown, of the "wilderness" or wild lands, of a lack of skills, of wildlife, and even of other people. Newcomers in New Zealand mentioned that parks were not for them (immigrants) as they (immigrants) did not feel they were as brave as "New Zealanders" (Lovelock, 2011). In a recent scoping review of immigrants' relationship with nature, Charles-Rodrigues et al. (2022) found that when immigrants do visit parks and natural areas, many people express feelings of togetherness, belonging, and opportunities to confirm or reconstruct personal identity in their new host country. Nature-based leisure has also been repeatedly cited as contributing to overall well-being for many newcomers (Hurly & Walker, 2019; Hordyk et al, 2015; Stodolska et al., 2017)

As valuable as leisure experiences are, research has also documented constraints and in many cases the increased constraints that newcomers face to meaningful leisure participation. These barriers include but are not limited to un(der)employment, discrimination and racism, lack of information, travel and accessibility, language, social isolation, time, and other family or work obligations (Quirke, 2015). Lovelock et al. (2011) revealed the many constraints New Immigrants to New Zealand face regarding nature-based recreation such as time, transportation, lack of information, not having people to participate with, lack of money for leisure, and fear of the "wildness" of national and regional park spaces. Immigrants, ethnically diverse, and racialized people have also expressed discrimination and feelings of exclusion or being unsafe in many leisure settings, parks included (Kloek et al., 2013; Floyd, 2001). This combination of factors highlights the complexities of understanding constraints to leisure within immigrant communities (not to mention that immigrants are not a homogenous group and therefore do not experience the same constraints, motivations, leisure preferences, etc.).

Calls for more research focused on the meaning of leisure and specifically nature-based recreation highlight the need to better understand the lived experiences of newcomers and how parks may or may not be meeting their needs (Quirke, 2015). This lack of research is interesting given that leisure and nature can help the development of place attachment, a sense of belonging, cross-cultural understanding, and positive integration (Rishbeth & Finney, 2006). This research brings forward the lived experiences of New Canadians and connects nature-based recreation with the settlement process.

Sense of Place

Regardless of ethnicity or immigrant status, parks can be places of deep meaning, connection, and belonging. Our natural landscapes are rich in history, memories, and emotional and symbolic meanings, and individuals develop lasting bonds with these places (Williams & Vaske, 2003). The emotional, affective, cognitive, and social bonds we make with places are described as sense of place or place attachment (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Kyle et al., 2005; Low & Altman, 1992; Williams et al., 1992). In general, place attachment is understood as an affective and cognitive bond or link between people and specific places. People, or groups who bond with places, require the interplay of affect and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, behaviours and actions (Kyle et al., 2005).

Sense of place is a more holistic concept in comparison to place attachment. It involves both the social and geographical aspects of places as well as the subjective qualities (the sensing of place to create personal meaning), including community and ancestral connections to place (Hay, 1998). In the field of human geography, sense of place is critical to our understanding of environmental experiences (Relph, 1997). It is the thread that ties each of us to our surroundings as a way to understand that place for what it is, and what it means to the individual (or group)

(Relph, 1997). Sense of place and place meanings are derived from one's lived experience both with the natural environment and the people in their lives. Research connecting immigrant experiences in parks (protected areas, and nature more broadly) and sense of place suggests that natural areas can serve as universal places or a link between previous homes and their new host county (Derrien & Stokowski, 2014; Jay & Schraml, 2014). This universality is central to the notion that sense of place is always contextualized within past and current knowledge and experience within places. For Bosnian immigrants to the United States, the geography and climate were similar and thus developing a sense of place in a new country was easier for newcomers who felt it reminded them of home (adding comfort and bringing joy to newcomers) (Derrien & Stokowski, 2014).

While the natural environment appears to be central to creating and maintaining a sense of place, the experiences we have with others through leisure are also fundamental. Places do not have inherent meaning until we, as humans, socially construct meaning to a place (Kyle & Chick, 2007; Smale, 2006; Stokowski, 2002). In a study examining the role of nature-based recreation in fostering relationships and adaptions for immigrants across the United States and Europe, Stodolska et al. (2017) found that social relationships were both a universal outcome and a key factor in developing a sense of place in their new hot country. Participants (from all countries) noted that nature-based recreation was done with family and friends of similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds and supported positive memories and bonds to natural areas (in their new host country). Similarly, Hurly and Walker (2019) described the positive experiences of refugees in Canada participating in a group camping trip organized through a settlement services agency and cited the friendship and shared experiences of the newcomers as contributing to the positive sense of place developed through nature-based recreation.

Given the important role nature and nature-based recreation can and does have in shaping a sense of place in people's lives, it warrants a better understanding of how immigrants develop (or don't develop) a sense of place with Canadian parks. Further, while there are critiques of Canada's romanticized and colonial history with nature (and parks) there is also value in investigating the experiences of newcomers with nature-based recreation as it relates to Canadian identity. More than 78% of Canadian households participated in outdoor activities in 2021, and millions visit parks every year (more than 17,000,000 people visit just three of the country's largest urban parks annually) (Statistics Canada, 2023b; Parks Canada, 2022). Canadians overwhelmingly support national parks (more than 92% support Parks Canada Mandates), and more than 18 million Canadians (not including foreign travellers) visited a national park in 2021 (Parks Canada, 2022).

Sense of Belonging

Sense of belonging and sense of place are conceptually distinct but empirically co-present, and it is valuable to consider these concepts in the context of each other (Peters et al., 2016). Belonging, while a nebulous term, is strongly related to humanity's relationships to places. Hagerty et al. (1992) defines belonging as "the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of" (p.173). A sense of belonging between humans and the natural world was well outlined by the famous environmental philosopher, Aldo Leopold (1966), who wrote "We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect" (foreword, p. x). We come to understand our obligation to places and spaces when we have developed a relationship with these places (Bennett, 2014).

There can also be a historic element to this relationship, whereby belonging evolves over time and in some cases requires a long-term relationship. However, the sense of or feeling of belonging is not binary and while we can feel as though we don't belong or perhaps do belong in a particular place (e.g. a country), we can also shift through these feelings and be influenced by the place itself, the people we experience it with, and our own identity and connection to the history of the place (Miller, 2003). Currently, more than 3% of the global population lives outside of their country of birth, meaning an estimated 281 million around the world are international migrants (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021) As humans migrate around the world (both within and out of their country of birth) belonging becomes an increasingly more complex and yet significant aspect of well-being (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995).

Connections with nature can foster a sense of belonging and increase social cohesion, especially among immigrants (Charles-Rodriguez et al., 2022; Hordyk et al., 2015; Lovelock et al., 2011; Peters et al., 2016). However, access to nature is a key factor for connection to occur and many New Immigrants can only benefit from nature's ability to foster a sense of belonging when they can easily access it, such as walking to urban parks. Having said that, even the smallest of encounters in nature can help shape belonging. Lauckner et al. (2022) described ordinary daily activities such as sitting on a park bench and walking on a trail in your neighbourhood helped to create a sense of belonging for newcomers in Canada. Nature-based recreation might offer particularly unique forms of recreation for newcomers such as winter camping in Canada. Engaging in and embracing these new outdoor activities was paramount for children and their parents in Hurly and Walker's (2019) study with refugees.

The sense of belonging derived from nature is unfortunately not certain. Lovelock et al. (2013) found that parks in New Zealand were places of exclusion and highly racialized for ethnic

minorities and People of Colour. There are similar findings with regard to parks in North America, including urban and neighbourhood parks (Bryne, 2012; Powers et al., 2020). Scott and Tenneti (2021) described Canadian parks and environmentalism as being absent of Black and Racialized voices. They further discuss how the parks sector, media, and recent research has perpetuated the idea that Black people and New Immigrants prefer "the city" or urban nature rather than "wilderness" or more "Canadian" forms of nature. These findings are akin to those of Byrne (2012), who found that Latinos in Los Angeles experienced similar exclusion, and unwantedness in parks due to racialization, fear for safety, and discrimination. Furthermore, there is a lack of research surrounding the experiences of immigrants and ethnic minorities in Canadian parks with regard to racism (Bain et al., 2008; Salenieks, 2014).

Berry (2005) suggests that this sense of belonging for newcomers is essential as it allows people to feel accepted, secure, and at home in their new host country. Understanding leisure experiences and natural environments supporting this feeling and development of belonging is particularly significant in Canada. However, to date, there lacks a clear understanding of how New Canadians engage with parks and protected areas in developing a sense of belonging (or not) to their new host country and communities.

Nature Relatedness

The concept of nature relatedness brought forth by Nisbet et al. (2009) encompasses our appreciation and consideration of how interconnected humanity is with all other living beings on Earth. It is defined as "the affective, cognitive, and experiential relationship individuals have with the natural world or a subjective sense of connectedness with nature" (Nisbet et al., 2011 p. 304). Scholars suggest that nature relatedness influences human emotions and may explain why

some people feel strongly and positively about nature, whereas others are unmoved, and subsequently unmotivated to act or protect it (Kals & Maes, 2004; Milton, 2002; Nisbett et al., 2009). Humans' relationship with nature is complex and multidimensional. While terminology fluctuates between relatedness and connection, the tenants of this relationship include affect (emotions), cognition (knowledge), and behavioural interactions (Mayer & Frantz, 2004; Nisbet & Zelenski, 2013). Understanding how we as humans relate to nature, and how we are in fact a part of the wider ecological community within nature is central to the concept of nature relatedness. Nature relatedness is a distinct concept that includes more than activism, love, or enjoyment of nature. It proposes that all living things and all aspects of nature are important and valuable. The concept is understood as a "personality trait" that tends to be relatively stable and constant across time and situations (though not completely fixed) (Nisbett et al., 2009).

Studies suggest that culture influences our relationship with nature and our willingness to protect the natural environment (Chwialkowsks et al., 2020; Ringov & Zollo, 2007). Cultural values, such as collectivism, act as moderators of pro-environmental behaviours and influence the relationship between the antecedents of pro-environmental behaviour (environmental concerns and values, attitudes, social norms, the locus of control) (Chwialkowsks et al., 2020). Individuals from collectivist societies have been found to live more in harmony with the natural environment and are more willing to accept personal sacrifices in support of sustainability (Schwartz, 1994). Collectivism and individualism are not the only cultural influences on our relationships with nature. Values have also been shown to impact our perception of nature (Kloek et al., 2018). Depending on the many influences on a person's values (such as ethnicity, religion, place of birth, family status etc.) they may perceive or value nature differently. Kloek et al. (2018) investigated these similarities and differences between immigrants and non-

immigrants in the Netherlands and found that ethnicity and religion both had significant influences on how people perceived and represented nature. Ethnicity shaped perceptions of nature in that many non-immigrants held much stricter boundaries to define nature. Non-immigrants used words like parks and unspoilt wilderness, whereas immigrants experienced much more inclusive definitions of nature such as trees, gardens, and urban greenspace. This is also in line with Johnson et al.'s (2004) findings, which highlighted the socially constructed concept of wilderness as statistically less significant to immigrants compared to American-born individuals. While these studies highlight differences, perhaps they were looking too specifically at nebulous terms such as wilderness, and even park, which may not be a direct translation from English to other languages. Understanding newcomers' relationship to nature is much more holistic and potentially nuanced.

This research is in response to calls for in-depth examinations of the ways in which the unique backgrounds of immigrants and their arrivals to a new host country affect their interactions with nature and their communities (Peters et al., 2016; Lovelock et al., 2011). This work also addresses Floyd and Stodolska's (2019) call for a place-based approach to understanding leisure experiences for ethnically diverse communities. The focus of this study is to understand how New Canadians perceive Canadian provincial and/or national parks and the natural environment. It also explores how their experiences in parks have contributed to their connection and relationship with nature (i.e. nature relatedness). Therefore, the main research questions guiding this research are: (1) How do New Canadians perceive and experience national and provincial parks?, and (2) How does visiting national and provincial parks influence nature relatedness, sense of place, and sense of belonging within their new host country?

Methodology

Interpretive Hermeneutics

This research is in alignment with the philosophical assumptions of pragmatism. For Dewey, pragmatism is a philosophy that should help develop ideas relevant to actual life and the crisis of living our daily lives; the knowledge and intelligence we generate should therefore be used to liberate action (Dewey, 1976; Creswell & Poth, 2017 Greene, 2007; Hall, 2013; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; and Morgan, 2014). Within this approach to understanding real-world experiences a hermeneutic approach was employed. Hermeneutics provides insight into how individuals experience the world and better understand the "whole" story through part-whole relationships (Patterson & Williams, 2002). Specifically, this research was guided by Gadamer's hermeneutics known as moderate, productive, or projective hermeneutic research (Gallagher, 1992). This tradition asserts that the researcher cannot bracket their preconceptions, nor can they truly empathize with another's experience.

The concept of empathy is of particular interest here as the focus of this research program is on newcomers and the experiences of New Canadians in national and provincial parks. As the primary investigator of this work, I am not a new immigrant, rather a third-generation Canadian, Caucasian female who has spent much of my adult life visiting parks, researching parks, and working in park management[4]. Empathy, in the case of Gadamer's hermeneutics, relates to the researcher's horizon or our particular starting point from which we view the world. This suggests that empathy, or our understanding of another person's lived experiences occurs through the concept of the fusion of horizons (Lawn, 2006; Smith, 2010).

[4] The use of I refers to the lead author in this work and the use of we refers to the lead author working in collaboration with the supervisory team/committee in the research process.

This fusion of horizons creates new understanding between the two. This is different than suggesting one can fully empathize or relate to someone else's experience as they have their own unique horizon or understanding of their own experience. Rather, the fusion of the researcher(s) and the participants horizons co-produces understanding and new perspectives. Since I am an outsider to the complexities of the immigration experience and being new to Canada, it was therefore crucial to come to these new understanding through negotiations between myself as the researcher (and instrument) and the participants. Recognizing that one cannot "bracket" their preconceptions, Patterson and Williams (2002) describe the role of the researcher as active, playing a key role in the interpretation process.

Dewey's pragmatism and Gadamer's hermeneutics are related through the use of the hermeneutic circle (Figure 7), the importance of experiences, and the belief that there is no separation in theory and practice (Vessey, 2006). The overall understanding is that hermeneutic research encourages a strong focus on individual cases and specific occurrences of a phenomenon, while also recognizing the context-dependent reality; this includes meaning that change across time, cultures, and individuals, as well as a view of human experience characterized by situated freedom, are central. Therefore, phenomena are approached with an understanding that is shaped by past experiences and the belief that each new situation is unique. Rather than seeking to establish a theory or be generalizable to all instances, hermeneutics seeks to generate knowledge applicable to a specific instance or situation (Patterson & Williams, 2002). As Mullins (2014) noted, hermeneutics emphasizes the interrelation of lived experiences and accounts of these deeply personal meanings to provide insight at various levels and understanding – the participants themselves may be aware of or assume these meanings through

their actions and practices but perhaps not in their language – that is the role of the researcher, to interpret and make meaning of the parts and of the whole (Van Manen, 1997)

Smith (1991) and Patterson and Williams (2002) describe the back-and-forth movement between the part (i.e., text or interview transcript) and the whole (i.e., the individuals' story, culture, social, and historical context) as the hermeneutic circle. This circle understands that the text represents the individual and is read by the researcher to gain an understanding of the data in its entirety and then examined closer for separate parts. Understanding of the separate parts impacts the original meaning or understanding of the whole, which can then again influence the meaning of the parts. Working in a cyclical fashion, understanding the whole helps to understand the parts, while at the same time, understanding the parts shapes the understanding of the whole and vice versa. Prasad (2005) suggests

> The meaning of [these] texts does not reside solely in the words and sentences of the policy statement. A researcher would have to closely examine the wider organizational background to understand why specific policies have been initiated, which organizational actors have been most influential in its creation and what local interests it may serve. (p.35)

The nature of the phenomenon is also understood in this same manner, but now individuals make up the parts (idiographic) and the phenomenon represents the whole (nomothetic) (Patterson & Williams, 2002). By understanding previous life experiences and culturally relevant elements of the whole it allows the researcher to better understand the parts and subsequently create meaning in the interpretation. In theory, there is no end to the hermeneutic circle, however, in practice when the researcher is able to find a meaningful understanding of the phenomena, they can impose closure (Prasad, 2005).

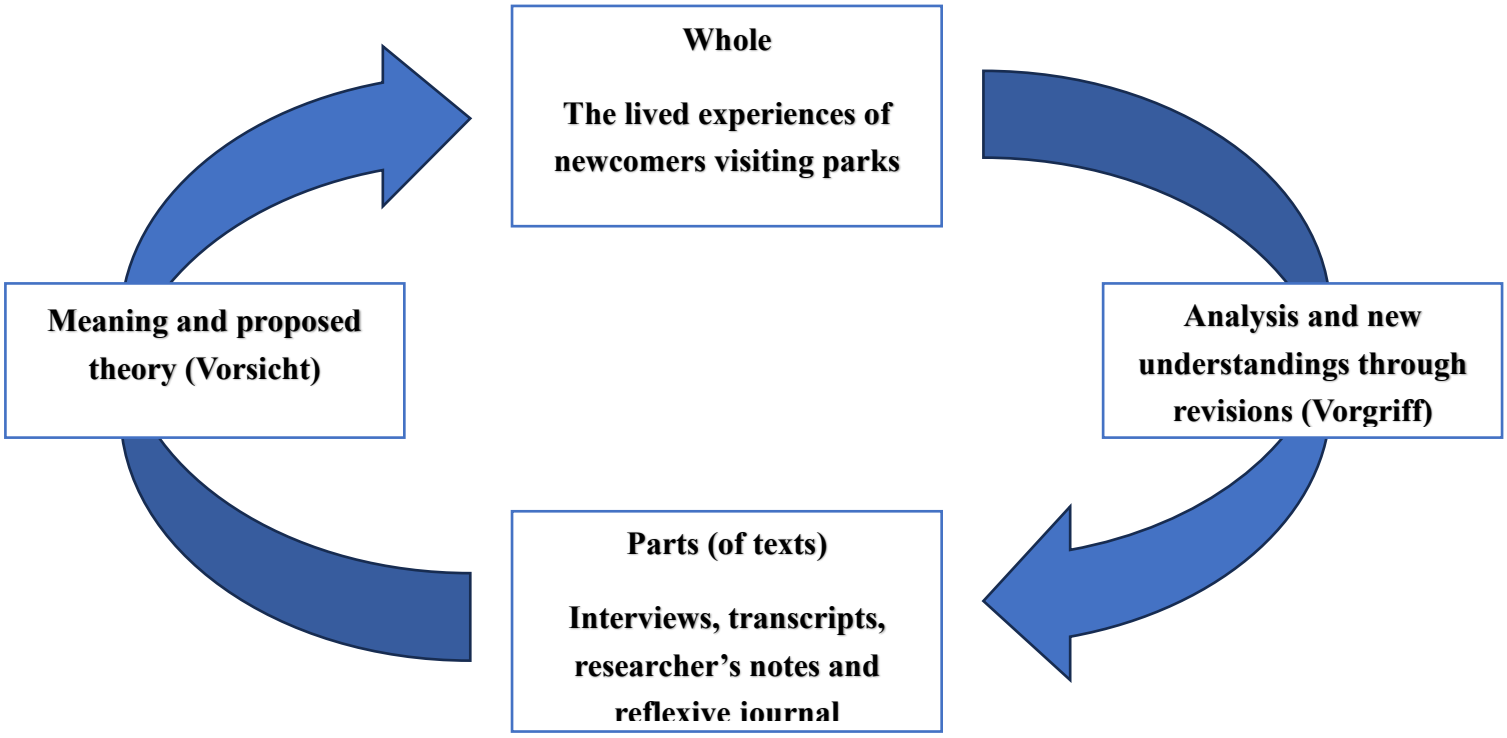

Figure 7. The Hermeneutic Circle as described by Heelan and Schulkin (1998). Adapted from Paterson and Higgs (2005).

While many examples are provided regarding the efficacy of hermeneutics as it relates to education, curriculum, youth, and leisure settings (Ellis, 1998; Smith, 1991; Patterson et al., 1998). Smith (2010) provides a recommendation that hermeneutics may be of particular interest to those who come from strong cultural traditions as it looks to discern openings and opportunities to engage in dialogue regarding other traditions. If we conceptualize tradition and culture in relation to others, we can see how the use of hermeneutics allows for an understanding that supports two cultures or two horizons coming together to create meaning in a new place. An interpretive hermeneutic approach was best suited to this research as the focus was on understanding the history, culture, and whole-part relationship of the individual lived experience. In addition, this approach was chosen in response to Floyd et al.'s, (2008) and Stodolska and

Floyd's (2016) recommendations to provide an insider perspective and move beyond descriptive frameworks. Through the process of phenomenological hermeneutics, we were able to understand the complex structure of lived experiences.

Participants and Recruitment

The purpose of choosing who to sample is to determine who will represent the phenomenon being studied (as not all who experience the phenomenon can be studied) (Patterson & Williams, 2002). Following purposeful sampling techniques participants included adults (over the age of 18), who were New Immigrants to Canada, spoke English, and had visited a national or provincial park in the past 12 months. All study participants lived in the Canadian province of Alberta, which has an abundance of national and provincial parks. As immigrants are a diverse and heterogeneous group we sought to engage with people from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and life experiences. This resulted in interviews with fourteen New Canadians from seven different countries, who all currently reside in Alberta, Canada. Table 7 summarizes participants (pseudonyms have been used to ensure anonymity).

Table 7

Participant Details

Pseudonym	Country of Origin	Gender Identity	Time in Canada
Grace	Jamaica	Woman	2-5 years
Clara	India	Woman	0-2 years
Jian	China	Man	6-10 years
Lihua	China	Woman	2-5 years
Jiali	China	Woman	0-2 years
Luz	Yemen	Woman	0-2 years

Fatemah	Iran	Woman	6-10 years
Ashur	Syria	Man	2-5 years
Rania	Syria	Woman	0-2 years
Rahman	Afghanistan	Man	0-2 years
Husna	Afghanistan	Woman	0-2 years
Sadaf	Afghanistan	Woman	0-2 years
Mahnaz	Afghanistan	Woman	0-2 years
Jalila	Afghanistan	Woman	0-2 years

The purpose of targeting New Immigrants versus settled or multi-generation immigrants is based on findings from Lovelock et al. (2012) and Buijs et al., (2009), who found differences in outdoor recreation and landscape preferences among immigrants based on length of time since immigration and generational status (first or second generation). Support for differences is unclear but may be influenced by the type and availability of nature and outdoor recreation in their home country compared to their new host country. Other factors may include the novelty of a new country, the desire to become familiar with cultural practices in a new country, and the location of immigration within a country (urban vs. rural) (Buijs et al., 2009; Lovelock et al. 2012)

Some participants had been to only one national or provincial park in the previous 12 months while others had been to numerous parks. The decision to focus specifically on national and provincial parks was explicit as we felt these places are a direct representation of the Canadian "outdoor" or "nature-based" identity (as discussed earlier). According to Canada's national park agency, Parks Canada, the core mandate of national parks is to protect and present Canada's natural and cultural heritage (Parks Canada, 2016). Similarly, Alberta Parks' provincial

parks are focused on the preservation of Alberta's natural heritage, landscapes, natural features and objects of geological, cultural, historical, archeological, anthropological, paleontological, ethnological, ecological or other scientific interest or importance (Government of Alberta, 2023). Both park systems also have the dual mandate of connecting visitors to nature and facilitating nature-based recreation for current and future generations, while also protected and conserving nature.

Accessing non-dominant ethnic groups for research typically entails working with community gatekeepers, individuals occupying formal or informal leadership positions in immigrant-serving and community agencies, churches, and neighbourhood associations (Eide & Allen, 2005; Renert et al., 2013). The strategy in this study involved one such individual from a local (Edmonton) based settlement service agency. I had made connections with this individual through my work in community sport and recreation, and as such this relationship proved to be very supportive. The agency leader shares a passion for nature-based recreation and consequently hosts multiple trips to national and provincial parks through the agency. Six of the fourteen participants had either participated in the agency's own programming or were connected to the agency through a partnership with Alberta Parks. Additionally, I am highly involved with local charities and non-profit organizations focused on building inclusive recreation systems across Alberta and had opportunities to recruit participants through events, workshops, and direct contact with newcomers. In total eight participants had visited parks through a program organized specifically for New Canadians (through the settlement service agency and or Alberta Parks) while the other six participants visited parks with family and friends through self-organizing.

Data Collection

Primary to the foundations of Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology is the notion that the researcher must adopt the role of "self-as-instrument" and participate in the emerging discourse (Gadamer, 1998; Patterson & Williams, 2002). Therefore, the primary source of data for this study was in-depth interviews with 14 New Canadians. Following recommendations by Charmaz (1991), the interviews were approached as directed conversations. In order to achieve this approach, we developed a semi-structured interview guide that included open-ended questions and probes to keep the conversation centred around the research themes while simultaneously employing probes to elicit further observations, perceptions, and responses from participants (see Appendix B). The interviews took place over Zoom as data collection occurred during 2022 and early into 2023, while COVID-19 pandemic restrictions limited in-person contact. Additionally, the Zoom interface provided a convenience that in-person interviews might not have. Study participants have incredibly busy lives, with work, family, education, and leisure obligations all acting as potential barriers to participating in the study, but the convenience of a virtual interview allowed both the participants and the researcher much more flexibility. Given the prevalence of virtual interviews during and after the COVID-19, pandemic studies have found the use of Zoom video interviews help participants feel more relaxed as they are likely to be participating from their home or a space they are comfortable in (Oliffe et al., 2021). Oliffe et al. (2021) found that their participants had a naturalness and seemed to be comfortable speaking frankly and freely about their experiences while using Zoom/virtual interviewing data collection.

Reflexivity

In addition to interviews, as a researcher, I (as the lead author) kept a reflexive journal and field notes. The field notes were diligently made throughout the entire process and documented thoughts, ideas, and observations occurring throughout the interview and analysis phases (Cohen et al., 2000). Duffy et al. (2021) describe reflexivity in qualitative research as the ability to reflect critically on themselves and acknowledge one's own biases. They further state that "if it (reflexivity) is done holistically, it remains one of the most viable practices to bring strength and clarity to the messiness of leisure research" (p.449). The reflexive process and journaling followed the guidance of Duffy et al. (2021) and their proposed framework for holistic reflexive practice. This framework provides five domains to guide the reflexive process, including the social/relational context, representation and voice, embodiment and positionality, politico-ideological awareness, and unconscious/emotional entanglement. I reflected on these domains and used Duffy et al.'s guiding questions throughout data collection and analysis.

Reflective journaling was also essential in engaging with the hermeneutic circle, moving back and forth between the parts and the whole of the text (Bartley & Brooks, 2023; Laverty, 2003). Within this context, I investigated and moved between the smallest of local details and reflected back on the most macro structures in a way that allows for both to be visible to interpretation (Brooks, 2003). The notes made during and following the interviews as well as reflecting on the guiding questions allowed for an ever-increasing understanding of meaning and an expanded verification of the experiences of New Canadians in parks. I also used the reflexive journal as a tool to support the fusion of horizons central to Gadamer's hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1989).

Data Analysis

Hermeneutic data analysis begins with the data generation itself (interviews) and following the hermeneutic circle never explicitly ends. However, in the context of research, studies end when one has reached sensible meanings of the experience being studied (Laverty, 2003; Paterson & Williams, 2002). Tesch (1990) suggested that hermeneutic data analysis must follow an "organizing system"; therefore, the use of NVivo 12 provided a system in which to organize all of the materials during data analysis. This organizing system is fundamentally different from content analysis in that data are not coded into a system of categories. Rather, a hermeneutic approach is more holistic and aims to show the inter-relationships among the themes. Data organizing followed Patterson and Williams (2002) and Cohen et al., (2000) and is described below.

Step one involved transcribing, referencing or indexing (numbering lines and sentences of text), and reading the transcripts to immerse the myself in the data. It is important to note that Patterson and Williams (2002) strongly encourage the researcher to, wherever possible, conduct the interviews, transcribe the interviews, and read the transcriptions themselves; I completed these tasks. Step two focused on identifying meaning units within the text, seeking to specifically identify meaning units that provide insight into the phenomenon being studied. The initial meaning unit phase yielded 739 meaning units. Step three allowed me to use the meaning units to develop themes. Themes represent my analysis of the "hard data" or how the meaning units reveal insight into the phenomenon. Finally, the last stage was to write and re-write the narrative discussion of findings, with a careful balance of empirical evidence and rich description (Cohen et al., 2000; Patterson & Williams, 2002).

Findings

The following section presents the outcomes of the data analysis. The findings revealed that visiting parks shaped New Canadian's experiences in Canada in various ways. Through this section, we highlight the main themes (Table 8) related to the research question of how these experiences influence nature relatedness, sense of place, and sense of belonging for newcomers to Canada.

Table 8

Main themes

Characteristics of parks experiences (themes)	**Meanings**	**Examples/quotes from participants**
Space (places) to be myself and space to find my (new) self	Parks became places for New Canadians to relax and be themselves, they remind people of who they were in their home country and bring back fond memories of places that are important and relevant. As nature feels familiar it also provides a new place in Canada to become a New Canadian, to engage in nature-based recreation felt very "Canadian" to many participants.	"I am a pretty outdoorsy person, when I was young my dad took me everywhere [in China] and in the summer would go hiking. When I came to Calgary and realized there were mountains I wanted to go every weekend, that is how I further developed myself"
Building Community	Parks offer a place to build community. Community is shared with other newcomers but also with non-foreign-born folks. Time spent in parks offered an opportunity to share stories, culture (food, music, dance), and share successes and failures.	"Back home [in Afghanistan] we are all together [after work or school] but since coming to Canada it is different, you are just in your bedroom. But in the parks it is different, you can see each other and talk to each other. I think it sometimes feels like a special time for our family."
(missed) Connections to nature	The connection (and joy) felt while in nature in Canada helped participants feel grounded in their new host country.	"My city [Tehran] is located next to the Alborz Mountains. When I was growing up it felt like one big park and growing up, we used to go, that is one of my fondest memories" "When I was going hiking in the different place [in Canada] it is

		so beautiful place and I was so enjoying it because the big mountains the water is coming from the mountains, it is a beautiful place. I love this place."
"Nature is like medicine" Healing and well-being experiences of nature	Visiting parks felt like treatments for ailments such as feelings of depression, anxiety, and a sense of being overwhelmed after moving to Canada but the opportunity to spend time in parks provided relief and a chance to heal.	"Nature makes me feel good. I feel like I have depression, but it really boosts my mood. If I see that happening, like I am feeling down, to the point that there is no point in life, then I go hiking. Little by little you start to feel happy."
Nature near and far, understanding the perception of "real" nature and the constraints to accessing nature	Urban parks fill a void and provide daily doses of vitamin "N", but there is a strong desire to return to "optimal" nature, however, it is challenging.	"Big national parks that are way away from city back home. You just have like the regular connection, not the Internet connection. You have no option other than enjoying the park and just exploring, doing everything. I think it's really good for mental health, especially if someone is struggling with stress and anxiety"

Space (places) to be myself and space to find my (new)self

Visiting parks was both a new opportunity and a chance to feel "at home" in a new place. For many of the newcomers who came from places with mountains the Canadian Rocky Mountains felt like home and allowed them to reminisce of meaningful place attachment that had been developed over a lifetime. While they acknowledged the mountains themselves were different, there was an overwhelming sense of familiarity and thus a connection to the place. Lihua spoke of being outdoors a lot while growing up in China (with her father) and was thrilled to see the proximity to the mountains when she arrived in Calgary, and even more so when she realized that visiting the mountains was a regular occurrence for Canadians. She actively sought

out more and more opportunities to visit – accomplished in part through relationship building that would allow her to spend more time hiking in Canada's mountains.

Nature is powerful, drawing people's attention, and immersing them in its attributes; study participants referenced even the smallest, most subtle phenomena in nature, like the sound of the birds, or the wind blowing through the trees. For Fatemah, this holistic view of nature was tied to her identity, she mentioned *"I am not really a city person, I want to be calm and close to nature, that is the person I am becoming."* While these feelings may be more about nature broadly and less about connection to Canada as a country, but for most study participants, time spent in parks helped newcomers feel more at home compared to their urban environments.

Being new to a place holds a dual meaning for many New Immigrants. Participants described wanting to hold on to the person they were back home and the many ties, connections, and a feeling of grounded-ness that being "from" somewhere can provide. Yet, at the same time, there were opportunities to reflect and (re)consider who they have become or are becoming in this new place. For Jian, this was exactly what nature-based recreation provided him. He described:

> *I'm not too outdoorsy person at first. So that's why it took me so long to start to learn... So I kind of feel like if I want to keep up with them [Canadian-born Friends] and then, like, maybe I should learn, I keep learning new stuff.*

The sense of being Canadian was linked to the outdoors, and while he described visiting parks in China, Jian spoke of the differences and how much more "natural" parks in Canada felt. He enjoyed these feelings of being "closer" to nature. He also felt that being in the mountains and the experiences with his friends were incredibly important. There was also a sense of safety and calmness felt in parks in Canada. Luz described that in her home country (Yemen) it was not safe

to visit parks (natural areas) and yet in Canada, she was able to visit a provincial park, which was outside the city and more remote than she had experienced in her home country. She described feeling a sense of comfort:

> *I feel comfortable, my daughter and more. This was our first attempt to sleep alone and it was nice to share it with others. I hope to repeat this experience because we totally enjoyed it and being in the forest for the first time, it was so nice.*

The experiences in parks that are shared with others appear to elicit the most connection to the place for participants. Overwhelmingly the positive memories of time spent with friends and families are what made parks in Canada seem special to newcomers and helped to shape their sense of place in nature and in Canada.

Building Community

Being with other newcomers was especially important in developing connections, both to Canada and to others. Spending time in nature allowed participants to feel more comfortable and relate to each other based on their shared realities as immigrants. Feeling like we are part of a community, a sense of connection to others, and belongingness is a fundamental human motivation and essential for well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Hagerty et al., 1992). The loss of community is a significant outcome of the migration process, as many people choose to leave their home country either on their own or with only their immediate family. However, this process leaves behind relatives, friends, careers, and countless connections made and fostered over a lifetime. Arriving in Canada was positive for most newcomers; however, the staggering aloneness was overwhelming for some participants. Ashur described being alone and bored when he first arrived in Canada, but parks provided a new opportunity to spend time with friends and enjoy Canada in a new way. Similarly, Grace spoke of the challenges she faced being new to

Canada, including finding meaningful employment, securing housing, making friends and social connections. For her, park experiences were filled with new friends through local community and faith-based groups. She was able to build her network again using parks as an entry point for developing relationships.

Being new to a place and feeling alone can be isolating, but participants spoke of the value of sharing nature experiences with other newcomers. Specifically, Mahnaz said:

> *Actually, I came with a trauma here to Canada. I thought maybe when I was waiting for my visa in Pakistan. I thought when I arrived or received to Canada, everything will be better or will be good. But since I came to Canada, I got really bad. Like you are in a new country, you know you don't know anything. You're like a kid. But the only person who can understand a newcomer is a newcomer.*

The chance to visit parks with other newcomers gave participants the opportunities to connect with people who they felt understood them, understood their stress, their fears, but also their joys and their excitement for this new "Canadian" recreation of camping or hiking in parks. There was something unique about the park and time spent in nature that fostered deeper connection with each other. The sense of belonging with each other was forged through shared immigrant experiences but also shared nature-based recreation experiences. For the participants who spent multiple days hiking, camping, or being in a park together, they reminisced over the joy of sharing food, laughing, singing, and dancing, even if they did not speak the same language.

Nature provided a shared setting which could be discussed and appreciated across cultures – easing efforts to communicate and build relationships. Lihua described how hiking can create friendships and strengthen bonds "*especially I think for some friends like you are not very*

familiar with at the beginning and after you went hiking with them for one time you feel like there is more bonding among each other. Yeah, that's. I think that's really cool." This was seen as different from "other" leisure settings, nature-based leisure seemed to make it easier to create bonds and relate to one another over shared experiences such as hiking or camping.

Programs and experiences that offer New Canadians the chance to visit parks with others were critical, however, not all participants joined a program organized by a settlement agency or the parks agencies. For others, they turned to online tools such as the "meetup" app (or website), which is an online community bringing together people with shared interests and goals to establish social connections and friendships. This tool allowed some participants the chance to make new friends, visit parks, and participate in their desired recreational activities. Being new to Canada with no one to hike or camp with was a constraint that needed the correct tools to be overcome and for Fatemah, this app provided both a sense of community and belonging with others who shared her passion for hiking and satisfied her need to be in nature.

Community was also described at the macro level, or at the national level. Visiting parks was seen as a very "Canadian" thing to do and a way in which to entrench themselves in a new culture and to potentially feel like you belong. Jian spoke about how "*Canada is all about the nature"* and Ashur described how being in parks gave him that chance to learn about Canada and feel more Canadian. Ashur talked about learning about Canada through his visits to national parks:

> *"I actually learned about the stories of each national park (and Canada), and so when I was in Banff this year I learned more about the stories and what happened here, you are reading about a place that you are (physically) in and that is something that makes me feel more like I belong here, where I am right now."*

The ability to feel like you are Canadian because you belong in a park, and you have the skills, knowledge, and ease of being did not happen without support. For Sadaf, the opportunity to camp with help from the settlement service agency was paramount, she mentioned feeling out of place the first time and feeling like she did not belong. However, throughout the first weekend in the park, she learned new skills such as how to set up a tent and certain rules that are quite different in Canada (e.g., disposing of grey water in an outhouse (pit toilet), which is the practice in Alberta's provincial parks, whereas national parks provide outdoor dishwashing stations). By the time Sadaf was in the park a second time she felt more comfortable: "Yes, when we go back to the park or a national park I feel we can do it, now I know how." Belonging is also bi-directional, for newcomers learning how to be more "Canadian" was something they were proud of, but there were also elements in parks that did not require learning or adapting that made people feel welcome. For Luz and Mahnaz, washrooms and running water are important park amenities that allow them to practice their religion while in the park. Within the Muslim faith, there are five prayer times per day, and before these prayers, there is a ritual known as Wudu, in which a person washes their hands (and feet). Knowing that parks had places to wash and perform Wudu made some participants feel like they could be themselves in parks in Canada, like these places are meant for them to be who they are, even in a new place and especially in nature.

Finally, while not directly related to visiting national or provincial parks it is important to note the sense of belonging and the importance of community that participants felt visiting urban parks. Urban parks were specifically mentioned by name over and over in almost all interviews. Not only are these places for large family gatherings, places to spend time with friends, and opportunities to connect with nature, but they also offered a different sense of belonging in a

place that participants felt was a reflection of themselves. Mahnaz reflected on how surprised she was with how many cultures and languages she heard in an Edmonton-based park: *"I'm hearing lots of languages that show many people come from many different places. It felt very nice to have all the world in one place."* This made her feel more at home, and more like she belonged in the place. Additionally, urban parks offered a more familiar "park" experience for many newcomers, one that is centered around sharing meals (picnics, events, gatherings etc.) and socializing, rather than a more solitary or individual hiking trip – which was felt to be more of a "Canadian" way to be in parks.

(missed) Connections to nature

Our connection to nature transcends borders and political boundaries, shaping and reshaping our relationship to the natural environment based on the time we spend in nature. That same connection also shapes our sense of identity and relatedness to nature. Leaving behind nature that we are connected to through the act of migration, does not appear to reduce connections to nature but rather enhances and provides perspective. Participants reflected on how they were not fully aware of how important nature was to them, until of course they were apart from familiar nature. Rahman expressed how much the Canadian Rocky Mountains made him feel like he was back home in Afghanistan. He felt a sense of peace and gratitude for the magnitude of the mountains, an appreciation for how beautiful the sunrise over the mountain peaks was, and how inspiring it was to see wildlife free and healthy. At the same time, it was being in nature and in the park that evoked painful memories of what he was missing, the mountains that he knew so intimately were not the same, the trees, the grass, and of course the people were different. Nature held a juxtaposition for him. On the one hand, he felt a strong

affinity for being in nature (in Canada), and yet this same positive environment brought about a distinct sadness.

The bond participants feel with nature appears strong when nature provides a sense of calm, relief, and peace. Husna spoke of how the scene of mountains, trees, and running water relaxes her, *"it takes all the stress from your brain."* Jalila was overwhelmed at the start of her camping trip and contemplated if it was even a good idea, but the desire to immerse herself in nature took hold and produced a meaningful multi-day visitation. So much so that she did not want to leave the national park at the end of her trip. She recalled *"All the provinces in Afghanistan have different and beautiful places, some are like (the national park in Alberta), all the areas are green and there are trees. I want to always be in nature, it is so special."* Many of the women from Afghanistan shared these views of how special and valuable being in nature was to them. They also all reflected on how much they wanted to share these connections and opportunities with the women back home. Afghanistan has experienced political turmoil in recent years and has a complex history with women's rights. As such women are not currently allowed in most parks and this restriction felt detrimental and unjust to the women from Afghanistan.

Participants did not specifically discuss a correlation between their appreciation of nature and an obligation towards stewardship. However, some did note how well-maintained parks appeared in Canada and how important that was to them (e.g. no litter). Lihua did mention how she felt that Canadians take the natural environment for granted and was concerned that perhaps Canadians are not aware of how valuable or significant these parks and protected areas are.

Immigrants have various, and oftentimes, complex reasons for leaving their homes and beginning a new life in a new, sometimes foreign, place. Safety, better education, employment,

and quality of life are all reasons participants discussed. But when given choices as to what country to move to or when thinking about how to evaluate their decisions, nature was also a factor (although not primary for any of the newcomers interviewed in this research). For Jiali, after the primary motivation of better education opportunities for their son and employment for her and her partner, the natural environment played a huge role. She reflected how:

"When I think in that way my son can have a chance to touch the land, connect with nature to have more activities to learn like about the plants, the animals, because they've learned that from the book they can see the real things in the nature. So that's why I like to take him there [to parks]. Not just like playing football or basketball outside. I want him to have more touch [connection] to the nature, to touch the plants, really touch to feel it with his sense."

Husna and her family were deciding between Canada and two other Western countries, and ultimately chose Canada based on their sense of diversity and inclusiveness they felt they would experience in Canada. However, she also noted that when researching she was inspired by the beauty of Canada's natural environment.

"Nature is like medicine" Healing and well-being experiences of nature

The newcomers in this study expressed a multitude of symptoms related to health conditions and illness and some indicated that these were a result of the immigration experience or the challenges newcomers face in Canada. Participants spoke of feeling stress, anxiety, loneliness, depression, and general malaise. However, the healing power of nature was paramount to their resiliency and increased well-being.

Almost every participant noted the overwhelming stress and anxiety they experienced throughout the immigration process. Jalila felt stress related to being new to Canada, she felt

stressed when meeting and interacting with new people, and she was stressed about her lack of language skills, but the time she spent hiking and camping in a national park erased this stress: "*All of the hard things gave me stress, but in […. National Park] I don't have any stress, everything was just so interesting to me."* Mahnaz explained it in almost exactly the same manner:

"Everything is new for you, you left your country for a new country and the new thing is stressful that you don't know how to handle everything. But it is so important for us as newcomers to Canada to have parks, spaces without anxiety, stress, or anything."

Parks in this application were exactly like medicine to participants, Newcomers talked about how time spent in parks offered a respite from their symptoms of distress. But similar to medicine parks were not seen as accessible for all, and they are not like a pill bottle on a shelf with a clear label indicating the treatment and application. Husna reflected on how parks (especially more remote parks such as provincial and national parks) require awareness, appropriate skills, and understanding of the place, guidelines, activities etc. Specifically, she noted that not having a car made it challenging to access these places, which was frustrating because visiting parks made her feel less stressed and happier.

While there were a few participants who had prior knowledge of nature-based recreation, such as hiking or boating, even these newcomers spoke of how important it was to learn from others "more experienced" than them. The recognition of the settlement service agencies and the parks agencies who offer direct programming and support for newcomers was clear. Luz recalled a time earlier in her migration journey when she felt so sad that she couldn't see a future. She stated "*I have these feelings of depression; I was feeling down and I'm at the point*

where there is just no point in life. Then I go hiking. I didn't know what happened but little by little you start being happy again. That's' how I feel when I'm in nature."

Nature near and far, understanding the perception of "real" nature and the constraints to accessing nature

Underpinning the four above themes was the irony the "nature" they discussed was also largely inaccessible. This version of "nature", experiences in national and provincial parks is focused on more remote, wild, and expansive natural areas compared to urban parks. Other than the one or two memorable and significant experiences in these parks (for some facilitated through the support of a settlement service organization and or the park agency directly) many participants felt that they could not visit nature or spend as much time in nature as they would like due to a host of constraints. These include but are not limited to time, other priorities, transportation, financial barriers, information, and other family obligations.

For some newcomers (e.g., those from China and India) there was less of a division between the nature that urban parks provide compared to the naturalness afforded to more vast or remote parks (provincial and national). In fact, in some cases, these experiences were preferred because they felt that Canadian cities having large urban parks was a welcomed convenience and provided them solitude and connection to nature. Plus, these parks felt safe, well-maintained, and welcoming. In contrast, some came from countries where nature was more integrated with their daily lives and the concept of parks was less institutionalized. For example, one participant indicated that in their understanding of their home country, they did not have parks, nature was just there, everywhere. For these newcomers' urban nature was more familiar and felt like less of an escape than their visits outside the city to spend multiple days camping, hiking, and relaxing

in nature. This was not necessarily a values-based difference (one nature was not better than the other), but it was more of an observation, that while urban parks are important, so is the chance to decompress, power down, and enjoy the healing and restorative properties of a "more" natural immersive experience. In addition, the urban parks were seen as more of a social gathering place to connect with family and friends (share meals, celebrations, and leisure time). National and provincial parks provided more of a connection to "Canadian" experiences, immersive nature, and the chance to really participate in nature-based recreation. Jalila spoke of how hiking in (an urban park) was nice but not the same *"Because the hiking place is so important, we need somewhere quiet and beautiful, but in the city or on the streets all the people are around, I am so much more relaxed in […National Park]".*

The constraints to visiting nature outside the city are therefore more pronounced, as the distance required to travel is greater, the time commitment is more significant, the costs increased, and more advanced knowledge, information, and skills are required. Ashur explained how he did not know about national parks when he first arrived (from Syria), he did not know you needed to pay, book campsites in advance, drive far, etc. This required a whole new commitment and knowledge base that took him years to acquire. However, for him, it was worth it.

> *Camping is like I don't even know, it felt really good the first time. Like, I was disconnected (from technology, stress, and city life), and able to live in the moment and connect with nature. This is what you get from being in [….National Park] and it is one of the best things.*

For Ashur, while he was able to connect with settlement service agencies, local community groups, friends, and relatives who had been in Canada before him, he found that many supports

were not directly providing some of the necessary information or resources. For example, the federal government partners with a national non-profit organization, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship on the program Canoo (formally the Cultural Access Pass) which provides New Immigrants (and permanent residents) free access to national parks for one year (among many other benefits) (Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 2023). However, he noted that this only becomes available after you receive citizenship and at the time of our conversation was not open to permanent residence[5].

Overwhelmingly, those who participated in a program or experience supported by a settlement service provider or park agency spoke of the need for more support, more programs, and continued opportunities to visit these parks. Luz spoke forcefully of this value:

> *It (the camping program in a provincial park) is very helpful for newcomers, because newcomers can't find community (at first), this is the reason when I first came, I was sad, I lost my friends and I can't find anyone to speak with. But, after the park, I meet new people and now I really know them. It feels good to have a community now.*

Similarly, Mahnaz described the tranquility and sense of accomplishment she felt while hiking to a waterfall in [….National Park] *"It was my first experience seeing a waterfall, and very close to me. It was amazing… so very special."* Again, these experiences were in some ways more meaningful, profound, and empowering for newcomers than the "daily" (or more frequent) doses of nature received in urban parks (although urban nature was still viewed as incredibly important).

[5] In late 2022 access to the Canoo App was made more widely available. This increase in eligibility will likely have a notable impact on newcomers' abilities to learn about and access national parks (information and supports to visit provincial parks are also included on the app).

The notion that one facilitated experience is "enough" does not begin to address the larger more systemic barriers felt by newcomers. Grace (who immigrated as a native English speaker from Jamaica) still found the experience of finding meaningful employment, housing, and time for leisure incredibly challenging. Not to mention the lack of community, or knowledge of the Canadian parks system. While no one faulted the settlement service agency for this (in fact the organizations and leaders were praised over and over), the reality is that funding is limited, and the increasing numbers of newcomers means that budgets are stretched even thinner. It begs the question of what role parks (national and provincial) can and must play to better support these experiences. Additionally, while all participants in this study spoke of the value of nature, how important and significant their visits to parks were, and the importance of building community through nature-based recreation, there was also a reality of priorities. Being a new immigrant requires one to effectively start over and when faced with meeting basic requirements (needs) such as food, shelter, employment, security, and education visiting parks (especially more remote or distant parks) is not always a priority (or an option). Jiali is a mother, working full time, going to school to earn her master's degree in the evening, and establishing a new life in a new country. She described how she prioritizes nature experiences for her son and wants to create meaningful opportunities for herself to visit parks but rarely has the time or the capacity to do so. Jiali stated:

> *" It is not easy for immigrants when they come here. Especially for professionals. I was a teacher back home in China and now I need a new degree…I am working on a second master's degree in education and working a full time job. That it why it is so busy. I never seem to have time to get outside, but I make time to get my kids outside,"*

She values nature, supports conservation efforts, and experiences the joy and healing properties of nature-based recreation. But, for her, and for so many other newcomers, their lived experiences of visiting parks are layered with the complexities of everyday life.

Discussion

Despite the multitude of challenges New Canadians experience, the participants in this study were able to benefit from visiting parks. Newcomers' recounts of their experiences in national and provincial parks suggested that visiting nature in Canada facilitated the development of a sense of belonging and sense of place. Parks drew strong emotional responses from participants that reminded them of their home countries, which led to feeling more at home and welcomed in Canada. The connection to back home and culture is reflected in similar studies and recent work from Ono et al. (2023) who interviewed New Immigrants to Canada visiting parks in the Vancouver area. They found that outdoor experiences represented an opportunity to recreate and/or maintain their traditions and routines. These activities also evoked a strong sense of nostalgia but helped people feel connected to cherished people, places, and traditions from their home countries (Ono et al., 2023). Participants in this study echoed these feelings but included landscapes and geographies in their understanding of nature and how a sense of place can be concurrently held in two distinct spaces, something that is perhaps unique to migrants. These multiple realities were challenging at times, but nature also held space for newcomers to process these emotions. Helping to support health and well-being outcomes, which is well documented in the literature (Nisbet et al., 2020; Romagosa et al., 2015; Zelenski & Nisbet, 2014

Visiting parks resulted in positive memories, and after reflecting on the experience, some newcomers felt a strong desire to return (to parks). They described Canadian parks they had

visited as special, important places they hold sacred. This sense of attachment and feeling of being in place in nature has been described by other researchers and felt by new migrants across the world. Bryne (2012) interviewed Latinos living in Los Angeles to better understand barriers to visiting parks and found many participants described the vastness of nature in their home country (Mexico) and how important parks were for people. They felt a sense of being themselves in nature, suggesting they would not be able to live without mountains as they are a place to forget about your problems and just breathe.

The ability to feel "Canadian" and a sense of belonging in nature was also enhanced or facilitated through visiting national and provincial parks. As Hurly and Walker (2019) and Risbeth and Finney (2006) revealed in their work, engaging in new activities associated with the host country's culture is one way that migrants acculturate and familiarize themselves with their new home and community. Engaging in nature-based recreation associated with Canada represented a way that participants were connecting with Canadian culture and recreational behaviours. However, the location and geography (landscapes) appeared to influence newcomers as well, stating that visiting national parks helped them learn more about Canada and noting how camping and hiking felt distinctly Canadian, different than the urban park experiences participants described. This geographic sense of place is central to the nationhood of Canada (Kaufmann & Zimmer 1998). Canada prides itself on being multicultural and encouraging ethnic groups and newcomers to maintain and develop themselves as distinctive groups within society; however, within this policy intergroup contact and sharing of culture is also paramount (Berry & Kalin, 2000; Government of Canada, 2023). Thus, the parks and nature-based recreation that has become intertwined with "Canadian" identity and one such element of culture sharing. This research supports much of the work park agencies such as Parks Canada are doing with programs

like “Learn to Camp”. In 2016, the federal government mandated an expansion of the Learn to Camp program to reduce barriers, create connections with nature, foster a sense of connection, and increase park visitation (Parks Canada, 2016). Within this program, the target markets include families with children, urban Canadians, New Canadians, and low-and middle-income families. Over time the program has evolved, and while it is reaching more than 100,000 people per year, nationally, these programs have shifted from multi-day overnight trips to a combination of online, event-based, day trips, and some camping. Given the significant benefits participants described from visiting national and provincial parks and the ability of these visits to foster belonging and attachment to these natural places, there is evidence to continue and even enhance these efforts.

Socializing, building community, and using nature to connect over shared experiences was incredibly important for participants. Similar findings have been found across Canada and throughout Europe (Charles-Rodreiguez et al., 2022; Hordyk et al., 2015; Kloek et al., 2013; Rishbeth & Finney, 2006; Stodolska et al., 2017; Ono et al., 2023). Parks and natural areas are experienced as safe, and welcoming (by some, not all) and valued for their ability to facilitate family time, celebrations, and cultural traditions. The relational dimension was especially important for spending time with other newcomers. Recreation and leisure (in other contexts, such as sporting events, festivals, and celebrating cultural events) has been shown to have an influence on strengthening bonds between people both within and outside their ethnic enclaves (Stodolska, 2015). Typically research highlights how recreation can support cultural integration and adaptation through facilitating relationships with members of the host society (Tirone & Goodberry, 2011). This pattern is positive, but there is a gap in our understanding of the significance of immersive leisure experiences such as the overnight camping trips to national and

provincial parks with other newcomers. As the participants in this study shared, no amount of empathy is equal to a shared lived experience. Nature-based recreation programs should seek to facilitate both inter and within-cultural encounters.

For participants in this study, having the chance to visit parks and participate in what was for the most part a completely new and immersive experience (camping, backcountry hiking, even being on their own without family for the first time) was monumental. Research focused on the transformative properties of nature has found similar results (although not specific to newcomers). In a systematic review, including 84 studies on immersive nature experiences on children and youth, Mygind et al. (2019) found that more in-depth experiences that focus on closeness to nature, outdoor recreation, and adventure had a significant positive effect on mental well-being, improved self-esteem, self-efficacy, and resiliency. This finding is in line with Hurly and Walker's study (2019), which documented the experiences of refugees winter camping in Alberta, Canada. The newcomer participants remarked on the pleasure of being away from the city in a pristine natural environment (Mygind et al., 2019). However, the dominant narrative is that newcomers tend to visit less remote and more urban or peri-urban parks and that they visit parks less (broadly defined) frequently than their non-foreign born counterparts (Jay & Schraml, 2014; Johnson-Gaither, 2014; Kloek et al., 2015; Ono et al, 2023). For the participants in this study, their visits to urban parks were also more frequent (than their visits to provincial and national parks) but in some cases less meaningful, and there was a strong desire to return to or increase visitation to more remote, larger, and more "natural" settings. This finding has important implications for policy, decision-makers, and park agencies looking at enhancing diversity and increasing visitation for non-traditional park users. Newcomers in this study and previous research, are seeking these experiences and have self-reported the immense benefits

derived from them, and yet due to systemic and seemingly unavoidable constraints, are not able to satisfy these needs (Lee, 2023; Lovelock et al., 2011)

Sense of place and nature relatedness have both been found to correlate with stewardship actions and foster an engaged population who values protecting the natural environment (Gosling & Williams, 2010; Halpenny, 2010; Martin et al., 2020; Nisbet et al., 2009). Participants in this study appear connected to nature and hold identities in line with the concept of nature relatedness. This finding supports the earlier work of Lovelock et al. (2013) who found no statistical differences in the environmental worldviews of immigrants and native-born New Zealanders, as both groups held somewhat high eccentric worldviews. Participants did not suggest their worldviews or nature-relatedness shifted as a result of moving to Canada, but they did highlight how important nature was to them as newcomers. The tremendous value nature held for people following a stressful and intensely emotional journey of leaving their homes led newcomers to articulate their support for conservation, protection of nature, and the overall importance of parks.

Conclusion and future recommendations

In sum, the findings of this work support the notion that parks are essential places for newcomers to form bonds with their new host country through landscapes, shared experiences, and a connection to their home countries. New Canadians felt that nature-based recreation and visiting parks is core to the Canadian identity, and their eagerness to learn more about Canada and feel more connected was reinforced through these experiences. The healing and restorative properties of nature were evident across all participants, regardless of their country of origin or their specific park experiences. However, there was, for some, a clear distinction between the

wellness derived from visiting urban parks compared to more remote, immersive nature that they perceived national and provincial parks to afford.

Much of the research in the field of leisure scholarship has promoted the narrative that newcomers are drawn more to urban or peri-urban environments. Though the data might support this, from a frequency perspective this research proposes that systemic and inter/intrapersonal constraints many be fueling this outcome, as opposed to newcomer choice and preference. Furthermore, this same narrative should be interrogated to ensure the holistic newcomer perspective is included. For many newcomers in this study, especially those who were in Canada for less than 2 years, the complexities of establishing a new life challenges priorities and may impact their leisure choices. Finally, the work of facilitators such as settlement service agencies and parks programming specifically developed to welcome and support newcomers visiting parks on an ongoing or repeat basis, should be continued and enhanced.

Future research should seek to explore nuances in newcomer identity. This work was not able to make comparisons among group members (e.g., country or origin, immigration reason, gender differences, family status etc.). As mentioned earlier, newcomers are not a homogeneous group and this work does not reflect the experiences of all immigrants (Buijs et al., 2009; Gentin, 2011; Hurly & Walker, 2019). Many participants in this study had the support of facilitators such as settlement service agencies or the park agency had programming and resources dedicated to welcoming New Canadians. There is likely to be a significant number of Newcomers who do not experience national or provincial parks given the known significant constraints and the vast demands on their time as immigrants. Settlement services agencies and park programs are limited in the number of New Canadians they can serve in a given year. Inevitably there are folks who do not receive support or those who just simply won't benefit from the outreach programs.

Finally, participants in this study did not discuss negative experiences in the parks. This is curious, as other studies have found quite different results. For example, Xiao et al., (2022) found that Black and Hispanic individuals (not necessarily New Immigrants but Racialized people) are almost 4 times as likely to report feeling unsafe in National Parks as White respondents.

There are also opportunities to investigate and evaluate programs delivered for and with newcomers. This study found many positive outcomes but did not probe deeply nor were we able to fully understand the design and delivery of the nature-based recreation programs. Finally, this work was led by a Caucasian, English speaking, Canadian female, who has worked in parks and visitor management for over a decade and holds very fond memories of parks. While I acknowledged my positionality and my active role as a researcher, I am also obligated to reflect on how my inherent biases may have influenced the conversations with participants and my analysis of their experiences. As one of the participants suggested, no one understands a newcomer, like a newcomer (Mahnaz, p.156). Participants may have been reluctant to share negative experiences or not had the words to describes their full range of emotions and experiences (as English was not their first language). There was very little discussion of negative park experiences, no mention of feelings of exclusion, and no critique of the Canadian park system (constraints to visitation were typically spoken of as outside of parks scope of influence). Future work should seek to create more diverse research teams and consider alternative research methods such as photovoice (Hurly & Walker, 2019), the use of dyads or focus groups (Lauckner et al., 2022) or more creative methods such as personal meaning maps (Bueddefeld, 2019)

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Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The goal of this dissertation was to gain a better understanding of how Canadian parks are experienced by New Immigrants and how the policies and park management practices of these parks influence those experiences. For these reasons, three unique studies were designed. Study one focused on how policies, programs, mandates, and management frameworks across Canadian park agencies are (or are not) supporting and possibly increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of park visitors (i.e. New Immigrants and Racialized Canadians). The second study sought to identify constraints to visiting parks, as well as to investigate how constraints are negotiated by ethnoculturally diverse park visitors (i.e. New Immigrants) and what influence motivations and nature relatedness have on individuals' likelihood to visit national parks in Canada. Finally, the third study examined how New Immigrants and ethnoculturally diverse park visitors perceive and experience Canadian national and provincial parks and how park experiences contributed (or did not) to a sense of place, sense of belonging, and nature relatedness in Canada (their new host country).

The results of the first study revealed the complexity of policies and programs intended to support visitor diversity, and even more layered is the relationship between park mandates to welcome all visitors while focusing on specific visitors (e.g. New Canadians or Racialized People). Through phase one of this study, park policies were analyzed across provincial and national parks and the main findings suggest that park management is values based and driven by organizational ethics. These values and ethics are in line with the notion that parks are for all Canadians, however, this reference to "all" implies both implicit and explicit notions of diversity and borders on problematic when systematic barriers are not recognized, and equity practices are not made paramount. Parks are using policy to shift practices and recognize the need for systems

to change to enhance and increase inclusion and diversity across parks, rather than focus on visitors learning and always adapting to the system. Both national and provincial parks systems are aware of the significance of collaboration and partnerships in achieving more inclusive and diverse communities of visitors. Finally, this phase of the study noted that parks are becoming more innovative and developing new programs to support more diverse visitors.

The second phase of this study focused on park staff and how those who work in parks have come to understand what diversity means and the level to which policies and park programs can support increasing the ethnocultural diversity of park visitors. Results highlighted the saliency of enhancing visitor diversity and simultaneously noted the multifaceted reality of the term. While staff are committed to creating inclusive and welcoming parks there is a combination of factors that support this work, and meaningful policy and government direction can be challenging. However, within national parks, there is a high level of support for this work and therefore substantial funding, though little direction. In opposition is the provincial reality where a meaningful policy was adopted in 2014 and through government transitions and evolutions, this policy is no longer as relevant. Ultimately, staff felt that policy is important and supports actions, funding, and direction to staff but should still allow for freedom and innovation. This innovation is essential in reimagining how park systems can be more inclusive, safe, and welcoming spaces for diverse park visitors. Finally, this complex and important work must be led in collaboration with diverse community members and staff who work in parks should reflect the diversity of the Canadian population. The efforts of parks to increase visitor diversity must be matched by their efforts to increase diversity from within as well.

Understanding what policies are shaping parks across Canada allows us to investigate where there are gaps in policy and what the value of policy might be (John, 2012). This research

explains how decision makers (those working within government) produce public actions that are intended to have an impact on citizens and the overall systems with which we live and operate within (John, 2012). While this research found gaps in specific policies related to increasing ethnocultural diversity in parks, in the absence of perspective or directive policy, Canadian Parks are leading with values and ethics that emphasize visitor diversity. Veal (2017) suggests that our current systems create policies for populations with little representation of those particular populations, park policies (when they exist) are largely reflective of this system. Guided by McCown (2013) and Khazaei et al. (2017), there are frameworks and recommendations for how parks can meaningfully engage with diverse citizens, organizations, and viewpoints to ensure that future policies, programs, and management direction is more collaborative and reflective of the needs to diverse Canadians.

Findings from the second study extend our knowledge of how New Canadians experience leisure constraints and the role of motivations and nature relatedness in their negotiations of those constraints. Guided by constraint negotiation theory (Crawford et al., 1991; Hubbard & Manell, 2001) the results supported several hypotheses and provided substantial evidence to conclude that the data supported nearly all aspects of the structural model (although not all hypotheses were supported). Similar to previous research (White, 2008, Chun et al., 2022; Mueller et al., 2019), higher levels of constraints were associated with less frequent park visitation ($\beta = -.362$, $p = .005$), negotiation strategies positively influenced park visitation ($\beta = .393$, $p = .01$), and motivations had a direct positive effect on negotiation strategies ($\beta = .225$, $p = .05$). Nature relatedness was added to the original constraint-effects-mitigation model of leisure constraints theory proposed by Hubbard and Mannell (2001) and was positively associated with both motivations ($\beta = .378$, $p < .000$) and negotiation strategies ($\beta = .201$, $p = .05$). However,

unexpectedly, it had a negative and non-significant effect on park visitation (β = -.207), which is inline with Mueller et al. (2019) who found similar results when they included the influence of social identity on constraints and negotiations of gravel cyclists. Bootstrapping procedures confirmed the significance of all indirect effects, with bias-corrected confidence intervals indicating non-zero values. Indirect effects were significant, with motivations and nature relatedness influencing park visitation through negotiations, and constraints influencing park visitation through negotiations as well. The total model explained 39% of the variation in New Canadian immigrants' visitation to national parks (R2 = .392).

These results provide insights into the complex relationships between constraints, negotiations, motivations, nature relatedness, and park visitation among New Canadian immigrants in the context of national parks. Constraints had a direct negative impact on park visitation, while negotiation strategies had a direct positive influence. Intrapersonal constraints, such as lack of time, skills, information, or confidence, emerged as the strongest correlates of leisure participation barriers, which is in line with many studies in the past two decades (White, 2008; Chun et al., 2022). However, contrary to the initial hypotheses, constraints negatively influenced negotiation strategies, suggesting that some constraints may be beyond individual negotiation abilities, necessitating structural and systemic support. This underscores the importance of addressing individual-level constraints through tailored programs and policies and working with Newcomers to develop park systems that are welcoming and accessible.

In environmental psychology, several studies have attempted to understand the relationships among motivation, leisure constraints, and negotiation strategies (Bizen & Ninomiya, 2022; Chun et al., 2022; Evans & Gagnon, 2019; Jackson et al., 1993; White, 2008). This study found that while motivations did not directly affect park visitation, they were

influencing visitation indirectly through negotiation strategies. This suggests that the relationship between motivations and park visitation was fully mediated by negotiation strategies. Consistent with previous studies (Bizen & Ninomiya, 2022; Lyu & Lee, 2016) testing the constraint-effects-mitigation model, these findings suggest that stronger motivations to visit parks can activate more willingness or more effective negotiation strategies. These motivations may, in part, be related to past experiences and influenced by the central role that nature plays in our lives, our characters, and our individual identities (Godbey et al., 2010; Hurly & Walker, 2019).

Extending Hubbard and Manell's constraints-effect mitigation model by incorporating nature relatedness, this research highlights the important role our connection to nature can have in motivating and activating negotiation strategies. However, according to Nisbet et al. (2009), we develop and strengthen our levels of nature relatedness through nature-based experiences, therefore functioning in a cyclical relationship. More time spent in nature enhances our nature relatedness, and higher levels of nature relatedness increases our motivations to visit nature and willingness to negotiate constraints to nature-based recreation. This is important for two distinct reasons, the first being that scholars suggest that nature relatedness influences human emotions and may explain why some people feel strongly and positively about nature, whereas others are unmoved, and subsequently unmotivated to spend time in nature or to protect it (Kals & Maes, 2004; Milton, 2002; Nisbet et al., 2009). Given the current climate crisis and risks to global biodiversity, it is essential that we enhance meaningful relationships with nature to foster stewardship behaviours (Dornhoff et al., 2019). The second reasons is that park policy and mandates to increase visitor diversity, creating programs and managing parks in such a manner that Newcomers feel welcome, safe, and included will increase park visitation and likely increase nature relatedness of park visitors.

Understanding constraints, specifically those faced by New Canadians, can support the reduction in constraints (through better park management, policy development, collaborations across sectors, etc.). This research also increases awareness of effective negotiation strategies, which can help in the development of programs that focus on those behaviours that have demonstrated success.

The final study highlights the lived experience of New Canadians visiting national and provincial parks, and how these experiences influence their nature relatedness, sense of place, and sense of belonging. Drawing on qualitative data collected from interviews with participants, the study revealed how visiting parks facilitates a sense of belonging and connection to both Canadian culture and participants' home countries. The emotional responses elicited by natural landscapes evoke nostalgia and enable a sense of place, while shared experiences in parks contribute to socialization and community-building among newcomers. Sense of place is especially relevant as research strongly suggests there is a connection between a deep sense of place and a willingness to protect that place, engagement in pro-environmental behaviours, and supporting nature relatedness (Buta et al, 2014; Halpenny, 2010).

Findings demonstrate the transformative potential of nature experiences for Newcomers, emphasizing the role of parks and nature-based recreation in promoting mental well-being and resilience. Furthermore, the study underscored the importance of nuanced exploration of newcomer experiences and the evaluation and enhancement of programs designed to support their access to parks and nature-based recreation. The main themes of this study included "Space (places) to be myself and space to find my (new)self," highlighting how parks provided opportunities for newcomers to connect with their identity and feel at home in a new country. "Building Community" illustrates how parks serve as spaces for community-building, fostering

connections among newcomers and with the broader Canadian society. The theme of "(missed) Connections to nature" explored the emotional and therapeutic aspects of nature experiences, acting as a healing force for mental health challenges faced by newcomers. This theme highlighted the dichotomy of being new to a place, where individuals seek to retain their cultural identity while embracing opportunities for self-reflection in the new environment. The fourth theme of "Nature near and far, understanding the perception of 'real' nature and the constraints to accessing nature" uncovered the challenges newcomers face in accessing nature, emphasizing the importance of support programs and community initiatives. Lastly, "Nature is like medicine" explored the healing and well-being aspects of nature-based recreation, revealing its significance in alleviating stress, anxiety, and depression commonly experienced during the immigration process.

While newcomers expressed a strong affinity for nature, the research underscores the systemic barriers limiting their access to more remote parks and overnight experiences (Bryne, 2012; Lovelock et al., 2011; Kloek et al., 2013; Floyd, 2001). The study advocates for increased support programs, emphasizing the role of parks in facilitating meaningful experiences for newcomers. However, it also acknowledged the complex realities newcomers face, where basic needs often take precedence over leisure activities. The findings highlighted the intricate interplay between nature experiences, community-building, and the broader challenges associated with immigration, calling for a more nuanced approach to integrating newcomers into the Canadian natural and cultural landscape.

Taken together, these three studies demonstrate the complexity of increasing ethnocultural visitor diversity in parks. Policy alone cannot make parks more inclusive; it cannot make parks more welcoming or make people feel safe. Similarly, park managers and staff cannot

change long-standing colonial systems without policy, mandates, and government support. The policy landscape of national and provincial parks, which, combined with staff dedication and vision is working towards meaningful systems level change in parks to foster ethnocultural diversity. Both the needs of visitors and park staff/management need to be considered in order to achieve this shift. Policy can help support and direct staff but must balance agility and avoid being prescriptive and limiting to staff. Parks should continue to foster a culture of innovation and work to establish (or continue supporting and growing existing) partnerships and relationships with diverse community members.

The work of park management and staff, supported by policy can and should be informed by the lived experiences of diverse Canadians. Specifically, our understanding of the constraints New Canadians experience and how they negotiate those constraints in visiting National parks enhances our ability to better plan, manage, and develop policies to reduce these barriers. This dissertation adds to our understanding of leisure constraints theory by firstly confirming support for Hubbard and Manell's (2001) constraints-effect mitigation model, with the exception of the hypothesized direct pathway from motivations to park visitation. However, similar to Son et al.'s (2008) dual channel pathway, this relationship was fully mediated by the role of negotiations. Similarly, Chun et al. (2022), also found no significant direct pathway from motivations to nature-based recreation participation pathway. Nevertheless, the role of motivations is highly influential and this study extends that significance (Bizen & Ninomiya, 2022; Chun et al., 2022; Evans & Gagnon, 2019; Jackson et al., 1993; White, 2008).

This research also extends our understanding of the psychological processes that influence leisure choices, specifically, the role of nature relatedness, which previously has been applied to relationships with happiness, pro-environmental behaviours, and concern for climate

change (Groulx et al., 2016; Obrey and Bangert, 2017; Zelenski & Nisbet, 2014). This is the first time nature relatedness has been applied to leisure constraints and negotiations. Given the similarity of nature relatedness to the concept of an ecological identity and our understanding of the interconnectedness between humans and the natural environment, it is useful to think about the potential effects on our leisure choices (in addition to the many other behaviours and outcomes influenced by nature relatedness) (Nisbet et al., 2009). The structural equation model in this research supported the hypothesis that our level of nature relatedness would positively influence leisure negotiation strategies and motivations to visit national parks. This is in line with Jun and Kyle (2011) and Mueller et al. (2019), who both found that identities can influence both motivations and leisure negotiations. Future leisure-constraint negotiations theory work should therefore seek to include relevant identity variables such as nature relatedness.

Given the significant role of motivations and nature relatedness in the structural model testing psychological factors that influence New Canadians' likelihood to visit national parks, it is imperative to achieve a deeper understanding of why people visit parks and what those experiences mean to Newcomers. The final study was guided by Relph's (1997) and Stokowski's (2002) concept of a sense of place. How we as people connect to the natural environment and our relationship with our surroundings are derived from our lived experiences in places and with the people who share and shape those experiences. The act of giving value to spaces creates meaningful places for which we have deep connections and care. We have a limited understanding of the role nature plays in shaping this sense of place in a new host country for Newcomers, and this work provides essential details on the value of nature-based recreation experiences in forming associations and emotional connections to Canada. Similarly, I was interested in how these same experience fosters a sense of belonging for Newcomers to Canada.

This is vital as belongingness is inextricably linked to well-being and flourishing in a new community (Berry & Hou, 2016). While leisure experiences of immigrants have been well documented as having beneficial outcomes supporting building community and increasing sense of belonging, there was a dearth of research in Canada focusing on immersive nature-based recreation and the role of nature in this relationship (Kim & Iwasaki, 2016; Lauckner et al., 2022; Suto, 2013).

Summary of Practical Implications

In terms of practice, findings reported in this dissertation revealed the influence of different factors on increasing ethnocultural diversity across Canada's parks. Parks have long been created and managed for a Eurocentric, white, masculine ideal. Kluane National Park Reserve demonstrates an example of exclusionary hunting practices and expropriations that were present in Cape Breton Highlands National Park provides further details on these exclusionary practices (Neufeld, 2011; Sandilands, 2011). Thorpe (2012), provides an example of how power dynamics and racism fuelled the creation of Ontario's wild lands and Temagami Lake into an area devoid of Indigenous culture and history and a landscape for western, masculine, bourgeois to reflect their own cultural values of wilderness.

While Canada has progressed over the past 150 years, the hegemonic patriarchal style of park management continues to influence its current practices. Parks are often cited as playgrounds for the [white] middle class (Meeker, 1973; Pease, 2011), and have been criticized for not reflecting the changing demographics of the country. Park managers and policy developers in Canada have begun to change this narrative through programming, outreach, creation of new (urban) parks, and other initiatives targeting diverse and non-traditional park visitors. However, as Wright and Matthews (2015) pointed out, there lacks a significant body of

empirical research to support park managers and policy developers on best practices for connecting non-traditional park visitors to nature and increasing ethnic and cultural diversity in Parks. This dissertation attempted to address these issues through theory guided and empirically tested studies. In conclusion, the following practical implications are suggested based on the findings of this dissertation.

Some politicians, park management, and staff are passionate and committed to increasing visitor diversity, however clear policy to ensure that this critical work is ongoing and embedded into the core functions of both national and provincial park systems is needed. This policy should be informed and led by diverse community members and committed to taking new actions and new systems that are reflective of the needs of diverse Canadians. Parks as a sector, have an opportunity to reimagine how people use parks and connect to nature. We should therefore respond by being innovative and leaders in this regard. Additionally, this research found that intrapersonal constraints including not having the time, skills, information, or confidence to visit parks, as well as the sense of feeling unwelcome were the most influential and common constraints New Canadians reported. These constraints are particularly interesting for park managers, recreation practitioners, and settlement services agencies as these organizations can design programs and policies to specifically address some of these challenges. While the programs have been well supported, policy is lagging behind. Perhaps this is what van Ewijk (2011) refers to as the epistemological trap of talking on different levels or mistaking diversity as a shorthand for diversity policy. When we refer to diversity so often and without clear definitions or guidelines, there is a risk of blurring the two. Therefore, park agencies must employ a sense of urgency in formalizing policies and defining diversity in clear and meaningful ways.

The programs, collaborations, and initiatives occurring in parks should continue to evolve and ensure more and more diverse voices in the planning and implementation of park activation and nature-based recreation planning. Highlighted in this dissertation was the amazing work of Parks Canada's Learn to Camp program. As other studies have shown (Bain et al., 2008; Hurly & Walker, 2019; Sullivan, 2015) programs that allow for deep and meaningful experiences or foster long-term connections are the most impactful. Not only do these opportunities support the ultimate goal of increasing visitor diversity, but they will also support and enhance the development of nature relatedness, sense of place, and foster a sense of belonging. The parks sector should work with community champions to ensure that these opportunities offer culture sharing between both immigrants and non-immigrants, as nature can be a place to learn from one another. As Suto (2013) and Ono et al. (2023) have noted, many Newcomers (and non-immigrant Canadians) postulate that nature-based recreation is inherently "Canadian". As such there is a keen interest in engaging in this "Canadian" leisure as a chance to become more Canadian (and enjoy learning about new and different forms of enjoyable recreation) (Hurly & Walker, 2019). Simultaneously, programs developed to welcome ethnoculturally diverse park visitors should also provide a space for Newcomers to bond with other immigrants who can relate to each other.

There should be a recognition of the heterogeneity of Newcomers' needs, interests, and desired nature-based experiences. Parks exist along a continuum, with different management goals and varying objectives, but important complementary goals of connecting people to nature (and protecting nature) (Canadian Parks Council, 2017). This continuum includes urban parks all the way to vast wilderness areas such as National Parks. Similarly, park experiences and park visitors exist along that same continuum. The parks sector must ensure that all types of parks are

included in the vision of welcoming more diverse visitors into these special places. This research highlighted the need to better understand how New Canadians are seeking immersive nature-based experiences and overnight camping trips and in some cases in addition to urban day-use areas such as urban parks or even national urban parks. There are also different ways Newcomers might want to use parks and our policies, programs, and park infrastructure must support these opportunities. These experiences and park infrastructure might include larger family gathering areas, more group camping, increased cultural programming such as music and food-based programming in parks, the use of multiple languages in programming, signage, etc.

All of this should be underscored with an introspective review of park employment diversity needs, policies, and actions. Current hiring policies may be limiting parks from making the necessary shifts in the system, or perhaps new approaches must be considered. As Santucci et al (2014) pointed out in the US National Parks Service, parks may be improving seasonal and front-line position diversity but still lack clear pathways from temporary positions into full-time or from front-line positions into more management level positions. There is additional guidance provided by the Canadian Parks Protected and Conserved Areas Leadership Collective (2023) in their recent Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization in Pan Canadian Parks and Protected Areas Research and Management Report.

Limitations and Future Research

There were some limitations to this dissertation research. First, this work attempted to balance the nuances and intricate relationships of both national and provincial parks. This was done for two reasons, the first being it provided a more robust analysis and insights into Canadian parks. The second was that visitors rarely know the minutia or the distinct differences between these two systems. As such, the more in line the two systems are as it relates to visitor

policy perhaps the more overall success both agencies would have. However, in practice, this approach might have highlighted more differences rather than similarities. Given the current political landscape, these differences may also be more pronounced (the Federal Mandate letter was in stark contrast to the provincial mandate letter). Additionally, including only one provincial park system may not have provided an accurate representation of provincial parks across Canada. Future research should seek to include a more robust contingent of participants, park agencies, and perspectives. Finally, given the nature of power dynamics related to New Canadians, Racialized Canadians, and government institutions, there are also opportunities for future research to investigate public policy documents with a more critical lens such as feminist theory or Foucauldian discourse analysis.

Within the leisure-constraint and negotiation structural modelling study, the relatively small sample size, and the use of only one national park (in a system of 49) limits the generalizability and reliability of the findings. Future work should seek to expand sample size, increase the number of study sites, and include multi-group comparisons based on ethnicity or country of origin as New Canadians are not a homogenous group and individuals from different countries or cultural backgrounds may experience leisure constraints and motivations to participate differently. Secondly, cross-sectional survey design is often cited as a flaw in social science research. A better understanding of true population parameters would be enhanced by looking at behaviours over time and with repeated measures. Next, there are opportunities to improve constraint and negotiation variable measurements. Kyle and Jun (2015) have critiqued leisure researchers long held (mis)conception of leisure constraints measurement models as reflective. Reflective measures assume that causality or explanatory moves from the observed items to the latent variable, essentially each observed measure is a function of the same

underlying cause (Borsboom et al., 2004; Kyle & Jun 2015). However, they have proposed that leisure constraints are more appropriately understood as formative measures, in that each observation is the indicators that define the latent construct. This would mean that constraint indicators are not, in fact, all measuring the same underlying phenomenon and that items are not required to be correlated (as they are each measuring a distinct observation that is impacting the larger construct) (Kyle & Jun, 2015). The field has been slow to adopt this assumption, as there is still ongoing debate regarding the conceptualization and analyses of formative measures (Edwards, 2011). Kono et al. (2020) did provide partial support for formative indicators among two of the three subcategories of constraints (structural and interpersonal). Future research should look to consider this debate further. Finally, this research focuses on participants who were already in a national park, which in its very essence suggests they either experience fewer constraints to visitation, have higher levels of motivation, and or have successfully used negotiation strategies. Future work should include New Canadians who are both park visitors and those who do not or have not visited a national park.

Finally, the in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of New Canadians provided valuable insights, however, this work was not able to make comparisons among group members (e.g., country or origin, immigration reason, gender differences, family status etc.). This study found many positive outcomes but did not find negatives or harmful experiences, as have been described in previous research. Additionally, were we not able to fully understand the design and delivery of all the nature-based recreation programs participants attended due to some language barriers. The research was led by a Caucasian, English-speaking, Canadian female, who has worked in parks and visitor management for over a decade and holds very fond memories of parks and nature based expreinces. This may have influenced the research and the findings in

various ways. To begin with participants may not have felt as comfortable sharing negative experiences with a non-immigrant. Secondly, my own bias towards parks may have looked for more positives in the parts of participants lived experiences as I was shaping and connecting back to the whole story. There was very little discussion of negative park experiences, no mention of feelings of exclusion, and no critique of the Canadian park system (constraints to visitation were typically spoken of as outside of parks' scope of influence). Future work should seek to create more diverse research teams and consider alternative research methods such as photovoice (Hurly & Walker, 2019), the use of dyads or focus groups (Lauckner et al., 2022) or more creative methods such as personal meaning maps (Bueddefeld & Erickson, 2022).

Conclusion

The collective understanding this dissertation provided brings together political nuances of policy, theoretical advancement of psychological factors influencing leisure decisions to facilitate nature relatedness and foster stewardship, along with a deepening view of lived experiences of New Canadians visiting national and provincial parks. Combined, this work provided important insights to support more inclusive, welcoming, and safe parks across Canada that can welcome Newcomers and foster new generations of environmentally conscious citizens. Finally, this dissertation provided a solid foundation for future research and applied work aimed at creating a Canadian parks system that is more representative and relevant for all Canadians.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Interview Guide with Parks Staff

1. *Background info, how long have you been with the agency what's your specific role etc.*
    a. *Background in their career and education etc.*
2. *Can you tell me a bit about your favorite park? Why is it your favorite? What makes it special?*
3. *Could you describe what the term diversity means to you?*
    a. *Can you explain your background with ethnic communities (if any)? Personally, and professionally?*
    b. *Do you see diverse visitors in parks? How do you observe what is or isn't happening in parks?*
4. *What are the factors that make increasing diversity of visitors easy to achieve?*
5. *What are the factors that make increasing diversity of visitors challenging?*
6. *Within your agency how is diversity supported or not supported?*

Policy

7. *What policy documents do you have in your agency and in your department/role?*
8. *Can you describe how you use policy?*
9. *Tell me about how diversity is mentioned in policy documents within your agency?*
10. *In what ways do you think policy is helpful or not helpful?*
11. *In what ways could policy be enhanced in order to support diverse park visitors?*
12. *Could you describe programming that aims to increase visitor diversity?*
13. *Can you remember a time when you specifically wanted to increase diversity of visitors?*

14. *In what ways do you think programming could be enhanced to support diverse park visitors?*

15. *Is there was one thing you could do (with no restrictions) to increase diversity in parks, what would it be?*

Appendix II: Park Visitor Survey

Dear Park Visitor: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this University of Alberta, student research. This survey is being conducted by PhD Student Clara-Jane Blye, from the University of Alberta and is in no way associated with Parks Canada. **It will take you about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. By agreeing to complete this questionnaire, you are giving your consent for us to use the data you provide us.** Taking part in the study is voluntary; you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time during the surveying process. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. By completing the questionnaire, you are indicating that you understand the above information, and you are willing to share your information with the Principal Investigator (Clara-Jane Blye, PhD Student). If you have any questions or concerns about the research conducted please contact clarajan@ualberta.ca

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this study.

Please return the completed survey to surveyor.

1. Have you visited a National Park before?
    a. Yes
    b. No

2. We would like to know some information about your current visit to this park.
    a. How many nights are you staying in the park on this trip?
        i. _____ nights
        ii. I am just here for the day
    b. How many times have you been to this park before (if any)?
        i. _____ times
        ii. This is my first time
    c. How many times a year do you visit **this park**?
        i. _____ time
        ii. This is my first time
    d. How many times a year do you visit National Parks?
        i. Once or twice a year
        ii. Less than once a month
        iii. About once a month
        iv. About once week
        v. Almost daily
    e. Including yourself, how many people are in your current group?
        i. _____ adults

ii. _____ children

f. Which of the following best describes the type of group you are with?
   i. By myself
   ii. Family/friends
   iii. Organized group (scouts, summer camp, school group)
   iv. Commercial group (professionally guided)
   v. Other type of group: _____

3. **How important are the following reasons for your current visit to this park?**

	Not important at all	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Enjoy nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spend time with friends & family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gain a sense of self confidence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Have fun and relax	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience excitement and or adventure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Observe the scenic beauty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Quiet time and reflection	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Learn about nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Be with people who share my values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experience local culture and history	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. **How often do you do the following?**

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Neutral	Sometimes	Often	Always

Visit a National Park	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Visit a Provincial Park	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Visit a park in the city that I live in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volunteer with an organization that helps the environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Talk to others about environmental issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Look for information about the environment on TV, in print or on the internet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Donate money to a nature or conservation organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. **Listed below are constraints commonly associated with visiting parks. Based on your own experiences, indicate your agreement with the following statements**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I don't visit national parks because I don't have the time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't visit national parks because I am afraid of wildlife	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't visit national parks because I don't have the skills or physical ability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't visit national parks because I lack information about the park(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't visit national parks because I don't feel welcome	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't visit national parks because I am just not interested	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't visit national parks because my friends and family prefer other things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't visit national parks because the people I know live or work too far away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't visit national parks because I don't have friends/family/people to go with	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't visit national parks because admission fees are too high	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't visit national parks because I don't like being exposed to inclement weather (i.e extreme heat, rain, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't visit national parks because I do not have transportation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. **The following questions are about strategies and actions people commonly use to get around obstacles they face when trying to visit parks.**

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I Organize visits to parks with my friends and family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I bring other people to parks make me feel safer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to find people with similar interests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to visit parks with people who share a similar ethnic background with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I go to places in parks where I feel comfortable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to visit my favorite park when it is less crowded	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I go to parks that are closer to home	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to budget money so I can visit parks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I choose to visit parks that are less expensive to travel to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I set aside time for outdoor recreation activities in parks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I buy equipment necessary for visiting parks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I look for information about parks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to learn new activities to do in parks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. **Please Tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements related to negotiation barriers to visiting parks**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In the past, I have been successful at getting around the barriers to visiting parks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People I admire find ways around challenges they face when trying to visit parks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My family and friends encourage me to visit parks, even when there are obstacles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoy overcoming obstacles to visiting parks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Which of the following traditional sources of information do you use when planning to visit a National Park? (choose all that apply)
    a. Brochures
    b. Roadside displays/signs
    c. Family/friends/relatives
    d. Travel agent
    e. Travel Magazine
    f. Tourism publications
    g. Television or radio programs
    h. Newspaper
    i. Television or radio advertisements
    j. Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.)
    k. Parks Canada website
    l. Other websites (not Parks Canada)

9. **The following questions ask about how you connect with nature. For each of the following, please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Please respond as you really feel, rather than how you think "most people" feel.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My ideal vacation spot would be a remote, wilderness area	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I always think about how my actions affect the environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My connection to nature and the environment is a part of my spirituality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I take notice of wildlife wherever I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My relationship to nature is an important part of who I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel very connected to all living things and the earth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. Please tell us about your current park visit

How satisfied are you with your park experience on this visit (**please circle one number**)?
Very Dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Satisfied

11. This section will give us a better understanding of who took part in our study. Like all of the other answers, this information will be kept strictly confidential.
    a. In what year were you born? _____
    b. What gender do you most identify with? (**please circle one only**)
        i. Male
        ii. Female
        iii. Trans Male
        iv. Trans Female
        v. Non-Binary
        vi. Two Spirited
        vii. Other _____
        viii. prefer not to answer
    c. What is your postal code? _____

    d. Were you born in Canada?
        i. Yes
        ii. No
    e. If you were born outside of Canada, how long have lived in Canada for?
        i. 0-5 years
        ii. 5-10 years
        iii. 10-15 years
        iv. More than 15 years
    f. What Ethnicity or cultural group do most identify with?

        _____
    g. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (**please circle one only**)
        i. elementary school
        ii. high school
        iii. college diploma, apprenticeship
        iv. some university
        v. university bachelor degree
        vi. university graduate degree
    h. What was your total household income last year (before taxes)? (**please circle one only)**
        i. Under $50,000
        ii. $50,000-99,999
        iii. $100,000 to 149,999
        iv. more than $150,000
        v. I prefer not to answer

Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Appendix III: Interview Guide with New Canadians

Welcome and introductions (Hi my name is CJ Blye, thanks again for participating in my study part of my PhD research with the University of Alberta, a bit about me…)

1. *Where do you live?*
2. *Do you like (city)?*
    a. *Weather, city culture etc.*
3. *Tell me about yourself*
    a. *Family, hobbies, etc.*
4. *Can you tell me what country you immigrated to Canada from?*
    a. *Is this where you were born? Where did you spend most of your life prior to immigrating to Canada?*
5. *When you think of Canada what comes to mind?*
6. *Can you tell me a bit about your time spent in parks?*
    a. *What parks did you visit before immigrating to Canada?*
    b. *What do you remember about those parks? What did you do in those parks?*
    c. *What parks have you visited in Canada?*
    d. *Why?*
7. *Describe a place in your home country that you felt connected to, how is that place similar or different from a place you feel connected to in Canada?*
8. *How would you describe your experiences in Canadian Parks?*
9. *Can you explain how you visit parks (what do you like do when you visit parks)?*
    a. *Who do you visit parks with?*
10. *When you spend time outdoors in nature, what helps to make one such outing or recreational time better than another?*

11. *What are some of the things you enjoyed most from park programs? Were there some parts that weren't so enjoyable?*
12. *Are parks in Canada places that you enjoy visiting? What makes a park more enjoyable to visit? What makes a park less enjoyable to visit?*
13. *What makes parks places you want or don't want to visit?*
14. *How are parks related to being in Canada?*
    a. *What has your time in Canada been like? Do parks make it better or worse? How so?*
15. *Is there anything else you would like to share with me?*
    a. *What interested you about my study?*