

**Refuge and Life Overseas: Influences of Gender, Culture, and Migration on Parenting
Practices of African Refugees in Canada**

by

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Abstract

Parenting is a socially and culturally constructed role and experience. Parenting practices vary across and within communities yet most of what we know about parenting in the literature stems from Western worldviews on what ideal parenting and child-rearing looks like in practice. Taking a postcolonial feminist approach, this study helps to diversify the literature by presenting the perspectives of 11 parents with traditional and postcolonial African worldviews who have migrated to Canada. With the purpose of examining gender-based parenting practices of African refugees in Alberta, Canada, this study drew upon existing interviews from a larger study focused on gender relations in African immigrant families. The study used interpretative phenomenological analysis informed by three theoretical frameworks (transnationalism, postcolonial feminism, and intersectionality) to generate three themes and nine subthemes. These findings reveal old, new, and bifocal ways African refugees practice parenting in a post-migration context as well as the impacts of structural forces on their practices. Key among the complicating factors described involve a lack of community-focused and culturally-informed social supports for adjusting to new gender roles and relations in cultural traditions, family life, and parenting challenges typical in their post-migration experiences. Implications for childcare, community, and workplace supports to help African refugees successfully manage the higher risk of facing a host of interpersonal, systemic, and structural barriers when they arrive in Western host countries like Canada are discussed. Studies on gender roles and relations in parenting practices for African refugee parents are rare and this study provides much-needed insights that can be further explored.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Eki Okungbowa. No part of this thesis has been previously published. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “Gender Relations Within Parenting Practices Amongst African Refugee Families”, No. Pro00104047, September 16, 2020.

Dedication

For my brother and grandmother.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without my superb support system. My family, friends, mentors, supervisors, and defense committee – thank you. You share in the success of this thesis and I am indebted to you all. Many thanks to the African refugees whose voices are reflected in this study on behalf of their community – this thesis is for you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis study is about African refugee parents residing in Alberta, Canada and their gendered experiences in parenting. I was also interested in examining how culture and migration may influence their gendered parenting experiences. The purpose of this introductory chapter is to set the stage for the remainder of this document. I provide background information about my research including guiding definitions of phenomena central to this study and key concepts. I begin by orienting the reader to my usage of the terms Africa and African throughout this thesis followed by an introduction to the main phenomena in this study: parenting practices and cross-cultural parenting. I then introduce the reader to common experiences shared by refugee parents in broad terms, followed by a narrative describing why the study at hand was undertaken specifically involving refugee parents from Africa. Next, I introduce the concepts of gender relations and roles, followed by why a gender lens was applied to understanding parenting experiences of African refugees. At the end of this chapter, I share the study purpose, objectives, and research questions of the current study.

A Note on the Usage of “Africa” and “African” in the Current Study

The parenting experiences of refugees from Sub-Saharan African countries are at the centre of this thesis. Throughout this thesis, you will notice that I use the terms Africa and African. As an African descendant person of Nigerian ancestry and heritage, I use these terms with a high degree of awareness of the intricacies packed within these terms that I argue, continuously need to be unpacked as the world learns more and more about people from continental Africa and members of the African diaspora. For the purposes of this thesis, I use the terms Africa and African from a pan-African emancipatory stance and as a community member and insider.

Africa is a continent comprised of many countries like the rest of the world geographically defined by borders. Yet far too often, Africa is spoken about or referred to in everyday conversation as if it is a country. In parallel, it is habitual for community outsiders to refer to someone from Africa as “African” rather than by their country, nation, or ethnicity; a respect and privilege offered to non-African people without conscious thought. A remnant of imperialism and colonialism in contemporary times is the use of the terms Africa and African in oblivious and homogenizing ways, consciously and subconsciously at interpersonal and structural levels.

In my conversations about Africa, one of my pleas is for people to refrain from using the terms Africa and African as rash default descriptors. Instead, I encourage one to put some thought behind how they refer to someone from Africa by referring to the person by their country and ethnicity, like in my case, Nigeria and Nigerian respectively. For the purposes of this thesis, I use Africa and African to reflect in my findings of this study commonalities in values, morals, teachings, solidarity in migration adversities, and collective resilience shared by the participants in my study. This approach to my usage of these terms is informed by my pan-African worldview and my experience in the community where these terms are sometimes used in conversation by community members from different African countries as a way to feel a sense of unity and preserve our collectivist values in a foreign, individualistic society. Countries of origin for each participant in my study can be found in the demographic table on page 78, and at times I make reference to specific African countries when needed for emphasis.

I am attuned to our differences yet I am inspired by the many things that brings us together. In my study, I wanted to connect the experiences of the participants more closely and to draw attention to cultural similarities. In my experience, the more regional we get with Africa,

the more commonalities can be found. For instance, Sub-Saharan Africans share more similarities with each other than with those north of the Sahara. When thinking about regions in terms of cardinal directions like West Africa for example, it is common to notice cultural patterns among people from West African countries like Nigeria and Ghana. Nonetheless, diverse cultures, customs, languages, religions, ethnicities, socioeconomic backgrounds, histories, systems, among other ways of life are found within the African continent and it is important to always bear this in mind.

Defining Parenting and Parenting Practices for the Current Study

Parenting can be defined as a set of behaviours and values used by caregivers to support children's physical and psychological development (Kgomo, 1996). Parenting is a role and an existential experience. Expectations of parents are socially constructed, culturally-bound, context-based, and vary regionally (Ambert, 1994). Parenting plays a crucial role in the development, socialization, and outcomes of a child, and it is shaped by individually harboured views and societal expectations (Amato & Fowler, 2002; Ambert, 1994; Bornstein & Cheah, 2006). In parenting, caregivers are tasked with translating subconscious and conscious thoughts into action, developing relationships with their children, and ensuring their children are healthy in the physical and psychological senses (Rubin & Chung, 2006). Parenting is bidirectional, meaning that not only do parents influence their children, but children also influence the ways in which parents practice parenting (Kuczynski & Lollis, 2003; Trommsdorff, 2006).

Parenting remains highly gendered in many societies across the globe that continue to operate based on patriarchal ideologies that underlie and influence social organizing, systems, and institutions. The gendered nature of parenting in such circumstances has the greatest impacts on women. This is due to socially constructed expectations directed by patriarchal worldviews of

women and mothers in parenting. Women are perceived to have an innate ability for parenting and parenting practices such as nurturing children and providing care (Rothman, 2007; Rich, 1979). Women are assumed to be naturally fit to handle work related to parenting such as domestic tasks with little to no support (Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Blair-Loy et al., 2015; O'Reilly, 2004).

Taking a look at Western societies, there is a general assumption that there are two parents (a mother and a father) biologically related to their child or children, and that parents within a nuclear family structure, particularly mothers, will assume parenting responsibilities over their children (O'Reilly, 2004; Ambert, 1994; Bornstein & Cheah, 2006). This is the prototype for family organizing and parenting from a Western point of view (Keller, 2014). In many non-Western collectivist cultures, like the African cultures studied in this thesis, parenting involves more than just the biological mother and father of a child. In these cultures, an array of trusted members within the community assume parental responsibilities for children (e.g., Morelli & Tronick, 1991; Weisner & Gallimore, 1977; Tronick et al., 1985). All in all, this is to say that different approaches, beliefs, and cultural understandings are examples of factors that influence how parenting is practiced within and across communities.

Parenting practices are situation-based actions that occur on a day-to-day basis and have direct impacts on the outcomes of children. The impacts that result from parenting practices can be beneficial or harmful for the physical, psychosocial, and emotional well-being of children (Amato & Fowler, 2002; Lee et al., 2006). Parenting practices are one of many aspects of the multifaceted role and experience of parenting. Parenting practices are important to study because of their direct impact on the lives of children and adolescents, and their ability to yield positive or negative developmental outcomes (Amato & Fowler, 2002). Across cultures, good parenting

is understood as a contributor to a child's successful development and social functioning according to their abilities (Trommsdorff, 2006). Studying parenting practices helps us to build an understanding of practices that are beneficial to those who are parented as well as practices that could be modified to lead to better outcomes. Children make up the next adult generation in our global society, thus the quality of parenting practices is not only important at the familial level but for society as a whole.

Examples of parenting practices include nurturing, discipline, setting expectations for children, conversing and interacting with their children, cognitively stimulating children, and providing basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter (Lee et al., 2006; Bornstein & Cheah, 2006). The ways in which parenting is practiced varies across time, cultures, class, race, and other constructs (Ambert, 1994). Thoughts and beliefs about raising children as well as how parents interact with their children to fulfill parenting goals are culturally-regulated. For example, traits of obedience and discipline in children are examples of goals carried by some Chinese parents, while parents born and raised in Western cultures tend to be accustomed to parenting practices that value the development of traits such as freedom and independence in children from a young age (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006; Stevenson et al., 1992; Stevenson & Zusho, 2002).

I chose to study parenting practices rather than another facet of parenting such as parenting styles because parenting practices "have different 'meanings' to different cultural groups" (p. 383) (Stewart & Bond, 2002). Parenting typologies like parenting styles have been defined based on research mainly involving White, middle class, Western families, especially in the United States and Europe (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006; Ambert, 1994; Ochocka & Janzen, 2008). My study involved African refugee parents so it was more appropriate to study parenting

practices as they are culturally understood by them, as opposed to try and contain and categorize their experiences within the confines of Western theoretical typologies that are not always easily transferable or suitable to non-White families. It was important for me to hear the experiences directly from parents. Thus, studying parenting practices was a broad enough construct to understand their experiences. This broadness was also important for the fact that parents in my study are refugees. As refugees, transient experiences that come with escaping sociopolitical circumstances that threaten their livelihood, coping with trauma, seeking refuge, and migrating are all contributors to the changes they experience in their lives, and these changes inevitably reflect in their parenting practices.

In order to investigate the phenomenon of parenting practices in different groups such as African refugees, a culture-specific analysis of what parenting practices mean, their associated qualities, and their effects is essential. In the next section, I discuss parental ethnotheories and how they can be used to reveal cultural meanings of parenting practices.

Importance of Culture and Parental Ethnotheories in Parenting Practices

Studying culture and parenting as interdependent constructs is an important one. From a research perspective, exploring how parenting is practiced in different cultures allows researchers to critique and expand the dominant discourses on parenting we currently have. For example, in the field of psychology for which the current study is situated, research on what parenting means and what parenting practices are the norm in different cultures helps to diversify psychological constructs such as parenting which are usually Western-based.

Although there are several definitions for culture, one comprehensive definition I turned to and used for this study is the following by Matsumoto (2000):

Dynamic system of rules, explicit and implicit, established by groups in order to ensure their survival, involving attitudes, values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors, shared by a group, harbored differently by each specific unit within the group, communicated across generations, relatively stable but with the potential to change across time. (p. 24)

Given that parenting and culture are both socially constructed and are given meaning based on belief systems, it comes to no surprise that, as Bornstein and Cheah (2006) highlighted, “all aspects of parenting children are informed by culture” (p. 7). Thus, studying how culture influences parenting is warranted and needed in order to better understand how people who belong to different cultures make sense of parenting and what parenting means based on their cultural belief system. In a cross-cultural study by Cole and Tamang (1998), it was found that culture influences parental beliefs which in turn influences parenting practices and children’s behaviour. Studying parenting practices can also reveal how culture is passed on from one generation to the next. Parenting plays a role in the continuity of culture, where cultural knowledge is passed on and becomes generational through parenting (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006). A way to go about an exploration of the interconnectedness of culture and parenting is by studying parental ethnotheories. Parental ethnotheories are cultural belief systems held by parents that shape and inform their parenting practices and views about their children, family, and themselves (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006). Parental ethnotheories vary because differences in ideologies about parenting translate to different practices (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006).

Since parental ethnotheories comprise the views, beliefs, and cultural customs of parents, it is important to understand how a parent’s parental ethnotheory translates in their parenting practices. As Bornstein and Cheah (2006) put it, “understanding an activity and its meaning often depends on examining that activity in the context of culture” (p. 10). Thus, an aim of my study

was to learn how the views, beliefs, and cultural customs influenced the parenting practices of African refugees. Further I used a cross-cultural approach to understand their experiences as refugees. Cross-cultural studies inquire into and provide insight on similarities and differences found among cultures (Bornstein, 1980; van der Vijver & Leung, 1997). As Bornstein and Cheah (2006) articulated: “the cross-cultural perspective provides social-scientific analysis with unique and extraordinary power to unravel meaning and the association of meaning with action” (p. 10). Grounded in the context of migration, the way I employed a cross-cultural lens in my study was to compare the cultural norms refugees in my study were accustomed to pre-migration, to cultural expectations and new ways of living that they grappled with post-migration in a Western culture. This is significant because cultures can change across time and space depending on social, historical, and environmental factors. Thus, studying how cultures can be maintained or changed in a different geographical context due to migration and refugee status was an aim of my study. I speak to common transient parenting experiences refugee parents have in the next section.

Common Parenting Experiences Shared by Refugee Parents

In extreme and unpredictable situations caused by incessant environmental and sociopolitical events like natural disasters, civil wars, and famine, parenting is affected and transformed, and parents and families faced with such circumstances are forced to adapt to these situations (Ambert, 1994; Garbarino et al., 1992; Garbarino et al., 1991). Refugees are people who flee dire circumstances in their homelands including the ones mentioned above, and others that threaten their human rights. According to the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is a person who:

...owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (p. 14)

Refugees seek protection and the liberty to live free from fear and prosecution as they seek refuge and establish a new life away from their homelands. In doing so, refugees experience social, cultural, and economic barriers while migrating and settling into countries they flee to, and many barriers impact refugee parents in their ability to effectively parent as they know it (Stewart et al., 2015a; Ambert, 1994; Hyman et al. 2004; Kgomo, 1996).

For parents who relocate to a new country, two major adaptation challenges from which other issues stem are (1) providing stability for their family, while (2) stabilizing in a new environment themselves (Ochocka & Janzen, 2008; Levine, 1980). Refugees are a subpopulation of migrants who are typically viewed as being at higher risk for adaptation challenges compared to other migrant groups due to the forced, involuntary nature of their migration, pre-migration trauma, and higher incidents of post-migration daily stressors linked to the social determinants of health and mental health (Fenta et al., 2004; Matheson et al., 2008; Simich et al., 2010; Stewart et al., 2015a). These factors add a layer of complexity in resettlement experiences including those presented in parenting. Refugee parents who resettle in Western countries experience unique challenges in parenting relative to other immigrant and host country-born parents for reasons mentioned thus far and other reasons such as differences in culture and parental ethnotheories, and structural barriers related to their refugee status (Ambert, 1994; Stewart et al.,

2015a; Salami et al., 2020a; Stewart et al., 2008). For these reasons, I was compelled to centre my study on the experiences of refugee parents in a Canadian context. In the next section, I explain my rationale for focusing on refugees from African countries in my study.

Motivations for a Study Focused on African Refugee Parents

While there has been research on the impacts of refugee experiences on parenting (e.g., Deng & Marlowe, 2013), there is limited work to date on African refugee families in Canada. Research on parenting tends to be limited to Western philosophies and ideations of parenting, and the majority of research samples consist of Western, White, middle to upper class parents (Ambert, 1994; Van IJzendoorn et al., 2006; Rothbaum et al., 2000; Ochocka & Janzen, 2008). Studies that intentionally seek to investigate and better understand the parenting experiences of different ethnocultural groups within Western contexts are sparse. Thus, there is a need for more research that takes a cross-cultural approach to understanding the seldom studied parenting experiences of diverse groups, especially given that “cultures and individuals differ with respect to shared values and beliefs in regard to the role of the person in the family and society” (Trommsdorff, 2006, p. 156). With respect to this and to help fill the apparent gap in the literature, my study focused on the parenting experiences of refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa who have resettled in Alberta, Canada.

Sub-Saharan Africa can be geographically defined as countries in the four regions south of the Sahara desert: Central, East, West, and Southern Africa (University of Minnesota, 2016). For many years and over long periods of time, countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have grappled with political unrest, economic downfalls, and other far-reaching events that have impacted their people, causing some to flee from these countries as refugees (Simich et al., 2010; Abdulle, 2000). Immigrants and refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa experience numerous parenting

challenges in Western countries according to the limited research we have about this group. Barriers as a result of migration status, low socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, language, and cultural clashes are some of the root causes of difficulties in parenting practices of African immigrants and refugees (Salami et al., 2020a). For African refugees specifically, barriers are compounded due to forced migration and traumatic experiences before migrating, and their status as a refugee which tends to limit the rights and opportunities they receive in their destination country. Given their unique encounters with migration that leave them in precarious circumstances and more vulnerable than others upon arrival in a host country, I chose to focus on the experiences of African refugees. This focus will help illuminate and subsequently improve their migration and resettlement experiences that impact parenting and ultimately the lives of children made vulnerable as a result of the barriers brought by the refugee status of their parents.

My study drew upon existing data from a larger study focused on gender relations between African immigrant and refugee men and women in Alberta, Canada. More about the larger study from which the current study emerged from is described in the next chapter. My focus on African refugees in Alberta, Canada was possible because I was able to access data already available for this demographic of interest. By using existing data, I avoided any further burdens to this vulnerable population because they tend to be a group that is overly asked for research participation given their unique life experiences and underrepresentation in the literature. The origin study also afforded me the opportunity to carry out a critical analysis of gender in parenting because it investigated gender relations among African immigrants and refugees in several domains including parenting. I was interested in analyzing gender relations in parenting among African refugees because of the impacts patriarchy has on parenting in a postcolonial era, particularly on women and in sustaining gender inequality within and outside of

the home (O'Reilly, 2004; Rich, 1979; Rothman, 2007; Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Johnson, 1988). In the next section, I elaborate further on the rationale for studying gender relations within parenting practices of the African refugees in this study.

Guiding Definitions of Gender Roles and Gender Relations

Gender is one of the most basic and universal units of social organization (Laslett & Brenner, 1989). It is socially constructed to make differences in biological sex socially significant (Fouon & Schiller, 2001; Laslett & Brenner, 1989; UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, 2017). Gender shapes and is shaped by culture, human interactions and relationships, historical contexts, institutions, and state interests (Fouon & Schiller, 2001; Laslett & Brenner, 1989). As much as the performance of gender occurs at an individual level (Butler, 1988), gendered ideologies embedded in institutions are in part responsible for the construction of gender. This structural power limits and encourages activities that reinforce dominant gendered ideologies thereby maintaining influence over how gender is embodied by individuals (Fouon & Schiller, 2001). The institutionalization of gender occurs in various ways and domains in societies across the globe (Laslett & Brenner, 1989). For example, gender is institutionalized in families (Laslett & Brenner, 1989). I argue that this site of the institutionalization of gender enables ideas of motherhood, fatherhood, expectations for children based on their gender, divisions of labour in the home, generational practices that are gendered in nature such as matrilineal and patrilineal lineage tracing, and how social systems outside of the home interact with families based on how families have organized themselves according to gender.

My sample consisted of men and women which allowed me to study the different views and experiences of these genders. The study of gender is vast, thus to guide my study of gender in the current study, I chose to examine two aspects of this construct that are typically observed

in parenting: (1) gender roles and (2) gender relations. The following are the definitions I used to guide my analysis of gender in my research:

Gender relations define how people should interact with others and how others relate to them, depending on their attributed gender, and they should be analyzed within the cultural context in which they develop. Gender roles are the form in which a person's gender identity is expressed. They are standards of behavior that the social group defines as appropriate for men and women, and they influence people's daily lives; they are the rules that tell them how they should feel, what to expect, what gestures are correct, how to dress, what they can aspire to, how to express themselves, and how to relate. From these definitions, the roles of women and men are described symbolically as expressions of femininity and masculinity, and they are regulated until they become rigid stereotypes that limit individual behavior and development. (Sánchez-López & Limiñana-Gras, 2017, p. 8)

I used these definitions to investigate how gender roles and relations impact parenting practices of African refugees. Keeping in mind that an imbalance in power and control gives way to gender inequality in gender roles in the family (Curry Rodríguez, 2014), I planned to analyze any evidence of gender-based power and control over resources (European Institute for Gender Equality, n.d.) in gender roles and relations of parents. My theoretical frameworks, which are described in Chapter 4, supported this critical analysis of gender. The following section explains why studying gender roles and relations in parenting practices of African refugees is an important area of study.

Placing a Focus on Gendered Experiences of African Refugee Parents

Migration is a gendered and familial experience and it is often a contributor to changes in gender relations that occur within immigrant and refugee families (Curry Rodriguez, 2014). Women, extended family influences, and the impacts migration has on families, including changes in gender roles and the division of labour within families, has increasingly become the subject of focus in migration research and analysis (Curry Rodriguez, 2014; Johnson & Stoll, 2008). With migration, gender divisions, hierarchies, and inequalities can be sustained or in other cases, reconstructed to result in “more equitable relations between men and women” (Fouron & Schiller, 2001, p. 540). Thus, a study of gender in migration can help identify ways in which gender inequalities or gender parity persist, and how they can be challenged or promoted respectively. In the methods chapter, I go into more detail about the gendered nature of migration in a description of my use of transnationalism as a theoretical framework for my study.

Past studies have revealed that gender roles in parenting and familial relationships change during and post migration (e.g., Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018). Yet studies that closely focus on gender-related challenges in parenting are lacking in mainstream research. This gap is more glaring when it comes to research involving immigrants and refugees. This gap is especially apparent for African immigrants and refugees, as it has been noticed that other ethnocultural groups from other parts of the world such as Asia are relatively better represented in the literature (Ambert, 1994). Researchers have called for more ethnocultural parenting research with a gender-based analysis and research concerning post-migration gender roles (Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2020; Salami et al., 2020b; Hyman et al., 2004). I believed a study like my own would be responsive to the need made known by scholars.

Bringing It All Together: Rationale for Current Data Reuse Study

In the previous sections of this chapter, I presented how the phenomena of this study was conceptualized to provide a theoretical foundation for the work. In this section, I outline the main purpose of the study and briefly introduce the methodological approach I used to fulfill the study purpose. I then outline the research questions and objectives for this study. I end this introduction chapter with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore what gender views and experiences African refugees in Alberta, Canada ascribe to their parenting practices and familial relationships using data from a larger parent study that investigated the gender-related challenges of African immigrant and refugee men and women in Canada. Among the social challenges studied in the origin study were those related to parenting, which was what I focused on in my study. I used interview transcripts for refugee parents and analyzed the data using a phenomenological method as a way to understand the parenting experiences of the participants in my study. Transnationalism, postcolonial feminism, and intersectionality were theoretical frameworks I used to guide my analysis.

Objectives

The first objective of my study was to examine how gender roles and relations influence parenting practices of African refugee parents by examining the role of gender more closely as it applies to: (a) parent-child interactions, (b) parent-to-parent interactions, and (c) extended family and family-community interactions within families. The second objective was to investigate if there are gender differences in how African refugee men and women access and navigate resources directly or indirectly related to parenting. The third and final objective of my study was

to examine the extent culture and migration influences gendered parenting practices of African refugees.

Research Questions

In line with my study purpose and objectives, my research questions are as follows:

1. What gender-related views and experiences are attributed by African refugee parents as influencing their parenting practices within their families?
2. How might gender influence the ways in which African refugee parents access and navigate resources and services that impact their parenting practices?
3. How might culture and migration influence gender-related views and experiences in parenting for African refugees?

Structure of the Thesis

In the second chapter of this thesis, I provide a description of the origin study used for my study as well as my background, interests, and experiences as a researcher in relation to the research. The third chapter contains a review of relevant literature for the study. In the fourth chapter, I describe the methodology and methods used to explore my research questions and analyze the data. The findings of my study intertwined with a discussion is found in the fifth chapter. The sixth and final chapter contains the conclusion and implications for future work.

Chapter 2: Study Context

This chapter provides an orientation to the origin study and researcher's background. In this chapter, I contextualize the secondary analysis to provide insight on the suitability of the origin study for the secondary analysis. To do this, I start with a description of how the origin study and secondary analysis are proximal and distant in content and methods. Next, I describe how the purpose and objectives of the origin study influenced the current study. Finally, I discuss positionality in the origin study and my background and interests in the current research.

Proximity and Distance Between the Origin Study and Secondary Analysis

I completed this study as part of my thesis-based master's program at the University of Alberta. This study served as my thesis which I was required to complete as part of my program requirements. My co-supervisor, Dr. Sophie Yohani, was one of the co-investigators for the origin study that my secondary analysis emerged from. The other leading co-investigators of the origin study, Dr. Philomina Okeke-Ihejirika and Dr. Bukola Salami, are faculty members and researchers at the University of Alberta. It was through Dr. Yohani that I obtained access to data from the origin study that I used for my study, which was a study focused on examining gendered ideologies of African refugees post-migration to Canada. Given that Dr. Yohani was a co-investigator for the origin study, she had access to the study data and was able to share a subset of data from the origin study that I was interested in using for my study, which was the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews conducted with African refugee men and women. Dr. Yohani also acted as a data custodian throughout the research process for my secondary analysis, as she facilitated de-identification of data, data transfer, explained the process for secure storage of data, and fielded any questions I had about the data when they arose. More

about the data transfer process, ethics, and protocols I followed to access the data are described in the methods chapter.

There are notable similarities and overlap between the origin study and the secondary analysis. Both studies share similar theoretical orientations, methodologies, and objectives. Transnationalism, postcolonial feminism, and intersectionality were the theoretical frameworks used in both studies, and more about how these theoretical frameworks were used in my study are described in the methods chapter. The participants used in my study were included in the origin study. Both African immigrants and refugees were included in the sample of the origin study, and I used data pertaining to participants who identified as refugees given the purpose and objectives of my study described in the previous chapter. The data I used from the origin study were from individual semi-structured interviews conducted with African refugees, and a summary of demographics for interviewees. In essence, my study was carved out of the origin study and my inquiry aligned with that of the origin study in terms of objectives, rationale, and goals.

As much as my secondary analysis was proximal to the origin study, as a researcher, I was considerably distant from the origin study given that I was not a part of the research team for the larger study. Throughout my study and to date, I have not seen any other data other than what I was given, and I have not read the research (i.e., analysis methods, findings, conclusions) of the original study. I had no role in the origin study, giving me some distance from the first project and this was arguably beneficial as this put me in a good position to exercise a fresh take on a subset of the data. Despite my distance from the larger study, I was able to easily access members of the core research team given that they are faculty members at the same post-secondary institution I completed this project under, and co-my supervisor and data custodian

Dr. Yohani facilitated the connection when needed. During my research process, I spoke to the origin study's principal investigator, Dr. Philomina Okeke-Ihejirika, to clarify questions I had about the origin study.

Influence of the Origin Study's Purpose and Objectives on the Current Study

The role of gender within African immigrant and refugee families is understudied yet crucial to the successful integration of them in host countries such as Canada. Recognizing this gap and need in the literature, the co-investigators of the origin study sought to better understand how gendered ideologies are maintained or change post-migration among African immigrants and refugees. The overall purpose of the origin study, titled *Understanding Gender Relations in African Immigrant Families: A Participatory Action Research (PAR)*, was to garner a comprehensive community-based understanding of gender relations within African immigrant and refugee families in Alberta, Canada using a participatory action research approach involving African immigrant men and women and other stakeholders including service providers and policymakers. Using the findings from this study, the co-investigators planned to create a framework that could be used to inform areas significant to African immigrants and refugees such as employment, parenting, and safety, with the ultimate vision of assisting in improving the quality of life for members of this group upon their arrival in Canada. The four main study objectives identified by the origin study's research team were as follows:

1. Understand how gender-related challenges within African immigrant and refugee families impact resettlement experiences of African immigrants and refugees in different facets of life such as building social networks, employment, parenting, and safety.
2. Development of a practical framework that can be used by service providers, policymakers, and informal support channels within their community (i.e., religious

leaders, elders) to address gender concerns within African families. Lived experiences and relevant theory informed the framework.

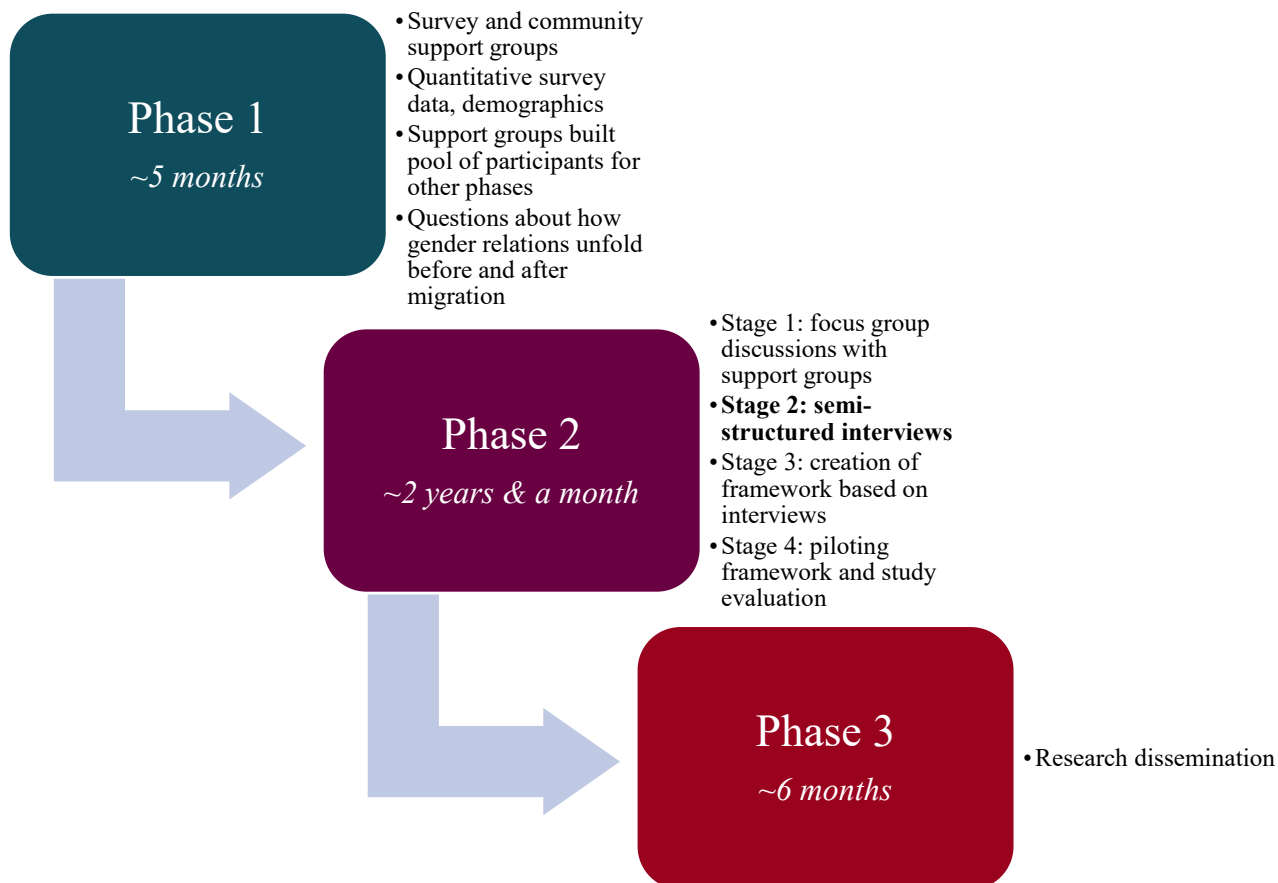
3. Pilot the framework to better comprehend gender relations within these families. The primary aim of the piloting stage was to examine how stakeholders could integrate the framework into programs, services, and educational materials with an overall aim of ameliorating gender-related challenges within these families.
4. Knowledge dissemination and mobilization of research findings.

The purpose for the secondary analysis was similar to the origin study, but the sample and method used to address the purpose of the secondary analysis was different from the origin study. In both studies, the purpose was to generate a better understanding of gendered experiences in African immigrant and refugee families who have resettled in Canada. The origin study included the experiences of both African immigrants and refugees, whereas my study focused solely on refugees. The origin study used qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) as the analysis method, while I used interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2007) in my study. My study meets the first objective of the origin study, and findings from my study could be used to inform the community-based framework developed in the origin study as described in objectives two through four. Overall, my study was influenced by the purpose and objectives of the origin study, but my study offers a more narrowly focused understanding of the parenting experiences of a specific group included in the origin study, namely, refugee parents.

To meet the study purpose and objectives, the origin study's research team designed the study to include three research phases. My study used data collected in stage two of the origin study. The research phases of the origin study are summarized in the figure below.

Figure 1

Flowchart Summarizing the Three Research Phases in the Origin Study



Note. To show where the current study's data source came from in the origin study, phase 2 stage 2 is highlighted in the figure above.

Origin Study's Co-Investigators' Positionality

The co-investigators of the origin study stated their positionality in relation to the sample in the research. The origin study's co-investigators are all African immigrant women residing in Alberta, Canada, and they have extensive experience working with African immigrants and refugees in a community-based participatory research capacity. They are significantly involved in various activities and networks for African communities and leveraged their social positioning as members of African communities to discuss with other community members before designing the study. I admired their cultural connection to the research, and it encouraged me to carry on with my study as a researcher who is also a member of the African diaspora in Canada. A reason I chose to pursue my study was because of my cultural background as a Canadian of African descent, and how this unique positioning and closeness to the participants' background may have allowed for a more culturally tactful reading and interpretation of the data than if I were not a member of the community in the research. I discuss more about my background and interests in the following section.

My Positionality, Background, and Interests in the Current Study

Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Uganda, Somalia, Senegal, Tanzania, Djibouti – these are examples of African countries many of my childhood and current friends and loved ones have roots in. Through my relationships with people from these communities, I have learned a lot about our shared values, histories, and experiences, and I have also learned that we are richly diverse and different in our ethnic groups, languages, and customs. It is through the communities we have in our ancestral homelands and in the diaspora that I learn more about who I am just as I am learning about others I consider distant relatives. These lived experiences and observations motivated me to embrace a pan-African worldview

throughout my study. More about my application of this worldview in my study is described in the fourth chapter.

I identify as a Black woman of Nigerian ancestry, and my cultural background influenced my interest in the research. My positionality as a Canadian woman of African descent drove my motivation to undertake a study that centred the experiences of members of the African diaspora and highlight those of African women. Part of the title for this thesis is one example of how my cultural background influenced the project: “life overseas” is a popular saying in the African immigrant community that I grew up hearing at community events and gatherings, and it implies a shared struggle with trying to rebuild life away from homelands, some of which are reflected in the current study.

I was born and raised in Canada and proudly identify with my Nigerian heritage. This is in part due to how I was raised, which allowed me to have a vast knowledge and understanding of Nigerian culture as a second generation Nigerian Canadian woman. My household has always had strong ties to traditional and postcolonial African values and practices. Through my experience, I have learned that migration has a profound impact on African immigrant and refugee parents and their children as migration impacts all areas of their lives.

I am quite fond of my culture and I maintain transnational ties with members of my family that live in Nigeria. I have visited a handful of states in Nigeria, including Lagos which is pictured below. My name is of Nigerian origin and meaning, and I am familiar with other parts of my culture such as the foods and cuisine style, music, proverbial sayings, art, literature, traditional dress, and entertainment. I grew up with these cultural pieces, and they help me maintain a connection to my ancestral homelands as a member of the African diaspora despite

finding myself and being actively cognizant of residing in a settler-colonial state on indigenous lands in North America.

Figure 2

Image of Moshallahi Road at Ìpaja in Lagos, Nigeria



I consider myself bicultural, constantly merging or negotiating Nigerian and Canadian culture. Like many other second generation Black African Canadians (e.g., see Creese, 2018), I am always negotiating between being Black, African, and Canadian in terms of how I identify on racial, ethnic, and nationality bases. Although I was born and raised in Canada, it is not unusual for me to be asked “where are you from?” when I am queried about my cultural background due to (1) the visibility of my race and/or (2) because I have been mistaken for being an immigrant. Creese (2018) found that these examples I have mentioned are common experiences among second generation African Canadians. Creese (2018) articulates strong support for example (1) above concerning racialization and othering:

Distinctions between who does and does not belong are embedded in place-based historical processes. In the Canadian context, the history of settler colonialism and centuries of preference for European immigrants shapes who is perceived by others to be members of the imagined community of Canadians, and whose bodies are read as belonging or marked as strange and out of place. (p. 1479)

For the example (2) I shared with my experience of othering, Creese’s (2018) research supports this truth in my reality, and my experience with (2) can be summed up like how Creese (2018) put it:

Yet in everyday usage the term immigrant is a racialized concept, with Canadians of colour presumed to be immigrants even if they are born in Canada (Bannerji, 2000; Ng, 1990; Thobani, 2007). In contrast, white residents are typically perceived as local, as bodies that belong, unless specific markers (like accents) suggest otherwise. (p. 1479)

The ideology and racism that ensues from the belief that visible racial minorities must be from somewhere other than the place at hand because Whiteness is presumed to be inherently

“Canadian” is one that I frequently challenge and resist as a Black woman of African descent. These experiences show me how it must feel for African immigrants and refugees who experience otherness at a higher level due to their immigration status in addition to their racial and ethnic identities. Further to this, Creese (2018) noted that the “...embodiment of local accents, education and cultural capital translates into more equal treatment in contrast to the marginalization of the first-generation” (p. 1477). For me, it was important for me to recognize this reality because it significantly shaped my positionality in terms of this research. My privileges relative to the first generation such as English being my first language and receiving educational training in Canadian post-secondary institutions grant me greater social mobility and access in society, and remove barriers that many first generation African immigrants and refugees struggle to overcome.

Although there are cultural similarities in our backgrounds, there are ways in which my background differs from those of the participants included in my study. I was born and raised in Canada while participants are refugees, I am in a different generation from the parents, and I am not a parent myself. I do not have direct experience with immigration, however, my experiences have been indirect given that my parents immigrated to Canada and their experiences trickled down and impacted me in various ways, like access to services, employment, and education and the implications this had on my childhood and integration. Growing up, I witnessed the hardships African immigrant parents in my community went through upon migrating to a new country and culture, and the building blocks (formal and informal supports) they struggled to gather to secure a better future for their children.

Given that participants are from a number of Sub-Saharan African countries and not just from my background, Nigeria, I realized and reflected on the following early on into my

research. Sub-Saharan African cultures share commonalities such as cultural practices and colonial histories, yet we are not a monolith, and exhibit variation in our traditions, ethnic groups, tribes, etc. I assumed that given my culture, I would have an easier time accessing the data for my study because of my understanding of issues faced by African immigrant communities, my research questions would inevitably be meaningful, and that I am in the best position to disseminate "...a more truthful, authentic understanding of the culture under study" (Merriam et al., 2001, p. 411). Nonetheless, I constantly engaged in reflexivity to challenge these assumptions so that they wouldn't interfere with my analysis and interpretation of findings.

A Reflection About Insider/Outsider Status and Implications for My Study

Merriam et al. (2001) noted that it is important to understand how power and positionality can be assessed when research is carried out "within one's own culture and across cultural boundaries" (p. 406). Given that I identify with the cultural background of participants, I entered the research assuming that it would be easier to relate to the research, my interpretations would be culturally intuitive, and my findings would be more easily validated. I also assumed that this would be more apparent when it came to analyzing responses from women participants given that we share both culture and gender, and I approached this study with intersectional feminist lens. However, there were a number of factors I needed to take into consideration to challenge my assumptions and work on my research with my positionality in mind. When a researcher is seemingly close to the research by being a part of the culture being researched, Merriam et al. (2001) reiterate that the "reconstruing of insider/outsider status in terms of one's positionality vis-à-vis race, class, gender, culture and other factors, offer us better tools for understanding the dynamics of researching within and across one's culture" (p. 405). This was

important in my case because I acknowledge that although I am a member of the community being studied, I embody a particular space of power and privilege in conducting this research.

Traditional discussions revolving around insider/outsider status assume that this phenomenon is dichotomous and static, with advantages and disadvantages for each. However, Merriam et al. (2001) point out that this understanding commonly held by the research community has shifted, with the growing realization that insider/outsider status is more complex than the dichotomy traditionally used to categorize it. In fact, one can possess both insider and outsider status when conducting research within their community. Insider/outsider status in research can be perceived as relative and fluid rather than fixed (Aguilar, 1981), and being an insider, outsider, or a hybrid of both can occur at different times during the research (Villenas, 1996). These are understandings I applied in every stage of my study when assessing my positionality.

So far, I have highlighted similarities and differences between my lived experiences and that of the participants in this study. I perceive myself as an insider/outsider not only because of my generational difference in terms of being second generation Canadian of Nigerian heritage, but also because of researcher privileges bestowed upon me through the institution I am doing this work from. Given the institutional structure I am part of (i.e., a university, namely, the University of Alberta) and the priorities I am faced with through my graduate program, I approach the issues in this research with a theoretical, interpretive lens using my formal education background. Although I have experienced marginalization while establishing a place in academia, I realize the privileges I have been given through the institution such as the one that enable me to conduct this research (Villenas 1996, 2000).

Professional Experiences in Immigrant and Refugee Research

Specific recent professional experiences have informed the interest I have in immigration and refugee research. In these professional experiences in Toronto and Edmonton, I developed my knowledge about the barriers immigrants and refugees, especially non-documented individuals, face in accessing social, health, and mental health services. I was also able to learn from service providers firsthand about their strategies, restraints, and gaps in service delivery for this demographic.

A transformative experience I had was during an internship I held in 2018. As an intern completing a research placement in a multicultural centre, I learned more about the social, economic, and health barriers immigrants and refugees contend with when they arrive in Canada. During my placement at this multicultural centre, I recall a time when interns were asked to complete a reflective exercise to prime us before we commenced our engagements with immigrants and refugees accessing the centre. In this exercise, we were required to reflect on our privileges and oppressions to help us personally come to terms with our own positionality and the need to situate our positionality for the duration of the internship. This exercise was an epiphany-inducing moment for me and perhaps the most memorable exercise of my internship because I deeply pondered about the reflection questions asked and the activity has become a staple for me when I need to exercise reflective practice before more complex reflexive processes. For my thesis, I completed this activity in my reflexivity journal, and it advanced thoughts about the reflexive approaches I planned to take in my research. Thus, my internship experience at this multicultural centre not only afforded me an opportunity to work directly with immigrants and refugees, but also taught me skills on how to conduct a critical and honest self-assessment prior to engaging immigrants and refugees.

Another transformative experience I had in immigrant and refugee research occurred in 2019. My supervisor and data custodian for the current study, Dr. Yohani, invited me to attend focus group sessions as a research volunteer for a community-based mental health research project focused on African refugees in Alberta (see King et al., 2021 for the publication). By attending to logistical needs of participants, listening to their lived experiences during focus group sessions and notetaking, I was given the opportunity to directly engage with African refugees and learn more about their background and challenges with resettlement in Canada.

While engaging with immigrant and refugee communities, I realized that there is greater need for supports for this group to help ease their transition and integration into Canadian society. Many newcomers lack a platform grounded in transformative social change as a means to voice their concerns and support needs, hence I felt that I could provide such a platform for African refugees through my study. Another takeaway from my professional experiences that has an implication on the current study is that there is a need to study immigrant and refugee groups separately, and within these categories, to study different ethnocultural groups distinctly because of what I noticed in how varied their experiences are. Hence my focus on African refugees in my thesis.

Chapter Closing

This chapter contextualized the current study in terms of its origin and the researcher's background. In data reuse studies, a description of the origin study is essential for contextualizing the secondary analysis and examining the suitability of the origin study for the secondary analysis, thus this was the purpose of this chapter. In the next chapter, I present a review of the literature starting with an introduction to refugees in Canada.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

The first part of this literature review presents background information about one of the phenomena of interest, that is, Black migration to Canada including immigration pathways past and present to highlight the need for further study of experiences of African refugees in Alberta. The second part describes the unique African notions of family and gender-related parenting challenges experienced to situate African refugee-specific challenges with those highlighted by previous studies of African parents in Canada. Together, the two parts provide the foundation for the need for the study I describe at the end of the chapter. Although limited, there have been a number of studies within the Canadian context that have examined parenting challenges of African immigrants and refugees, and I chose to focus my literature review on studies in Canada to help draw parallels between the experiences of African immigrant and refugee parents in previous studies and the African refugee parents in my study. Most studies combine African immigrants and refugees as one group for study therefore in this literature review, I highlight the experiences of refugees when possible.

Part I: An Overview of Recent Black Migration to Canada

In Part I of this literature review, I provide information and descriptive statistics about recent immigration pathways, Black migration patterns, and information about refugees, all within the context of Canada. I situate African refugees within each section to contextualize the presence of African refugees in Canada.

Recent Immigration Pathways to Canada and Black Migration Patterns

Economically, politically, and socially, immigration is an integral contributor to Canada's new collective identity as a multicultural society and a nation that takes pride in cultural pluralism. According to Statistics Canada (2017a), Canada's outlook and goals for immigration

can be summed as the following: “In Canada, immigrants are selected based on three main objectives: to enhance and promote economic development; to reunite families; and to fulfill the country's international obligations and uphold its humanitarian tradition” (p. 1). Additionally, immigration is important to the social fabric of Canada because “in addition to contributing to the social and economic development of the country, immigrants and their descendants play a significant role in shaping and enriching the ethnic, cultural and linguistic composition of the Canadian population” (Statistics Canada, 2017a, p. 1).

In Canada, there are three main immigration pathways: (1) economic class, (2) family class, and (3) refugee class. As of 2016, 60.3% of immigrants were admitted through the economic class, 26.8% of immigrants through the family class, and 11.6% of newcomers came as refugees (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Between 2011 and 2016, Canada received 141,735 Black immigrants through these different pathways, with 40.3% in the economic class, 27.2% in the family class, and 28.7% as refugees (Statistics Canada, 2019).

The presence of Black communities in Canada can be traced back to the 17th century (Henry, 2016; Morgan & Bullen, 2015). Some Black communities have been in Canada for generations such as many of those in Atlantic Canada (Library and Archives Canada, n.d.; Milan & Tran, 2004). Many early Black migrants came as slaves through the transatlantic slave trade. Black people have come to Canada from all over the world, most notably, Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the United States (Library and Archives Canada, n.d.).

The social, political, and economic contributions of early Black migrants as well as those from recent Black immigrants and refugees from Africa and the Caribbean are appreciable despite the barriers members of Black communities face such as low-paying jobs, poverty, poor housing, racism and discrimination in public life and services (Marshall, 2013; Government of

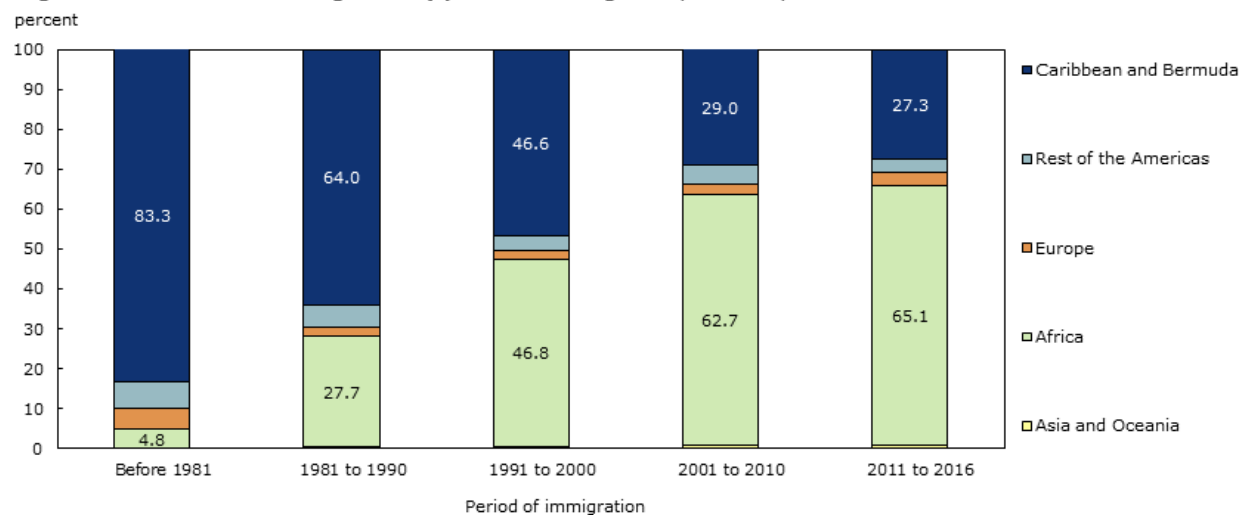
Canada, n.d.a; Milan & Tran, 2004; Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Zaami & Madibbo, 2021). There is great diversity in Black immigration patterns in Canada, with Black immigrants representing 125 countries from around the world, mainly from the Caribbean and Africa (Statistics Canada, 2019). In 2016, 623,195 (52%) of the Black population in Canada identified as immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2019), with the majority migrating from Sub-Saharan Africa. Historically, the Caribbean was the main source of Black immigrants, but in contemporary times, Africa is increasingly becoming a top source, which is illustrated in Figure 3 below (Statistics Canada 2017b).

Overall, the 2016 Census revealed that the general trend in immigration is that the number of immigrants in Canada has and will continue to increase. Statistics Canada postulates that Canadians who identify as immigrants could be as high as 30% of the general population by 2036 (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Based on the data we have, immigrants from Africa are one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in Canada.

Figure 3

Chart Displaying Region of Birth of Black Immigrants in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017b)

Region of birth of Black immigrants by period of immigration, Canada, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

Note. Historically, the Caribbean was Canada's top source for Black immigrants. A growing number of Black immigrants in Canada are from African countries making Africa a top source of Black immigrants in Canada. With the gradual decrease in Black immigrants from the Caribbean as seen in the figure, Africa is currently the main source of Black immigrants in Canada.

Who Are Refugees in Canada?

Canada is a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol for this Convention, both overseen by the United Nations. The main goal of this international convention was two-fold: (1) to define the term refugee (included in Chapter 1, page 8), and (2) to provide a set of obligations that signed parties are expected to comply with when receiving refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951).

The main difference between immigrants and refugees is that immigrants migrate and resettle out of choice, while refugees flee their native country by force (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2010; Government of Canada, n.d.b). Refugees are those in need of protection out of fear of persecution in their homeland on various grounds such as race, religion, gender, nationality, or political affiliation, or may be affected due to war, conflict, or a threat to their human rights (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951; Statistics Canada, n.d.). Refugees flee for a number of reasons, which could include conflict and war in home country, economic downfalls, killings or separation from family members in home country due to political unrest, persecution, torture, assault (i.e., physical, sexual, with weapons) and other forms of violence they directly experience or witness (Stewart et al., 2015a). With these experiences come certain barriers when refugees migrate and resettle in destination countries, including linguistic barriers, economic hardships, lack of information about services, and discrimination (Stewart et al., 2015a; Jackson & Bauder, 2013).

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (“the Act”) provides laws and governance related to refugees in Canada. According to the Act, two of several objectives for refugee-related laws found in the Act are noteworthy to mention here: (a) “to recognize that the refugee program is in the first instance about saving lives and offering protection to the displaced and persecuted”,

and (b) “to fulfil Canada’s international legal obligations with respect to refugees and affirm Canada’s commitment to international efforts to provide assistance to those in need of resettlement” (Minister of Justice, 2001). Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada provides oversight for the country’s refugee programs (Government of Canada, n.d.c). For the purposes of program administration by this government body, a refugee may be classified as (1) Convention refugee abroad class, or (2) country of asylum class. Within these classes, there are subcategories which are used to further delineate the types of refugees within Canada in order to place them in appropriate programming (Government of Canada, n.d.c). Nearly 27,000 refugees were admitted to Canada in 2017, with approximately 8,490 coming from Africa (Government of Canada, 2018).

Present Day African Immigrants and Refugees in Canada

In statistical reports and the literature, African immigrants and refugees tend to be grouped as one category which can make their individual study challenging. Notably, the 2016 Census is the first census in Canada where the classes of immigrants (economic, family, and refugee) were disaggregated in data reporting (Statistics Canada, 2017a). This new approach is advantageous for research such as the current study at hand, because it allows for a closer look at different immigrant groups in the country for the purposes of further study, such as the refugee population. This section of the thesis will draw on data from the 2016 Census to provide the most recent and comprehensive portrait possible about African refugees. All statistics presented in this section are referring to data from the 2016 Census, unless otherwise noted. I begin by briefly presenting general statistics about immigration patterns in Canada, situating African refugees within these patterns. Following this, I provide information about African refugees in the

Prairies, with a specific focus on Alberta given that this is the geographic location the current study is situated.

When taking the overall immigrant population into consideration (both newcomers and immigrants with a longer history in the country), immigrants from Africa rose from 1.4% to 8.5% when comparing the 1971 and 2016 censuses (Statistics Canada, 2017a). By 2021, Statistics Canada (2017b) projects that this number will rise up to 9.7%. It is also predicted that by 2036, this number will be between 11.0% and 11.9% (Statistics Canada, 2017a). In 1971, 3.2% of newcomers to Canada came from Africa, while in 2016, 13.4% of newcomers were from Africa, and currently represent one of the newer and fastest growing ethnocultural communities in Canada. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa such as Nigeria and Cameroon were among the top five countries African immigrants came from (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

To date, almost a third of the world's refugee population are in Sub-Saharan Africa (Statistics Canada, 2020b). In the Canadian context, refugees from the African continent currently represent the second largest refugee group after refugees from Asia including the Middle East (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Among Black recent immigrants, 3 out of 10 were refugees, and top countries of origin for these refugees included the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia (Statistics Canada, 2019). Africa is increasingly becoming a top source of Black immigrants and refugees in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017b).

Baffoe (2010) argued that African immigrants are the most underresearched immigrant group in Canada and highlighted that they are typically categorized with Caribbean immigrants as one group because these groups tend to share the same skin colour. Refugees differ from immigrants in that they experience greater barriers during resettlement, mainly due to the involuntary and urgent nature of their migration. Diversity in ethnicity among Black immigrants

(i.e., Africans and Caribbean people) and classes (i.e., immigrants versus refugees) is often ignored in research, yet this is crucial to give attention to in research and practice in order to better serve the unique needs of groups. Although there has been a divergence from the shared commonalities approach in recent years, the quantity of research on immigration with a subpopulation analysis remains small. This study helps to narrow these stated gaps by focusing on a specific category of Black migrants in Canada – African refugees. With participants from different African countries represented in my study, I had a diverse set of voices representing African refugees.

Historically, poverty, armed conflict, and natural disasters have pushed those originally from the African continent to emigrate to countries like Canada (Houle, 2020). In more recent times, economic drivers have contributed to the surge of immigrants from Africa in Canada. Economic drivers are notably gendered in nature. More women are migrating from the African continent independent of their spouses, and many of these women emigrate in pursuit of professional opportunities (Houle, 2020). Gendered trends in the labour market have played a contributing role in this occurrence. For example, there has been an increased demand for health care workers and more women from Sub-Saharan Africa have been recruited to fill these positions (Houle, 2020). However, men remain the principal applicant for immigration under the economic class more than half of the time for some countries (Houle, 2020).

African refugees find it more difficult to resettle in their host society relative to other refugee groups because their displacement, post-traumatic stress, disruptions to pursuits in education and career, and overall efforts to rebuild a new life are compounded by marginalization, discrimination, absence of cultural capital, and the challenges attached to having refugee status (Kuyini, 2013; Bakker et al., 2016).

Trends in Alberta Regarding African Immigrants and Refugees. Provinces in the Prairies are increasingly being chosen by immigrants for settlement (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Alberta for example has seen a significant increase in the number of new immigrants in the province between 2001 and 2016, rising from 6.9% to 17.1% within this timeframe. In 2016, both Calgary and Edmonton were top census metropolitan areas that received a relatively high number of immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2017a). In Calgary, 29.4% of the population are immigrants, and in Edmonton immigrants make up 23.8% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

When compared to other Canadian Prairie Provinces (i.e., Manitoba and Saskatchewan), Alberta has the highest Black population in the Prairies (Statistics Canada, 2019). Notably, Alberta's Black population in 2016 was five times what it was in 1996, and immigration mainly from African countries has been determined as the factor responsible for this significant increase (Statistics Canada, 2019). Most Black people residing in Alberta (62.8%) are first generation (Statistics Canada, 2019), suggesting a more recent arrival of this group in the province. Africa was also reported as one of the top continents in which first and second generation children in Canada under 15 years of age were of African heritage (Statistics Canada, 2017a). According to data from the 2016 Census, top places Black newcomers in the Prairies arrived from included Nigeria, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea (Statistics Canada, 2019) which are countries in Africa. Notably, these countries have faced significant political upheaval in the last two decades and have become refugee source countries. There is a pressing need to study the phenomenon of Black migration to Canada by documenting the experiences of African refugees in Alberta.

Part II: Gender-Related Parenting Challenges Experienced by African Refugees

In this section, I describe the meanings of family held in many traditional African cultures, and beliefs about familial gender roles and relations in a postcolonial era. Although there are many oral traditions, historical accounts, and research accounts of early African notions of family, I draw mainly on the work of Sheldon (2017) and Ndofirepi & Shumba (2014) in this section. I then present parenting challenges related to gender that African immigrant and refugee parents face in Canada, many of which contend with traditional and postcolonial notions of African family organizing described in the beginning of this section.

African Notions of Family

Understandings and meanings of family and children are ascribed and culturally-based rather than universal or fixed across cultures. Ambert (1994) argued that “childhood and parenting are social constructs that evolve with sociohistorical changes” (p. 529). Nonetheless, some understandings of family and children persist over time and are carried on generationally. In most African societies, the family unit is core to the foundation of the community and children are highly valued culturally. Families are understood by these communities as crucial for societal functioning in various ways, and children are central in the concepts of family (Ndofirepi & Shumba, 2014; Lazarus, 2009). In African societies, historical and philosophical perceptions of children and family have been ancestrally passed down and have shaped present understandings of traditional African cultures and worldviews (Ndofirepi & Shumba, 2014; Lazarus 2009).

In most African cultures, the meaning of a child goes beyond the physical and biological differences between children and adults. The psychosocial dimension of childhood is studied in order to equip children with skills to survive and succeed in the world. In addition to parents, other family and community members are seen as vital in protecting, nurturing, and raising children to be productive adult members of the community (Ndofirepi & Shumba, 2014). It is

important to African families that their children engage in relationships for development, learn behaviour through observations, and that they are shaped by practices that are socially and culturally grounded (Ndofirepi & Shumba, 2014). For Africans, children are seen as valuable assets to the family and are a source of pride. Therefore, it is crucial for Africans to ensure that their children develop according to cultural standards.

Indigenous formations of family and associated practices involved in raising children in traditional African societies were disrupted by colonization (Sheldon, 2017). Pre-colonial traditional African families varied in their family structures, yet there is an agreement that women had fairly equal power to men as noted in the number of documented matrilineal societies where women held important titles such as being chiefs and queens (Sheldon, 2017). Women were involved in decision-making related to family life and matters related to economics like agriculture and trade (Sheldon, 2017). Their impacts transcended the immediate family structure, as they were seen as “mothers to future generations” (Sheldon, 2017, p. 1). There were less hierarchies and division of roles according to gender, and men and women assumed fluid roles in terms of divisions of labour, which Sheldon (2017) provided insight on in her work:

While it is likely that there was a gender division of labor, based in part on the need for women to bear children and care for them during the earliest months of breastfeeding, research does not support such a strict division between women’s and men’s work.

Studies focused on women found that men also gathered and women sometimes hunted, particularly for smaller animals and birds. Women’s hunting activities included traveling to seek animals, as well as setting traps and attracting desired animals and birds so that they could be caught through more passive methods. In addition to understanding that

hunting was not only a male activity, analysis has shown that daily meals and the bulk of the diet in the family and community relied on women's foraging and food preparation of grains, nuts, fruits, eggs, and other foods, with meat supplying an occasional source of protein rather than daily sustenance. (p. 4)

In some African societies however, there were clear division of roles and women were largely responsible for domestic work while men were perceived as community leaders. However, women were still valued, respected, influential, and seen as important contributors to the well-being, survival, activities, culture, and decision-making of the community (Sheldon, 2017). African women were known for developing new tools and methods for agriculture (Sheldon, 2017) and cared for livestock, contrary to historical narratives that indicate men were in control of this type of work (Sheldon, 2017). In early African societies, men were typically seen as powerful in terms of politics and leadership, while women held religious and spiritual power and vested this power onto men and advised men in their positions. Though there was this general categorization, men and women were seen as supportive of each other and complementary to one another (Sheldon, 2017). Women also had considerable power and independence in their marriages, they could willingly leave their husbands in cases of abuse, and they were not "considered the property or wards of their husbands, as was common in other world areas" (Sheldon, 2017).

Colonialism and the rise of political structures and social hierarchies disrupted traditional ways of community organizing in African societies. The sense of gender equality in family structure was lost alongside the power women initially had in their communities (Sheldon, 2017). African men led the establishments of nation states which emerged out of capitalist

monopolies, and this also pushed women into subordination in light of men's unearned social positioning (Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2019).

Cross-culturally and across the globe in contemporary times, motherhood is an expected aspiration for a large number of women, and women are assumed to be primarily responsible for childcare work (Kgomo, 1996; Rich, 1979). Motherhood as a gendered phenomenon is present in many African cultures, where African women are expected to desire to have children and eventually have children (Ndofirepi & Shumba, 2014; Dipio, 2019). Recent studies show that African mother-child relationships tend to be very intimate, particularly in the early years of a child's life (Salami et al., 2020b), and that African women continue to assume most of the domestic labour in their homes (e.g., Opoku-Dapaah, 1992). Our understandings of these gender-related parenting experiences continue to be understudied and African refugees would benefit from further examination.

Gender-Related Parenting Challenges Experienced by African Immigrants and Refugees in Canada

In this section I present parenting challenges related to gender that are experienced by African immigrants and refugees in Canada. This section is broken down into three sections that mirror the focus of my study objectives. My first objective was to examine parent-child interactions, hence the focus in the first section of the following sections is on gender-related practices directly involving children. My second objective sought to investigate parent-parent interactions, thus the literature review topic of the second section below is gender dynamics within spousal relationships and the impacts on parenting. My third objective was to investigate extended family and family-community interactions thus the third section below deals with gendered experiences with informal and formal support systems.

Gender and Children.

In this subsection, I describe the views held in traditional African societies in terms of roles for children based on the gender of a child, and the influence of these early beliefs in parenting practices of African men and women in contemporary times.

It was normal practice in traditional African societies for the socialization of gender roles to commence in childhood. It was culturally expected for young boys to learn the same responsibilities that older men had, and for young girls to learn from women senior to them (Ndofirepi & Shumba, 2014). Following colonialism, gendered beliefs and roles were more glaring within African traditional societies (Sheldon, 2017). The more pronounced gender order in postcolonial African societies was maintained and can be seen in African families in current times.

The gendered roles extend into new homelands where some African immigrant and refugee families treat their children differently according to gender. This was evident in a study by Salami and colleagues (2017b) where African immigrant parents carried gendered expectations of their children for household tasks. For example, some African mothers expected their daughters to shadow or assist them or other women in the family when it came to housework. Boys, on the other hand, were allowed to engage in social activities outside of the home more often than girls were (Salami et al., 2017b). In general, mothers in Kgomo's (1996) study revealed that in their home countries, it was common for African parents to have high maturity expectations for their children beginning at a young age ranging from six to twelve years old. Parents in Kgomo's (1996) study shared that when adults were not around, children were expected to know how to do basic tasks such as self-hygiene, serve themselves food, be familiar with local places and able to complete errands without getting lost, and look after

younger siblings. However, these expectations and responsibilities are gendered. Girls are expected to take on more responsibilities than boys and as they grow, and they are expected to prepare themselves for both domestic and public work. Boys on the other hand are expected to focus on building their career (Kgomo, 1996). Ethiopian men and women in Hyman et al.'s (2004) study voiced similar childhood experiences growing up in Ethiopia. These are examples of how African parents in pre- and post-migration contexts parent their children according to a child's gender. Girl children tend to be domesticated and trained to balance this with education and career, while boy children can escape domestic work more easily and are taught to prioritize educational and career goals. The domestication of girls gives them less opportunities and time to socialize outside of the home. Overall, it appears that sons and daughters are treated differently based on their gender, and that girls experience more limits and pressures to meet cultural expectations in terms of gender roles.

In their study of parenting practices of African families living in Alberta, Salami et al. (2020b) found that as girl children grew, they became closer to their mothers and received more mentorship from their mothers than from their fathers. They also found that a similar parent-child relationship occurred between boys and fathers, though the closeness was described as being less than the closeness between daughters and mothers. Another gender-based parenting practice was highlighted by Salami and colleagues (2020b) and this finding was regarding how mother and father roles are perceived in African families:

African immigrant children are typically socialized to perceive fathers as tough enforcers of discipline and mothers as the proverbial buffer zone, with whom refuge can be sought. For this reason, the parent-child bond was reported to be more intimate with mothers than with fathers at every stage of a child's development. Parents expected this blend of

compassion and toughness to expose children to a variety of experiences that would prepare them for their transition to adulthood. (p. 9)

With these views of African parents, it is apparent that a strategy used by African parents to meet the disciplinary and emotional needs of children is through parenting based on ideas of emotions mothers should carry and ones that fathers should have based on their gender.

Overall, the literature about gendered parent-child interactions within African refugee families is very limited, contributing to the need of my study.

Gender and Spousal Relationships.

In this subsection, I present the general understanding African immigrants and refugees have about the roles men and women play in spousal relationships. I then discuss some of the disruptions to these views that African immigrants and refugees experience in a different cultural context like Canada.

In African immigrant and refugee families, roles and relations in mother-father relationships are primarily determined by gender. A number of issues arise post-migration when traditional gender roles contend with conflicting gender norms and ways of life in Western host countries. For instance, in Canada it is expected that both mothers and fathers will work and generate individual incomes. For African immigrants and refugees, men are largely responsible for managing family finances through their ascribed breadwinner role, and women may or may not work but ultimately, women not expected to head finances and assume less of a role with financial decisions for the family. Many African immigrant and refugee families find that the breadwinner role ascribed to men is gradually lost after migration. Men have less control over the financial flow of the family and in decision-making and women become more involved in these matters (Salami et al., 2017b; Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018; Stewart et al., 2015b).

What is also apparent are shifts in gender roles with regards to domestic duties. African men become more involved in household tasks such as cooking and cleaning and other responsibilities traditionally seen as women's work such as childcare (Salami et al., 2017b; Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018; Este & Tachble, 2009; Lazarus, 2009; Salami et al., 2020a). For African refugee men, such shifts are unlikely to occur in their origin country given cultural customs that direct gender norms like women being associated with domestics (Este & Tachble, 2009; Lazarus, 2009). Nonetheless, even though some men assist with domestic work post-migration, many families believe it still remains the primary responsibility of women and that men's involvement in such work goes against pre-migration cultural norms (Hyman et al., 2004; Makwarimba et al., 2013).

In a post-migration context, African refugee women struggle to balance the demands of work within and outside of the home (Stewart et al., 2015a; Lazarus, 2009; King et al., 2016; Elabor-Idemudia, 1999). This struggle is unique to women as they are culturally expected to be able to handle domestic responsibilities, but in a post-migration context with the absence of family and others to help and the pressing family need to work for wages in Canada, women have a hard time meeting all labour expectations. Some women feel restrained to ask their husbands for help due to cultural expectations of women when it comes to domestic work, and some men aim to maintain the gendered divisions of labour they are used to (Stewart et al., 2015a; Este & Tachble, 2009; Opoku-Dapaah, 1992).

With post-migration shifts in gender roles, some men have a hard time with gender role changes. Some men feel as though they have less power than what they are used to while women have more power than expected, and these views lead to an array of marital issues in some situations (Stewart et al., 2015b; Salami et al., 2017b). They tend to feel as if African women are

aware of these shifts in gender roles as well as an awareness of their legal rights and that women leverage these in a way that explicitly challenges men (Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018; Simich et al., 2010). Women's increased contributions to the family income and in some cases, men's underemployment post-migration, create new tensions for African immigrant and refugee families (Simich et al., 2010; Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018; Salami et al., 2020a). In Salami et al.'s (2020a) study, unforeseen family tensions erupted as some African immigrant families strived to find their place in a new society, and a change in gender roles was a common contributor to these tensions as gender roles were impacted when parents immigrated (Salami et al., 2020a). In extreme cases, difficulties with adjusting to changed gender roles contribute to more serious family problems such as separation and divorce and an increased risk for domestic violence particularly towards women (Lazarus, 2009; Hyman et al., 2004; Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018; Salami et al., 2020a). For African immigrants in Salami et al.'s (2020a) study, divorce rates were perceived as high given the common experience of family cohesion in their home country, and the observation of higher divorce rates in a post-migration context were seen to have stemmed from family tensions and changing structures such as shifts in gender roles (Salami et al., 2020a). Divorce seriously impacts single parent African immigrant families as they experience notably more challenges when it comes to "financial hardships, material deprivation, and emotional problems" (Salami et al., 2020a, p. 130). It is important to consider the impacts of separation, divorce, and domestic violence on parenting experiences within African immigrant and refugee families because conflict between parents can have repercussions on children and children are impacted by such situations (Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018; Wolchik, 2009).

For some African immigrant parents, especially fathers, attitudes about women's increased involvement in paid work change once in Canada. In a study by Hyman et al. (2004), both African immigrant men and women acknowledged that in addition to the financial benefits of women working to support the family, employment for women has positive psychosocial benefits that reduce isolation and help women transition into a new society as immigrants. In another study by Stewart et al. (2015), some African refugee men cited education and maturity as factors that made it easier for them to accept changes to gender roles post-migration. Some African men are ready to alter parenting practices in the best interests of their children to favour and promote their children's success (Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2020). These are examples of how gender roles are renegotiated to benefit the family, women and children especially as seen in these examples. These examples remind us that although challenges may arise as a result of shifts in gender roles and relations, these shifts also offer migrants "the opportunity to recreate, reinvent, and negotiate established gender roles" (Hyman et al., 2004, p. 76).

On the contrary, some African men find it difficult or feel unprepared to renegotiate gender roles upon migration such as taking on domestic duties and other gender roles defined by cultural customs (Okeke-Ihejirika, Salami & Ahmad, 2019; Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018; Makwarimba et al., 2013). Okeke-Ihejirika et al. (2019) offered that notions of gender are hard to shake off from these communities because "the tendency is to reinforce these norms as cultural imperatives that should be cautiously guarded in the post-migration context" (p. 591). For those habituated to patriarchal family rules, exercising gender equality feels as though it is a challenge to traditional gender norms. As Stewart et al.'s (2012) found in their study on African refugees in Canada:

Some male participants noted that role expectations for men in Canada were different from those in their home country. Husbands wanted to maintain the gender power imbalances from their home country and were concerned that this was difficult in Canada where women were employed and contributed equally to family incomes. (p. 524)

This finding by Stewart et al. (2012) points to the struggle African refugee men have with wanting to hold onto power within their spousal relationship as directed by cultural customs, but this patriarchal inclination is challenged by the need for women to work and contribute to the family purse in the Canadian context.

Changes in gender roles and relations experienced by African immigrants and refugees are not fixed but rather dynamic and gradual and occur at different times during resettlement (Hyman et al., 2004). There is a pressing need to better understand gender-related parenting challenges experienced by African refugees in Alberta.

Gender, Social Supports, and the Impacts on Women's Work and Educational Aspirations

In this section I describe some of the challenges African refugee mothers and fathers have in securing social supports that could help with their parenting in Canada and the implications for women's employment and educational aspirations.

In his study of Ghanaian refugees in Canada, Opoku-Dapaah (1992) found that Ghanaian refugee women are subject to gender inequality within their home and resultantly, experience significant barriers in pursuing educational endeavours. Despite men and women working for the same amount of time in their paid jobs, women were expected to take care of childcare responsibilities and domestic work when they returned home from their paid jobs while this expectation did not apply to men. Without the help of extended family as they were used to in Ghana, Ghanaian women explained that maternal care and domestic work takes more of their

time than usual. Similarly, African refugee fathers in Este and Tachble's (2009) study reported resettlement adversities in navigating their new country Canada with the absence of familial and community support. In Opoku-Dapaah's (1992) study, the additional responsibilities African refugee women have in Canada in absence of their typical support system coupled with other challenges, such as difficulties in coordinating class times for potential educational pursuits with their children's pick-up and drop-off times and their husbands' schedules, made women feel reluctant to pursue higher education. Another barrier shared by women was that career plans would need their husband's approval before they embarked on their plans, and that approval was not always received or plans were redirected such as persuading women to work instead to help raise the financial capital of the family (Opoku-Dapaah, 1992).

When searching for gendered differences among African immigrant and refugee parents in their experiences with social supports for parenting, I noticed that there is not a lot of literature on the differences between men and women. Many studies look at parents collectively, and not mothers and fathers separately. My study aims to highlight any gender differences between African refugee men and women in their experiences with social supports for parenting.

Need for the Study

It is important to consider the historical contexts outlined in this literature review in current parenting practices of African refugee parents in a Western context like Canada because the literature shows that history has impacted present-day parenting practices of Africans. There is evidence of shifts in gender roles, relations, beliefs, and attitudes among African immigrants and refugees that pre-date migration. Migration further shifts gendered expectations and roles within parenting and marital relationships in African families. Based on my review of the literature, the limited number of Canadian studies we have about African refugees and any

gendered experiences they have are focused on Somali and Sudanese refugees, African refugee new parents or no explicit focus on parents, African refugees grouped with immigrants in a study sample, or solely African refugee men when gender is studied. The current study takes a new approach to studying gender experiences within the African refugee community in Canada by including African refugees from a variety of countries beyond Somalia and South Sudan. It also extends existing studies by focusing on African refugee parenting practices and including parents of children in different developmental stages and both African refugee men and women.

Importantly, my study has a sole focus on African refugee voices. The potential to develop a new understanding of gender roles and relations in parenting from African refugee men and women in Canada was a driving force for this study. The aim of the current study was to explore gender roles and relations within African refugee families in Canada through the study of views and gendered experiences.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

In this chapter, I describe the methods used for my study. I begin by introducing the use of secondary qualitative data analysis as my study design, the procedures for my access to the origin study data, the participants involved, and the interview procedures used to collect the data. Then I describe the theoretical frameworks guiding my study, the participant sample involved, and the data analysis strategy used.

Study Design Rationale

Secondary Data Analysis

My study fulfilled all 3 purposes identified by Turner (1997) for a secondary qualitative data analysis as an: (a) an extension of an origin study described in Chapter 2, (b) exploration of a different set of research questions that were not asked in the origin study, and (c) employment of methods not used in the origin study to address the research questions in the secondary study.

A Qualitative Approach to My Study

Qualitative research is a scientific, systematic, and inductive process that aims to uncover the meanings people attribute to their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mayan, 2009). A qualitative inquiry approach was appropriate for my study because the origin study data was qualitative and the phenomenon I sought to better understand as depicted in my research questions was best answered using narrative descriptions of experiences. A qualitative approach is best for exploration of a subjective phenomenon (Alase, 2017), so I chose a qualitative inquiry because I wanted to explore what gender views and experiences African refugees in Alberta, Canada ascribe to their parenting practices and familial relationships. Qualitative research involves generating rich descriptions, which I envisioned for my analysis, results, and discussion of findings to have.

Qualitative researchers are typically interested in designing an inquiry about ways of life as it is lived, particularly for those who are vulnerable or are in a defining moment in life (Clark & Sharf, 2007), like in my study – the post-migration experiences of African refugees. Giving voice to participants and the utilization of a transformative-emancipatory paradigm are opportunities that qualitative research affords (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Thus, a qualitative approach was fitting given the transformative, anti-oppressive outlook I envisioned for the research. I wanted to give voice to African refugees because they face unique challenges due to race, ethnicity, refugee status, and other intersectional identity factors. I also wanted to bring the voices of African women to the forefront through the application of feminist lenses given that they are commonly viewed as subordinate to men in postcolonial patriarchal African cultures (Dipio, 2019). For the African women in my study, it was important for me to take into account and investigate their double status as women and mothers and associated implications for parenting (O'Reilly, 2004). I wanted to leave readers of my thesis with a nuanced and elaborate account of the phenomenon based directly on the human experiences of participants, and qualitative research was best to achieve this goal (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Adequacy and Suitability of Origin Study Interview Data for My Secondary Analysis

The origin study included African immigrant and refugee parents with diverse backgrounds and a mix of men and women. The interview data from the origin study was adequate and suitable for my study because I wanted to focus on African refugees given the unique migrancy experiences refugees have relative to other migrant groups, most participants were parents, and both African men and women were involved. The inclusion criteria and data collection methods in the origin study made it possible to distinguish refugees from immigrants

in the larger study and to track the gender of each participant since this information was recorded, and this was all useful for my project in terms of subsetting data and selecting appropriate transcripts. The sampling procedures used to identify the subset of participants for the secondary analysis was based on my research questions and purpose of the research, which was to focus on refugee experiences.

My sample is a subgroup of participants included in the origin study – refugees. What my participants have in common is that they can speak to the African refugee experience, which is the basis of my research questions and part of what I seek to understand. Africans are a diverse group of people yet they share many sociocultural and historical commonalities. Realizing the fact that African refugees are not entirely the same in terms of their experiences with migration, I attempted to understand the parenting experiences typically shared by African refugees who land in Canada. Data for my study are adequate because it meets the following methodological criteria: the origin study aimed to maintain homogeneity among participants through its inclusion criteria in order to explore an in-depth understanding of shared experiences.

My Use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IPA is both philosophical, and scientific (Larkin et al., 2011), and it is used to understand and unpack people's perceptions of experiences, and the meanings they ascribe to their lived realities. It is a qualitative approach to understanding cognitive processes with regards to people's lived experiences and worldviews (Smith & Osborn, 2007; Larkin et al., 2006; Smith, 1996). A key aim of IPA is to provide interpretative analysis that situates experiences within social, cultural and theoretical contexts (Larkin et al., 2006; Larkin et al., 2011). During analysis, the main goal of an IPA study is to produce a "detailed examination of personal lived experience" (Eatough & Smith, 2017, p. 193). IPA extends the inductive approach inherent to

qualitative methods by going beyond finding themes in the data, to interpreting themes (Alase, 2017). Alase (2017) maintains along with other researchers that IPA is arguably “the most ‘participant-oriented’ qualitative research approach” (p. 10). For me, it is an approach that gets me the closest I can get to participants’ lived experiences especially since I was not involved in the origin study, which utilized a participatory action approach where participants were present in every stage of the research process. IPA is a suitable approach for my study because of my focus on generating understandings of the lived experiences of my participants through interpretation.

The emergent nature of inductive analysis is not arbitrary, but rather, guided by what the researcher seeks to understand, how the researcher interprets the data based on elements of the study paradigm such as theoretical frameworks, and selected ontological and epistemological orientations (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). I wanted themes from the analysis to be induced from the data itself in order to give voice to the community I was studying. This particular approach was in line with a core goal of IPA, which is to focus on shared experiences among a group to better understand a phenomenon uniquely experienced by the group. For this to be achieved in IPA, it is important to intentionally recruit participants with similar characteristics that will be relevant to the research question(s) and to select a sample from a homogenous pool of participants (Alase, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2007). As mentioned in the previous section, data for my study met these methodological criteria.

Origin Study Data Access and Procedures

Ethics Application Details of the Origin Study

The origin study received ethics approval from the University of Alberta’s Research Board Ethics 2. The study identification number for the origin study’s ethics board approval is

Pro00073065. There were no conflicts of interest declared in the ethics application. Participants were required to provide informed consent in order to participate in the study. Consent was obtained through written consent using a signed consent form and participants were free to withdraw from the study at any point. Upon request, data from the interviews could be removed within two months that the interview took place. Data from incomplete interviews were destroyed.

Measures were put in place to maintain confidentiality and to protect the identity of participants during and after research. As per University of Alberta human research ethics policies and guidelines, data will be destroyed after 5 years. The research data are available and accessible only by the research team and all electronic data is stored on an encrypted, password-protected computer. A master document containing all identifying information for computer files and physical documents is stored in a locked cabinet in the office of the PI. Members of the research team were required to sign a confidentiality agreement form. Research team members other than the PI and co-investigators were supervised throughout the research to ensure confidentiality.

Guided by the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018) the research team assessed this study as minimal risk meaning that benefits were greater than the risks. There were no foreseeable physical, psychological, emotional, and social risks or discomforts. However, the PI noted that participants may feel uneasy when probed about their lived experiences as these experiences are not always easy to convey. To manage and minimize this potential risk, research activities were purposely held in places members of Albertan African communities normally convene like in the spaces of community organizations such as Africa Centre in Edmonton and

the Centre for Newcomers in Calgary. Other strategies used to mitigate this potential risk included providing the option for participants to engage in the research via telephone, a nurse and registered psychologist were members of the core research team, and the team curated a list of service providers in case it was needed. Given the human interaction and engagement in the origin study, these ethical practices were put into place to mitigate the risk of harm and preserve the dignity of participants.

The study had no direct benefits to participants, however, the following were noted as indirect benefits to participants:

1. Reflections during research participation that may have evoked individual-level change beyond research sessions.
2. Opportunities for dialogue between African immigrants and service providers.
3. Agency given to community members to participate in a study about their lived experiences.
4. Expansion of academic literature on African immigrants and refugees in Canada.
 - a. Men's and women's sharing of lived experiences contribute to a gender-based analysis of African migration.
 - b. Published findings increases the literature about this understudied population.

Origin Study Justification of Participant Sample

As previously reiterated, Africans are diverse in terms of their histories, cultures, ethnic groups, religions, languages, and other characteristics, yet they share similarities that bring them together. Some of the similarities they share that the research team identified as drivers for the origin study include the following:

1. There is evidence that in pre-colonial Africa, women had more autonomy and agency in their families and society compared to the present day (Sheldon, 2017). Colonialism, nationalism, and capitalism were movements predominantly led by men that impacted the status of women in Africa. These structural forces reshaped cultural understandings of gender and rendered women subordinate to men (Chadya, 2003; Bujra, 1983, Whitehead & Tsikata, 2003).
2. Compared to men, women have fewer opportunities upon migration. Yet they are often seen as the rebuilders of family life upon migration and are expected to rebuild with the limited support available to them.
3. African immigrants and refugees maintain transnational ties with their home country.
4. African immigrants and refugees tend to identify collectively as such, and work together to overcome challenges faced by their community.

In their recruitment, members of the research team were cognizant of the diversity in Sub-Saharan Africa, and consciously paid attention to diverse perspectives that emerged in the course of the research. Immigrants and refugees from the fifth major region in Africa, North Africa, were excluded. This was due to their starkly different cultures, histories with colonization, and migration experiences, relative to those commonly shared by immigrants and refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa.

To be eligible to participate in the study, participants were required to be Alberta residents, minimum 25 years old, permanent residents, citizens or persons with official refugee status in Canada, currently or previously involved in a heterosexual relationship (married, common law, separated, divorced, widowed), and fluent in English. Different marital statuses were included because in African cultures, gender relations transcend marital breakdowns such

as divorce, separation, and death. The heterosexual family structure was of focus given that a majority of African families have this structure. Most African immigrants and refugees are at least 25 years old, rationalizing the minimum age for this study. The core research team recognized that immigration statuses that lie outside permanent residency, citizenship, or official refugee status warranted a different analysis given the considerably different implications in immigration policy for groups outside of the groups targeted in this study.

Origin Study Preliminary Data Collected in Focus Group Discussions

The core research team has a longstanding history and relationship with African immigrants and refugees in Alberta, as well as service providers who work with and serve this population. They consulted African communities using diverse means such as focus groups and consultations with service providers that spanned over six years to learn about migration challenges faced by African immigrants and refugees. Prior to the origin study, the core research team completed a document analysis of policy documents and reports assembled by service providers and found that different immigrant groups were aggregated and lumped together as one group, leaving a specific focus on African immigrants out of discourse. They also completed a scoping review (Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2020) of scholarly literature and found that African migrant women in particular share concerns regarding: changes in gender relations in their families, a lack of social supports upon migrating, difficulties developing careers, coping with trauma experienced in their home country, and other barriers. The core research team found that gender relations mediated most of these issues.

From preliminary focus group discussions, the researchers learned that African immigrants and refugees typically gravitate towards informal support channels such as religious leaders and elders because formal professionals offering services do not possess adequate

culturally-competent skills to meet their needs. Furthermore, it was found that participants were willing to work with service providers and adapt their current beliefs about gender within the family through the development and implementation of a gender-sensitive framework, and this supported the idea of developing a framework based on findings from the origin study. The aim of the framework was to interweave African values with best practices used in Western society to improve the livelihood of African immigrants and refugees who resettle in Canada in six areas, namely: (1) employment opportunities, (2) financial management, (3) parenting, (4) safety, (5) extended family, and (6) social network and support systems. These six areas were the basis of the questions for the interview protocol used during the semi-structured interviews later on in the research. Please see the interview protocol in Appendix A.

Semi-Structured Interview Procedures From the Origin Study

The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to understand the lived experiences of gender-based challenges among participants. Service providers, policymakers, and other sources of support that service the African immigrant and refugee communities were also interviewed to garner informative insights on these matters. Using purposive sampling, 20 men and 20 women from communities of interest in Edmonton and Calgary were invited for an interview. Between six to eight people who identified as service providers, policymakers, and informal support channels were interviewed as well. Recruitment and meetings for the study took place in two cities in Alberta, namely, Edmonton and Calgary. The primary research sites in Edmonton were the University of Alberta and Africa Centre, and the primary research site in Calgary was the Centre for Newcomers. Alternate sites were used as necessary in cases where participants expressed a preference for a more convenient location. In addition to physical locations,

communication platforms, namely, Skype and telephone, were used to connect with participants for meetings and interviews.

Written consent from participants was mandatory before they could take part in an interview. Interviews were conducted by highly trained community workers, research assistants, the PI, and co-investigators. Members of the research team kept journals and field notes. The interview questions were based on the emergent themes discovered in the preceding stages of the research. Support groups and the advisory committee also offered insight on the development of questions. Interviews were carried out either in-person or by phone, conducted individually with participants, lasted approximately one hour each, and were audio-recorded. Data analysis for the interviews was guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis.

Interview participants received a \$20 gift card as an incentive and \$10 cash as reimbursement for transportation costs. Based on the research experience of the PI with the community and past studies with immigrant groups, these amounts were deemed appropriate for the purposes of the research and not too high to be considered coercive. The purpose of the incentives and reimbursement was to appreciate participants for their time, and to allow participants to access the research site by making appropriate travel arrangements with monetary support available.

Data were anonymized once collected, meaning that personal identifiers (specifically, first and last names, telephone numbers, emails, and ages) were removed. Identifying information was stored separately from the remaining interview data on an encrypted, password-protected computer. Identifying information is not found on the interview transcripts, as it was removed before analysis. After data collection was complete, master lists that linked participant

identifiers with de-identified data were destroyed in order to protect the anonymity of participants.

My Study Data Access and Analytical Procedures

Approval of My Proposal as a Precursor to Data Access

Access to a subset of data from the origin study was provided to me through one of my program supervisors who also acted as the data custodian for the project, Dr. Sophie Yohani. Before I was given the data, I formulated ideas and assembled a proposal for a secondary analysis including mapping my research questions to the interview protocol involved in the origin study (see Appendix B). This process informed the development of my research questions and allowed me to draw potential links between my inquiry and parts of the origin study data that could answer my research questions. My proposal was approved by my program supervisors and the origin study PI and we signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Within the MOU, we agreed to terms and conditions related to confidentiality, access to only the semi-structured interview transcripts for refugees, data transfer via secure means that adhered to protocols outlined in the approved ethics application for the origin study and through our data custodian, publications and authorship rights, intellectual property, and university regulations. Please see Appendix C for the MOU.

Ethical Considerations When Conducting Secondary Data Analysis

Procedural ethics and ethics in practice are both evident in my study (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Procedural ethics were obtained through a formal ethics application process, where I submitted an ethics application to my university, the University of Alberta's Research Board Ethics 2, before I was given access to the data (see Appendix D for my ethics approval letter). The ethics number of the origin study mentioned previously was included on my ethics

application for reference. I was given the ethics application for the origin study after my research proposal and ethics application were approved. Ethics in practice occurred throughout my research, particularly during data storage, management, and analysis. There were ethical protocols put in place before I received the data: data were anonymized by my data custodian before I received it and I agreed to all confidentiality terms as outlined in the origin study ethical requirements and my MOU. When I received the transcripts, I ensured that files were securely handled and stored in a secure place and on an encrypted, password-protected computer, that only the research team has access to the data, and I am following procedures outlined in my ethics application regarding the destroying of data.

The issue of consent arose during my research with regards to the semi-structured interviews used. Given that my study was a secondary analysis and closely related to the origin study, ethics revolving consent were sufficiently met. The origin study is akin to being a “parent” to my study, and my ethics application was approved, allowing me to proceed accordingly as my study was deemed integrous and trustworthy. Approval of my ethics application from the research ethics board served as evidence that consent and confidentiality procedures of the secondary analysis adhere to that of the origin research (Poth, 2019).

My Participants and Sample

There is no set number in terms of how small or large a sample size should be in IPA studies. Nonetheless, between 2 and 25 participants and semi-structured interviews are recommended for traditional phenomenological methods (Alase, 2017). Like other qualitative research methods, small sample sizes are considered ideal for IPA given the idiographic nature of the method. For IPA studies, the sample size primarily depends on the research topic, the amount of time the researcher or research team has to analyze the transcripts, the amount and

adequacy of the data, and any other limitations that must be considered (Smith & Osborn, 2007). An IPA study should produce a “sufficient in-depth engagement with each individual case but also allows a detailed examination of similarity and difference, convergence and divergence” (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 57). My study sample was well positioned for IPA as I used a sample of 11 participants, each case having participated in a single semi-structured interview as part of a larger study.

My study brings a unique perspective to typical research on migration. By using a sample solely composed of African refugees, findings in my study come from a distinct ethno-cultural voice. This is significant given that researchers such as Okeke-Ihejirika and colleagues (2019) highlight that the general approach taken in the research world concerning research about immigrants and refugees is the tendency to focus on shared experiences across immigrant groups regardless of country of origin and intersectional differences related to ethnicity, culture, and other identity factors that bring about differences in migrancy experiences. There are pitfalls to this aggregate approach conventionally taken with migration research because the unique needs and differences among subgroups of migrants are very likely to be overlooked and often are. Research that intentionally considers diverse pre-, during, and post-migration experiences is gravely needed and necessary to comprehend the nuanced differences among migrants coming from different source countries, cultures, and walks of life.

My Guiding Ontology and Epistemology

The ontological and epistemological lens I adopted for this research were hermeneutic realism and post-constructivism respectively. Researchers have deemed these lenses as compatible and complementary (Willig, 2016; Barkin, 2003). The rationale and justification for the use of these perspectives was related to the knowledge I am seeking from this inquiry, and

my methodological design described in the sections that will follow. I was interested in the multiple and diverse African refugee perspectives related to post-migration gender relations within families, and the social construction of gender that may be mediated by postcolonial African cultures.

As Merriam et al. (2001) defined: “Constructivists argue that knowledge/reality/truth is constructed by individuals and by human communities” (p. 414). In the context of IPA, post-constructivism extends beyond constructivism by taking into the account experiences that prompt and make known meanings made during defining moments in life (Larkin et al., 2011). Hence Larkin et al. (2011) suggested that IPA is a “post-constructionist” phenomenological psychology because it recognizes the value of the constructionist view, whilst “wanting to affirm and reinstate experiential meaning-making as a useful mode of understanding in psychology” (p. 327). A post-constructivist view was important for me because I wanted to examine the experiences of a group (African refugees) who are at a point in time that meaning-making is dynamic and ever-changing due to circumstances brought by migration and cultural reconfigurations.

Hermeneutic realism posits that our world exists and that this is a universal truth, yet as humans, we create meaning in our world (Larkin et al., 2006; Slife & Christensen, 2013). I took a hermeneutic philosophical approach to my phenomenological design, as IPA was born from hermeneutic phenomenology developed by early theorists Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (Smith et al., 2009). Heidegger’s philosophical framing focused on situated observations and intersubjectivity whereas Merleau-Ponty prioritized the embodiment and the physical (Larkin et al., 2011). Thus, I chose to use Heidegger’s phenomenological philosophy as a theoretical guide

for my work given that my interest was in exploring phenomena revealed through lived experiences.

Heidegger argued that objects and our natural world could exist without human existence, but when in contact with human existence, these things are considered real or unreal based on human meanings (Larkin et al., 2006). Heidegger conceptualized this thought as “person-in-context”, meaning that we do not choose to be in a relationship with our world, but rather, we inevitably are in such a relationship as part of our being (Larkin et al., 2006). For the purposes of my research paradigm, context is defined as “wordly circumstances in which meanings are made” (Larkin et al., 2006). Thus, the relationship we have with our world is bidirectional; we are a function of our world, and the world is “a function of our involvements with it” (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 106). This informed my post-constructivist epistemological lens, as I was interested in how postcolonial notions of gender shapes the lives of African refugees and how these refugees in turn build their own meanings of these constructs, having implications for transnational experiences.

I used hermeneutic realism to study each participant as person-in-context by learning about their experience of phenomena, namely, gender in parenting pre- and post-migration, and considered their relatedness in terms of the context they are situated in and the positioning they experience the phenomenon from (e.g., culture, geographic location as refugees coming from African countries to Canada) (Larkin et al., 2006; Larkin et al., 2011). Larkin et al. (2011) noted that in inquiry, not only should there be a focus on personal meaning expressed by a participant, but this meaning should be “situated in the cultural and historical context of their production” (p. 322). Heidegger argued for the importance of understanding lived experiences, and not just describing them. Heidegger drew on existential philosophy to shape this critical perspective, and

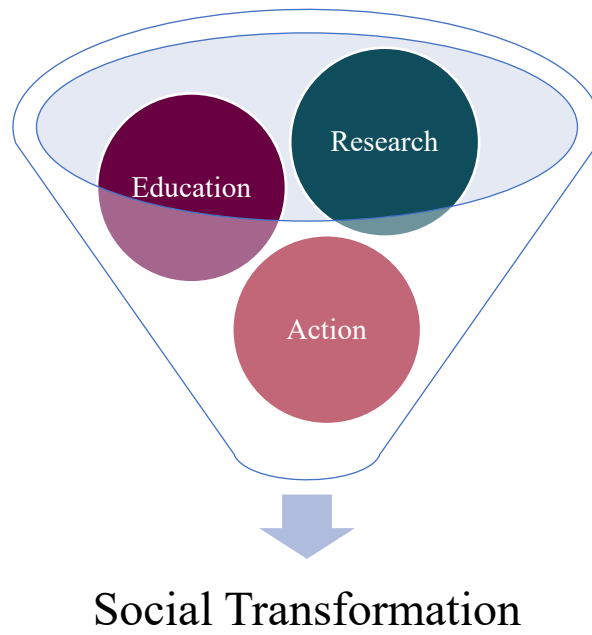
placed an emphasis on the use of hermeneutics and interpretivism within phenomenology. Heidegger's phenomenological philosophy supported my ontological framing of hermeneutic realism and has been known to be the foundation of IPA hence the relevance of Heidegger's philosophical perspective in the current study. Furthermore with this view, IPA is good not only for studying meaning but also contextualizing this meaning and taking into account factors such as culture and the interpreter's background, given the hermeneutic underpinning in the method (Larkin et al., 2011). Essentially, context cannot be removed from the lived experiences of participants and the interpretation of researchers. Overall, hermeneutic realism and post-constructivism were congruent with my method, interpretative phenomenological analysis, allowing for methodological coherence and congruence within my study (Mayan, 2009).

My Study Extends the Origin Study Theoretical Frameworks

I drew upon the two theoretical frameworks used in the origin study and added a third one. The researchers in the origin study used postcolonial feminism and transnationalism as theoretical frameworks. These frameworks were used in my secondary analysis, and they will be further described in the section below. The theoretical frameworks chosen in the origin study informed the overall goal of the research which was to use the study for social transformation through research, education, and action (see Figure 4 below). The researchers used a participatory action research approach throughout the study to further advance this goal.

Figure 4

Illustration of the Overall Goal of the Origin Study – Social Transformation



Similar to the origin study, the main goal of my study using a phenomenological secondary data analysis is to use findings to drive social transformation. The theoretical frameworks used to inform interpretation of results in my case were transnationalism, postcolonial feminism, and intersectionality. Theoretical frameworks are important and needed in IPA because they help to inform the interpretative work that takes place, particularly in unpacking constructs (Larkin et al., 2006). In this section, I describe why and how each theoretical framework was used to illuminate gender-related parenting experiences of African refugees in this study.

Transnationalism.

Transnationalism can be defined as cross-border exchanges of cultural, economic, and material assets, and helps describe how migrants maintain ties to their homeland while residing in a new country. Salami et al. (2020a) defined it as the following:

The concept describes the exchange of goods, information, and sociocultural practices across multiple nation states. It challenges the hegemonic idea of immigrant assimilation while highlighting the social, political, and economic relations between immigrants and their home countries (Villa-Torres et al., 2017). (p. 128)

Transnationalism can occur in many different forms such as communication through media such as phone and email, political activity like exercising the right to vote while outside of the country, remittances, and regular visits to the country of origin (Dunn, 2009). Transnationalism aims to understand how families, cultural practices, power related to social status, and other branches of social organization are changed or sustained across the borders migrants transcend (Vertovec, 2004).

Transnationalism is propelled by international migration and globalization, and it is enabled through “technology, travel, and financial” means (Vertovec, 2004, p. 971).

Transnationalism on its own does not cause transformations in society, but rather it is interwoven in processes already occurring in our world such as globalization, which in turn contributes to gradual changes in ways of life and an unprecedented re-shaping of society. I drew from Vertovec’s theoretical positioning regarding transnationalism given his substantial contributions to the development of the theory. According to Vertovec (2004), transnationalism can be studied according to the following three domains: sociocultural, political, and economic. Each domain is characterized by transformations that are driven by causes, processes, and outcomes.

Transformations are more than just localized changes, and instead, help to explain bifocality and system changes related to sociocultural, political, and economic organization (Vertovec, 2004).

I focused on relating the sociocultural and economic domains to my research because these domains are the most relevant to unpacking familial transnational ties and how parenting differs along the lines of gender in the host society versus the country of origin for the African refugees involved in this study. The sociocultural and economic domains are the most applicable when it comes to analyzing gender, parenting practices, and family from a transnationalism lens. Interests of mine that inspired my use of transnationalism in my inquiry include the study of ways in which transnational parenting manifests and how cultural and familial ties transcend physical borders.

Bifocality is a concept in transnationalism that is crucial to understanding social practices within transnational families, parenting, and childhood (Vertovec, 2004). In the context of transnationalism, bifocality is a dual frame of reference whereby migrants adapt to their host country and “maintain and act upon particularly strong senses of connection to people, places

and senses of belonging associated with their places of origin” (p. 977). I was interested in whether African refugees forged a bifocal identity in their parenting practices upon arrival in Canada.

From a transnational perspective, the home country, host country, and diaspora a migrant belongs to are crucial for understanding how culture plays a role in the new life of migrants like African refugees in Canada. Understandings using this theoretical framework can be extended by including other factors such as gender in a transnational analysis. There are gender differences in the embodiment of transnationalism given that privileges or lack thereof influence mobility and access differences among women and men (Dunn, 2009). Transnational feminism is a branch of transnationalism that takes into account the implications of gender in migration and transnational ties, and “focuses, in particular, on the reality that women bear a disproportionate burden of the economic and social dislocation that result from the neoliberal economic policies that characterize the global economy” (p. 159). The use of a transnational feminist lens can provide insight on the impacts of gendered socioeconomic barriers women face in their migration experiences, and the implications of these gendered experiences in parenting practices (Salami et al., 2020b). The absence of a gender lens when studying migration assumes a gender-neutral narrative as the default experience for migrants (Curry Rodríguez, 2014). Using gender as an analytical unit to better understand how men and women experience migration differently is an advancement to theoretical orientations typically used in migration research that are oblivious to gender differences and hence do not include a gender lens (Curry Rodríguez, 2014).

Intersectionality and Postcolonial Feminism.

Intersectionality and postcolonial feminism are theoretical frameworks that have been noticed by researchers for their congruency with transnationalism (Kerner, 2016; Grabe & Else-

Quest, 2012), which strengthened my justification and use of all three frameworks in my study. I will now describe intersectionality and postcolonial feminism and their key overlaps with transnationalism that informed my triangular usage as depicted in Figure 5 at the end of this section.

Intersectionality was first coined and developed by African American scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (Crenshaw, 1989), and the theoretical framework has contributed to other theories, methodologies, and empirical work (Kerner, 2016). Within the context of migration, my main reason for applying an intersectional lens to study migrancy experiences was to explore the “inherently inequitable access to mobility across various axes of embodied difference, including skin colour, disability, and gender” (Dunn, 2009). One critique of transnationalism highlighted by Dunn (2009) is the lack of an anti-oppressive approach to understanding how systems of oppression related to social locations, such as those demarcated by race and gender for example, cause inequities in migration experiences. Since his critique, Grabe and Else-Quest (2012) have “offered the concept” (p. 159) of transnational intersectionality to emphasize the need to take an intersectional approach to migration research. Taking an intersectional approach in my study aided in understanding how identity factors such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, marital status, and gender intersected and impacted the migration experiences of the refugees in my study, particularly in their parenting practices.

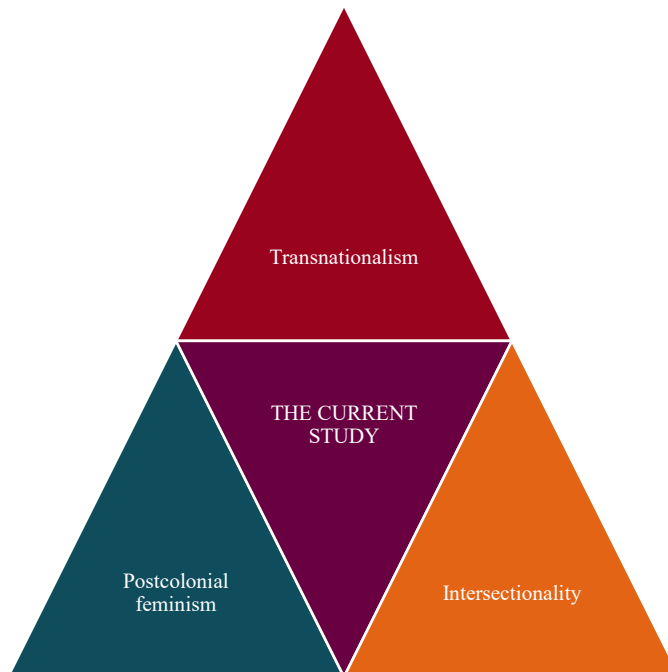
Postcolonial feminism is a theoretical framework that seeks to understand women’s experiences beyond Western women’s experiences with and narratives on gender inequality. Postcolonial feminism has transnational themes and takes into account postcolonial consequences on women’s experiences with inequality (Kerner, 2016). Postcolonial feminism stretches feminist movements past local and national discourses within Western contexts. It does

this by considering historical contexts that have impacted women in our world such as colonialism in the Global South and the implications of such history-defining moments for meanings of gender (i.e., in roles and relations) in non-Western cultures shaped by colonial structures (Kerner 2016; Grabe & Else-Quest, 2012).

Both intersectionality and postcolonial feminist theory challenge gender-based inequality, oppression, discrimination (Kerner, 2016), which were all interests for me within the context of African refugee parenting practices. Both theories promote the transformative-emancipatory paradigm underlying this study by shifting neoliberal-rooted fault-finding habitually directed towards oppressed individuals for their experiences of marginalization to structural forces and ideologies responsible for social inequities. Despite their theoretical variations in addressing marginalization and the subjugation of women, both theories are complementary and can be considered alongside each other (Kerner, 2016), which I did for this study.

Figure 5

Illustration of Theory Triangulation Used in the Current Study



Note. Transnationalism, postcolonial feminism, and intersectionality are known for their congruency in research. This figure roughly depicts the degree to which each framework was used in the interpretation of study findings; transnationalism was used often and postcolonial feminism and intersectionality were used about the same.

My Data Analysis IPA Procedures

I drew on Smith and Osborn's (2007) IPA approach to guide my use of IPA in the current study, keeping in mind that "there is no single, definitive way to do IPA" (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 54). My choice of guiding author is based on Smith's leading contributions to the development of IPA and its current place in the field of psychology. Smith was arguably the first to set aside IPA as a subcategory of phenomenology (Alase, 2017; Tuffour, 2017). Smith and Osborn (2007) described three steps in their approach, and these three steps provided overall guidance to my analysis and were modified as needed. Smith and Osborn (2007) noted that their analytical approach is adaptable and the authors support modifications to the approach as necessary given the interpretative nature of IPA. Occasionally, I drew from Smith et al.'s (1999) work to better describe each step in analysis. Smith and Osborn are the leading authors of both works used and similar ideas are conveyed in both.

Ryan et al. (2007) suggest that data analysis for a phenomenological study depends on the philosophical underpinnings of the study. By choosing Smith and Osborn's (2007) IPA approach, my analysis was methodologically congruent not only with their theorization of IPA but also with my epistemology, social constructivism. Smith and Osborn (2007) do not prescribe a fixed coding method or theoretical frameworks thus I drew on other scholarly material for guidance on approaches that would support methodological congruence in my study (Mayan, 2009). In the previous section I described the theoretical frameworks used in my study and I will describe the coding methods used during my analysis in Stage 1 below.

Transcript Preliminary Reading and Selection.

With several cases¹ to analyze, Smith and Osborn (2007) recommended reading through one transcript at a time to maintain the idiographic nature in IPA. In addition to a case-by-case analysis, I looked for shared cross-cutting themes among the cases. A case-by-case analysis coupled with a focus on shared experiences is recommended by Smith and Osborn (2007) when working with a relatively large sample in IPA.

I used Microsoft Word for my transcript preliminary reading and selection process. The origin study had 21 participants who identified as refugees. I was given the interview transcripts for these 21 participants. To select transcripts that would best answer my research questions, I followed a series of steps which I will now describe. I began by reading each transcript for the first time, highlighted interesting points in the data, and wrote down my initial thoughts in the page margins on anything that stood out in the data. This was my “free textual analysis” of the data, where there were no fixed rules dictating what needed to be noted (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 67). The goal of my second round of reading was to select the transcripts I would use for further study. During my second reading, I searched for terms, phrases, and subtle commentary about gender roles and relations in parenting and familial interactions and highlighted them. I marked transcripts that had information in these areas as rich and other transcripts were marked as not rich. I then proceeded to mark each highlighted section in each rich transcript with one of the three relationships reflected in my study objectives: (a) parent-child interactions, (b) parent-to-parent interactions, and (c) extended family and family-community interactions. I reread unhighlighted sections of each transcript to ensure no potential evidence was left behind. I then listed my research questions on a separate document and reread the transcripts. For each research question, I wrote the transcript identification number of each transcript that addressed the topic

¹ The term “case” is used in the following sections and in this chapter. It is defined as a unit of analysis; it is equivalent to one interview transcript.

reflected in a particular question to ensure I had a reasonable number of parents who could speak to each research question. I came down to 11 cases for my study. The average number of children for each parent in my sample was four (ranged between one to six) and the children of parents in my sample were a mix of young children, adolescents, and young adults. Individual demographic information of my study participants is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1*Participant Demographics Table*

Participant Identification Code	Gender	Country of Origin	Religion	Education Level	Marital Status	Number & Gender of Children
CAF002	Woman	Cameroon	Catholic	College diploma	Married	2 boys, 4 girls
CAF008	Woman	Zimbabwe	Christian	University degree	Married	2 girls, 1 boy, 1 child's gender not reported
CAF012	Woman	South Sudan	Christian	College diploma	Single	6 children, genders not reported
CAF013	Woman	Zimbabwe	Not reported	Graduate degree	Married	3 boys
CAM002	Man	South Sudan	Christian	High school or less	Married	2 boys, 1 girl
CAM004	Man	Zimbabwe	Christian	College diploma	Married	2 boys, 2 girls
CAM005	Man	Eritrea	Christian/Jehovah's Witness	High school or less	Married	2 girls
CAM006	Man	South Sudan	Christian	University degree	Married	1 girl
CAM011	Man	Zimbabwe	Christian	College diploma	Married	3 boys
CAM013	Man	Sudan	Christian	College diploma	Married	4 girls
EDF002	Woman	Congo	Christian	High school or less	Single	3 girls, 1 boy

Stage 1: Looking for Themes.

I reread the 11 cases in their entirety to thoroughly familiarize myself with each transcript to a greater extent. I used Word processor functions and features for analysis stages 1 and 2. My notes consisted of important quotes, summaries, initial interpretations, cultural references, consistencies or contradictions in what participants shared, the extent to which the interview transcript contains the probes outlined in the interview protocol sheet, commentary on the interviewer's interviewing style and tone, and if there were certain parts of the interview that appeared fragmented (Smith & Osborn, 2007; Smith et al., 1999). I started off coding with the case that had the most notes and therefore potential codes, and this strategy was in line with IPA's idiographic approach which involves thoroughly examining one case and then inducing themes from it (Smith et al., 1999).

Saldaña (2016) described a code as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 4). Themes on the other hand, are products of coding that emerge from analysis (Saldaña, 2016, p. 15). Larkin et al. (2006) provided some guidance on coding approaches in IPA. According to Larkin et al. (2006), IPA utilizes cumulative and integrative approaches to coding, cumulative meaning that "patterns of meaning are generated within a transcript" and integrative meaning that "patterns of meaning are generated across a set of transcripts" (p. 116). The specific coding methods I used to generate patterns of meaning within and across transcripts were based on Saldaña's (2016) coding manual guidelines. After retrospection of my research questions and paradigm (Saldaña, 2016), I determined that elemental coding methods were best to use in this study, specifically, in vivo coding and concept coding (Saldaña, 2016). Using two coding methods is recommended by Saldaña (2016) to

enhance coding rigour. Additionally, by combining these two particular coding methods, I created my own emergent conceptual framework: starting off with in vivo coding allowed for theming possibilities to be open and emergent while subsequent conceptual coding enabled me to apply an interpretative approach to determining theme labels.

The use of in vivo coding was methodologically coherent with my epistemological perspective and the use of IPA because in vivo coding allows a researcher to explore the personal and interpretative meanings within the data (Saldaña, 2016). In vivo coding was chosen because this coding method best aligns with IPA. A characteristic of IPA is to use data verbatim from the transcripts to support interpretative claims (Larkin et al., 2011). In vivo coding uses words directly said by participants, and this way of coding can be empowering especially for vulnerable groups like the African refugees in my study since the voices of participants permeate through this analytical coding method. Saldaña (2016) noted that in vivo coding is typically used in “studies that prioritize and honour the participant’s voice” (p. 106). The opportunity to empower my participants through in vivo coding supported the transformative-emancipatory paradigm conceptualized for my study, which was a motivating factor for choosing this coding method.

Conceptual coding is fairly used in cultural and phenomenological studies like my own (Saldaña, 2016). Saldaña (2016) defined a concept as “a word or short phrase that symbolically represents a suggested meaning broader than a single item or action” (p. 119), and this was the working definition of concept I used while applying conceptual coding to my data. In conceptual coding, codes move from simply stating objects and observable behaviours to macro-level ideas (Saldaña, 2016). Conceptual coding is “highly interpretative” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 122) and “it stimulates reflection on broader social constructs” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 120), thus this coding method was strongly aligned with my epistemological perspective and use of IPA. To get to a

conceptual code in my analysis, a series of in vivo codes that were similar in meaning were analytically condensed to form a concept code (Saldaña, 2016).

I used Smith & Osborn's (2007) suggestion for theming data. In IPA, the purpose of themes is to "move the response to a slightly higher level of abstraction and may invoke more psychological terminology" (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 68), which was the case in my study. Themes induced from my data were "high level" enough to draw "theoretical connections" but still very much related to what was voiced by participants (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 68). Conceptual coding as the last step in my emergent conceptual framework allowed for a smooth analytical transition from codes to the delineation of themes. I describe theme clustering in the next section.

Stage 2: Connecting Themes.

I assembled clusters of themes by grouping those similar to each other. Each cluster was then given a name representing the overarching theme for each (Smith et al., 1999; Smith & Osborn, 2007). Overarching themes were denoted as superordinate themes (simply known as "themes" herein) while themes within clusters were called subthemes. Subthemes that were not adequately supported by data in the transcripts were dropped during this stage. My decision was based on the frequency of the subtheme within the transcript, how rich the data were to support a particular subtheme, and if the subtheme supported and flowed with others (Smith et al., 1999). By the end of this stage I had 2 themes and 11 subthemes.

Stage 3: Analyzing Other Cases.

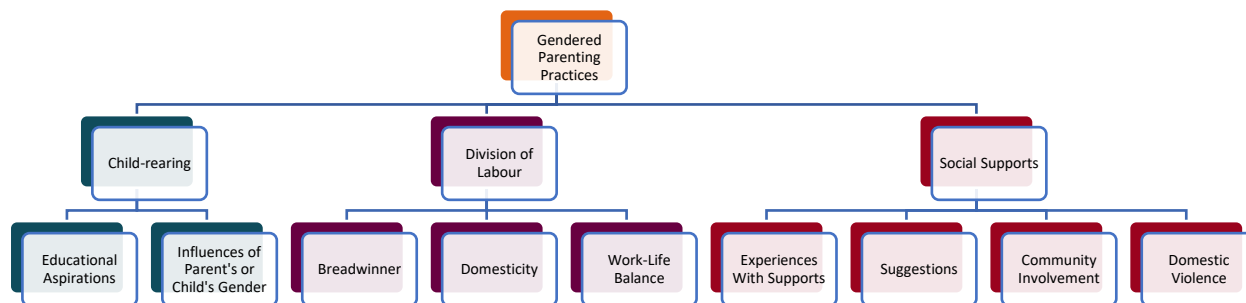
I used the clusters of themes from the previous stage to analyze the remaining cases. I added new themes and subthemes as they emerged from the data and some were later on condensed. I looked for "similarities and differences across cases to produce detailed accounts of

patterns of meaning and reflections on shared experience” (Shinebourne, 2011, p. 23).

Similarities and differences were tracked primarily according to participants’ gender to produce a gender-based analysis beyond mentions of gender in the transcripts. During analysis, special attention was paid to not only what was said about gendered experiences, but who said them. The gender of the person speaking in transcripts was noted as well as common parenting challenges shared by a reasonable number of participants according to gender. This was a way to understand gendered experiences implicitly and explicitly. NVivo is a software commonly used in qualitative research as a tool to assist with organizing data during analysis. I used NVivo to complete my analysis of the remaining cases. A total of 3 themes and 9 subthemes were induced by the end of this stage. A coding tree depicting initial theme and subtheme names is in Figure 6 below. My final coding list is in Appendix E.

Figure 6

Coding Tree With Initial Names of Themes and Subthemes



Strategies For Enhancing Trustworthiness and Validity

To promote trustworthiness and rigour in qualitative research, a best practice is to conduct an evaluation of the study (Alase, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Cohen and Crabtree (2006) noted that it is important to use evaluative criteria based on the method used in a study and that we are not bound to one set of criteria but rather, we must choose criteria that are most suitable for our study. For my study, I drew upon Creswell's (1998) and Lincoln and Guba's (1985) set of guidelines to evaluate my study. Given the secondary data analysis nature of my study, not all criteria listed were applicable to my research. I evaluated my study using the following five criteria for evaluating phenomenological studies: theory triangulation, reflexivity, thick description, external audits and audit trail. As a general recommended practice for qualitative research and given that I was the only one who analyzed the data, I also employed strategies to enhance coding rigour and interpretative validity.

Theory Triangulation

To achieve theory triangulation, I used more than one theoretical framing to interpret my data (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006) which helped to provide a nuanced understanding of the experiences of participants from different lenses.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a methodological tool used in multiple ways throughout the qualitative research process. Reflexivity takes different forms and serves as a part of the evaluation of a study. When practiced, it enhances rigour and ethical practice in the research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). For my study, I engaged in reflexivity in four ways: self-reflexivity, reflexivity about those studied, analytic reflexivity, and reflexivity about my audience (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009; Pillow, 2003; Patton, 2002). I maintained a reflexivity journal throughout the

research process to record personal thoughts, values, beliefs, and reactions to my research, as well as methodological decisions and rationale for these decisions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My research supervisors and the origin study PI were also resources used for my reflexive practice. I critiqued my own social location as a researcher at different points in the research. I will now go into more detail about how I practiced reflexivity in the four ways listed above.

A researcher is an instrument in research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and this facilitates a researcher's access, understanding, and interpretation of the experiences of participants (Clark & Sharf, 2007). My guiding questions for self-reflexivity were: (a) What do I know? and (b) How do I know what I know? (Patton 2002; Hertz, 1997). My positionality, epistemology, and ontology all informed this stage of my reflexive practice and how I constructed interpretations of the data (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Part of my self-reflexivity was taking into account the authority I had in developing the research in terms of conceptualization, direction of the inquiry, and methodological decision-making, and how my interests and values shaped these choices (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Pillow (2003) offered the following supporting insight:

To be reflexive, then, not only contributes to producing knowledge that aids in understanding and gaining insight into the workings of our social world but also provides insight on how this knowledge is produced. (p. 178)

I bore in mind throughout the research how my positioning as a researcher with authority over the project could influence analysis, interpretation, writing and presenting the lived experiences of participants (Pillow, 2003; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). I used reflexivity to examine my internal conceptions of self, and how my socialization experiences impacted the research process and how research participants are represented (Pillow, 2003). Reflexivity is not just about assessing one's own identity, but rather, a critique of this identity whilst confronting power

inherent to research (Pillow, 2003). Thus, on a recurring basis, I critiqued the notion of objectivity as well as power dynamics between myself, the researcher, and the participants included in my study.

In terms of reflexivity about those studied in my research, I considered the concept of insider/outsider researcher status. There are appreciable benefits of having research led by a researcher considered to be an insider regarding the research topic at hand. Research led by an insider researcher has the advantage of possessing what Delgado Bernal (1998) coined as “cultural intuition”, where cultural subtleties that may have otherwise been overlooked or left out by an outsider researcher are more likely to be noticed and picked up by a researcher from the community being studied. My cultural connection to the research instilled a sense of confidence that I was uniquely positioned, authentic, and competent to best analyze, interpret, and share the experiences of others with a similar cultural background through my study. However, as Pillow (2003) states, “being part of the community or having racial commonalities with the subjects of your research does not automatically yield the research egalitarian” (p. 182). Understanding this made me realize that my power as a researcher needed to be interrogated regardless of the fact that I identify with the background of the research participants. Although I walked into my research firmly believing that I would relate to some cultural references and experiences expressed by participants, I also planned to use this research opportunity I was given to learn more about my community and thus, myself. My research co-supervisor Dr. Yohani and the PI for the origin study both identify as part of the community studied and have substantive experience doing participatory action research with this community. They were able to help me unpack some aspects of my research I found intriguing yet unfamiliar with.

It is not possible for one to consciously know all preconceived notions and biases one may have about the research topic before engaging in the research. Therefore, reflexivity is an ongoing practice throughout the research process that appraises the construction of knowledge (Smith et al., 2009; Alase, 2017; Pillow, 2003; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). I started practicing reflexivity right from the beginning of my research during the conceptualization of the study and used it throughout the research to query subjectivity, biases, potential influences, and limitations that may have impacted the research (Pillow, 2003; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

Reflexive iteration is central in analytic reflexivity. Iteration in this sense means to purposely revisit the data regularly as new insights emerge from the data, in order to refine meanings developed through the data (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). One way I engaged in analytic reflexivity was to ask myself the following after each coding and theming stage, which was used by Srivastava & Hopwood (2009) in their data analysis framework to refine the focus of their analysis and make links back to the research questions: “What is the dialectical relationship between what the data are telling me and what I want to know?”. Part of my reflexivity about those studied was probing how they know what they know (Patton, 2002), and I used my ontological framing of hermeneutic realism to understand that there is truth and meaning underlying lived experiences, and mindful that access to the views of participants relies on iterative and reflexive interpretative process of the researcher (Smith, 1996).

Pillow (2003) articulated the importance of reflexivity about the audience, which I considered in my study:

...reflexivity and the reflexive text not only trace and challenge the constructs of the author but also challenge the reader – pushing the reader to analyze, question, and re-question her/his own knowledges and assumptions brought to the reading. (p. 189)

The audience of my research and how they would make sense of my findings was always kept in mind especially during the writing of this thesis (Patton, 2002).

Thick Description

Providing a rich, thick description of the phenomenon explored is a way to promote external validity in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I met this standard of verification in my study and evidence of this can be found in the discussion section of this thesis. For each subtheme I provided a rich and thick description by describing research results with quotes of participants, interpretation, and literature to help readers capture the essence of the experiences of participants in my study.

External Audits and Audit Trail

My supervisors evaluated the quality, accuracy, and validity of the research (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). I was very fortunate to have a co-supervisor who is a highly respected methodologist in the research community, Dr. Cheryl Poth. Using her expertise in the field of research methods, Dr. Poth provided me with substantial feedback on my methodology and methods throughout my research and ensured my secondary analysis was high quality (e.g., see Poth, 2019). In terms of an audit trail, I kept one from the beginning of the study until the end of my research. To accomplish this, I shared all notes, drafts, analysis files, and other relevant materials describing my research with my supervisors in order for them to trace and evaluate all steps taken for the research.

Enhancing Coding Rigour and Interpretative Validity

To help bolster rigour in my coding of data, I used two strategies suggested by Saldaña (2016). Saldaña (2016) recommended using two coding methods to boost rigour. Following this recommendation, I applied two ways of coding during data analysis, namely, in vivo coding and

concept coding. More about these coding approaches are explained in the data analysis procedures section of this thesis. I also used intercoder reliability to test for interpretative convergence. To do this, I shared a portion of my transcript with a colleague, provided them with my coding list, and asked them to apply my coding list to the portion of the transcript. I matched their coding with my own to assess for a general agreement in coding.

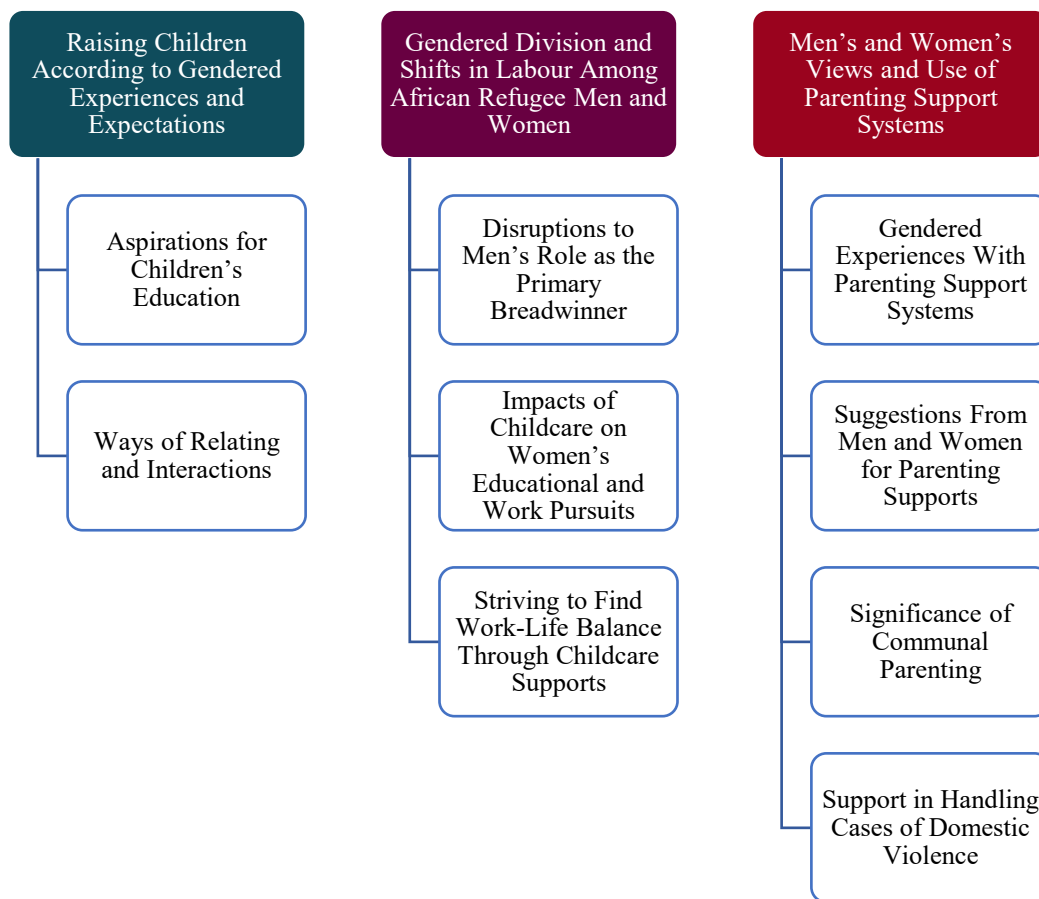
Overall, trustworthiness and rigour are evident in my study given the multiple strategies used to ensure veracity in findings. By using two sets of evaluative criteria, I was able to evaluate my study against applicable standards of verification.

Chapter Closing

In this chapter, I outlined the methods used to analyze data used for my study. I described my study design rationale, procedures for accessing data from the origin study, and strategies I used to enhance the trustworthiness and validity of my study. In the next chapter, I present my study findings and a discussion for each of my findings.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion

In this chapter, I present the findings of the study as well as a discussion for each of my findings. 3 themes and 9 subthemes emerged from the data, which are listed in Figure 7 below. Each theme begins with an introductory statement about the theme, how it was defined, and a restatement of the subthemes that followed from the theme. Discussion points are interspersed within the findings when appropriate for the purpose of drawing links to findings in past research or to highlight new insights into the gendered experiences of African refugee parents that emerged from the data.

Figure 7*List of Themes and Subthemes*

Raising Children According to Gendered Experiences and Expectations

This theme conveys cultural influences to parenting approaches based on the gendered experiences of parents in my study and the gender of their children. The subthemes discussed below point to two key influences the parents described in the interviews to raise their children: (1) Aspirations for Children's Education, and (2) Ways of Relating and Interactions.

Aspirations for Children's Education

This first subtheme refers to the cultural value that education plays in the aspirations African refugee parents have for their children as a parent in Canada. I begin with a discussion relating the aspirations shared similarly by mothers and fathers and the unique views of single mothers.

In response to a question about aspirations for their children, a majority of parents in this study described educational aspirations for their children. These parents expressed valuing education and a belief that post-secondary education in particular is key for success. Men and women alike, regardless of whether they had post-secondary educational training, hoped that their children would attend post-secondary school in their new country, Canada. One mother without a post-secondary education alluding that an education is key to economic prosperity stated:

They're trying, school is not easy, but they have to do what they can do to move them forward. In this country [Canada] when you have education, it can take you far, but if you don't have education, that's another level that you cannot move forward.

It is well established in the literature that African refugee parents aspire for their children to complete post-secondary education. Several researchers have documented the associations parents make between post-secondary education as a means to bring to bring honour and respect

to the family name, make exceptional contributions to society, improve their livelihood in Canada, and help them thrive in a new country (Adekoya & Sinacore, 2019; Lazarus, 2009; Baffoe, 2010). Overall, African parents want their children to be responsible, respectable, and self-sufficient (Kgomo, 1996; Adekoya & Sinacore, 2019), and believe that education and establishing a steady career is a means to fulfilling these values.

Some parents in my study attributed high hopes and dreams they have for their children to their own experiences struggling to settle in Canadian society, particularly as it relates to employment experiences and single parent status. One university-trained father explained the challenges of accessing decent employment, educational credentials earned in his origin country not being recognized in Canada, and these experiences driving his educational aspirations for his daughter:

...Because the one thing I noted in my – while I am here, is that the system has blocked the immigrant...The system has blocked the immigrant by saying this rule or regulation apply. Somebody is a graduate of law, I cannot practice here. It's ridiculous...Now, the difference is the language. Now I'm working hard for my daughter to be a doctor or a lawyer...not to be a cheap labour. Now I'm being put down, pinned down as a cheap labour...

African refugee parents in previous studies have described Canada as a place that can provide their families with safety, security, opportunity, and a better life for their children. However, similar to my results, the barriers they personally face as newcomers from a different country and culture motivates them to encourage their children to take up educational and career opportunities that their new country has to offer (Lazarus, 2009; Este & Tachble, 2009). They wish for their children to pursue higher education for better job prospects, income, and an overall

different experience than they had as refugees (Este & Tachble, 2009; Adekoya & Sinacore, 2019). It is important to note that research evidence has revealed that despite having high aspirations for their children, African refugees and other Black parents more broadly speaking lack access to resources, networks, and social capital that can be used to effectively direct their children and support their academic pursuits (Stewart et al., 2012; Salami et al., 2017a).

Analysis of the data showed that the two single mothers in this study held unique aspirations for their children, especially their daughters, which stemmed from their own gendered lived experiences as women intersecting with their status as single, mothers, refugees, and African. Both single mothers emphasized and were quite adamant that they hoped their children, particularly their daughters, would grow to become independent, self-sufficient, and more educated than they were. One college-educated single mother voiced that she wanted her daughter to be educated and stand up for herself as a Black woman in Canada:

I don't want them to end like me. I need them to be well educated and to achieve their goals. To be somebody else in the future and to stood up as a Black woman, well educated in Canada.

The other single mother desired for her daughters to be financially stable, self-reliant, and educated. Based on her experience as a single mother, she believed that her daughters would always need to be able to provide for themselves as they may not have men to rely on for financial support as culturally expected given that unforeseen family situations such as divorce or becoming a single parent may arise. The following captures this sentiment in the words of this mother of three daughters:

Like if they finish high school, they go to college, they find something... Whatever they want to do that will make them stable in their finance, because you cannot depend on a

man in this country. You always have to be strong and provide for yourself, because tomorrow a man will not be there. So how are you going to cope if you have children or maybe divorced, how are you going to cope. But if you have a career, you know that you can always fall back into your career and you can be stable, whether the money is there or is not there, you are financially stable. So that's why I always push my kids to learn, move forward, because where I came from is different, I learned it the hard way back home...My main priority is for them to learn, learn so that nobody will look down on you tomorrow. When you have your education, that's your ticket, you can go anywhere and be proud of yourself that you go to school, that you achieved something...So you know so as a single mother I want my children to learn, I want them to make me proud and make themselves proud that they achieved something, things that I did not achieve.

From an intersectionality perspective, we can better understand the reasoning behind the study's two single mothers' aspirations for their daughters. For example, Elabor-Idemudia (1999) highlights their intersectional subordination as African women in the patriarchal Western culture:

As a group, African/Black women tend to experience their social world differently than do men and other, non-black women...they experience oppression, subordination, exploitation, and discrimination mainly because of their race and gender. (p. 40)

Their intersecting identities as women, refugees, single mothers, African, and Black impacted them to an extent where it was important for them to keep in mind their lived experiences and hardships as they raised their daughters. The gendered aspirations single mothers in my study had for their children stemmed from the challenging experiences these mothers faced related to their intersecting identities.

Ways of Relating and Interactions

The contribution of this subtheme is the gendered outlook specific to how parents describe how they interact with and relate to their children. My analysis using a postcolonial feminist framework helped me understand how patriarchal norms may be influencing their actions in two distinct ways of interacting and relating to their children, specifically, how men and women parent according to the gender of their child and the unique experiences of being a step-parent. Most remarks in the data made about parenting based on the gender of the child were shared by men.

Some fathers in this study described themselves as being protective of their daughters and concerned for their safety, while a similar attitude was not held for their sons. One father explained that culturally, there are different views when it comes to parenting male children. He suggested that the role of an African father includes protecting their daughters and ensuring that they are pursuing an acceptable path such as education, while their role for sons involves training them to be the head of the family since culturally men are preferred to be the head in African families. In the words of this father:

As a father of the family, there are obligations and rights. One of the obligations is to protect my daughter. One of the obligations is to keep her safe. One of the obligations is to keep her in school...as a boy there are always differences, especially in African culture. And we still follow that here. We like the boy always to be the head of the family. And therefore, you'll always be careful to teach [him] how to be a responsible man. That's number one.

The same father quoted above shared that for female children, daughters are expected to act in culturally-acceptable ways expected of women in his origin country Sudan which include

refraining from certain behaviours such as drinking, smoking, and limiting the number of social gatherings they attend. He indicated that there are at times different perspectives between parents and female children regarding parenting practices rooted in the cultural expectations of women that he mentioned. He explained that although sometimes daughters may feel as though their parents are against them when cultural expectations of women are evoked, he suggested that in such situations parents believe that they are taking care of them by following cultural norms for women. In this father's words:

Yeah, we always argue, it's very hard...it is this unlimited right, we argue about it, we argue about, because it's different when you have to follow the culture. We, in Africa, we always take care of the girl. Girls are not allowed to go out often. They can go if there is a party, big party, which is shared by a lot of people. We don't drink. In South Sudan ladies don't drink, don't smoke. Now, they claim it here we are against them, which is not true. We are taking care of them. [We always] argue with her, and she understand.

Looking to the literature, some studies have found that it is more acceptable in some African immigrant families for boys to engage in social activities outside of the household compared to girls, and that girls are typically encouraged to assist with household work (Phillips-Mundy, 2011; Williams et al., 2011; Cook & Waite, 2016; Togo, 2006; Adekoya & Sinacore, 2019). There is evidence that these gendered views held by African parents are changing. For example, Tetreault et al. (2021) found that Somali immigrant mothers in Canada make an effort to assign housework to girl and boy children more equally. Interestingly, in Tetreault et al.'s (2021) study, it was found that there was resistance to change among some Somali children because they were accustomed to the gender roles traditionally held in their culture which made it challenging for them to adjust to new ways.

Another father shared that he was concerned and sometimes had conflict with his children about their choice of friends. He indicated that he was especially worried about his daughters' friends. His advice to his daughters regarding their friendships focused on being cautious about the boys they hung out with. In his words:

I think at times I had the conflict, I'd say it was a conflict with the children in the choice of their friends. I am glad that they realised and accepted the parental advice in the choice of their friends, especially the girls. They were advised, we advised the girls to be careful with the boys that they were going out with.

While fathers in my study indicated feeling anxious and protective of their daughters, there is research that reports on African immigrant mothers' difficulties in raising boys. For instance, Somali immigrant mothers in Canada in Tetreault et al.'s (2021) study claimed that boy children were harder to raise compared to girls.

One father shared that in his family, he and his wife used to provide counsel to their two daughters and two sons based on the gender of a child. He explained that for issues perceived as critical to address for female children, his wife took the lead on such conversations with their daughters. He further explained that there were certain things he felt, and according to his culture, were not appropriate for him as a man to discuss with his daughters and that his wife was better positioned given that his wife and their daughters share the same gender. The parents in this family took a similar approach for their sons, where the father provided counsel to his sons on topics such as relationship advice. The following is a quote that conveys the views of the father in this family in his own voice:

We used to sit down together with my spouse and talk to the child but I believe that my spouse as the mother, she will go sit down on her own with the eldest daughter and

discuss critical issues. You know, our culture was – we could never discuss critical things like sex issues with your daughter, you always wanted to make that to the moms to discuss with the daughters, so there are certain things I could not talk to my daughter...I also had my discussions with my sons about their choice of their girlfriends and how they should behave when they have a girlfriend.

Similar to this finding, Salami et al.'s (2020b) found that parent-child relationships in some African immigrant families are stronger between parents and children of the same gender. For example, parents in Salami et al.'s (2020b) study reported that girls receive most of their parental counsel from their mothers.

Some mothers and fathers in my study who are step-parents held different views from one another in terms of parenting step-children. The step-mothers in my study felt that they were obligated to assume a mothering role for their step-children and care for their step-children as their own. Below is a quote from one step-mother with her views on parenting step-children:

My boyfriend and I have two kids, I play a big part in his children's life, because I'm a mother, I love kids. So whatever I do for my kids, I do it for his kids also, I don't want them to feel bad that oh I don't have a mother that do this for me, so I take them all as my own. I do what I can just to make them happy, not only for my kids.

On the other hand, men in my study who are step-fathers felt that it was harder for them to play a parenting role in the lives of step-children because of their step-parent status. In the words of one step-father:

The other challenges when you living with step children, it's not easy, it's not an easy situation... Not really a major conflict as such, but when you are a step father, it means you are a step away... I think the cause for certain conflicts comes from differences is

that if you are not the biological father, the percentage for listening to what you want them to do is not the same as what would happen if they were your biological children.

So you know, I have a limit as to what I can say or what I can advise them.

My analysis pointed to a gender difference in views and experiences step-mothers and step-fathers have about step-parenting in their blended families, and the views pointed to patriarchal understandings of parenthood. I found that even in step-parenting, mothers are assumed to have a natural affinity for children while this supposedly innate feature is not an assumed characteristic of fathers. Step-parenting within African immigrant and refugee families in Canada often goes unexplored in research and this finding provides new insight on step-parenting within African refugee families.

Gendered Division and Shifts in Labour Among African Refugee Men and Women

This theme conveys parenting responsibilities assigned within families examining different roles amongst the genders. Three subthemes emerged from this theme: (1) Disruptions to Men's Role as the Primary Breadwinner, (2) Impacts of Childcare on Women's Educational and Work Pursuits, and (3) Striving to Find Work-Life Balance through Childcare Supports.

Disruptions to Men's Role as the Primary Breadwinner

In this subtheme, I provide my interpretation of participants' perceptions of a primary breadwinner role in the family. A common experience amongst parents is a disruption of the breadwinner role in Canada. The nature of the gendered roles, disruptions in the Canadian context, and the implications for the family are discussed below.

According to the majority of men and women in my study, there is a cultural expectation of African men to play the role of primary breadwinner in the family. Men and women shared a common understanding of men's roles in the family as the primary source for family's financial

needs. One father shared that he believed that the money he made was for his family, particularly for the care of his children. He highlighted the challenge of earning sufficient income in Canada in fulfilling financial responsibilities for his family. In this father's words:

I work for them, not for myself. I work for them so that they have a better education. So I'm working. I tell you I'm working for them. This money does not belong to me, it belongs to the kids. That's why you know, sometimes you don't get enough money for the income over here.... Sometime, it depends what kind of job you are doing. The men is everything for programming. Money for the school fees, money for the clothing, money for the shoes, money for the books, money for the – so a lot of things separated.

Other men in my study described the hindrances that employment barriers bring and the consequences for their ability to generate a stable income and fulfill the breadwinner role. They explained employment barriers as diverse as the deskilling in work, low paying and unstable jobs, the lack of consideration of previous work experiences and educational credentials, not being able to speak English fluently, and the lack of Canadian experience and citizenship. For many it was a combination of these factors affecting their ability to carry out the primary breadwinner role. Other studies have had similar findings, where underemployment, discrimination in the workforce, menial jobs, and employment that does not match the educational qualifications African immigrant and refugee men bring to Canada has had consequences for the provider role men are traditionally expected to fulfill (Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018; Este & Tachble, 2009).

Some men and women in my study described the supplementary or even subordinate role that women's financial contribution plays in the family finances in Canada. One father explained that his wife is not expected to financially support the family. Typically according to African

cultural norms, he would not ask her for such support. To illustrate this culturally-influenced belief, I describe his example of a computer purchase for his daughter and the breadwinner role he believes he should have played. In the words of this father:

If she want to support me, I don't tell her to support me. It's me all the time. If she want to contribute, she can do it, but it's not a must to her to do that. If she see something is missing, she can bring it. But it's not a must. That's my house. She can take my note and she can buy – last time she bought computer to my daughter, and I didn't say no. But it's supposed to be me. Right?...Because the wife is – always the man in Africa is the head of the house. He's depending on everything, I bring and put it in. My wife, she can bring her financial or whatever she can, she put it into our – she always a helper. She cannot take care of the house. She's the helper, [no better word]. Yeah, yeah.

Many parents in my study indicated that in Canada, the primary breadwinner role shifted from being a role culturally ascribed to African men to one that was shared between men and women. The disruption was attributed to greater financial needs of the family while resettling in Canada. The consequences related to men's inability to solely fulfill the primary breadwinner role for various reasons including an insufficient income, unemployment, and the absence of men in the case of single mothers. The shift in the breadwinner role experienced by African refugee men and women in resettlement countries influence their parenting practices as well. One woman shared her experience with taking up the primary breadwinner role in Canada while her husband took on roles traditionally assigned to her as a woman to care for the house and children. In this woman's case, her husband's health issues prevented him from working and she reported being propelled into the breadwinner role because of his unemployment. She explained that before her family migrated to Canada and even while they were in Canada but before her

husband's health issues, her husband had been the primary breadwinner in her family. She described him as having the 'philosophy' of a 'proper African man' whose 'got this idea that he has to take care of the family', which I interpreted with the aid of postcolonial feminist theory as a man whose cultural belief system is rooted in patriarchal understandings of men's roles within the family. Her husband's health issues caused him to stop working and resultingly, he took on less financial responsibilities in the family than he was used to. In her words:

So currently he's at home and he'll tell you if he has to talk to you that he's my house husband. So when I get home the house is clean, the food is cooked. He's pretty good with that. So, before we came to Canada my husband was the main breadwinner, and he's got this philosophy, you know, he's a proper African man. He's got this idea that he has to take care of the family. So when we came to Canada it was still that way. He did everything. He paid the mortgage. I only had to pay the utilities and the telephone and groceries. And he did everything else.

She also described taking on the bulk of financial responsibilities in her family because she worked. This woman further revealed that with her new family situation, it was typical for her husband to complete house tasks such as cooking and cleaning before she came home from work. She described her husband as her 'house husband', which I noticed was a play on a more popular colloquial saying 'house wife' that insinuates wives as domestic workers. 'Roles have vice-versed' and 'change in circumstances' were other terms this woman used to describe the shift in gender roles she experienced with her husband. In this woman's view, despite the shift her family experienced with the breadwinner role, she and her husband were good at working together to manage the family purse. The following is a supporting quote from this woman:

Now with the change in circumstances we've changed it around. So I'm the one that pays for everything. The bigger – the bulk of the account and he just does the phone, the car insurance, and some groceries, because his pension isn't very much. So it's like our roles have vice-versed. But he's always been really ... been very good with working together to manage our money.

Past studies have found that for African immigrant and refugee families post-migration, there tended to be a gendered change in the primary breadwinner role. Specifically, African women have assumed the breadwinner role for various reasons mainly related to socioeconomic circumstances (Hyman et al., 2004; Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018; Salami et al., 2017b; Este & Tachble, 2009).

Interestingly, I found that not all men in my study were readily accepting of the changes they experienced in Canada with the primary breadwinner role. Some men explicitly noted or implied that sharing leadership in finances and decision-making with women was unpalatable to them. The quote below is the response from a father when asked about how financial decisions are made within his family and whether it is the man who decides or the wife who decides on financial matters. He explained that in South Sudanese culture, even if a woman holds a position of power in society such as in governance, men still have control over everything and have power. He contrasted this to his experience in Canada, where he observed that women tended to have more control than he was used to seeing including when it comes to the family purse.

Because here in Canada here the woman control everything, but not the man, its opposite apply. But in South Sudan men control everything. Whatever she's a minister or whatever, she's a president it's still the man controlling everything, that the men have power.

Similar to my findings, previous studies have found that African immigrant and refugee men in Canada have expressed their contempt with women's increased agency in the family when it comes to the family purse and when men are no longer viewed as the as main provider and decision-maker in the family (Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018; Este & Tachble, 2009; Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2019).

Impacts of Childcare on Women's Educational and Work Pursuits

In this subtheme, I provide my interpretations of the views shared by men and women regarding domestic work and childcare. The shared belief that women are responsible for childcare and the challenges a lack of supports presents in pursuing work and education are shared below.

Several men and women either described directly or indirectly the African cultural expectation for women to assume domestic work and childcare responsibilities. For example, according to one man, the women are considered to be responsible for the domestic work in his country and culture. He commented on the atypical roles he assumes as he helps his wife with domestic work in Canada:

My country and my culture is, female is very hard work, and much work have under female. In female, well, work of the female is inside home, cleaning, cooking, prepare cooking, to make – she makes to cook, she makes – cleans the clothes, just have a laundry, just not much more. Then she cleans the home, and prepare...I in my way, by my behaviour, I am helping my wife. In mostly the people, male is not help my females, in my culture, in Eritrea. A female, hard works, have the much loaded under a female.

A similar finding of the gendered role of women in domestic work was found by Stewart et al. (2015) in their study involving African refugee parents in Canada. Fathers revealed their belief

that domestic work was the responsibility of women. Mothers who were married tended to be reluctant to ask their husbands for help with domestic work.

My analysis revealed post-migration, women remained primarily responsible for childcare. Some women described the differing impacts of childcare responsibilities on their pursuit of educational and employment opportunities. Whereas both single and married mothers found it more difficult to pursue education and work pursuits due to childcare responsibilities, the husbands of married women did not express similar challenges. In the words of one married mother of four young children: *My husband got in school, I had two small kids so I didn't go on.* Likewise, a married father shared his wife's pursuit of work would occur once the childcare responsibilities had shifted to others:

The everyday life for the kids was the first two, when they were young the mother stayed with the kids at home and then I think after a year or two, she will look for a maid or a family member to help with the staying with the kids while we both working...

In contrast to the experiences of the married participants, single mothers lacking supports described more challenges. One single mother described the unique challenges with scheduling and shift work in the absence of a partner:

...It's hard to find like employment here, it depends on the type of work you are looking for, because you're looking for a warehouse job, 6 till what time, you cannot do it as a single parent and with no help. And you have children, daycare start like 6 o'clock. You know even if you get that job, how are you going to do it when you don't have help to watch over your kids. So things like for single mothers like us is a big struggle.... it's because of the time they want you to start and the time they want you to finish. So I

couldn't do it because of the time, so I have to do something that work with the time for me and my child.

The same single mother described how her Canadian situation posed additional challenges that would not have been present in her home country where she would have had more support:

Well back home lifestyle is different there. In Canada lifestyle is different, like in Canada it's hard, because when you have kids, the men are not always there to help or the support. So you as the mother you carry all the load, take care of your child, make sure your child eat, she wears clothes, she got to school. It's all about the mother, the dad never involved, so it's a big struggle. Well at the same time we're trying to do our best.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, African refugee parents in previous studies have described finding it difficult to parent in Canada without the social supports they were used to in their home country (Opoku-Dapaah, 1992; Este & Tachble, 2009).

My finding demonstrated that some married parents in my study were able to work out childcare arrangements with their spouses while the single mother I examined in this subtheme did not have this option. In the experiences of the married mother and married father I analyzed for this finding, I noticed that even though they had more support with childcare compared to the single mother in my analysis, married mothers were still primarily responsible for childcare. I interpreted this from two examples in the data: 1) in the case of the married father referenced, he noted that his wife compromised her time to become a stay-at-home mother while he did not make the same sacrifice, and 2) in the case of the married mother, she reported that her husband was more hands on with parenting in Canada than in her home country Zimbabwe but that in her resettlement experience, she stayed at home with her children while her husband pursued educational opportunities.

Striving to Find Work-Life Balance Through Childcare Supports

In this subtheme, I provide my interpretations of the experiences men and women in my study shared about balancing work and family responsibilities and its impacts on their parenting practices. While the struggle is common, it is particularly difficult for single mothers. I highlight the unique experience of a single mother when it comes to efforts for balancing work and family life, as well as policy suggestions put forth by a father that could help African refugee parents achieve work-life balance.

A majority of men and women described a common struggle related to balancing work and family time in Canada. They attributed this imbalance to a perceived difference in Canadian work demands compared to their home countries. Some mothers and fathers described work-life imbalance as a source of mental and physical stress. In the words of one father:

Sometimes you want to work, work, work, but you know, you never get anywhere working every day, you just wear out yourself. You need to balance between your work and your family life. You want to give yourself time to, you know, to rejuvenate your brain and physically.

The lack of time to pursue community resources that could be beneficial to their parenting such as attending parenting and family support groups was attributed to long work hours and precarious work by two fathers. One mother also revealed that the work demands she and her husband faced prevented them from engaging with volunteering activities at their children's school:

...Sometimes you end up not going to their school stuff. They wanted me to volunteer, I never volunteered at any of their schools because I'm always busy. Yeah and the father can't, he is teaching, he doesn't have time to volunteer.

For one single mother, it was challenging for her to balance work and life demands without parenting supports in Canada. The following are her words describing the unique challenges she experienced:

Yeah, back home work over there is different...they all can help. Even when your child go to school, you have somebody that drop them at school, it depends what time you work, when you come back there is time for family. But in Canada here is not easy, if you are by yourself. Like for me I'm a single parent, it's not easy for me in the morning, dropping my kids to different locations – one go to daycare, one go to a different school, junior high and the other school, dropping them in the morning is a very hectic job you know. But as a parent and as a single parent, you don't have no choice, you don't have nobody to help, so you just get up and do what you can do, as long as God is giving us the strength to do that... Well for me as a single mother, it's a very hard thing, because if you are working, like some people start like 6 o'clock in the morning, but if you have children, who are going to take your children to school, who are going to pick your children up after school. So if you have the help or you don't have a partner or even somebody that you can rely on to take your kids to school and pick them up, it's a very hard job.

One father suggested that government subsidies for childcare options, like babysitting which he was unable to afford, could help parents like him who work multiple jobs and allow them to be able to work and still have time to spend with their families. He also advocated for the creation of more sponsorship opportunities to help African refugees reunite with family from their origin country. He believed that having family in Canada could help with childcare, while not having family continues to be a barrier and disadvantage for African newcomers in Canada.

So for us, those are one of the barriers that we have. We need to have a chance to sponsor if we have somebody that can come and help at least in these areas here, like parents, grandparents, who can be able to come and assist us while we are running the race of life here in this country. That is one of the barriers and disadvantages of Africans.

The suggestions made by the father quoted above are what I perceived as policy opportunities, which I discuss in the next chapter.

Men's and Women's Views and Use of Parenting Support Systems

This theme is about the views refugee parents in my study expressed about support systems used in their cultures for parenting, and their experiences with formal and informal supports in Canada. Four subthemes were induced from the data to form this overarching theme:

(1) Gendered Experiences With Parenting Support Systems, (2) Suggestions From Men and Women for Parenting Supports, (3) Significance of Communal Parenting, and (4) Support in Handling Cases of Domestic Violence.

Gendered Experiences With Parenting Support Systems

In this subtheme I provide my interpretation of men and women's experiences with social supports for parenting. I present examples of experiences concerning parenting support groups based on the gender of a parent. These key points are further discussed below.

A majority of parents shared that they used support groups while in their homelands to help them with parenting and marital issues. Some men and women reported being able to manage issues on their own with their spouse and in their family based on their values and beliefs. For example, the following is a quote from a father who shared his perspective and approach to handling familial conflict:

You have any conflict have any conflict with the families, with wife, or with husband. Just solve... to communicate wife and husband. Just communicate, and don't show for your children. Then I and my wife – me and my wife – we communicate, and – by peacefully communicate, not harassment. I am like a Jehovah Witness, studied by bible. Bible is good leader of any person. Then no any problem in my wife – in my family.

Like the father quoted above, many other parents reported seeking support from religious social networks such as churches and religious leaders. The Christian church in particular was mentioned several times by both men and women as a place that they seek help for parenting, marital counselling, and other matters like immigration support. A father in this study explained a way the church assists in addressing parent-child conflict. In his experience, children and young adults have their own classes and support groups within the church to discuss issues they have with their parents without their parents being present for such discussions. He added that these forums also help in translating the perspectives of parents to children:

Yeah, I think that some of those challenges could be prevented by discussing in social groups like through the church when your children have got their own classes or when they – when these discussions come up and that helps the children to understand where we are coming from. Okay it's different here but they should always try to behave and follow their parents' advice. I think they also have their support groups where they discuss those issues and when they meet without the parent, like when we are talking about the children over the age of 21, even the young ones, it's still the same thing.

Looking at previous studies, a scoping review by Okeke-Ihejirika and colleagues (2020) highlighted that activities organized by community and religious organizations fosters resiliency

in African migrants and that in many cases, the church is the most significant place of community support African families turn to.

Almost all men and women in my study said that back home, in addition to churches, parenting support was received from extended family and community members such as grandmothers, aunts, uncles, seniors, neighbours, schoolteachers, support groups, and elders, and family issues were worked through the community. Many parents shared they did not have the same supports in Canada, and one father attributed this to being situated in a new culture and society:

So there was always networks. Down here, ugh, who do you see, who do you talk to? There is nobody...there's a big difference you know, it's a new culture, a new society...Virtually it disappeared, there was no network.

Some parents in my study believed that the lack of familial supports made conflict resolution within the family more challenging. Looking at the literature, Stewart et al. (2015) noted that participants expressed a lack of culturally-based marriage counselling upon arrival in Canada. Further, they explained that despite attempts to use transnational ties, they struggle with getting the marriage supports they were used to prior to migrating due to distance and relatives in their country of origin not having a full understanding of challenges specific to family life in Canada.

Two men shared that in their countries of origin, there were parenting support groups organized according to the gender of parents. These groups were used to discuss family issues and for group members to give ideas to each other on how to overcome such issues. One man noticed that with migration to Canada, this structure is broken down and that a lack of such support leads to loneliness. He said that upon arrival in Canada, networks that he was used to seeing disappeared and eventually he had no network to turn to. He also noted a gendered

dimension in seeking formal supports. This man shared that when there are problems in parenting children and between spouses, most people in the community do not know where to go for help but that women are more likely to go to counselling centres. In the words of this father:

....it's even more difficult because we don't know where to go. When there is a problem with the kids, there's a problem with the husbands, there's a problem with the wife, the women maybe go to the child counselling centres, but most people don't really know where to go. Yeah, especially for men. Like men, they feel embarrassed, first of all, to go and talk about it. And like back home we used to use the churches for counselling....But we need these things in the communities to start building it from there and work upwards.

The quote above highlighted a gendered view of the father which is that compared to women, men in his community are more likely not to know where to go for help with family issues. Furthermore, he added that men in his community tend to feel embarrassed to talk about the issues they face in their family.

For Sudanese refugee fathers in Este & Tachble's (2009) study, a lack of men-led services was cited as a barrier to accessing formal support systems. In a study by Stewart et al. (2017) on a support intervention for African refugee parents in Canada, African refugee men reported experiencing benefits with men's support groups including the development of skills for "mutual decision-making, taking more responsibility for household chores, and raising their children..." (p. 126). Given the evidence in the current and other studies, African refugee men could benefit from having male perspectives in formal supports like counselling.

Suggestions From Men and Women for Parenting Supports

In this subtheme, I present suggestions made by men and women in my study regarding parenting supports that they believe would benefit their parenting experience in Canada.

One woman from a war-torn zone in South Sudan voiced the need for organizations in Canada that support Black refugee women like her immediately upon arrival. In her experience in Canada, she felt alienated when asking for help from members outside of the Black community. In describing her experiences, she used terms such as not being regarded as a human being but instead as a servant, and receiving different attitudes and treatment compared to others around her. Her remarks implied experiences of racism and discrimination and thus her desire to have more direct help readily available from people she could identify and relate with, namely, Black women. In her words:

...We need some organisation to stood ahead of the Black woman and show us the road. When I came here it's really very, very difficult – very, very difficult to handle everything – nobody helping. Even we're stressed out – we're stressed out. Nobody look at you as a human being – just like servant. It's really – I doesn't like it and even at work, they give us a different attitude or different – I don't know how to say it...they give us different treatment. If we have a community of Black women, we should get a lovely opportunity ahead of us where or I'm going to speak, or stood up for myself.

The mother quoted above furthermore suggested that there was a need for resettlement guidance from cultural brokers. Additionally, she suggested that community-specific intersectional support could help refugee women like her with resettlement experiences like some of the ones she wished she had guidance with such as minimizing mistakes during resettlement, living in a new city like Calgary, looking for employment, sharing problems related to her children's schooling, and her own education path prospects. This mother's experience suggests that tailored formal supports that take into account intersectional barriers and needs are important for end users with

lived experience being at the intersections – like this mother who is a woman, single mother of six children, a refugee, Black, African, has limited education, and is a trauma survivor.

When asked about the most difficult aspect in raising her children in Canada, this mother revealed that despite having a hard time managing behavioural issues exhibited by her children, she has never utilized formal counselling services with White counsellors because she believes they are not well-positioned to give her culturally-based advice, that her children would respond better to someone from a similar cultural background, and that she would prefer a system that her kids would not lose their culture and language. The following is a quote from this mother reflecting her experience:

...nobody gives us counselling or the community sit around us to let us where we feel – the kids they feel, family or somebody come to sit us, with us. If – I never have a counselling with White people, and my kids fighting and violent, no I never get that. But please I need somebody like your colour to see, they feel this is our blood – they talk to us, they obey you and they give them the truth... I like the way back home people they – like we say we leave raise the children. We need that to be very close even though from where, from where, to be together in one room, to bring our kids not to lose the culture, not to lose the language, to be together in weathering that is what I needed from Black women to stood up for us.

For the mother quoted above, family counselling from a professional who shares a similar background to her is important to her. Some studies (e.g., Woodgate et al., 2017; Wahoush, 2009) have highlighted the lack of culturally-appropriate services amongst the reasons African refugees may not access formal support services. Other reasons include racist and discriminatory

encounters when accessing formal supports which lead to feelings of fear, frustration, and marginalization.

Other parents in my study shared ideas related to improving counselling services that could help them with parenting in a new country. One father suggested that social workers and counsellors from the community can help resolve problems in the family, and that the church can help establish this connection. Another father insisted that with the support of government policy, African parents could benefit from having more social workers that could work with community clubs and develop a counselling society. He also suggested elders could be a part of this and that they should be legally backed, meaning, officially recognized and supported by the government.

From the government right on top to say we having a new policy, our kids are not going the right direction, we need people to change in society. We need more social workers that can actually ... In a community let's say like [unintelligible 00:07:50] as a club, we've got a counselling society there. You've got problems with your kids, walk up there, go sit with the elder, go sit with Bayo. "Bayo, me and the children and the wife here, we've got a problem". So we've got [coms] to go through and these people can advise, but they must also be legally backed up.

A space where African parents can come together, speak their native language, and discuss problems unique to being African was recommended by this father. He said, however, that the reality of many parents working multiple jobs to make ends meet may make it challenging for people to attend. We see here the cross between issues – wanting formal parenting support but calls to work as a disincentive to getting support of this nature. In the words of this father:

Even now like we formed this Zimbabwean Society, it's difficult for people to come for the simple reason that people are doing two jobs a day, so when do they attend? They are trying to; they'd love to meet other people. We love to get together, talk our own language, you know, and discuss our problems, as we know problems, as Africans. But like I say, it's difficult. The time is just not there. It's so tough.

Findings from my study show that in addition to culturally-appropriate formal supports, there is a need for gender-based ones to help African refugee parents resolve issues related to parenting, marriage, and other family matters.

Significance of Communal Parenting

In this subtheme I provide my interpretation of men and women's experiences with extended family and community involvement in parenting pre- and post-migration. I also highlight the gendered nature of communal parenting, where women were found to assume most communal parenting roles.

Mothers and fathers in this study shared that with migration, the sense of community involvement in parenting was lost. A majority of men and women explained that pre-migration, if children had problems with their parents, they could go to a family member or community member and talk to them about it. In African cultures, parenting problems are perceived as a problem for the community and not just the parents alone. In the words of one father:

In Eritrea, in culture, your children, they give some problem, to kick yours – not us, for me, in my country. The children is yours also. My children is your children. Your children is my children. It's a community. Children, I have any problem, community problem. Not like Canada.

Contrastingly, Western culture in contemporary times tends to view parenting as a job for parents alone (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006). Here is how one father explained his shift from communal parenting to reliance on the nuclear family structure as it is expected in Canada and how he and his wife worked out their schedules to care for their daughter in absence of extended family:

You know, one thing we have a disadvantage of as African, is that we don't have extended family. And what that mean is the system there that when you have an extended family your child can be take care of your mother, or your grandmother or your grandpa, or somebody belonging – related to you. Now, that disadvantage here is only two people. One of you must be working, or you two [are working]. So what you do my wife is working in the daytime, she always wake up very early. I have to take care of my kids. When she reach four years, I would drop her into the daycare, and then when my wife came here at around 4 o'clock, I go to work, and then she come and pick up my daughter, and then she stay with her. And we been doing that [since then]...you immigrate by yourself and you have a system, and this system is already set up like that. Set up like each and everybody have to go to work. Each and everybody must take care of his kids. And therefore that's challenging to somebody coming as a new immigrant. With the culture we have in Africa, I can say in Sudan, well, the child belong to everybody. Here it's individualism, and that to us is not good.

Although there was a sense of loss of communal parenting for some parents like the father above, many parents strived to hold onto the practice of shared parenting. Some parents in my study who had family as well as friends considered family in Canada helped with parenting post-

migration. The following mother expressed her joy in having her house filled with children beyond her immediate own:

...My house are always full with children, because I always welcome children in my house. So I don't even need to call them, when I start to barbeque outside, they start coming, it's like I'm having a party, my whole house is full with children, which is a very good thing, because this is how we were raised in Africa. We're always surrounded with family, so I consider those my neighbour kids ... Sometimes I don't even know these kids, even neighbour kids they come to my house and they come and enjoy themselves, because they need a place they can go apart of their house, so that they can sit and relax and talk.

Despite these challenges, some parents described means that they use to seek parenting advice and moral support in raising children from relatives residing in their homelands. Men and women described maintaining good relationships and communication with members of their family back home using technology such as the telephone and social media applications such as WhatsApp. One mother explained that it was important for African parents to maintain ties with their country of origin because of the cultural differences between their home country and Canada.

Based on the data for my study, women are more involved in carrying out communal parenting. For instance, one woman described her aunts as “little mothers” and explained that they are the first people she talks to when she faces family problems:

All my aunts are my little mothers. So even when I'm having a problem they're the first person I talk to...even on WhatsApp, we've got a WhatsApp called the Six Degrees of Mom.

A couple of women shared their experiences practicing community parenting here in Canada, where they helped family members or friends with caring for their children. Here is one woman's experience:

...My cousin was having problems with her son in Fort McMurray...he had got into trouble with the law and my husband said to me, you know what INT-CAF013, you need to go to Sharon, go and see Sharon. And she needs your support. I flew out and I went to Fort McMurray and I was with her for about a week and a half.

Communal parenting however was described as being different in Canada compared to the home countries of parents. Mothers believed that they had much more help with parenting back home compared to Canada. Men and women said that parenting without the extra support such as family members and the community is especially challenging with the demanding work schedules they are faced with in Canada. While a lack of parenting support is challenging for parents in this study, a parent shared that an advantage of having more parental responsibilities put upon African parents was getting to know their kids better in more ways and becoming closer to them.

Similar to the suggestion made in the work-life balance subtheme, a father suggested African refugee families should have more immigration sponsorship opportunities to rebuild their system of support through community parenting:

One of the solutions I have in my mind, because there is a migration system here. You can sponsor one of your siblings and one of your cousins, you can bring them here, and they will help you to lift their burdens, instead of being here alone, if you have extended family come, brother or sister or a cousin...So you're going to distribute the burden...And, at the same time, being all of you in one place, in one area, in one city, the

*problem of the babysitting and the problem or the thing that we've been talking about ...
so you can help it.*

Traditional African communities operate using a communalistic philosophy which is grounded in collectivist values and principles such as community solidarity, harmony, reciprocity, and intimate interdependence among community members (Ndofirepi & Shumba, 2014). It is customary for community interests to come before individual gains, while the opposite is common in individualistic societies like in the Western world. Traditionally, child-rearing is a shared responsibility for the community and the community is expected to collectively care for, protect, and raise a child (Ndofirepi & Shumba, 2014). As Ndofirepi and Shumba (2014) put it, “it is not just the immediate family but every member of the community that has the duty to take care of welfare of the child” (p. 238). Elders, extended family, siblings, neighbours, other community members, schools, and churches play significant roles in disciplining children, supporting their growth, and nurturing socially accepted behaviour according to societal standards (Kgomo, 1996; Ndofirepi & Shumba, 2014). Keeping these cultural values in mind, the father quoted above made a culturally-grounded recommendation to support African refugee parents.

African parents who have migrated to Canada find that the workload of parenting is more strenuous due to a lack of community support. Like other African newcomer parents in previous studies (Salami et al., 2017b; Adekoya & Sinacore, 2019; Salami et al., 2020a), African refugee parents in my study expressed missing their family's and community's help with parenting. Furthermore, many parents in my study found parenting more stressful in Canada without their typical support system.

Support in Handling Cases of Domestic Violence

In this subtheme I provide my interpretation of men and women's perceptions of domestic violence, its impacts on children and implications for parenting, and parental views on seeking support during domestic violence.

Participants in this study were invited to reflect on their perceptions of domestic violence within their African communities. Both men and women described domestic violence as physical violence, emotional and verbal abuse, and as a situation that impacts the victim's mental health and self-esteem, parenting, and the development of children. Parents tended to describe domestic violence where women are the primary victims. In relation to parenting, the parents in this study believe that domestic violence has negative impacts and long-term effects on parenting and children. One mother shared that she moved away from her former spouse because she noticed the domestic violence she was facing was affecting her son. One father remarked that domestic violence affects kids and the ability of parents to model values such as respect and pass on good teachings to their children:

It affects everything. When something going wrong in your family it will affect them. As I said to you, most of the family, kids, they're all in jail. Why? Because the kid they don't have respect to mom or have respect to dad and then when you think, if you don't have a good teaching to your kids, where do you think your kids are going to be if there's no any good direction to show them? This for example...For example, if you don't give good direction to your kids, what are you going to be? What's your kids going to be? They're going to be robbery, stealing money from people, stealing things from the mall, drinking, drugs. So this is how the family's going to be because there's no respect in between the husband or the wife.

In this father's view, the lack of good parental practices due to domestic violence can lead children to lose respect for their parents, delinquent behaviour, lack good direction and consequentially, and poor outcomes such as conflict with the law due to poor choices.

Both men and women suggested other ways domestic violence impacts children, primarily when children experience violence themselves or witness arguments between parents. For example, the following is the view of one married father:

And what do you think somebody expressing domestic violence, what do you think the children in the home, seeing that, what do you think it can ... what do you think can be the effect on children... When you're growing up, if you leave home probably you're going to end up abusive. When you are in a place full with domestics, probably when you grow up that is what you're going to end with. They have an effect for a long time for the family. And most of the people who have been abusive, probably they have been growing up in abusive homes, and those are the seriousness of these kinds of situations and environments. And when people see those things, if they get help it's always good, and I'm always telling people, parents, when you have talked to your wife, mostly make sure, outside of when the kids are sleeping and make sure you don't raise your voices, even in ... because kids are listening, and it affects them so bad.

The father quoted above expressed his concern that domestic violence and the tense environment it produces is harmful to children because kids coming from a household with domestic violence may grow up to be abusive, and that perpetrators of abuse may have grown up in an abusive family.

Some parents revealed that when experiencing domestic violence in Canada, sometimes there is hesitancy in seeking formal help because they fear their children will be apprehended

and subjected to the child welfare system. Women in particular described being afraid to speak up because of concerns with a marital and family breakdown, described by one woman in her words:

Yeah so even here people have domestic violence but they hide it. They don't pronounce it because they feel if they take the help maybe their husbands will be sent away and they don't want to do it so they keep it – so according to my tradition they try to hide and not to let the government know what is happening.

Previous studies have found that African women tend to be fearful in terms of reporting domestic violence because of the consequences it could have on their husbands like being reprimanded by the police (Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2019). Another reason offered by Okeke-Ihejirika et al. (2020) for why women are reluctant to seek formal help in cases of domestic violence is that due to the limited support system they have in Canada, women are wary of breaking this down even more if they speak out about issues they face (Okeke-Ihejirika, 2020). Although reasons behind women's fears in reporting domestic violence were beyond the scope of my study, these reasons disclosed in other studies provide context to this complicated issue.

With regards to parental views on accessing supports during domestic violence, culturally-appropriate approaches are seen as key. One woman suggested helping African men and women handle cases of domestic violence by turning to traditional African conflict resolution strategies. She described the essential role of elders in supporting families in conflict, with involvement of institutional apprehension powers limited to when a child or parent is in imminent danger, saying:

You know what? I believe that the best way to work with any immigrant family is to use the elders. Elders in the community that have been through something similar and that

can talk to them, because honestly, these programs – and don't get me wrong, some of the programs are really great. But a lot of the programs – how shall I put it? They highlight ... stuff that does not need to be highlighted. So what I'm saying, for instance, domestic violence in Africa would mean maybe somebody coming and talking to the person and whatever. The children would remain in the home. Here, domestic violence means the children's services are going to pull your children out of the home and pull your husband out of the home so that there is no husband. And I don't think this is the best way. You know, I think that the best way it to actually work together with the couple, do therapy, do whatever you need to do to keep the family together, unless it is so bad, you know, that the child is in danger or one of the parents are in danger. Then of course you need to pull – you need to pull people out for stuff like that.

Similar to the woman quoted above, a man in my study advocated for the use of elders and community groups to overcome domestic violence in his community:

Well it's something that Calgary is trying here, like for example we have a started a Zimbabwean society, you know, a community where the Zimbabweans contribute and they have get-togethers. This year, summer time, we had a very beautiful sports day. So that brings our communities together, and you meet at the hall, there's get-togethers, there's barbeques, there's families. It's even building up to where the elders in these communities they talk to people. You can just go talk. Like the other day they were saying, okay, all of you, if you feel a bit lonely on such-a-such a night there's a get-together where we've got a few elders, the women get together, they sit, you know? And we try and pass resources around.

An established counselling system through the church, community members, and elders was what some parents reported using to get help with domestic violence pre- and post-migration though parents in my study described having such a system is more difficult to establish post-migration. African immigrants and refugees in other studies have shared similar experiences. Prior to migration, to resolve family conflicts such as domestic violence, African families rely on their community, family members, and elders to intervene in culturally acceptable ways. In Canada, no such support exists as easily for parents in my study and those in other studies (i.e., Okeke-Ihejirika & Salami, 2018).

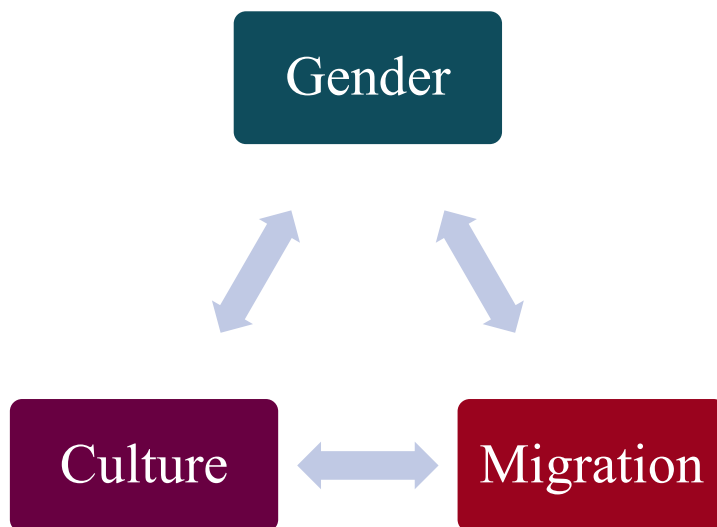
Connections Between My Research Questions, Objectives, and Findings

For my first research question, I was interested in knowing what gender-related views and experiences African refugee parents attributed as influencing their parenting practices. From my findings I found that views and experiences attributed by parents in my study were covered in the themes Raising Children According to Gendered Experiences and Expectations and Gendered Division of Labour Among African Refugee Men and Women. I found that views and experiences were attributed to two interactions listed for investigation in my objectives, namely: a) parent-child interactions, b) parent-to-parent interactions. In my second research question, I sought to understand how gender influenced access to resources and services for parenting. Findings in the theme Men's and Women's Views and Use of Parenting Support Systems revealed gender-related experiences with informal and formal supports which included resources and services, and one interaction listed in my objective reoccurred throughout the theme: c) extended family and family-community interactions. Finally, as indicated in my third research question, I wanted to know whether culture and migration were underlying influences of gender-related views and experiences in the parenting practices of African refugees in my study. I found

that influences of culture and migration on gendered views and experiences were present in all three themes and were factors in all three objectives. Figure 7 below illustrates the interconnectivity of gender, culture, and migration that I found was the case in my study.

Figure 7

Diagram Demonstrating Relationships and Interconnectivity of Gender, Culture, and Migration



Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this section, I outline my study implications for theory, practice and methodology. I also share my study limitations and how future directions could mitigate some of these limitations. I end this chapter with closing remarks pertaining to my relationship with the research and how I hope to see it mobilized in the future.

Study Implications

Theoretical Implications

In this subsection I present theoretical implications that came from my study that could support novel insights. First, my study confirmed what I found in my literature review regarding women's challenges with their childcare role and pursuing education and work opportunities. My study offers new insights into how work responsibilities create challenges for accessing parenting supports and participating in children's extracurricular activities. Another contribution my study offers is the single mother's perspective of how the lack of supports for childcare intensifies the challenges with pursuing educational and work pursuits for single mothers compared to married parents.

Second, similar to Salami et al.'s (2020b) findings, African refugee parents in my study use faith-based organizations such as churches to help with family conflict. My study identified the need for gender-based and community-based counselling and supports for parenting and domestic violence. Given that churches were identified as a safe and culturally congruent place to address family conflict and domestic violence, gender-based counselling and discussion groups for African refugee parents could be developed in partnership with the faith-based organizations they attend. I discuss practical implications in more detail in the next section.

Policy and Practical Implications

In this subsection I present policy and practical implications that came from my study. The participants in my Edmonton sample described similar gendered parenting roles to those described in a Toronto-based study (Opoku-Dapaah, 1992), where women in both instances reported carrying on most childcare responsibilities. Noting that immigration is a federal ministry in Canada and the similarities among African refugee parents in different parts of the country, a federal policy in Canada specific to addressing the childcare needs of African refugees might be possible. Based on the results in my study, there are several factors that need to be addressed in practice for a culturally-informed pan-Canadian childcare policy for African refugees, which I now highlight.

First, a pan-Canadian childcare policy for African refugees would need to account for differences in marital status of parents as my study showed that single and married parents at times had different parenting experiences influenced by whether they were single or married. Second, diverse culturally-appropriate childcare options should be included in such a policy. As my study shows, cultural systems of care are significant for African refugees and this system of care is communal in nature, where extended family members, friends, and elders play significant roles in parenting. These familial networks typically included in African cultural systems of care should be included in policy discussions about childcare options for African refugees. Additionally, programs and services associated with this policy should recruit and train frontline childcare personnel (i.e., daycare workers and staff facilitating parenting supports in community organizations) that are reflective of the African refugee community. Third, results in my study pointed to the need for more flexibility in operational hours of childcare services like daycares so that parents are able to navigate and balance work and childcare responsibilities better. Refugees, like the participants in my study, are often limited in employment opportunities they have and in

selecting work times, and this needs to be recognized by childcare services. Fourth, the location of childcare services and parenting supports (i.e., daycares, gender-based counselling services) is another consideration when planning a childcare policy for African refugees. It can be helpful to consider where existing and future community activities are happening like churches as these are places African refugees are typically found and can be served. Finally, another consideration for a childcare policy for African refugees is the inclusion of more government subsidies for childcare options like babysitting and more sponsorship opportunities to bring family members to Canada to serve as caregivers.

In practice, pan-Canadian culturally-appropriate parenting supports for African refugees should be based in the community, should include personnel representative of the community, and should include gendered options reflecting gender roles men and women play in African cultures. Culturally-appropriate supports for parents should also include the use of elders and community groups for conflict resolution, like in cases of domestic violence.

Methodological Implications

In this subsection I present three methodological contributions that came from my study. The first is my own lived experience as a Black Canadian woman of Nigerian descent and heritage, which helped with my analysis and interpretation of the context and lived experiences of participants. My use of secondary data limited my ability to know interpersonal cues that occurred during interviews such as body language and verbal cues, which could have added to my contextual analysis of experiences. My cultural background afforded me a unique cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998) that I used as an aid in my contextual analysis of what was said in the interviews. As discussed in chapter four, I engaged in reflexive practice throughout my research so that my positionality did not influence the direction of my study interpretations but

rather, used to enhance the study. Overall, being an insider researcher for a cultural study using secondary data was beneficial in analyzing, interpreting, and narrating the experiences of participants through thick descriptions. IPA was a useful analytical tool in this process given the interpretative roots of the method and its focus on unpacking lived experiences as close as participants understand them to be.

The second methodological contribution my study offers is a comparison between married and single parents through a gendered analysis on the perspectives of parents that also took into account their marital status when it was appropriate to highlight. My study also begins to examine men's perspective in a context of a study that includes both men and women because other studies in the past have focused on just men (e.g., Este and Tachble, 2009) or women's experiences (e.g., Opoku-Dapaah, 1992). The African men's perspective is an important contribution as there are particular needs of African men that are not yet represented in the literature for example, the identified need for men's counselling groups.

Study Limitations and Future Directions

There were five main limitations in my study which I discuss in this subsection and each identified limitation is followed by recommendations for future research. The first limitation concerns the data I had access to. My study was naturally limited by the interview questions and probes that were asked as part of the origin study, and the origin study data was limited to what participants chose to disclose and were able to disclose. Future research could build upon my findings and further probe areas in which I have been able to generate only preliminary understandings such as the perspectives of African step-parents.

Second, my study was limited to the participants and demographic data collected as part of the origin study. For example, the origin study did not distinguish among different African

ethnocultural groups in the interview questions and data. Going forward, researchers could compare parenting practices among different African ethnicities and cultures to generate new understandings that better consider in research the diversity of African peoples and cultural practices. Another example of how the second limitation of my study can be addressed in future research is the further focused sampling of single parents (both single mothers and single fathers) and fathers to help ensure that the scope of diverse parenting views are included in the literature.

Third, my data was also limited by the timing and context of data collection as the interviews I had access to were conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, migration, policies, and programs have been disrupted or changed in several new ways. Future research could examine the parenting experiences of African refugees in a post-pandemic context and how new environments, living situations, challenges, and ways of operating in society have reconfigured the parenting practices of African refugees. Existing policies and programs aimed to help African refugee parents and new ones like those proposed in this chapter, must take into account new national, international, and community-specific (i.e., such as the health and social inequities COVID-19 has exacerbated for Black communities) factors brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted policy proposals and program delivery across Canada and around the world. For vulnerable populations with a higher risk for life challenges such as African refugees, it is especially important to consider the impacts of the pandemic on their access to programs and services.

The fourth limitation of my study concerns my theoretical framework. While postcolonial feminism helped in understanding women's experiences, this framework wasn't enough to investigate the mother role. The findings in my study pointed to a preliminary understanding of the experiences of mothers in different cultural contexts in parenting research that could benefit

from other theoretical frameworks. I see matricentric feminism as a theoretical framework that could be used to understand the experiences of women who are mothers, and as a methodological tool to help ideate how the mothering role could be more empowering for mothers within a cultural group in a different context outside of their home origins such as African refugees in a Western country like Canada.

Finally, the fifth limitation in my study concerns my comparison of pre- and post-migration experiences. I was able to closely examine migrancy experiences of a vulnerable group, refugees, because the origin study collected data for immigrants and refugees. However, based on my findings, it is worth noting that most of the experiences shared by participants related to their post-migration parenting experiences. Future research could further explore pre-migration gender experiences and parenting practices of African refugees.

Future research could also investigate how African parents perceive the efficacy of their parenting and how they perceive their children are doing. Finally, to generate a more multifaceted understanding of parenting, capturing children's voices and experiences would provide a more comprehensive understanding of parenting.

Although I was limited by the data I had, my study showed that secondary analysis of data has several benefits in research. In my study, I brought a new perspective to data already collected which not only gave rise to new findings, but also reduced the burden for participants as African refugees tend to be over-asked to participate in research studies. A secondary data analysis also saved me time and resources that typically would have been needed if I conducted the study as a primary research study.

Closing Remarks

This thesis was an exceptional learning journey for me. I am grateful for the opportunity I was afforded to study a part of my community I was less familiar about before embarking on this study, namely, African refugees. The parenting experiences of African refugees in my study were in some cases eye-opening, and in other cases reaffirming of some of my lived experiences growing up with African immigrant parenting practices as a child with African roots born and raised in Canada. There were times where there were references made by parents in my study that I had not previously thought about or observed. In other times, I felt proud to use what I knew about my community to better contextualize cultural references presented in the data. These somewhat contradictory occurrences reinforced my dynamic role as an insider and outsider in my research.

It is a bittersweet moment completing this thesis as I know that my study has contributed to the limited literature we have about African refugee parents but I also know that work remains in mobilizing the findings from my study, especially in implementing policy and practice recommendations informed by findings in this study. It is my hope that improved and new policies and practices informed by my study will emerge to have positive short- and long-term impacts in the lives of African refugee parents and their children.

I am looking forward to sharing my study results far and wide with stakeholders of interest such as policymakers, mainstream and community-specific organizations that serve African and Black communities in Canada to help create spaces for innovating ideas based on the findings of my study on how we can better serve African refugee families in resettlement, parenting, and gender experiences impacting them.

The voices of African refugees are at the heart of this work. By reading this thesis, it is my hope that you the reader learned more about a community that is both vulnerable and

resilient. A memorable elementary school teacher of mine once told me that a writer figuratively dies once they have released their writing for readers to consume. This could not be truer in my circumstance with this thesis. I hope that the messages I try to get across through my thesis are well-received and encourages you to learn even more about the community in this study.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Study Title: Understanding Gender Relations within African Immigrant Families: A Participatory Action Research.

Semi-Structured Interview Questions (African men and women)

Prompt: We wish to explore your experiences of and viewpoints about the following aspects of family life as an African immigrant parent and/or spouse: **paid employment or career, financial resources, parenting, domestic violence, relationships with extended family members, existing support systems and social networks.**

We know that these aspects of family life are not separate, but often interrelate with one another. Hence your responses are likely to shift from one to another. We are mainly interested in your responses to any of the above facets of family life that you feel comfortable to address or are applicable to your situation.

Getting into the interview

Let's begin the interview with a brief overview of your experience of coming to Canada and settling down – as an individual and as a family. *(Allow for a 5-minute narrative, including general probes: why and how you came, what you've been doing, challenges faced, etc.)*

Parenting

1. Tell me about your children. *(Probe: gender, age, education, work history, present situation)*
2. Tell me about your family's routine with the children *(Probe: gender roles, relationship with children; underlying reasons)*
3. What are your aspirations for your children and why? *(Probe: socio-economic expectations, gendered views, changes before and after migration, etc.)*
4. In your experience as a parent, what do you consider the major sources of conflict with your children *(Probe: nature of conflict, age/gender of children, reasons for conflict, how conflict is handled, support systems, etc.)*
5. What makes parenting challenging or easier in Canada? *(Probe: challenges, advantages, perceived reasons why.)*
6. Based on your experience, comment on ways that these challenges could be prevented or alleviated for African parents

Relationships with Extended Family Members

1. Tell me briefly about your experience with extended family on your own side *(Probes: view/nature of extended family, responsibilities, influence on nuclear family as support/stressor)*
2. Tell me briefly about your experience with your spouse's extended family *(Probes: view/nature of extended family, responsibilities, influence on nuclear family as support/stressor)*
3. Based on how you have fared with extended family, comment on how African families should manage extended family. *(Probes: own/spouse's family, comments for families in general)*

Paid Employment or Career

1. Tell me about the various ways your family earned a living before you came to Canada
2. Tell me in more detail about your own job/professional/career life: *(Probe: work experience, perceived professional and economic status, work satisfaction, work-life balance, etc.)*
3. What about your job/professional/career life in Canada? What has changed/remained the same? *(Probe: work experience, relative income, perceived professional and economic status, work satisfaction, work-life balance, etc.)*

4. In the same order tell me about your partner's story. (*Probe: work experience, relative income, perceived professional and economic status, work satisfaction, work-life balance, comparison with interviewee's story, etc.*)
5. What are the challenges, if any that you faced with paid employment/career back home? How have you dealt with these challenges? (*Probe: male, female and personal experiences; impact on the family*)
6. What are the challenges, if any that you faced with finding employment opportunities in Canada? How have you dealt with these challenges? (*Probe: male, female and personal experiences; impact on the family*)
7. What factors have helped in your effort to improve your employment status in Canada? What factors have tended to undermine your effort? (*Probe: personal life, support system, institutions, etc.*)
8. Based on what you now know, what would you have done differently? What changes would you like to see?

Managing Financial Resources

1. Briefly discuss how you and your spouse contributed to and managed the family purse before you came to Canada. (*Probe: major budget items; compare incomes, contributions, individual responsibilities, formal/informal budgeting; underlying justifications for financial decisions, etc.*)
2. Briefly discuss how you and your spouse currently contribute to and manage the family purse. (*Probe: major budget items; compare incomes, contributions, individual responsibilities, formal/informal budgeting; underlying justifications for financial decisions, etc.*)
3. What important changes, if any, have occurred in terms of how you currently manage the family's finances, starting with yours? (*Probe: uses of personal/spousal income, underlying reasons for changes*)
4. What would you consider the major challenges you faced with managing the family's finances before you came to Canada? How did you handle these challenges? (*Probe: personal/spouse's/family finances before and after migration*)
5. What would you consider the major challenges you now face with managing the family's? (*Probes: personal/spouse's/family finances before and after migration*)
6. How do you deal with these challenges? In what ways do you think these challenges could be alleviated for African immigrant families?

Safety... (including Domestic Violence)

Do you know of anybody who has or is currently experiencing domestic violence in your community? (Probe: male and female victims/survivors)

1. In your view, what is domestic violence? *Elaborate (Probe: perceptions and severity of; reasons and/or justifications for domestic violence – male and female victims)*
2. How close would you say you have come to experiencing domestic violence? (*Probe: psychological, physical, emotional forms of domestic violence; as victim/survivor or perpetrator*)
3. Where do you seek/have you sought help from domestic violence and what was the outcome? (*Probe: support systems, services offered, and level of satisfaction*)
4. Comment on ways we could go about domestic violence in African immigrant families.

Existing Support Systems and Social Networks (including immigrant service providers)

1. Tell me about the places/persons you have sought help/information/support before you came to Canada? (*Probes: formal/informal*)
2. Tell me more about your experiences with these sources? (*Probes: Formal/informal – information, availability, accessibility, relevance*)
3. Please comment on what kinds of support would be more helpful for African families and why.

Final Prompt: How do you feel about coming to Canada? Any final thoughts you would like to leave with us?

Appendix B: Mapping Origin Study's Interview Protocol to My Research Questions

Origin Study Interview Protocol Question Number	Secondary Analysis Research Question(s)
#1	RQ 1
#2	RQ 1, 3
#3	RQ 1, 3
#4	RQ 1, 3
#5	RQ 1, 2, 3
#6	RQ 1, 2, 3
#7	RQ 1, 3
#8	RQ 1, 3
#9	RQ 1, 3
#10	RQ 1, 3
#11	RQ 1, 3
#12	RQ 1, 3
#13	RQ 1, 3
#14	RQ 1, 2, 3
#15	RQ 1, 2, 3
#16	RQ 2, 3
#17	RQ 2, 3
#18	RQ 1, 3
#19	RQ 1, 3
#20	RQ 1, 3
#21	RQ 1, 2, 3
#22	RQ 1, 3
#23	RQ 2, 3
#24	RQ 1, 3
#25	RQ 1, 3
#26	RQ 1, 2, 3
#27	RQ 1, 2, 3
#28	RQ 2, 3
#29	RQ 2, 3
#30	RQ 2, 3

Appendix C: Memorandum of Understanding

Memorandum of Understanding

Eki Okungbowa

Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/resources-for-faculty-and-staff/forms-cabinet>

The research project on which you will be working is led by Dr. Philomina Okeke-Ihejirika as principal investigator, with Dr. Sophie Yohani and Dr. Bukola Salami as co-investigators. They are acting on behalf of the University of Alberta and funded by the Social Science and Humanities Council of Canada (SSHRC). In order to complete your thesis, you will be required to perform the research work as outlined in the research ethics document and research proposal statement to the best of your ability and to make your best efforts to meet the specified deadlines. These may change during the course of research and will be agreed upon mutually. You are permitted to use the data and results from the research in your thesis only. As the research is normally funded by third parties through the University of Alberta, all of the original data are the property of the University of Alberta and/or the funding agency. The following information on Intellectual Property Guidelines for Graduate Students and Supervisors may be helpful and can be found on the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research website:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/graduate-program-manual/section-10-intellectual-property>

Your project involves the analysis of data on a subset of data and subset of questions on gender relations within African Immigrants' Families in Alberta. The principal investigator and co-investigators conceptualized the broader study, applied for funding for the research project, developed the plans for data gathering, developed ethics protocols, developed research questions, and conducted or were involved in data collection. Based on these, the research team maintains the intellectual property of the broader project, including information in transcripts. As an graduate student, you will own the copyright and the intellectual property to your master's thesis

The master's thesis that develops from these data falls under the regulations of the University of Alberta unless an intellectual properties agreement is in place that overrides the rules and regulations of the University of Alberta. You must agree upon the following points:

1. The methods developed and data generated from the research are to be made available to the investigators, as they become available.
2. The results of the main project are to be kept confidential except for descriptions and parts that have been reviewed and agreed upon by Dr. Philomina Okeke-Ihejirika and only in approved outlets.
3. For this third party funded research (i.e. the main project) a final report is required. In these case, Dr. Okeke-Ihejirika and co-investigators, if any, will be listed as the principal author(s) on all progress reports, drafts, final reports and talks related to the research work.
4. It is customary for the results from graduate theses to be published in peer-reviewed journals, conferences or other venues. Any articles, papers and presentations related to this research work

will include Dr. Philomina Okeke-Ihejirika and other co-investigators as a coauthor, provided they have provided feedback, reviewed and/or revised the work.

5. In cases where substantial parts of your thesis are used in a report or publication, you hereby give permission to Dr. Okeke-Ihejirika to use these parts freely. In addition, Dr. Okeke-Ihejirika will have permission to assign copyright to third parties for publishing data, figures, quotes etc., that may be found in your thesis. You will be credited according to your contribution.

6. You will be the first author on any paper submitted for publication, provided that it is based on your thesis work, you have completed the analysis, and you have written the first draft of the paper.

7. You must submit a paper for publication in a peer reviewed journal by June 30, 2022 (latest) so as to ensure that the team can meet the requirement of the funding agency. If a paper is not submitted by this date, Dr. Okeke-Ihejirika reserves the right to submit the manuscript with you as an author if you have completed the analysis and drafted parts of the paper. See <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/graduate-program-manual/section-10-intellectual-property/10-2-guidelines-for-authorship>

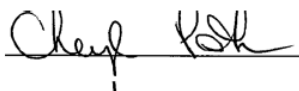
8. You are expected to communicate with your supervisors, Dr. Sophie Yohani and Dr. Cheryl Poth regularly and adhere to your research schedule. You must also communicate any intent to present the data from the study in any outlet and obtain approval from Dr. Okeke-Ihejirika prior to presentation

9. Dr. Okeke-Ihejirika will provide access to the relevant Google Drives to complete the work related to the thesis. All data from the study must be stored on these Google Drives or Dr. Okeke-Ihejirika's shared drive.

All data must be securely handled. In the course of your analysis, you may come across confidential information that does not directly related to your thesis. You must keep all information obtained, including during interviews, meetings, and data analysis, confidential.

Supervisor:  Date: September 7, 2020


Supervisor: Cheryl Poth



Date: September 7, 2020

Student: 

Date: June 23, 2020

Principal Investigator of Primary Data Set: 

Date: Sept. 7th 2020.

Appendix D: Ethics Approval Letter for the Current Study

Notification of Approval

Date: September 16, 2020
Study ID: Pro00104047
Principal Investigator: [Eki Okungbowa](#)
Study Supervisor: [Cheryl Poth](#)
Study Title: Gender Relations Within Parenting Practices Amongst African Refugee Families
Approval Expiry Date: September 15, 2021

Thank you for submitting the above study to the Research Ethics Board 2. Your application has been reviewed and approved on behalf of the committee.

Any proposed changes to the study must be submitted to the REB for approval prior to implementation. A renewal report must be submitted next year prior to the expiry of this approval if your study still requires ethics approval. If you do not renew on or before the renewal expiry date, you will have to re-submit an ethics application.

Approval by the Research Ethics Board does not encompass authorization to recruit and/or interact with human participants at this time. Researchers still require operational approval as applicable (e.g., AHS, Covenant Health, ECSD, etc.) and where in-person interactions are proposed, institutional and operational requirements outlined in the [Resumption of Human Participant Research - June 24, 2020](#) guide must be met.

Sincerely,

Ubaka Ogbogu, LLB, BL, LLM, SJD
Chair, Research Ethics Board 2

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system).

Appendix E: Coding List

Themes	Theme Definitions	Codes	Code Definitions	Sample Quote
Raising Children According to Gendered Experiences and Expectations	Approaches parents reported using to raise their children based on their own gendered experiences and the gender of their children	Aspirations for Children's Education	Career and educational aspirations for children shared by both men and women and the unique aspirations of single mothers	"They're trying, school is not easy, but they have to do what they can do to move them forward. In this country [Canada] when you have education, it can take you far, but if you don't have education, that's another level that you cannot move forward." -Mother EDF002
		Ways of Relating and Interactions	How men and women parent according to the gender of their child and the unique experiences of being a step-parent	"As a father of the family, there are obligations and rights. One of the obligations is to protect my daughter. One of the obligations is to keep her safe. One of the obligations is to keep her in school...as a boy there are always differences, especially in African culture. And we still follow that here. We like the boy always to be the head of the family. And therefore, you'll always be careful to teach [him] how to be a responsible man. That's number one." - Father CAM006
Gendered Division of Labour Among African Refugee Men and Women	Parenting responsibilities assigned within families examining different roles amongst the genders	Disruptions to Men's Role as the Primary Breadwinner	Participants' perceptions of a primary breadwinner role, disruptions to this role in the Canadian context, and the implications for the family	"I work for them, not for myself. I work for them so that they have a better education. So I'm working. I tell you I'm working for them. This money does not belong to me, it belongs to the kids. That's why you know, sometimes you don't get enough money for the income over here. Sometime, it depends what kind of job you are doing. The men is everything for programming. Money for the school fees, money for the clothing, money for

				the shoes, money for the books, money for the -- so a lot of things separated.” - Father CAM002
		Impacts of Childcare on Women’s Educational and Work Pursuits	Views shared by men and women regarding domestic work and childcare and the challenges a lack of supports presents for women in pursuing work and education	“Well back home lifestyle is different there. In Canada lifestyle is different, like in Canada it’s hard, because when you have kids, the men are not always there to help or the support. So you as the mother you carry all the load, take care of your child, make sure your child eat, she wears clothes, she got to school. It’s all about the mother, the dad never involved, so it’s a big struggle. Well at the same time we’re trying to do our best.” -Mother EDF002
		Striving to Find Work-Life Balance Through Childcare Supports	Experiences men and women in my study shared about balancing work and family responsibilities and its impacts on their parenting practices	“So if a woman ... mostly you would prefer a woman to work in the morning, until four or three o’clock. At least if we have a babysitter it’s going to be for one hour, at least it’s not going to cost us that much. And then the man is going to be from four to midnight.” -Father CAM013
Men’s and Women’s Views and Use of Parenting Support Systems	The views refugee parents in my study expressed about support systems used in their cultures for parenting, and their experiences with formal and informal supports in Canada	Gendered Experiences With Parenting Support Systems	Men and women’s experiences with social supports for parenting	“So there was always networks. Down here, ugh, who do you see, who do you talk to? There is nobody...there’s a big difference you know, it’s a new culture, a new society...Virtually it disappeared, there was no network.” - Father CAM011
		Suggestions From Men and Women for Parenting Supports	Suggestions made by men and women in my study regarding parenting supports that they believe would benefit their	“...We need some organisation to stood ahead of the Black woman and show us the road. When I came here it’s really

		parenting experience in Canada	very, very difficult - very, very difficult to handle everything - nobody helping. Even we're stressed out - we're stressed out. Nobody look at you as a human being - just like servant. It's really - I doesn't like it and even at work, they give us a different attitude or different - I don't know how to say it...they give us different treatment. If we have a community of Black women, we should get a lovely opportunity ahead of us where or I'm going to speak, or stood up for myself.” -Mother CAF012
	Significance of Communal Parenting	Men and women’s experiences with extended family and community involvement in parenting pre- and post-migration	“In Eritrea, in culture, your children, they give some problem, to kick yours – not us, for me, in my country. The children is yours also. My children is your children. Your children is my children. It’s a community. Children, I have any problem, community problem. Not like Canada.” - Father CAM005
	Support in Handling Cases of Domestic Violence	Men and women’s perceptions of domestic violence, its impacts on children and implications for parenting, and parental views on seeking support during domestic violence	“Yeah so even here people have domestic violence but they hide it. They don’t pronounce it because they feel if they take the help maybe their husbands will be sent away and they don’t want to do it so they keep it – so according to my tradition they try to hide and not to let the government know what is happening.” -Mother CAF002