Along Came a Virus: Leisure in a Dangerous Time

Hermeneutic phenomenological explorations of the lifeworld experiences and meanings of

leisure of African immigrant mothers and daughters in Canada, during the COVID-19 pandemic

by

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Abstract

The purpose of my hermeneutic phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of leisure of African immigrant mothers and daughters resettled in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. My research questions explored (a) how African immigrant mothers and daughters describe their lived experiences of leisure (both indoor and outdoor) during the COVID-19 pandemic, (b) the meanings African immigrant mothers and daughters ascribed to their leisure experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, and (c) their relationships with each other, with friends or other leisure companions, during the COVID-19 pandemic. I conducted my research at a time in the pandemic before COVID-19 vaccines were widely available.

Methodologically, my hermeneutic phenomenological study was underpinned by two philosophies: Aristotle's philosophy of leisure (Hemingway, 1988; Owens, 1981) and Gadamer's (2004) theory of hermeneutic experience. I engaged in philosophical hermeneutic interviews (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011), augmented by visual methods (Margolis & Zunjarwad, 2018), including drawings and auto-driven photo elicitation (Samuels, 2004), to gather stories of 14 participants' lived experiences of leisure. Participants comprised four mothers (aged 29-36) and ten daughters (aged 13-24).

I analysed the interviews in accordance with Hycner's (1985) phenomenological interview procedures, combined with those of Finlay (2014) and Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) and turned to theory from fields within and beyond leisure to facilitate the interpretations of the findings. I generated themes from my data as follows: **The crucible of cultural hearth**, in which I described the experience of loss in terms of severed connections, leisure, and the faith sanctuary. In **The cultural hearth warms** I explored the ways in which leisure became possible and was often expressed through culture. In the theme **My soul soothed in arts- and nature-**

based leisure I examined how creative leisure and leisure in nature soothed and brought pleasure. In **Come together: The worldwide digital hearth** I detailed how digital leisure allowed for connection with others, daily living tasks to go on, and became a fount of entertainment. Finally, in **The friends at the hearth: Developing and deepening ties** I considered the ways in which friendship comforted participants.

The pandemic shocked participants as familiar gathering places, such as churches and restaurants, closed. Participants lost jobs and volunteer work. They decried being unable to have leisure, socialize with friends, or travel. Participants attended church services online or found different ways of expressing their faith that brought comfort and succour.

Participants found leisure derived from their cultural heritage traditions especially satisfying. Leisure companionship within families strengthened participants' appreciation for their loved ones and firmed their familial bonds. Family members became close companions; mothers and daughters took renewed interest in each other and sought each other for leisure of many different kinds. Mothers and daughters shared culinary traditions, heritage language learning, and played traditional African games. Embodying the African ethic of *ubuntu* mothers in healthcare found leisure in extending care and protectiveness to the vulnerable people they served in their work. Surprising friendships blossomed and participants expressed gladness at the unexpected deepening of their relationships with friends.

Creative leisure such as painting, writing, dancing, and sewing, were cathartic for expressing political convictions, experiencing nostalgia, and evoking joy and happiness. Connection to the land, and cultivating, harvesting, and consuming plants native to their homelands gave comfort, satisfaction, and purpose to participants' pandemic leisure. Equally important was digital leisure. The internet not only meant that life could go on: banking,

studying, reading electronically, playing games, working from home, it afforded plenty of entertainment too—though it palled with a surfeit of it. Importantly, the pandemic revealed in stark relief, the leisures—and relationships—they had taken for granted that had been sidelined by pandemic health restrictions, and focused participants on what was important in their lives.

Given the participants' experiences, they may have benefitted from the expansion of access to nature and community gardening, and the provision of affordable internet access and intuitive, user-friendly technologies to bolster online connectivity and prevent isolation during a crisis. These findings may resonate with other groups under similar social and health restrictions.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Jane Hurly. The research project, of which this thesis is a part,

received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project

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Dedication

To my husband, Geoff, who never stopped believing in me.

Acknowledgements

My deepest thanks must be to the women who so generously contributed to my study by participating in it and allowing me to interview them, even as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted their lives astronomically. They were unfailingly generous and gracious—and this was before vaccines brought some glimmer of normalcy back to our lives. Some had lost their jobs; they had to become teachers when their children's schools closed. Those who were on their own in Canada, or single, suffered an abyss of loneliness; isolation and quarantine sundered them from all-important human company and family connections. Others, working in the healthcare field among the most vulnerable and frail faced deadly uncertainty with magnificent courage every day—and still they came to each online interview, smiling cheerfully and asking how *I* was. They showed me the true meaning of courage and backbone in perilous times.

I am so very thankful for my family, both near and far. My husband, Geoff, has carried me through many a crisis with abiding love and a generosity of spirit that enveloped me like a warm blanket—whenever I needed it. And that was often. My grandchildren, Gabby and Daniel, reminded me of what was truly important in life; my sister, Lesley Ott, was my fiercely supportive stalwart, my sounding board and confessor on numerous occasions during my doctoral journey. In this vein, warmest thanks are due to my lionesses: Dr. Tanya Berry, Dr. Audrey Giles, and Dr. Frances Plane who lifted me up when I most needed it and helped run me to the finish line. And to my armada of kind and loving friends who kept encouraging me, especially through the rough spots: there are few words that would adequately thank you for your friendship and support.

I would also like to acknowledge my supervisor, Dr. Donna Goodwin, and my supervisory committee, Dr. Tara-Leigh McHugh and Dr. Shintaro Kono, as well as my

examiners, Dr. Bukola Salami and Dr. Monika Stodolska. My sincere thanks for your investments of time and effort in my thesis. You challenged me to think in new ways. I learned more than I ever knew I would.

I am profoundly grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for my Doctoral Fellowship, the University of Alberta for my President's Doctoral Prize of Distinction, and to the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation for a Graduate Student-Initiated Research Projects award. These much-appreciated scholarships and support provided me with the needed monetary resources to conduct my research and was especially welcome in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused untold upheaval and delay to my program and necessitated my conducting my research and writing my dissertation in a socially-distanced bubble of one.

Last, but most assuredly not least, I am grateful to Johann Sebastian Bach, whose exquisite *Goldberg Variations* served as an ineffable, thrilling, and uplifting anthem, and as beloved and familiar background companion during interviews, while thinking, writing, and dreaming in a time of solitude, and when deadly plague gripped the world. In the gorgeous iridescence of music, I floated free…

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Glossary of Terms

Most definitions, except for those of acculturation and acculturative stress, have been sourced from The Canadian Council of Refugees (https://ccrweb.ca/en), and the Master Glossary of Terms (2006) from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR].

For the purposes of my study, I use the term immigrant to include people who have come to Canada as voluntary and involuntary migrants. Therefore, in accord with Baffoe (2013) and Ludwig (2013) who found that refugees wished to shed the term 'refugee' as quickly as possible post-resettlement to avoid the stigma attached to the word, I use the term 'immigrant' to include immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and sojourners.

Acculturation

The experience and process of culture contact was defined by Redfield et al., (1936): "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (p. 149).

A later definition of acculturation, based on Redfield et al.'s (1936) understanding of the phenomenon was formulated by the Social Science Research Council in 1954, as comprising

> Culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission: it may be derived from noncultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modification induced by an imposing culture: it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life (p. 974, as cited by Berry et al., 2002, p. 350).

Acculturative stress (also resettlement stress)

Acculturative stress occur when people of different cultural heritages come in contact with each other, such as occurs when culturally diverse immigrants settle in a new homeland that is culturally distant from theirs, they often do not affect each other in a benign way (Berry et al., 2002). People belonging to different cultural groups may clash when they come in contact with each other; some groups may be hostile to the 'intrusion' of others in 'their' country. Some groups may find they face discrimination because of race, ethnicity, religion, accent, or attire (Creese & Wiebe, 2009).

Asylum seeker

An asylum-seeker is an individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum-seeker. (UNHCR, 2006)

Immigrant

An immigrant is an individual who makes a deliberate choice to emigrate from the country in which they reside to another country of their choice. Immigrants seek permission from the country to which they wish to emigrate by applying, in advance, for permanent residence; they obtain the necessary travel documents, such as visas and health documents in advance of their travel. They may also visit the country to which they wish to emigrate for reconnaissance purposes, regarding job prospects, housing, and schools for their children. Immigrants are typically not in situations of duress in their homelands but choose to emigrate.

Internally displaced person (IDP)

Internally displaced persons are people who have fled from their homes because of conflict and violence, human rights abuses, or both natural and human-caused catastrophes. Typically, IDPs are displaced within their own countries; they have not crossed a border into another country, and they have not applied for asylum (UNHCR, 2006).

Migrant

These are people who leave their countries of origin purely for economic reasons not in any way related to the refugee definition, or in order to seek material improvements in their livelihood. Economic migrants do not fall within the criteria for refugee status and are therefore not entitled to benefit from international protection as refugees (UNHCR, 2006).

Newcomer

This is an umbrella term often used in Canada and elsewhere to encompass all immigrants regardless of residency status (e.g., Gallant & Tirone, 2017; Lauckner et al., 2022; Quirke, 2015) and in order to avoid the use of negative terms in cases where migrating individuals do not have legal immigration status in a country (Callister, et al., 2022). The term includes immigrants (those who have permission to reside in Canada permanently), refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and sojourners.

Refugee

According to the UNHCR Emergency Handbook (n.d., p. 2) (https://emergency.unhcr.org) the primary and **universal** definition of a refugee, according to Article 1 (A)(2) of the 1951 Convention, amended in 1967, defines a refugee as someone 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, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term "the country of his nationality" shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national.

Importantly, a person who is a refugee cannot, under any circumstances, return to her home country because it would be dangerous to do so.

Resettlement – see Acculturation

Settlement

The process of settling in, of putting down roots and establishing one's home (Baffoe, 2010).

Sojourner

According to Zheng and Berry (1991) a sojourner is an individual who emigrates for a fixed term, in other words, that person is a temporary resident of another country. Such an individual might be a businessperson, or a contract worker who leaves her homeland to work for an extended period on a project, or she might be an international university student, who seeks to obtain a degree in a foreign country. In all these cases, immigration is not permanent, but temporary. In each case, the individual expects to leave the country in which they sojourn and return to her native homeland, after accomplishing the project, or obtaining a qualification.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In early 2020 the world awoke to a new threat: the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic (Piret &
Boivin, 2021; Yang et al., 2020). Since March 2020 we have all witnessed and experienced
firsthand sweeping restrictions limiting our daily comings and goings, and socializing: the
closing of borders; the sequestering, isolating, and quarantining of individuals and countries, and
an exaggerated response to anyone with the merest sniffle or untimely cough. According to
Johns Hopkins University's COVID tracking data (https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html), on
June 28, 2021, close to 179 million people had been infected with the COVID-19 virus, and
nearly four million had perished globally.

Yet even in the great plague literature, from Boccaccio's (2009) *Decameron,* a 14th
century tale of a group of people sheltering from the Black Death and whiling away the time by
telling stories to each other, to Daniel Defoe's (2009) *A journal of the plague year* chronicling
the horrors of plague in 17th century London, and Mary Shelley's (2009) 18th century epic
tragedy *The last man* that describes (and foreshadows?) the annihilation of humans by pandemic,
there were inklings that leisure brought relief, and solace to the characters in these great literary
works. Whether spinning yarns while sheltering in place (*Decameron*), poring over magnificent
art works, and reading great literature in the deserted galleries and libraries of Rome (*The last
man*), or writing a diary (Defoe's journal), leisure became apparent as important for enjoyment,
serving as distraction from stark reality, bringing a little normalcy, pleasure, joy, purpose, and
satisfaction into troubled, altered lives.

We know little about African immigrant women's leisure yet migration from Africa is
forecast to swell in future, thereby significantly altering the demographic landscapes of countries
in the Global North (OECD, 2017). In addition, because in the midst of the 2020-2021 COVID-

19 pandemic, the literature on this topic in the leisure studies domain was scant, and, at the time of writing, I have found none that examined how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted leisure experience for African immigrant mothers and daughters resettled in Canada. However, leisure, which has been found to positively impact quality of life and life satisfaction (Mannell, 2007) can play a vital role in easing resettlement stress (Kim & Iwasaki, 2016; Quirke, 2015; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Suto, 2013). Leisure, with its propinquity for uplifting, as essential to achieving excellence in the flourished, well-lived life, and deemed essential to the development of the whole person (Owens, 1981), becomes ever more urgent a field of study, now overladen with the added trauma of pandemic.

In addition, because of global mass migrations now afoot, owing to internecine conflicts, tribal rivalries, economic hardship, poor governance, failed states, poverty, and simply a desire for a better life, demographics in many immigrant-receiving countries are shifting dramatically (OECD, 2018). Refugees come not in trickles, but in thousands-strong waves, such as the 'caravans' of migrants from Central America who have converged on the Mexico/USA border (Musalo & Lee, 2017), or the four million from South Sudan who have fled to Uganda and other neighbouring countries (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2018). Such large influxes of diverse people to new homelands pose urgent questions of how to successfully and easefully resettle immigrants among long-settled (and often wary) citizens (Kelley, 2017). Moreover, countries welcoming immigrants are anxious to find ways to help them flourish (de Graauw & Bloemraad, 2017) in their adopted homelands.

Leisure and the Satisfied Life

An often overlooked but essential facet of the fulfilled and satisfied life is leisure, which can contribute substantially to both easeful resettlement and the amelioration of resettlement

stress (Hurly, 2019; Stodolska, 2015). While there is a tendency to consider leisure as a luxury, the purview only of those with the means and time to indulge in it and as manifestations of "wealth, prestige and power" (Juniu, 2000, p. 70; see also Veblen, 2005), it clearly offers much in life enrichment for everyone (Juniu, 2000; Kleiber, 2000; Mannell, 2007)—as well as for those who have experienced great trauma in their lives (Kleiber et al., 2002).

Leisure for Socialization and Strengthening Community Bonds

Leisure has been found to be important for immigrants in supporting their well-being[1] (Quirke, 2015) and affording beneficial effects in various life dimensions. For example, Stodolska (2015) touted sport and recreation as essential facets of the satisfied and enjoyable life for immigrant communities in the U.S. as beneficial for mitigating acculturative stress, strengthening both community and broader society bonds, and improving physical and mental health. In Germany, Mohammadi (2019) reported that a cycling program for Middle Eastern women immigrants brought pleasure, feelings of accomplishment, and enjoyment to participants' lives, none having had the opportunity to learn to cycle in their native lands.

Sport and Recreation. Playing sport has afforded refugees relief and a way to cope with uncertainty and stress for those sequestered in reception centres and awaiting word on their residency status (Waardenburg et al., 2018). Sport participation was similarly vivifying for

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[1] Crisp (2017) explained that "well-being is most commonly used in philosophy to describe what is non-instrumentally good *for* a person" (para. 1). Furthermore, both Crisp (2017) and Kraut (2018) emphasized that philosophers tend not to agree on how to define well-being, and several vastly different philosophical theories of well-being abound. Such theories include that well-being may consist in hedonism, in welfarism, or in the fulfilling of our desires, or in achieving objective lists of pleasurable life experiences that please and satisfy, and lead to feelings of contentment with one's life (Crisp, 2017). For the purposes of my thesis, I espouse the understanding of well-being as enunciated within Aristotle's philosophy: it is *eudaimonic* (*eu*=good; *daimon*=spirit) and consists in virtuous activity that lends to the nurturance of a person who is as wholly and fully developed, intellectually, mentally, physically, artistically as they can become by striving for excellence (Hemingway, 1988; Owens, 1981). Kraut (2018) described well-being in this sense as "experiential eudaimonism"(p. 3). In essence, I perceive Kraut to mean that well-being consists in a human being experiencing a combination of experiences that, in sum, lend to the flowering of the flourished and flourishing, virtuous individual, whose actions do not harm either themselves or others.

Syrian young people (both male and female) who reported that playing sport evoked in them feelings of competence, confidence, self-esteem, and greater belonging in Canada where their families had been resettled (Robinson et al., 2019). Researchers in Canada found that leisure, experienced in a variety of ways, both indoors and out, was deeply appreciated and enjoyed by refugees (Hurly, 2019; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009), as affording opportunities for family time, socialization, physical activity, and cerebral leisure, such as learning.

Leisure in Nature. Leisure in the natural environment, whether in urban parks (Hordyk et al., 2015; Rishbeth & Finney, 2006), community gardens (Coughlin & Hermes, 2016; Peters et al., 2016), or outdoor recreation has offered newcomers (a term that includes recent immigrants, refugees, sojourners, and asylum seekers) benefits for calm and restoration, and socializing (Kloek et al., 2015). Encouragingly, even a brief, two-day winter leisure outing for refugees in Canada evoked expressions of resilience, hope, joy, pleasure, and self-confidence among participants to be able to succeed in their new homeland (Hurly & Walker, 2019a). Coughlan and Hermes (2016) discovered that the leisure of community gardening afforded refugees a sense of belonging in their adopted homeland.

Effects of Trauma in Refugees' Lives

It is important to briefly contextualize the deleterious and dangerous (if not lethal) political, physical, and emotional environments from which many women from Africa have come. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] (2017) more than 48.4% of the world's refugees are girls and young women. Their plight is dire: rape, gang rape, and violence against women and girls, have become increasingly used as weapons of war in many of the world's major conflicts, such as in Sierra Leone (Marks, 2013), Rwanda and Bosnia Herzegovina (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002) and Democratic Republic of the Congo

(Bartels et al, 2010). The toll of these traumas on refugee women's lives and well-being can affect their feelings of worth, and feelings of diminished worth can have profound knock-on effects in terms of their resilience and ability to transcend their trauma once resettled (Goodman et al., 2017). Furthermore, women and girls who have endured life in unstable or violent countries have often experienced extreme trauma (cataclysmic events that are life-threatening), in addition to sexual violence (Cohen, 2013). These are important differentiators between the lifeworld experiences of those living in countries at peace and those whose homelands have been wracked by conflict and must be taken into consideration when examining any aspect of immigrants' lives post-resettlement, including leisure.

The Rift: Mother and Daughter Relationships

After resettlement in a safe country, mothers, who strove to protect their daughters from harm during flight and in refugee camps (Bokore, 2013) continued to play a significant role in their daughters' lives. Nonetheless, daughters, whether they came to Canada as immigrants or refugees, often clashed with parents, rebelling against parental controls and expectations of heritage culture adherence (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). Consequently, mother-daughter relationships in immigrant families can become fractious and fraught with tensions. This was discovered to be particularly prevalent when adolescent daughters begin rapidly acculturating in Canadian society and they wanted (and demanded) more opportunities to explore and integrate with their Canadian peers and enjoy the same freedoms and leisures (Goitom, 2018). Familial discords may lead to fractured, contentious relationships between mothers and daughters (Goitom, 2018; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000).

Because of women's varied immigrant and refugee women's varied experiences before and after immigration, discord and tensions between mothers and daughters may occur after

resettlement, and the promise of leisure in mitigating acculturative stress (the stress newcomers experience when adapting to a new homeland) (Berry, 2005), I hold that leisure[2] in the philosophical sense, as essential for the development and flourishing of the whole person (Goodale, 1985, 1991; Hemingway, 1988; Hurly, 2021; Owens, 1981; Sylvester, 1991), may offer much-needed respite, comfort, and joy in immigrant women's lives.

Research Purpose

The purpose of my research was to explore the lived experiences of leisure of African immigrant mothers and daughters living in Canada. My research objectives were to explore the lifeworld experiences of leisure, and the meanings of leisure of African mothers and daughters, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Questions

1. How do African immigrant mothers and daughters describe their lived experiences of leisure (both indoor and outdoor) during the COVID-19 pandemic?

2. What meanings do African immigrant mothers and daughters ascribe to their leisure experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic?

3. How do African immigrant mothers and daughters experience leisure in their relationships with each other, with friends or other leisure companions, during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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[2] Leisure, in the philosophical sense, is anchored in Aristotle's (2002) philosophy of leisure, and characterized by the pursuit of virtue, and in striving for excellence to attain the flourished or felicitous life (Goodale, 1985, 1991; Hemingway, 1988; Holba, 2007, 2013; Owens, 1981; Sylvester, 1991). Leisure, in Aristotle's (2002) philosophy, is also marked by the obligation to apply ethical wisdom or *phronesis*, derived from leisure, for the benefit of others.

Significance of the Study

We know little about the leisure experiences of African immigrant[3] mothers and daughters, as "Africans are the least researched of all the immigrant groups in Canada" (Baffoe, 2010, p. 158; see also Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2018), and this lack has been compounded by the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had profound and catastrophic impacts on health and well-being globally (Bottan et al., 2020). For refugees especially, whose lives have already been upended by conflict and strife of such relentless intensity in their homelands that it has prompted them to flee beloved and familiar places, often wrenched from loved ones, the loss of leisure is even more searing and profound than for those whose lives and families were not in imminent danger before the pandemic struck. Political strife has not ended with the pandemic; wars have not ceased. Humans continue to migrate for economic reasons, or to flee persecution, torture, and untenable living conditions. There will always be immigrants. Leisure, with its propinquity for uplifting; as essential to achieving excellence in the flourished, well-lived life (Goodale, 1991; Hemingway, 1988; Owens, 1981; Sylvester, 1991), and deemed, in the philosophical sense, as "the finest of all possessions" (Kalimtzis, 2017, p. 2) becomes ever more relevant and urgent a field of study now laden with the added trauma of pandemic.

Researchers interested in exploring the leisures of immigrant women, whether they came to their adopted homelands voluntarily (immigrants and sojourners) or involuntarily (refugees and asylum seekers) are beginning to gain momentum (e.g., Gallant & Tirone, 2017; Hurly & Walker, 2019a; Mohammadi, 2019). Often these studies have been conducted with a view to

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[3] For the purposes of this study all participants are referred to as immigrants, no matter their status when they first arrived in Canada. This is because there is well-documented evidence of newcomers' desires to not to be hampered by the stigma they perceive to be attached the term 'refugee' and to simply get on with their lives (Baffoe, 2013; Ludwig, 2013).

understanding immigrants' well-being through leisure as they resettle. Because leisure has been found to be a resource for social support and comfort for newcomers (e.g., Hurly, 2019; Suto, 2013) there is reason for further exploration and among culturally-diverse women from around the world.

Compounding the need for this research is the world's largest recorded migration now afoot (OECD, 2017) that will continue to bring many more culturally diverse people from primarily Africa, Asia, and the Middle East to lands of resettlement in search of safety and a new beginning. According to the International Organization of Migration's [IOM] (2018) report on global migration indicators, there is less research about migrant integration than about matters related to migration such as trafficking, remittances, and financial health. In short, the role of leisure in the lives of immigrants and how it contributes to their feelings of thriving and flourishing in their adopted homelands tends to be overlooked. My study contributes to the scant extant knowledge pertaining to the lived experience of leisure for immigrant mothers and daughters from Africa who have emigrated to Canada, and their experiences of leisure in terms of their relationships with each other, such as friendships with others beyond the family circle, during a once-in-a-century pandemic (Piret & Boivin, 2021).

In addition, because I think it is important that all research should enrich the lives of others, in the spirit of activating *phronēsis*—practical wisdom—a term I will elucidate in the Philosophical Underpinning section—leisure and recreation practitioners and service providers, settlement counselors, and parks authorities may benefit from the new knowledge brought to light in the provision of culturally appropriate, inclusive services. However, I do not, through my research, seek to generalize my findings or desire to tout them as universally applicable to all immigrant women and daughters in Canada. The new knowledge that emerges from my work,

may enhance, enrich, and augment the knowledge of relevant immigrant-serving groups and organizations in the leisure and recreation realm about how African immigrant women, both mothers and daughters, experience leisure and role of leisure in familial and non-familial relationships during a global health crisis.

The chapters in my dissertation are elucidated as follows: my literature review (see Chapter Two) describes first the diverse leisures of African women in the African context. I then paint a picture of African women immigrants in Canada and the life experiences that affect their well-being. Thirdly, I explore leisure post-resettlement for African women who have emigrated and resettled in a new homeland, and the mother-daughter relationship. I then expound the philosophical underpinning of my research in Chapter Three. Chapter Four outlines my research methodology. In Chapter Five I describe the method I used for information gathering, and how I analysed the information emanating from the interviews, photographs and drawings that resulted. Thereafter I expound on the trustworthiness of my research. Chapter Six describes my findings in detail. In Chapter Seven I explore, in-depth, the findings in the Discussion chapter in terms of relevant concepts and theories arcing across domains ranging from leisure to psychology and beyond. Finally, in Chapter Eight I present the conclusion to my study and describe its contribution to the leisure field, the limitations of my study, and possible directions for future research employing a classical view of leisure (Hemingway, 1988; Owens, 1981), entwined with Gadamer's (1976; 2004) theory of hermeneutic experience.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

In my literature review I explore leisure in several life domains including satisfaction with life, amelioration of stress, the impacts of leisure in the lives of women and adolescent girls, and cultural nuances and influences in the attainment and expression of leisure.

My literature review is presented as follows: First, I describe leisure and recreation, as their understanding is central to the research being undertaken. Their description is followed by an exploration of the literature covering African women's leisure in the African context. This provides some understanding of African women's lives pre-migration. Second, I broadly describe African immigrants in Canada, as well as the plight of women who were refugees before emigrating and the dangers posed by refugee camps for women and children before they have been accepted by a country for resettlement because these experiences affect leisure participation. Third, I describe the role of leisure in immigrants' lives post-resettlement. I consider sport and recreation to be nesting within the broader concept of leisure, and so I have also included literature in these cognate leisure facets. This section also includes literature indicating how immigrants have benefitted from leisure in terms of their resilience and inner strength as they resettle. I also illuminate the importance of socializing through leisure for immigrants, and how immigrants have found leisure in learning opportunities. In addition, I review the literature on nature-based leisure and its role in newcomers' lives in terms of their well-being and belonging. I include this section because nature-based leisure has been found to be efficacious in terms of its calmative and restorative propensity in people suffering anxiety and post-traumatic stress, or resettlement stress (or all of these; Lovelock et al., 2011; Peters et al., 2016; Stodolska et al., 2017).

Fourth, because, in my research, I explore the lived experiences of leisure of African immigrant women and daughters resettled in Canada., I include a section focusing on family leisure and particularly on the role of mothers in enhancing, managing, or curtailing their daughters' leisure. Of note, often researchers use the umbrella terms 'newcomer' or 'immigrant' to describe immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Consequently, usage of these terms in studies may become somewhat blurred. For these reasons I have judiciously included literature on immigrants broadly as it may actually be about or include people who had arrived as refugees (or asylum seekers) but who do not identify as such anymore (Baffoe, 2010, 2013; Sangalang et al., 2018). In addition, settlement agencies frequently encourage refugees in Canada to eschew the 'refugee' label in favour of calling themselves 'immigrants' or 'Canadians' and are now part of Canada as landed immigrants or citizens (Joan, refugee from South Sudan, personal communication, May, 2017). The women in my previous studies (Hurly, 2019; Hurly & Walker, 2019a) were typically reluctant to describe themselves as refugees, supporting Sangalang et al.'s (2018) contention that refugees are anxious to divest themselves of the stigma of having been a person needing help, and instead preferring to describe themselves simply as immigrants (Baffoe, 2013; Ludwig, 2013).

Finally, my literature review has been developed in accordance with Efron and Ravid's (2018) formulation of the traditional/narrative review. As such the focus of my literature review is primarily on findings and includes an unrestricted scan of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies, undergirded by an array of theoretical perspectives in a variety of fields beyond leisure, sport, and recreation.

Leisure and Recreation

I begin here with a brief review of some concepts of leisure and, point out, where salient, the commonalities and divergences among them. After this, I expound the term recreation, and explain how leisure and recreation differ and how, though these terms (leisure and recreation) are often used interchangeably, should be understood as entirely different concepts. I contend that leisure is the overarching, philosophical concept, under which leisure pursuits or activities, such as sport, physical activity, and recreation are tucked.

Leisure

Definitions of leisure abound, but there is no one definition upon which all can agree (Kleiber et al., 2011; Sylvester, 2004). Hence, it is worthwhile to return to some of the classical notions of leisure as many of the tenets of leisure articulated in these philosophies of leisure undergird my approach to research.

When asked to define the meaning of 'leisure' in Western civilization, most leisure scholars would have to pause. That is because it is a term, a concept, an idea, a philosophy, that has, over the centuries, metamorphosed from its original meaning among the philosophers of Ancient Greco-Roman times (Kalimtzis, 2017; Sylvester, 1999) as essential to attaining the good life and human flourishing (Maynard, 2010) to a diluted concept confused (and conflated) with recreation (Holba, 2014; Kalimtzis, 2017). Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, and Seneca considered leisure essential for providing the necessary nurturance of intellectual, artistic, spiritual, mental, and physical blossoming essential for molding the virtuous citizen who could, thus versed and schooled, wisely serve the political governance of the community (Sylvester, 1999). Aristotle's idea of leisure—and I will focus on him because he wrote most prolifically on this topic—was embodied in the term *scholê* from which the modern derivations

in English include *school, scholar, scholarship, scholastic* and similar derivations exist in French, Spanish, German and Russian (Kalimtzis, 2017). Aristotle held leisure (*scholê)* in the highest regard, holding it as essential for achieving excellence, for theorizing (which, being a philosopher, Aristotle saw as the zenith of human activities) for human thriving and flourishing, a fertile bedrock for incubating intellectual curiosity through learning, honing the art of critical thinking and debate, as well as for participating in the arts with the aim of edifying the intellect (Maynard, 2010). Artistotle, arguably one of the most influential of the West's philosophers, explicated what he considered to be the hallmarks of *schole* most clearly in the *Nichomachean Ethics* and *Politics* (cited in Maynard, 2010). At its heart, Maynard offered, leisure's most important expression is in having freedom from the necessity of labour, or obligation, and in the art of conversation, of discourse and debate in the interests of intellectual enrichment, human flourishing, or what the Greeks termed *eudaimonia—*achieving the good, complete, fulfilling, and satisfying life (Hemingway, 1988). Importantly, and many definitions of leisure today tend to ignore these tenets of leisure: that such a life, the eudaimonic life, was marked by virtue, morality and ethicality (Owens, 1981). In other words, the life well and virtuously lived (Goodale, 1991). Happiness, one of the hallmarks of the good life is not possible to achieve without leisure—and by this Aristotle (2002) means the pursuit of learning and knowledge and interested involvement in the social and political spheres purely for the sake of doing so.

Aristotle (2002) makes clear that "leisure is not vital to the *survival of man*. Instead, leisure is viewed as *necessary for human flourishing*" (cited in Maynard, 2010, p. 28, italics added). Vital to the achievement of intellectually vibrant leisure is the notion of choice, and this notion does not simply mean that it is the choice to do anything: it is the thoughtful choice to

engage in the excellent to achieve the good life that elevates the mind, and for the common good of all society (Grondin, 2003, 2006).

Leisure, in the philosophical sense, is anchored in virtue, and in striving for excellence in pursuit of the flourished life (Goodale, 1991; Hemingway, 1988; Holba, 2007, 2013; Owens, 1981; Sylvester, 1991). Leisure, for Aristotle, was also marked by the obligation to apply ethical wisdom, derived from leisure, for the benefit of others. Aristotle thought leisure to be "the actualised condition at the apex of human aspiration" … and "the condition for the perfected life" (Kalimtzis, 2017, p. 2). Perhaps Hemingway (1988) offers one of the most insightful understandings of leisure or *scholê,* as propounded by Aristotle, that comprehensively captures leisure's purpose and its benefits, and best describes the phenomenon at the centre of this study:

> … The specific function (*ergon*) of leisure is the unfolding of practical reason (*praxis*) and moral wisdom (*phronesis*), that its characteristic end (*telos*) is eudaimonia or the felicitous life in pursuit of virtue, and that its excellence (*arete*) is that of the citizen whose character reflects civility in the active life of the *polis* (city/state). (p. 189)

Such leisure traits are further echoed by philosopher and theologian Josef Pieper (1963), who, though influenced by Aristotelian and Platonic philosophies of leisure (insofar as they underscore intellectualism, discourse, and civic service), departed from their intellectual and dialogical foci to include worship of the divine as essential to the true leisure experience. Pieper also underscored the importance of a receptive, contemplative frame of mind that allows the person to open themselves up to a true spiritual experience. In Pieper's case, worshipful contemplation is grounded in Christianity, and in his fundamental work, *Leisure: The basis of culture,* Pieper (1963) argued that "leisure is possible only when a man consents to his own true nature and abides in concord with the meaning of the universe" (p. 42). According to Pieper,

leisure is inherently good because it allows for a spiritual communion with God through contemplation to take place. However, according to Maynard (2010), this is where Aristotle and Pieper part company: for while Pieper believes that leisure in inherently good, Aristotle sees leisure "simply as a condition of freedom from obligation and necessity" (p. 39). Furthermore, Aristotle does not attach any religious aspects to his view of leisure. Pieper (1963) however, deeply admired and was influenced by the 13th Century Catholic priest and theologian, Thomas Aquinas, who was, in turn, deeply interested in Aristotle's philosophies and made a study of them (Keenan, 1994). As such, these disparate yet interwoven philosophies of life, leisure, and human nature appear to have coloured Pieper's ideas about leisure, and the place of divine contemplation's role therein—and that allowed his philosophy of leisure to nestle with some ease between 'pagan' (read Aristotelian) and Christian thinking on the matter. To wit, Pieper's (1963) foundational work, *Leisure: The basis of culture,* maintains its relevance in helping leisure scholars to gain a clearer understanding of the importance of leisure in our lives. However, some would argue that Pieper's leisure concept is too bent on the metaphysical and the "meaning of leisure in a vanished world" at the expense of the "messy, conflictual substructure of leisure in industrial culture" (Rojek, 2006, p. 28). Certainly, these matters cannot be ignored. Matters of race, gender, ethnicity, class, socio-economic status, and societal power asymmetries all influence leisure and leisure itself takes multitudinous forms that are as individual and diverse as those making the choice to engage in them.

Further leisure theorists defining leisure in terms of the central notions of freedom of choice, or perceived freedom, and intrinsic motivation (e.g., Neulinger, 1974, as cited in Kleiber et al., 2011), have expressed the psychological effects of leisure, for example on optimal arousal, emotion, and affect (e.g., Tsai, 2007; Walker et al., 2019). Matters of place, time, and constraints

to leisure, as well as the degree of seriousness or casualness with which one approaches one's leisure (Stebbins, 2012), or the state of mind we achieve during leisure that fully engages us by being both challenging and satisfying (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), have provided further titrations of leisure studies approaches—and definitions of leisure itself. However, it is important to note that these later concepts and definitions of leisure in the psychological realm typically overlook two vital characteristics of leisure in the classical philosophical sense as articulated and expounded by Aristotle (2002): that it is grounded in virtue and ethicality (Goodale, 1991; Hemingway, 1988; Owens, 1981) and in *phronesis*: an intellectual virtue (Dunne, 1993; Rabinoff, 2018) beholden to the task of engaging ethical wisdom in service of the common good (Grondin, 2003; Hurly, 2021).

For the purposes of my own research, and because my own thinking about leisure's meaning embraces lack of coercion and a *degree* of choice as its pivotal sentiments, and cleaves to leisure as ethical, moral, and virtuous in its ethos, I hold to Hemingway's (1988) definition of leisure as previously described. In addition, in more recent writings on the meaning of leisure, I find that Spracklen's (2017) definition of leisure offers yet another unique perspective, the tenets of which align with my own thinking that leisure is essential to the fulfilled and satisfied life, and that interleave with Aristotle's (2002) and Pieper's (1963; also Parr, 2009) elucidations of leisure as essential for thriving, achieving one's potential and characterized by virtue and ethicality. Spracklen (2017) described leisure as a "human desire" (p. 30) and unfurls a definition of leisure redolent of Habermas's (1990, cited in Spracklen, 2017) concept of communicative rationality. He extended this concept to craft his definition of communicative leisure, which Spracklen pronounced as "ideal leisure" (p. 30) because it is

… the leisure in which we make free choices, use our agency and interact with each other (or with our environment) in a morally right way. It is the form of leisure that instructs us in how to be human, how to respect others and how to feel the satisfaction of creativity (p. 30).

When interleaved then, these concepts of leisure (Hemingway, 1988; Pieper, 1963; Spracklen, 2017) offer a sound basis for my own research in exploring the lifeworld experience of leisure of women immigrants from Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic. Before describing recreation, it is important to first describe a key component of Aristotle's leisure philosophy, *eudaimonia.*

Eudaimonia. Within the crucible of Aristotle's leisure philosophy lies *eudaimonia*, a philosophical 'ingredient' as it were, that is both crucial and integral to the understanding of leisure in the classical sense. This pivotal facet of leisure, argued Bouwer and van Leeuwen (2017), denotes "the end purpose of life that expresses both intellectual virtues (practical and pure theoretical thinking) and character (or moral) virtues" (p. 102). The word *eudaimonia,* broken into its component parts comprises the word '*eu*,' which can be understood as 'good' and '*daimon*' as meaning the soul or self (Ryan & Martela, 2016). Interweaving these latter understandings then, living eudaimonically means living the virtuous, moral, intentional, contemplative, and ethical life, and it can *catalyze happiness* because living eudaimonically "is [more] likely to produce many beneficial outcomes like great happiness and integrity than other pathways in life, such as non-virtuous living, hedonism, or indolence (Ryan & Huta, 2009, as cited in Ryan & Martela, 2016, p. 7). Huta (2013) clarified that eudaimonia does not *mean* happiness (Huta, 2013) as it is at times (erroneously) perceived in the modern era (e.g., Hall, 2018), as resulting from doing things that are self-gratifying, momentary, hedonic pleasures. In

fact, Moran (2018) argued that "the closest approximation to *eudaimonia* [in English] may be 'success in life' (and the Greeks seem to have thought that you could not have worldly success unless a divine power (*daimon)* was well *(eu)* disposed to you" (p. 9). Hemingway (1988) posited that confusing *eudaimonia* with happiness is a fallacy because "eudaimonia is not a passing moment but the result of continued application of oneself to the question of how one ought to live one's life and the attempt to carry this into exemplary action" (p. 186). For Aristotle (2002) this was the goal (*telos*) of leisure (Hemingway, 1988; Owens, 1981).

Morton and colleagues (2019) demonstrated that older individuals with ethically-driven purpose in life that extended beyond themselves (the authors referred to BTS or 'beyond the self') were more satisfied with their lives, found greater meaning in life, regardless of whether they were well or in ill health, wealthy or living with straitened means. Moreover, their contentment with life was marked by benevolence and concern for others.

Ryan and Martela (2016) described eudaimonic living as encompassing "pursuing intrinsic goals, living autonomously, being mindful, and being benevolent" (p. 1). Aristotle considered doing so to be virtuous, and that a human's *telos* or goal was to strive for excellence (Ryan & Martela, 2016). In Ryff's (2018) estimation—her well-being model's psychological components are infused with Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia—she perceived the "key ideals of eudaimonia are to be virtuous and to grow" (p. 246). Explicating eudaimonic living further, Ryff elaborated that

> The key task in life is thus to know and live in truth with one's daimon . . . Eudaimonia embodied the Greek imperatives of self-truth (know thyself) and striving toward an excellence consistent with innate potentialities (become what you are)" (p. 246).
> According to Ryan et al. (2006) Aristotle made a very clear distinction between hedonism

and eudaimonism: "Eudaimonia is not a 'feeling' it is instead a description of character: it is an adjective suggesting an exemplary life" (p. 143). Therefore, eudaimonia has nothing to do with 'good feelings', but with a way of being that exemplifies living a virtuous life to achieve one's full potential. However, such achieving of one's true self is done mindful of one's impacts on others. It is marked by the virtues of contemplative thought, of kindness, benevolence, and friendship towards others, and does not derive from materialism, desire for fame, glory, recognition, or other vainglorious ostentations.

While often appropriated by social psychologists to describe subjective well-being (SWB) or happiness without referencing *eudaimonia's* philosophical nascence, Ryan et al. (2006) clarified the distinction between happiness, which they described as a state of mind (p. 140) and *eudaimonia*, which, they rightly argued, is focused on the "*content* of one's life, and the *processes* involved in living well." In making this distinction, Ryan et al. underscored a key difference between eudaimonia and hedonia: that "hedonic conceptions of well-being focus on a specific *outcome*, namely the attainment of positive affect and an absence of pain" (p. 140, italics in the original). Therefore, hedonism has nothing to do with the long game of life, of finding meaning, of developing one's intellect, of performing good works, striving to achieve one's potential, of making a difference in the lives of others, and of having goals and interests that serve the greater good and are 'beyond the self' (e.g., Morton et al., 2019). It is here that Aristotle's prime virtue, *phronesis*, is animated. *Phronesis* describes applying ethical or practical wisdom in service for the good of humanity (Dunne, 1993; Gadamer, 2004; Grondin, 2003, 2006; Sylvester, 1991) and represents the apogee of the *eudaimonic* life. This appears to be as much the anchoring hallmark of *eudaimonia* as it is for hermeneutic experience, for these go hand in hand. Because *phronesis* is also pivotal to Gadamer's (2004) theory or philosophy of

hermeneutic experience (Dunne, 1993), I have explicated it further in the chapter on my philosophical underpinning.

Recreation

What of recreation? How is it defined? I returned to Veal's (1992) definitions of leisure and recreation where recreation is frequently described as enjoyable activity for diversion, relaxation, and enjoyment that "re-creates," refreshes, and restores a sense of equilibrium and well-being in individuals (p. 7). Also common among the definitions of recreation is the belief or understanding that recreational activities take place *during leisure time* (see Stebbins, 2017). According to Edginton et al. (2005) scholars have tended to agree more readily on a definition of recreation, and it has been commonly defined as "*an activity that is engaged in during one's free time, is pleasurable, and which has socially redeeming qualities*" (p. 56, italics in the original). Participation in recreational activities is seen to be the individual's engagement in "specific, wholesome, and voluntary activities" (Edgington et al., 2005, p. 56).

McLean et al. (2017) have noted that there is consistency in the literature as to the elements comprising recreational activities. Such activities are (a) regarded as an activity, rather than a state of idleness, or rest; (b) they embrace a wide range of activities that may be engaged in once, and briefly, or multiple times over a prolonged period of time, even a lifetime. Recreation is (c) voluntary and (d) extrinsically motivated. Finally, people engage in recreational activities (e) for pleasure-seeking and it is their attitude toward the activity that makes it recreation, rather than the activity they engage in, and; (f) it takes place in one's free time.

Recreational programs are typically goal- or outcome oriented, focused on promoting the common good, and as an instrument for promoting "desirable social ends" (Edgington, et al., 2005, p. 57). Such recreational programs might include keeping children busy after school

(Lauer et al., 2006), as a means for controlling and curbing poor free time choices, or inculcating

respectable and decorous behaviours (e.g., Kelly, 2012; Parratt, 1999). Recreation can serve

educative purposes (Stephen, 2011); it can be used to promote physical activity (Librett et al.,

2007), healthy, active lifestyles (Henderson & Bialeschki, 2005) or for quelling anti-social

behaviours among youths (Kahn & Jamil, 2017), among others. Parratt (1999) described the

well-intentioned, moralistic "rational recreation" of 19th Century England, which saw the

establishment of organizations like the Girls' Friendly Society

(https://girlsfriendlysociety.org.uk/) and the Mothers' Union (p. 480)

(https://www.mothersunion.org/). These organizations, which are still in existence today, though

with broader, inclusive girl-and-woman-empowering mandates, were initially run and mentored

by upper class (or ruling class) English women for working-class girls and women of the time.

They had, as their aim, to engage lower-class girls and women in virtuous recreational pastimes

to prevent them from "sliding into sin" (Parratt, 1999, p. 473). In addition, those running the

organizations inculcated their religious principles among their members. They provided

instruction on domestic duties and served as benevolent mentors—with the goal of preserving

working-class girls' and women's morality and respectability. It is entirely possible that they did

so with the goal of guiding women they deemed as socially vulnerable because of their lower

class (and beliefs held by the upper classes about the vulgarity of the lower classes) in line with

the genteel ministrations of their own upbringing.

Therefore recreation, which can include sport and recreational activities, such as yoga,

jogging, belly-dancing, or photography, can be deployed for various purposes, including

promoting prosocial behaviours. However, recreation nests within the broader concept of leisure

that emphasizes state of mind, a time to allow the self to surrender to the moment, and repose for

contemplation, restoration, and renewal. It might even include divine worship (Heintzman, 2006; Pieper, 1963).

During my research I was not concerned with the outcomes-based goals of recreation. My study was not centred around understanding how a recreational activity is engaged in, or its effects. I delimited my study to explore the lived experiences of leisure of African immigrant mothers and daughters resettled in Canada, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Between Scylla and Charybdis: The Scourge of Disaster on Mental Health

There is little question that disasters, catastrophic events, and health crises cause immense impacts and disruptions on human lives (Christadoulou et al., 2016; López-Ibor, 2005). Words such as 'disaster' cannot adequately describe the catastrophic, long-term, psychological havoc and trauma it trails in its wake, whether the occurrence of disaster is natural (e.g., tsunami, earthquake, mud-slide), man-made (e.g., war, terrorism, nuclear) or economic (e.g., financial collapse; Christodoulou, 2016; Lopez-Ibor et al., 2005; Makwana, 2019).

Natural Disasters

Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, avalanches, floods, droughts, cyclones, or wildfires are not typically human-made, though López-Ibor (2005) cautioned that in many natural disasters, "the human hand is always present" (p. 3). Even in these instances, the experience of them may be gendered. For example, Niaz (2016) drew attention to the vulnerability of women in Pakistan, an area prone to earthquakes, noting that in addition to the precarity of life following a natural disaster, "due to social norms and their interaction with biological factors, women, particularly girls, have faced increased risk to adverse health effects, and violence" (p. 59). By this statement Niaz noted how women in patriarchal societies experience unequal access to resources in a disaster, such as social networks

which affected their access to transportation, employment, and even decision-making. Moreover, she asserted, women were considered—and treated—as lesser to men. As such, women were "not sufficiently included in community consultation and decision-making processes" (p. 59). In addition, Niaz (2016) found that because natural disasters disproportionately impacted the informal and agricultural sectors, women were typically over-represented among the unemployed, further disadvantaging them. Furthermore, men frequently migrated when lands became unworkable following a disaster, leaving women at the head of large households but with few resources, particularly if the home had been destroyed or severely damaged. In addition, the prevalence of rape and other sexual and physical violence during natural disasters has been documented by researchers, such as Fisher (2010) and Nguyen (2018). Fisher (2010) discovered that in the aftermath of a tsunami in Sri Lanka, women reported sexual molestation, rape, violence, even when taking shelter in accommodations meant for safe-housing victims of the disaster. Following a typhoon in the Philippines in 2013, similar sexual atrocities and violence were commonly reported by women and girls (Nguyen, 2018).

The experience of natural disasters may be racialized as well. Garfield (2007) drew attention to evacuation plans for New Orleans in the face of Hurricane Katrina, the design of which excluded those unable to drive themselves from harm or get to evacuation centres themselves. Hence, many poor African Americans were left behind, including the elderly, and people with disabilities, with no means to escape. Worse yet, hysterical, misinformed media portrayals of Black survivors rendered "stranded African Americans as unworthy disaster victims, regardless of age, gender, class and other significant social distinctions" (p. 73).

Human-made Disasters

The second type of disaster is *human-made* and encompasses war, violence, and acts of brutality (Husain, 2005) such as torture and rape. Other human-made disasters may be nuclear (e.g., Chernobyl), or involve terrorism (e.g., the kidnapping of school children by Boko Haram in Nigeria; suicide bombers in Afghanistan; snipers in Bosnia). Human-made disasters "are the consequence of a clear intention, as in the case of conventional war" (López-Ibor, 2005, p. 3). They occur when malevolent actors plot to destroy cultures and ways of life, disrupt and destabilize social systems and infrastructure, breed fear, assert domination, vanquish a foe, appropriate land (or sea), and conquer and wield power and dominion over others (e.g., the Holocaust; Christadoulou, et al., 2016).

In countries in conflict, the experience of women who have fled conflict and sought assistance and shelter in refugee camps, has, once again, been an experience fraught with danger. Fleeing the terrors and horrors of war, refugees are often severely traumatized, suffering depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Steel et al., 2002), and complex post-traumatic stress disorder (CPTSD; Nickerson et al., 2016) in cases where individuals have endured "repeated, prolonged, interpersonal trauma exposure" (Nickerson et al., p. 2). Prolonged trauma can stem from their horrific experiences of, or having been witness to, brutality, torture, rape, loss of loved ones and homes, plunder, and murder. The devastating effects of their mental distress can linger for decades (Varning Poulson, 2017; Sangalang et al., 2018).

It is understandable that people seek to flee these environments, often seeking the support of outside agencies such as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (https://www.unhcr.org/) or the International Organization of Migration (IOM) (https://www.iom.int/), which try to help resettle them in a safe country. However, it can take a significant amount of time for a refugee to be resettled. Refugees have often spent up to 20 years

in refugee camps before being accepted for resettlement in Canada (Hurly & Walker, 2019a; Hurly, 2019; Tanle, 2013). In addition, as Bokore (2013) described in her own narrative as a Somali woman with four children whose family was eventually resettled in Canada, refugee camps can be especially dangerous places for women and children. It appears that while refugee camps offer refuge from the conflict, the supposed safety from harm they promise is often illusory (Bokore, 2013). This is because the threat of being raped, experiencing violence—often perpetrated by those entrusted with their safety (Kagwanja, 1999)—is prevalent in refugee camps, especially for women alone or those with children. Bokore (2013) described her sojourn at a Kenyan refugee settlement as a shattering experience of watching her children starve and being constantly fearful for their safety and her own from both men and wild animals.

Economic Disasters

Economic disasters (Christadoulou et al., 2016; López-Ibor, 2005) may result from man-made actions and have knock-on sociological and psychological effects, such as the financial crisis of 2008 when major banks collapsed causing mass unemployment (Drydakis, 2015) and widespread mental health problems, including anxiety and pessimism. For example, during the financial crisis (2008-2018) in Greece austerity measures were introduced that reduced government spending considerably. The result was a collapse of the social services network, and massive unemployment and business closures. These conditions caused destitute people without hope to commit suicide (Tsitsipa & Fountoulakis, 2016). Similarly, in India, when crops failed or market conditions made farming precarious as a way of life, many farmers who could not repay their debts took their own lives (Kallivayalil, 2016).

COVID-19 – A Global Health Crisis

Because the COVID-19 pandemic is the first major global health crisis of the 21st Century (Piret & Boivin, 2021), researchers focusing on the human experience of disasters have had little time to explore its impacts on the human race. Yet the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, caused by a novel coronavirus, has proved a terrifying vortex, not only of contagion, but with deleterious socio-economic impacts globally, affecting every corner of life from agriculture, and manufacturing, to aviation and hospitality, sport, and leisure, and well beyond (Nicola et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic began quietly enough, when, in December 2019, doctors at a hospital in Wuhan, China noticed an unusual number of patients seeking medical assistance for what seemed like a new type of pneumonia (Hui et al., 2020; Piret & Boivin, 2021; Yang et al., 2020). It was not long thereafter that a novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, now known globally as COVID-19 was identified (Yang et al., 2020) and its genome sequenced. This was no benign influenza-like virus, but a highly infectious pathogen that quickly spread beyond China in a globalized world. Since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (Sohrabi et al., 2020; see also https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/media-resources/press-briefings), COVID-19 went on to rapidly infect and kill millions globally. According to the COVID-19 tracking data produced by the Centre for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University, (https://systems.jhu.edu/research/public-health/ncov/) as of May 6, 2022, there were over 516 million cases of people infected with the COVID-19 virus, and more than six million had perished globally—though underreporting by numerous countries was suspected (e.g., Lau et al., 2021; Unnikrishnan et al., 2021). While many countries in the West and Asia have managed to quell the infection rate, and boost vaccination rates, many poorer countries have fewer resources to do so. My data gathering took place

between late 2020 and early 2021, before access to vaccines for COVID-19 was widely

available.

Effects of Disaster: A Glimmer of Hope in Leisure

While disasters have befallen humankind since the dawn of time, the effects on human

health and well-being are not all negative. Lecic-Tosevski et al. (2016) found that individuals

who had survived deeply traumatic events associated with conflict and violence had done so in

6-16 months, and some even expressed gratefulness for the experience, thinking themselves to be

stronger and more resilient because of the trauma. Supporting this assertion Zvi Zemishlany

(2016) of Tel Aviv University reviewed Israeli studies in which individuals had experienced

rocket fire, mortar attacks, and both threats and acts of terrorism and found that, despite the

horror of their experiences, and the ephemerality of their living situations, several factors proved

psychologically protective to individuals. Social cohesion, having shared religious or ideological

beliefs, and a supportive community in which one felt one belonged, lent to attitudes of solidarity

and resilience. Zemishlany (2016) concluded that "when combining all these findings, 'sense of

belonging' appears to be an important characteristic of resilience" (p. 219). A sense of

belonging, feeling loved and protected, have also served as protective factors for children in

Bosnia's conflict during which girls as young as six were raped, and snipers picked off children

in the street where they played, or when queuing for water or food (Husain, 2005). Husain

(2005) found that despite the horrors of their existence, children in Bosnia still played together,

and through play they engaged in magical thinking, and imaginative play in which they absorbed

their war-shattered surroundings into their games, affording them an oasis to be carefree children

once more, even amid their fearful realities. "Resistance and resilience are qualities that children

possess that function like an antidote to the many poisons life has to offer," offered Husain

(2005, p. 241). Four prominent factors contributed to the resilience and resistance Husain had found in children. First, having a positive outlook boded well, while children who were consumed with "revenge fantasies" (p. 242) became mired in negativity and fared less well than children who were focused on a future beyond the conflict. Secondly, having a purpose in life had a buffering effect against their experiences of armed conflict, as did being able to let go of survivor guilt and to rebuild their lives, hopeful of the future. These factors, combined with Zemishlany's (2016) findings that feeling a sense of belonging, solidarity, being cared for in times of disaster, instability, and uncertainty point to important ways in which humans can be protected, even in the most threatening, dangerous circumstances. Importantly, leisure may also be protective and nurturing in such circumstances.

Less is known about the role of leisure in the lives of those who have experienced disaster, though a small body of research currently exists. Kono and Shinew (2015) are among a handful of researchers who have explored leisure in the aftermath of a natural disaster. In their research among Japanese survivors of the 2011 Great Eastern earthquake and tsunami, Kono and Shinew found that small leisure experiences, such as hobbies or pleasures found in simple recreational activities, such as swimming, or socializing with friends, helped to foster meaning and purpose in participants' daily lives. Leisure also afforded individuals a modicum of normalcy amid catastrophic loss and upheaval. As such, their findings were in accord with those of Husain (2005) and Zemishlany (2016) who reported that feeling that one belonged, and had a sense of purpose, led to more optimistic thinking about the future, and moving on with one's life for individuals who had experienced war and terror, or a natural disaster.

Finding the 'normal' in life through leisure following disaster has been noted by Donlon (2013), who discovered that staging traditional cultural performances, such as Mardi Gras in

New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the bull-pushing festival following the Mid-Niigata Prefecture Earthquake in Japan in 2004, were important leisure experiences for raising morale and rousting people to participate in something they knew. These beloved festivals served as nostalgic rallying points for people, reminders of their own indefatigability and courage in the face of adversity. These festivals, staged despite the natural disasters that had occurred, represented a glimpse of a normal future in which the cherished familiar stood as defiant testament to resilience and resurrection in the face of disaster.

A significant difference between a natural disaster, a man-made disaster, and a global health crisis, such as COVID-19, is that people were, in a natural disaster or even war, permitted to come into close proximity with each other. They could comfort each other, and most importantly, they could touch each other: place a hand on a shoulder, hug a bereft person, hold hands, gather to mourn, lend a hand, or visit each other. On the other hand, during this pandemic, human contact has been lost (Du et al., 2020; Shah et al., 2020). Loneliness, and isolation have marked the COVID-19 pandemic as individuals were advised to have no contact with anyone beyond their immediate household, with deleterious health impacts, including stress (Boals & Banks, 2020). These restrictions on human contact, so unnatural to human beings, had negative impacts on personal relationships for many (Pieh et al., 2020). Despite many being permitted to work at home, others were on the frontlines of the pandemic, tending the ill, the infected, those in long term care. Many others lost their jobs (Bottan et al., 2020). Fitness and sports facilities, gyms, theatres, museums, and other entertainment venues, including libraries, closed their doors; travel declined (Roberts, 2020), essentially bolting the doors to any kind of activity involving contact with others that might bring respite through leisure. Consequently, baking became, among some, a passion because it was one of the few things one could easily

engage in for leisure. However, as Easterbrook-Smith (2020) noted, competitiveness and snobbery about who could or had baked the most perfect, artisanal loaf became rife among those who posted their efforts online, particularly by self-declared gourmets and 'foodies' who had anointed themselves as 'in the know' about such things.

One of the most important and enjoyable facets of leisure is that it is shared with others (Gallant & Tirone, 2017; Giles & Oncescu, 2020; Hurly, 2019; Knopf, 1987; Suto, 2013) and it involves socializing, making friends, having a social network (Kloek et al., 2017; Mohammadi, 2019), feeling a sense of belonging with others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and love and friendship (Ryan & Deci, 2017). During the pandemic, the social network for leisure became one's family (Yuen, 2021). Much of the early research on leisure during the pandemic comprised personal essays, commentaries, and opinion pieces, or research with oneself as the subject—because no research could be conducted face-to-face. For example, Yuen (2021) described her family's experience of leisure in lockdown, in which they came to have a greater appreciation of each other as they focused on their relationality as a nuclear family unit. On the other hand, Giles & Oncescu (2021) underscored the pivotal place of relationality in leisure from their perspectives as single, childless, professional women. They drew attention to their loss of freedom in leisure during COVID-19 when distanced from their social networks and emphasized the harms of enforced social isolation and the overwhelming importance of social connection.

The importance of being creative during the COVID-19 was emphasized by Marques and Giolo (2020). In their informal study, they asked graduate students in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, about their experiences of leisure during the pandemic, and found that, with many in-person leisure opportunities curtailed, students had availed themselves of digital visits to world-class museums and galleries, including watching live-streamed musical events. They had

created apps and websites to meet with friends remotely. Marques and Giolo (2020) noted that these were conscious choices by the students, who found that "the dynamics of working from home sometimes made them lose track of time, making it hard to realize where their time was going" (p. 346), and prompted them to be creative about finding outlets for leisure. Importantly, Marques and Giolo (2020) alerted us to the significant demand for cultural leisure experiences despite the pandemic, and the artful ways in which ballet companies, opera houses, museums, science centres, art galleries, and so on, have responded with digital initiatives that have, to some extent, slaked the thirst for cultural leisure, even as we pined for companionship. In an Australian study, Krause et al. (2021) explored the use of media-based leisure activities in the early months of the pandemic among Australian university students. These researchers surveyed 127 university students in a series of six online surveys completed every two weeks, asking questions about television usage, listening to music, online gaming, and social media. Krause et al. (2021) found that of all media, students reported greater satisfaction with life when listening to music, and lower life satisfaction when watching television, engaging in social media, or playing video games, and posited that this might have been associated with the degree of control one has in the music one listens to. Consequently, they argued, listening to music might be a valuable aid for students during times of stress and uncertainty such as the pandemic has wrought. Perhaps, as Gammon and Ramshaw (2020) suggested, when we connect with leisure experiences that induce feelings of nostalgia, whether listening to music one knows well, watching a re-run of a world-class soccer match, or simply looking through an album of family photographs, can generate positive emotions and happiness. During the COVID-19 pandemic these digital leisure experiences have afforded pleasure and feelings of social connectedness, small islands of familiarity and comfort during the COVID-19's unfamiliar, socially distanced *terra incognita*.

African Women's Leisure in the African Context

In the African context in times of relative calm and sans pandemics, Sharma's (2018) admonishment is worth heeding: the African identity is not a Pan-African one, and Mawere (2014), in supporting Sharma's claim, cautioned that African cultures are not homogeneous. They are richly diverse even though they may share some philosophies of humanness, spirituality, and kinship. Mawere (2014) used as his exemplar the concept of *ubuntu*, noting that this philosophy of "humanness that embrace[s] unity, love, and peace. . . is pervasive and ubiquitous in many African cultures, from the southern to the northern and from the eastern to the western parts of the continent" (p. 24). Therefore, both convergences and divergences of African thought, culture, and tradition come to bear in the lifeworlds and leisure experiences of African women.

Sharma (2018) argued that while many African dialects may not have a word for leisure, that does not mean there may not be African concepts broaching the Western definition of leisure. Chick (1998) was asked this question as well, pondering whether leisure might be easily translated by people who speak different languages. According to his research, Chick and a student from Africa, who spoke Xhosa, found that though the word leisure might not have its equivalent in another language, the lack of it does not represent a barrier to understanding leisure as a concept. Chick examined anthropological, ethnographical and leisure studies literatures to see whether and how conceptualizations of leisure might differ. He concluded that "the concept of leisure is relatively easily understood by speakers of [other] languages" (p. 117) and that "leisure, though it may be called something else and conceptualized somewhat differently, is discussed commonly enough in the ethnographic literature to conclude that it is a universal human phenomenon" (p. 127).

According to Sharma (2018), leisure experiences in Africa have been shaped by the continent's early history, the impacts of colonialism, and the commodification of ethnicity for tourism purposes (e.g., experiences of a traditional Zulu *kraal* replete with bead bedecked women demonstrating traditional crafts, and an imposing *InDuna* [great warrior] to bid tourists welcome to reinforce the 'noble savage' trope). It should be noted that Sharma's examples were from post-apartheid South Africa only and may not reflect leisure tourism in other African countries. These examples are important reminders that just as there is no Pan-European, Pan-Asian, or Pan-North American identity, leisure is experienced and defined differently across all cultures. Furthermore, the definitions and meanings of leisure have all been influenced by intercultural interactions and exchanges across generations because we are not static as human beings, sedimented in our pasts, but evolving always. Therefore, in the post-colonial era, Sharma (2018) said, "Eventually, it is for the people themselves to decide what they want to draw from the 'leisure experience'" (p. 234). Her words alert us to the multiplicity of leisure meanings and enunciations no matter where the individual resides, the myriad influences in every woman's life that will affect her leisure, what she regards as leisure and the meaning it has for her. To this end Esherick (2005) pointed out the vastness of the African continent, where presently 1.2 billion people live (UN Population Division, 2019), and the individuality of each African woman. "Each [African woman] has her own dreams and limitations. Each has rules by which she must live. But each is an individual with a value, worth, and dignity all her own" (Esherick, 2005, p. 23). Oduyoye (1997) also warned against assuming that there is a Pan-African female identity, or a Pan-African feminism. Oduyoye cited her own example as an Akan woman of Ghana, where the society is matrilineal, and her shock at learning that the Yoruba women of western Nigeria were, in their patriarchal-patrilineal society, not equal with men as decision-makers in society.

Therefore, women's roles *in African societies*, and how each woman engages in leisure, may be variously shaped by her ethnicity, tribal norms, and traditions, as well as the Western influences of colonialism, capitalism, the infiltration of religions including Islam and the "attempted Christianization of Africa" (Oduyoye, 1997, p. 9; see also Njoh, 2006). In addition, the multitudinous African cosmologies, mythologies, values, and belief systems may shape the African woman's life and leisure.

I would caution, too, that we should also not assume a simplistic view of African women. African women are as likely to be highly-educated professionals, as they are to be illiterate. They are as likely to be politicians, musicians, engineers, writers, and teachers as they are to be tradespeople, homemakers, unemployed, or market vendors (Esherick, 2005). This does not mean that women in African society enjoy equality with men across the continent. In fact, the United Nations and African Union's (1995) Protocol for the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa seeks specifically to entrench African women's rights where the patriarchy predominates. The African Charter entrenches women's rights to be free of discrimination, harmful practices (such as clitidorectomy or female genital cutting), equal property rights and matrimonial inheritance, freedom from violence against her person in peacetime and in conflict; the right to dignity, as well as protection for aged women, and those experiencing disability.

Oduyoye (1997; see also Njoh, 2006) partially blamed the prevalence of the patriarchy in Africa on Western religions, such as Christianity (southern Africa) and Islam (northern Africa), that have seeped, capillary-like, through many African countries. In addition, traditional African beliefs in the equal but complementary powers of females (through menstrual blood) and males (through semen) have been usurped by Western colonial precepts of male superiority and female

inferiority (Oduyoye, 1997). These Western precepts have, over centuries of colonial influence become deeply embedded in many parts of Africa as the norm, influencing women's lives and place in modern-day African society.

There are some studies in which researchers point to modern-day African women's leisure that find parallels in the Western feminist leisure literature where several significant restraints on women's sport and leisure participation have been enunciated, including pervasive gender stereotyping and societal role expectations that constrain women. Coquery-Vidovitch (1997) in examining African women's lives in Africa, concluded that African women "for centuries have not even understood the possibility of leisure time" (p. 232). However, in 2016, Naidoo noted many similar demands on African women's time and expectations of the tasks they would fulfill in the home as did Coquery-Vidovitch, though two decades divides their work.

Naidoo (2016) declared that African women living in Africa have been found to be just as overburdened by domestic obligations as women in the West, even as professional women (Naidoo, 2016). By way of example, Okumdi and Asiazobor (2011) conducted a mixed methods study of the leisure of professional women living in Southwest Nigeria. These researchers found that Nigerian women were responsible for a disproportionate share of domestic duties. Overburdened with the lion's share of domestic responsibilities topped with the expectation of performing optimally in their professional lives led most participants to indicate they had no time for leisure. "I find it difficult to balance my time between housework and paid work and I cannot squeeze leisure in my schedule," said one woman (p. 56) whose comments were echoed by many study participants. Responsibilities to family affirmed the predominance of the 'ethic of care' (Noddings, 2002) where women often feel obligated to take care of family needs and put the needs of others before their own. Putting family first or risk being "considered a bad woman"

(Okumdi & Asiazobor, 2011, p. 56) constrained Nigerian women's leisure behaviours to hearth and home (Oduyoye, 1997). In addition, the culturally-embedded belief that leisure was possible for men, but not women, attested to the influence of culture, and the gendered nature of Nigerian society that reinforced gender stereotyping.

Researchers of the aforementioned studies have underscored the high expectations of women as caregivers and providers in the African context and also the relegation of their leisure to something they might have once family duties have been completed. But once again these articles and studies point only to leisure experiences in some African contexts, such as South Africa and Nigeria.

Although not the focus of my study, in the sporting realm, Pelak (2005) discovered that women soccer players in post-apartheid South Africa were largely dismissed as interlopers and pretenders to the sport. As Pelak noted, "what women do is [perceived as] 'kids-stuff' and what men do is the serious sport" (p. 58). However, the women, while aware of the 'second-best' narrative prevailing in society, were undeterred and played enthusiastically regardless. One young woman even staged a hunger strike to pressure her mother into allowing her to play on the team. Pelak hailed the transcendence of traditional bonds by South African women and celebrated the female athletes as "not simply victims of sexist, racist, colonialist relations" but instead as "active agents in negotiating structural inequalities and ideological constraints in the social institution of sports" (p. 66). She also acknowledged the valorization of men's sports over women's sports generally, around the world, regardless of a country's history of racial inequality and violence.

Akyeampong and Ambler (2002) have drawn attention to the introduction and acceptance of Western sports, such as the advent of football (soccer) in many African countries, as well as

cricket in countries like Rwanda ("The fastest growing sport in Rwanda is cricket." *The Economist,* 2019) that have become consuming leisure pastimes of many Africans, particularly men, across the continent. Furthermore, with the rise of cosmopolitan cities and the ascendance of capitalism, consumeristic leisures have emerged, such as conspicuous leisure travel, the accumulation of fashionable cars, clothing, and jewellery in a development of leisures far removed from those of rural Africans (Marshall, 1997). Typically, leisure of the modern-day city-dwellers in Africa are redolent of the leisure enjoyed by Westerners, including dance clubs, festivals, sport participation (either as participant or observer) and travel, among others. However, as in all cultures, these leisure experiences are tempered by access to disposable income, choice, and the gendered nature of perceptions about women's roles in African society (Naidoo, 2016; Oduyoye, 1997; Okumdi & Asiazabor, 2011).

In summary, the leisure of women in Africa is as varied and multitudinous as the vast continent of Africa itself (Dowden, 2013; Esherick, 2005) in which 1.2 billion people live (UN Population Division, 2019). Leisure for African women may be influenced by their ethnicity, tribal norms, religion, and sexism as well brushes with colonization, and Western influences, such as capitalism (Njoh, 2006; Oduyoye, 1997), and whether she lives in a cosmopolitan centre or rurally (Marshall, 1997). Gendered notions of women's place in society (Naidoo, 2016) may affect their participation in sport (Pelak, 2005), or their rights to have leisure (Okumdi & Asiazabor, 2011) where the patriarchy is entrenched.

While researchers have studied and described leisure in the lives African women residing in peaceful countries, the situation is very different in countries mired in war and conflict. In countries embroiled in conflict, all sense of normalcy in women's lives—in fact, all lives—is catastrophically upended. Safety and security become paramount. The pleasures of life, such as

leisure, become chimeric. Fleeing families find themselves in cultural landscapes that are often quite remote from those in their heritage homelands.

I now describe the situation of African refugees in Canada to provide some context and understanding about the effects of war, violence, rape, torture, and deprivation on refugees, all of which affect the need for, understanding of, and engagement in leisure. It must be noted that not all refugees have lived in refugee camps (Baffoe, 2013), and not all people who migrate from Africa were refugees. By describing the situations and experience of women from Africa who came first as refugees, I wish only to draw attention to the fact that for those who entered the country as refugees, their situations before arrival would have contrasted greatly with those who chose to emigrate to Canada and arrived as immigrants.

Africans in Canada

According to recent figures from Statistics Canada (www12.statcan.gc.ca), Africans from across that vast continent comprised of 54 countries made up the second largest group of immigrants to Canada after the Philippines and is one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in Canada (Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2020; Salami et al., 2020). Between 2011 and 2016, 162,790 people from Africa settled here, the largest group of which came from Nigeria. The majority settled in Quebec (74,200), followed by Ontario (39,385) and Alberta (27,765). Of the total number of newcomers from Africa, 35,990 were refugees, hailing primarily from East and North Africa, with Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia accounting for the lion's share of involuntary migrants, in addition to smaller numbers from Central Africa. Central African refugees came primarily from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Canada accepts a relatively small number of refugees from Africa each year, though some of the world's bloodiest protracted conflicts rage there (UNHCR, 2017). Indeed, Africans

make up the smallest group of refugees accepted by Canada. Between 2015 and 2018, Canada welcomed just 5903 refugees from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan (UNHCR Resettlement Data Finder, n.d.). These numbers pale in comparison to 28,223 government assisted refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic who were resettled in Canada over the same period and forgiven their Government of Canada transportation loans unlike all other refugees (Fenwick, 2017). Therefore, while many African countries are embroiled in state-based conflicts (Bakken & Rustad, 2018), those do not appear to attract the same degree of attention or urgency of action in Canada in terms of refugee resettlement as do conflicts in other parts of the world (Coffie, 2018).

Once resettled in their adopted homelands, leisure prevails in helping newcomers feel at home, even in a vastly different physical, social and cultural environment. In his study exploring the concept of home among African immigrants in Canada, who came from a variety of countries across Africa, Baffoe (2010) noted the strong ties all African immigrants have and maintain to their original homelands. Beyond the strong ties of kin, national pride, support to family back home through remittances, many Africans expressed their cultural identity through leisure, including social gatherings with their ethnocultural groups, playing music from their homelands, and maintaining their culinary heritage. Baffoe (2010) described how African immigrants in Ottawa drove to Montreal to access African food markets, so important and integral to their self-expression and identity was the consumption of the beloved and familiar foods of their homelands.

Leisure and Resettlement

All immigrants, regardless of whether they are voluntary or involuntary migrants, face the daunting process of beginning again in their newly adopted homelands that may be vastly

culturally distant from their native lands (Baffoe, 2010). While much of the research on immigrant resettlement focuses on immigrants' social and economic integration (Baffoe, 2010; Creese & Wiebe, 2009; Fou et al., 2016; Reitz, 2013), the matter of leisure—arguably one of the critical life dimensions contributing to life satisfaction (Mannell, 2007) tends to be overlooked for its contribution to well-being in the process of resettlement (Hurly & Walker, 2019a; Hurly, 2019).

There is, however, significant evidence of the rehabilitative and calmative impacts of leisure in restoring a modicum of well-being and normalcy in immigrants' lives. For example, taking part in traditional, cultural pastimes, such as weaving, not only ameliorated stress in Karen women refugees from Myanmar resettled in the U.S.A., but also helped in their integration into American society because they found interest, encouragement and a market for their creations among Americans (Miner Stephenson et al., 2013). In Miner Stephenson et al.'s phenomenological study, the researchers used semi-structured interviews and focus groups with Karen women to explore the essence of the meanings they ascribed to their traditional weaving. The authors found that the women expressed their culture through their weavings, and in sharing their culture, they affirmed their belonging to it. Miner Stephenson et al. indicated that, among refugee populations, having leisure may make a positive contribution to physical health, psychological and spiritual well-being across the lifespan by "diverting or distracting people from distressing thoughts that may be triggered by stressful life events" (Mannell, 2007, p. 117).

Further bolstering Mannell's (2007) view of leisure's positive affect (e.g., inducing positive feelings of joy, happiness, and contentment) on humans in many life situations, Kleiber et al. (2002) reviewed the literature on leisure and the transcendence of negative life events

arguing for a robust role for leisure in provoking post-traumatic growth[4] (PTG; Tedeschi &

Calhoun, 2004; see also Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2014). PTG may evoke a "survivor rather than

victim" (Kleiber et al., 2002, p. 221) concept of self that may benefit interpersonal relationships

and foster an optimistic philosophy of life (Powell et al., 2003). Such feelings of well-being may

manifest in an appreciation "for the smaller things in life and a desire to make the most of the

moments available" (Kleiber et al., 2002, p. 221). Supporting Kleiber et al.'s contention, Iwasaki

et al. (2005) suggested that leisure may be valuable for coping with and counteracting stress.

"Not only does leisure involve taking a time-out from one's stressful life and providing a

positive, alternative focus, but it also helps individuals feel rejuvenated and gain a sense of

renewal" (p. 96). While this research was not among immigrants, Iwasaki et al. did include a

diverse cohort of interviewees for their study, including vulnerable and marginalized groups,

making this valuable and pertinent knowledge for my study. In addition, when leisure

experiences are shared with friendly, compassionate companions who provide a form of social

support in the form of "leisure friendships" they may serve to quell stress (Iso-Ahola & Park,

1996, p. 183).

The Leisure Experiences of Immigrant Women

Much of the leisure literature related to the experiences of immigrants, refugees and

asylum seekers settling in their new homeland has focused on a mélange of leisure, recreation,

and sport participation as catalysts for integration in their new homelands (e.g., Kensinger et al.

2007; Olliff, 2008; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000; Waardenburg et al., 2018). While such participation

is important, leisure is not a panacea for preventing isolation or promoting integration among

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[4] Post-traumatic growth (PTG) denotes some individuals' ability to transcend their experience of trauma that involved great personal suffering and loss, and to realize markedly positive life changes (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2014)

newcomer women though some gains have been noted (e.g., Olliff, 2008; Whitey et al., 2016). However, it is important to note that recreation and sport programs do not always include, or benefit, refugee, or immigrant women (Spaaij, 2015).

In the following section, I describe how leisure for immigrant women takes many forms, and that, though often influenced by ethnocultural norms and cultural constraints, these factors may be negotiated (Tirone & Shaw, 1997; Stodolska & Livengood, 2006). Next, I explore ways in which leisure enhances resilience in immigrant women (Mohammadi, 2019), bolstering their confidence (Hurly & Walker, 2019a), and sense of well-being (Stack & Iwasaki, 2009) in many life domains. Learning as leisure has emerged in several studies (e.g., Hurly & Walker, 2019a; Hurly, 2019; Dali, 2012) and I explore this phenomenon further in this section. Further, I describe the importance of leisure for socialization, a key ingredient of leisure as empowerment for immigrant women (Gallant & Tirone, 2017; Kloek et al., 2017; Suto, 2013), after which I examine the connection between leisure and the natural environment and its essential role in many immigrants' lives (Hordyk et al., 2015; Peters et al., 2016). Having considered the many ways in which leisure may benefit immigrant women, the matter of how leisure is experienced in immigrant families is elucidated. Finally, I reflect on the ways in which cultural considerations and self-construal impact leisure.

Leisure as Negotiation. Immigrants of different ethnocultural heritage may be strongly influenced by their heritage norms and feel compelled to uphold those in their adopted homelands. Depending on the extent to which that culture is entrenched, women and girls can be thwarted from full participation in leisure. For example, community pressure among South Asians to maintain their Indian culture meant women tended to police each other with elders frowning on any woman stepping 'out of bounds' in terms of engaging in leisure pursuits. This

was particularly so if family and domestic duties were perceived to be neglected. Similar findings have emerged in Canada where Tirone and Shaw (1997) conducted a phenomenological interview study of Indo-Canadian women's leisure. Tirone and Shaw found that the "centrality of family" (p. 232) in these women's lives was critical to their concept of leisure, as was preserving their Indian cultural identity and inculcating it with their children. In addition, Indian immigrant women expressed disdain for the concept of leisure as "private space and time" to oneself (p. 239) which they deemed irrelevant in their lives.

Preserving their heritage culture, the umbilicus of family, maintaining close Islamic community ties, and preservation of traditional cultural and religious norms, also strongly influenced the leisure choices of immigrant women from Islamic countries living in the U.S. (Stodolska & Livengood, 2006). The Muslim women in this qualitative study were aware of the curbs on their leisure posed by Islam, such as being unable to participate in mixed dancing or swimming. However, they professed to accept these constraints, and adjusted their leisure participation in accordance with their beliefs, including using their faith as a way to avoid interactions with other Americans in venues antithetical to Islamic ideology or where they felt unwelcome.

Stodolska and Livengood (2006) cautioned that "care needs to be taken when employing the existing theoretical frameworks to analyze the behaviour of diverse ethnic/racial groups" (p. 311). Their caution is pertinent because what might be perceived as a barrier or constraint to leisure by a Western researcher applying Western leisure theories, might not be deemed such in the eyes of their participants. In step with much qualitative research in the leisure domain, Stodolska and Livengood chose to conduct in-depth interviews to gain deeper insights into participants' perspectives, underpinned by two theoretical perspectives: selective acculturation

and symbolic interactionism. Acculturation posits that individuals will choose how they participate in the broader society and will retain the cultural or heritage tenets of their culture that are important to them. In Canada's multicultural context, 'selective acculturation' might be akin to Berry's (2005, 2006, 2019; see also Berry et al., 2002) acculturation theory wherein he defines integration as those immigrants who essentially straddle two cultures and choose to participate fully in the broader society, while retaining heritage culture values dear to them. Further, Stodolska and Livengood (2006) turned to symbolic interactionism because of the symbolic nature of leisure, "laden with meanings, symbols, and norms that are given by the individual participants as well as their social environment" (p. 298).

Leisure and Resilience. Many immigrants have found leisure a source of empowerment, inner strength, and resolve. Practical applications of knowledge about the importance of leisure in immigrants' lives articulated in focused leisure programs have proved beneficial. For example, Mohammadi (2019) took a life history interview approach in her qualitative case study of seven Middle Eastern women, all immigrants from Islamic countries (Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq) recently resettled in Germany. Taking this approach enabled her to delve into the women's leisure experiences both in their heritage homelands and after migrating. Mohammadi explored their experiences of a learn-to-cycle program and found that though some of the women had struggled to learn to ride they had determinedly persevered in order to master an activity they had been denied in their homelands where it was deemed unseemly for a woman to cycle and forbidden. In this study, the women had enthusiastically shed the Islamic requirements for female comportment from their former homelands and availed themselves of the more liberal cultural norms of Germany to take up cycling. Mohammadi discovered that the women

experienced significant beneficial outcomes in terms of their psychological and physical well-being, and participation in the freer milieu of German society.

The cycling program, besides instilling confidence, met the women's desire and need for socialization together in a comfortable setting. In a similar vein a decade before, Stack and Iwasaki (2009) conducted a qualitative study of Afghan refugees resettled in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Stack and Iwasaki discovered that leisure played an important role for both men and women as they adapted to Canadian life. Leisure afforded opportunities for socializing, maintaining contact, and assisting others from their community, though it is unknown to what extent heritage culture or religion played a role, and whether women specifically were empowered or restricted because of it. In their study, Stack and Iwasaki remarked that refugees considered "learning and development" (p. 249) important for maintaining "social, cultural, educational, developmental and mental and physical health" (p. 254) and facilitating their comfort as they resettled in Canada. Further studies with immigrants have also surfaced the importance of learning, and often that learning has been described as leisure.

Learning as Leisure. Learning as leisure and lifelong learning have tended to be overlooked as leisure, but they meet the criteria for eudaimonic leisure, grounded in the idea of the complete and flourished life through contemplation (Meyer, 2011), intellectual enlightenment, and enrichment as propounded by the early Greeks (Maynard, 2010). Leisure learning (or learning as leisure) has in fact been found to benefit immigrants by providing a means to social inclusion, to connect with other immigrants, and as a way to explore personal and professional interests. For example, in my phenomenological study of three African women's leisures in Canada (Hurly, 2019) attaining qualifications, reading to acquire knowledge, or attending English conversation groups were all described as leisure by the

women, because they chose to engage in these activities, enjoyed the company of others, and the opportunity to acquire knowledge. In addition, having been refugees for up to 20 years, they had all had their schooling disrupted owing to conflict in their homelands or in the country where they had sought refuge. These cataclysmic disruptions resulted in frequent, frantic household upheavals, hasty departures, and tentative settlings. Therefore, learning in Canada was embraced as indulging in personally-desired leisure; it also represented freedom to recover lost opportunities for education, of rebuilding interrupted lives, and of cementing relationships with fellow learners within their learning communities, and the wider society.

In earlier research Stack and Iwasaki (2009) had discovered similar leisure meanings among Afghan refugees in Winnipeg, Manitoba, who cherished learning opportunities, such as learning English or acquiring technical skills, and they saw such learning as entwined with their leisure. These learning opportunities also provided refugees with venues, such as libraries, to informally gather and socialize with each other, and, importantly, they saw learning as a way to connect and share their culture with fellow Canadians.

In Dali's (2012) hermeneutic phenomenological study of 14 Russian immigrants in Canada, she found that leisure reading in their home language eased their acculturative stress and assuaged the alienation they sometimes felt. Public libraries served as hubs for social and emotional support, as sources of solace during resettlement, and as centres of knowledge for immigrant women in Norway (Audunson et al., 2011). Similar findings emerged about immigrants' public library usage in Sweden (Johnston, 2016). The authors of these studies underscored the importance of cerebral leisure experiences as they enabled newcomers to "explore their interests and personally grow" (Lorek Dattilo et al., 2012, p. 13). As Morrice (2014) has asserted, such feelings of comfort among migrants stemming from their self-

development efforts through learning—and the connectivity with others fostered by belonging in learning communities—may evolve because humans' constructions of the self are interwoven with their learnings throughout life in all domains whether in technical, practical, and language skills, but also in socialization learnings, and learnings about the world around them. The negative impacts of underemployment and unemployment, which are disproportionately represented among migrant populations (Huddleston et al., 2013, as cited in Morrice, 2014), may be mitigated by serious[5] leisure (Stebbins, 2017) and pursuits such as lifelong learning (Jones & Symon, 2001).

Leisure's propensity for positively impacting numerous facets of life, from helping immigrant women to resist deeply-entrenched cultural norms to engage in activities they had previously been unable to (Mohammadi, 2019), to acquiring knowledge (Hurly, 2019), and playing sport on a team (Pelak, 2005), underscores leisure's place as a vital ingredient in the quest for life satisfaction (Kleiber et al., 2011). However, the spice, as it were, of leisure, is that it often affords opportunities to interact with others, to socialize, and belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Leisure and Socializing: Key Ingredients of Empowerment. The experience of community, bonding with others, and socializing are important facets of leisure for immigrants in that can bring people together in the enjoyable and companionable sharing of it (Kleiber et al., 2011). For example, the importance of socializing during their "empty hours" (Suto, 2013, p. 54) was described by educated women immigrants in Canada. The women in Suto's ethnographic study found leisure important for self-care, managing the stresses of resettlement, such as unemployment, and "to cope with depression, anxiety and loneliness" (p. 55). Often socializing

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[5] According to Stebbins (2017), leisure in which an individual engages with such passion and vigour that it is all-consuming, and may even turn into a career, can be thought of as serious leisure.

was with women from their home countries, who spoke their home language. Because of the added comfort of speaking one's mother tongue among friends from their homelands, doing so afforded them both emotional and social support. Suto (2013) chose as her theoretical underpinning Bourdieu's (1991, as cited in Suto, 2013) theory of practice, and animated the concepts of habitus, disposition, and field in terms of how they evoked or produced human capital among immigrant women. Suto also described her approach as both ethnographic and as drawing on critical social theory. For these reasons, her qualitative study, which also involved semi-structured interviews with immigrant women, was strongly informed by her position that power and justice inequalities stand in the way of immigrant women's inclusion in the economic realm. Moreover, matters of race, ethnicity, gender, and faith imbue the social and cultural institutions that may render them difficult to access for immigrant women.

The immigrant women in Gallant and Tirone's (2017) qualitative study in which they employed semi-structured interviews with both immigrant service providers and immigrants, also described the importance of attending a women's community gathering that occurred informally at members' homes. Doing so helped build social networks and community connections. These simple leisures that involved creating a sisterhood with other immigrant women were important to the women's well-being, particularly as they struggled to find meaningful work, a common problem among immigrants (Creese & Wiebe, 2009). Further evidence of resilience through leisure has ably demonstrated leisure as a nexus for socialization, and connection with others by forming bonds around common interests (e.g., Gallant & Tirone, 2017; Hurly, 2019; Kloek et al., 2017; Suto, 2013). Leisure, it appears, may be conceived of in many different ways, and may add enrichment, solace, empowerment, and comfort to a woman's life depending on her point of view, heritage culture, or religiosity when considering the concept.

It bears noting that the African women from South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo in my study (Hurly, 2019), all of whom adhered strongly to their Christian faith, parlayed the confidence and fortifying spiritual strength they derived from their devotions, and the close bonds and shared leisures within their church community to forge friendships beyond their ethnocultural groups. Furthermore, the African women determinedly obtained Canadian credentials, usually at significant expense because they did not have the Canadian Benchmark Language level (typically CLB 7) needed to attend a publicly-funded institution. They then sought meaningful work in order to be active and present in the broader society. In an earlier study with South Sudanese women resettled in the U.S., the theme of "standing on our own two legs" (Baird & Boyle, 2012, p. 17) was equally apparent among these refugees. The South Sudanese women's socializing—intertwined with sociable leisure among fellow compatriots through church activities—was an important catalyst that sparked their resilience and desires for independence in gaining education or skills. Often gaining skills was sought with the strategic intent of helping those left behind in South Sudan and their entire Dinka tribe, while participating fully in American society.

In summary, though I found scant literature on which to draw that focuses on the lifeworlds of immigrant or refugee women from Africa once resettled, the few studies that do engage with leisure appear to point to African women's determination and strength to be self-sufficient, strong, autonomous, and independent in their adopted homelands (Cook & Waite, 2016; Hurly, 2019; Hurly & Walker, 2019a). In addition, while some immigrant women have used their faith or culture to cloak themselves from interactions with the broader society (e.g., Stodolska & Livengood, 2006), other women (of diverse cultures and faiths) have not (e.g., Gulamhusain, 2021; Hurly, 2019; Mohammadi, 2019) and have jubilantly engaged in leisure,

such as cycling, or playing sport—often taboo or inaccessible in their heritage culture—and relished the freedom of movement, stress alleviation, empowerment, and physical activity it afforded.

        The Leisure-Nature Connection. Where leisure is enjoyed and conducted is important. To wit, numerous researchers have pointed to the importance of connectedness with nature, outdoor leisure, and spending time in green spaces of all types for well-being and mental health (e.g., Barton & Pretty, 2010). In addition, researchers have underscored the importance of nature-based leisure for immigrants (e.g., Peters et al., 2016) for instilling calm and belonging (Hurly, 2019; Rishbeth & Finney, 2006). For clarity, when I discuss leisure, physical activity, exercise, sport, or recreation in natural environments or use the term green space, or green places I mean leisure that occurs "in the presence of nature" in accordance with Barton and Pretty's (2010) explanation of "green places" (p. 3947). Therefore, green spaces and green places also include white spaces (snowy landscapes), brown spaces (barren or desert spaces), and blue spaces (water landscapes, e.g., rivers, lakes, or oceans). Furthermore, these places are typically in the outdoors, rather than the indoor environment, though I do not dismiss indoor gardens, or the presence of house plants or flowers in an indoor setting. I regard indoor plants, or the presence of fish in a fish tank, or birds in a bird cage, akin to bringing the outside indoors. In the presence of these, one is also surrounded by, or in the presence of nature and it can be equally salubrious (Hurly & Walker, 2019b).

        In 1984, biologist E. O. Wilson proposed the biophilia hypothesis, arguing that humans have an evolutionary bond with the plant and animal kingdoms. Humans' need for nature has been conceptualized as being "innately wired into our basic design" (Knopf, 1987, p. 789). Yet other researchers (e.g., Lovelock et al., 2011) have argued that culture also plays a critical role in

humans' interactions with nature. In Lovelock et al.'s study, the researchers discovered that Chinese immigrants in New Zealand expressed fear of losing their way in the wild, untamed nature of national parks. However, in the qualitative study of Peters et al. (2016), these researchers interviewed 70 immigrants in the U.S., Poland, the Netherlands, and Germany, and drew attention to the way in which immigrants valued both proximal and distal greenspaces and wilderness areas as evoking nostalgia, and a sense of belonging in newcomers. From the in-depth interviews they conducted, Peters et al. found that immigrants associated urban parks with marking family milestones, such as birthdays, children's first steps, or learning to ride a bicycle; or life events, such as beginning a romantic relationship that led to an engagement or marriage. Peters et al. also discovered that "the natural environments helped to foster and solidify their [immigrants'] social relationships, facilitated building and strengthening of family and community bonds and, by doing so, promoted developing belonging in the host society" (p. 67; see also Horolets et al., 2018). Peters et al. (2016) found that some immigrants quickly developed an emotional attachment to greenspaces around them as they inhabited them and became familiar with them for leisure.

Urban greenspaces have been further found to help refugees quell resettlement stress and develop a sense of belonging in their new homeland. In their qualitative study using photo elicitation, a survey, and interviews with 22 Somali Bantu women resettled in New York, Coughlan and Hermes (2016) reported that the women found pleasure, and spiritual renewal tending a community garden. They took comfort in working the soil and nurturing plants and recounted feeling nostalgia for their small farms in Somalia, and their gardens in a Kenyan refugee camp when comparing photographs of these spaces (Coughlan & Hermes, 2016). In a similar vein, the familiarity of allotment gardening for Turks in Germany reminded immigrants

of their fields in their native land and served as hubs for community members to socialize in ways that made them feel at home (Stodolska et al., 2017).

Familiarity and a sense of normalcy were evident in Rishbeth and Finney's (2006) study of refugees and asylum seekers' experiences of natural environments in England. Refugees living in England responded warmly at finding plants and other familiar elements in urban parks that kindled nostalgia. These researchers suggested that nostalgic connections with nature may presage a sense of belonging in a new homeland because familiar "nuances of landscape" (p. 203) offer "glimpses of normality" (p. 203), enabling refugees to visualize and "conceptualise their position in the new society" (p. 204). A sense of normality helped newcomers to temporarily shelve their anxiety over their residency status and precarious living situations. Familiar landscapes in Hurly and Walker's (2019a) study of refugees' experiences of a winter camping trip in Canada, evoked similar expressions of nostalgia at vistas and settings that reminded participants of their heritage homelands. Importantly, the experience was marked by epiphanies of resilience, confidence, enthusiasm, and optimism about the future for themselves and their families. Furthermore, feelings of hope and belonging in Canada were sparked by the welcoming community of diverse people, many with similar refugee experiences.

Not everyone may feel welcome in the outdoors, however. For example, in a British study, Neal and Agyeman (2006) argued that because England's rural countryside is bound up in nostalgic notions of nationhood and what it means to be English as enshrined in bucolic rural settings, landed gentry, and exotic pastimes (such as fox hunting) people of different ethnic backgrounds may feel unwelcome there. Rishbeth et al. (2019) looked at ways in which refugees and asylum seekers in three European cities (London, Sheffield, and Berlin) availed themselves of leisure in urban parks, and found that perceived and overt discrimination, lack of confidence,

or distrust of quiet spaces influenced usage or avoidance of such natural areas. Women were especially alert to, and aware of, hostile (perceived or actual) comments and looks, particularly if they wore Islamic attire. Stodolska et al. (2017) similarly noted that immigrants with discernably different looks, such as darker skin tone, or Asian features in their study of 70 immigrants from China, Latin America, Morocco, Turkey, and Ukraine living in the US, Poland, the Netherlands, and Germany, were more likely to mention "hostile looks/feeling observed, gestures, and rude remarks" (p. 485). Perceptions of discrimination, similar to those articulated in Stodolska et al.'s study, were also remarked by Muslim women living in the Netherlands. Kloek et al. (2013) found that the women in their study negotiated leisure in urban parks and other greenspaces in four ways. They either (a) justified the discriminatory attitudes or behaviours as expected; they (b) confronted rude behaviours, or accepted such behaviours, but were not deterred from engaging in their leisure of choice. In addition, these Muslim women (c) altered their behaviours, such as speaking softly when speaking in Arabic so as not to draw attention or the ire of other park-goers, or (d) they reduced or did not participate in some outdoor leisures, particularly those that were deemed "typically Dutch" (p. 416) such as ice-skating or bowling for fear of being singled out for unwanted attention. Kloek et al. noted that the Muslim women's veils or headscarves, combined with distinctive Islamic dress, proved lightning rods for attention, such as staring, and derisive or inappropriate comments by some autochthonous Dutch, as did aural and vocal cues, which signaled the women's otherness.

 Bialeschki (2005) has drawn attention to women's fears of sexual assault in wilderness areas, and Lovelock et al. (2011) has echoed these findings, noting that all women in their New Zealand study, regardless of their ethnicity, expressed fears for their safety in wild nature. It is, therefore, not only Muslim women who may feel unsafe in natural environments, whether

wilderness or urban greenspaces, underscoring Kloek et al.'s (2013) contention that

discrimination against immigrants in natural environments and leisure spaces is gendered.

Supporting Kloek et al.'s findings, Stodolska et al. (2017) found that while immigrants generally

enjoyed American and European parks for a variety of reasons, including cleanliness and

peacefulness, women might not, in some instances, find those places welcoming and salubrious

leisure spaces. In the Canadian context, however, Hordyk et al. (2015) found that for 13

immigrant families in Montreal with whom they conducted interviews, the presence of urban

parks in immigrants' neighbourhoods afforded welcome relief from resettlement stress, social

isolation, inadequate housing, unemployment, and underemployment. Hordyk et al. noted that,

"embodied practices in nature—the unconscious, sensory, reflexive interactions that participants

had with the natural environment—served as protective factors in the face of these hardships" (p.

76). These findings led Hordyk et al. to conclude that regular connection with nature could

positively impact the trajectory of health outcomes for immigrants to Montreal, and that their

data indicated that "a dynamic interaction between the relaxed body, rested mind and a

heightened orientation to the wide environment is at play" (p. 81).

 Convincingly, despite the numerous different ways in which immigrants of all stripes—

including refugees, asylum seekers—engage with green space, connection to nature has been

found to constitute a basic human psychological need (Hurly & Walker, 2019b). In our review of

the nature-relatedness literature across a wide variety of disciplines and geographical locales,

using Baumeister and Leary's (1995) nine need standards as our guide, we discovered that

connection with benign nature appears to transcend age, health status, cognitive acuity or

decline, socio-economic status, culture, gender, whether living freely or incarcerated, with

positive effects across the lifespan, from birth to death. For refugees, leisure in the natural

environment offered promise of substantial mental and physical health benefits, even considering the trauma they had endured before being resettled and the acculturative stress they frequently experienced after migrating. Finally, nature-based leisure may be particularly efficacious for immigrants given the determination and resilience (Hurly & Walker, 2019a), nostalgia and belonging (Rishbeth & Finney, 2006), coping and stress-reduction (Hordyk et al., 2015) it has fostered in individuals.

Leisure in the Family: Like Mother like Daughter?

While many of the studies I found focus on women immigrants or refugees, there is no broad body of literature on how immigrant mothers and daughters fare after resettling, or how they experience leisure. There is a growing body of research on Muslim girls and women from various immigrant ethnic communities and their sport, physical activity or exercise participation and the influence of their faith and family on these activities (e.g., Kay, 2006; Mohammadi, 2019; Stodolska & Livengood, 2006). This may be because of the displacement and migration of many people from Islamic countries owing to protracted conflicts (e.g., Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Mali, Kenya, Nigeria). What has emerged from the leisure literature about women from Islamic countries post-migration is that family authority, and the mentoring role of mothers in daughters' lives, grounded in the tenets of their faith, was pivotal to the way daughters participated in leisure (Kay, 2006). However, there is scant literature on African women's leisure post-migration or how their relationships with their daughters might be affected or influence the leisure they have. Moreover, we cannot assume that all ethnocultural groups would think or behave in the same manner. Furthermore, if leisure is gendered, it is worth asking what it is that mothers pass on to their daughters about leisure and how they might engage in it.

One of the most complex familial relationships is between Black mothers and daughters (Everett et al., 2016) and a critical one when it comes to learning about, and imparting values, as well as to leisure (Shannon & Shaw, 2008). Mothers may, in fact, convey to daughters that leisure is not as important for them as it is to care for the needs of the family (see Freysinger et al., 2013). Notably, what was modelled for daughters by mothers appeared to be more important than simply talking about leisure's inherent benefits. For example, in Shannon and Shaw's (2008) qualitative study examining the role of mothers' influence on their daughters' attitudes to leisure, the authors noted that "observing their mothers in context seeks to affect the daughters' later attitudes toward leisure as much or more than the mothers' deliberate teachings about the value of leisure" (p. 14). The authors of this Canadian study found that although the daughters had absorbed and appreciated their mothers' efforts to engage them in leisure activities through childhood, youth, and adolescence, and they understood the value of leisure, they also put their families first—and assumed this was the norm—when they married and had their own children. Shannon and Shaw also underscored the importance of parental involvement in leisure and recreational activities and the importance of role modelling for offspring. Moreover, these researchers afforded insights into ways in which mothers, in particular, can convey and instill leisure attitudes in their daughters that reflect their familial bonds (see also Liechty et al., 2006).

According to Snethen (2010) strong, supportive bonds between mother and daughter, and particularly bonds strengthened through shared leisure and recreational activities, can act as effective deterrents in preventing adolescent daughters from making deviant leisure choices, such as gang involvement. In proposing her theoretical model aimed at supporting mother-daughter relationships where gang membership is involved, Snethen located leisure at the epicentre of her Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning. She argued for its protective function in

fostering supportive mother-daughter relationships. Further, leisure has been shown to be a valuable resource for overcoming trauma, and negative life events (Kleiber et al., 2002) and its rehabilitative role when family relationships have been damaged, or when daughters need support and emotional healing having made imprudent life choices, needs to be considered (Snethen, 2010). The importance of building strong familial relationships through leisure finds resonance in Shaw and Dawson's (2001) study of 31 families' leisure in Ontario, Canada. These authors found that both mothers and fathers were strongly supportive of engaging in family leisure, seeing it as important for imparting family values and building cohesion. Importantly, family leisure among the families in this study was not intrinsically motivated. Instead, leisure was specifically "directed toward particular extrinsic benefits" (p. 228) in terms of strategically modelling and inculcating healthy, active lifestyles, and strengthening familial bonds. In addition, though parents described family leisure as pleasurable "it also involved work, effort, and sometimes frustration and lack of enjoyment" (p. 228) for parents. Consequently, Shaw and Dawson concluded that leisure not for its own sake should be defined as 'purposive,' and, in this case, essential for supporting healthy child development.

What remains unclear is how immigrant mothers could use leisure to inculcate leisure behaviours and practices with their daughters given their possible histories of trauma (Skjelsbaek, 2006, 2018) and as their daughters rapidly acculturate in Canada (Berry et al., 2002; Goitom, 2018). Therefore, while there is some evidence in the North American context that mothers can positively impact their daughters' emotional resilience through shared leisure (Snethen, 2010), and model positive leisure behaviours (Shannon & Shaw, 2008) for daughters, we do not know how culture—and trauma—might factor into the experience of leisure, particularly for those who came to Canada as refugees.

The Cultural Influence of Leisure

While the gendered nature of family leisure did not emerge in Shaw and Dawson's (2001) study of the role of mothers modelling leisure behaviours for their daughters, the authors drew attention to the possibility of specific cultural variances in leisure participation of girls and women among different ethnocultural groups. The cultural variances were in terms of "attitudes, activities, and the purposes of such participation" (p. 229) and they invited further research and exploration in this direction.

It is appropriate here to pause briefly and describe what is meant by culture, and I turn to several theorists to do so because defining culture is as complicated as defining leisure (Poortinga, 2015) which is another polysemous term. There are myriad perspectives on what culture is, ranging from anthropological (Goodenough, 1999) to sociological (Rojek, 2006) and the cross-cultural psychological view (Poortinga, 2015), which has largely cohered to the anthropological standpoint. Offering the anthropological perspective, Goodenough (1999) posited that

> A culture consists of the criteria and guidelines for speaking, doing, interpreting, and evaluating that people who live and work together have acquired in the course of interacting with one another in the conduct of recurring activities and that they have thus learned to attribute to one another. (p. 85)

From the sociological standpoint, Rojek (2006) held that, "culture refers to localized continuities having to do with deep-rooted, customary principles and practices of inclusion and exclusion" (p. 25). However, in considering the relevance of culture in the study of cross-cultural psychology, Poortinga (2015) was less convinced that definitions of culture are valuable in the study of people across cultures and argued for the abandonment of the term because there is little

commonality among the various definitions. As Poortinga noted, when Baldwin and colleagues (2006) attempted to gather all the definitions of culture from among the various disciplines employing the concept of culture to understand difference, they found that a common definition was impossible to delineate. Baldwin et al. decided the term was moot and described culture cynically as "an empty sign that people fill with meaning from their own academic backgrounds or personal experience" (cited in Poortinga, 2015, p. 10). While Baldwin et al. (2006, as cited in Poortinga, 2015) pronounced culture's irrelevance as a defined term (because there is no consensus) and Poortinga (2015) have called for its banishment for the same reason, Jahoda (2012) has taken the middle path. He argued that the term 'culture' is indispensable to understanding and called on the researcher using the term to simply describe what she means, rather than leaning on one of the multitudinous and conflicting definitions currently in existence to define it for her. Therefore, I will describe (rather than define) culture as customs, beliefs, norms, behaviours, and ways of being and knowing that are passed from one to another across generations, and that may influence the way in which individuals live their lives, act towards others, and view the world around them. I also understand culture not as rigid, but fluid.

Other Cultural Considerations: Individualism, Collectivism, and Communalism. Cultural factors, including how individuals self-construe in relation to others is a key factor in understanding how individuals experience emotion or affect and such factors can influence ways in which people of different cultures define and experience leisure. Simply put, self-construal is the way in which individuals perceive themselves in relation to others (Cross et al., 2011). The term self-construal was first coined by Markus and Kitayama (1991) in a cross-cultural study examining how emotion, cognition, and motivation were influenced by whether the individual identified as independent, or as interdependent in their relationships with others. Independent

self-construal, they argued, is more likely to emphasize personal attributes, such as self-reliance, assertiveness and uniqueness, while those with an interdependent self-construal tend to emphasize their relationships to others, value harmonious relationships, and putting the group's interests ahead of one's own. Individuals' self-construal(s) affects individual experiences (p. 224) in relationship to their interactions with others in family, work and leisure settings and impacts cognition, emotions, and motivations in all facets of life, including for leisure. In a later study, Kitayama et al. (2000) examined the differences in the way 'good feelings' among Japanese and American university students were valued, using the independent and interdependent modes of being or "selfways" (p. 95) and a range of emotions that were more or less engaged or disengaged from connection with others. They found that Japanese students were more likely to report strong positive emotions that related to engagement with others (interdependent selfway), while American students were more likely to report strong positive emotions that were disengaged and that chimed with a more independent selfway.

Markus and Kitayama's (1991) concept of independent and interdependent self-construal or 'selfway' complements understanding of two key dimensions to understand human culture and cultural differences: *individualism* and *collectivism* (Hofstede, 1983; Triandis, 2001). Triandis (2001) and Triandis & Gelfand (1998) more deeply examined independent and interdependent self-construal in the collectivist and individualistic cultural dimensions, recognizing that both independent and interdependent self-construal may exist in one individual and vary in intensity depending on situational context. Triandis and Gelfand (1998) proposed that independent and interdependent self-construals may be horizontal or vertical within the dimensions of collectivism or individualism depending on whether individuals emphasize equality (horizontal) or hierarchy (vertical) and allowing for degrees of variation in self-

construal. Triandis (2001) noted that Indian and Israeli collectivism differ markedly, with India being more vertically collectivistic (favouring hierarchy) and Israel more horizontally collectivistic, favouring equality.

The *independent* construal of self is more common in Western cultures and grounded in Greek philosophy, which promotes individualism and an independent self-construal (Kitayama et al., 2000; Nisbett, 2003). For example, children growing up in Western homes might be encouraged to be self-reliant, to express themselves assertively, and strive for uniqueness. In contrast Eastern cultures encourage interdependence: harmonious relationships with others, respect, and fitting in because of the collectivistic nature of their cultures and interconnectedness with in-groups. For example, Japanese schoolchildren are taught to practice "perfectionism through self-criticism" (Nisbett, 2003, p. 55) which reinforces humility and plays down uniqueness. But what of African cultures? How might African peoples self-construe? And can one generalize? To wit, Kitayama et al. (2000) pointed to the complexity of humans and of labelling them and noted that many people of different cultures contradict and "resist the dominant frame in a variety of ways" (p. 95), and that different 'selfways' or ways of being may co-exist within an individual that influence the experience of emotion.

In the African context, neither collectivism nor individualism, with their corresponding 'selfways' of interdependence or independence (Kitayama et al., 2000) hold absolute sway because the African way of being is grounded in the concept of *ubuntu* and offers a distinctly African nuance of self-construal. *Ubuntu* is a Zulu word signifying the belongingness of each person to humanity and of his or her *interdependence* with others (Nwosu, 2009; Mawere, 2014; Moemeka, 1998). Fundamentally, *ubuntu* is entwined in the concept of *communalism* and the meaning of community in a uniquely African way (Moemeka, 1998; Murithi, 2009). Such

communal belonging defines the individual's membership in the traditional community of birth, by blood connection, rather than simply as a member of a group of people connected by shared interest (Moemeka, 1998, p. 122).

Western social theorists such as Hofstede (1983) and Triandis, (2001) have described cultures as individualistic or collectivistic depending on whether the rights of the individual transcend those of the group, such as the United States, which tends to be individualistic, or Japan which tends to be collectivistic. To Moemeka (1998) these cultural dimensions—and the social theorists expounding them—ignore the communalism dimension, unique to Africans, which is situated beyond collectivism on the individualism/collectivism continuum. While one could argue that African cultures are vertically collectivistic (Triandis, 2001), group-focused and hierarchical, this dimension does not account for the importance of lineage, blood ties, and lifelong community belonging, which is maintained despite a long absence (Nwosu, 2009; Moemeka, 1998).

Communalistic communities are lineal and hierarchical; they revere leaders and elders, uphold the sanctity of life, regard marriage as an important institution, and religion as an integral part of life (Nwosu, 2009). Moemeka (1998) argued that while the supremacy of the community is the goal, rather than the protection of individual rights or groups within the community (p. 125), the aspirations of the individual are not subsumed, but woven into the community's desires and needs as aspirations for all. Awareness of these factors in the ways people in African cultures construe is important to bear in mind because such factors may impact how emotion and affect are experienced and expressed during leisure and preferred affective states.

These aforementioned cultural considerations have import for my research because of the extent of the massive, ongoing human migrations in the world (OECD, 2017). Culturally-diverse

people will continue to migrate, flee, and resettle in new homelands, altering demographic

landscapes where they make their home, and bringing with them their cultural norms and ways

of being. Moreover, they will do so in ever larger numbers owing to ongoing protracted conflicts

in areas like South Sudan, Syria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (UNHCR, 2017). With

migrants may come cultural norms governing the behaviour and leisure of girls and women that

may be very different from the dominant ones in the host society. Such cultural differences and

norms among ethnocultural groups were highlighted in Raghavan et al.'s (2010) study

comparing American and immigrant Asian Indian mothers' attitudes, belief systems, or

ethnotheories about their daughters. While American mothers tended to focus on desires for their

daughters to become independent, assertive, confident, and well-rounded, Asian Indian mothers

stressed obedience, respectfulness, modesty, and being hospitable, as desirable characteristics in

their daughters, and essential to their future success. It bears noting that parental desire to imprint

heritage culture norms in their children may result in stress among daughters wanting to

experience more freedom to pursue leisure among leisure companions of their choosing in their

new homeland (Goitom, 2018). When Talbani and Hasanali (2000) conducted a study of South

Asian adolescent girls from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh living in Montreal, Quebec, they

revealed that South Asian girls were more closely supervised by their parents than boys were

because parents deemed girls more vulnerable than boys. Often, such surveillance resulted in

some South Asian girls engaging in antisocial or rebellious behaviours, such as withdrawing

from ethnocultural social gatherings, flouting parental wishes, drug-taking, and running away.

Girls were also at risk for mental health problems, such as depression. By way of explanation in

the Islamic context, Tarar (2012) offered that Muslim daughters are traditionally viewed as

burdens and are raised "in ways that would facilitate her parting with her parents and adjusting in

a new family [her husband's]" (p. 71). Therefore, parents' efforts to preserve their daughters'

virtue may have been construed as essential for ensuring that she was able to make a good match,

and this meant controlling her leisure so that she would conform to traditional Islamic ideals of

girls as future good wives and mothers and who would serve as pillars of morality. Immigrant

girls have found ways to skirt such restrictions on their leisure. For example, Moroccan-Dutch

Muslim young women, living in Holland, but constrained by Islamic religious dictates and

Moroccan cultural boundaries, found ways to circumvent their mothers' surveillance of their

leisure by recruiting friends and family members (cousins and sisters) into providing "alibis and

companionship to go out to different DV (diasporic visitor) leisure consumption sites around the

city" (Wagner & Peters, 2014, p. 424). In addition, echoes of the Islamic belief system about

raising Muslim girls as described by Tarar (2012) pervaded Raghavan et al.'s (2010) study, in

which they compared the ethnotheories (belief systems) of American and Asian Indian mothers

about their daughters. Raghavan et al.'s findings were supported in more recent research by

Giulani et al. (2017) in their study of Muslim immigrant adolescents from Morocco, Egypt, and

Pakistan living in Italy. Giulani et al. found that parental expectations regarding attributes of

'good' sons or 'good' daughters were gender-based. As such they involved more oversight of

daughters' lives in terms of Islamic and heritage cultural preservation, adherence, and

observance, as well as obedience to parents, particularly in terms of socialization. These

restrictions invariably caused internal conflict because girls had been also exposed to the Italian

culture, and "Western models of female independence and self-fulfillment" (p. 16) which they

hankered to sample. When Tirone and Shaw (1997) conducted research among South Asian

Indian women in Canada, they revealed that mothers who had lived in Canada for a few years

often gladly relaxed or even relinquished traditional Indian customs with regards to their

daughters, such as choosing their marriage partners. Instead, mothers encouraged their daughters' educational aspirations, freedom of association, and leisure of their own choosing. There were aspects of leisure in mainstream Canadian society that evoked scorn or distaste among the Indo-Canadian women, such as the desire for time for oneself or leisure on one's own, sans children. It appears that not all leisures and customs in new homelands may be approved or appreciated—but that they may be negotiated. Importantly, and to the latter point, the women in Tirone and Shaw's study had found ways to negotiate their leisure needs and desires so that they selectively adopted leisure practices from both India and Canada to find a comfortable balance that reflected their values.

The notions of cultural negotiation, relinquishment, and relaxation among immigrants were prominent in Cook and Waite's (2016) qualitative study of African immigrants from Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe, living in England. Cook and Waite examined emotional attachments to place and the evolution of intergenerational relationships over time. Through semi-structured interviews and focus groups Cook and Waite found that, like the Indo-Canadian women in Tirone and Shaw's (1997) study, African parents in England gradually rethought and renegotiated their heritage culture expectations and norms of children's upbringing "to enable them to live transnationally across two cultures" (p. 1394). Cook and Waite described the different expectations African parents had of sons and daughters and found that though parents and daughters and sons maintained some cultural practices of their heritage culture, they also accepted that to live comfortably in England's multicultural society, traditional gender boundaries needed to be renegotiated. In the case of one Kenyan mother with daughters, the mother acknowledged the pressure from family in Kenya to have her daughters undergo the pubertal ritual of female genital cutting (clitoridectomy) and her own resistance to that pressure,

because, she said, "They are not from your [Kenyan] culture. They live in two cultures" (Kenyan mother, as cited in Cook & Waite, 2016, p. 1398). It was this recognition and acceptance of living between cultures, adopting from each culture what was important that impacted the ways in which daughters (and sons) socialized in the broader society, and participated in leisure.

It is not, however, merely a matter of cultural difference that plays a role in how, or if, women—daughters specifically—engage in leisure. Liechty et al. (2006) found that mothers' attitudes to food, exercise, body size, and body image, influenced, to some extent, the ways in which their daughters participated in leisure. The body's appearance, and whether a woman thought her body was acceptable to subject to the public gaze without derision affected both mothers and daughters in terms of their choice of leisure. Confidence about exposing the minimally-clothed body to the public gaze influenced the women's participation in some physically active leisure activities, such as swimming, or dancing, that were shied from if the women did not feel their bodies conformed to the thinness ideal and body image they held for themselves. The women in this study were primarily White, middle-class Americans, and therefore we do not know whether, or how women from other cultures and geographic regions might describe their body size and image in relation to leisure constraint or catalyst. However, given the brief banning of the burkini (full-coverage bathing suit) from beaches in Southern France in 2016, such misguided attempts to control Muslim's women's leisure in the public sphere may have deterred and constrained many Muslim women and girls from participating in public swimming. In Almeida's (2018) review of online discussion forums, he found that Muslim women who wore burkinis did so to empower themselves and to enable their engaging in social and leisure activities that might not have been possible without a swimming garment tailored to satisfy both their personal and religious values. It would seem then that self-

surveillance, as well as the surveillance and censure of others, and self-imposed censure, may hamper women's leisure generally, regardless of ethnicity, or religious, or cultural norms.

I have established in the two preceding sections that leisure for women in Africa is arguably as varied in its conceptualization and actualization as it is in Western concepts of the term. Further, in explicating the gendered nature of leisure both in Africa (e.g., Okumdi & Asiazabor, 2011) and elsewhere in the West (e.g., Liechty et al., 2006; Shannon & Shaw, 2008) researchers found that women's desires or needs for leisure tended to be overlaid by an ethic of care,[6] Noddings (2002), which meant they put their family's interests first. In addition, researchers have underscored the unequal ways in which daughters' leisure may be curtailed or managed in some settings and cultures because of their perceived vulnerability (e.g., Cook & Waite, 2016; Giulani et al., 2017). However, while mothers are influential in the passing on of leisure practices to their daughters (Liechty et al., 2006), immigrant mothers are also willing to loosen the reins of their heritage culture norms for their daughters (Cook & Waite, 2016; Tirone & Shaw, 1997), opening up freer access to leisure of their choice for girls and young women.

Leisure has been found to be helpful for immigrants in terms of stress alleviation (e.g., Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Suto, 2013), connection with others through learning opportunities (e.g., Audunson et al., 2011; Dali, 2012;), or fostering well-being and confidence (Hurly & Walker, 2019a; Quirke, 2015). Importantly, socializing, whether with people in their ethnocultural communities or beyond, in leisurely settings, such as community groups (e.g., Gallant & Tirone, 2017) afforded support and comfort. Furthermore, leisure in the natural environment, in green spaces, whether tending a garden (Coughlan & Hermes, 2016), meeting with friends and family

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[6] The ethic of care, considered inherent in women, may, for some, supersede their concerns, needs, desires, or rights to leisure, in deference to their nurturing, care-giving and bonding roles, and putting family first (Freysinger et al., 2013)

in an urban park (Kloek et al., 2013), experiencing winter sports outdoors for the first time

(Hurly & Walker, 2019a), or learning to cycle (Mohammadi, 2019) evoked pleasure and

happiness. However, not all green spaces may be welcoming or appealing, particularly for

women (Kloek et al., 2013; Lovelock et al., 2011). Immigrant women of all ethnicities have

expressed fear of wild nature, such as that found in national parks—not because of the natural

environment itself, but what might lurk there to harm them. Overall, because nature-based leisure

appears to hold promise for helping to relieve the stress of resettlement, and to evoke well-being

and a sense of belonging, these considerations need to be taken into account. However, nature-

based leisure cannot be considered as a panacea for restoration, calm and stress reduction,

especially because of women's fears (regardless of their ethnicity) of assault in less-managed

natural environments.

Finally, the literature on mothers' roles in their daughters' leisure is contradictory and

complex, and there is no 'one size fits all' (Henderson, 1996). Furthermore, while mothers do

inculcate their leisure practices with their daughters, those daughters may put their own families

first when they marry (Shannon & Shaw, 2008). Encouragingly, mother-daughter bonds,

strengthened through shared leisure, can help to steer daughters from inappropriate leisure

choices (e.g., binge-drinking, drug-taking, or joining a gang) (Snethen, 2010). Snethen suggested

that if daughters have made imprudent leisure choices, mothers can be influential in modelling

good leisure choices and supporting their daughters to do so. Cultural values imposed on

daughters, particularly when daughters wished to enjoy leisure in the same way as girls in the

larger society beyond their ethnocultural community (Giulani et al., 2017) could result in

antisocial and rebellious behaviours (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). However, it appeared that over

the passage of time spent in the new homeland, immigrant mothers were more willing to

relinquish the tight rein on their daughters' freedom of choice, including her leisure (Cook & Waite, 2016). Therefore, because the role of leisure in the lives of different ethnocultural groups is varied, and because there is a paucity of research examining the influence of tradition and culture and particularly of African mothers and daughters post-migration, there is a need for more research in this area considering the extent of mass migrations from the African continent to Canada that are forecast to increase over time (Kirwin & Anderson, 2018). Immigrants' successful resettlement is of critical importance to the country's well-being and if mental health problems among refugees, in particular, are not addressed, feelings of social isolation and unresolved emotional pain may cause "emotional numbing" (Song et al., 2014, p. 244). Even more concerning is that social rejection, combined with weak family and community bonds may stoke a backlash of devious behaviours that may fester into "violent extremism" (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 18) causing further detachment and disenfranchisement in the society of settlement. Therefore, while economic inclusion of immigrants is imperative to ensure their successful resettlement, I think that leisure can play a meaningful, life-altering role in fostering social inclusion (Quirke, 2015) and a sense of belonging (Hurly & Walker, 2019a) in countries of resettlement. Moreover, given leisure's positive impacts in terms of transcending past trauma and negative life events (Kleiber et al., 2002) and fostering well-being (Hurly, 2019), the study of it in relation to immigrants' lifeworld experiences of leisure in their adopted homeland is not merely academic, it is essential.

Chapter 3: Philosophical Underpinning

I chose Gadamer's (1976, 2004) philosophical[7] hermeneutics[8] and phenomenology as my theoretical undergirding because it is a philosophy focused on the understanding of being, of the "lived experience of human existence" (van Manen, 2014, p. 26) through language. This is the bedrock of my research to explore the lived experiences of leisure of African immigrant women and daughters resettled in Canada.

Before describing the elements of Gadamer's (2004) theory of hermeneutic experience as derived from the philosophical tradition, it is important to pause here to explicate the role of theory in hermeneutic phenomenology. Thereafter, I describe the key elements of Gadamer's philosophy and theory that will guide my research.

The Role of Theory in Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Though hermeneutic phenomenology is grounded in philosophy, it is not devoid of theory. On the contrary, it is deeply informed by theory but theory that is markedly different in concept and scope from scientific, psychological, or sociological theories, many of which are focused on disproof (Collins & Stockton, 2018), generalizability, replicability across populations in other settings, and causation (Collins & Stockton, 2018). Instead, hermeneutic phenomenology, which can be described as the phenomenology of interpretation (Moules, 2002; van Manen, 2014), marries both theory and practice (Jervolino, 1995), and has its roots in

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[7] According to the Oxford English Dictionary (www.oed.com), philosophy is "the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, and the basis and limits of human understanding; this is considered as an academic discipline" (2006, 3rd ed., para. 7). The word itself derives from the Middle English usage of the Old French word *philosophie.* The Old French word, in turn, came into being via Latin, evolved from the Greek term *philosophia*: the love of wisdom.

[8] Hermeneutics, derived from the Greek *hermeneuein* means to interpret (George, 2021) and, according to Moules (2002), dates back to the 17th Century where the 'art' of hermeneutics was aligned with the interpretation (exegesis) of Biblical and legal texts. In the present era it has been described as both a practice and theory of understanding human lives. Grondin (1994, as cited in Moules, 2002) described hermeneutics as "the science, art, and philosophy of interpretation" (p. 3; see also George, 2021). Gadamer (1975) makes clear that the anchoring hallmark of hermeneutics is language: "Language is the fundamental mode of operation of our being-in-the-world and the all-embracing form of the constitution of the world" (p. 3). Therefore, it is through the interpretation of language in our interactions with each other that understanding is made possible.

ancient Greek philosophy. As such it nests within the traditions of philosophical theories of

being and being's understanding of being-in-the-world (Larrabee, 1990; van Manen, 2014). In

Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutic philosophy and phenomenology, he theorizes the centrality of

theoria as meaning to contemplate, and *praxis* (practice) in his project. Furthermore, Gadamer's

(2004) hermeneutic philosophy and phenomenology are anchored by the overarching concept of

phronesis: the virtue of putting ethical wisdom into practice to serve the common good.

(*Phronesis* is expounded further in the Philosophical Underpinning section in which I fully

describe the elements of Gadamer's (2004) theory of hermeneutic experience).

As Jervolino (1995) expounded, in Greek philosophy "what is worthiest of being honored

is the divine order of the cosmos, which human reason contemplates in the privileged moment of

theoretical activity" (p. 65). *Theoria* as understood among the ancient Greeks marked a

procession "sent to the feast in honor of a god" (p. 65), and denoted not a celebration, but a

profound and dedicated engagement in contemplation (van Manen, 2014) of the prevailing state

of affairs and of self. Therefore, theory in the philosophical understanding of the term "is not

something that can be assembled as modern scientific theories are, but is rather a belonging to,

and an approaching of, the rationality of being" (Jervolino, 1995, p. 65). van Manen (2014)

extended Jervolino's concept of theory in the philosophical canon still further, offering that

hermeneutic phenomenology "is a method of abstemious reflection on the basic structures of

human existence" (p. 26). van Manen explained that what he means by such a pronouncement is

that hermeneutic phenomenology involves the researcher engaging in reflection that "abstains

from theoretical, polemical, suppositional, and emotional intoxications" (p. 26), and strives for

an intricate, rich, and deep unfolding and interpretative description of another's experience of a

phenomenon (that which appears). van Manen (2014), who has propounded a complex

"phenomenological practice of doing phenomenology" (p. 21) stands in accord with Crotty (1998), who referred to hermeneutic phenomenology not as method, but as a methodology and theoretical perspective, epitomizing the very zenith of what it means to interpret leading to understanding.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is not only a way to attend to thinking deeply about understanding individuals' quotidian lived experiences. To think so would be to brush aside or gloss over the deep and voluminous roots phenomenology has in philosophy and that irrevocably entwine the two. One cannot be ignored at the expense of the other. As Neubauer et al. (2019) contended in their article championing the efficacy of phenomenology for health profession education (HPE) scholars in doing research, it is essential for researchers interested in phenomenology to deeply study and grasp the "philosophical moorings" (p. 91) of the phenomenological strand they seek to engage (and there are at least 12 of these at the present writing (van Manen, 2014) with numerous scholars continuing to think prolifically and expansively to develop the ideas of the original philosophers in each strand). Having a profound knowledge of these philosophical moorings is imperative because "those philosophies theorize the meaning of human experience" (p. 91). Hermeneutics, then, is considered both a theory and a practice (Moules, 2002) and can be thought of as a philosophy of interpretation (George, 2021). Explicating further George (2021) argued that

> Philosophically, hermeneutics therefore concerns the meaning of interpretation—its basic nature, scope and validity, as well as its place within and implications for human existence; and it treats interpretation in the context of fundamental philosophical questions about being and knowing, language and history, art and aesthetic experience, and practical life (para. 2, l.18-21).

In choosing Gadamer's (1976, 2004) hermeneutic phenomenology as the lodestar of my research study, I have taken Neubauer et al.'s (2019) admonishment seriously, making as deep a study of Gadamer's (1976, 2004) hermeneutic philosophy as I could in order to familiarize myself with his theory of hermeneutic experience. The pivotal elements of Gadamer's theory imbue and saturate all facets of my dissertation, from choice of leisure definition to method, to analysis of data, and modes of ensuring trustworthiness of my research. In addition, in agreement with researchers calling for the consistent and thorough presence of theory applied rigorously in a qualitative study (e.g., Bradbury-Jones et al., 2014; Collins & Stockton, 2018; Sandelowski, 1993), I demonstrate that theory is not haphazardly present in my qualitative study, but persistently and evidentially so.

Ensuring Theory's Persistent Role in My Study

The theory of hermeneutic experience (Gadamer, 2004) has provided the philosophical strongback of my approach to my phenomenological research and informed and influenced the way in which I approached my study. It also pervaded the analysis of my data as I reached to other theoretical perspectives to understand my findings and to connect them to other scholarly literature. As I examined my findings theories beyond Gadamer's (2004) theory of hermeneutic experience came to the fore. Sandelowski (1993) has articulated how theory, while imperative in qualitative studies, can enter and depart from a study at different stages of the work. For example, a theoretical framework might be chosen at the outset of a study, with researchers seeking to disprove a theory (Collins & Stockton, 2018). Doing so comes with a caveat though: looking at a study with only one theoretical perspective dogmatically could result in myopia, with the researchers blinkered (by their slavish adherence to a certain theory) and unable to perceive important data peering through, that conflicts with their premise. The use of theory

throughout speaks to the rigour of qualitative studies, according to Bradbury-Jones et al. (2014),

but, in concert with Sandelowski (1993) they emphasized that "different approaches to

qualitative inquiry specify different roles for theory" (p. 140).

Importantly, Bradbury-Jones et al. (2014) and Sandelowski (1993) offered that theory

should be judiciously chosen with relevance to one's discipline, paradigmatic stance, and

research question in mind. Sandelowski cited an example of her own work (Sandelowski, Harris,

& Holditch-Davis, 1991, as cited in Sandelowski, 1993) in which it was only once the data had

been preliminarily categorized that she and her colleagues began searching for theories that

would explain their data. Therefore, theory can form the basis for a study, it can make its

entrance during the analysis of data, and theory can sometimes come from sources outside of the

social sciences, such as when Sandelowski and colleagues turned to Samuel Beckett's play,

Waiting for Godot, to develop a theory of fiction in couples seeking to adopt.

Where relevant, I examined my findings in relation to relevant leisure theory (e.g.,

Crawford & Godbey's, 1987; constraints theory), and theories in other domains such as

psychological theory (e.g., Bonanno's, 2004; resilience theory), and environmental psychology

(e.g., ART: Kaplan, 1995) to deepen and enrich my understanding of leisure phenomena in their

unfolding. (See the Discussion chapter in which I explain how these, and other theories were

relevant to the understanding of my findings.) Sandelowski (1993) has made clear that no

qualitative study is devoid of theory, and I concur, but I also agree that its role differs according

to how the research is designed. For studies, such as mine, where philosophy anchors a theory of

hermeneutic experience (Gadamer, 2004) and undergirds my approach, I did not begin with

assumptions, presumptions, or a hypothesis about how leisure will be conceptualized or lived in

participants' lives. (Hurly, 2021). Instead, sociological or psychological theories entered my

study later in the research process and played a role as I analysed the information I had gathered. "Researchers do not have to force fit a theoretical formulation to their data the way Cinderella's stepsisters forced their feet into her slippers," Sandelowski (1993, p. 216) admonished. Blackshaw (2016) has gone yet further in arguing for less reliance on theory to interpret facts, or in questing for, and developing, a Grand Theory that will explain everything and have relevance to everyone. Instead, Blackshaw has entreated researchers to attend more closely to the interpretation of people's stories and allow theory to evolve and emerge if it does, and as it does. van Manen (2014) hewed to Blackshaw's (2016) position, noting that, "it should be admitted that almost all theory starts from experience" (van Manen, 2014, p. 66), and he added this: "So, rather than using theory as a scaffold for building an interpretive structure, phenomenology uses theory as a foil for examining what it glosses" (p. 66). In other words, phenomenology may turn to theory when exploring "a human phenomenon or event" or where "theory and phenomenology intersect in the understanding of human phenomena" (p. 67) but it will not subsume the unfolding of experience to 'fit' theory.

Therefore, with these latter persuasions and admonitions in mind, to strengthen and enrich my understanding of my findings, I looked to relevant leisure and other theories *judiciously* and as they made sense for my study, and as I thought about the findings. Moreover, in turning to relevant theories beyond those of hermeneutic phenomenology I did so with intent of enhancing and broadening my understanding, analysis, and interpretation of the interview data.

I now describe the key elements of Gadamer's (2004) theory of hermeneutic experience that ground my study, beginning with an understanding of the term 'experience'.

The Meaning of Experience (*Erfahrung)*

Gadamer (2004) elucidated two types of experience. In German there are two words for experience: *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*, which helpfully distinguish between the two (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017). The first, *Erlebnis*, entails the understanding of facts through scientific induction, acquiring and possessing knowledge through practice of how to perform something or by having participated in something or observed it, having had the sensation of something, to have knowledge or know-how. Such experience is epistemological in nature, seeking to objectively know or have objective knowledge of a thing (Gadamer, 2004; Higgins, 2010). An experience may be prosaic, banal, or it might also involve an escapade, a momentary thrill, such as bungy-jumping, or whitewater rafting, or eating a raw oyster for the first time. However, in Gadamer's philosophy *genuine* hermeneutic experience (*Erfahrung*) involves a kind of spiritual and intellectual bonding with another human being, one that transcends utterly the banal. It may be called a 'meaningful experience' according to Bouwer and van Leeuwen (2017), and, simply put: "Erfahrung encompasses and interprets the *Erlebnis*—experiences people have. *Erlebnis* is a subset of *Erfahrung"* (p. 65). Therefore, the second kind of experience Gadamer (2004) propounds (*Erfahrung)* requires an attitude to openness to another that goes beyond simply being willing to be attentive to something (Dunne, 1993). It is an openness that begins, simply enough, with a question (Gadamer, 2004; Higgins, 2010). But it is no ordinary question. It is the question that seeks to explore, to probe, to surface something well beyond the prosaic. It is also the question that occurs when we come face-to-face with another human being to address a question to which neither of us instinctively knows the answer and that reaches beyond us both. It invites us to join in playful, absorbed conversation and to explore something yet unknown. Risser (1997) described the essence of the genuine hermeneutic experience as one that is

… an encounter with the voice of the other. And the openness to experience, as the willingness to listen, means accordingly not to consume and assimilate the other but to suffer what is beyond oneself. But there is no waiting to be addressed, one is always already addressed by the voice of the other, even if it happens behind my back. Such is the event character, the happening, of experience. (p. 94)

Genuine hermeneutic experience in Gadamer's philosophy is linguistic in nature, and dialectical, and it is a process of mindful interpretation leading to understanding (Gadamer, 2004). "Language," noted Gadamer, "shows this when we use the word 'experience' in two different senses: the experiences that conform to our expectation and confirm it and the new experiences that occur to us" (p. 347). Moreover, in experience and coming to understanding of it, Gadamer (2004) drew attention to the circularity of understanding in the evocation of the hermeneutic circle which we enter, but do not leave (Dunne, 1993) to address the hermeneutic question of how we come to an understanding of lifeworld experience, moving back and forth as we oscillate between the whole and parts of the subject matter before us. Moreover, how we sense and perceive experience is historically effected (Gadamer, 2004; Risser, 1997). We are bound by our tradition, our knowledge and experience of the world, and by our finitude as human beings who occupy a finite space and time, and these factors together form our horizon of understanding of the world.

Our pre-judgments of the world, or our prejudices, can never be set aside or bracketed (van Manen, 2014). They enrobe us always because these are the trappings of our humanity that moor us in this place and time. However, knowing that we are thus cloaked is not a despairing call to surrender, but an invitation to openness with the full knowledge that each of us in conversation wears a similarly bedecked carapace carved of our lifeworld experience, history,

prejudice, tradition, and finitude. As we come together in conversation in search of understanding, Gadamer (2004) has argued that we must fuse our respective horizons of historicity and tradition to foster greater understanding or even a new understanding of something.

It is important to emphasize that hermeneutic experience of the lifeworld should not be confounded with knowledge that can be gleaned from instruction, such as for a technical skill. It is grounded in *phronesis*, the ethical wisdom that springs from openness to transcendent experience (Hemingway, 1988). As Dunne (1993) argued, "For phronesis does not ascend to a level of abstraction or generality that leaves experience. It arises from experience and *returns to experience"* (p. 293, italics in the original). In other words, from experience (*Erfahrung)*, develops *phronesis*, which, because of the deep insights it affords, it folds back into experience and continues to enhance and remake experience. *Phronesis* then, is not separate to experience, or an afterthought to leisure, but interwoven into the very fabric of it. It is, in sum, as Kristjánsson et al. (2021) declared, "an intellectual meta-virtue of holistic, integrative, contextual, practical reflection and adjudication about moral issues leading to moral action" (p. 241), and a concept that is experiencing a renaissance in a variety of fields well beyond philosophy.

I chose Gadamer's (1976, 2004) philosophical hermeneutics and phenomenology as my theoretical undergirding because it is a philosophy focused on the understanding of being, of the "lived experience of human existence" (van Manen, 2014, p. 26). Moreover, according to Gadamer (2004) the lived experience of being is made visible through the interpretation of language. It is the ontological focus—and by ontology, I mean "that which can be said to exist" (Searle, 2012, p. 582) or the "nature of reality and what can be known about it" (Laverty, 2003,

p. 23)—that is the focus of Gadamer's (1976, 2004) hermeneutic philosophy and phenomenology. To explicate further, ontological understanding acknowledges that there are myriad ways of being and interpretations of beings and their lifeworlds; they are subjective, individual and infinite in variety (Laverty, 2003). In Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutic philosophy, to attain understanding we must focus our attention on the experience of being in the world, on the individual's lived reality of being. In a participative and mutual exchange, interlocutors are regarded as equal, and their conversational engagement is earthed in their histories and traditions (Moran, 2000).

In my study, which nests within the interpretivist paradigm, epistemology—and by this term I mean how we may know what we know to exist (Searle, 2012)—is subjectively understood. In Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutic phenomenology epistemological knowing is expressed and interpreted in language, and it is intersubjective because it is shared in dialogue with another. I do not attempt to arrive at an objective truth of what is known but rather what is subjectively and intersubjectively understood by the one expressing it. Therefore, I regard what can be known as relative to the individual expressing her knowledge and understanding of something through language.

In this chapter I provide a brief introduction to the hallmarks of Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy and theory of hermeneutic experience. (A deeper exploration of Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutical philosophy and phenomenology and his theory of hermeneutic experience can be found in Appendix C). The first of these hallmarks is understanding.

Understanding (verstehen)

Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy is grounded in the belief that all understanding of the world is through the interpretation of language (Crotty, 1998; Figal, 2006; Gadamer, 1976,

2004; Grondin, 2006; Lawn, 2006; Moran, 2000). To expand, the primary focus in the hermeneutical conversation is on reflexivity, equality, and reciprocity—a knowing and self-understanding of the interpreter (Moran, 2000) and that the interlocutors *together*, seek common meaning and agreement (Grondin, 2006). Self-understanding is crucial to the "understanding of understanding" (Moran, 2000, p. 252) because in self-understanding we can be more acutely attuned to the pre-judgments or prejudices that may work "behind our backs" (Gadamer, 1976, p. 38), influencing our understanding.

Prejudice, Tradition, and History in Understanding

Gadamer (1976; 2004) revived the idea of prejudice—a word often considered in a negative light in the modern understanding of it—seeing it as pivotal in understanding the being of a being. Rather than meaning that one has judged falsely, it means that one's prejudices can have either a positive or negative impact on understanding. While admitting that making such a statement is provocative, Gadamer (1976) suggested every human being comes to every human interaction, conversation, text, or work of art, with her own prejudices about the world, the weight of her own experiences, history, and life knowledges that make up her historicity or tradition, and they cannot be suspended to arrive at truth. However, prejudices are not obstacles to greater understanding, but fulfil "the function . . . in bringing all of something to conscious awareness" (Gadamer, 1976, p. 38). Doing so, enables us to reflect on whether our prejudices are justified or not. This is important because prejudices are not to be blindly accepted as unalterable obstacles to greater understanding but enable greater understanding in gaining "a new understanding of what I have seen through eyes conditioned by prejudice" (p. 38). Our histories and prejudices (foreknowledge and understandings of things) form our tradition.

Tradition (knowledge and understandings passed down through the generations) is inescapable, because for Gadamer (1975, as cited by Smith, 1993) humans are always part of their tradition. As Lawn (2006) noted, "We cannot escape tradition as we are always in it" (p. 36). We bring our historical knowledge, bounded by time and space, to every interaction with others, and, as we attempt to understand and come to an agreement about something. Gadamer (2004) referred to the melding of our own traditions or histories with those of others with whom we are communicating as seeking to *fuse our respective horizons* of historicity and tradition. Horizon means the standpoint from which we see the world or understand something. Through the *fusing of our respective horizons*, we foster a greater understanding (even a new understanding) and self-understanding are made possible because we acknowledge and accept our historically-situated selves, steeped in tradition and prejudice, as influencing our understanding.

How we arrive at a new understanding develops from the way in which we approach a conversation or text in which we must examine first the whole of the matter, then the parts before returning to the whole to divine a clear understanding of something (Crotty, 1998). This oscillating movement in the hermeneutical interpretation denotes the circularity of understanding and is called the hermeneutical circle.

The Hermeneutical Circle

Grondin (2006) enunciates the major hallmarks of Gadamer's concept of the hermeneutic circle of understanding as follows (p. 49): (a) that interpretation circles or oscillates between the whole and the parts of the subject matter, (b) the circle is focused on the interpretation of text and language, coming to agreement, (c) the circle is not really a circle because interpretation and understanding entail the constant revisiting of the subject matter as individuals oscillate between

the whole and the parts, revising their interpretations, and making allowances and changes to their interpretations as different manifestations of truth and knowledge come into view, and (d) interpretations are informed by the past and by tradition, and by our prejudices. In terms of my own research, I accepted that I was grounded in, and surrounded by the world around me, my history and my understandings of the world around me (see section on Positionality, or My Historicity), as were the participants in my study. I fully expected that our conversations would be imbued with our prejudices and histories and that, rather than attempting to distance ourselves from them, we welcomed their presence as saturated into our being, and our experience of being-in-the world.

Our focus is always on the subject matter (Gadamer, 2004) as we search for agreement, meaning, and truth through language. Gadamer (2004) explicated though, that truth is not absolute, but ephemeral and elusive because . . . the discovery of the true meaning of a text or a work of art is never finished; it is in fact an infinite process. Not only are fresh sources filtered out that obscure true meaning; but new sources of understanding are continually emerging that reveal unsuspected elements of meaning. (p. 298). Still, Gadamer (2004) did not mean that no understanding is ever possible, but that a fuller understanding and truth comes about only through and by language.

Language and Truth

Gadamer's (1976; 2004) hermeneutics of language was intent on the interpretation of language manifesting through text or the spoken words as one understands it oneself (Mangion, 2011). Even such an interpretation is not fixed, though, but fluid. In my research I anticipated that such fluidity of interpretation might occur during member reflection (Thomas, 2017) when I

met with study participants to share the research findings and to hear their thoughts on my interpretations of them.

The emphasis in the conversation is always upon the subject matter (Gadamer, 1976). In elucidating the importance of maintaining focus on the subject matter, Gadamer (1976, 2004; see also Mangion, 2011, and Risser, 1997) turned to the metaphor of a game, wherein the players are focused on the ball rather than on each other, to illustrate the to-and-fro motion "that is not tied to any movement that would bring it to an end" (p. 104). According to Linge (1976), "This element of buoyancy . . . suggests the inadequacy of trying to comprehend understanding from the perspective of the subjectivity of the author or the interpreter" (p. xxii) and alerts us to the importance of focusing on the subject matter itself. Doing so enables becoming absorbed and carried along by the 'game' on the path to deeper understanding.

Gadamer did not proffer a "theory of truth" (Risser, 1996, p. 159), nor did he attempt to provide definitions of what is truth. Gadamer did, however, in the Platonic tradition, see that truth is most closely associated within the beauty (*aletheia* or truth) of works of art, which, though the artist may not be there to interpret them for the viewer, can be interpreted by the viewer in her own way. As Gadamer (2004) averred, if we begin with the "ontological view that being is *language"* (p. 481, italics in the original) we can accept that it is the beautiful, defined by St. Thomas as knowledge, that provides the clarity to see a thing revealed in its being. In the clear seeing of a thing or a being we come to an understanding of that entity, and "when we understand something, we come to some truth about it" (Dostal, 2006, p. 254).

Coming to understanding and some truth are not without purpose though. All of Gadamer's (1976, 2004) hermeneutic philosophy and phenomenology is centred on the ultimate goal of putting into productive ethical practice what has been learned. Gadamer (2004) turned to

the Aristotelian concept of *phronēsis* to illuminate the grand *raison d'etre* of his project: the application of ethical wisdom in the service of humanity.

Phronēsis: Applying Ethical (Practical) Wisdom for Good

Gadamer's elucidation of hermeneutical interpretation of the dialogical finds its footing in the Aristotelian concept of phronēsis, or practical wisdom, which involves both perception and reasoning. Phronēsis embodies acting ethically in life, and so the application of practical or ethical wisdom gleaned in mutual understanding of something is always anchored in the ideal of wisdom applied in the ethical service of the common good. This was also my thesis: to explore with African immigrant mothers and daughters their experiences of leisure during the COVID-19 pandemic, through conversation and coming to agreement through a fusion of our horizons. Thereafter, my aim was that we would come to understanding together, and the ethical, practical application of what was learned and shared among us would serve the common good. (My strategies for translating the knowledge stemming from my research are discussed further in Method).

Rabinoff (2018), in her study of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* described phronēsis as "a state of soul that makes possible the sort of thinking necessary for good action" (p. 118). It is an intellectual virtue, that, by attending to the particulars of a situation, being aware and receptive to how one thinks about those particulars, one is able to make virtuous and ethical choices. Therefore, an individual demonstrating phronēsis would be initially sensitive, aware, and perceptive to a situation or set of circumstances in order to make the good, wise, ethical, and practical choice or action. Rabinoff argued that "phronēsis makes possible good practical reasoning just by providing this correct apprehension of particulars" (p. 116).

Gadamer (2004) drew a clear distinction between practical (ethical) wisdom and technical knowledge (*techne*). *Techne* describes the acquisition of a practical skill, such as a craftsman or craftswoman might have, or might learn. This means that the individual building a bench or learning to drive a car follows a set of instructions. Such a deployment of technical skill does not require the application of ethical knowledge. It requires only the remembering of how to complete a task. Warnke (2006) cautioned that applying ethnical knowledge is not straightforward (such as applying a technical skill one has mastered), because the acts of being ethical and virtuous are intertwined with our ideal of how to act virtuously and ethically. Therefore, the ideal of ethicality to which we strive is not independent of our actions to realize that ideal. As Warnke (2006) argues, "we make and remake our ethical knowledge and ourselves in these changing circumstances, in the actions we take to apply the ethical knowledge we already possess" (p. 85). Gadamer (2004) also pointed out the importance of relationship in explaining difference between the application of practical wisdom and technical skill or knowledge. No relationship is needed between those seeking or receiving technical advice. However, when we seek or receive practical wisdom, relationship is all important. Gadamer (2004) explicated this relationship as one bound in friendship and empathy:

> Both the person asking for advice and the person giving it assume that they are bound together in friendship. Only friends can advise each other, or put it another way, only a piece of advice that is meant in a friendly way has meaning for the person advised. Once again we discover that the person who is understanding does not know or judge as one who stands apart and unaffected but rather, he thinks along with the other from the perspective of a specific bond of belonging, as if he too were affected (p. 320).

Further to the practical application of knowledge through interpretation and understanding, is the importance of applying such understanding to "do the good in human affairs" (Grondin, 2006, p. 39). Therefore, application, in these terms (of practical wisdom) is in the service of humanity (Risser, 1997, also see Rabinoff, 2018). It is this concept of ethical service (Rabinoff, 2018; Smith, 1993) that is also the project of historical hermeneutics. To elucidate further: acknowledging the event of understanding as situated within tradition—"the process of handing down" (Rabinoff, 2018, p. 308), and coupled with the self-knowledge of the interpreter that is enriched through dialogue with another, leads to a *better understanding* of understanding (Grondin, 2006). The greater understanding that is made possible through these acknowledgements means that what is now understood and agreed can be applied for the greater good.

In addition, in emphasizing the practical focus of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, Rorty (1982, as cited by Risser, 1997, p. 115) pointed to Gadamer's common ground with pragmatism and the understanding,

> …that philosophy is not a transcendental operation of securing first principles as its way of making sense of the world. The pragmatist and the hermeneut of philosophical hermeneutics do not want to separate reason from the practice of life, and in this sense, both are fundamentally Socratic: there is the 'willingness to talk, to listen to other people, to weigh the consequences of our actions upon other people'.

Smith (1993) contended that all understanding is, at the heart of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, both a practical task and accomplishment—and that because humans are, at their core, "ethical and moral beings, understanding is at its core ethical and moral" (p. 197). In making this claim Smith underscored one of the most important hallmarks of Gadamer's project:

that the morality and ethicality of philosophical hermeneutics grounds it steadfastly in the unfolding of the understanding of the human experience of the life world.

das Resümee: A Recapitulation

Gadamer's (1976, 2004) hermeneutical (interpretive) philosophy is forged around the understanding of human beings' experience of being through language. Without language "there is, for us, no insight without speech, without conversation in language" (Dostal, 2002, p. 262). The hallmarks of Gadamer's philosophy, find their inspiration in Heidegger's account of being and the factical life of the finite being. Gadamer's (2004) account of being-in-the-world elucidates the concept of language as a playful interplay between people that is buoyant, unpredictable, resulting in conversations we did not expect, and truth revelations stemming from our dialogical interactions with each other (Risser, 1997). Gadamer (2004), in his hermeneutic philosophy, argued that we are all beings located in history, and we are enrobed in our traditions, our prejudices that cannot be tossed aside in our quest for an objective truth. Our prejudices, our understandings of things will always be coloured by the mantle of the past and present, but we can, in search of understanding and truth with another person, engage in a circularity of understanding, moving between the whole and parts of the subject matter, in search of better understanding (Dunne, 1993; Gadamer, 2004; Grondin, 2006; Lawn, 2006). The guiding Aristotelian principle of phronesis: practical or ethical wisdom in service of a common good (Grondin, 2006; Warnke, 2006), grounds Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy in ethicality. Practical or ethical (not technical) wisdom underlines the goal of achieving good; of democratic, respectful, and dignified dialogical interactions with others that may lead to understandings beyond what we thought possible. Such interactions, marked by openness, are not designed to

bestow superior status to one or another but to seek mutual understanding—wisdom that can be

ethically applied (Warnke, 2002).

Chapter 4: Methodology

My research is underpinned by Gadamer's (2004) phenomenological theory of hermeneutic experience, and grounded in philosophy, *entwined with* Aristotle's philosophy of leisure (Goodale, 1991, Hemingway, 1988; Hurly, 2021; Owens, 1981; Sylvester, 1999). Therefore, in my study I focus on the interpretation of the dialogical and linguistical exchanges between people seeking common meaning.

There is good reason to do so, because scholars, such as Brinkmann (2018, citing Ritzer, 2008) has decried the rise in 'methodolatry' as inherent in the *McDonaldization* of research where evermore focus is on uniformity of method to speedily and efficiently produce results, rather than on a thoughtful unfolding of understanding using methods that make sense for the project at hand that may cross boundaries into interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to doing and analyzing what has been created. In this vein Christians (2018) has argued for an ontological transformation in terms of qualitative approaches to research, and, in concert with Guba and Lincoln's (1994, as cited in Christians, 2018) reminder of the pre-eminence of paradigms over method, argues that research ethics should be married to action in the interests of the common good. In my desire to activate those aims, and in animating phronēsis—the application of ethical wisdom for the common good—I turned to philosophical hermeneutical interviewing (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011) which is in step with my philosophical underpinning, grounded in Gadamer's (1976, 2004) hermeneutical philosophy.

Paradigmatic Assumptions

My research falls within the humanist, interpretivist or constructivist paradigmatic approach under which phenomenology nests because it centres on the "the act of understanding, the central act by which humans engage with the world" (Moran, 2000, p. 250). The ontological

focus of Gadamer's (1976; 2004) hermeneutic philosophy is centred around the interpretation of the dialogical exchanges between people through language and the becoming of beings into being is primarily understood through language. Therefore, the ontological understanding of ways of being, the nature of reality (Lincoln & Guba, 2013) or "what can be said to exist" (Searle, 2012, p. 582) as relative to each individual in Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutic philosophy is aligned with the interpretivist or constructivist paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

Epistemologically, and by this term I mean how we can know what we know (Searle, 2012), Lincoln and Guba (2013) stated that in the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm epistemology is presupposed to be transactional subjectivist. What Lincoln and Guba mean by this is that what is known is created; it depends on the highly subjective transaction between the knower and what is to be known in "the particular context in which the encounter between them takes place" (p. 40). These subjective meanings and understandings are mediated by personal factors such as gender, race, sexual orientation, cultural values and are unique to each person. "Knowledge is not 'discovered' but rather *created;* it exists only in the time/space framework in which it is generated" (p. 40). Knowledges and truths are revealed through the unique perspectives of individuals as they divulge and make meanings of their experiences in time, the setting in which they occurred, the circumstances surrounding the event, the individuals' states of mind when the event occurred, and how that might have changed with the passage of time. These factors and myriad other aspects provide a rich, multifaceted understanding of an event from the individual's viewpoint.

Taking an interpretivist stance means that I acknowledge that individuals make their own meanings of the complex social environments in which they live. As an interpretivist, therefore, I subscribe to a relativist ontology. Ontologically, this means the researcher believes there is one

reality (Markula & Silk, 2011), but I should make clear, this is not the reality as envisioned by the researcher, but reality from the perspective of the individual living that reality in her lifeworld. Shadish (1995) asserted that the goals of interpretivist researchers "refer to constructing *knowledge about* reality, not constructing reality itself" (p. 67, italics in the original). Guba and Lincoln (1990, as cited in Patton, 2002) and later Lincoln and Guba (2013) have extended these understandings of the interpretive/constructivist paradigm, arguing that in addition to its (transactional) subjective epistemology and relativist ontology, interpretivism is "methodologically hermeneutic and dialectic" (p. 98). It is focused on an understanding or meaning and interpretation of the language individuals use to describe their experience, as well as the context (Manning, 1997) and "original purpose" thereof (Patton, 2002, p. 114). Interpretivism's hermeneutic characteristic means that the researcher's understanding of self is also enriched by what she learns from those she interviews (Markula & Silk, 2011). Accordingly, "the researcher's main aim is to understand the participants' subjective experiences and through these experiences, interpret the participants' meanings" (p. 34) in the event of understanding (Gadamer, 2004). The basic presuppositions of the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm are, therefore, closely aligned with Gadamer's (1976, 2004) hermeneutical philosophy premised on "the ontological view that being is *language—i.e., self-representation*—as revealed to us by the hermeneutical experience of being" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 481, italics in the original).

Phenomenology: More than One Approach

There is a tendency, when considering phenomenology as a method, for many scholars to regard only the strict Husserlian phenomenology as the 'proper' way to go about 'doing' phenomenology (see Finlay, 2014; Schmitz-Scherzer, 1990; Sokolowski, 1999; van Manen, 2014). Steps in the Husserlian phenomenological method typically include the practitioner

having the normal or natural attitude to the subject matter, which then transmutes into the phenomenological attitude as the researcher rises beyond simply seeing things as they are and instead is able to see things as the transcendental ego would observe them: removed, objective and untainted with prior knowledge. Having achieved this transcendent state of having risen above the normal or natural attitude the researcher then animates the *epoché* and reduction (Sokolowski, 1999). These cornerstones of the Husserlian phenomenological method (Moran, 2000) see the researcher bracket, or set aside, her assumptions about something in order to approach the subject as though never having approached it, seen it, or experienced it before. Sokolowski (1999) describes this detached, transcendent condition as becoming "something like detached observers of the passing scene or like spectators at a game" (p. 48). We suspend (somehow) our intentions, perceptions, doubts, and so on, suspending them as though frozen in time and space in order to examine a thing objectively as though from some "philosophical perch" (p. 50).

Gadamer (2004) in his hermeneutic philosophy, as has already been articulated in the Philosophical Underpinning chapter (see also Appendix C), argued that this is simply not possible and the Husserlian phenomenological method seeking the essence of a thing (the 'what') is simply continuing in the path of Enlightenment philosophers who regarded only objective observation, reason and logic as enabling truth to reveal. Hermeneutic experience, interpretation and reflection do not call for a focus on a methodological imperative, and Gadamer denies his theory of hermeneutic experience suggests in any way a how-to manual for winkling out the truth of the matter. He invites instead a thoughtful, ethical reflection of the human experience, of a coming into the world through language. As Grondin (2003) contended,

Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutic philosophy is focused on being (the ontological), rather than consciousness (the epistemological).

I concur with Gadamer regarding the pivotal role of interpretation in coming to an understanding and elucidating the lived experience of individuals (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Gadamer, 1976, 2004). Furthermore, because my intent was to explore the lived experiences of leisure of African immigrant mothers and daughters resettled in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic, Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutical (interpretive) strand of phenomenology was most appropriate because, as Gadamer emphasizes, "The task of hermeneutics is to clarify the miracle of understanding, which is not a mysterious communion of souls, but sharing in a common meaning" (p. 292). In addition to exploring and sharing our common meanings of leisure, van Manen (2014) has argued that phenomenological meanings "may provide meaning structures that help to understand the *significance* of human phenomena such as fear, anxiety, and grief" (p. 44 italics added). According to Moran (2000) Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy is phenomenological because it is concerned with the "act of understanding, the central act by which humans engage with the world" (p. 250). It is also phenomenological because it "attempts to do justice to the event [of understanding] and does not reduce it to a subjectivist or epistemological framework" (p. 250).

I found that the potent alchemy of Aristotle's (2002) leisure philosophy, as anchored in striving for excellence and living virtuously (Owens, 1981), combined with Gadamer's (2004) theory of hermeneutic experience afforded me an ethical guide, steeped in philosophy (Hurly, 2021) for my study. Because in my study I engaged with African women from different cultures and traditions, I sought not the rigidity of a hypothesis, or a theory to be falsified, but a respectful guide for coming alongside, for sitting with, and together exploring the lived experience of

leisure during the COVID-19 pandemic. I contend that the focus on lived experience of hermeneutical phenomenology revealed deep evocations and understandings of my study participants' leisures and aided me in richly illuminating their subjective, multiple, and unique leisure meanings. This is because I perceive philosophy as affording a way to think about the world, the experience of being in the world, and our experience of human interaction (Hurly, 2021), leading to understanding and self-understanding (Gadamer, 2004). In the following chapter I articulate the method I employed that complemented my philosophical underpinning, and my methodology.

Chapter 5: Method

I discuss the following topics in this order: (a) sampling strategy, participant recruitment, and the sample size. Thereafter, I describe how I (b) engaged in philosophical hermeneutic interviews (as the prime method of data collection; Vandermause & Fleming, 2011), and how I used (c) participant-created visual methods (drawings, photographs, or other self-created ephemera; Ellis et al., 2013) that included auto-driven photo elicitation (Pauwel, 2015), (d) the analysis in my study data, and (e) created an ethical space for doing this research. Finally, I describe how my research is (f) trustworthy in ways that cohere with my philosophical undergirding and paradigmatic assumptions. It is important to note that I conducted this research during the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic. I recruited participants between August and November 2020. Interviews were conducted between September 2020 and February 2021, before vaccines were widely available.

Sampling Strategy

I purposefully recruited a group of mothers and daughters for my study using a combination of criterion and snowball sampling (Markula & Silk, 2011). My rationale for choosing these sampling modes was as follows: I used criterion sampling because criteria for my project include preferring that participants (a) were immigrant women (mothers and daughters, related or unrelated) from Africa, or of African descent, regardless of race, ethnicity, or country of origin, and who (b) had emigrated to Canada from any country in Africa. Moreover participants (c) could be permanent residents, landed immigrants, hold Canadian citizenship, or a work permit or study permit. In other words, temporary foreign workers, or international students were also eligible to participate. In addition, (d) immigrant mothers and daughters did not have to be related. Finally, (e) participants had to be willing to participate in at least two audio-

recorded interviews and to draw or photograph aspects of their experiences of leisure during the

pandemic or depict their leisure in another creative manner of their choosing.

Moreover, the marital status of mothers, whether married, single, divorced, widowed, or

cohabiting with a partner was not a criterion for exclusion. Any African immigrant woman

responsible for the upbringing of a young woman, whether related to that young woman or not,

was included if she was interested in participating in my study and met the aforementioned

criteria for inclusion. I set no age parameters for mothers.

Daughters had to be sufficiently mature to be able to freely give informed consent to

participate. I did not seek to involve any young person under the age of 13 years. Therefore, I

determined adolescent daughters' capacity to freely give their consent by explaining the research

and making clear the risks and benefits of engaging in the research. Though I had initially

thought to limit the inclusion of daughters to adolescents between the ages of 13 and 19 years of

age, the daughters who were willing to participate in my study were between 13 and 24 years of

age.

Snowball sampling is a valuable way of tapping into social networks that are not readily

accessible to reveal hidden knowledge and insights from hard-to-reach groups (Noy, 2008).

Inevitably the snowball begins with one individual who invites the researcher to link to a chain

of others. Some of those participating in the research knew each other, and this was inevitable

with snowball sampling (Noy, 2008). However, familiarity with each other was not a criterion

for inclusion or exclusion in my study. In previous studies I have conducted, some participants

knew each other through familial connections and friendships (e.g., Hurly, 2019) and in another

involving a nature-based leisure experience arranged by an immigrant-serving agency, they did

not (Hurly & Walker, 2019a). In each of those studies, the information gathered from the

participants was rich, broad, and deep because participants were individually interviewed and thus participants were able to freely express themselves.

Participant Recruitment

Since 2014 I had cultivated an excellent, trusting working relationship with Catholic Social Services (CSS) in Edmonton, Alberta. I had volunteered for several years with the organization and met regularly with team leaders and settlement counsellors, many of whom had become personal friends. In addition, I had assisted CSS by attending and co-presenting with settlement counsellors at conferences (e.g., Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Associations [AAISA] annual conference, 2017), as well sharing my research findings with them and aiding them in the preparation of grant proposals and conference presentations. However, though they had expressed their willingness to assist me in the recruitment of participants for this study, with the sudden and shocking advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 and the resultant deleterious impacts on their clients, who often represent individuals in dire need of social assistance, CSS had no other option than to withdraw from assisting me recruit participants for the study. According to the counsellors with whom I had been communicating, their workloads had increased exponentially as demand for their services increased, and they were simply too overwhelmed with the additional level of aid required of them to assist me.

While criterion sampling is more common in phenomenological studies (Frechette et al., 2020), if I had not turned to snowball sampling (Noy, 2008; Patton, 2002) I doubt I would have been able to recruit any mothers or daughters for my study. Therefore, realising that I would not be able to rely on CSS to aid me in recruitment, I contacted social services and ethnocultural community groups in Edmonton, Red Deer, Canmore and Banff, and Calgary, to gauge their interest in facilitating the recruitment of participants for my research. Typically, I received either

no response, or an apologetic refusal. Furthermore, I approached some religious groups (churches, mosques, synagogues, etc.) serving diverse congregations and people from the African diaspora. I drew a blank in this regard as well. In addition, I approached two professors at the University of Alberta who engage in research among immigrants from Africa. Though they tried to help me, and generously provided possible leads, I was unable to interest anyone in my research. I then turned to friends of African descent with whom I had studied at university; I attempted to contact the connections they provided me. These, too, yielded nothing. Finally, I reached out to women from Africa I had met during my volunteer work with CSS, and those who had participated in a previous study. In this way, at snail's pace, using snowball sampling (Markula & Silk, 2011; Patton, 2002) I was able to recruit one participant at a time over a period of four months. Consequently, I was able to recruit four mothers and three daughters.

None of the participant mothers were blood mothers (Hill Collins, 2005) of the daughters who agreed to participate. In many cultures, an introduction from a trusted friend or relation can assuage concerns regarding the integrity of the researcher wanting to recruit, and so I employed snowball sampling (Noy, 2008), asking women who consented to participate if they could introduce me to other women in their circle who might be interested in participating. Having the nod from women they trusted that I and my research project were above board meant that some women became more comfortable consenting to be part of my study.

I offered to arrange to meet with any participant if she was open to, or desired such a meeting, to provide her with information about my study, and for us to have the opportunity to meet and get to know each other a little. While it would have been an opportunity for potential participants to 'interview' me, as it were, to build rapport, and for them to judge for themselves whether they are comfortable with me and think me worthy of hearing their stories, only one

mother initially did so. We met on Google Meet for approximately 20 minutes, and it proved an important 'handshake' and enabled us to get to know each other a little. This was particularly important as this woman was a recent arrival in Canada and was still acquiring English speaking skills and comfort using the language. For this participant, the pre-interview was of more value than the written consent letter, and it afforded us the opportunity to meet and share information about ourselves. As more mothers and daughters became interested in participating in my study, I met online with two more mothers (three in total) and two daughters, who wanted to learn more about me and my study before consenting to participate.

In terms of recruiting daughters, having initially managed to recruit just three over a two-month period, I posted a notice to the University of Alberta's undergraduate students' digest, a weekly e-newsletter of events and news relevant to undergraduates, and in which researchers seeking participants may 'advertise' their study. I posted a brief summary of my research in student digests in two consecutive weeks, and through the advertisement in the students' digest I was able to recruit a further seven daughters. In total I recruited four mothers and ten daughters from a variety of African countries including Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. The daughters I recruited ranged in age from 13 to 24. Mothers and othermothers[9] ranged in age from 29 to 36 years of age. The two othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005) were older sisters to younger siblings whom they had raised in the absence of their blood mothers. In both cases, the elder sisters had fled conflict in their

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[9] 'Othermothers' is a term favoured by feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins in drawing attention to how grandmothers, sisters, aunts, cousins, or unrelated women may help in the raising of children of blood mothers when needed. Though Hill Collins (2005) applied this term specifically in the African American context, it is relevant in the context of my research because in this study I define 'mother' as embracing blood mothers, and any woman who has taken on the guardianship, whether formally or informally, and the responsibility of raising a girl or young woman in the absence of a blood mother.

homelands and sought refugee status in Canada, then brought their younger sister to Canada to raise her.

I provide first a table (Table 1) that summarizes my participant sample, followed by a brief description of each participant. Names marked with an asterisk denote that this is a pseudonym. To ensure that participants retained control over how they were named in the research, each participant was offered a pseudonym of her choice, if she wished. Six participants wanted to be identified by their own name; eight preferred to have a pseudonym. The participants who preferred not to be anonymous in the research also gave me permission to show their faces on any photographs in which they appeared, as well as those of their children, and other family members. For example, in one instance, a daughter provided me with a photograph of herself and her boyfriend and I obtained his written consent to use his likeness.

Participants

Table 1

Summary of Participants

Name/Pseudonym	Mother/other mother/ daughter	Age	Country of origin	Family	Occupation
Emilia*	Daughter	13	Ivory Coast	Two siblings, older sister, older brother; both parents	Junior high school student
Lindiwe*	Daughter	17	Ivory Coast	Two siblings; younger sister, older brother; both parents	High school student
Thembi*	Daughter	20	Nigeria	3 brothers (two younger, one older); both parents.	4th year university student. P/t jobs at university library and psychology laboratory
Kiza	Daughter	21	Tanzania	3 sisters (two older, one younger), 2 younger brothers; both parents	4th year university student
Vanessa	Daughter	20	Nigeria	Older sister; mother	4th year university student
Ewurakua	Daughter	19	Ghana	No family in Canada. Family resides in	2nd year nursing student (international student)

Name/Pseudonym	Mother/other mother/ daughter	Age	Country of origin	Family	Occupation
				Ghana. Two parents, three younger sisters.	
Zuhrah*	Daughter	19	Nigeria	1 older sister; both parents	2nd year nursing student
Alexis*	Daughter	20	Canada	Older brother and sister; mother, stepmother, and father from Ghana	3rd year university student
Elsa*	Daughter	21	Ghana	2 younger brothers; both parents	3rd year university student
Jean*	Sister of Sarah (othermother)	23	South Sudan	2 older brothers; sister (Sarah); father in Uganda	Works several jobs; community services volunteer
Rose	Mother	36	South Sudan	2 children: girl (11), boy (5), married	Health care aide in a long-term care facility
Florence	Mother	29	Uganda	2 daughters: 3 and 10 years. Single, divorced.	Administrative assistant at a clinic
Sarah*	Othermother (raised her sister, Jean)	36	South Sudan	Othermother to 2 younger, adult siblings. Single.	Carer; health care aide
Argentine	Mother and othermother (raised her adolescent sister)	34	Democratic Republic of Congo	Othermother to her sister (15); blood mother to daughter (4). Single.	Runs own sewing business, Shona Canada.

Names with a * denote a pseudonym. Immigration status is not included in this table because participants preferred to be identified as immigrants.

Daughters. Two daughters from the same family, Emilia* (13 years) and Lindiwe* (17), who took part in this study were originally from Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), from which they emigrated in 2014 with their French-speaking family. Emilia was in junior high school in grade 8, and Lindiwe was a high school student in grade 11. Though they initially lived in Quebec after emigrating, their family lived in Alberta and comprised both parents, and an older brother, aged 20. Neither sister held a part-time job during summer, and both were disgruntled at having to do their studies online since schools had closed. Each was bored during the school summer holidays and dissatisfied with having to stay close to home because of the pandemic. At the time of

writing, both Emilia and Lindiwe were anxious to get back to attending school in person and to being able to socialize with their friends in person.

Thembi* was from Nigeria. She was 20 years of age, and a fourth-year university student. She was particularly interested in the mental health field—an area she was considering pursuing through graduate studies. Thembi's family resided in a southern Alberta city, having immigrated to Canada in 2013. She lived in a student residence. She had three siblings: a sister (28 years) and two brothers, one older (27 years) and one younger (14 years). Thembi helped with home schooling for her younger brother when schools closed, and classes were held online. Her mother ran a day home for children, and during the pandemic Thembi helped her mother with the day-to-day running of the business. Her father lived and worked in Nigeria and returned to their southern Alberta home regularly. During the summer, Thembi worked at a cycle camp for youngsters, and during the term she held down a part-time job in one of the university's libraries, as well as in a psychology laboratory.

Kiza (20 years of age) was born in Tanzania, where her parents had sought refuge from conflict in their homeland in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The family emigrated to Canada in 2004, and now resides in a northern Alberta city. Kiza was a fourth-year university student, had two brothers (aged 17 and 15) and four sisters (all older except for one), not all of whom live in her hometown. Her youngest sister was 18 years of age and about to embark on her own university studies in urban planning. A keen musician, who played keyboard, guitar, and ukulele, and with a fine voice, Kiza sang in her church's choir. Her family members were all musically talented, singing, and played a variety of instruments, and they frequently sang and made music together. Kiza worked at a local festival during the summer. However, during the pandemic, this part-time summer job had disappeared.

Vanessa (20 years) was from Nigeria, her family having emigrated in 2014. She, too, was a student, completing the fourth year of her undergraduate degree, and she was considering graduate studies. She lived in residence at the university. Vanessa was active in a student leadership group and close friends with other students of African heritage in her university residence, and in other faculties beyond the faculty of science. Her brother (22 years) was an engineering student, the profession of engineering featuring prominently in her family. Her father died the year she was born, and her widowed mother never remarried. Vanessa's mother was a nurse, working on the front lines of a pandemic. Vanessa found painting an outlet for expressing her creative and political self during the pandemic.

Ewurakua (19 years) was a Ghanaian international student having begun her studies in Canada in September 2019. Her family resided in Ghana; her father worked for the United Nations and her mother single-handedly raised Ewurakua's three younger siblings, all girls, two of them twins. Ewurakua was alone in residence after the university closed because of the pandemic. During this time, she focused on her fitness and dietary habits, taught herself to cook, brushed up on her French, and talked to each of her parents every day. Ewurakua was a determined, courageous young woman who did not panic when she found herself isolated from her friends as they left campus during the pandemic. She instead resolved to be strong and resilient, finding comfort in her Christian faith, and in mastering tasks of daily living, such as cooking for herself, to be more independent and self-sufficient. Her sister hoped to study at a university in Canada beginning September 2021.

Zuhrah* (19 years of age) was completing the second year of her program at a university in northern Alberta. She and her family emigrated from Nigeria in 2007, and the family lived in a southern Albertan city. Zuhrah lived in residence while she attended university. In terms of

family, Zuhrah lived with her parents, and an older sister (aged 23). She returned to her hometown when the university closed its residences and encouraged any students who could leave to do so. Deeply fond of the colour yellow, Zuhrah loved to engage in kickboxing and dancing, as well as cooking and dressing up for outings. She was a committed Christian and her faith was not only important to her: it provided the strongback to her way of being and influenced her way of thinking about her life. Her faith helped to hold her steady during the uncertainty of the pandemic.

Alexis* (20 years of age) was a third-year university student. Born in Canada of Ghanaian immigrant parents, Alexis defined herself more by her Ghanaian culture and identity, than by her Canadian identity. She lived with her stepmother and father, her brother (30) and sister (22). An avid reader, Alexis enjoyed cerebral pursuits, such as doing puzzles and she was a keen aficionado of anime, as well as vicariously travelling by watching the exploits of travelers who vlogged their adventures on YouTube. During the pandemic, Alexis missed interacting with friends and found herself spending much more time on her computer and the internet. A music lover and a dancer, Alexis favoured West African beats and Afro dance moves, and she loved to go walking and hiking. Her Christian faith was deeply important to her.

Elsa* (21 years of age) was a third-year university student. Originally from Ghana, her family (mother, father and two younger brothers) emigrated in 2017 and settled in a southern Alberta city. Elsa lived in residence on campus, where she became close friends with five young women in residence who were also immigrants from Africa. She held a part-time job as a library clerk at the university. In addition, she enjoyed spending time with friends, going to Asian restaurants, and the Calgary Stampede with its array of foods to sample, and its carefree atmosphere. During the summer, she worked at a cycle camp for children, though the pandemic

interfered with her being able to do the job in 2020, or to attend any of her favourite festivals. A sociable person, Elsa missed the company of friends during the pandemic and dearly wanted to do that once again.

Jean* (24 years of age) was born in South Sudan and sponsored to come to Canada in 2006 when she was nine years old by her older sister, Sarah, who raised her. Jean lived with relatives in Ontario for 10 years before she moved to Alberta in 2016, when Sarah obtained work in a northern Alberta city. Jean worked as a special needs assistant in an elementary school and she was an ardent community volunteer with groups supporting newcomers to Canada. Jean loved children, and spent much time with her two young nieces, daughters of her older brother who lives in southern Alberta. Family meant everything to Jean, and she cared deeply about her older sister, Sarah, describing her as "my rock, my everything". Jean taught herself English by watching Treehouse television and she still loved to watch television, finding in it respite and escape. She was an adventurous gourmet of Asian foods, with a fondness for Vietnamese Pho soup, and she loved African music.

Mothers. Rose was 36 years of age at the time this study took place. She was born in South Sudan and raised by her mother; her father having been killed in internecine conflict when she was a very young child. She lived for many years in a refugee camp in Uganda before she was sponsored by her husband, who had been accepted into Canada some years beforehand. Rose arrived in Canada in 2016 with their six-year-old daughter (now 12 years of age). She and her husband also have a son (now six years of age). Since arriving in Canada Rose has obtained credentials as a health care aide and worked in a long-term care facility in Alberta. A determined, forward-looking woman, Rose prided herself on being a good wife and mother, as well as bringing comfort and support to those she served through her work. She was also the sole

support for her mother and many other family members in Uganda. At a nearby farm, she tended

her plot of traditional plants, and grew foods in her own garden for her family's consumption.

Her leisure revolved around her community, her church, and her family.

Florence (29 years of age) was born in Uganda and emigrated to Canada in 2006. Having

first arrived in Ontario, she later moved to Alberta in 2017. Florence worked as an administrative

assistant at a sexual health clinic and her place of work remained open throughout the pandemic.

A single mother, Florence had two young daughters, aged nine and three years whom she raised

with the help her 'aunties' and sisters-in-law, Sarah* and Jean*. Her daughters she described as

her world, and she forewent events and outings with her community group to ensure that her

daughters were well cared for. When not at work, or caring for her daughters, Florence preferred

to spend time indoors, watching Nigerian dramas on Netflix, dancing and singing to gospel

music, and baking her favourite traditional Ugandan cake to evoke warm memories of her

childhood.

Sarah* was 36 years of age and was born in South Sudan. She emigrated to Canada in

2006, arriving in Ontario and making her way to Alberta after attaining work as an attendant in a

retirement facility. She lived in an apartment with her younger brother, and her sister, Jean.

Sarah worked a frantic schedule at two jobs: during the days she worked in a school with

children who had special needs, and in the evenings and weekends she worked at a group home

for people who experienced both mental and physical disabilities. As the sole provider for the

two families of her late brothers in Uganda, she felt compelled to support them because they had

no other help. When she had time for herself, she chose to relax quietly, listening to gospel music

with the volume low. At other times when her loquacious young nieces visited, they played

traditional African games, and cards. When her brother, who lived in another city, visited, family

barbecues brought much pleasure and welcome companionship. During the pandemic, when schools closed, she had more time to herself and began to explore and enjoy the outdoors and the city's stairway system and nature trails with a friend and Jean and Sarah relished these times immensely.

Argentine (32 years of age) was a recent immigrant from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She was a skilled seamstress and crafts vibrantly lovely African themed totes and shopping bags, and she sold these through her website, Shona Canada (https://shonaincanada.com) with the help of her friend and mentor, Dawn Hurley, who met her in Goma when Dawn and her husband lived there for a time. Argentine was othermother to her adolescent sister (15 years of age) who accompanied her to Canada, and she was bloodmother to her own four-year-old daughter. They lived in a small Northern Alberta town. Having contracted polio as a child, Argentine used crutches and a wheelchair to move around, and she loved to be outside in the sun, and taking her young daughter to the park, to cycle and play. However, she missed the heat and vibrancy of African cities where the streets teemed with people. The largely empty places and roads, so common to Canada, seemed arid and devoid of life, and shockingly quiet after her life in Africa. A devout Christian, with a magnificent singing voice, Argentine found great pleasure singing in the church choir in her town even though her English was rudimentary. She continued to practice her English and to attend church online. Faith brought her immense comfort and was deeply engrained in all aspects of her life and leisure.

Examples and Rationale

van Manen (2014) argued that in phenomenological studies, the term 'sample' should not be misconstrued as referring "to an empirical sample as a subset of a sample" (p. 352) because, in doing so, it implies that one is seeking to generalize one's findings. He has, however, offered

that if the word 'sample' is aligned with the word 'example' and meant in that way—as an exemplar of women who fit the criteria for inclusion in my study—it is more apropos for a phenomenological study. Moreover, *sample size is not relevant* for a phenomenological study as the aim is only to richly unfold the individual's lifeworld and lived experience of a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). van Manen (2014) suggested that the researcher should, rather than choosing an arbitrary number of participants based on "some logarithm or statistical criterion or on some formula of data saturation" (p. 353), instead ask herself how many examples of experiential descriptions the researcher thinks the study needs in order to properly explore the phenomena she is curious about. van Rijnsoever (2017) has criticized the arbitrariness of pronouncements about the optimal number of participants in qualitative studies, which he argued is not based on much more than conjecture. However, Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) were clear that "the number of subjects necessary depends on the purpose of the study. If the aim is to understand the world as experienced by one specific person … this one subject is sufficient" (p. 49). Because of the lack of definitive rules for the optimal number of 'examplars' in phenomenological studies, to use van Manen's (2014) terminology, others in this field have weighed in. Frechette et al. (2020) pointed to Groenewald's (2004) suggestion of 10 as both reasonable and manageable because the researcher will typically interview participants multiple times. In addition, as Steeves (2000) and Gentles et al. (2015) pointed out, it is the *intensity* of interaction and contact sought by the researcher with participants that influences how many participants should be recruited for a hermeneutic phenomenological study. Therefore, taking into consideration the varied, but not definitive, literature relating to sample size for hermeneutic phenomenological studies (e.g., Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Frechette et al., 2020; Gentles et al., 2015; Groenewald, 2004; Steeves, 2000; van Manen, 2014), I initially planned to recruit five mothers/othermothers and

five daughters as I thought that such a sample would afford me sufficient 'exemplars' (van Manen, 2014) of mothers' and daughters' experiences of leisure during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even so, I was trepidatious that the pandemic might make recruiting even that number difficult. I recognized too that because the pandemic had severely impacted lives globally and had complicated matters in various ways for everyone, it was likely that some participants might not be able to commit to two or three interviews no matter how flexibly I arranged them. Therefore, when more daughters came forward than I had initially sought to recruit, I enrolled them into the study. As it happened, four daughters and one mother were unable to complete all phases of the study. One participant found that as a newly-arrived immigrant she had too much she needed to accomplish in terms of settling in. As a result, she felt that she would not have the time to fully participate. One daughter said she did not want to talk about the drawings she had created. Two daughters simply did not respond to further communications from me after one interview in one case, and after the second interview in the other. In these latter instances, each was in her third year at university and preparing for end-of-year examinations was inevitably more pressing a concern than participating in a study. As it was their right to choose not to continue to participate at any point in the study for any reason, I was respectful of their choices.

In the following section I articulate the nature of philosophical hermeneutical interviews and how I animated the spirit of them in the interviews I conducted.

Philosophical Hermeneutical Interviews

Brinkmann (2013) described conversation as "a rich and indispensable source of knowledge about personal and social aspects of our lives" (p. 2). In a similar vein Gadamer (2004) described language as the medium of hermeneutic experience and that conversation

[I]s a process of coming to an understanding. Thus, it belongs to every true conversation that each person opens himself to the other, truly accepts his point of view as valid and transposes himself into the other to such an extent that he understands not the particular individual but what he says. (p. 387)

To achieve meaningful conversation in interviews with participants, Vandermause and Fleming (2011) suggested that the philosophical hermeneutic interview is characterized by four distinctions: (a) setting the tone of the research, (b) using incomplete responses to prompt but not lead conversation, (c) looking for assent, and (d) returning the participant to the story. Using Vandermause and Fleming's four tenets as my guide, I sought "to uncover what it means *to be* as it . . . reveals itself through story" (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011, p. 369, italics in the original) for my study participants and focused intently on understanding participants' experience and the meaning of their experience.

Vandermause and Fleming (2011) offered that philosophical hermeneutical interviews afford significant potential for allowing new ideas and knowledge to surface because they are not slave to a rigid interview guide, and so allow for more wandering (and dwelling) down avenues of interest. To this end and given that there was no choice but to conduct all interviews in the virtual space, I developed an interview guide (see Appendix B), with well selected questions, that would prompt reverie and permit room for meandering and wandering down tributaries of interest. Also, because of concerns about being constantly online (Bailenson, 2021; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008), the interviews were no longer than 30 minutes. In the online space I met with two participants once, two participants twice, six participants thrice, and four participants four times. At times, the interviews extended beyond 30 minutes if the participant was comfortable doing so.

In the following section I expound how I conducted interviews with participants in accord with the four pillars of philosophical hermeneutical interviews as expounded by Vandermause and Fleming (2011).

Setting the Tone of the Research. Because I had purposively sampled participants, they were informed about the research and how their stories might contribute (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011). In accordance with Vandermause and Fleming's suggestion, I gently introduced the subject matter—leisure as experienced during the pandemic—in a friendly, welcoming, open, and reflexive way, to set the tone of the interview. We began conversationally, talking about general events in our lives, after which I asked a question and then encouraged the participant to take the lead. The genuine conversation according to Gadamer (2004) "is never the one that we wanted to conduct" and this is because a conversation between two people takes "its own twists reaching its own conclusion" (p. 385). He made the point that while we may conduct, or guide a conversation to some extent, we are not so much the leaders of the conversation, as led along by it. "All this shows that a conversation has a spirit of its own and that the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth within in—i.e., that it allows something to 'emerge' which henceforth exists" (p. 385).

Using Incomplete Sentences. As Gadamer (2004) noted, it is the conversation that leads the interlocutors along with it. In this regard, Vandermause and Fleming (2011) encouraged the interviewer to "guide rather than lead the discussion" (p. 372) and to use incomplete sentences as a way to gently invite her to continue because what she had to say was interesting and that I was keen to hear more. For example, when one of the participants was describing her experience of dancing, she suddenly stopped, yet I thought that she had more to say. Therefore, I encouraged her, saying "And so dancing felt …?" Perhaps all she was waiting for was a sign from me that I

was still interested, caught up in the story. What followed was a torrent of rich description of how faith was wound up in the physicality and creativity of dancing, embodying exuberant manifestations of this young woman's love of God.

Looking for Assent. Vandermause and Fleming (2011) suggested that for the interpretation of the interview to be credible the interviewer must periodically seek affirmation that she has understood correctly what the participant is saying. For example, during participant reflection one mother explained how being away from her children over Christmas because she had to isolate had affected her. In the midst of describing her feelings, she became silent, as though she was not sure she could reveal how she had truly felt. I said, as kindly as I could, "Oh, my dear, it must have been hell." I did not mince my words. I wanted her to know that I thought being away from family at such an important time of year would be horrific. My expression of solidarity with her, and compassion for her situation resulted in her sharing with me that she had been so depressed and bereft that it was only her faith and prayer that had soothed and comforted her and steered her from negative thoughts.

Returning the Participant to the Story. Vandermause and Fleming (2011) stressed the importance of keeping the conversation on track and of not allowing it to wander aimlessly. Though this admonition coheres with Gadamer's (2004) concept of the conversation as play, marked by the buoyant back-and-forth interplay of words, thoughts, and ideas about the subject matter at hand, I found that it was important, especially considering the deleterious effects of the pandemic, to be much more flexible, and not to return the individual too quickly to the subject matter at hand. At times, an individual simply wanted to talk. One daughter told me that meeting with me was therapeutic, and she looked forward to our interviews because she enjoyed them. Therefore, I allowed conversations to wander until I felt that the participant was ready to return

to the interview. I found that silences, deviations, hesitations or unwillingness to continue at times signalled that the conversation had entered a dark and difficult place where the participant simply did not want to go because it was too painful (Hurly & Walker, 2019a). I found it prudent to give the participant plenty of time to recover her composure and for her to determine whether she was comfortable going on or preferred to postpone the interview.

Furthermore, to set participants at ease, all interviews took place at a time participants preferred. I found that because all interviews were conducted virtually, typically on Google Meet, we met in our home spaces in the rooms that afforded participants some degree of privacy and where they were most comfortable. I say *some* degree of privacy because most of my interviews with mothers of children often included the children, who came and went as they pleased, and provided a happy intrusion of young voices, curious faces, and plenty of greetings and side conversations with youngsters interested in what their mother and I were doing. At times, the demands of childcare meant that interviews with mothers had to be suddenly curtailed. I regarded such occurrences as inevitable, and we either continued the interview when the child's needs had been attended to, or we simply postponed the interview to another, more convenient time.

Visual Methods

I augmented the use of in-depth interviews in my study with visual methods. Visual methods nest comfortably within my hermeneutic approach to interpretation and understanding (Margolis & Zunjarwad, 2018) in complementing interviews which focus on the spoken word (Guillemin & Westall, 2008). I included photographs taken by participants and participant-rendered drawings, because, as Sontag (1977, as cited in Margolis & Zunjarwad, 2018) succinctly noted: "Photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and

drawings are" (p. 601). As pathways to deeper understanding, Gadamer (1976) has also argued that the closest we come to knowing truth is through art—which I consider as another form of communication—that, though it was created in a different epoch lures us into the "timeless present" (p. 96) it commands and invites both our curiosity and interpretation and, in this study, served to represent the women's communications of meaning visually. I invited participants to take photographs of their leisure, either on their mobile telephones, or on a simple-to-use digital camera that I would provide either by couriering it or delivering it to their homes. I provided participants wishing to draw with drawing pads, and coloured pencils (Guillemin & Westall, 2008), chalks, crayons or markers with which to draw their experiences.

Because of the pandemic health requirements in place at the time this study took place, participants who had made drawings scanned their drawings and sent them to me as photographs (JPEGs) or in a PDF (portable document format). In this way, all participants retained their own drawings and photographs, and other creative depictions of leisure, and shared with me only what each wished. Those who were sent cameras and/or drawings materials were invited to keep them.

In terms of the depictions of leisure participants preferred to create, I placed no limitations on what they chose as subject matter or on the number of photographs they took. However, I asked them to choose between six and 12 images to send me via email, and which would be the focus of one of our interviews. In addition, I also offered participants the freedom to create other depictions of leisure, such as by writing, or making a video, or choreographing a dance, for example. Three mothers/othermothers took photographs of their leisure as did five daughters. Two daughters preferred to make drawings of their leisure, and one daughter made a leisure collage by combining words, poetry, and photographs. In addition to providing

photographs, two daughters sent me poems they had written. Two participants made videos of their leisure, and one mother sang for me during our interview. Not all participants submitted drawings or photographs or other depictions of leisure. One mother and two daughters did not participate in this phase of the study.

While Pauwels (2015) contended that the researcher must also analyze and interpret the photographs (and/or drawings) herself, independently of the participants, I did not do so because it was the participants' interpretations and understandings that were of importance to me, not my interpretations. I used the photographs and drawings as memory prompts, and as catalysts to conversation (Ellis et al., 2014).

Auto-Driven Photo-Elicitation

> "My enthusiasm for photo elicitation also comes
>
> from the collaboration it inspires. When two or more
>
> people discuss the meaning of photographs they try to
>
> figure out something together. This is, I believe, an
>
> ideal model for research".
>
> Douglas Harper (2002, p. 23).

In the search for meaning Harper (2002) argued that photographs, or indeed any visual image, be it a stick-figure drawing, a painting, a picture from a magazine or a billboard, for example, can be used to stimulate conversations that stir memory and prompt revelations and stories like no other stimuli. Visual stimulation can result in stories, memories, and knowledge that might never otherwise emerge. Visual images provoke the brain to deeper consciousness and awareness, Harper suggested, because physically the parts of the human brain that interpret

images are evolutionarily older than those that process verbal information. For these reasons, a picture can spur memory and bring forth a torrent of words and emotions (Samuels, 2004).

Other advantages include flattening the power imbalances that are inherent in the researcher-participant relationship as the participant takes control of both the medium and the message and tells the story in her way, interpreting the image in ways that make sense for her (Mandleco & Clark, 2013). Collier (1957) described the difference between interviews supported by photographs as vivid with description, while interviews alone tended to be less focused and with the participants more quickly losing interest and running out of things to say. Loeffler (2004), who conducted her study over four decades later, underscored the veracity of Collier's (1957) claim. She noted that in her auto-driven photo elicitation study of students' meanings of their outdoor pursuits, the use of photographs served as a 'memory anchor' for participants, prompting them to deeply-felt descriptions of the meanings they associated with the images. Consequently, this method, focused on catalyzing meanings through images was congruent with my hermeneutical philosophical stance in seeking to fuse my horizons with those of participants as we jointly searched for meaning (Gadamer, 2004).

Incorporating Creative Leisure Depictions into Interviews.

Hirsch and Philbin (2016) have suggested that drawings and diagrams can also help individuals to verbalize about subject matter that may be painful or difficult. It is important to mention here that while some researchers have employed a critical visual methodology (Rose, 2001, as cited in Guillemin & Westall, 2008; Hirsch & Philbin, 2016) to analyse the images themselves, I did not do so because my focus was on what the participants wanted to say about their own drawings or photographs. During the interviews, the photographs and drawings, and other depictions of leisure they had created, served as the focus for one of our conversations.

After we had had two interviews talking about leisure and had developed an easy camaraderie with each other at this point, interviews related to the drawings or photographs, and other creative pieces, took place. Conversations began with questions about family, or what they had been doing since we last spoke. Once we were ready to discuss the images, I opened the conversation by beginning with a participant's chosen photograph or drawings and asking: "Tell me about this photograph, or this drawing," allowing the conversation to develop from what came forth. My intent was to learn how the participants interpreted the images, rather than imposing my own interpretation on them.

In terms of using the photographs in my thesis, I asked each participant whose image I wished to use whether she would prefer her image to be digitally manipulated so that she could not be recognized or preferred that her face be shown. Hence, I received permission from all participants whose likenesses are clearly visible in the photographs used in my dissertation to display them in this way.

Analysis

"We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time."

T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets: Little Gidding
(1942, lines 866-869)

Before describing the procedures, I engaged in to analyse the interviews, it is pertinent to make clear that I examined and analysed participants' transcripts separately. My intent was not to homogenize participants' experience, but rather to gain as deep an understanding as possible

of mothers and daughters' unique lived experiences of leisure during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, I deeply explored each participant mother's (or othermother's) transcript individually, and then in comparison to those of the other participating mothers, seeking both commonalities and differences among what it was that participating mothers articulated about their leisure experiences. Daughters' transcripts were analysed similarly. However, I was wakeful and attentive in the only case where participants were related to each other. Only one mother and daughter were related, and they were not a dyadic pair, but sisters, the elder having raised the younger woman. In this case, having examined their transcripts separately, I examined their transcripts together for convergences and differences in their stories about their lived experience of leisure.

To analyse my interview data, I referred to Hycner's (1985) phenomenological methodology, as well as Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) phenomenologically-inspired five-step interview analysis procedure (which was derived from Hycner), and two helpful concepts from Finlay's (2014) process for phenomenological analysis, to guide me. In brief, these five steps include (1) verbatim transcription of the interviews, (2) listening intently and reading deeply to gain a sense of the whole. This step also incorporates Finlay's (2014) concept of dwelling; (3) dividing the texts into natural or general units of meaning; (4) addressing the units of meaning to the research questions to ensure relevance to the study's aims, and (5) clustering like themes together and developing an overarching or umbrella term or phrase to capture or encompass the overall idea of those themes.

These procedures are faithful to, and congruent with, my paradigmatic stance, Gadamerian hermeneutical philosophical undergirding (Gadamer, 2004), and the nature of my research questions exploring how African immigrant mothers and daughters describe their lived

experiences of leisure (both indoor and outdoor) during the COVID-19 pandemic, the meanings African immigrant mothers and daughters ascribe to their leisure experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, and their relationships with each other, with friends or other leisure companions, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both Hycner's (1985) and Brinkmann & Kvale's (2015) procedures inhere to the hermeneutical circle of understanding where interpretation and understanding germinate and develop in the oscillation between the whole and parts (Gadamer, 2004). To elaborate, this entails the interpreter (or researcher) first taking in or examining the panoramic view, the lay of the land as it were, before zooming in to examine the parts, then reflecting again on the whole, having surfaced new understandings.

Finlay (2014) described the important process of *dwelling* with the interviews to allow the interview data time to penetrate deeply into one's cerebral processes, taking root there to be cogitated upon, turned over, held up to the light of deep reflection, and deliberately considered from all angles. Secondly, Finlay (2014) evoked the importance of "languaging" (p. 133) and by this she meant describing lavishly, with voluptuous language, the experience of a phenomenon so that it reflects with sensitivity and empathy what reveals. I found that Finlay's twin concepts of *dwelling* and *languaging* found purchase in Gadamer's (2004) theory of hermeneutic experience because Gadamer has emphasised the importance of focusing intently and with rapt deliberation on the subject matter before us, as interlocutors. I found Finlay's (2014) concept of *dwelling* valuable during the analysis of the interview data, and I engaged in *languaging*— writing rich and evocative description that foregrounded participants' voices and lived experiences —when I wrote my findings and analysis.

In addition, in Gadamer's hermeneutical phenomenology language is the way in which we express our lifeworld experiences and interpret them so that we understand. As Gadamer (2004) underscored, "All understanding is interpretation, and all interpretation takes place in the medium of a language that allows the object to come into works and yet is at the same time the interpreter's own language" (p. 390).

Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) procedure, intertwined with Hycner's (1985) phenomenological approach, entails a five-step process. First, I completed verbatim transcriptions of the audio-recorded interviews. All interviews were recorded with permission of each participant using Otter.ai, an artificial intelligence-based recording and transcription application. Thereafter, as a second step, I engaged in a thorough reading of the text to gain a complete sense of the whole. I read each transcript thoroughly, and made notes of my thoughts as I read, and recorded anything a participant said that stood out, was peculiar, unusual, unexpected, particularly incisive or unexpected, or simply appeared to be important to note. I did this with each transcript, then immersed myself in reading them a second and third time for a deeper reading, continuing to make notes as I did so. It was in this phase that I incorporated Finlay's (2014) concept of *dwelling* into my analysis. In dwelling with the data, Finlay contended, one allows oneself to immerse in the data, settle one's gaze and truly listen, see, and reflect on what appears. I found dwelling helpful because it afforded me a reflective entrance into the hermeneutical circle as I lingered, taking my time to reflect and for the things themselves to appear. I attended mindfully to oscillating between the whole and the parts, both in-depth with each transcript, and laterally across all transcripts in examining the interview data to gain as deep an understanding of participants' articulations of lived leisure experience as I could. At no point did I attempt to define the universal essence of the leisure experience of the participants in my

study, but rather I was intent on explicating, with fidelity, their lived experiences of leisure such

that what I wrote "captures something meaningful that expresses, or points in the direction of,

that particular lived experience" (Finlay, 2014, p. 137).

I used MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software for first level coding, memo writing,

and note-making, and diarized my thoughts about the interviews in memos using Otter.ai as I

immersed myself in listening to and reading the interview transcripts. Typically, after each

interview, I made reflexive notes about the conversation that had just transpired, emotions that I

had felt or noted in the participant and elaborated the poignant touchpoints in the stories shared.

The purpose of my notes, either dictated directly into my transcription software or typed into

MAXQDA or Word, was to provide me with additional context to the interviews that I could

return to during the analysis and interpretation of the findings and to ensure that I had captured

all revelatory moments and ideas to this end.

Because phenomenology "begins with wonder at what gives itself and how something

gives itself" (van Manen, 2014, p. 27), I did not seek to impose pre-determined themes upon the

information or data, but instead allowed the themes to reveal or 'give' themselves from the data.

After immersing myself deeply in the transcript, as a third step I divided the texts into "natural

meaning units" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 235)—these are units of meaning as naturally

described by the interviewee, but which I, as the researcher, determined. I then developed and

articulated the dominant themes from the interview data and characterised the meaning units

succinctly.

Fourth, I addressed the meaning units to the purpose of the study and my research

questions to assure myself that they were relevant to my study. While Hycner (1985) suggested

that statements in the transcript that do not have relevance to the research question should be

discarded, I kept those because often, on reflecting again, I thought they might reveal unexpected

understandings of participants' experiences that seemed at first unconnected to the research

questions.

Fifth, I clustered the "essential, non-redundant themes of the entire interview"

(Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 235) together, to find an overarching term or phrase to encompass

them. The overarching 'umbrella' themes for this study were presented in five themes. The first

of these is **The Crucible of Cultural Hearth**, the second is **The Cultural Hearth Warms.**

Third is **My Soul Soothed in Arts- and Nature-Based Leisure.** The fourth theme is **Come**

Together: The Worldwide Digital Hearth. The fifth theme is titled, **Friends at the Hearth:**

Developing and Deepening Ties under which I clustered the relevant sub-themes. The elements

of culture and tradition undergirded the essential themes I had found to be strongly cogent to my

research purpose, and represented the shock of the loss of leisure, previously taken-for-granted,

and now stripped away, then the awakening to a glimmering of new possibilities for leisure,

bathed in tradition and cultural significance and discoveries of the authentic self, and finally a

determined and resilient move toward finding comfort and companionship in leisure despite the

hardships of the pandemic. I then explored the elements of the sub-themes nested under the

umbrella themes individually, and explored how they connected to each other, in detail.

Hycner (1985) emphasized that his goal in setting out a possible way of analyzing

interviews phenomenologically is not to cement a cookbook style manual of how to 'do'

phenomenological analysis, but merely to draw the attention of the researcher to things that they

should consider and a way of attending to those. Importantly, Hycner has underscored that the

researcher should heed and pay mind to the presence of "significant non-verbal and para-

linguistic communications" (p. 280) that may be present in an interview. Such communications

may comprise looks, sighs, signs, gestures, or silences. Being attentive to such non-verbal and paralinguistic cues can foster deeper, and more nuanced understanding. As an example, during an online interview with one othermother, Sarah, after Christmas, I had asked how she and her family had experienced the traditional holiday in 2020. There was a long silence, followed by a deep sigh, and Sarah looked at me intently. Then she slowly shook her head and looked down before she began to tell me of the privations she and her family had experienced, the loss of many important customs, such as gathering with friends, and going to church. Sarah's silences, sighs, body language, and looks were equally evocative articulations of her poignant expression of her experience of bereavement at the loss of important family and faith rituals, as were her words. These non-verbal and paralinguistic cues in my conversation with Sarah served to amplify and augment the words she used to describe her experience of Christmas and draw, for me, a richer, deeply-nuanced picture and hence a deeper understanding of her experience.

In addition, Hycner (1985) elucidated the task of bracketing and phenomenological reduction and pronounced them as essential to phenomenological analysis—not as banishing one's meanings and interpretation, but of being aware of them in order to facilitate the blossoming of the other interlocutor's perspectives and understanding. Hycner's call to openness dovetails with the hermeneutical approach, because, in the hermeneutic tradition and in accord with Gadamer's (2004) philosophy, our histories, traditions, meanings, and prejudices are ever present, inherent, and essential to the process of interpretation (Laverty, 2003). Hycner's (1985) position is supported by van Manen (2014) who described bracketing in hermeneutic phenomenology not as an attempt to transcend one's own situatedness in the world, but as an invitation to openness. While Gadamer (2004) thought bracketing simply impossible to do, I interpreted bracketing in concert with Hycner (1985) and van Manen's (2014) views on this: as

an invitation to greater awareness of my positionality and prejudices and to openness to the participants in my study as they described their lifeworld experiences of leisure during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Presentation of My Findings

I have presented my findings in thickly-described (Patton, 2002) evocative writing that respects and reveres the expression and unfolding of the lifeworld experiences of the participants in my study. It was during the writing phase, as I described my findings, that Finlay's (2014) concept of *languaging* came to the fore. To honour participants' stories and experiences, I wrote thickly-described (Patton, 2002) and lavishly, voluminous expositions of their leisure experiences under the themes that developed from the data. Themes were generated from my analysis of the interviews that remain faithful to participants' enunciations of their lived experience. In foregrounding the voices of the participants in my study, I used exemplars of their experience of the phenomenon of leisure, peppered with ample quotations taken directly from the interview transcripts to illustrate their experiences. Doing so has amplified their voices and honoured the "fluid multiplicity of meanings" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 271) that emerged from their stories of leisure experienced on the road to understanding (see the Findings chapter). To further understanding, my writing has been augmented, with permission, by participants' photographs, drawings, and other creative depictions of leisure. The inclusion of these artefacts further enhanced the understanding and meaning of the lived experiences of leisure I have expounded. I turned to relevant theory in the human sciences and beyond (see the Discussion chapter) to enable me to rupture and transcend my own historically-situatedness (my historicity), prejudices, and foreknowledges to nurture and support thoughtful, reflexive interpretations of the findings.

Research Trustworthiness

Patterson and Williams (2002) clearly stated that "hermeneutics maintains no single set of procedures for establishing validity … because there is no single correct interpretation of phenomena …" (p. 32). van Manen (2014) is equally adamant that the methods often required of qualitative researchers to prove that their work is methodologically rigorous are *neither relevant nor appropriate to phenomenological studies*. As van Manen (2014) lamented: "This is especially challenging when external concepts of validation, such as sample size, sampling selection criteria, members' checking, and empirical generalizations are applied to phenomenology. These are concepts that belong to the languages of different qualitative methodologies" (p. 347). While van Manen decried the naïve and inappropriate application of such criteria "applied across various incommensurable methodologies" (p. 347), I applied a combination of trustworthiness criteria as propounded by Patterson and Williams (2003) and Lincoln and Guba (2013) as appropriate to my project.

Before describing the criteria I applied in my study, I provide here a brief explanation of the trustworthiness criteria of *persuasiveness and insightfulness* as proposed by Patterson and Williams (2002) who indicated that these criteria, as well as that of *utility,* were appropriate for adjudging the trustworthiness of hermeneutic studies. *Persuasiveness* described by Patterson and Williams asks the question as to whether, upon reading the manuscript, the reader could say that they could see or imagine the same things or similar things to what the interpreter saw and expounded—even if that individual does not agree with it. Patterson and Williams argued that to be persuasive "interpretations must therefore be coherent and documented with relevant examples from the data" (p. 33), as well as the liberal inclusion of quotations from the transcripts so that the voices of participants can be foregrounded and vibrantly present.

In their *Constructivist Credo*, Lincoln and Guba (2013) have suggested the following criteria that they argue cannot be considered foundational in any way. The first of these is *fairness* – as evidenced by informed consent and the manner in which it was obtained; the researchers' prolonged engagement in the field; participant reflection, and peer debriefing (participant reflection; See also the section on Ethical Praxis).

Secondly, Lincoln and Guba (2013) called for *ontological authenticity*. This criterion, they argued, is achieved by dialectical conversations, explicating the purpose of the project openly (in other words, not concealing what the project is actually about); building trusting, caring relationships with participants; comparing participants' changing meanings of their experiences over the course of the study; elucidating one's own and the participants' statements of personal growth through self-reflections. Ontological authenticity harmonises with a hallmark tenet of Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutical philosophy and phenomenology: that all who participate in conversation or dialogue will be enriched and experience greater awareness resulting from self-reflection in pondering what was said.

Lincoln and Guba (2013) also promoted *catalytic authenticity* as a trustworthiness criterion. Catalytic authenticity describes how meaningful action can be taken to catalyse action, and accelerate the implementation of findings, including relaying findings to stakeholders, and providing evidence of practical applications, or, I would suggest, implications and benefits of ethical application of findings for the benefit of African immigrant mothers, othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005), and daughters.

Finally, Lincoln and Guba (2013) suggested a criterion of *tactical authenticity* which assesses the "extent to which individuals were empowered to take the action that the inquiry implies or proposes" (p. 70). Steps include demonstrating informed consent, participant

reflection, maintaining confidentiality, agreement on the interpretation of the data, as well as

mentorship for participants seeking access to, and negotiating "corridors of power" (p. 70). This

latter criterion echoes Lincoln and Guba's (1985) earlier trustworthiness criteria for

dependability—maintaining a detailed audit trail throughout the project—and *transferability*—

ensuring that the research can be a catalyst for action to benefit the groups participating in the

research project. I deemed these criteria, combined with those of Patterson and Williams (2002)

to be appropriate for animation in my study. In the section below I expound how I addressed my

actions in my research to these criteria in demonstrating rigour and trustworthiness in my study.

Ensuring Rigour and Trustworthiness in This Study

Patterson and Williams (2002) proffered criteria of *persuasiveness, insightfulness*, and

utility for evaluating hermeneutic research projects are well-aligned with Gadamer's (2004)

hermeneutical philosophy which is an ethical project in the interests of the application of ethical

wisdom, also known as *phronēsis*.

In combining several of Lincoln and Guba's (2013) quality criteria for trustworthiness

relevant to my study, with those of Patterson and Williams (2002), I strove for rigorous

trustworthiness throughout my study.

Persuasiveness. Patterson and Williams (2002) described *persuasiveness* as the

researcher unfolding a sufficiently rich and deep description of the research, the research site, the

participants, and interpretation that will be persuasive to others reading the research as to the

veracity and rigour of the research, even though they might not agree with the interpretation. To

be persuasive "interpretations must therefore be coherent and documented with relevant

examples from the data" (Patterson & Williams, 2004, p. 33), and include the liberal use of

quotations from the transcripts so that the voices of participants can be foregrounded and

vibrantly present. This requirement chimes with Patton's (2002) call for descriptions in qualitative data that are thick and richly evocative. A thinly-documented or described phenomenon can be neither compelling, nor persuasive. However, the aim is not to strive to admit only one point-of-view, but that in accord with hermeneutical philosophy embrace multiple interpretations that will not all agree. In addition, on the understanding that truth is not absolute (Gadamer, 2004), this trustworthiness criterion has some common ground with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criterion for *credibility.*

To achieve both persuasiveness and credibility, I described the leisure experiences of the women in my study in detail, using numerous direct quotations from their interviews so that their voices would be clear and vibrant for the reader, and to enable the reader to gain a sense of each woman. In addition, I made liberal use of the photographs and other creations they made, such as drawings, music, poetry and creating writings to 'flesh out,' as it were, each marvellously unique woman, so that the reader could sense her presence, hear her voice, and the way in which she expressed herself. In addition, I wrote descriptive and thoughtful analyses of the interviews to do justice to each woman's contribution.

Fairness. In their *Constructivist Credo*, Lincoln and Guba (2013) suggested *fairness* – as a criterion on research trustworthiness. Fairness may be evidenced by informed consent and the manner in which it was obtained; the researchers' prolonged engagement in the field; participant reflection, and peer debriefing. Lincoln and Guba (2013) pointed to the importance of having in place well-thought-out, ethical procedures for gaining informed consent, and for ensuring that participants are fairly represented. A thorough explanation of my ethical procedures throughout my study and how I attended to ethical praxis is elucidated in this chapter. While member checking and peer review or debriefing are Lincoln and Guba's (2013) preferred ways of

ensuring that participants' voices are ethically represented in the research in the way they prefer, there are some critics of this mode of verification (Merro-Jaffe, 2011; Thomas, 2017). However, I describe my reasons and mode of engaging in participant reflections here—even though it is not required for, nor is it congruent with hermeneutical and phenomenological studies according to some phenomenologists, for example, Smith (1993) and van Manen (2014).

Participant Reflection. While the notion of participant reflection is one of the cornerstones of Lincoln and Guba's (1985, 2013) trustworthiness criteria for qualitative studies, Morse et al., (2002, 2018) have argued that "with the exception of case study research and some narrative inquiry, study results have been synthesized, decontextualized, and abstracted from (and across) individual participants, so there is no reason for individuals to recognize themselves or their particular experiences" (p. 16). Participant reflection, therefore, may actually "invalidate the work of the researcher" (p. 16) in some cases because it does not allow for an expansive analysis that explores meanings well beyond the actual data. Mero-Jaffe (2011) concurred, suggesting that when participants are sent their transcripts for review, they may be surprised at their unsmooth or ungrammatical articulations and this may lead to participants editing their spontaneous articulations, and render them sterile and arid of their colourful expression. Done this way, participant reflection may threaten the integrity of the research, or lead the research away from the original research question. Thomas (2017) found that in an extensive review of qualitative studies where the researchers had engaged in 'member checks,' research quality was not enhanced by doing so. Furthermore, returning transcripts to participants for further checking or input proved intrusive for many of them in terms of time and effort, and the number providing additional input as part of participant reflection was low. Smith and McGannon (2017) have come to similar conclusions.

In the interests of honouring Gadamer's (2004) ontological understanding of being that we reach agreement and understanding by fusing our horizons, not by imposing superior arguments in a conversation to gain the upper hand, I engaged in participant reflection as a way of reporting back to participants, and as an opportunity for those who wanted to engage in participant reflection a chance to hear what I had found, and to share their thoughts about the findings. I did not share transcripts with participants because some participants told me they were not comfortable reading long documents in English; others were students with heavy course loads and already had much on their minds. Also, to Merro-Jaffe's (2011) concern, I did not want participants to feel they needed to edit their transcripts or perfect them. For example, many participants, particularly the daughters, used the word 'like' extensively as they spoke. I did not want participants to remove their idiosyncratic modes of expression and render the transcript anemic of its unique character. Therefore, once I had completed the analysis of the findings, I contacted all participants via email or text message. I prepared a brief summary of my complete analysis of the findings and sent them to each participant with an invitation to an individual, virtual meeting on Google Meet. I thought it important to provide such a summary in case participants were not able to participate but might be interested or curious to see what I had found. I offered participants several ways of engaging in reflection with me, including an online meeting, a telephone or FaceTime call, use of WhatsApp, or even simply to send me an email. Uptake on the offer was low. Mothers and othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005) participated more than did the daughters. Three of the mothers/othermothers, and one daughter participated, and we spent approximately 30 minutes in each conversation. Participation was lively and the women helped me to think differently about some of my interpretations. For example, Ewurakua explained to me that her friends at university had not stayed in touch with her once they left

campus when the university first closed its doors and advised students in residences to return home—something I thought they had done. In addition, three mothers/othermothers (Florence, Rose, and Sarah) provided me with additional information about their experiences of Christmas 2020, and the heartache and loneliness it had brought them at a time of year typically boisterous and joyful in shared celebrations with family. The participant reflection interviews then, were more than simply gathering to talk about the research, but also a chance for us to socialize and reconnect. Moreover, it also enabled me to ensure that their stories as I had told them met with their approval. Though the number of participants engaging in participant reflection was modest, the willingness to do so and the depths of their reflections and contributions of those who did participate undermined the critiques of this type of after-the-study engagement raised by other researchers including Thomas (2017), Merro-Jaffe (2011), and Smith and McGannon (2017).

Insightfulness and Ontological Authenticity. I saw these criteria as interwoven because this study was imbued with the guiding tenets of Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutical philosophy of being. Because of the ontological focus of Gadamer's philosophy and the coming to understanding through the dialogical and linguistical interactions of people as they fuse their horizons, those tenets infused all parts of my study. The 'seeing' of meanings that participants articulated as they described leisure in their lifeworlds, and our interpretations of those meanings led to numerous new insights, particularly as the experience of leisure during a pandemic was uncharted territory in the leisure domain. These are not the result of using precise methods. As Patterson and Williams (2002, citing Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 34) have contended, "Seeing the meaning is an insightful event supported by evidence, but the evidence is ambivalent and takes on its own meaning from its place in the interpretation proposed. The seeing is ultimately unformalizable and thus its demonstration is not absolute" (p. 238). Therefore, I aspired to

articulate the meanings and interpretations of phenomena arising in the interviews with the women in ways consistent with Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutic philosophy to foster understanding and insight to be faithful to participants' articulations and understandings of their leisure experiences.

Central to recognizing my historically-situated presence in the research, imbued with my own prejudices, history, finitude, and tradition, I draw attention to the importance of reflexivity in my role as researcher, and acknowledgement of my positionality in the research (how I am positioned in the research). Rather than attempting to extract myself from the research, or pretend that I could rise above my historicity, I remained aware of the potential influences of my historicity and prejudices as I engaged with the women in my study. To this end, I found that journaling and digital note-making and memo-ing afforded me invaluable ways to consider and reflect on my role as researcher and how I might be perceived by participants, and how I could bridge the normal divides (such as perceptions of status and power) between us. This leads to the important role of reflexivity in qualitative research.

Reflexivity. Lincoln and Guba (2013) suggested that interpretivist researchers may seek to establish the authenticity of their research by reflecting consciously, throughout the research, on their role in the research, as to how their personal biases may impact their research. For example, Goodman (2004) reflected on her position of power as a White, older female in interviewing young, Dinka male refugees in America and how their responses might have differed had the interviewer been of the same ethnicity, age, or gender. I, too, reflected on my own situatedness as a White, senior woman in my study with African and Middle Eastern refugees (Hurly & Walker, 2019a) and how that might affect interviews, particularly with men from societies where women do not have equal status with men in society.

Reflexivity, however, goes beyond demonstrating rigour or being aware of one's own biases or position as researcher: it also broaches the ethics of research (Brinkmann, 2007). In this regard, according to Guillemin and Gillam, (2004), reflexivity in qualitative research "involves critical reflection of how the researcher constructs knowledge from the research process" (p. 275) and the factors that may influence that process. To this end and given that some of the women in my study had experienced significant personal loss and "disintegration" of the self (Newman et al., 2013, p. 229) because of their experiences as refugees, I was constantly alert to the potential influences I might have on the research, but also the ethical issues which might arise during the course of my interactions with participants. As Guillemin and Gillam (2004) suggested, reflexivity is interlaced with the interpersonal interactions that occur between the researcher and participant and that it is within these interactions that reside "the possibilities of respecting the autonomy, dignity, and privacy of research participants and also the risks of failing to do so, thus perhaps causing harm" (p. 275). With these exhortations in mind, I strove to build trust and rapport by my actions and by demonstrating respect for their opinions, customs, and concern for their well-being (see also Ethical Praxis).

Reflexivity is also an opportunity for the researcher to step back from the process "and take a critical look at his or her role in the research process" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 275). I reflected throughout the research process on how the research might impact participants in my study, and to take steps so that, even while probing deeply, to cause no harm (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). To accomplish a thorough reflection, I kept two digital journals throughout the research process using both Otter.ai (recording and transcription software) and MAXQDA (qualitative data analysis software) that has a robust memo feature, as a way of documenting my biases, my history, and my self-reflections as I mulled over the findings. Gadamer's (2004)

hermeneutic philosophy emphasizes the importance of reflection, and self-reflection in coming to understanding and I found that journaling extensively and recording my thoughts and deliberations enabled me to be faithful to Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) and Gadamer's (2004) canons of ethical engagement with others and were vital for thinking through the research.

Transferability (Catalytic and Tactical Authenticity) and Utility (Phronēsis). To my mind, it is imperative for research to be of benefit, to enrich lives and to uplift. Therefore, the guiding principle for my research was *phronēsis*: the application of practical (ethical) wisdom for the common good (Gadamer, 2004; Grondin, 2006). Application, which can also be described as transferability of knowledge in Lincoln and Guba's (1985;2013) parlance, or utility (usefulness in the interests of doing something beneficial) (Patterson & Williams, 2002), lies at the heart of Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutic philosophy (Risser, 1997). To me, this ensures putting what I found (along with my participants) into ethical service for their benefit. Doing so is congruent with Gadamer's (2004) purpose (Grondin, 2006; Risser, 1997; Warnke, 2002).

There are a number of ways in which I accomplished this. Patton (2002; also van Manen, 2014) described the importance of writing richly-described interpretations of the data that help to engage the reader and illuminate the research setting, the participants and their experience of phenomena. Because my research falls within the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, I focused on bringing to life, and colourfully illustrating the lived experiences of participants, foregrounding their voices using rich, evocative language. In addition, through this research, I want to help immigrant-serving organizations to tailor and improve their leisure program offerings in ways that will positively affect immigrants to Canada. Although my research only involved one participant who was receiving settlement services from CSS because she was newly arrived in Canada, I have maintained my connection with the two counsellors who were

going to work beside me before the pandemic put paid to my original research project. I will share my findings with those individuals and other organizations that serve immigrants so that this research may be transferable in terms of its learnings. Sharing will certainly comprise writing a report on what I have found. I will also offer to make a presentation to settlement counsellors, either online, or in person, Covid permitting. In addition, two settlement counsellors, and a trauma counsellor at CSS are personal contacts, and we may meet informally, or by telephone to discuss the findings and how they might be helpful to them in the service of their clientele. I will also share the link to the university's Education and Research Archive site (https://era.library.ualberta.ca/), once my dissertation has been posted there. For my master's degree, sharing my full thesis with Alberta Parks and CSS was found to be important to both organizations, who shared my full thesis widely with their staff.

My findings may also be of service to those organizations and other organizations that may be directly or indirectly immigrant-serving, such as schools, sporting and recreational bodies, and parks authorities. Furthermore, the findings of this research may serve to support immigrant-serving agencies and settlement counselors' funding requests for their leisure experiences for newcomers and to extend existing programs. Finally, because Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutic philosophy and phenomenology seek to evoke deeper self-understanding through reflection, the women who participated in my study may have benefitted from the knowledge and wisdom gained through our interpretations and understandings of what we learned as we journeyed together. To me, it was of utmost importance that the women who had participated experienced benefit in the form of deeper self-understanding, and of leisure, so that from the experience of participating in this study they accrued some personal gain. It appeared that several did. For example, several daughters told me that they had not realized the magnitude of leisure as

a philosophy, or the importance of leisure in their lives, and that they had realized a deeper understanding of leisure in terms of their own development as human beings as a result of participating. Mothers/othermothers told me how comforting it was to spend time with me, talking about their leisure, and that they looked forward to their interviews. Perhaps even the catharsis of sharing one's thoughts with an interested other can afford comfort and respite for a time. Even in the midst of a pandemic leisure can be found.

Ethical Praxis: Creating the Ethical Space

Guidelines for research ethics abound (Bannister, 2018; Marshall & Batten, 2004; Moosa, 2013) but the prescriptive guidelines stressing voluntariness, consent, confidentiality, anonymity, fairness, and justice are more than simply words on a page or a box to be ticked, particularly in engaging in research across cultures. Sometimes, as Moosa (2013) noted, in intercultural research, the standard ethical guidelines do not go far enough, or they do not afford the flexibility that is needed to protect both the participant and the researcher from harm (Hett & Hett, 2013).

To build trust with participants I worked to create what Ermine (2007) described as an "ethical space" (p. 194). Ermine borrowed this notion of the ethical space from philosopher Roger Poole (1972, cited in Bannister, 2018, and Ermine, 2007), finding it an evocative way to consider the metaphorical space between people of differing worldviews as the neutral space in which they can reach across and bridge the divide between them. While Ermine (2007) saw this space as a way of thinking about, and encouraging, respectful engagement between the Government of Canada and First Nations, particularly with reconciliation in mind, it is also a valuable concept for my research, particularly in terms of building trust. In accord with Bannister (2018) and Ermine (2007), I see the ethical space of engagement as an ethic of being and of "being with others" (Bannister, 2018, p. 37). Equally cogent for me is that the ethical space

dovetails with the ethical and moral ethos that is central to Aristotle's philosophy of leisure

(Owens, 1981) as well as pivotal to Gadamer's (2004) theory or philosophy of hermeneutic

experience.

Therefore, in addition to the prescribed requirements of the Research Ethics Board

approval process, I thought the following were of immense importance in the creation of an

ethical space for my research: (a) gaining trust through truly informed consent; (b) power and

control in the ethical research space; (c) confidentiality and anonymity: the ethics of

representation and human agency; (d) a matter of voice, (e) positionality, or my historicity, and

(f) leaving the field: negotiating respectful closure with participants. In the following sections, I

expound these aspects of ethical research that I deemed essential for my study.

Gaining Trust Through Truly Informed Consent

A matter of grave ethical import in qualitative research is obtaining *truly* informed

consent. This requirement is rigorously exercised in meeting research ethics boards' standards

for achieving "human dignity, justice, and beneficence" (van Liempt & Bilger, 2012, p. 452) in

all research projects. In the Kantian view, all people must be treated equally as "worthy of

respect as moral agents" (Hugman et al., 2011, p. 658). In the modern era, following the Helsinki

Declaration (Goodyear et al., 2007), ethical guidelines were developed to protect the integrity

and rights of vulnerable persons and specifically in the bio-medical sphere. However, the

overriding principle is that no person should participate in research without their agreeing to

through informed consent. While the Declaration is useful in bio-medical instances, it does not

adequately address the complexities of obtaining genuinely informed consent when doing

research with people whose cultures and languages differ from those of the researcher. This is

especially cogent when individuals have experienced deep personal loss and assault on their

selfhood and autonomy stemming from hardship, deprivation, and brutality against their person or having witnessed it (Hugman et al., 2011a; Mackenzie et al., 2007; Perry, 2011).

Typically, the requirement for informed consent means that researchers will provide a detailed description of the research, a consent letter, or an assent letter in cases where children are included in the study, which the participant must sign. Written consent can be problematic because individuals may be distrustful of signing documents, or it is not part of their tradition (Sikes, 2013)

Hugman et al. (2011a) suggested a participative approach whereby consent is obtained only when trust has been sufficiently established with the participants to allay their concerns, and to be more attentive to the unintentional harm one might cause by asking people to sign a document they may not easily or fully comprehend. This is, as Hugman et al. argued, much more sensitive and germane if participants are still acquiring a level of comfort with English, or they have experienced treachery, precarious living, or violence, or in cases where they are distrustful of signing anything they do not fully comprehend, or it is not culturally appropriate to do so (Sikes, 2013).

For these reasons, and in accord with the University of Alberta research ethics guidelines in this regard, as well as Canada's Interagency Panel on Research Ethics (PRE), I obtained informed consent orally wherever necessary when I met with participants in the virtual space. This was especially important as some participants did not have access to software that permitted digital signatures, or scanners, and so granting oral consent was simple to accomplish by recording it. Other participants signed the consent letters digitally and emailed them to me.

Mindfulness and Iterative Consent. We can, as researchers, never be *sure* that we truly have *informed* consent when we rely simply on a set of consent forms to be signed, or orally

consented to, that serve the institutional needs (Christians, 2018; Hugman et al., 2011a). In all cases, building trust through mindful engagement prior to asking for consent is essential. Mackenzie et al. (2007) have called for iterative consent, as a way of constantly checking in with participants to ensure they understand their rights to not answer questions they do not want to, or to withdraw at any time, as imperative. In addition, by engaging in iterative consent with research participants I could ensure, as far as I was able, and that the women in my study were aware of their right to withdraw from the project at any time without penalty, or to decline to answer any question I posed. Rather than seeing this step as being overly cautious and paternalistic (Helgesson & Eriksson, 2011), I saw it as essential and respectful, especially given the uncertainty and instability caused by the pandemic in many lives. Therefore, at the start of each interview, I reminded each participant of her rights and also in other communications I had with her, such as when I invited participants to reflect on the findings. In this way, I attempted to practice *constant mindfulness* (González-López, 2011) throughout the research process, so that I did not become complacent or thoughtless of the realities of participants' lives. In my previous research (Hurly, 2019; Hurly & Walker, 2019a) and throughout the present study I obtained iterative consent, particularly because some participants were still acquiring language skills in English. I also saw iterative consent as a way of respecting the fact that people currently participating in my study might change their minds, or suddenly have doubts about an aspect of the project, or an event in their lives suddenly meant they could no longer participate. Therefore, by reaffirming the individual's willingness to continue to participate was also an opportunity for small talk that served as a gentle beginning or lead-in to the interview. In other words, a form of 'warm-up' to the interview, and a valuable opportunity to deepen trust. I found that by opening

each interview with a warm greeting, and then reminding each participant about her rights served as a platform, a sort of front doorstep to our ethical space.

In addition, I found that while I was attempting to recruit participants to my study, inviting potential participants to pre-interview me and talk to me about the study was one way to build rapport and trust. González-López (2011) had found that recruiting participants who had experienced sexual assault was helped by inviting women to pre-interview her. In this way, she hoped they would be convinced of her sincerity and ability to treat them with dignity and empathy when they told their harrowing stories. In accord with González-López (2011), I found the pre-interview (where it was desired) helpful for building rapport and gaining trust (Fernandez et al., 2020; Hett & Hett, 2013) because it afforded an arena for potential participants the opportunity to determine whether they were interested in my study, had the time to participate, and whether they were comfortable with me. It was also a chance for potential participants to satisfy themselves that I would be a trustworthy, respectful individual and researcher and that their dignity would not be impinged, or their stories go unappreciated or disrespected by me. Three mothers and two daughters who expressed interest in my study spoke to me before they consented to participate. In the case of two school-aged daughters (aged 13 and 17 and from the same family), their mother, who declined to participate in the study herself, had asked me to send the consent forms to her after she and I had spoken about the study. I used these opportunities to describe the research as fully as I could, as well as being forthright about the possible benefits and harms, and to truthfully address their questions.

Power and Control in the Ethical Research Space

One of the abiding issues in qualitative studies is the matter of power: who holds it, who wields it, and how it moves in the process of research (Hett & Hett, 2013), particularly when

research involves individuals who may be marginalized or vulnerable (Marshall & Batten, 2004) or where power has been misused to meet researchers' ends (Fernandez et al., 2020). To flatten, as far as possible, any real or perceived hierarchy of status or power imbalance between me and my participants I reflected throughout my study, on how my role as researcher might be perceived as affording me higher status than they had (González-López, 2011), thus tipping the balance of power in my favour. I was mindful as to how that might affect our interactions and actively strove to take steps to 'level the playing field' as it were. For example, over our online interviews, as I sought to build congenial relationships with participants, I dressed casually, introduced myself simply by my first name, and warmly welcomed participants to the interview space. I encouraged each interviewee to lead the conversation once we were ready to begin, following, for example, a simple, open-ended question such as, "Tell me about your experience of leisure before the pandemic." Doing so allowed for openness to meandering, and space for thoughts and imagination to take flight, before I ushered us back, when it felt appropriate to do so, to the subject matter at hand (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011).

Furthermore, although I told participants our online interviews would be no more than 30 minutes so as not to tire them, I told them that we could talk for as long, or as little as they wished, turning over to them the power to lengthen or terminate the interview as they saw fit. Ermine (2007) has described the importance of nurturing and building such empathic spaces because it "triggers a dialogue that begins to set the parameters for an agreement to interact modeled on appropriate, ethical, and human principles" (p. 202). Marshall and Batten (2004) have argued that being in partnership with a community to do research can help to build solidarity, *communitas*, so that perceived or actual power dynamics can be flattened or lessened.

The community is not powerless but has control within the research project over what is done, how it is done, and how the research is disseminated.

My study involved individuals from many different life situations and worldviews, rather than a community or particular ethnic group. Crucial to building partnerships in the research study is the manner in which individuals perceive themselves to be warmly welcomed to the research, and respected, and this I strove to do. It was essential to me that participants should also feel—and know—that they had control over many aspects of the study, including anonymity and the use of pseudonyms, use of their photographs or drawings and other creative depictions of leisure, the power to control the length of the interviews, the choice of how or whether to answer questions (Anyan, 2013), or withdraw from the study (Brinkman, 2018).

Power Asymmetry in the Interview. Brinkmann (2018; see also Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018) have drawn attention to the unequal nature of interviews, no matter how well-intentioned the researcher might be. Because one person is asking questions, and the other responding implies a power asymmetry that has been troubled by other qualitative researchers questioning the nature of the interview process. As González-López (2011) found, simply by virtue of her being a researcher, participants in her studies regarded her as an expert, afforded her respectful titles, saw her as an authority figure, and were therefore deferential to her position as a researcher and assumed greater knowledge. González-López acknowledged that her elevation in the eyes of potential participant to 'expert' influenced their decision to participate. In addition, Brinkmann (2018) has alluded to the additional status that can be afforded a researcher in the interview situation because of their perceived educational or socio-economic status advantages that could influence the power dynamics of an interview. Participants also have the power over the telling of their own truths and over how they will tell their story or withhold parts of it—or simply

refuse to tell it, or whether the interviewer may record the interview. The balance of power, therefore, oscillates between interviewer and interviewee during the interview. Brinkman (2018) has elaborated four ways in which the interview can be fraught with shortcomings, besides as a site of power asymmetry between the interviewer and interviewee: The interview is typically a one-way dialogue with the interviewer asking questions and the interviewee responding; it serves as an instrumental dialogue in meeting researchers' needs for data and provides "descriptions, narratives, and texts, which the researcher then interprets and reports according to his or her research interests" (p. 588). Lastly, researchers can feign friendship and interest to learn what it is they wish to know. Brinkmann (2018) described such tactics as "a questionable instrumentalization of empathy, a commodification of empathy that is displayed to provide a fast way to get 'data'" (p. 588). His concerns are both cogent and valid and served as a reminder to me as to the ethicality of my project and the importance of being alert always and mindful that an interview will go where it will, often well beyond the range of even a brief interview guide. I was mindful of participants as unique sentient beings (Ermine, 2007; Bannister, 2018; Lincoln, 2013) living historically-situated lives (Gadamer, 2004), and whose situations and lifeworlds would undoubtedly influence our conversation, or they could choose to terminate it abruptly.

In some cases, I spoke to participants on weekends, or late in the evening, because that was the time available to them. Two participants chose to withdraw from the study after one interview; others chose not to submit photographs or drawings. No participants told me that they were withdrawing, and I respected their right to do so. One daughter submitted drawings of her leisure but was reluctant to speak about the drawings in a subsequent interview and chose not to continue. In all cases, I accepted that it was each participant's right to choose whether and how she would participate, or not.

I strove to be patient, attentive and mindful to the realities of all participants. This meant being mindful and respectful of their lives. As Dostal (2002) explicated, "the truth-event takes time, requires language, and is the result of mediation, dialectic, and conversation" (p. 256). It also requires "tarrying" (*Verweilen*) to allow the truth to come to us, much like in the act of play (Gadamer, 1976, 2004) losing oneself in the conversation, and becoming oblivious of time passing while engrossed in discussing the subject matter before us. The interview can, therefore, not be hurried; neither interest nor empathy can be feigned. To attain an empathic, open, meaningful conversation leading to understanding, the interview cannot be manipulative or merely an instrument for attaining data.

The Interview Guide. The interview guide for my study was inspired by Castillo-Montoya's (2016) interview protocol refinement framework (See Appendix A). Castillo-Montoya (2016) suggested that interview questions fall into four categories or types: (a) introductory questions—simple questions that help to put the participant at ease and to develop a sense of comfort and rapport between interviewer and interviewee, (b) transition questions to help move the conversation from the introductory ones to the (c) key questions. Key questions are related to the research questions and study purpose. Finally, closing questions provided an opportunity to address anything further the participant wished to say, and to provide some closure to the interview itself.

However, because in Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutic philosophy, the interlocutors immersed in a conversation are entreated to allow the conversation to buoy them along with it in a constantly renewing 'game' marked by the back-and-forth motion of keeping the conversation aloft (Gadamer, 1976, p xxiii), I developed a simple interview guide with well-chosen questions so that our conversation could wander as it would, before I gently guided us back to the intent of

the interview (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011). In this way, in the reflective space of the interview/conversation, we made room for new vistas of knowledge and understanding to reveal. I used the same interview guide for all participants because the focus of the questions was pertinent to all participants.

It is important here to note that during the initial interview I asked each participant, "What does leisure mean to you?" Invariably, the response was, "free time" or another term/explanation indicating that leisure comprised what one did when not obligated by studies, chores, or work (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017; Holba, 2013; Stebbins, 2017). It seemed the common place or prevalent view of leisure as mere respite after work (Holba, 2013; Stebbins, 2017, 2018) prevailed. Because I was concerned that the responses to my questions would be lacking in the richness and depth I was seeking, I shared with participants—and with not a little trepidation and concern about imposing a Western philosophical concept of leisure on them— Aristotle's (2002) holistic philosophy of leisure with its accent of striving for excellence in all one did to edify all aspects of one's intellectual, creative, physical and mental capacities in pursuit of the moral and virtuous life, well lived, and in service of the greater good (Hemingway, 1988; 1995; Owens, 1981). However, I did not *insist* that they consider their leisure in this way but suggested only that such knowledge *might* encourage the broadening of their thinking about leisure in terms beyond merely 'free time.' I found that, in doing so, it opened a floodgate of sorts, and participants shared with me stories of their work as leisure, or expressing their political dissent, or studying language as leisure, as well as their abiding Christian faith that suffused all aspects of their being and doing, and therefore their leisure. (See the Findings and Discussion chapters for further elucidation.)

Confidentiality and Anonymity: The Ethics of Representation and Human Agency.

One of the cornerstone requirements of ethical research is to guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants' identities. Researchers are advised to offer to identify people only with pseudonyms to afford anonymity. However, as Patton (2002) suggested, doing so may deny an individual agency to determine for themselves what it is that they would prefer. For example, Arditti (1999, as cited in Patton, 2002) interviewed Argentinian grandmothers in the Plaza de Mayo, who silently protested their missing husbands, sons, and grandchildren. Arditti found that the grandmothers did not want to be anonymous. They wanted to be visible, known, and they all wanted their stories to be recorded as theirs. In a similar vein Perry (2011) recounted that a Sudanese refugee, one of the orphaned 'Lost Boys of Sudan,' refused to participate in her study because of the research ethics requirement to change his name.

Hugman et al. (2011a) have also drawn attention to the importance of ensuring that the individuals participating in the research are seen as partners, as co-creators of the research whose stories must not be taken from them (Pittaway et al., 2010) and that the relationship should be ongoing with the intent of application and doing good (Hugman et al., 2011a). In my research I offered participants a pseudonym of their own choice, if they wished to have one. One mother and seven daughters preferred a pseudonym. In this way, participants had control over their identities within the research, choosing how they wished to be named in the research.

In terms of confidentiality, this is not entirely possible to guarantee to the participants in my study, particularly as I would like to publish scholarly articles stemming from my research. To ensure that participants were fully apprised of how I hoped to use the information from the interviews and visual artefacts, I openly discussed my desire to publish excerpts from the interviews. This information was also included in the consent letters so that participants would have a clear understanding of how the gathered information would be used.

In addition, I assured each participant that the transcript files from the interviews would be held in confidence during the research process, and the transcripts would be encrypted on my password-protected computer. All photographs and drawings were also stored on my password-protected computer and in a locked cabinet in my home, the door of which was locked.

A Matter of Voice

I am, in accord with Gadamer's (1976; 2004) hermeneutic philosophy focused on the ontological (the reality of being) understanding of being. Gadamer's philosophy and his theory of hermeneutic experience is grounded in the understanding of the equality of interlocutors in conversation searching for meaning and a quest to fuse their horizons (the standpoint from which they view the world). Gadamer's (2004) hermeneutic philosophy and phenomenology are anchored by the ontological question of being, and how beings experience their lives in the world, their lifeworld. Most importantly, it is through language that we express our worlds (Gadamer, 2004), and therefore because in the phenomenological tradition, richly written and thickly described (Patton, 2002) evocations of experience are of paramount importance, I have foregrounded the voices of the women in this study, lavishly and voluptuously amplifying their own words in describing their experiences of leisure and the meaning they ascribe to it. Lokot (2021) advocated for privileging the voices of women not usually heard in research, rather than relying on key informant or gatekeeper interviews. She argued, "a feminist lens to research prioritizes the knowledge of those considered ordinary—because each person has valuable knowledge" (p. 6). In this study, it has also been my ethical stance to engage with each woman individually, and at length. I have not sought only those with rich vocabularies in English or poetic turns of phrase, though this is one of the hallmarks of phenomenological studies (van Manen, 2014). I welcomed women from Africa from all walks of life, and with various levels of

fluency in English. To honour their contributions ethically, I have voluminously and richly described their leisure experiences and meanings, using numerous quotations from the interviews. In this way, I have sought to evoke, through their own words, each woman's vibrant presence in my dissertation.

In addition, Gadamer's (1976; 2004) hermeneutic philosophy and phenomenology are anchored by the ethical cornerstone of *phronesis*: using practical (ethical) wisdom to do good, in the service of making the lives of others better and on profound understanding. The focus on understanding the beingness of beings through language, on the equality of interlocutors coming together to seek meanings and agreement on a topic fit well with my desire to do research in an ethical, caring, empathic way that honoured the gift of sharing story, and meanings. As Dunne (1993) emphasized,

> The basic requirement here—what constitutes the conversational attitude—is *openness*: a readiness to allow the *questionableness* of one's own contribution or to be persuaded that the other's contribution may enrich it or even have to prevail over it. (p. 118)

The hermeneutical circle, which brought me and the participants into conversation with each other denoted the oscillation of shared conversation as we looked at the whole and parts of what we were discussing. Combined with Gadamer's (2004) entreaty to seek a fusion of our horizons, these tenets of human-centred research chimed with how I thought and enacted respectful sharing in my study, in a to-and-fro of conversation, much like a game during which we sought no end, but simply played until we wanted to stop. These principles of engagement fitted wholly within my understanding of meaningful research with the women in my study.

Positionality, or My Historicity

According to Gadamer (1976; 2004) we are all bound by our traditions, histories, and

pre-judgments (prejudices) about the world, and though these are not the focus of our interpretation, they affect how we interpret our worlds. Furthermore, Gadamer (1976) states that, "an ideal of understanding that asks us to overcome our own present is intelligible only on the assumption that our own historicity is an accidental factor" (p. xiv). Therefore, Gadamer invites the researcher to bring herself into the dialogue, drawn into a circle of understanding between the researcher, the participant, the dialogue, and the text. In terms of my own historicity, my feminist ethics are grounded in the principles of fairness, inclusivity, empowerment, and justice (Preissle & Han, 2012) and, as such, in my research I strove to be reciprocal (e.g., sharing my findings, listening, giving, and receiving) and reflective throughout. That meant that I constantly considered and reflected on my own biases, and 'fore-meanings' (Gadamer, 2004, p. 271) about phenomena when doing research, by keeping an online journal during the research process (Ortlipp, 2008). I kept a diary of my thoughts and reflections using a digital recording and transcription software called otter.ai. I deployed Otter.ai across my devices, including my laptop, I-pad, and mobile telephone so that I could record my thoughts, musings, or concerns easily, no matter which device I was using. In addition, I used the memo feature within MAXQDA, the qualitative data analysis software I had chosen, to write over 250 memos related to the interview data. In this way I was able to refer easily to my thoughts or ideas about nuggets I found glimmering and peeping through the (at times) higgledy-piggledy morass of data. This was a way to keep track of my thoughts and to remain close to my instinctive responses and reactions to what I had seen and heard, and to aid in deepening my analyses of the interviews.

What I Am is What I Am. As a White, English-speaking senior woman of European descent, I have, having lived many years in South Africa during the notorious apartheid era, an enduring interest in, and abiding admiration and respect for, the people of the African continent

whose lives and stories have largely been overshadowed in predominantly Western-centric research, with populations not typically representative of the complex mosaic of peoples of the global South. Noddings (2002) has called for researchers to be alert to the importance of caring relationships in their research and an ethic of caring, which is underpinned by genuine empathy, respect, and consideration. By heeding Gadamer's (2004) call for the equality of interlocutors in conversation, and a commitment to ethicality and making an 'ethical space' (Bannister, 2018, p. 33)—a comfortable, respectful, welcoming space in which to share our worldviews, I have reinforced my personal dedication to engage in research with, not about, people, regardless of their gender, race, class, or ethnicity. While concern for who may represent or speak for whom in social science research (Aitchison, 2003) and reflexivity has become the watchword in validating qualitative research of late (Pillow, 2003), I am not sharing my own historicity as a confessional or to justify my 'rightness' in doing this research, but merely to make it clear that I acknowledge my participants and I have different life worlds and experiences of being-in-the-world and that I deeply respect such differences. In addition, I acknowledge that while my ethnicity may offer me privilege, I would not go so far as to say that the power balance in my relationships resides entirely with me because power relations are fluid and may ebb and flow in relationships (Lemke, 2002) with the balance sliding sometimes toward the researcher, and sometimes toward the participant (Ganga & Scott, 2006) during the research process.

As I began recruiting participants for my study, I did not know, at first, how ethnically diverse my participants would be. After all, Africa is immense as well as racially and ethnically diverse (Dowden, 2009). Initially then, as I began recruitment, I was uncomfortably and self-consciously aware that I might be perceived by potential participants as merely a privileged White woman researcher seeking to intrude upon their lives out of a sense of misplaced

superiority or entitlement, and that I might be deemed unworthy or unacceptable for these or any number of other reasons. Other than being women and having lived in Africa, we had little in common in the way of history, tradition, or life experience. However, rather than shy from doing this research, I decided that it was important for me to sit with my discomfort at how my Whiteness, or position as a researcher might be perceived by women who might be racially or ethnically different from me, and simply be at peace and allow potential participants to choose what they wanted to do. I acknowledge that I considered often how power relations in our interactions are ever present, and though I did not seek to dominate or subdue (Lemke, 2002; Risser, 1997), I needed to convey my respect for their dignity of person by my words, demeanour, and actions.

To this end, I foregrounded my age, race, background, and current situation to each participant, so that I would be 'revealed' as it were, right from outset of my study. Milligan (2016) and Chhabra (2020) have argued for researchers to strive for in-betweener status, an elegant (or at times, wobbly) straddle between insider, meaning one who may have intimate knowledge of the culture, language, and lifeways of a particular group, or to be member of that group (Olukotun et al., 2021), and an outsider. An outsider has no relation or association with those with whom she seeks admittance or acceptance, either by ethnic group belonging or knowledge of culture, and language. Other than my years of living in South Africa and Zimbabwe, and an abiding love of Africa and its peoples, I was most decidedly an outsider at the outset of my study.

Milligan (2016) has suggested that using participatory methods, such as visual methods, is a way of breaking down barriers with participants by relinquishing power over parts of the research to participants, who can control how they engage in the research. I found, however, that

it was not so much the use of participatory methods, but how we interacted during the interviews that enabled me to shift from outsider to in-betweener, though, in truth, I cannot say I was able to do so with all participants. Where I was able to shift my position within the research to in-betweener (Chhabra, 2020; Milligan, 2016), I attributed this to my philosophical underpinning which offered me an ethical guide, an open-spirited approach to understanding, and which I found to influence me profoundly in terms of how I approached each participant. No human is devoid of her history, beliefs, knowledge, culture, or ways of being. Therefore, we must accept and acknowledge that each of us is similarly enrobed, or informed, or imbued, and this is not something negative or that gets in the way. As such, in accord with Gadamer's (2004) theory or philosophy I strove to position myself as an in-betweener with my participants as we sought common understanding. As McNess et al. (2015) described, "For Gadamer, the past has a pervasive power in the phenomenon of understanding. The past cannot be restricted to merely supplying texts or events that make up the objects of interpretation, but it is what creates our horizon (*Horizont*) of understanding" (p. 305, italics in the original). In fact, being within our histories (and inescapably so) enables a deeper understanding to come about (McNess et al., 2015).

Therefore, because, as Milligan (2016) suggested, it is often up to participants to decide whether to allow an outsider in, whether they will permit the shift to in-betweener, I was acutely aware of my position as outsider as I began my research, the importance of trust was again reinforced so that I could come closer. I would likely never be an insider because I did not share their race, ethnicity, culture, or lifeways (Chhabra, 2020; Olukotun et al., 2021) with any of the women in my study. However, I attempted through my actions to show participants that I welcomed and appreciated their gifts of sharing, and that I respected what was shared with me

during interviews and their visual representations of their leisure as sacrosanct, an honour, a bestowal. No one can ever be an insider in another's circle, or with another person without trust and respect as anchoring the bedrock of the relationship built. It is for trust that I strove. The fact that most of the women remained in the study for the full duration, even during a truly devastating pandemic, and regardless of the many hardships they experienced, appeared to demonstrate that I had succeeded in building the kind of trusting, considerate, and caring relationships that made my study participants comfortable with me.

However, I was acutely aware that, while I had managed to recruit seven daughters of African heritage through the university e-newsletter to undergraduates, trying to interest their mothers in participating in this study was unsuccessful. Therefore, it seemed to me that for more mature African immigrant women to whom I was a stranger, perhaps my Whiteness rendered me too radically a *far-outsider*, and no matter all my good intentions I could not build a bridge from outsider to in-betweener. The drawbridge stayed up. The moat of race, and the ravages of history, it seemed, were simply too vast to ford for some, and I respected their right not to let me in.

Leaving the Field: Negotiating Respectful Closure with Participants

The question of respectful withdrawal from the field when the research ends has been a thorny, messy issue for qualitative researchers in many domains (e.g., Gallmeier, 1991; Stebbins, 1991; Wolf, 1991), and, as Morrison et al. (2012) have documented, one that remains difficult for qualitative researchers to negotiate. This is, as Morrison et al. aver, chiefly because there are no set procedures for doing so (see also Gallmeier, 1991). Furthermore, qualitative researchers are entreated to build trust and rapport with participants in their studies (Goodwin et al., 2003). Building trust and rapport takes time, and empathy. That often means developing close

relationships with people whom we, as researchers, are encouraging to share the most intimate, even secret, details of their lives (Wolf, 1991). Researchers engaging with people who have experienced severe trauma, in terms of their physical or mental health, find it extraordinarily difficult to maintain a neutral stance, or to be emotionally detached (Dickson-Swift et al., 2006) and there is little doubt that ethical engagement needs to both buttress and be the strongback of such research. Dickson-Swift et al. noted that many of the health researchers in their study talked of 'blurring boundaries' between researchers and participants, of friendships that formed and lasted, with researchers visiting participants after the research had ended, or exchanging Christmas cards for years, and sharing confidences. While Dickson-Swift et al. pointed out the pitfalls of becoming attached to participants and finding it difficult to let go—and these included burnout, emotional exhaustion—their chief recommendation was for neophyte researchers and supervisors to pay more attention to these matters in the planning of the research. Morrison et al. (2012) have suggested that participant and researcher-negotiated strategies upon which they agree can help with the difficult task of negotiating closure at the end of a study. These researchers contended that talking to participants about how the research will end when the research begins can help to manage participants' expectations about how that might happen, and to have a voice in negotiating closure. In their case study of a doctoral student doing research among obese adolescent young men, Morrison et al. (2012) pointed out the painful nature of the participant-researcher relationship coming to an end as akin to a relationship 'break-up.' The young men in this case study described feelings of loss, of being used, anger, and emotional hurt at the conclusion of a research program where they had found acceptance, joy, fun, camaraderie, and friendship. Their outpourings of emotion were both disconcerting and unnerving for the researcher who had not expected such strong reactions. Therefore, negotiating closure with

participants at the beginning of the project is essential. Morrison et al. contended "because the participants deserved not only a voice regarding their day-to-day lives but also a voice to indicate how the participant-researcher relationship should end" (p. 424).

I explained fully to each of the women in my study what the research would entail and we discussed when and how the research would come to an end. I made it clear at all stages of the research, from the first conversations, through onboarding, in the content of the recruitment letters and consent forms, and at the beginning and ending of each interview, I described our progress through the interviews and signalled in our dialogues when the research would be complete. However, as I have been in my past research, I was open and willing to stay in touch with participants *if they chose.* I invited participants to do that, and three participants (two mothers and one daughter) have remained in touch because the pandemic has caused such hardship in terms of loneliness and isolation (Shah et al., 2020). The two mothers and I continue to speak weekly in the case of one of them, and monthly in case of the other (correct as of May 6, 2022). The daughter, who has stayed in touch does so by occasional text message and continues to do so (correct as of May 6, 2022). Such meetings by telephone or Facetime have afforded us an opportunity to continue to stay in touch and to comfort each other. Three of the daughters in my study were on the verge of completing their degrees and so, at the time of writing they have moved on, returning to their hometowns, and pursuing their first jobs. Others have lost touch as they moved on with their lives.

I have never felt put upon, or burned out by these connections and, as a result of my connections with women from either volunteer work or research, I have become part of two extended 'families' in South Sudan; I have helped participants from previous studies to find the resources they need to gain educational qualifications and employment, set up their own

apartments, and together two participants—now also friends—and I are helping several of their family members in a refugee camp in Uganda. It has been an uplifting and fulfilling part of my life. Perhaps this is a function of being an older researcher. Perhaps if I were a younger researcher on the cusp of a long research career, I might, over time, experience feeling overwhelmed by lengthy relationships with former participants. But, in my present world, I do not find it burdensome.

At the close of the final interview on Google Meet, I could no longer engage in the ritual of gift-giving (usually a gift certificate) because all our communications took place in the virtual place, but as we closed our interview sessions, we 'air hugged' and wished each other well. Thereafter, I mailed a hand-written thank you card with a unique personal message to each woman and enclosed a gift card to a well-known grocer.

Furthermore, because I think it imperative to return to participants to talk about my findings and invite their reflection, several participants met me online in separate Google Meet meetings and we maintained contact that way as well. While I would typically offer to give talks at communities or church congregations to share my research findings, because of the pandemic and gatherings disallowed, I wrote short reports of my complete analysis of the findings and shared those with all participants inviting their input. Four participants have expressed interest in receiving a copy of my dissertation once it has been accepted, and published, and I will honour their wishes. In addition, my contacts at Catholic Social Services have asked if I will share my findings with them, and to this end I will write a summary of my findings to fulfill their request. Should it be possible in the future once the pandemic has been overcome, I will gladly make presentations to CSS staff as I have done previously.

Chapter 6: Findings

While many kinds of leisure were expressed as meaningful and engaged in during the

COVID-19 pandemic, from the prosaic (e.g., reading, watching shows, engaging in social media,

meeting in the virtual space) to the sublime (e.g., expressing self through faith, the creative arts,

and connection with the land and nature) the embeddedness of cultural traditions of their African

homelands or heritage was strongly evident in participants' enunciations of their leisure

experiences. Traditions of African culture, particular to each individual's heritage and her

family's traditions (for, it must be emphasized, there is no Pan-African culture) were interlaced

through many participants' enunciations of their leisure, and these cultural traditions of leisure

brought both comfort and solace during the most serious health crisis of the 21st century—and

profound grief at the loss of them in the early months of the pandemic. In the case of the

daughters (aged 17 to 24), Canadian cultural ways of being and having leisure were more often

comfortably entwined with their African ones, creating a horizon of understanding that embraced

a culturally hybridized mosaic of leisure through being and knowing.

I used two metaphors as I considered my findings. The first of these is the crucible,

which, in the context of my study, represents a deep and sturdy cultural melting pot, filled with

traditions and ways of knowing, doing, and being moored in cultural heritage. The crucible

warms this rich and potent blend at the cultural hearth, infusing the familiar and the loved in a

heady, warming, soul-soothing broth. The second metaphor, alluded to already, is that of the

cultural hearth, which I imagine as a warm, inviting and vibrant centre, crackling and ablaze with

kinship, care, friendship and leisure. The hearth[10] is the gathering place, where reflection and

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[10] I borrowed the metaphor of the hearth from the ruminations of Philolaus of Croton, a 4th century BCE philosopher and scientist, and a contemporary of Socrates. In his conception of it, the hearth is the central fire round which the planets and the cosmos swirl (Huffman, 2020). The hearth, in Philolaus's time, was also the centre of the household where important family rituals took place, such as introducing newborns to the rest of the family (Kaljava, 2004).

contemplation occur as we stare into the flames. It is the metaphorical nave to which we are

drawn to derive warming comfort in the sphere of familial bonds, of friendships, of spiritual,

emotional, and intellectual being, bound in the experience of leisure.

It is important to share with my readers that though 14 mothers and daughters

participated in my study, not all described their leisure as *deeply* imbued with traditional cultural

significance. Mothers who emigrated to Canada as mature women, were more likely to note the

importance of culture and tradition that hewed to their ways of knowing, being, and experiencing

leisure in uniquely African ways, or that was influenced by their African cultural traditions.

Among daughters, who had emigrated to Canada as youngsters, I found them capable cultural

straddlers, balancing easily, like colossi, with one (cultural) foot in Canada and the other in their

African homelands, or those of their parents. As such, some daughters were less likely than

mothers to articulate the importance of African cultural knowing and ways of leisure being. All

of the mothers in my study were vocal and eloquent in expressing their cultural leisure traditions.

Some of the daughters were equally articulate, but not all. I have, therefore, tried to balance the

many voices of the mothers and daughters[11] in my study and to include quotations and stories

that best amplify and support the engaging presentation of the themes of my findings. I chose not

to present mothers and daughters' stories separately but instead combined their enunciations of

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Thus, in Philolaus's philosophy or understanding of the nature of the cosmos, the 'family' of planets and celestial bodies that enliven the cosmos likewise orbit a sustaining, fiery hearth (Huffman, 2020). In Greek mythology, Hestia is the goddess of the hearth (Kaljava, 2004), responsible for tending the fire—a vital role because the hearth was deemed the centre of the household. Hestia is also closely associated with the 'hearth' of political power, and, to some extent, the 'hearth' of religious ritual where offerings were made for favours and blessings sought (Kaljava, 2004). Further, Tuan (1996) asserted that we return to the hearth of home for nurturance and comfort when our wider ramblings in the world find us in need of sustenance and the warming familiarity of hearth and home. The pandemic has been a rude and brutal awakening to our human ephemerality. The hearth, associated with communitas, ritual, culture, and tradition has been a welcoming, sustaining beacon for many.

[11] To aid the reader in differentiating between mothers and daughters in the findings, mothers' names appear in a different font and font colour (Gill Sans and purple).

leisure and their experiences of it during the COVID-19 under the evocative themes that follow. This was because daughters' and mothers' experiences were both present under the themes. The subthemes are where the daughters' and mothers' experiences are differentiated (if at all).

My findings are presented in five themes. The first of these is **The Crucible of Cultural Hearth**, the second is **The Cultural Hearth Warms.** Third is **My Soul Soothed in Arts- and Nature-Based Leisure.** The fourth theme is **Come Together: The Worldwide Digital Hearth.** The fifth theme is titled, **Friends at the Hearth: Developing and Deepening Ties.** Table 2 affords the reader a summary of the main themes and subthemes of my findings.

Table 2

Summary of Themes and Sub-themes

Theme	Sub-themes
The Crucible of Cultural Hearth	Severed Cultural Connections: The Hearth Cools, Leisures Lost
	The Sacred Hearth: Faith Woven Through Leisure
The Cultural Hearth Warms	Languaging Leisure
	Keeping and Sharing Tradition: "This smell just takes me back"
	Teaching Traditional African Games
	Making Hair: Bonding Through Leisure Doing
	Leisure in Work: "It relaxes your mind"
My Soul Soothed in Arts- and Nature-Based Leisure	A Side of Nostalgia: "I can think about my family in Africa"
	The Traditional Leisure of the Soil: Planting Africa
Come Together: The Worldwide Digital Hearth	Staying Connected with Screens
	There's An App for That: "All I do is be on my phone"
Friends at the Hearth: Developing and Deepening Ties	

The Crucible of Cultural Hearth

As the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered all manner of meeting and gathering spaces, from places of business, and of worship, learning, and leisure, it also curtailed social gatherings, and

instilled a shiver of fear into the simplest of daily living tasks, leisure, and other activities. Most

grievous to all participants in study was that the pandemic had severed connections to those most

dear as restrictions on gatherings came into force. Both mothers and daughters in my study

expressed shock and dismay at ways in which pandemic restrictions hampered their ability to

gather with their ethnocultural communities, and to have leisure among familiar people with

familiar ways that made being-in-the-moment easy and gentle on the mind, and comforting.

Severed Cultural Connections: The Hearth Cools, Leisures Lost

Job loss was one of the most oft-mentioned fallouts of the pandemic, particularly for

participants who were university students whose part-time and summer employment helped pay

their tuition for the next academic year. However, equally devastating was the loss of volunteer

work, an important nexus for leisure's two pivotal mainstays: the moral and virtuous

development of the whole being, and phronesis: engaging practical wisdom in service of the

common good. Lost volunteerism was best articulated through Jean's storied experiences. Jean, a

daughter from South Sudan, described missing her volunteer work with a multicultural non-

governmental organization (NGO) providing new immigrants with resettlement services. Fond of

children, Jean told me that she volunteered at the NGO to take charge of childcare while

immigrant parents attended the NGO's orientation meetings about the realities of living in

Canada. She also did so because she had known the stress of immigration, and "of being the only

Black person in the room and getting to learn English, and just living in Canada, coming here

and becoming an immigrant." For these reasons Jean wanted to ease other newcomers'

acculturative stress by taking care of their children while they attended to settlement concerns.

Furthermore, Jean expressed considerably more dismay that a South Sudanese young people's

group, South Sudanese Youth of Canada (SSYC), to which she belonged had curtailed its in-

person meetings. It was this loss of community with other young people from her heritage homeland which was vitally important because "it's good to have somebody apart from family understand me," that struck her to the core. The SSYC was where she connected with other young South Sudanese, who shared similar lifeworld experiences. It was among these young people that Jean experienced a profound feeling of belonging among her peers from her ancestral homeland, and in whose company she could make sense of her immigration experience, as well as her place in Canada. In Figure 1 Jean attends a conference, in pre-pandemic times, of the SSYC and stands between the flags of Canada and South Sudan.

Figure 1

Woman Integrated: Between Two Cultures

She said, "This picture represents the two parts of me: the Sudanese part and the Canadian part." The photograph represented, to me, the epitome of immigrant reality: that as immigrants we must learn to straddle and negotiate two cultures, our heritage culture, and our adopted culture—or even three if we are tri-cultural. For Jean, her cultural belonging in Canada was eased by her belonging in a welcoming, open-minded community of young people, from

many different South Sudanese tribes, who were forging their own understandings of their cultural roots.

As Jean remarked, "In my country there's a lot of tribalism where, like, some of the tribes don't get along. This [SSYC conference] was a chance where the kids get to learn from those other youth and make their own opinion." Then, with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the SSYC had to hold its meetings online. For Jean the loss of this important South Sudanese ethnocultural hive with its bright young minds and novel ideas about their shared history, tribal belonging and cultural identity that transcended the old intertribal feuds of their parents' cultural reality and memory of their heritage homeland, was devastating. In addition, the closing of concert venues where she had enjoyed seeing artists from Africa, that had been another mode of maintaining connection with that vibrant continent, had been lost. Whether eating out in restaurants to sample different cultural cuisines—often the favoured site of socializing with friends for Jean—or relishing Ugandan food and music at the Heritage Festival in Edmonton, all of these important cultural touchpoints for leisure and cultural traditions that brought comfort and pleasure as they evoked fond memories of her native land, had, in the blink of an eye, vanished.

As noted in my interview notes,[12] Argentine had suffered much deprivation and danger living as a refugee in Burundi,[13] to which she fled from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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[12] Please see the Methods chapter in which I described how, following an interview, I dictated or typed notes about each interview, recorded my thoughts, and made special note of high, low, and standout moments, as well as emotions expressed, and remarkable touchpoints. These notes served as valuable, additional sources of information that I used in my analysis of the interviews.

[13] I also gleaned information about Argentine's life story from Dawn Hurley's (2019) book, *The place between our fears: Life in Congo and beyond*, written with Mapendo Ndongotsi and Argentine Imanirakunda about their life experiences in Congo and their journey to Canada.

Burundi is itself a country experiencing upheaval and conflict.[14] Therefore, having lost or been wrenched from the company of so many loved ones in her native Congo, and connection to what was culturally familiar, as an accomplished seamstress, the loss of contact with friends she had met selling her African-themed wares—beautifully crafted totes, shopping bags, purses, and aprons—at the local farmers' market in her new hometown was accentuated. The friends she had made in her community of Athabasca were important to her, as they provided a lifeline of human connection, a bridge to Canadian culture, as well as support and encouragement, and help navigating unfamiliar Canadian systems, such as the health care system, taxation, and access to supports for people who experienced disabilities. Argentine recalled:

> Before pandemic I was going in the farmers market to sell my bag, my book. Things that I make with my hands and also, I was happy to meet with people….because when I have good people [around] they can love you, and they feeling [like] your friend, to be your friend….now, they can't visit me, because of COVID….And some people they were calling me to go to their family, to visit their family, like in Thanksgiving Day or Christmas Day…. For now, we can't do anything.

The loss of leisure kinship in the form of community gatherings of ethnocultural groups at important holidays, such as Easter or Christmas, caused distress for other participants as well. Lindiwe, whose family is from Ivory Coast, expressed her frustration that the large gatherings of Ivorians she enjoyed and anticipated with pleasure at Christmas and Thanksgiving could no longer be held because of pandemic-related restrictions on social gatherings.

She sighed as she related the pleasure of community events before the pandemic.

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[14] Burundi is one of many African countries experiencing unrest and violence. Though it hosts refugees from countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is also itself unstable. (Human Rights Watch: https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/burundi).

Oh, like for Christmas, they will like give a present for the kids. And for Thanksgiving we were normally like doing parties as well with the whole family. And for like January 1 2020, I went to a party and stayed all night. And it was so much fun, and, like, so much games. All my friends, yeah, they were there. I don't think they're going to have a party or something like that [this year].

The pandemic had sundered Lindiwe's much-anticipated and enjoyed opportunities for leisure during which she cemented her connection and sense of belonging to her ethnocultural community, and especially to other young Ivorian friends living in Alberta.

Loss of Connection to Homelands, Distant Families

An enormous deprivation for participants, both daughters and mothers, was the inability to travel to connect with families in their heritage homelands. This was noted with disappointment by mothers/othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005) Sarah, Florence, and Rose, and daughters, Jean, Vanessa, Thembi, and Lindiwe. They described their strong desire to travel, and that the pandemic had scotched their plans to journey to connect with families in their ancestral homelands they had not seen for years. Sarah, Jean, and Rose, who are from South Sudan, had all had plans to travel to Uganda to see their relatives who live in refugee camps there. Rose and her husband were anxious for their family to return to Uganda, partly so that their young son, who was born in Canada, could receive his tribal name. The ceremony of naming is a ritual of enormous cultural significance, Rose emphasized, as a child's traditional name, bestowed by the tribal elders, was an important rite of passage for African children. Dismay was evident in Rose's heartfelt evocation of the lost opportunity to reunite with family and to bind her son to his African culture and heritage by participating in the naming ceremony.

We're supposed to go to Uganda like this the coming year in February, but it's not possible. We plan to go all because we are missing our people back home. They also missing us too. It will be a good time if we go, then we have time together. The other thing is Baraka is born here. We didn't give his.... Like we have naming ceremony. But for Baraka, he's not given officially [his African tribal name] so we had planned to go and give his name officially for him. But not now.

Vanessa expressed frustration and disappointment that she could not return to Nigeria to visit family and friends—not because this was something she regularly did, but it was the loss of choice of going if she wished that she missed coupled with a deep desire to reconnect with her ancestral heritage. Jean, who came to Canada from South Sudan as a young child, had acculturated rapidly in Canada, as young people typically do, and she felt the strong urge, and a need to reconnect with her father and other family still living in Uganda. Her family had expressed concern that she had become too Canadian; she was disappointed that she could no longer easily understand her family's tribal dialect, and so the emotional pull to travel to reforge family bonds and family belonging was strong. Jean was supposed to travel in 2020, but her plans were quashed, filling her with a sense of deep loss. Disconsolate at her frustrated travel plans, Jean lamented:

I wanted to go back, like especially to go meet my dad too and meet some of the family members that I have not met in so long. And also, to go see my late brother's family who have not met since I was a child, and I don't remember them. But this was supposed to be my chance to go back and go meet them and like, get back those memories that I've lost. Also, connection I lost with relatives that I've never really known, even though they've known me as a child, but they speak of me as if they've known me all their life, but I have

no recollection of them. So, this is my chance to, like, go do that. But the pandemic came in, and we can't do that anymore. So, it's really hard. I had to wait for my papers and when the time came for the papers to be done with, the crisis came.

Annual family trips to Ontario for Florence, and to Quebec for Sarah (othermother) and Lindiwe (daughter) to reunite with resettled family members from their African homelands were no longer possible, yet these were important family reunions for reaffirming their belonging and bonds of blood and kinship. "Like I would really like to go to Quebec because we have family there, because now we can't go somewhere else," said Lindiwe in frustration. Florence was equally perplexed that the annual family reunion to the aunt who had sponsored her to come to Canada, had been scotched. Most keenly felt was the loss of her daughters' opportunities to be with their same-age cousins and to share a joint birthday celebration that had been a long-standing family tradition and much anticipated.

> Every summer we travel, we go to Ottawa. We go for like a month after school has finished, then we go like, sometime in July for a month, right? So, then they [my daughters] spend time with the cousins. And then I go visit my aunt and we try, you know, to catch up on what happened, what's going on? Then this summer we weren't able to go. So, it was kind of rough because they really look forward to that because I have two cousins that have two daughters like Amara's age. So, we combine all the birthdays, and we do a big birthday party. Yeah, this summer we were unable to go, which was really sad.

Missing the chance to experience 'Lagos in December,' a celebratory homecoming for Nigerians living or working abroad was a disappointment for Thembi. She had dearly wanted to travel to Nigeria with her father once her university examinations were complete, to reconnect

with her friends in her heritage homeland, and share with them a celebration of belonging in a uniquely Nigerian cultural way.

> "[This is] where usually all the international Nigerians will come back to Lagos in December, and everyone is just partying and catching up. So, my dad actually had planned for me to come back, and I would have met my friends and like it was supposed to be like something big. I was like, what would I have been doing if I had just gone back just to see everyone, all my friends. It wasn't necessarily nostalgic. It was more like what if.

The loss of choice, an anchoring tenet of leisure philosophy, and the thwarted desire for cultural connection and family reunification through travel and other kinds of leisure, seemed most keenly felt among the participants. The privation of spontaneity fell heavily upon them. They missed having the freedom and privilege to decide on a whim to do something with people one liked; being carefree and unconcerned and coming together with loved others in a shared, mutual, cultural milieu from which one derived deep satisfaction and happiness because it filled the soul.

Loss of Leisure in the Faith Sanctuary

When conversing with the participants in my study I was struck how, while they described being disturbed and quite devastated at the loss of being able to attend services at their church of choice—often a beloved gathering place for their ethnocultural communities—they were also immensely buoyed and strengthened by their Christian faith and the spiritual succour it bestowed, despite the loss of being able to attend worship in the physical body of the church. I struggled at first with how to present these two widely divergent ideas of profound loss on the one hand, with the uplifting, bolstering influences of faith so strong it seemed like metaphorical

armour. In the following pages you will see that I decided to first describe the experience of profound privation of the faith sanctuary that participants had described, then I unfold the ways in which faith served to provide a sacred hearth of spiritual nourishment in the face of this devastating pandemic. For many participants, their belief in a benevolent and loving God who would protect them was integral to the very fibre of being-in-the-world, the *Dasein*, of participants.

Those participants who devoutly identified as Christians, were all deeply troubled at the loss of community and fellowship with people from their ethnocultural communities at church. At church they had enjoyed attending church services in person before the pandemic. It was here that joyful singing, either in the choir or as a congregant, dancing in praise of the Lord, and gathering together and socializing at a communal tea after the service brought happiness, fellowship, and comfort and as a venue to foster and nurture community relationships.

During the pandemic, faith groups, such as churches, quickly adapted in harnessing the internet to hold their services online. Thereafter, one of the internet's important roles for the women in my study, whether mothers, othermothers, or daughters, was in connecting them to their faith and ethnocultural communities in the absence of in-person church services. It seemed that, no matter how unsatisfactory they felt church online to be, it afforded them an important leisure: the leisure of connection to God. However, nothing could replace the feeling of being in the presence of God in His House. As Sarah so poignantly noted:

> Going to church now it's very challenging, because after the pandemic [began] you have
> to look for a place to pray, or somebody who prays online, and then you just join that
> online. So, there's a difference because it's not like the one that were physically there.

Rose who belonged to the same South Sudanese faith community as Sarah, sorely missed going to church for the traditional Christmas celebration, after which they would, in pre-pandemic times, all meet in the church basement for tea and Mandazi, a traditional sweet cake that Rose prepared for the enjoyment of all, and that had been taught to her by her mother. In addition to the loss of sharing the cherished rituals of communal worship—"In our culture we sing and dance, but not now, no," said Rose incredulously—and traditional cake redolent of memory, most important was the lost opportunity to socialize with other community members, to hear news of their homeland, to share fellowship with each other, and cement community bonds with fellow compatriots, all thousands of kilometres from the beloved homeland they had left, or been forced to flee.

> Biggest change now is like going to the church as part of my leisure, I enjoy it too. You don't go to the church, but we do [attend church] online. It is not satisfying really, it's not satisfying, like going to the church and meeting people that's not something that is changing. Yes, changes like in our lives these days. Yeah, there's something that I'm unhappy that we don't go to the church anymore, and they try it online.

Though Rose felt the loss of being able to go to church keenly, she was not only concerned for herself, but also for her children. Attending church also meant her children had the opportunity to learn from others, and to socialize with other people and children and in that way, receive wisdom from their elders. Therefore, attending church was not only important for spiritual enrichment, but engaged in with purpose. In communalistic Africa, elders are revered and sought out for their wise counsel and the passing down of traditional knowledge and lore. Church was a place to bring multiple generations together, where all could benefit from the wisdom of the elders. As a hub for the community to gather, Rose deplored the lack of

connection at church for its effects on her children, whom she saw as missing this vital fount of wisdom. She said, "Even the kids. The kids like they have their own lessons that they get from the church, but not anymore, even online they don't." "No church, no nothing. So hopeless, right?" added Sarah, equally dismayed by the loss of her spiritual haven.

The sense of hopeless loss of connection was particularly poignant for participants, such as Argentine, a recent newcomer to Canada. Argentine's Christian faith imbued all aspects of her life and leisure. She recalled:

One of the things was to enjoy church. I feeling good in my head, and in my heart, because at church they are talking about Jesus and it makes me really happy because from my family and from my mom, I grow up, I know I have to go to church. I will have to make a day for praying. Every Sunday we have to go to church. And the choir, it make me very, very happy in my heart. So, I sing for Jesus. And I feeling very, very happy.

With her immediate family still in Uganda in a refugee camp Argentine's four-year-old daughter was her only solace in Canada, and, for Argentine, in-person church attendance had served to not only connect her with fellow Canadians, acquainting her with Canadian cultural traditions and ways of being, it connected her with a faith community that had welcomed her, embraced her as a chorister, and that shared her Christian fervour and deep spiritual roots, representing a tapestried cultural intertwining of African and Canadian faith expression. For Argentine the loss of church as a place for spiritual sustenance and renewal was especially profound, and yet even though the loss of the physical presence of church, the earthly manifestation of God's home, was out of bounds because of the pandemic, faith was apparent and integral to every aspect of participants' lives, and they spoke of their faith as enriching and fulfilling. I was astonished that even in the face of the loss of their beloved, physical faith

sanctuaries during the pandemic, participants were resilient and determined. They told me that they had found other ways to express their love of God and their thankfulness for His blessings in their lives. I found that their Christian faith was lovingly stitched and woven through all they did, bringing joy to their leisure as they sought to become their most excellent selves, even in the depths of a global health crisis.

The Sacred Hearth: Faith Woven Through Leisure

While their Christian faith had been the backbone of many participants' lives before the pandemic came, during the pandemic, it continued to evoke both satisfaction and happiness. Their Christian faith was intimately tapestried through many aspects of their lives, shaping their experiences and meanings of life and leisure.

Kiza, a gifted musician, with a lilting voice, performed as a member of her church's choir, and regularly attended church until gatherings were no longer permitted. She said that her faith was threaded through all aspects of her life. Singing, she said, was her soul's way of celebrating its being-in-the-world. "I sing every single day. Every single day, singing. And singing, it's almost like my soul's way of like manifesting or communicating." Her faith, she said, represented hope. It had buoyed her parents when they were refugees from Congo living in Tanzania; God was credited with saving her mother's life many times. The family, all musically-gifted, pooled their voices and musicianship in exuberant, melodious music-making, and joyful singing, worship, and thanksgiving, their faith interwoven with their leisure. "The best part about singing together is that we harmonize," added Kiza. "I think it's the most beautiful thing in the world. And doing that with my family… it's just like meshing those two things together. Very therapeutic."

Figure 2

Playing Music, Praising God

To Zuhrah, her Christian faith had afforded her stability, a rock she could cling to, especially during the pandemic. She admitted to being an anxious woman, and that her faith had grounded her, offering her tranquility in God's steadfastness, and a sense of purpose. She said, "Having a sense of faith has helped me because it's stable. It's something I can always turn to." Zuhrah's depth of devotion was shared by others: Thembi always wore a crucifix as a symbol of her faith and read her Bible regularly. She had an app on her mobile telephone, the Holy Bible app with lessons from the Bible for each day. Thembi read her Bible regularly and kept a journal of her thoughts. She said, "Christianity is very important to me like, even the way I interact with people, like, it's a way of life".

The teachings of their Christian faith profoundly influenced participants' lives, in particular their ethos, their way of acting towards themselves and others, as well as their leisure. Their indomitable Christian faith, a long-revered tradition in their families, handed down through generations was both the foundation and guiding light for their way of being in the world, and it was manifest in many of their descriptions of their leisure experiences. Argentine, who had arrived in Canada as a refugee from Congo, described being welcomed by the faith community

in her Northern Alberta town. Argentine's Christian faith was strongly bound in all aspects of her life and leisure. When pandemic restrictions curtailed her church-going Argentine contented herself with watching gospel music on YouTube, and attending church services online, and joining in the joyful singing of hymns of praise. "I sing for Jesus, and I am feeling very, very happy!" she joyfully told me. It was thanks to God, Argentine said, that in Canada she had broadly expanded her sphere of knowledge: she had learned to speak and write in English, learned to use a computer, master the use of a mobile telephone and apps such as WhatsApp and Facetime as ways to connect with her mother in Congo, and other friends still living there. Clearly, participants' perceptions of an omnipresent and omnipotent God in their lives, the experience of being, and what they did for leisure were braided, like bright ribbon, through all they held dear, and it brought about feelings of happiness, joyfulness, of being loved, uplifted, and benevolently watched over.

Isifinyezo[15]: A Recapitulation

In this theme I introduced the notions or metaphors of crucible and hearth to describe the significant presence of cultural traditions, rites of passage, the passing down of ancestral knowledge and wisdom, the friendships and relationships embracing families and ethnocultural communities that flowed, lava-like, through participants' accounts of their leisure during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic came as a devastating shock to participants as familiar gathering places, such as churches and restaurants, became restricted places where they could no longer gather. Jobs and volunteer work were lost, and with them vanished the camaraderie and joy of being with others. The comforting nexus of the molten cultural hearth that they had turned

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[15] *Isifinyezo* is the Zulu word for a brief statement, highlighting the main points of something. In the context of my thesis, I have used this word in all instances where I recapitulate the main points of each theme.

to for the warmth of socializing, belonging, and nurturing relationships, and where the crucible of elder wisdom once bubbled its ancient knowledge, had rapidly cooled as pandemic restrictions isolated people. As a global health crisis, COVID-19 restrictions meant that leisure travel to reunite with family both in Canada or abroad, or to attend important culturally significant ceremonies were taboo, and, as such this caused participants frustration, feelings of anger, and annoyance.

One of the most keenly felt leisures lost was that of attending church for worship and community socializing, and yet despite the loss of this hub of virtuous leisure being, participants were not bowed. As churches turned to the internet to reach their flocks, the women in my study, whether mothers or daughters, attended services online, or described turning inward to their families and finding other ways of expressing their faith that brought them comfort and strength. Whether making music, singing gospel songs, praying by themselves, or reading the Bible, the leisure of faith found its voice at the sacred hearth, the women's gentle breath enlivening its embers.

The Cultural Hearth Warms

As the pandemic worsened across the globe, the participants in my study described drawing closer to each other, mothers to daughters and daughters to mothers, and deriving comfort from each other's presence, and that of other family members. Mothers and daughters sought each other's company, sisters who had not been close before the pandemic discovered the pleasure of each other's company, and the camaraderie of families doing leisurely things together became a vital nexus of solace. Comfort came in the form of nostalgic leisure including meal-making and baking, steeped in memory and tradition, and the cherishing of those traditions with others, or alone as a means of alleviating distress, and of drawing closer—even though separated

by many kilometres and continents—to significant others. The cultural hearth I imagine here is a

metaphorical molten centre from which traditions steeped in cultural significance radiated

through leisure, whether in language learning, in sharing traditional making and doing, or in

work. Leisure and tradition in this sense entwine to embody the blossoming of the whole person.

It was in work where the ethic of care that characterized participants' familial and community

relationships, spilled over into the care of vulnerable others, especially in the workplaces of

mothers working in health care, blanketing the elderly and infirm and those unable to see their

families, in care and love.

Languaging Leisure

Daughters found the lull the pandemic had caused in their usual social lives afforded

more time for choosing leisure they loved and that brought them happiness: reading, and learning

things that intrigued them, or that they had neglected, or had had little time for, given their busy

lives, whether as students or working women. For some, the pandemic afforded a golden

opportunity to forge closer bonds with their families through learning or polishing their heritage

language skills. For example, Alexis used the pandemic lull, and her isolation, to rekindle her

love of learning the language commonly spoken in her home, Twi, and the main spoken

language in Ghana, her parents' country of origin. As the daughter of immigrants from Ghana,

Alexis, who had grown up in Canada, understood Twi but could not speak it. The pandemic

yielded her the chance to take up these leisures of the mind and improve her language

proficiency. Learning the traditional languages spoken by, and beloved of, her parents also

brought her closer to her parents, cementing their bonds with both her parents and their linguistic

heritage.

While her nursing program at university had kept her fully occupied, with the pandemic closing off many avenues for social leisure, Ewurakua, too, decided to put her time to good use and resume learning French, something she had loved at school and she said she found both enriching and fulfilling. Learning French was also a poignant reminder of comforting times with her mother when the two would spend time watching French telenovelas at the family home in Ghana. "That was a popular thing back home," said Ewurakua, "and then I, like, started watching it back, like, in French, and then I go call her and tell her about it and stuff like that. Like, I enjoyed the process." Doing so in Canada drew her back into a circle of closeness with her mother, a way of drawing her near though far away. It was also a way for Ewurakua to achieve her potential in mastering a language she associated with fond memories of family and evoked a sense of achievement.

For both Ewurakua and Alexis, learning languages was an evocation of the significant place of family connection and belonging in their lives, of the importance they placed, not merely on learning language, but language steeped in their cultural tradition that drew them closer into the orbit of their family. For Alexis, learning Twi meant she could converse with her parents in their heritage language, strengthening the familial ties that bound her to them, and drew her closer to Ghanaian culture with which she identified most strongly despite having grown up in Canada. Ewurakua's language learning gave her an opportunity to resurrect an enjoyable leisure shared with her mother, while improving her French skills. Perhaps when she speaks French, it will always be a soothing, comforting reminder of enriching leisure with her mother.

Keeping and Sharing Tradition: "This Smell Just Takes Me Back"

While learning and speaking languages of heritage tradition soothed, gave succour and imbued a modicum of normalcy in the midst of the pandemic upheaval, daughters also related how foods from their cultural heritages that were comforting and important to them had become even more so in the pandemic. Such foods included traditional favourites such as Moi Moi (steamed bean flour buns with tomato) for Zuhrah, or Jollof rice and pounded yam, for Vanessa. Daughters, though, were adventurous eaters, keenly sampling foods from many different cultures, from Vietnam to the Caribbean, from China to South Africa. However, for the mothers in my study food leisure involved not only the enjoyment of food, but both the cooking of it and the consuming of it were closely tied to what they saw as their role as bearers and protectors of cultural knowledge. They felt that they bore the responsibility for both preserving their culinary traditions and passing them along to their children. Traditional foods often evoked fond memories of their homelands, memories of which became achingly poignant during the pandemic, though laced with concern for their families 'back home'.

Whenever she wanted to conjure her happy childhood in Uganda, Florence baked a traditional Ugandan fruit cake. This was a form of leisure Florence had, on occasion, engaged in before the pandemic. However, during the pandemic, with social distancing, lockdowns, and waves of Covid infection the norm, this single mother, who longed for her homeland and her family, found deep satisfaction and pleasure in baking a luscious traditional treat.

Though time-consuming to bake and laden with many ingredients, it was, for Florence, a cherished reminder of a gentler time of innocence, of an embracing community and the loving grandmother who raised her. The Ugandan fruit cake was so much more than simply a cake. It was a cake that buffered Florence from the uncertain present. It was steeped in sweet memories of childhood, a traditional cake prepared at Christmas or to celebrate a wedding in Uganda. So

important was the baking of this cake, Florence prepared a 30-minute video, in which she carefully detailed each step, and described with care the ingredients, and the exact order of their entry into the mixture. She lovingly described how she associated this cake, redolent of warm spices, such as nutmeg, with memories of a happy childhood, anxiously waiting for the coveted wedding invitation because attending a wedding would mean the consuming of this beloved cake—a rare and treasured treat in a young child's life. Florence recalled:

It takes me back to my childhood, like, when I was a little girl, right? Like, my grandmother, only the time we eat cake is if we go to a wedding or it's Christmastime, right? It takes me there every time I make it. Just takes me there and I think about like my grandmother, the weddings we went to, which weren't many. So, you can imagine a little girl looking so forward to go to a wedding and have cake, right? So, which we didn't have every day. So, you wait, anxiously wait, for a wedding to go to have cake.

The act of making the fruit cake represented comfort, memory, and love. In summing up the importance of baking the traditional Ugandan fruit cake (see Figure 3), Florence said, "So, me concentrating on that, it kind of just blocks everything out. And then listening to music and dancing and, you know, being myself, I felt like I'm being myself in really a way that I enjoy".

Figure 3

The Traditional, Magical Ugandan Fruit Cake

It was not only the savouring of traditional foods, but the leisure of passing down the skill, knowledge and flair of culinary tradition that brought joy. With the pandemic restrictions in place, Zuhrah drew closer to her mother in the kitchen, and her mother, sensing her daughter's readiness to accept and revere gifts of cultural knowledge, handed down her the family's traditions of food, quite possibly taught to her by her own mother in Nigeria. Zuhrah said she felt deeply connected to her mother at that moment as the recipient of the culinary traditions of her family. Zuhrah said, "I remember she spent all morning explaining, step by step, like why this is important and how this one works … And that just made me feel really understood. And, like, we connected in that moment." In the throes of a devastating pandemic, the making of food and the sharing of it, was one of the few ways in which people could have leisure at a time when so many leisure choices were curtailed as COVID-19 infection rates soared across the world. The leisure of food soothed, calmed, and served to bring a sense of normalcy to life in the midst of pandemic-induced uncertainty.

Teaching Traditional African Games

The warming and welcoming hearth of cultural leisure is broad and one of its hearthstones encompasses the companionable leisure of play, and, in my study, of games steeped and storied in a long history of African tradition. When Sarah and Jean stepped in to assist with childcare of their two young nieces they did so gladly. After all, looking after their nieces afforded the sisters the opportunity to pass along an ancient leisure: the skill of playing traditional African games to their young charges, while enjoying the satisfaction of doing so. One of those is Mankala, a popular and playful game of strategy and mathematical dexterity. It is common throughout Africa and known by many names across the continent. In Uganda it is called *Soro*. However, when I asked Sarah the name of the game, she said she did not know it, and I have been unable to find the South Sudanese name for this ancient game. The young nieces, Imbolo and Amara[16], bright, inquisitive, loquacious, and very active, took to this traditional board game of mathematical skill and strategy (see Figure 4) with aplomb.

Figure 4

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[16] The names Imbolo and Amara are pseudonyms

The Ancient African Game of Mankala or Soro

Learning to play a traditional African game was, for Sarah and Jean, a way of sharing their cultural heritage with their nieces who had been born in Canada, and to impart to them a distinctly and much-loved African form of leisure, marked by quick thinking and mathematical prowess.

Making Hair: Bonding Through Leisure Doing

It takes skill and much patience to artfully style Black hair, with the participants remarking that Black women prefer going to a salon that specializes in styling their hair. For Rose, a self-taught stylist who had learned the art while living in Uganda, hair styling had, before the pandemic, been a social affair. When a friend wanted her hair styled, Rose's home became more than merely a home salon, it became a casual gathering and social place for women friends to get together. Styling hair meant leisure in the company of friends, socializing, and whiling away a pleasant day together—styling was often an eight-hour process—drinking tea and talking while Rose's nimble hands worked hair into a fetching style. At the time of writing, with the pandemic still holding sway across the world, styling her own hair and her daughter's was, in

concert with other participants, Rose's way of having mother-and-daughter leisure and taking care of an important grooming tradition. Furthermore, as the pandemic wore on, Rose told me that because of her work with elderly and infirm people, and her concern she might become infected with COVID by a friend, she had stopped doing friends' hair. "I don't want anybody from outside in the house," she said firmly. Other daughters in my study also bonded with their mothers in the leisure of styling their hair as COVID-19 infections proliferated, and hair salons closed.

Kiza, who said her relationship with her mother was "an amazing relationship" that has "gotten stronger over the years," described how styling her mother's hair was not simply an act of grooming, but a demonstration of respect, of care, and love for the woman who had raised her and nurtured her to adulthood, and who was essentially her "best friend." During the pandemic Kiza and her sisters turned the garage into a 'salon' where they pampered their mother, spending two days to design and execute the perfect 'do.' Kiza described this form of leisure as her way of thanking her mother for caring for her and braiding the hair of her four daughters as they grew up. "It's my way of repaying her. And when I do that [braiding her mother's hair], it counts as leisure to us. It's kind of like mother-daughter time," said Kiza.

The love Kiza expressed for her mother was a testament to their close familial bond and the nurturance of their relationship. Kiza described, with care, the effort she willingly expended in the design of an elaborate, fetching hairstyle with braids and twists, and she did this to demonstrate her respect and love for her mother. There was an ease of comfort of being together, a languor of submission to the moment, with Kiza happily devoting two days to the careful styling of her mother's hair. They talked, watched films, shared conversations with others by

telephone as they whiled away the hours it took to 'make' her mother's hair just so, her mother basking in her daughter's love and care.

For Vanessa, it was her mother who 'made' her hair. Typically, every three months the two settled in for a lengthy session of braiding. However, when Vanessa was unable to go home to Calgary during the pandemic, she had her hair styled at a salon instead. It became clear, when she was able to return home, that her mother had cherished that time with her daughter more than she would admit. Vanessa said,

> I noticed that she was, well, not upset that I did my braids in school, but she felt left out,
> you know. It's a sign that I'm growing up and soon we won't have that time when she
> makes my hair, and we're watching TV and stuff.

It appeared that, even though Vanessa's mother had sometimes complained about 'making' her hair because Vanessa's hair is thick and she wanted tiny braids, it was a task her mother enjoyed as a way of expressing her love, demonstrating her care for her daughter, time spent happily together, and the loss of it came sharply into focus as the pandemic constrained many opportunities for socializing and togetherness outside the family nucleus. Doing each other's hair became more than simply performing a task, it was described as an act of love, and it was, in essence, a very intimate leisure that served to nourish and nurture the relationships between mothers and daughters and enrich them.

Leisure in Work: "It Relaxes Your Mind"

Beyond the cultural hearth of home lay the domain of work. It was here, in institutional care settings, that the cultural hearth moored in the African tradition of an ethic of care, in which mothers enveloped their homes and families, was extended to embrace the elderly, the unwell and infirm, and the vulnerable people in their care. The African ethos of respect for elders,

venerated for their knowledge and wisdom spilled into mothers' workplaces, unfolding leisure's virtuous hallmark of phronetic doing and being.

If the pivotal cornerstones of philosophical leisure are that it uplifts, edifies, and enriches the mind, body, and spirit in a virtuous and moral way, then both Rose (mother) and Sarah (othermother) were examples of how leisure was embedded within their work through service to others, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Service underlined the ethos of care that had been ingrained in them since childhood. This African ethos of care is moored in the ancestral ethic of moral obligation, to be of good character, and, in the spirit of *ubuntu,* to revere all humanity. Rose and Sarah both worked in health care, and they took pleasure and satisfaction in serving those whose care was entrusted to them in their work. This was particularly so during the course of the pandemic. Initially, when the pandemic was declared, Sarah's workplaces temporarily closed, and Rose's shifts were curtailed. However, as the numbers of infected people rose dramatically, and hospitals, long-term facilities and hospices were overwhelmed Rose and Sarah were recalled to their jobs, and along with dealing with added pandemic-related precautions, redoubled their efforts to serve with care and kindness those who were sundered from families.

Rose described her deep satisfaction and joy at serving with kindness and empathy those who, in her homeland, would be cared for by family members. She offered the care and deference to elders traditional to her culture and that she truly believed was the respect due to the elderly. In doing so, she embodied the very kernel of her Christian faith: Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you (Matthew, 7:12) and Aristotle's bedrock anchor of leisure philosophy: phronesis, which entails using one's ethical wisdom for the good of others. Rose recalled:

What I do is like I help elderly people. And what I do to them is like, I want somebody do it to me then when I grow older like that, for sure. For us, back home, we take care of the elderly people at home. They don't go like to facilities. But here, I come to Canada, they [the elderly] are in facilities. They're not home because of the work kind that people having here, nobody home to take care of them. So, where they are staying is like their home now. And we are part of them too. My clients, they love me. I feel like this is my second home. And then, like most of my time I spend with them, I love them, I love all the ladies, and all the men that I work with. Some are like, 'take me home, take me home', and then I'm like, 'I cannot take you home'.

Rose said she felt validated by the reciprocal affection and high regard her clients held for her. Her work, she said, "makes me relax." Having seen much distress and upheaval in her life in a Ugandan refugee camp before coming to Canada and having long experience of conflict and violence and the stress it engendered, Rose strove for calm and to approach her job with humour, empathy, and a desire to collaborate with colleagues to get the work done. Serving with empathy and a sense of purpose had earned her accolades from her employer and she was warmly regarded and appreciated by the families of those she served. She was proud of her contribution to the well-being of those in her care, particularly during the pandemic, and found happiness and fulfillment in taking care of their needs in the same way as she would one day wish to be cared for. It was, for her, a badge of honour to offer the best possible service to her clients, to give them comfort when the pandemic had robbed them of the company of their families and had plunged many into an abyss of loneliness.

Working two jobs, and as many shifts as she could manage, Sarah was often away from home from Friday to Sunday, one of a handful of workers at her job willing to work weekends

and statutory holidays, the awkward shifts, the graveyard shifts, the times when others typically wanted to spend time with their own families. Sarah, too, was responsible for providing for the needs of family members in Uganda, including food, medicine, and school fees, hence her hectic schedule. Yet, like Rose, she told me she found joy, pleasure, and fulfillment in serving the needs of others, and did so with a joyful heart to ensure that no one in her care was neglected. Sarah had no formal training as a health care aide, but she had spent her life caring for others, whether in raising her sister, or as an aide in long term care facilities and group homes. Her warm-hearted generosity of spirit was evident in her concern for those in her care, doing her utmost to be responsive and alert to their concerns. Like Rose, she espoused deep respect for the elderly, and at her workplace, she was attentive to the elders as they talked about their lives. Sarah described the lessons the elderly offered:

> Like, if you work with the seniors, they like telling you about the stories that you never know before, right? So, for them, if you are you asking them about their life, their childhood, how they grow up, they want you to talk about [that]…. I learn a lot.

Sarah expressed appreciation for the stories and reminiscences of elderly people and described both empathy and love for people who, in some cases, have not been treated well or had been ignored or neglected by their families. Sarah, echoing Rose, emphasized, "we are their family." Sarah's feelings of satisfaction, gladness, and comfort were derived from caring for and protecting vulnerable people, and of bringing joy and contentment into their lives, as well as fostering a haven of normalcy—something she found especially important to do as the pandemic continued to rage across the globe.

Though both women were immensely busy with their numerous shifts and multiple jobs and responsibilities, what they experienced in service of others was described by each as leisure

because it filled their being with the satisfaction of enacting goodness. Their experiences are an example of leisure through work, as they felt uplifted by serving with generosity of spirit.

Isifinyezo: A Recapitulation

In the face of the most devastating losses of the COVID-19 pandemic, study participants articulated ways in which they had turned to leisure derived from, and anchored in, their cultural heritage traditions for comfort. At the warming, vivifying cultural hearth that had begun to glow once more even as the pandemic fanned across the globe, families turned to each other, finding leisure companionship, and strengthened appreciation for their loved ones. Radiating from the cultural hearth came satisfaction and happiness in the leisure of preparing, savouring, and sharing traditional meals and baking.

Leisure radiated from the cultural hearth and was made manifest in the handing down of culinary traditions from mother to daughter, and daughters receiving such gifts and treasures of heritage evinced grateful thanks and deepened their relationships with their mothers. The hearth sparked and bloomed other satisfying and pleasurable cultural leisures: of heritage language learning that served to strengthen bonds between daughters and mothers, or with families, or in passing on to younger family members the playful joys of traditional African games. Making and doing in the form of hair styling and braiding brought mothers and daughters closer as they drew pleasure and happiness from their leisure grooming, and in feeling cared for, or in caring for others.

The cultural hearth of home spilled over into workplaces where the anchoring tenets of philosophical leisure, that it is both virtuous and phronetic, were apparent in Rose and Sarah's kind generosity in extending their love and protectiveness of their families to the vulnerable and infirm people they served in their work, and whose families could not visit because of pandemic

restrictions. In doing so, Rose and Sarah embodied their traditional ethic of care, so deeply

embedded in their African tradition of being, and reverence for elders.

My Soul Soothed in Arts- and Nature-Based Leisure

The deep cultural meaning of leisure during the pandemic found expression in an

exuberance of creative and artistic endeavours that included painting, creative writing, dancing,

sewing, and soul soothing leisure involving working the soil and cultivating plants native to

participants' homelands. At times, these ventures manifested political discontent, especially in

light of the events of the summer of 2020 when racial tensions came to a boil in the USA with

the murder of a Black man, George Floyd, by a White policeman before a large, horrified and

pleading crowd of onlookers. Daughters in my study raged at this injustice, and injustices in their

homelands, and they vigorously painted their seething feelings, or wrote passionately about

inequity, power, and the scourge of racial discrimination.

While some of the daughters in my study had told me how they had either taken up

painting during the pandemic, a painting by Vanessa reached into the pool of her deeply political

side. In Figure 5, the painting represents Vanessa's outrage and her protest at violence against

women, of solidarity with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and protests in the US.

Figure 5

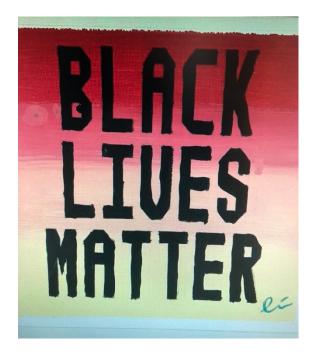*Painting the Personal and the Political*

Figure 5 also represents her anger at police brutality and male violence against women and girls in Nigeria, she told me, as well as her frustration and anger at the complacency of the older generation who, to her mind, appeared not to care that these atrocities were committed against women and girls with impunity and unconcern for their human rights. Vanessa expressed her rage through her paintings. She told me how she had gone to great lengths to get the BLM painting (Figure 5) just right: drawing the letters on graph paper first to ensure the dimensions were just right and choosing the colours with care so they would convey her solemn message of concern for, and unity with, a movement still gathering momentum. "I like the fact that people are risking their lives to fight for this [human rights] in a pandemic. It really says a lot," she said. The experience of painting had been immersive to the exclusion of other distractions, and the painstaking care she took with each colour choice and brush stroke made manifest her expression of cultural and political solidarity with those speaking out against deeply-entrenched racism, sexism, and injustice, and alongside whom she could not be in person. Painting had offered both

a refuge from becoming overwhelmed by her emotions, and from the horrors she saw around her and needed to inwardly digest.

Both Zuhrah and Kiza (daughters) found the written word, through writing poetry and other creative writing, important for expressing their inward questioning, turmoil, or shock and dismay at political events. Like Vanessa, Zuhrah too was horrified at the murder of George Floyd and expressed her compassion and grief in this poem, titled, "All the right terms, and not a solution in sight"

> xenophobic.
> sexist.
> racist.
> prejudiced.
> marginalized.
> idolized.
> privileged.
> we have all the right words.
> the explosion of
> nomenclature
> neologisms
> language
> to discuss our feelings
> our experiences
> our society
> and all the problems that come along with it.
> but there's a responsibility that comes with
> awareness, that i was never ready for.
> the burden of social equity:
> a pursuit, bigger than yourself.
> it's exhausting.
> time after time
> person after person, mistreated
> disregarded
> murdered
> for their race
> sex
> class
> did they choose?
> choose to be given so many labels
> choose to become another statistic

> thrown around in arguments
> without humanity
> or compassion.
> we've already lost.
> we have all the right words, without a solution, insight.

This is just one of Zuhrah's poems of caring, compassion, her outpouring of grief at the injustice she saw in the world. There was a sense of helplessness too, she said, because she was wise enough to know that real, monumental change took more than protest, but that the debates about racial and sexual injustice were important, timely, and relevant. She said, "I felt really hopeless [at George Floyd's death] to be honest. It's a really hard time to be a Black woman, but also just to be a person who has compassion. It was heartbreaking to see all that." Writing poetry to express her pent-up feelings was cathartic, and brought welcome release in the realization that, though she had not associated the creative arts—music, dance, poetry, drama—with bringing about societal change, she realized that "you need writers to help articulate a collective feeling. I had just never thought about it like that."

Alexis and Zuhrah both expressed leisure through their love of dancing for the sheer joy of it, and while Zuhrah had regarded dance as an expression of her faith and a celebration of life, Alexis, who loved West African music and especially "Afro dancing," the fusion of dancing and music were electric for her cultural self-expression. Dancing was Alexis's way of proudly expressing herself as a woman of African heritage, and her illustration of self through body movement was far more meaningful to her than mere words. "I think I just like moving and expressing myself with my body. I find it better to express like happiness or excitement through dance," she said.

Holding to Creative Nostalgia: "I Can Think About My Family in Africa"

The mothers in my study tended, in contrast to daughters, not to describe ways in which they had found new, creative ways to have leisure during the COVID-19 pandemic. More often, they told me they had continued to engage in culturally rooted creative leisures, such as sewing, or dancing, that they had enjoyed before the pandemic, steeped in African traditions of doing and being, and of preserving those traditions. Of note, it seemed that a thread of nostalgia for their childhoods in Africa, or the traditional rituals in which they had participated, ran through their creative leisure. The expressions of nostalgia appeared unique to the mothers, but only faintly so for the daughters, who had come to Canada as children and had grown up here. As such, daughters had rapidly acculturated, easily straddling two cultures: their African one and Canadian culture. One mother of a four-year-old daughter, Argentine, who was othermother to her adolescent sister, had learned to sew shopping bags, aprons, and purses at a centre for persons with disability in Goma, in her native Congo. With her love of sewing, and her means of supporting herself in Canada, Argentine had continued her industrious leisure through the pandemic. Though the making of items in a colourful array of African fabrics brought her joy and sense of purpose, it was also bathed in, and associated with heartfelt memories of her heritage homeland, and yearning for those family members and friends who remained there, many of them in dangerous or precarious living circumstances. Argentine said, "When I am sewing half of my mind goes to the things that I'm making, and the other half I can think about my family in Africa. Sometimes I remember how I was sewing in Africa." As she spoke, Argentine held up a piece of cloth, vibrant with shades of purple and pink. Immersing herself in the creation of new items, working with fabric redolent of her recollections of the sights and sounds of Africa, conjured fond memories of family and the beloved, troubled homeland she had fled.

The lure of dancing with abandon, and playing music from Uganda, became important for Florence's leisure and often she and the children spontaneously danced to Ugandan music and that of other African artists, as the pandemic wore on. She told me that her children leapt to their feet when they heard 'Jerusalema,' a hip-hop song by a South African artist, Master KG, that became an anthem, a siren call across Africa to dance, and an exhortation to be hopeful.[17] The song's lyrics, a religious message, an anthem of hope and a plea for God's protection resonated with many across the globe as COVID-19 infection rates ramped up across the world, and Florence and her children were not immune to the song's catchy beat. "Oh, my daughter loves that one! We have this on repeat. I love the song. So amazing," Florence enthused. Dancing to African music, particularly to gospel music and Ugandan music, evinced cherished memories of her childhood, living with her grandmother. Florence recalled being a child in her village in Uganda, and dancing, along with other village children, for their elders at Christmas. "Everything is just like colour surrounds on my childhood, because during Christmas time, like, all the kids compete. We do the traditional dance. So, you learn, you practice, and they tell you, 'Good job,'" she said.

The comfort of nostalgia, of being loved and appreciated by her grandmother and the community basked Florence in happiness as she heard the traditional music and danced to it, now in a place so distant from the rhythms of Africa, and still important for her leisure during the pandemic. The music of Uganda, and traditional gospel music, with their uplifting messages of joy and salvation evoked memories of living in the village with her grandmother and of the joyous gatherings of family and friends at Christmas. Sitting round the fire, listening to stories

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[17] The song, "Jerusalema" by Master KG, a South African hip hot artist galvanized people across the globe to devise their own dance. It became immensely popular in Africa. Here is an example of an exuberant interpretation by the energetic dance troupe, African Kids, of Tanzania. https://youtu.be/bXNWHF2SFyM

and riddles shared by the elders, followed by a dance competition accompanied by traditional music, were fond memories.

At the time of writing, Florence had a very busy life: she was a single mother with two young daughters, working full-time even through the pandemic. Music and dance afforded her a break, respite from her daily cares and responsibilities; they soothed the worry the pandemic had caused.

Both Sarah and Florence expressed their preference for the traditional songs of their homeland, or gospel songs, ones steeped in meaning and life lessons. Sarah said she had little time for the modern songs that seemed vacuous and meaningless to her; they were merely cacophonous blaring, but traditional gospel music soothed her soul. After her shift at work Sarah found a haven of quiet at home with her music. "Oh, most of the time, I play gospel musics that will comfort me. Yeah, or some kind of music, not gospel, but musics that are meaningful, that comforting me," she said. Traditional Ugandan songs soothed Florence and helped her relax as the uncertainty of the pandemic swirled around everything, upsetting peace of mind.

Listening to music or listening to Uganda music specifically because they, you know, there's certain songs … I guess like the old songs, not the new one. And actually, the old songs they had dispatched like a message. They [convey] things to various things to look out for. Now compared to now music is just now really like you know, not useful anymore. But, yeah, that old one? Yeah, that's what I [prefer], you know. I just there and think about it, and dance, and you know...

These sentiments of deriving comfort from music were echoed by other participants who sought solace and meaning in music during the pandemic, whether they were mothers or daughters. For Florence and Sarah, the 'old' songs of their native lands imparted advice, wisdom

that they could learn from, take comfort in and in which they could enrobe themselves and take heart.

The Traditional Leisure of the Soil: Planting Africa

Sarah (othermother) and Rose's (mother) stories of working the soil and connection to the land were intimately entwined in their African traditions of being, therefore an important facet of pandemic-era leisure continued and intensified in a farm outside of Edmonton (Sarah and Rose) and a backyard vegetable garden (Rose). The farmer had set aside some land for the South Sudanese community of the Bari tribe in Edmonton to cultivate the land, so that they could grow and harvest their own vegetables. Sarah embraced the chance to farm regardless of the pandemic. She relished the freedom, silence, and the satisfaction and enjoyment of working the soil at the farm. It was her greatest leisure, feeding the soul and the body as she revelled in the physicality of farming, and her mind as she recalled with pleasure memories of her life in Africa.

> Like farming is reminding your life how I grew up and how we used to cultivate food to eat. Most of the stuff that we are planting we cannot find some time in Canadian stores That makes me happy because it's reminding me how we used to get those veggies and how we cook them. So, I love farming.

Sarah described how the farming enterprise began and the feelings of connection, remembrance of time past, and solidarity and community with others from her homeland it evoked. Sarah described feeling nostalgic because the farm reminded her of planting her garden in her homeland, of harvesting, grinding corn by hand, accompanied by the harmonious singing of other women similarly engaged, and helping each other. Sarah sent me this photograph of herself at the farm (Figure 6), where she stood proudly among the corn she had planted and that had grown into healthy plants, signaling a good harvest.

Figure 6

Sarah Tends Her Crop

       Sarah also enjoyed the camaraderie of others, and that the children could also enjoy running wild in that lovely natural space. There was a large indoor swimming pool which everyone appreciated. She loved that the farm was peaceful and quiet with hectares of space around where the plants were grown, and far from neighbouring farms. Though deer at times came by and ate their vegetables, rather than frustrating her, Sarah told me she was glad to see wild animals there. She took pleasure harvesting what she had worked hard to cultivate, and to know that the harvest was good, organic, and flavourful. This was the kind of place Sarah told me that she would like to live on when she retires—somewhere to be quiet, to rest, immerse in nature, and to enjoy its bounty. Being on the land afforded her respite, stress alleviation, companionship, and an island of calm, peacefulness, and normality in a vastly altered world. Sarah recalled:

Actually, Joseph's friend have a very big place [a farm]. Yeah, so we dig as much as we can, you know. Big plot. Whatever you can plant that you know, you can get something there. Actually, he [the farmer] invited us to go to celebrate the harvest, because each time we are out there he will come and join us. It's very nice. We are like family. Oh, we love being there. I love it because actually, where he lives, there's no noise. There's a lot of space to go for a walk and to enjoy the nature. The little ones there, they enjoy. They have fun because nobody is telling them, 'Don't run in that traffic, don't do this'. They will just [run free].

While Rose had been more reticent about joining her community at the farm because of the threat of the pandemic, she, too, had cultivated some crops of traditional greens and corn at the farm for her family. As well as her crops at the farm, Rose also took refuge in her garden at her home, finding that working the soil was soothing. The family's home had a long backyard and she and her husband brought good soil and compost to augment and enrich the existing soil. They created a vegetable garden in which Rose, with the help of her daughter, had grown a variety of tomatoes and other vegetables and greens native to her homeland.

These indigenous plants from Uganda were prized for their role in the traditional foods she prepared and watching them grow and thrive in Canada brought Rose immense pleasure. She recalled with delight how plants particular to her homeland had thrived in Canada nonetheless, and were all the more precious because they were essential to her traditional recipes:

There's one called *sukuma wiki* [similar to kale or collard greens]. Yeah, we planted it, and when I have harvested it, I'll put in the freezer. Then, I like [to cook] it. Like you fry it; it is very, very delicious food. And I don't know if you know this bean with the black spot? We planted, and we cooked the leaves with peanut butter. It's so good.

Rose's gardening leisure evoked fulfillment and feelings of contentment and satisfaction during the unsettled times of the pandemic (see Figure 7). She described the satisfaction of watching the plants she had nurtured, grow. "I feel like I did something good, because I'm not going to spend, and it's very nutritious and healthful too, because it's not like that they added some fertilizer or chemicals that they have," she said.

Figure 7

Rose and her Children at their Vegetable Garden[18]

Being self-sufficient, growing her own food, harvesting it, and freezing it for use during the winter months was satisfying to Rose. It was also part of her own tradition of cooking traditional foods that she was raised with and habituating her children to the foods of their cultural heritage, so that they, in turn, will appreciate them, knowing and treasuring those foods

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[18] Permission received from Rose to show her and her children's faces. She was particularly keen that I include this photograph of her family. She said it was one of her favourite photographs because it represented her contentment at her life in Canada, her children, and the leisure of her productive garden.

and flavours of South Sudan, and preserving their culinary traditions by passing them down to future generations.

Isifinyezo: A Recapitulation

As the pandemic engulfed the globe, two creative cultural hearthstones became important lodestars of meaningful, vivifying leisure for participants. The pandemic, in 2020, coincided with dramatic political events, some of which erupted in public spaces (e.g., George Floyd's murder by a White policeman). Daughters in my study expressed their outrage at racial and sexual injustices they saw in North America and in their native homelands in leisure by painting and writing poetry passionately to articulate their solidarity with those protesting. They expressed their cultural belonging as African young women leisure expression, such as dance and music, that resonated with their self-construal as more closely allied with distant homelands than with Canada.

Mothers' creative leisure, in contrast to that described by daughters, could be imagined as a crucible of cultural nostalgia, brimming with poignant and comforting memories of their ancestral homelands that buffered them from the pandemic's deleterious impacts. The cultural crucible burbled gorgeous expression in a flair of sewing, listening to uplifting music from their homelands, whether gospel or traditional 'old' songs that conveyed meaning and hope in lives immeasurably complicated by the pandemic. Dancing to music from Africa brought happiness and bound them closer to their ancestral homes, filling them with feelings of joy and pleasure, and warm memories of far-off families and happy childhoods. Most evocative was the comfort of connection to the land, and the joy of working the soil and cultivating crops that were native to their African homelands. Whether at a nearby farm, or in a backyard garden, the importance of tilling, cultivating, and harvesting food for themselves and their families, was evocative of the

centrality of connection to the land of their lives in Africa, and where these leisures of the soil had filled them with satisfaction, purpose, and self-sufficiency in caring for their families' needs and in nurturing them.

Come Together: The Worldwide Cultural Digital Hearth

Participants turned to a pandemic prompted and particularly inward-turning resource for leisure: the internet and the many digital permutations and manifestations that have sprung from it. From social media to streaming services, to television programming, news services, video-gaming, blogging, and more, the internet became a vital way to escape, connect, maintain relationships, stay informed, learn, worship, and to have leisure. Study participants used digital leisure for entertainment, watching movies and television, reading books, playing games, shopping, studying, even for nourishment of the soul, but to what end? Digital leisure was no panacea for leisures lost, and ties severed. Participants also remarked that while digital leisure had great allure, and plenty of variety, it also repelled and palled after a glut of it. A surfeit of digital leisure resulted in feelings of dissatisfaction, desire for more meaningful ways to spend one's time, or boredom, even while participants recognized the digital world's significance and usefulness in their lives and leisure. This push-pull, attract-repel aspect of digital media was apparent in participants' heavy use of media on one hand, as well as satiation and turning from it on the other.

Staying Connected with Screens

Despite the hardship, economic deprivation, instability, and loss, including the loss of leisure choice and enjoyment of leisure with others during the COVID-19 pandemic, othermother Sarah revealed a remarkable insight: that because of digital communications and the internet we were able, in a time of plague, to stay connected to those dear to us. She said, "We

are lucky that the COVID happen when we have this [internet]. Like the communication became easier. Before, when, I guess, I came to Canada, it's very difficult to communicate. So now, at least, we can communicate through FaceTime." The veracity of Sarah's insight unfolded in the ways mothers in my study used the internet during the pandemic. Having the internet meant being able to continue some forms of leisure they had enjoyed before the pandemic interrupted normal life. Florence derived great pleasure and comfort in watching African American dramas on television because they embraced her in a cocoon of nostalgia for her native Uganda. "There's a way, like, he [the show] speaks to me, like, what relates my kind of childhood. I love those dramas," she said.

Daughters described watching Nigerian dramas with their mothers on YouTube, or North American daytime drama series. The chief joy was in sharing the experience, often swaddled in cultural familiarity of African movies that felt like 'home.' For Jean, watching Nigerian movies with her older sister was not only important for sisterly connection, but also served as a catalyst for Sarah to involuntarily reveal things about herself to which Jean was not typically privy. Because Nigerian movies "are kind of like similar to home," Jean said, they evoked emotional responses in Sarah, "And I get to see different sides of her. I get to see what makes her mad, what makes her happy, like, you know, what makes her laugh". That meant Jean could covertly deepen her understanding of the sister who had raised her. As a youngster, newly arrived from a refugee camp in Uganda to join her sister, Jean had explained to me how she had learned how to speak English by watching Treehouse TV, and that she still found watching television enormously helpful for quelling stress. She recalled that during the pandemic television was often the solace to which she turned for comfort and distraction. It was the electronic 'friend' that substituted for absent family members—Sarah's work at two jobs typically meant she was

absent from home for days at a time even during the pandemic when jobs were restored—and, without the company of family, the television, with its plethora of family dramas and situation comedies, comforted Jean with their company:

> TV is like a big part of my life. I watch it a lot. I learned a lot from it. I learned English from it, so it's something that I do all the time. When I'm stressed, I usually watch a film, like Korean dramas, and they get me out of, you know, feeling stressed, because I would be watching it out, forget about what I was stressed.

Other daughters similarly described watching programs or films with their mothers that they would not typically choose themselves, simply to spend some time with their mothers, and in appreciation for the nucleus of family. "And I guess," offered Thembi, "that has changed what I would say was our bonding activity." While she and her mother did not at times see eye to eye, watching television series together during the pandemic had brought them closer, smoothing out the rough spots in their relationship as they enjoyed the shows in peaceable companionship. It was also a means of escaping the carnage of the pandemic pervading every news broadcast.

The pandemic-mandated separation of families in different households meant sustaining relationships outside of the family circle through digital means. Kiza sent a poignant photograph (Figure 8) depicting two computers facing each other, one displaying a photograph of her with her "best friend and partner" and the other facing it, with a sign 'Movie' written on a sheet of paper and propped against it. Kiza shared:

Figure 8

Missed Movie Night

I hadn't seen my best friend in a long, long time. And so, he sent me this picture. We were supposed to have like a FaceTime movie date. But I think I got busy with school, so we didn't, and then he sent me that and I was like, aw.

It was these gentle, poignant expressions of affection that typified the heartache of missing someone deeply loved that warmed emotionally, helping Kiza and her boyfriend to stay connected—a playful photograph evoking the good times in leisure they had enjoyed before the pandemic altered life.

There's an App for That: "All I Do Is Be On My Phone."

Mobile telephones were ubiquitous and indispensable, as were tablets, laptops, and regular computers, armed with a plethora of applications, or apps, as vital modes of communication during the isolating influences of the pandemic. Apps were widely used by all participants to connect with friends and family, near and far. Without the internet, maintaining connection with each other, and with relatives in other countries, would have been difficult if not impossible. I noticed, however, that daughters tended to take the convenience of connectivity via

the internet for granted. On the other hand, Sarah and Argentine, both othermothers and former refugees, saw the internet as something special in its usefulness for daily life and expressed thankfulness for it. Because they had lived in war-ravaged parts of the world where internet access was patchy and unreliable if it was accessible at all, the internet, which allowed connectivity and all manner of leisure during the pandemic, was a blessing.

At times, particularly when schools were closed, leisure became simply whiling away time on TikTok[19] a video-sharing app to which ordinary people post videos of themselves doing humorous, or absurd things. As the pandemic progressed and was clearly entrenched for the long term, the important thing, Kiza said, was to be connected with others, and with her family and to draw closer that circle of insiders.

So, during the pandemic, like, we kind of like understood the importance, you know, of like being together, and we understood what we took for granted before. And then sometimes, like, we'd just get on, like, a group call … just like so we could hear each other's voices.

Both Lindiwe and Kiza said they had spent hours watching videos on their own, and they described TikTok as addictive. Kiza said,

On platforms like TikToK, where you're watching funny videos or you're literally… like people spend eight hours on TikTok laughing, and I know because I was one of them. It's a very popular app amongst my age group, and younger people as well. And then also on Snapchat, I think Snapchat can be considered leisure because you send funny pictures to

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[19] TikTok is a video-sharing application, created by ByteDance, a Chinese application developer. In existence for five years, and with over 1bn users, as of the current writing, TikTok has broad appeal for young people that far exceeds that of other applications, such as WhatsApp and Instagram. Using TikTok, users can make short videos of themselves lip-syncing, singing, or dancing, or getting up to mischief, and upload them for the entertainment of others. (*"TikTok isn't silly. It's serious."* The Economist, January 15 2022).

your friends, you know. You can play games with them. It's kind of weird, but I deleted

my Snapchat. But yeah, so I guess it depends.

Yet despite the connectivity internet-based apps afforded, none could make up for the

loss of human contact, human touch, the joy of being face-to-face with another person. Lindiwe

despaired, "I was always on my phone, though like even I have my phone, it was like really

boring because all I do is be on my phone."

Isifinyezo: A Recapitulation

Beyond the cultural hearth of home, and the sacred hearth of faith, the digital hearth

beckoned with its plethora of ways to connect with the wider world during the COVID-19

pandemic, or to simply carry on with one's life. At a time when physical isolation from anyone

but for one's immediate family was the edict of the time in many countries across the globe, the

internet was invaluable for helping to restore some sense of normalcy in people's lives. The

internet, then, might be considered a digital crucible of sorts, bubbling with a heady mix of apps

and programs, means for connectivity and entertainment, that meant all sorts of leisure was

possible, despite the pandemic, burbling away on the hob of this dizzyingly dazzling, cultural

digital hearth. Daughters, who had grown up with the internet having always been part of their

lives, took it for granted, whereas mothers, particularly those who had come from conflict-riven

countries, expressed their thankfulness for it. The internet not only meant that life could go on:

banking, studying, reading electronically, playing games, working from home, but that plenty of

entertainment was available too. Often, watching films with others using internet streaming

services afforded companionship and stress amelioration for a while. However, while the

cornucopia of apps, such as TikTok and Instagram, brought instant gratification, the internet also

palled with the glut of it, because it simply was no substitute for being in the flesh-and-blood company and presence of others from whom one had been sundered.

The Friends at the Hearth: Developing and Deepening Ties

I was interested in how African immigrant mothers and daughters experience leisure in relationships with each other, with friends or other leisure companions, during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the previous sections, I described the ways mothers and daughters deepened their relationships with each other, often through leisure steeped in cultural tradition. In this section I unfold the experiences of leisure with friends and other leisure companions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although mothers, whether guardians, birth mothers, or othermothers to a young woman they were raising reported that they spent time in the company of friends, they spent less time than daughters did during the course of the pandemic; mothers tended to be more family focused. However, in the case of single mothers, a colleague at work, or a close friend was sometimes included in the 'bubble' of individuals with whom it was deemed 'safe' to socialize as the pandemic raged and the number of people with whom one could interact was restricted. Sarah, an othermother, found that during the summer, when her workplace closed and many venues for leisure were shuttered, a friend from work, whose travel plans were scotched because of pandemic restrictions, introduced her to stair-walking in Edmonton's downtown, where flights of wooden stairs lead to pleasant riverside walks. It was a pleasurable experience, and one she would not have had, but for a friend—and but for the pandemic. Sarah described her appreciation for an enforced 'holiday' from work—one in which she found a unique opportunity to spend a few weeks in the company of a colleague and friend and her sister in carefree leisure she might not otherwise have had, and that she had relished. Sarah recalled:

Once [during the] pandemic actually we go to downtown to the stairs. So that is what we

did for about three weeks and then I get called back to work. So, we clearly have quality

time together, me, Jean, and my friend.

Several daughters in my study lived in the same residence at the University of Alberta,

and because of proximity, became friends as they were also either in the same program of study,

had a shared cultural identity, or had known each other in their hometown through ethnocultural

group belonging. University residences, in particular, served as a vital nexus for daughters to

connect with friends, bringing relief from isolation. One of Zuhrah's classmates in her nursing

program offered both emotional support and companionship when social connections were

severely restricted. She told me her friend was "such a light" and that having a few friends in

safe "bubble" with whom to socialize and have leisure helped counteract and protect against

negative emotions or feelings of isolation. "We're in each other's bubbles," she explained. "I

hang out with like four people. But we were able to go for walks and, you know, do our best to

make sure everybody's staying safe. But also, nobody's going crazy by ourselves."

In her final sentence, "nobody's going crazy by ourselves," Zuhrah touched on the impact

on mental health of isolation that had been forced upon people who were alone, without family,

or isolated from friends. Zuhrah expressed her relief at not being alone, appreciation for her

friends who supported each other with emotional and moral support, someone to lean on and

have leisure with despite the stress of the pandemic.

Having been isolated from her friends when the university closed its, Ewurakua was

ecstatic when her friends returned to campus during the summer of 2020. Some of the activities

offered by Campus and Community Services re-opened and friends Ewurakua and Zuhrah,

returned to the kickboxing classes they loved. Ewurakua shared a photograph (see Figure 9) of

herself, taken by Zuhrah, and described the experience of sitting among the autumn leaves, after a workout with her friend. "This is actually one of my favorite pictures," she said. "You know, I love how calm and relaxed I am and just happy in the midst of all the stress. I'm like freer. I'm happier."

Figure 9

The Pleasure of Leisure with a Friend

Ewurakua expressed an array of emotions as she reviewed the photo of herself sitting outside her residence (Figure 9). She shared her sense of accomplishment at having completed a challenging workout, the relief of having a companion to share leisure with, the pleasure of lolling on a leaf strewn lawn, and of momentary calm and respite in the midst of once-in-a-century pandemic.

Friends living in the residence found various ways to socialize and share leisure. With many of the daughters in my study being in the same small safe bubble of individuals, they spent Thanksgiving together, experimenting with recreating their favourite restaurant foods; they found ways to study in the library together, when it briefly re-opened. The most important part

for them all, though, was being together as friends. As Thembi said, following an evening of trying to recreate her favourite Chinese food in her dormitory room, and inviting her bubble of friends to partake, "We ate, and then we talked, and that was the end of the evening. It was around 12 (midnight) when we were finally done." The food, Thembi emphasized, was not the focal point of the evening. Getting together to spend hours in each other's company was. Appreciation for what had been taken for granted before, now lost, and the expectation of being able to gather with friends for companionship, socializing and support, was amplified in the shocked realization of the isolation of the 'new normal.'

Yet the pandemic was, unexpectedly, a catalyst for deepening friendships, even as it sundered many. As with Sarah, when a friend invited Jean to go outdoor stair-climbing in downtown Edmonton (the city has a number of steep stairways leading to various walks in the river valley) as a way of getting some exercise and keeping their weight down, she accepted. What she found was, that as they walked in the natural surroundings, their friendship deepened, and became more open, intimate. They shared confidences and secrets that they had not before.

Though Jean had said during our discussions that she did not particularly enjoy the outdoors, during the pandemic the outdoors provided leisure that had taken on new meaning for her. She discovered the pleasure of being outside, walking the stairways of Edmonton and found the activity invigorating. The expanse of nature seemed to loosen both inhibitions and tongues as friends broached topics they usually did not, deepening their understanding of each other. It was as though being outside invited more profound conversations about matters. This cathartic turn, wrought by being in nature, revealed new and surprising things about Jean's friend, and it was both enlightening and refreshing to realize that nature offered more than simply fresh air. Leisure in nature was also a catalyst, prompting invitation to reveal rare insights—far more than Jean had

experienced with her friend before. Jean described the experience of companionably walking with her friend in a lovely natural environment:

> And like me and her we'll have these deep conversations that we never usually would have. Topics just come up and go and you're like, I never knew this about you, you know? But I'm finding that I love it a lot.

During the pandemic summer of 2020, with friends working summer jobs, and so little time to spend together, Zuhrah and two friends in her 'bubble,' young women she had been friends with for a decade, planned a picnic before they were due to return to university. For one afternoon, away from everyone, they indulged in the rare joy of sharing each other's company, and a simple repast. Zuhrah made a collage of images of her leisure during the pandemic. In Figure 10, her friends sat, relaxed, at a picnic in a field.

Figure 10

A Pandemic Picnic

Zuhrah recalled the euphoric pleasure of their pandemic picnic:

So, this was one of the few times we were able to get together. We made a charcuterie

board; we got a bottle of sparkling apple juice or something and we just spent an evening

together, like in a field, just eating cheese and crackers and be like … I really enjoyed the

time we got to spend together because I left to come back here [university] a few weeks

later.

Zuhrah's experience of the summer picnic, the almost 'stolen moment' with her close

friends was bittersweet and of profound importance because it was a rare occasion during the

pandemic, making their time together all the more poignant and precious. The picnic served to

fill a number of needs. It served to cement and affirm their long friendship, as well as afford

emotional support and a measure of normalcy as they gathered together to share food and

company.

Isifinyezo: A Recapitulation

While the nucleus of family, vitally present at the cultural hearth, sustained and uplifted,

affording leisure of family, the hearthstone of friendship burnished too as a cherished touchstone

of well-being, offering companionship, leisure, and emotional sustenance. It seemed that the

pandemic, though restricting in so many ways, curbing leisure with our usual cadre of friends,

and clamping down on socializing beyond the family circle, had also caused surprising

friendships to bloom, often within families as sisters realised the importance of each other, and

came to appreciate each other more, or in deepening friendships in revelatory moments. Family

members became close companions; participants grew closer to siblings; mothers and daughters

took renewed interest in each other and sought each other for leisure of many different kinds; and

friendships blossomed. Importantly, the pandemic revealed in stark relief, and to the regret of

many participants, the leisures—and relationships—they had taken for granted that had been sidelined by pandemic health restrictions. It underscored the relationships they had overlooked or neglected, and the desire to improve or do better, be more adventurous, love more generously, when the pandemic had passed. Perhaps in what we have lost in the pandemic, we more clearly see what we truly do have, and what is important.

In the crucible of cultural hearth, we find the molten core of leisure. Through this core an alchemy of culture, tradition, and the intensity of being, blend and radiate, and are made richer by joining together. In a joining together that embraced friends and family members, inviting them to draw closer and share the cultural hearth's glowing heart of leisure, companionship, and emotional uplifting, participants made their way through a plague of loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Précis: Bringing it all Together

Drawing on the metaphors of crucible and hearth, I pay homage to the embeddedness of cultural traditions that I found emanating from many of my participants' enunciations of their leisure experiences during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is not to say that every participant described her pandemic-era leisure in these terms, but that cultural tradition was vibrantly and sufficiently noteworthy as pulsing through many participants' stories of leisure in a time of plague and could not be ignored. In the theme, The Crucible of Cultural Hearth, participants lamented the grief of loss of connection with those dear to them: family members in distant homelands, friends, and members of their ethnocultural communities. Being unable to travel was keenly felt as much-anticipated family reunions, opportunities for enacting important cultural rituals, or simply travel for leisure to homelands they dearly wanted to visit again, were rendered impossible because of pandemic restrictions. The loss of jobs and volunteer work, that

had been valuable modes of ethnocultural community connection, was deeply mourned. As churches, the hubs of virtuous leisure being and community socializing and leisure, closed their physical sanctuaries and took their ministering online, participants coped, turning inward to their families, and expressing their faith at a sacred hearth of their own devising: singing, music making, reading the Bible, and attending services online.

In the face of the pandemic, a great resilience flowered, and in the theme The Cultural Hearth Warms, I describe how many participants turned to leisure moored in their cultural heritage traditions for comfort. Often leisure was found in the handing down of cultural traditions, as mothers and daughters sought out each other's company. Culinary traditions were lovingly passed down to daughters, who in turn, deepened their love for their mothers who saw them as worthy of these cultural gifts. Other daughters strengthened their bonds with mothers and other family members by sharpening their heritage language skills, drawing them closer into the orbit of their families by becoming more fluent in their parents' tongue. Leisurely making and doing, in the form of hair styling took on significance as affirmations of mother-daughter bonding and familial love evoked happiness and pleasure in a pleasing ritual of grooming. The cultural hearth of home spilled into workplaces, where the powerful hallmark of leisure, phronesis, found joyful expression in virtuous caring and protectiveness for those who worked among the vulnerable, the infirm, and elderly. Mothers in health care stood in for their clients' absent families, who could not visit, extending to them the care and companionship characteristic of their African ethic of being.

In the theme My Soul Soothed in Arts- and Nature-Based Leisure I unfold the artistic and creative ways in which daughters, in particular, expressed themselves in leisure. Galvanized by blatant acts of racial and social injustice, painting one's emotions, rage, and solidarity with those

experiencing those injustices or protesting them provided a cathartic outlet, as did creative writing and poetry. The cerebral leisures, bathed in political beliefs, railed against the inequity daughters saw in the world. In contrast mothers found creative leisure in returning to what might be called a crucible of cultural nostalgia for the leisures they had loved before the pandemic and that reminded them of far-off homelands and those who still remained there. From mothers' nostalgic cultural crucible tumbled an array of leisures including sewing, listening to music from their homelands and gospel music; they danced with joy and happiness at the remembrance of happy childhoods. Most evocative was mothers' leisure of connection to nature, of working the soil, and of cultivating and harvesting plants native to their homelands. Planting African indigenous plants sprouted a cornucopia of well-being stemming from nostalgia, tradition, and that filled them with deep satisfaction, self-sufficiency, and a sense of purpose.

The dazzling allure of the internet served to bring normalcy to lives rendered askew by the pandemic, but it also repelled. In the theme Come Together: The Worldwide Digital Hearth I explore how the internet's magnetizing hearth of digital wonders helped to connect people sundered by the pandemic and its physical distancing requirements, and limits on social gathering. With schools, universities and all manner of workplaces shuttered, the digital hearth meant being able to talk to people, attend classes, take exams, work from home, read books, and play video games, and be entertained. Mothers, othermothers and daughters streamed films from their familiar and beloved homeland cultures and reveled in each other's company. However, this bedazzling array of leisure choices was also stultifying because of the vacuousness of many of the internet's offerings—and particularly because, while immensely useful for some things, it became tiresome and was no substitute for being with, and in the presence of, another human being. Daughters took the marvel of the internet in stride, there having not been a time in their

lives when it had not been there. However, for mothers who had lived in conflict zones of the world, where internet access was scanty or non-existent, it was deeply appreciated as a blessing.

While at the cultural hearth the nucleus of family was all-important for sustaining and nurturing leisures that involved mothers and other family members, the hearthstone of friendship was vitally important for the joy of friendship beyond the family circle. In the final theme, Friends at the Hearth: Developing and Deepening Ties, surprisingly wonderful and vivifying things happened as friends engaged in leisure with their 'friends in the bubble', doing things they had not before the pandemic in some instances. Consequently, in the surprise of the unexpected, friendships blossomed and deepened in pleasantly surprising ways, even as they opened new avenues for leisure. I found this to be especially so for participants who did not have an extended family in Canada, or whose family composition was atypical, such as for othermothers who had raised their sisters.

In sum, the COVID-19 pandemic had blown cold the bright embers and sparks of the cultural hearth, dousing, with icy immediacy, loved leisures and sundering friendships as restrictions on social gatherings were enforced. The initial reaction to this cataclysmic once-in-a-century health crisis was a sharp shock of grief, as though the world held its breath. But then courage and resilience manifested. Participants poured their energies into filling once again the crucible of cultural hearth, engaging in creative and artistic leisures to illustrate their feelings, and taking heart from the company of families, as mothers and daughters sought each other's company for leisure. They blew mightily on the embers of the cooled cultural hearth, sparking fresh flame of leisure revived. The internet afforded leisure that both uplifted and palled, so participants learned to draw away to find more meaningful and satisfying leisure choices beyond the luring web. Spiritual sustenance and the leisure of worship was burnished as online worship

became available and participants reached into the well of their ethos as Christian women to find, in themselves, a faith sanctuary and a comforting sacred hearth. As the embers at the cultural hearth glowed even during a deadly pandemic, participants derived joy, happiness, and pleasure from traditions handed down through leisure making, doing, and creating; from acts of kindness, care, and love toward those they served in their work, and describing it, unequivocally, as leisure.

Chapter 7: Discussion

The purpose of my research was to explore the lived experiences of leisure of African immigrant women (mothers and daughters) resettled in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. To foster an immersive exploration of the lifeworld experiences of leisure, and the meanings of leisure of African immigrant women and daughters during the COVID-19 pandemic I threaded together two lodestar philosophical theories: Gadamer's (1976, 2004) theory of hermeneutic experience and Aristotle's (2002) sage and holistic philosophy of leisure (Hemingway, 1988; Owens, 1981).

Gadamer (1976, 2004) underscored the omnipresence of tradition and historical situatedness in the experience of being in the world, and I found the presence of cultural knowledge and heritage tradition were strongly evident as serving as mighty leisure bulwarks of resilience and comfort for the participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the research questions I posed were broad in scope, the cultural experience of leisure was vibrantly present in the participants' experiences of leisure. Therefore, my intent in drawing attention to the significant role of culture or heritage tradition in the leisure described by many participants is not with the intent to 'other' or exoticize immigrant women from Africa, or to encapsulate the participants and their cultural heritage-imbued leisure meanings in a metaphorical 'snow globe,' an oddity to be held up for the curious, speculative, or critical gaze of others. I have no doubt that if I my participants had been from any other continent, country, community, ethnocultural group, or race, they would have similarly been influenced by their cultural and heritage traditions (Berry 2005, 2006; Gadamer, 2004). My intent, rather, was to draw attention to the profound veracity of Gadamer's (2004) assertion that as humans we are always in thrall of our traditions (Rabinoff, 2018). Our traditions are formed by an array of factors including the epoch and place into which

we are born, the handed down traditions (Rabinoff, 2018) of our families and social circle, and others who orbit our existence. Furthermore, our finitude as finite human beings and our histories, and the influence of our prejudgments or prejudices—biases and "forestructures of understanding" (Jantzen, 2003, p. 289)—also strongly influence the traditions that enrobe us (Lawn, 2006) and always will. As Lawn (2006) emphasized, "We cannot escape tradition, we are always in it" (p. 36). Therefore, our situatedness as finite beings in the traditions into which we find ourselves thrown in the world is imperative for understanding. After all, opined Vasterling (2003) in considering Gadamer's (1976, 2004) philosophy, "complete liberation from tradition would mean cutting off the branch from which understanding grows" (p. 153). Therefore, I frame part of my discussion in terms of Gadamer's (1976, 2004) broad and magnanimous notion of tradition as instrumental in providing the fertile fundament, the enrobing mantle, that profoundly influences and shapes our horizons of understanding, self-understanding, and understanding itself, all of which fruit from our lived experience of being-in-the-world.

Cultural Belonging: The Tradition of African Being-in-the-World

The impact of cultural belonging to ethnocultural communities through work, faith, volunteerism, and social connections helped sustain the participants during the pandemic. As such cultural adherence and belonging were soothing and comforting in the unfamiliarity and upheaval of the pandemic. Similar findings had also been noted by Baffoe (2010; see also Goitom, 2017; Salami et al., 2020)—though not in pandemic conditions—who found that among African immigrants living in three major cities in Canada, participants maintained strong connections to their heritage cultures and cultural traditions, through music, and the sharing of food, belonging to ethnocultural organizations, and adherence to cultural rites of passage "with regards to birth, naming, and rites of passage including puberty and death" (p. 165). As Salami et

al. (2020) noted in their study of African immigrant parent-child relationships, parents were more likely to be firmly "rooted in their African traditions" (p. 747) than their offspring, who quickly acculturated to Western norms (Goitom, 2017). Of note, according to Okeke-Ihejirika et al. (2018) post-migration African immigrant women, as crucibles of cultural knowledge and African tradition, feel responsible for upholding and maintaining their ethnocultural traditions within their families. They are therefore "pivotal to the establishment, maintenance and negotiation of ethno-cultural boundaries in the inherently de-stabilizing process of migration" (p. 429). During the COVID-19 pandemic these roles of women as upholders of cultural tradition became even more imbued with importance, as bulwarks and beacons of hope as contagion spread across the globe and "fear, stress and uncertainty forced some to re-evaluate what really matters in life" (Stodolska, 2020, p. 4). Participants described turning reflectively inward as the pandemic worsened and found in themselves—and in their communities—reservoirs of courage and resilience that helped them thrive as they faced the pandemic threat. Because participants in my study belonged to well-established ethnocultural communities (Baffoe, 2010; Goitom, 2017; Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2018; Salami et al., 2020), to faith communities, had strong, supportive family relationships, or a cadre of close friends on whom they could rely for companionship (Dale & Selfron, 2018) they did not falter but took control of their new circumstances. This "shared resilience" (Vinkers et al., 2020, p. 15) at the community level was pivotal in enabling the participants in my study to re-establish their equilibrium once again, even in the uncertainty of the pandemic. Bonanno (2004) theorized that resilience in the face of adversity, loss, or experiences of violence is more common in people than is typically described in the psychological literature. Bonanno further noted that "the vast majority of individuals exposed to such [traumatic] events do not exhibit chronic symptom profiles and that many and, in some

cases, the majority show the type of healthy functioning suggestive of the resilience trajectory" (p. 22). The resilience and determination, as well as the joy and happiness, expressed by participants during the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded in their leisures, moored in their cultural strongholds of ethical being, bore vibrant testament to the veracity of Bonanno's (2004) assertion.

In participants' initial responses to the dramatic and sudden changes to life as they had known it—loss, grief, and the deleterious effects on their mental health of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic—resonated with what Fuchs (2018) described as the experience of grief, in which the individual may feel as though she has been dealt a blow that she cannot rationalize; time slows, and the enormity of reality is discombobulating, disorientating, and does not seem real at first. Niaz (2016) described ways in which natural disasters in the world disproportionately impacted the lives of women in terms of number of deaths, and deteriorated living conditions during such events as an earthquake in Pakistan, or war in Iraq and Syria affected women. Zemishlany (2016) elucidated the victimizing experience of an act of terrorism in Israel and the importance of feeling a sense of solidarity and communitarianism to build resilience in the aftermath of such a traumatic experience. While these authors' studies were valuable for understanding the experience of people in natural and man-made disasters, those scenarios did not equate to the experience of a once-in-a-century pandemic (Gesi et al., 2020; Pfefferbaum & North, 2020, Vinkers et al., 2020), where human beings were bound by health directives to stay away from each other, and where every person with whom one interacted could carry infection, and, in the worst scenario, endanger one's life. There was, during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly at the advent of it, the perception of danger in every action. Such a

perception was heightened by confusing health messages from Canadian and international health authorities (Zhang et al., 2021).

The shock of the sudden loss and curtailment of normalcy in the early stages of the pandemic and "the imposition of unfamiliar public health measures that infringe on personal freedoms" (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020, p. 510) was followed by the stress of uncertainty that manifested occasionally in outbursts of anger or dismay, frustration, and insomnia. However, participants did not succumb to stress or become debilitated or incapacitated by it. As such, this finding is in accord with the work of Vinkers et al. (2020). These researchers, writing specifically about the psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, made the point that "distress and anxiety are *normal reactions* to a situation as threatening and unpredictable as the coronavirus pandemic" (p. 13, italics added), and that negative responses to stress, such as feeling helpless, depressed or being unable to sleep, were typical in a stressful situation. Furthermore, though some study participants had lost their jobs as workplaces were shuttered, and experienced a severely straitening impact on their financial situations (Boals & Banks, 2020), they strove to find ways to mitigate the negative impacts of such losses, and rather than panicking and unravelling psychologically or succumbing to despair, they took to leisure, often derived from their cultural traditions (Baffoe, 2010; Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2018; Salami et al., 2020) to help them think through their altered reality, and find space for coping (Froese et al., 2019; Kleiber et al., 2002; Iwasaki et al., 2005).

Participants found both comfort and spiritual renewal through leisure in the midst of the pandemic. Froese et al. (2019), in their review of the literature pertaining to leisure and meaning making following the catastrophic loss of a loved one, suggested that engagement in leisure could foster joy in life, forge important pathways for connecting with others, make space for

self-renewal, centre the individual in terms of their future direction and vision for themselves, and find inner strength. While Froese et al. (2019) had not focused specifically on leisure pertaining to the experience of a pandemic, these positive facets of leisure's propensity to uplift following devastating loss chimed with ways in which the participants in my study described ways in which they had found leisure that contributed to their ability to manage pandemic-related stress and to come to terms with a world radically changed by COVID-19. In a similar vein Kleiber et al. (2002) pronounced leisure as fostering the transcendence of debilitating instances in life. These researchers discovered that leisure was a valuable resource in restoring calm in the lives of people who had experienced negative life events. Similar claims were made by Iwasaki et al. (2005), who suggested that the experience of leisure could foster feelings of rejuvenation "and … a sense of renewal" (p. 96) in individuals for counteracting stress. The ways in which participants in my study described their experiences of leisure, their creativity in leisure (Boals & Banks, 2020; Gammon & Ramshaw, 2020), and the key role of warm and enduring relationships with family members and friends in difficult times (Yuen, 2021), was entirely in accord with the assertions of these aforementioned researchers. Therefore, while the initial enunciations of worry and stress at the outset of the pandemic were typical of the way participants described their feelings of loss, they were not lost. The pandemic did not overwhelm them. They drew on their wells of resilience and inner strength (Vinkers et al., 2020), their cultural traditions (Gadamer, 2004); they fastened tighter their family ties and found inventive ways to enjoy leisure (Froese et al., 2019).

The Power of Faith in Leisure

Christian faith and spirituality were deeply and inextricably embedded in participants' personal ethics and in their lifeworld experiences of being, of leisure, imbuing every aspect of

their lives and formed their horizons of understanding (Gadamer, 2004) of the world. People from sub-Saharan Africa tend to be Christian, whereas North Africa is dominated by Islam (Njoh, 2006; Oduyoye, 1997). Christianity and the practice of participants' faith was joyously expressed through prayer, through singing, and dancing. The women described how their faith was integral to their lives, that their faith was not separate from their leisure. Most important was the way in which their personal ethics in terms of their way of life and cultural being (Gyekye, 2011; Metz, 2012), and way of being in the world towards themselves and others was influenced by their faith (Hurly, 2019; Salami et al., 2017). The joy and comfort expressed by participants in their faith resonated with Pieper's (1963) philosophically and religiously imbued philosophy of leisure. According to Pieper (1963) "leisure is a mental and spiritual attitude" and a "condition of the soul" (p. 40) that describes those who "leave the reins loose and who are free and easy themselves" (p. 41), and it is enmeshed in contemplation and worship of God. Parr (2009) denoted this attitude of openness, receptivity, and awareness to which Pieper (1963) alluded, to the unfolding of experiences and life knowledges occurs and "insight into our humanness and connection with the world is given or revealed when our minds and hearts are quiet" (p. 84). Importantly, Pieper (1963) advised that leisure must be engaged for its own sake, and not in pursuit of shallow, hedonic outcomes. Thought of in these terms, faith and leisure in the lives of the women in my study hew very closely to Pieper's concept of leisure, and a leisure ethic that is affirming of the gift of being in the world (Parr, 2009), particularly because of their faith's pre-eminence in their lives, governing all they believed in and enacted.

The women in my study did not so much surrender to the comforting warmth of their faith, as they ardently lived it, and vibrantly celebrated it in their lives. Other scholars have documented the spiritual affordances of leisure. For example, Creighton-Smith et al. (2017)

argued that no matter the faith, because all faiths have as their fundament modes of ethical behaviour and good living tenets (e.g., the Ten Commandments), faith can form the basis for ethical decision-making in terms of leisure. This was true of the women in my study, particularly as they described moderating their leisure choices in accordance with Scripture. In addition, scholars such as Heintzman (2009) have documented the association between mindful leisure experiences, such as walking in nature, boating through peaceful glades, or gazing on beautiful vistas that have induced spiritual experiences, feelings of being closer to God and the universe, and heightened spirituality and well-being. It is also appropriate here to refer to the ethicality of leisure (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017; Hurly, 2021; Owens, 1981) particularly considering the morality, and virtuous living embedded in Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* within his leisure philosophy. It is a term often, and wrongly, assumed to mean the attainment of happiness (Hall, 2019), but this is a very shallow view of *eudaimonia* (Hemingway, 1988). Because Aristotle's concept of leisure involves striving to reach one's potential, by aiming for excellence in all one's doings, and in the virtuous life (Hemingway, 1988, Owens, 1981) there is in leisure the obligation to act morally and virtuously towards others in achieving *eudaimonia*, or what Hemingway (1995) called the 'felicitous life.'

Participants' beliefs and faith foundation found expression in ways that were congruent with Christianity, as they attended conscientiously to their faith for its messages of comfort, salvation, and words of wisdom for good and righteous living. Doing so was not an unusual occasion, but rather integrally woven into their lives. The understanding of self as a Christian woman who is strong, questioning, courageous, loved by God, and living her values-in-action (Harrell et al., 2014; Salami et al., 2017) was, for those of faith, reflected in other aspects of their leisure before and during the pandemic. Therefore, I would argue that faith communities and

churches in Canada have a unique role to play in the lives of newcomers to Canada by being vigilant and alert to the myriad ways in which belief is influential and pivotal in African immigrants' lives, and essential to their well-being and leisure, and as a faith-based pathway to making welcome and inviting in African immigrants, thereby fostering their successful integration into Canadian society (Hurly, 2019). It is my contention that churches can serve as unique naves for spiritual nurturance, fellowship and the leisure of socialization and friend-making for newcomers, and in particular for those who have come to Canada, who are alone, with no other family members. The church as gathering place for African immigrant women became yet more sharply underscored by the COVID-19 pandemic that severed this vital faith community, and well-being umbilicus. It is significant to note that, the ethic of Christian being in the world dovetails with an anchoring lodestar of hermeneutic phenomenology: the concept of *Dasein,* of being-in-the-world (Gadamer, 2004) and the understanding that the experience of being, and the metamorphosis of the *experience of being* that took place during the pandemic and expressed by participants, marked, among other self-expressions through leisure, their experience of authenticity.

This Above All: The Authentic Self. Participants appeared to use the pandemic-enforced time alone to be intentionally self-reflective, to focus on self-knowledge, and to meditate on their human condition and how best they could develop, grow, and polish the very best of themselves. The acts of contemplation and becoming and being true to one's authentic self are central to philosophical leisure in Pieper's (1963; see also Dattilo & Lopez Frias, 2021) enunciation of leisure, and appeared to be much in evidence among participants. I was also reminded of Shakespeare's play 'Hamlet' (1599/1966, 1.3.78-80) as I mulled these findings.

There is a scene in which the aged father, Polonius, gives parting words to his son, Laertes, advising him thus,

> This above all—to thine own self be true,
>
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
>
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Though Shakespeare's (1599/1966) words may be over 400 years old, the veracity and appropriateness of his exhortation to act and do the things that chimed with one's values, and to cleave to the moral code or code of ethics that spoke of the authentic self, are beyond reproof. Sandelowski (1993) in emphasizing the role of theory in social science research had remarked how she had turned to literature to help her to think about interview data she had already gathered. So, too, did I see a theory of authenticity of person emerging that resonated with the 16th century Bard's work, and pointed to the imperative to act in accordance with one's personal values, and to act virtuously and morally towards others. These anchoring facets of *eudaimonic* leisure expressed by participants chimed particularly well with Aristotle's philosophy of leisure (Hemingway, 1988, 1995; Owens, 1981) as well. They are also central to an African ethic of morality and humanity (Gyekye, 2011) and a traditional ethic of boundedness with others through our shared humanity (*ubuntu*) (Battle, 1997; Mawere, 2014; Nkondo, 2007) and being a person of good character (Gyekye, 2011; Metz, 2012), who strives to serve the common good (Gyekye, 2011). These grounding ethics of African being (Battle, 1997; Gyekye, 2011; Nkondo, 2007; Metz, 2012) harmoniously resonate with Aristotle's (2002) philosophy of leisure and are intimately entwined in the experience of moral being as the authentic expression of self.

In writing about the nature of authenticity from a philosophical viewpoint Guigan (2008) averred that "the ideal of authenticity first emerged as part of an attempt to lay a foundation for a

moral stance that is more authoritative and better grounded than the tendency to following the

crowd and be a team player…" (p. 279). In the context of my study, I found it manifested in the

thoughtful, mindful, self-searching of participants in the pandemic pause, and their desire to be

true to themselves. They sought deeper grounding in their own beliefs and values and that

appeared to reflect their desires for an authentic expression of self (Sohmer, 2020; see also

Tshivhase, 2015). In her study of the authentic self, Sohmer (2020) declared that "authenticity is

intimately connected with interpersonal and environmental contexts" (p. 20) and that the

discovery of the authentic self was relational, and embraced not just the self, but also others with

whom individuals interacted, such as family members and friends. The relationality of becoming

or realizing the authentic self was also noted by Tshivhase (2015). In accord with both Sohmer

(2020) and Tshivhase's (2015) claims that experiencing the authentic self is relational, I found

that the participants were seeking to be true to themselves through their leisure focused on the

tight circle of family and trusted close friends (when they could see them), and that hewed to

their traditions of comfort steeped in cultural meaningfulness (Gadamer, 2004). It appeared that

participants were, through mindful reflection about what was important to them, intent on

achieving greater self-understanding, an important hallmark of Gadamer's (2004) theory of

hermeneutic experience. Their internal reflections and machinations also invoked "the

hermeneutical circle of understanding" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 293), in which they oscillated

between the whole and the parts of their existential machinations and self-talk, throwing back

and forth ideas and notions in an animated internal debate of how they wanted to be, often in the

context of their cultural traditions, to reach their potential in the development and full flowering

of themselves.

The profound self-searching and self-talk participants described to distract themselves

from feelings of hopelessness or anxiety, to push themselves to engage in leisure they had enjoyed before the pandemic, or to discover new and different forms of leisure, they expressed resilience, and fortitude in the face of adversity (Bonanno, 2004; Vinkers et al., 2020). This finding was congruent with previous studies of immigrant women in which researchers found them determined, courageous, bold, and independent, finding themselves, and finding leisure in myriad ways, yet reliant on a close association with others (Baird & Boyle, 2012; Cook & Waite, 2016; Gallant & Tirone, 2017; Hurly, 2019; Hurly & Walker, 2019a). Therefore, we would be wrong to assume that people wilt under dire conditions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic wrought. Instead, like the Bosnian children in Husain's (2005) study, participants in my study demonstrated positivity and optimism even in uncertain and dangerous times, the stabilizing moorings of belonging and solidarity with others, being cared for (Zemishlany, 2016), and taking joy in small leisures (Kono & Shinew, 2015), seemed to serve to uphold and instill the will to continue to find joy in life through leisure (Quirke, 2015).

Relationality, *Ubuntu*, and Phronesis in Virtuous Leisure

The relationships between mothers, othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005), and daughters appeared to be surprisingly strong and to continue to strengthen despite the difficulties wrought by the pandemic. Mother-daughter relationships could be characterised by the words, 'admiration' and 'appreciation' to some degree, because of the ways in which participants described their relationships with each other during the pandemic. In this regard it is germane to consider pandemic-era relationships with the African philosophy of human connectedness, tying as it does into Gadamer's (2004) philosophy of equality and openness, and Aristotle's (2002) philosophy of leisure which describes the imperative of living life to one's fullest potential and excellence and in the service of the common good.

The experience of relationality which in the context of African peoples is centred in the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* according to Chilisa et al. (2016), addresses the nature of being in relation to others from an African perspective. The adage "I am because we are, I am a person through other persons, I am we; I am because we are; we are because I am; I am in you; you are in me" (p. 318) defines the essence of the *Ubuntu* ethic, and stems from African ways of being and knowing (Gyekye, 2011, Mawere, 2014; Metz, 2012). *Ubuntu* describes the infinite interconnectedness of people with one another through their shared humanity, the environment, and the cosmos. The *Ubuntu* philosophy is focused on the communal, not on the individual, and this ontological relationality defines the experience of being as tapestried in a complex and interwoven connectedness with every other living and non-living being (Battle, 1997; Chilisa et al., 2016; Nkondo, 2007). The inner circle, meaning family, became more important than the outer circle (of friends). Therefore, the appreciation and nurturance of good familial relationships became particularly important, as families became, in essence, the only people with whom it was safe to socialize and enjoy leisure with (if one had a family). Yuen (2021) described the importance of ontological relationality with its focus on the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of human beings as especially important during times of duress, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. She described how, with her only companions being her family as the pandemic wore on and lockdowns were experienced, leisure with her family "became more enjoyable, meaningful, and satisfactory when they centred upon relationality" (p. 94).

Lean on Me: Mothers and Daughters

The pandemic afforded daughters with an opportunity to know their mothers better. Similar to Yuen's (2021) family, the pandemic yielded an unexpected windfall of having a little more time to spend together and they expressed appreciation for being able to do so, basking in

the cocoon of care their mother had woven around them. Daughters repaid their mothers'
hypervigilance for their well-being in helping their mothers more, their mothers using the
opportunity to teach their daughters to cook much-loved traditional foods from their homelands.
The gift of tradition, the handing down of knowledge, the being in tradition is intimately bound
in our understanding (Gadamer, 2004; Rabinoff, 2018) and it occurs in a "ceaseless dialogical
interaction between past and present" (Lawn, 2006, p. 131). Tradition, and knowing that we are
ever enveloped in it, is what fosters greater understanding of the world, or a thing (Gadamer
1976, 2004). So too, did the daughters learn their traditions as their mothers imparted important
lessons about the making of foods that bore cultural significance (Beoku-Betts, 1995), or ways of
being that were necessary, in their mothers' minds, for their comportment and conducting of
themselves according to African cultural norms (Goitom, 2017; Salami et al., 2020). Shannon
and Shaw (2008) have drawn attention to the important role that mothers play in influencing
their daughters' attitudes to leisure. However, the circumstances of a pandemic created an
anomalous situation or environment in which leisure, and all aspects of life, were overladen with
safety concerns, and the need for hypervigilance to avoid becoming infected with the COVID-19
virus (Lashua et al., 2021; Stodolska, 2021). Mothers drew their families in, and certainly
mothers with younger daughters and other children strongly influenced their leisure and
recreation, such as when Rose described taking her children to the deserted school yard for
physical activity as a way to avoid contact with others.

Engaging in leisure with a goal in mind, such as engaging in exercise or being physically
active, could be described 'purposeful leisure' according to Shaw and Dawson (2001). These
researchers suggested that family leisure, in which parents arranged recreational activities for
their children to meet short term goals was not necessarily characterised by freedom of choice,

nor was it intrinsically motivated or particularly enjoyed by the parent. Shaw and Dawson's assertions were congruent with my findings, with mothers purposely seeking out recreational activity, such as forays to the park, or cycling near their home, watchfully supervised by their mothers. These were simply ways to afford children some safe playtime outside, even as they described their own ideal leisure as comprising doing solitary things such as being alone, listening to music, and baking. Moreover, Shaw and Dawson (2001) suggested that when parents of young children are invested in ensuring that their children are afforded leisure opportunities that enhance their well-being, their efforts could be thought of in terms of Stebbins's (2017) theory of serious leisure because of the emotional investment, diligence, and commitment they expend in the arranging of their children's leisure. While this association seems tenuous because it belies the hallmark of leisure choice that anchors Stebbins's theory, the veracity of Shaw and Dawson's (2001) claims that parents arranged leisure activities for their children purposefully is congruent with my findings among mothers of young children during the pandemic.

Snethen (2010) has pointed to the importance of building strong, supportive bonds between mothers and adolescent daughters, and that having leisure together may help to ensure that daughters made good leisure choices. My findings are in accord with Snethen's (2010) assertion to an extent because daughters articulated how leisure created, for most, strong bonds between them and their mothers as the COVID-19 pandemic dragged on. However, it was the *reciprocal* nature of leisure, with daughters reciprocating their mothers' care and concern with gifts of their time through shared leisure, which was remarkable. It seemed that this reciprocal leisure was possible for daughters who were more mature, because they had grown to understand and respect their mothers.

Some daughters described how their mothers had mellowed over time or loosened their expectations that their daughters should be raised as African (Cook & Waite, 2016; Goitom, 2017; Salami et al., 2017), and that learning to straddle two cultures and allowing their daughters to be both comfortably Canadian and of African heritage made for smoother relations that enabled a closer bond to form between mothers and daughters (Berry, 2005; Everett et al., 2016; Snethen, 2010). In this way my findings echo those of Cook and Waite (2016; see also Goitom, 2017 and Salami et al., 2020) who described how African parents living in England had "embraced new parenting approaches in Britain, often expressed as recognition of the need to be 'more relaxed' with their children to enable them to live transnationally across two cultures" (p. 1394). The daughters in my study were grateful for their mother's willingness to be open to different ways of thinking about parenting, though, according to Cook and Waite, openness to other cultural lifeways often came at a cost for parents whose relations in the homeland may continue to try to pressure or influence them or express their dismay and disapproval if certain rituals deemed sacrosanct in some cultures, such as the pubertal rite of female genital cutting, were not observed. Of note, Everett et al. (2016) argued that Black mothers are pivotal in raising their daughters "to think positively about themselves, to value their self-worth, and to be proud of their race" (p. 234) and instilling in them mantras of resilience, coping, and self-esteem.

The pandemic, with its severe limitations on socializing beyond the family circle and the aura of fear swirling around all aspects of leisure, has drawn attention to the importance of resilient family relationships and bonds between mothers and daughters that are tensile, and built on mutual respect, care, and love (Snethen, 2010) to sustain them (Everett et al., 2016). Mothers were enormously influential in conveying lessons about the importance of leisure (Shannon & Shaw, 2008), African culture and tradition (Goitom, 2017; Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2018; Salami et

al., 2017) and, in reciprocal gestures, daughters returned their mother's love and care for them by engaging in leisure with them that was pleasurable and meaningful to them both and strengthened their familial bonds.

Connections Beyond the Family: A Network of Friendly Women

While the mothers and othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005; Everett et al., 2016) in my study tended to describe more leisure with family than friends, or said they had a few friends, those they mentioned were typically members of their church and ethnocultural communities with whom they socialized (Baird & Boyle, 2012; Hurly, 2019). Baird and Boyle (2012) remarked on the importance of socializing for immigrant women in their study of South Sudanese women living in the U.S. who found that church served as a nexus for socializing, meeting with other women from their community who bolstered their resilience and confidence. In a Canadian study Suto (2013) discovered that socializing opportunities for immigrant women were keenly anticipated and helped newcomer women mitigate to manage stress and loneliness, and Gallant and Tirone (2017) reported that immigrant women in Nova Scotia, Canada, thrived on forging a sisterhood with other immigrant women, finding it essential to their well-being. These findings attest to the importance of networks of friends, companions, members of ethnocultural and church communities, to provide essential supportive relationships, particularly in stressful or difficult times (Dale & Safren, 2018). However, during the pandemic these socializing opportunities for leisure in convivial company connectivity were curtailed and impinged on their mental health.

Pieh et al. (2020) stressed that, based on findings from their study of mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, the degree of well-being an individual experiences depended to a large extent on the *quality* of relationships one had with others. Because the mothers (and

othermothers; Hill Collins, 2005) in my study also expressed their resilience and resolve to weather the pandemic's vagaries and relied on their strong connections with their families (Salami et al., 2017, 2020) and leisure to accomplish that (Suto, 2013), it seemed they were buffered or cushioned to an extent from more severe impacts, such as anxiety and depression, or that which they chose to share with me about their COVID-19 experiences (Pieh et al., 2020) on their mental health and well-being.

Hill Collins (2005) and Everett et al. (2016) drew attention to the importance of vital networks of bloodmothers, othermothers and other Black women in the community to help each other in the raising of children, and for companionship. Although these feminist authors were describing the unique situation of African American women, similar sentiments were expressed by African immigrant women in Canada (Hurly, 2019). Yet during the pandemic, such informal, casual, but essential networks of willing other women, and othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005; Everett et al., 2016) to lend a hand with children, and to afford companionship and opportunities for leisure, had vanished. Instead, enforced physical distancing precluded any reliance on friends, resulting in a gaping chasm of aloneness, exacerbated by the pandemic. I have hesitated to use the word 'lonely' to describe any of the women in my study because they did not express it, and as Hawkley and Cacioppo (2010) have maintained, loneliness does not merely describe the experience of being alone. The experience of loneliness that may result from social isolation can have harmful effects on cognitive processing, cardiovascular health, and high blood pressure. These insalubrious mental and physical health impacts, argued Hawkley and Cacioppo (2010), occur because humans are innately social beings, thriving on the company of others and that the survival of humans has always depended on forming meaningful social interactions throughout the lifespan. Feeling connected to a spouse or mate, family, and friends is essential to well-being,

both psychologically and physiologically, throughout life. Decades earlier Baumeister and Leary (1995) proposed that human beings have a need to belong, and this need is essential to human thriving. The need to belong, Baumeister and Leary suggested, is characterised by two vital aspects: that individuals appear to need to form attachments with a few significant others (such as a social group, or a lasting, emotional bond through marriage or friendship) that are satisfying, affective interactions. Secondly, such attachments to important others should "occur in a framework based on long-term, stable, caring and concern" (p. 520). In considering the relationships of mothers, othermothers, and daughters in this study, whether the relationships were long-established, familial, community-based, faith-centred, or recently formed, the need to belong was evident and persistent among all of the women in my study.

Ryan and Deci (2017) have also argued that human beings need to feel a sense of relatedness to others. In their self-determination theory (SDT), interpersonal relatedness is one of three basic psychological needs they proposed (the other two are autonomy and competence) and describes humans' innate desire and need for connectedness with others through reciprocal caring relationships. My findings in this study are congruent with these latter psychological needs theories and demonstrate not only the imperative for connectedness with others, but also point to the severe impact of the loss of human touch during the COVID-19 pandemic—a sensation viscerally integral to human connection. We do not only need to feel that we offer and receive love and affection, and acceptance from others, but we thrive on human touch from our earliest years (Owen & Gillentine, 2011) even to old age (Nist et al., 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person human connection and relatedness to others was thwarted by pandemic restrictions that tore many from the social connections and friends who were essential to their

well-being (Pieh et al., 2020), and the deleterious impacts of it have been exacerbated exponentially by the loss of human touch (Nist et al., 2020).

Getting By With a Little Help From My Friends. Daughters expressed relief and thankfulness for having friends they could turn to for emotional and moral support, helping them to experience moments of calm amidst the stress of the pandemic, and the numerous unknowns around it, and often the experience of connection occurred in leisure. Kleiber et al. (2002) suggested that the experience of leisure could be valuable in overcoming negative life events, and certainly the pandemic could certainly be considered a significantly negative event. In addition, in several studies researchers have discovered that social supports in the form of friendships with others that were formed around leisure experiences were essential in serving to buffer stress and foster coping (e.g., Coleman, 1993; Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Froese et al., 2019; Iso-Ahola & Park, 1996). Moreover, in their hierarchical model of leisure stress coping, Iwasaki and Mannell (2000) asserted that leisure friendships afforded individuals support in four ways: emotional support, raising self-esteem, tangible aid, and informational support (p. 177). In this regard, participants valued leisure friendships for their emotional and moral support most highly and they were especially appreciative of the revelatory leisure experiences that fostered deepening bonds and understanding among friends or entailed a revealing of self that had not occurred before. It seemed that simply being together in a different environment, often surrounded by pleasant nature (Soga et al., 2020), proved a catalyst for opening a new dimension of openness and sharing, which was warmly embraced in the surprise of it.

Knopf (1987) asserted that nature is non-judgmental, therefore it may have promoted feelings of vitality (Ryan et al., 2010) and a sense of freedom after spending much time sequestered indoors. There was also the realisation of how precious was the company of friends

when they were able to meet, and avowals that when the pandemic was over, they would be more adventurous, they would go to more places and not take life's freedoms or each other for granted. In thinking more broadly about resolve to change or do things differently following the deprivation of something important or that we hold dear, I turned to literature (Sandelowski, 1993) and I thought of Charles Dickens's (1843/1986) immortal tale of *A Christmas Carol*, wherein a repentant Scrooge vows, after his brush with imminent doom and eternal ignominy, to be good, and kind and generous and to mend his ways hereafter. This is not to say that participants were remotely like Scrooge, but I draw this comparison only to illustrate that it can take a catastrophic event in our lives to become mindful and appreciative of the good around us. Of note, humans *want* to overcome painful events in their lives and move on emotionally (Joseph & Linley, 2005). The propensity for human beings to strive to process negative events in their lives and transcend difficult and cataclysmic events in their lives has been documented by researchers positing ways in which post-traumatic growth occurs (e.g., Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Joseph and Linley (2005), in proposing an organismic theory of post-traumatic growth (PTG) that synthesizes the numerous theories on PTG, with deeper focus on both psychological well-being (PWB) and subjective well-being (SWB), asserted that a fully functioning person is one who values "relationships with other people, self-knowledge and personal strength, and adoption of a new life philosophy characterizes high levels of growth" (p. 270). Joseph and Linley's (2005) description of a fully functioning person bears relevance for all the women across this study, whether mothers, othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005), or daughters, and is especially remarkable given the unusually isolating and fearful time in the world's history that this study took place. My intent is not to downplay or gloss over the shocking reality and significant deleterious impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the participants in my study

including isolation, the loss of community, employment and volunteer positions; having to become digital experts and educators as their children's school closed and classes were held exclusively online—all as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Gesi et al., 2020; Pfefferbaum & North, 2020; Power, 2020; UN Women, 2020) and its onerous, but necessary health restrictions (Zhang et al., 2020). However, it is important to acknowledge that Black women have been remarked for their herculean propinquity for survival and strength in the face of adversity or difficult circumstances (e.g., Baird & Boyle, 2012; Dale & Safren, 2018). For the women in my study, it was, as Dale and Safren found in their study of Black women living with HIV in the U.S., the essentiality of the supportive "village" (p. S18) composed of friends, their ethnocultural community, peers, family members, and partners that sustained, nurtured, and fostered resilience and courage. Feelings of comfort and well-being in the face of disaster were further fortified by the embracing comfort of tradition (Gadamer, 2004), cultural belonging, and faith (Harrell et al., 2014).

The Commensal Sustenance of Culinary Tradition

While participants had variously described deepening their bonds with their mother or daughter, and with friends when they could be with them, through the preparation and consumption of food, it was never simply about nourishing the body and staving off hunger pangs. It was, whether in the time of the pandemic or in their memories of it before the health crisis, always described as important because of who it was shared with, those who came to the table, or those who were absent from the table. It was food enjoyed in company of family or friends that enhanced the flavour of foods, the savouring of it, the ritual of enjoying it together that was pivotal to the leisure of enjoying food. Van Esterik (2015) proposed that "eating together, commensality, is the moral core of human society" (p. 31) with ancient roots in the pre-

history of humankind (Isaac, 1975) when hominid groups would forage for food, then return to their home base to prepare and share what they had found. The commensal circle of feeding and sharing food begins in infancy, Van Esterik (2015) suggested, when mothers nurse their infants, sharing, in the most intimate way, nourishment from their own bodies with their babies. Then, as children grow, as the compilation of families grows and changes, as people of other cultures join families by friendship or marriage, the commensal circle expands in ever-widening concentric circles. All these widening commensal circles of nourishment involve socialization, and the sharing of food in a variety of venues (Van Esherik, 2015) from the kitchen table where the nuclear family might gather for breakfast, to the dining room where friends and family may join, or to a café where a cup of coffee might be sipped with a friend. Meals, regardless of whether they were casual or more formal affairs, afforded a nexus for connection with friends, and signalled the gathering of family together, and creating and nurturing belonging in a community (Lin et al., 2020) and in sharing the bounty of one's kitchen and hospitality of one's home (Beoku-Betts, 1995). In drawing attention to the complexities of food consumption Hauck-Lawson (1998) proposed that "food as a nexus in social interaction—that is, the place, use, and appearance of food—can serve to identify and make known the position, values, and action of individuals and groups of people" (p. 21). Importantly, Hauck-Lawson (1998) suggested that food had voice and that 'food voice' could become apparent in the ways in which individuals illustrated or articulated their feelings in relation to it. She argued that food spoke volumes about the individual describing it, imparting information about that person's life. For example, Hauck-Lawson suggested that food voice could be overlaid with anxiety, or hopelessness, or loss; it could be rich with tradition, and belonging, and love, and that those elucidations of food meanings could shed light on aspects of a person's life, including their mental and physical

health. While Hauck-Lawson (1998) was concerned about food voice from a physician's perspective, she alerts us to the multitudinous ways in which individuals associate the comings and goings, and doings of their lives through their foodways (p. 27), or ways of interacting with food that may be tapestried in emotion, culture, tradition, creativity, and sense of self.

Of great importance for mothers in my study was the preparation of meals traditional to their African heritage and enculturing their children to their traditional culinary ways. These desires to maintain their heritage culture through the food has been found to prevail among women of other cultures as well. For example, Taiwanese women living in Belgium set aside a portion of their gardens to grow vegetables native to their homelands that they could not obtain in Asian supermarkets. The vegetables they cultivated became sources of comfort, inducing feelings of nostalgia, the gardens representing a corner of 'home' that provided important links to family members in Taiwan as they shared news of their efforts with their relatives in Taiwan (Lin et al., 2020). Moreover, the Taiwanese women sought out occasions to share food in social gatherings with other Taiwanese immigrants, and to make traditional dishes for their families as a way of passing on the culinary pleasures and traditions of their homelands. In a North American study, among the Gullah women of South Carolina, Beoku-Betts (1995) had found a strong culture of preserving heritage foods, ways of preparing and cooking food, and a tightly bound sisterhood of women, intent on culture preservation in the West African tradition of their ancestors. Culture perseveration and ways of knowing and the passing down of those traditions and ways of food preparation to future generations was central to their being, as it was for the mothers in my study. It is important to note that the Gullah women were not immigrants but were indigenous African Americans descended from slaves who had been forcibly brought to America from the 17th century onwards.

In a Canadian study by D'Sylva and Beagan (2011) of the foodways of Pakistani women who identified as Goan, these authors discovered that the consuming of Goan foods, making Goan food, being known for the skillful preparation of certain dishes considered rare treats, and upholding Goan cultural culinary traditions, fostered pride in their identity as Goan. The preparation and inclusion of Goan dishes regularly in their families' food consumption was significantly "part of remembering their past and acknowledging their heritage as Goans" (p. 286) D'Sylva and Beagan (2011) noted. The imperative for preserving their language, culture, and culinary traditions is as cogent and pronounced for the women (particularly the mothers) in my study as it was for the Gullah (Beoku-Betts, 1995), Goan (D'Sylva & Beagan, 2011) and Taiwanese women (Lin et al., 2020). It appeared from these findings that retaining, and keeping alive important cultural cornerstones, such as those found in the cultivation and preparation of heritage foods is important to the well-being of immigrants of many cultures and to their successful resettlement, and feelings of ease and being at home in a country vastly different from their heritage homelands. The experiences of growing food, and then cooking it in a manner faithful to their heritage traditions, created a valuable leisure space, an oasis, (Iwasaki et al., 2005) for the participants wherein they could express, with pleasure and enjoyment, their heritage culture in the preparation of traditional foods, and share those and pass them down (Rabinoff, 2018).

Intimately bound in the sense of cultural self through culinary tradition is the role of the senses in the memory of food, and in the savouring of it (Anderson, 2014). Participants' reminiscences of loved foods, whether traditional African foods, or those of other cultural origins, chimed with Sutton's (2001) research among Greeks who had migrated. In describing the role of the senses in evoking memories of their homes in Kalymnos, an island in the

Dodecanese chain in Greece, Sutton noted that for Kalymnians who had migrated to other countries to study, or to live, scents of food unique to Greece brought forth a flood of memories. Even the gentle waft of scent from a pot of basil on a windowsill reconstructed the homeland left behind, and evoked vivid, comforting memories, momentarily restoring what had become fragmented through leaving home. This was true of the participants in my study. They had expressed how certain tastes and food aromas transported them to their homeland, to places that represented feelings of belonging associated with them. These were treasured memories and nostalgia of food that connected them with their heritage cultures fostered feelings of well-being (Routledge et al., 2012; Sedikides & Wildschut, 2018), relived with joy and expressed with pleasure at the retelling of the lifeworld stories associated with these tastes and aromas. These tales of recreating or experiencing happy times through cooking and eating chimed with the finding by Iwasaki et al. (2005) that individuals make a leisure space for themselves to cope with stress-related matters and to engage in them "as a survival strategy" (p. 97). Iwasaki et al. noted that "one way of showing people's strengths or resilience in coping with stress through leisure is the use of leisure as an opportunity or context to gain valued meanings—social, cultural, spiritual, altruistic, or empowerment" (p. 97). It appeared that the women who had described the ways in which food making and consuming as essential to their full enjoyment of it, had experienced pleasurable feelings that were all-encompassing, affording them an oasis of leisure (Iwasaki et al., 2005) in which they simply enwrapped themselves in happy memories. They had also expressed a form of empowerment and transcendence (Kleiber et al., 2002) through the enjoyment of nostalgia-invoking foods.

Of significance to participants was the role of tradition in their foodways (Anderson, 2014). Mothers in my study were traditional cooks, drawing on a menu of preferred culturally

significant foods and a store of traditional recipes they had been taught by their mothers. Rawlins and Livert (2019) have suggested that traditional cooks make traditional meals in the style of their mother or grandmother because "many of the dishes may hold strong meaning for them, which makes the preparation time more enjoyable: cooked properly, they embody the aroma, taste, and appearance of food associated with being loved and cared for by someone" (p. 131). The pleasure and nostalgia described by participants of the importance of the preparation and consumption of traditional foods associated with childhood memories, sharing foods they had made with their families and community, or handing down culinary traditions to their children, reinforced Rawlins and Livert's (2019) assertion. Considering that leisure is engaged in for its own sake (Maynard, 2010), because we want to (Stebbins, 2017), and is beneficial for its mindful acquiring of essential knowledge that contributes to the growth of the whole person (Hemingway, 1988), then culinary forays, and the happiness they evoked in the joy of making and sharing food and food traditions may certainly be considered leisure.

Inextricable from the traditional foodways described by my study participants and the cultural significance they shared about preparing, sharing, and handing down or reverentially receiving their culinary traditions (Rabinoff, 2018) was the soul soothing propinquity of working the soil during the pandemic, particularly for mothers who had done so in Africa, and who had articulated a strong bond with the land (Kangira et al., 2019). Tending the soil seemed akin to tending a cherished loved one—a way of being, thinking, and acting entirely in accord with *ubuntu* (Battle, 1997; Mawere, 2014) which denotes the connectedness of all creatures to each other, the earth, and the cosmos (Gyekye, 2011; Kangira et al., 2019; Nkondo, 2007; Metz, 2012). Thus, mothers/othermothers keenly relished community gardening on a farm and it was especially important to them during the COVID-19 pandemic for ethnocultural community

connection and the semblance of normalcy and distraction it afforded of tilling the soil and cultivating crops. Working the soil was not only soothing and comforting in the pandemic: it reminded them of far-off homelands, where connection to land also denotes connection to one's ancestry because, "To own a piece of land is considered, for example, among the Shona [of Zimbabwe] people as a symbol of growth, maturity, and source of pride. It is an inheritance from the forefathers – the ancestors" (Kangira et al., 2019, p. 75).

Similar findings were articulated by Stodolska et al. (2017) who noted that Turkish immigrants in Germany found comfort in allotment gardening where "transforming the land and planting traditional crops reminded them of the fields they had cultivated 'back home,' as well as of familiar landscapes and places of importance from their past" (p. 481). Furthermore, Hondagneu-Sotelo (2015) suggested that gardening communally served to recreate 'home' for Latina immigrant women. In her study of Latina immigrants' experiences of community gardening in Los Angeles, California, Hondagneu-Sotelo discovered that women planted herbs and vegetables native to their homelands. Similar to my study participants' descriptions of their farm visits, Hondagneu-Soleltu also remarked on the enjoyment experienced by the women in her study of tilling the land, growing familiar crops, cooking food together and sharing it after the day's work was done. The opportunity to socialize, helping each other with crop planting, and the communal tasks of weeding, watering, and harvesting, spoken of with much pleasure by participants, has also emerged in other studies of immigrants' use of community gardens (e.g., Hartwig & Mason, 2016; Stodolska et al., 2017). In addition to the therapeutic physical, economic, and social benefits of community gardening documented among refugees before and after resettlement by Coughlan and Hermes (2016), Morgan et al. (2005) discovered that immigrants to Australia used their home gardens to grow plants as reminders of home, or they

designed them as spaces that promoted both feelings of belonging in Australia and induced nostalgia for their homelands. This is not to say that nostalgia induces melancholic yearning for the past, but rather it is an invigorating stimulant, inducing feelings of comfort and emotional well-being in the remembering of, and reminiscing about, things past. Shared reminiscences can help people facing difficulties to find meaning-in-life, and experience heightened vitality (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2018).

It is not only the digging of the soil that is restorative. Hondagneu-Sotelo (2015) noted that for the Latinas in her study the community garden, simply visiting the garden, even if one did not yet have a plot of one's own, offered the social benefits of mingling and talking to others, as well as the advantages of calm, solace, restoration, and feelings of well-being by simply being still in nature (Capaldi et al., 2015; Hurly & Walker, 2019b). Participants reported that merely "sitting among the trees and plants, in meditative moments gazing out at the pedestrians walking on the sidewalk and listening to birds chirping" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2015, p. 26) was beneficial too. Therefore, in light of these findings, I would argue that accessible green spaces that are easy to navigate for individuals who experience disability remain valuable to ensure that *all* Canadians harness the voluminous psychological benefits of nature connection (Hordyk et al., 2015; Hurly & Walker, 2019b).

Leisure in Work: Expression of the Phronetic Self

On understanding that leisure as a philosophy embraced more than simply the common-sense or commonplace view of leisure understood as 'free time' (Dattilo & Lopez Frias, 2021; Stebbins, 2017, 2018), mothers enthusiastically pronounced the work they did as health care aides and carers as leisure because it fulfilled them; it was edifying, it was in their nature to care and be caring, and meaningful to them that those they cared for benefitted from their

ministrations. They performed their service to their clients with love, and empathy, and they did not view work as a drudgery they must endure to have leisure (Goodale, 1985, 1991), or in terms of their work environment and organization (Duerden et al., 2018). They spoke of their clients with respect, of taking the time to listen to them, coaxing them to tell their stories, being patient, loving, kind, helping those experiencing disability to join in play, or in dance; making elderly, long-term care residents comfortable, and comforting them when their families could not visit. Mothers worked long hours, took on as many shifts as they could to earn enough money to help family members still living in distant homelands, as well as for the support of their own families—and they took immense satisfaction in the work they performed.

In Stebbins' (2017) definition of leisure as "un-coerced, contextually framed activity, pursued in free time *and certain kinds of work*, which people want to do, using their ability and resources…" (p.11), he makes provision for the blurring of the line between satisfying employment and leisure. However, his assumption that leisure is unobligated time, and that work is separate from leisure, downplays the importance of work to human thriving. Goodale (1985, 1991) has argued that the work/leisure dichotomy prevalent in the modern era of leisure studies fails to address the satisfaction and pleasure some people may find in their work—though the obverse is true as well, and some people may well seek to distance their work selves from their private selves. Furthermore, Goodale (1985, 1991) asserted that there is really no such thing as *unobligated* time. We are ever obligated and even if

> one has some discretion about how his or her time may be used, it does not make it
> unobligated. In fact, the reverse is true. It is only when we have the opportunity to choose
> that our obligations become fully apparent. That … is consistent with Aristotle's thought.
> Surely there is no end to the worthwhile work that must be done." (p. 51)

To this end, mothers expressed their work in ways that bespoke their pleasure in their obligations to others in need of their care. When one mother described how she offered the care to those she serves in the manner she would one day wish to receive care, and that her work was her second home, she was expressing an ethic of care (Noddings, 2002) that was intimately entwined in her ethos of being as an African woman (Battle, 1997; Gyekye, 2011; Harrell et al., 2014; Salami et al., 2020). The women expressing their work as leisure was lived in the spirit of their Christian ethic, reflecting both virtue and morality central to the understanding of leisure in the Aristotelian canon (Hemingway, 1988; Hurly, 2021; Owens, 1981; Pieper, 1963). It was particularly poignant in relation to the ways the mothers and othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005) in my study extended their Christian ethic of care (Battle, 1997; Harrell et al., 2014) to those they served at work, encircling them with the love their families could not give because of pandemic restrictions limiting their in-person visits to long-term care facilities and group homes.

Hemingway (1988), in elucidating the understanding of leisure as propounded in Aristotle's "ideal of leisure" (p. 181), emphasized the virtuous character of leisure, one "based on the strength of character necessary to the search for truth and which insists on the level of devotion and morality demanded by the truth" (p. 181). The truth to which Hemingway alluded does not refer only to a truth (or as close to a truth) as one might come in the understanding of a thing that is outside of us, but it refers to the truth within us, the core of our being, and how that virtuous core is enacted in our being, in our civility towards others. The way in which mothers and othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005) articulated their love of the work they did, though they did it to earn money to live, it cannot be thought of only in those simplistic terms. Tinder (1977, as cited in Hemingway, 1988) has argued that Aristotle's ideal of leisure is anchored in civility, the virtue of acting towards others with tolerance, respect, openness, generosity, and being attentive

toward them. Considering the ethos of gentle, thoughtful attentiveness to the needs of the clients

they served, Rose and Sarah's demeanours toward their work, and those they served through

their work, expresses such gracious civility.

Moreover, it is also germane that much of the civility, tenderness, compassion, and

empathy expressed by mothers was through language as they engaged with their clients,

bantering, coaxing, encouraging, caring. Therefore, their articulations, conveyed through

language, bear out Gadamer's (1976; 2004) position that understanding of the world takes place

through the interpretation of language as the most vital way in which we understand each other

(Grondin, 2003). In addition, the self-understanding the women expressed of how the experience

of their work, and their interactions with their clients affected them, bears the hallmarks of

Gadamer's (2004) theory of hermeneutic experience, wherein self-understanding stems from the

hermeneutical conversation where the emphasis is on reflexivity, equality, and reciprocity

(Moran, 2000). These qualities, moored in Gadamer's (2004) philosophy, elegantly dovetail with

Aristotle's (2002) philosophy of leisure—particularly in terms of the moral character of virtuous,

eudaimonic leisure—and with the African ethic of morality and *ubuntu* (Battle, 1997; Chilisa et

al., 2016; Mawere, 2014). Importantly, the binding force of both Gadamer's (2004) theory of

hermeneutic experience, and Aristotle's (2002) philosophy of leisure is *phronesis*, the

application of ethical wisdom, or practical wisdom in service of the common good (Grondin,

2003). Furthermore, and importantly, *phronesis* also chimes with the African ethic of the

common good, which refers to such 'good' as the happiness, peace, justice and flourishing of all

members of a community, and not material possessions (Gyekye, 2011). The *phronetic* nature of

mothers' work, with its ethical grounding in their characters moulded by their Christian faith

(Harrell et al., 2014; Hurly, 2019; Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2020), hews to Aristotle's concept of

phronesis as virtuous action for its own sake (Rabinoff, 2018). Mothers did not describe the need to separate their work from their leisure, nor did they see work and leisure as compartmentalized from each other. The achieving of their excellent selves involved an intermingling of work with leisure, both were essential to their well-being, and were faithful expressions of themselves as women. In this way mothers' understandings of leisure, as comingled with their work, and in their attitudes towards their work and leisure, reflected the virtuous goal or *telos* of a life marked by continual attention to making decisions and actions that edified, enriched, and satisfied the most important aspects of the life well lived. In describing what Aristotle (2002) determined as the end goal of leisure, *eudaimonia*, Hemingway (1988) asserted that this term means constantly considering how "one ought to live one's life and the attempt to carry this into exemplary action" (p. 186). The exemplary actions and attitudes of mothers and othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005) to their work/leisure lives would seem no less.

Digital Leisure in a Pandemic: Blessing and Curse

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the closure of numerous venues associated with leisure, such as museums, concert halls, theatres, cinemas, and sports arenas (Garfin, 2020), home instead became the hub for entertainment and leisurely pursuits, typically through the copious use of digital technologies and the internet (Du et al., 2020; Király et al., 2020). When study participants could not be outside for leisure, owing to inclement weather, they spent time indoors and they used the internet, as well as a variety of applications (apps) for leisure including for watching shows on streaming services such as Netflix, and television, listening to music (Krause et al., 2021), and shopping, typically in the company of family members. Though participants could not spend time with friends because of the pandemic, digital leisure afforded mothers and daughters a surprising venue for connectedness and bonding,

while indulging in the nostalgic viewing of culturally familiar films from their heritage homelands. In their comprehensive review of the literature pertaining to nostalgia and meaning in life, Sedikides and Wildschut (2018) noted that the experience of nostalgia "bolsters presence of meaning, that is, the sense that one's life is significant, purposeful, and coherent" (p. 56). Therefore, nostalgia experienced through leisure choices, such as watching old films, or films that remind one of one's past, or listening to music from one's youth is beneficial, induces vitality, and is life affirming and rich with meaning for one's life, rather than a maudlin hankering for what has past, and a slide into despair. Gammon and Ramshaw (2020) noted that there is a cautionary tale, particularly with reference to the COVID-19 pandemic: that should the pandemic continue, the novelty and nostalgia of viewing old re-runs of films or viewing recordings of sporting events or visiting museums online could pall, creating a vacuum of leisure unfulfilled.

For the students (daughters) among the participants, when classes went fully online during the pandemic, they also spent a significant amount of time taking classes in virtual classrooms, so their use of the internet and virtual meeting applications was extensive. However, none complained of online fatigue or stress as the result of using online technologies, as was noted as problematic by Bailenson (2021) and Ragu-Nathan et al. (2008), and this may have been because there were few alternatives to doing many everyday things, from attending classes to shopping, or watching a film, except online.

It is essential here to consider the countervailing dimension of ambivalence with regard to digital leisure, luring on one hand, and repelling or palling on the other. According to Schneider et al. (2015; see also van Harreveld et al., 2004) human beings are capable of holding conflicting views—positive and negative evaluations—on any number of issues simultaneously.

These researchers cautioned that ambivalence does not describe holding a neutral stance on something but is instead "characterized by simultaneously having strong positive and negative associations" denoting a "psychological tug-of-war" (Schneider et al., 2015, p. 2) as the individual wrestles with her conflicting evaluations of a thing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, participants seemed alert to their ambivalence toward digital media as a means of connection and for leisure, but, in the absence of choice, they negotiated how they used it, mindfully disconnecting when they became bored with it, or tired of it, or wanted to do something more engaging.

Du and colleagues (2020) drew attention to the monumental disruptions to leisure caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and suggested that these might be considered through the lens of leisure constraints theory (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Crawford and Godbey hypothesized that constraints to leisure, or reasons that hinder leisure participation, may be (a) *intrapersonal* and comprise the internal psychological reasons an individual has for not participating. During the pandemic, in this regard, a significant concern was fear of infection and infecting others. Leisure constraint may also stem from (b) *interpersonal* factors: these are the social factors that inhibit an individual from participating in some leisure activities, such as not being able to have leisure with friends because of pandemic specific shelter-in-place restrictions, or feeling unsafe to engage in leisure of one's choice (Giles & Oncescu, 2020); or (c) *structural*—such constraints may, in the pandemic have included closure of leisure venues, or having no money because of job loss (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Du et al., 2020). However, as Jackson (2005) has pointed out, constraints may be negotiated. The constraints on leisure resulting from the pandemic were indeed negotiated by participants, but I would also point out that there was little choice but to adapt.

For individuals, especially those without close family members, or friends for company

Shah et al. (2020) described the social environment of the COVID-19 pandemic as "a pandemic

of lockdown loneliness" (p. 1) and a critical health issue affecting health and well-being

deleteriously. However, as Glover (2018) has argued, social isolation is a product of modernity,

it is also, counterintuitively, laced with numerous opportunities for interactions online. The

virtual space, Glover argued, makes it possible to maintain contact with numerous friends and

acquaintances. Yet, according to Glover, most leisure studies underscore the importance of in-

person interactions as more meaningful, desired, and effective in creating lasting friendships and

bonds between people. There is no doubt that the urgency of the virtual space as essential for

building and maintaining contact with social and cultural networks became pronounced during

the pandemic. It has, moreover, been marked by a poignancy and ephemerality that was not there

before the pandemic, I would argue. There was, at the time of writing, little opportunity to go

beyond social media, until the pandemic abated—or risk infection from COVID-19 or even

death. It is my contention that the longer the pandemic holds sway, the more fragile relationships

with others beyond our family circles will become with only the online space to sustain them.

In terms of making the internet more accessible, particularly for those isolated, or new to

digital applications, Shah et al. (2020) have argued that digital technologies that are easy to use

and could easily be taught to individuals who lacked skill in computing could provide important

avenues for maintaining connection with loved ones. The point that Shah et al. have made about

accessibility was particularly cogent given that not all immigrants resettling in Canada may be

familiar with digital technologies. As the COVID-19 pandemic is unlikely to be the last (Heid et

al., 2020) this is an important forward-thinking and looking proposal by Shah et al (2020). In

addition, as noted earlier, leisure can be an important resource for coping with stress-related

matters in life (Froese et al., 2019; Kleiber et al., 2002; Iwasaki et al, 2005), and this pandemic has resulted in an increase of online leisure and the use of digital technologies for leisure (Dennis, 2021; Krause et al., 2020). Digital technologies thoughtfully designed for simplicity to transcend age and language barriers, and degree of familiarity with internet and communication technologies, could, during periods of pandemic-related lockdown, ward off the spectre of loneliness for individuals who do not have family or leisure companions nearby, or few ways of connecting with them (Dennis, 2021).

Précis: Rounding Out, Drawing In

In drawing my discussion to a close, imagine we return to sit in ease at the hearth and I remind my readers that in the course of my discussion chapter I have brought attention to a number of important lessons to be gleaned from exploring the experience of leisure among African immigrant mothers and daughters during the COVID-19 pandemic. I would, however, like to narrow it down to just three. First, I draw attention to the importance of leisure in times of dire uncertainty and its affordance of meaning, pleasure, joy, enrichment, edification, and comfort—even in the face of a global health crisis—that has been demonstrated among the women in my study and builds on the growing body of research in this domain (e.g., Donlon, 2013; Husain, 2005; Kono & Shinew, 2015; Zemishlany, 2016).

Second, I emphasize the significant power of culture, understood in my thesis as tradition that is all-enrobing (Gadamer, 2004) and the handing down (Rabinoff, 2018) of what is important and matters in terms of leisure (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017) that succours and sustains, and may be steeped in cultural significance. It does so because it is familiar, evokes nostalgia (Gammon & Ramshaw, 2020), and acts as a binding force in drawing people together (Liebkind et al., 2016), and in providing a bulwark of normalcy in a time of great instability,

such as this pandemic has been. Whether through the tradition of faith (Harrell et al., 2014; Salami et al., 2020) service to others (Gyekye, 2010; Metz, 2012), culinary arts (Beoku-Betts, 1995; D'Sylva & Beagan, 2011; Lin et al., 2020) and the commensality of food (Hauck-Lawson 1998), cultivating the soil (Hurly & Walker, 2019b), connecting with the land as a hallowed ancestral imperative (Kangira et al., 2019) and harvesting the food of one's labour to feed one's family (D'Sylva & Beagan, 2011; Lin et al., 2020) or expressing oneself through art or writing, dancing, playing music, or singing in ways that honour one's selfhood and authenticity (Sohmer, 2020; Tshivase, 2015), as a historically-situated individual enrobed in tradition (Gadamer, 2004; Lawn, 2006), leisure is essential to human flourishing (Aristotle, 2002; Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017; Holba, 2007, 2013; Hemingway, 1988; Hurly, 2021, Owens, 1981).

Thirdly, I underscore the importance of human connection and human connectivity especially in perilous times. Leisure is often marked by sociality, having a social network (Kloek et al., 2017; Mohammadi, 2019) being with others, sharing loved traditions (Beoku-Betts, 1995; Lin et al., 2020) and companionship with family and friends (Gallant & Tirone, 2017; Giles & Oncescu, 2020; Hurly, 2019; Knopf, 1987; Suto, 2013). The pandemic has also been a stark reminder that many people are single, live alone, or do not have nearby family, or they may be new immigrants who have not yet developed a friend circle, and loneliness and isolation can have deleterious effects on mental health and feelings of well-being (Giles & Oncescu, 2020; Pieh et al., 2020). Here concerted efforts to reach out, whether in person, if possible, or digitally, to those who are alone, to become like Rose and Sarah, the families of those bereft or vulnerable in the spirit of *eudaimonia*, *phronesis* (Aristotle, 2002; Gadamer, 2004) and *ubuntu* (Battle, 1997; Chilisa et al., 2016; Mawere, 2014; Metz, 2012), may help those who are alone or isolated in times of crisis.

In my hermeneutical phenomenological study, I have shone a spotlight on the experience of leisure during the COVID-19 pandemic of a group of immigrant mothers and daughters of African heritage/descent and found that leisure was profoundly important to their well-being in many facets of their lives; it was manifested in numerous ways—some expected and some surprising. It was essential to their experience and understanding of being as historically-situated and in thrall of tradition (Gadamer, 2004). Tellingly, leisure spilled like unction into the farthest corners of these women's lives, anointing and edifying them with its beneficent gifts of uplifting and comfort even in a time of global uncertainty and a once-in-a-century pandemic.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

My study has unfolded the experience of leisure among a group of African immigrant mothers and daughters from seven African countries living in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. They expressed how leisure was vitally important for their well-being, particularly in the uncertainty and peril of the pandemic, affording meaning, pleasure, edification, joy, and comfort (Donlon, 2013; Gammon & Ramshaw, 2020; Husain, 2005; Kono & Shinew, 2015; Zemishlany, 2016), and manifested in leisure with family (Yuen, 2021), creative leisures that bespoke the enunciation of the authentic self (Sohmer, 2020; Tshivase, 2015). Secondly, the power of culture (Liebkind et al., 2016), understood in my thesis from the philosophical standpoint of tradition (Gadamer, 1976, 2004) in the leisure domain, which enrobes us all (Lawn, 2006), was anchored to the experience of leisure. Leisure, in the philosophical sense of it as striving for excellence, virtue, morality, and phronetic being (Aristotle, 2002; Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017; Holba, 2007, 2013; Hurly, 2021), dovetailed with the African ethic of *ubuntu* (Battle, 1997; Chilisa et al., 2016; Gyekye, 2011; Mawere, 2014; Metz, 2012) and permeated participants' meanings of leisure, whether in creative expression, faith-based leisure, or deeply satisfying work. Finally, in a time of unnatural isolation and social distancing, the sociality of leisure, and importance of having a social network (Gallant & Tirone, 2017; Giles & Oncescu, 2020; Kloek et al., 2017; Mohammadi, 2019) and a shared coping space in leisure (Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000; Iwasaki et al., 2005) were never more poignantly cogent.

Limitations and Strengths

My study had several limitations. The most significant of these was most certainly the COVID-19 pandemic context in which the study was completed. It has disrupted all lives immeasurably (Piret & Boivin, 2021; Yang et al., 2020). At the time of writing the world had not

begun to completely tabulate or fully comprehend the impacts, besides the astronomical death toll, of a pandemic that continues to mutate and infect at alarming rates (Johns Hopkins University & Medicine: https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data/new-cases) and vaccines have not yet become widely available. My findings must be read within the context of extreme social, economic, and environmental constraints.

According to leisure constraints theory (Crawford & Godbey, 1987) constraints to leisure may be intrapersonal, interpersonal, or structural in nature. I would argue that all of these constraint dimensions loomed large for the participants in my study, and indeed for the global population (Du et al., 2020) that has been so profoundly impacted by the pandemic. In my Discussion chapter I have alluded to these constraints in terms of pandemic leisure, and also illustrated how, with no choice but to adapt and negotiate the constraints (Jackson, 2005) thrust upon them by the pandemic, participants were artful and creative at devising ways to have leisure.

Secondly, because most families were negatively impacted by the pandemic, recruiting participants was extremely challenging and thereby delimited in scope. Consequently, I had to rely on my own network of friends to help me to recruit mothers, in particular. Hence, two of the mothers who expressed interest in participating in my study had younger daughters—they ranged from three to 10 years of age—and two mothers were othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005), women who had taken on the responsibility of raising younger sisters. Because without them my study would have been lacking in the voices of mothers—I had hoped to recruit five mothers—I recruited them into my study because I thought it was vital to be open and welcoming of women who were willing to participate during a most difficult and dangerous time in the world, and it meant I would be able to include more voices of mothers and othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005)

from Africa. In terms of recruiting adolescent daughters, after managing to recruit two teenaged sisters through a friend from Ivory Coast, I turned to the University of Alberta's student e-newsletter to try and reach more daughters. Though I had originally wished to recruit only adolescent daughters between 13 and 19 years of age, the daughters who responded to my study were between 17 and 24 years of age. Once again, I thought it crucial to be flexible and to adapt my study to welcome those willing to participate despite the hardships they were experiencing during the pandemic. As a result, my study does not convey the perspectives of adolescent daughters as much as it does those of older daughters between 17 and 24. Their perspectives are, consequently, more mature than those that might be articulated by younger adolescents.

Although the most desired form of communication is face-to-face communication (Braun et al., 2019), during the pandemic this meant that all interviews, and participant reflection conversations took place online. It had been my intention to meet with participants individually, in-person for our interviews and for participant reflection. However, because of the pandemic, this was not permitted due to COVID 19 related university restrictions. It is therefore possible that in-person interviews might have elicited deeper reflections, although I must make it clear that because people quickly adapted to maintaining connectivity with each other in the online space, most of the conversations were rich and deep in detail. I experienced a few instances where the internet connection became weak or failed, or a participant's camera would not work. In one instance, two participants in the same household were sharing a mobile telephone, and because of the home set up, it was not possible for one young woman to have the privacy needed for her to feel comfortable expressing herself. If we had been able to meet in person, I think that it is possible that the interview might have revealed more profound insights. Notwithstanding, when reviewing the depth and breadth of information surfaced from the interviews, there is no

denying the extraordinary generosity of all participants in responding fully and expansively to my questions about their leisure.

Against the limitations of the research, my study contributed to the vanguard of unique knowledge about leisure during the COVID-19 pandemic before the availability of vaccines generally and contributes to the growing field of research focused on the experience of leisure during disasters (e.g., Donlon, 2013; Husain, 2015; Kono & Shinew, 2015; Zemishlany, 2016). Another strength of my study is that it privileges the unique standpoint of African immigrant women, a group rarely the focus of leisure studies in Canada, or more generally (Baffoe, 2010, Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2018). In addition, two 'mothers' in my study were othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005), women who had raised their younger sisters in Canada, having fled their homelands because of conflict. Their perspectives and meanings of leisure have rarely, if ever, been explored in leisure studies. Therefore, I would suggest that my study contains hitherto unexamined dimensions of leisure experience, particular of women with a very specific life experience. In this regard then my study provided both a window and a platform for amplifying an array of African immigrant women's voices and unfurls a tapestry woven of their unique perspectives on the experience and meaning of leisure in a specific epoch, the COVID-19 pandemic, before the advent of vaccines (Piret & Boivin, 2021; Rees, 2022; Yang et al., 2020).

In addition, my study animated the meaning of leisure in the Aristotelian philosophical tradition (Hemingway, 1981; Owens, 1981), a perspective all but subsumed to leisure conceived of as 'free time' (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017; Datillo & Lopez Frias, 2021; Goodale, 1985; Holba, 2013; Stebbins, 2017) and elided with recreation and perceptions of leisure as mere activities engaged in outside of work, often for hedonistic, momentary pleasure. Uniquely in leisure studies I have threaded Aristotle's leisure philosophy together with Gadamer's (1976,

2004) theory of hermeneutic experience, which, in Gadamer's philosophy reveres the supremacy of language in the articulation of being, and in the interpretation of what is said in coming to understanding. To my knowledge, no other studies in leisure have so engaged this deeply philosophically grounded approach. Yet, by returning to the understanding of leisure as essential to achieving the felicitous life or *eudaimonia* (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017; Hemingway, 1988; Owens, 1981), one focused on achieving excellence in the full flowering of our human potential and marked by virtue (Goodale, 1985, 1991) and ethical wisdom (Gadamer, 2004), leisure, in its fullest sense, blooms anew.

Recommendations: A *Phronetic* River Runs Through It

In this section, I describe the recommendations resulting from my thesis, followed by recommendation to further leisure education**.** I propose these recommendations not to suggest that my findings generalize to other populations, people, or places, but to present readers with the possibility of transferability or fittingness to similar contexts or situations (Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Patterson & Williams, 2002; van Manen, 2014). I further suggest these recommendations in a spirit in keeping with both Gadamer's (1976, 2004) philosophy of hermeneutic experience, and Aristotle's (2002) leisure philosophy (Maynard, 2010; Owens, 1981), both of which are grounded in *phronesis,* which describes the unfolding of practical or ethical wisdom in the service of the common good (Dunne, 1993; Grondin, 2003, Hemingway, 1988, Rabinoff, 2018). This contrasts with *techne* or technical knowledge, which does not require relationships, but merely know-how (Gadamer, 2004) and can be thought of as the least of the knowledges (Hemingway, 1988; Hurly, 2021).

Recommendation 1: An Expanded Program of Community Gardens

I found that the presence of community gardens and having the opportunity to garden and grow familiar foods important for cooking traditional meals was, in accord with the findings of Coughlin and Hermes (2016) and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2015), extremely important to mothers in my study. They enjoyed working the soil, planting vegetables from their homelands, harvesting what they had sown, and they derived satisfaction in saving money, using their harvest for consumption, satisfied in the knowledge that their harvest was unpolluted by chemicals, and healthy. Therefore, an expansion of community gardening projects, such as the City of Edmonton's Pop Up Community Garden Pilot (https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/landscaping_gardening/pop-up-community-gardens-pilot.aspx) implemented in 2021, and their well-established community garden plan, may be beneficial to new immigrants, and made accessible so that people who experience disability, and who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids can also access these spaces and navigate them with ease. Knowledge about the gardens, their location, and how to apply for a plot in a local garden could be disseminated through ethnocultural community groups, immigrant serving agencies, and places of worship, such as churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues.

A very successful community garden at Spitalfields City Farm on the east end of London (https://www.spitalfieldscityfarm.org) was the nexus for The Coriander Club, a project of the Women's Environmental Network (https://www.wen.org.uk). The Club brought together Bangladeshi women who were housebound in their communities, and with limited English language skills. At the Spitalfields City Farm, the women were able to gather, grow, harvest, and sell their native vegetables. In doing so, Bangladeshi women found a space in nature to meet and socialize with other women from their community and to have interactions with other Londoners. It led to a blossoming of energetic work on the land, as well as instilling feelings of confidence

and belonging in England. Because of the importance of the attachment to the land to till, call one's own, and bequeath, among many African peoples (Kangira et al., 2019), the need for cities to expand their community gardening spaces, and, importantly, to open and make welcome immigrants who wish to participate is imperative. Doing so could help to fulfill the needs of many immigrants to work the land and grow their own food. In addition, farmers whose farms are contiguous with cities or towns may be willing, similar to the landowner who had set land aside for Sarah and Rose and their community to work, to set aside a hectare or two for this purpose, perhaps working in concert with immigrant-serving agencies, social services groups, faith institutions (churches, mosques, synagogues, temples) and municipalities to make such opportunities a reality.

The benefits of nature connection have been well-documented (e.g. Capaldi et al., 2015; Hurly & Walker, 2019b) and given the findings from my study this recommendation may have far-reaching, multi-dimensional benefits for physical and mental health, an opportunity for nature-based leisure (Barton & Pretty, 2010) that affords nature connection (Capaldi et al., 2015), a sense of familiarity and belonging (Coughlan & Hermes, 2016; Hartwig & Mason, 2016; Rishbeth & Finney, 2006), enjoyment of gardening (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2015) and comforting nostalgia (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2018).

Recommendation 2: Connectivity for All

While most women in my study were familiar with the internet and regarded it as the most natural of conveniences, two of the participants had lived in refugee camps where there had been little digital connectivity. Both had to rapidly learn how to use mobile devices, navigate the internet and use applications (apps) after emigrating to Canada. Moreover, two women who worked in the healthcare field drew attention to the plight of their elderly clients for whom

digital communications were unfamiliar. This meant that when people living in assisted-living or elder care housing were unable to receive visitors because of pandemic restrictions, they were utterly cut off from the outside world. The pandemic has drawn stark attention to the value of connectivity because of the essentiality of human contact (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010), not only to ward off loneliness, but also the harmful physical and mental effects of social isolation in terms of cognition, cardiovascular health, and high blood pressure, and a lack of human touch (von Mohr et al., 2017). Shah et al. (2020) have proposed that simple-to-use apps could be developed and taught to those who lacked skill in computing, thereby enhancing their opportunities for connectivity with loved ones, and entertainment for leisure. It is, however, essential that such applications be designed for ease-of-use so that they transcend language and age barriers and can afford important means of communication and companionship during lockdowns. As Sawyer et al. (2021) note, COVID-19 is not the last pandemic the world will face. Therefore, the lessons learned from this pandemic, particularly in light of the harmful impacts of prolonged social isolation for many (Shah et al., 2020), escalates the importance of the ubiquity of internet connectivity for all, and particularly for those shut in, single, alone, or recent arrivals to Canada during such times as lifelines affording human contact, some degree of normalcy, and for leisure. Moreover, when schools closed and home-schooling fell to parents, it caused immense hardships and difficulties for working families, and particularly on newcomer families still finding their feet in Canada—and especially on women (Power, 2020; UN Women, 2020). Many parents were unfamiliar with the online classroom set ups or found themselves unable to help their children (Morse et al., 2022). Clearly, such pressures highlight the importance of ensuring that all parents, and particularly immigrant parents new to Canada, are supported with

the necessary technical and digital knowledge to manage future disruptions such as COVID-19 has been and continues to be.

With many leisure spaces closed because of the pandemic, numerous museums and art galleries, ballet companies, and musicians put their offerings online, most of the collections or performances were free of charge (Marques & Giolo, 2020). It is my hope that these important cultural leisure spaces may consider continuing to provide a digital cultural window to global collections of art, archeology, and the performance arts, to democratize the accessibility of these places to those who may not be able to afford to travel to see them, to afford digital leisure oases for coping with stress (Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000; Iwasaki et al., 2005) and to mitigate, as much as is possible to do in a global health crisis, the psychological overload of stressful news (Ahmed, 2020) such as we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendation 3: Leisure Education

When I began this study, I asked each participant in our first interview, what 'leisure' meant for her. Typically, participants described leisure as 'free time', or time for oneself after work (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017; Holba, 2013; Stebbins, 2017). As Stebbins (2017) has lamented, the 'common sense' (or perhaps 'commonplace' is more apt) view of leisure has prevailed in the modern era making it the dominant viewpoint wherein work is conceived of as more valuable than leisure in contributing to human moral uprightness, well-being, and advancement (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017; Sylvester, 1999). Leisure has become thought of as merely the reward after work, an interlude of rest before resuming work (Holba, 2007; Kalimtzis, 2017). Recognizing that if leisure is regarded merely as time left over from the busyness of work, I realized that the responses to my questions about leisure during the COVID-19 pandemic might lack the depth and richness I was seeking. Therefore, I spent some time with

each participant describing leisure's fuller, richer meaning in the Aristotelian sense of embodying the things one did that one chose in search of achieving excellence in one's life, to reach one's full potential; that such actions were good, virtuous and moral, and were not harmful to others, but beneficial and for the good of society (Owens, 1981; Grondin, 2003; Hemingway, 1988; Maynard, 2010). Consequently—and I reiterate that this knowledge was shared only as 'food for thought' and not as a directive to think this way about their leisure—mothers and othermothers (Hill Collins, 2005) in particular, expanded their articulations of their leisure to include what occurred during their work, which they found fulfilling, meaningful and performed for the good of others, in service of them. In daughters' elucidations of leisure, they described the importance of faith, of nature connection, of reading to better the mind, language acquisition, creative expression of their authentic selves; the study groups and communities of learners they interacted with through their classes, or through the volunteer work they performed. It appeared that in having a wider understanding of what leisure *could be* it unleashed a torrent of expansive ideas and meanings about leisure in their lives.

I propose that leisure education could be a focus of leisure scholars in imparting a holistic understanding of leisure, so that it is not elided with recreation, or researched only for its sociological or psychological impacts on individuals (Caldwell, 2005; Kleiber et al., 201; Rojek, 1985, 2006). While I acknowledge the benefits of such perspectives—for, in accordance with Gadamer's (2004) theory of hermeneutic experience there is never only one possible interpretation of a thing—I argue that if leisure is to matter (Goodale, 1985, 1991) it is a *philosophical* vision of leisure education that should also be shared. A philosophical perspective of leisure drinks deeply from the well of philosophy from which it springs, and it is centred on the precepts of leisure as propounded by Aristotle (2002; Owens, 1981), particularly in the

Nichomachean ethics, and, though moored in ancient Greek thought, continues to render valuable lessons in thinking about leisure as essential to human flourishing (Hemingway, 1988). Returning to Hemingway (1988) we are reminded of one of the most insightful understandings of leisure or *scholê,* as propounded by Aristotle (2002) that comprehensively captures leisure's function, goal, and benefits:

> … The specific function (*ergon*) of leisure is the unfolding of practical reason (*praxis*) and moral wisdom (*phronesis*), that its characteristic end (*telos*) is eudaimonia or the felicitous life in pursuit of virtue, and that its excellence (*arete*) is that of the citizen whose character reflects civility in the active life of the *polis* (city/state). (p. 189)

Such an understanding of leisure hews to the classical view of leisure as infinitely holistic, not fragmented or dichotomized into work/not work, or only pleasurable activities one does after work for momentary respite from toil. Even though having leisure might lend to mental and physical health, that is not the *telos* (the virtuous end goal). The *telos* of the felicitous life (or eudaimonia) is the blossoming of individuals making right and wise choices, furthering themselves as they strive for excellence (Goodale, 1985, 1991; Maynard, 2010) and to serve the common good in the unfolding of their phronetic being (Dunne, 1993; Gadamer, 2004). Therefore, the experience of leisure should also be taught as the fullest expression and becoming of the ethical, moral, and virtuous human being in search of their most excellent, fully actualized selves.

Finally, I would suggest that for the study of leisure to flourish, it should perhaps be returned to its roots, in departments of philosophy in faculties of arts, because of its venerable place in philosophy—the love of wisdom—and so that it can be taught, researched, and knowledge about it dispersed in mindful ways in the education of all learners of any age. Such

leisure education might be in collaboration with, for example, schools, librarians, organizations that serve immigrants from Africa and elsewhere, and ethnocultural community groups. Leisure education should be broad and deep, and always anchored in its philosophical bedrock (Parr, 2009). In this way leisure could again take its rightful place in the quest for the *eudaimonic* life, its propinquity to exert the greatest and most robust influence in the development of whole persons—mentally, spiritually, physically, and creatively (Hemingway, 1988; Owens, 1981)—restored.

Future Research Directions

Aristotle's (2002; Hemingway, 1988; Owens, 1981) concept of leisure or *scholê* as essential for achieving the virtuous and excellent life in which one thrives and finds joy and fulfillment, chimes well with Gadamer's (2004) theory of hermeneutic experience because both entreat the individual to seek to understand the ontological in meaning and understanding: from the perspective on one living the experience and making meaning of her experience. According to Bouwer and van Leeuwen (2017) *scholê* … "is about the art of life. It is subjective experience occupied in the pursuit of the *important* in life" (p. 230, italics in the original). Yet despite leisure's deep philosophical roots, these roots are today largely overlooked in favour of positivistic, sociological, or psychological explorations of leisure that sidestep leisure's philosophical substratum. But we would be well served to look back to leisure's philosophical roots because leisure *is* a philosophical concept (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017; Hemingway, 1988; Holba, 2013; Hurly, 2021; Owens, 1981) that has the propinquity to transform and to uplift human lives—and especially if we understand leisure as a way of being, and not merely as recreation, or a break from busyness (Holba, 2007). Let us hew to the philosophical

understanding of leisure, to Aristotle (2002), for a proper understanding of the term and the idea of leisure (Hemingway, 1988; Hurly, 2021; Owens, 1981).

Where I see a philosophical approach to leisure, and also a phenomenological one, as especially efficacious is when research involves individuals who have experienced significant trauma, distress, or deprivations, such as we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. When we view leisure philosophically as Aristotle might: as embodying a life devoted to living virtuously, and achieving excellence as one's way of being in a fulfilling, satisfying, comforting and uplifting way (Goodale, 1985, 1991; Hemingway, 1988; Hurly, 2021; Owens, 1981), we transcend the notions of leisure as activity, a means to an end (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017), elided with recreation (Goodale, 1985; Hemingway, 1995), or as free time (Stebbins, 2017, 2018). Instead, we focus the attention and quieten the gaze on surfacing the ontological, bringing into the light, through language, the reality of the lived experience of leisure being.

Canada's multiculturality will continue to develop over the centuries ahead. As previously noted elsewhere in this thesis, according to Morency et al. (2017) by 2036, immigrants will represent between 24.5% and 30% of the Canadian population, hailing from many nations on earth. As the mosaic of Canada changes immensely, more and more immigrants will make their home here to join the grand tapestry of life in this country—not by hovering at the margins of society, but participating fully and vibrantly (Hurly & Walker, 2019a) in the rich pageant of it all. Leisure, considered from a philosophical perspective, could be pivotal to their resettlement experience because leisure, as we have seen among the participants in my study, is essential to human thriving and flourishing (Hemingway, 1988; Owens, 1981; Parr, 2009; Pieper, 1963), and especially during a health crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic has been, and continues to be (Nicola et al., 2020; Rees, 2022; Vinkers et al., 2020). Therefore, it is essential

that, instead of continuing to pathologize and to psychologize leisure (Mannell, 1991) we need to look back and draw on the wisdom of titanic philosophers of leisure (Aristotle) and hermeneutics (Gadamer, 2004; Hurly, 2021) to point the way, beckoning as mighty colossi from leisure's labyrinthine and storied past to its bright, focused, philosophical future.

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Appendix A: Participant Information Letter and Consent Form

Title of the study: Leisure in a Dangerous Time: Hermeneutic phenomenological explorations of the lifeworld experiences and meanings of leisure of African immigrant/refugee/asylum seeker mothers and adolescent daughters resettled in Canada, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

Principal investigator	Student's study supervisor
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I am a graduate student at the University of Alberta doing research for my doctoral dissertation. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study examining how African mothers and daughters, like you, who came to Canada as immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers, experience leisure (do things that bring them enjoyment, fulfillment, satisfaction, or pleasure) and what those activities mean to them. I am interested in learning about your leisure before, and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am recruiting immigrant (also refugee mothers and daughters (aged 13-25 years) from Africa, who came to Canada at least two years ago as immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers and who have settled here. I would like to talk to you about your experience of leisure, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, and what your leisure experiences mean to you, how they affect your life, and your well-being. Leisure describes something you choose to do because you want to; it is something that you enjoy, and you do it for fun, or pleasure.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate. Before you make a decision, I will go over this form with you. Please ask questions if you feel anything needs to be made clearer. I will give you a copy of this form for your records.

Purpose

I am doing this research because I want to find out more about the experience of leisure of African mothers and daughters who came to Canada as immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers. I am interested to learn about how you define leisure, what you do for leisure, how your leisure experiences make you feel, and what they mean to you.

The reason I am interested in leisure activities/experiences is because leisure (doing things that you freely choose for pleasure or enjoyment) has been shown to help to relieve stress, increase well-being, and provide opportunities to socialize. I think that having increased well-being may help newcomers to settle more comfortably and with greater ease in Canadian society.

I will use the results of this study to help organizations that provide settlement services to immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers, and parks agencies, to develop leisure and recreation programs that are inclusive of all Canadians, and that help to reduce stress and promote well-being through leisure. I will use the data I gather to write my dissertation, and for articles to be published in academic journals. In addition, I will also present the findings at academic conferences, and to relevant settlement agencies.

Study Procedures

Your participation will include 2-4 online interviews of approximately 30 minutes each, using a secure and approved online meeting room, such as Microsoft Teams, Skype, Facetime, Google Meet, WhatsApp, or Zoom. We will keep the interviews short so that they are not too tiring for you, or time-consuming.

I will also ask you to take photographs of your leisure—things that you do that bring you joy, contentment, fulfillment, and pleasure. If you choose, you may also make drawings of your leisure, or you can choose not to take photographs and only to draw. If you would like to draw and need drawing materials, please let me know and I will arrange to bring art supplies (drawing paper, crayons, coloured pencils) to your home. I will follow the Alberta government's health regulations for doing so: I will sanitize the package of materials, and wear vinyl disposable gloves and a mask to deliver the package to your door. I will text you when I arrive. I will place the package at your door, ring your doorbell, stand back at a distance and wait until you retrieve the package.

You may also write about your leisure, e.g. write a poem, or you can sing or dance about your leisure and make a recording of your performance which I will ask you to send me. In the interview(s) I will ask you to describe what the poem, song, or dance means to you.

If you draw your leisure, I will ask you to photograph your drawings and send them to me by email. If you take photographs, please choose between six and 12 of them, and send those to me by email. We will talk about the pictures during one of the interviews. Because we will also be talking about your leisure before the pandemic, you may also choose photos you had taken, or that someone had taken of you having leisure before the pandemic. The interviews will be about the kinds of leisure you do when you choose to do what you like that brings you joy and pleasure, and that you enjoy. We will talk about your everyday leisure both before and during the pandemic.

Making drawings, and choosing the photographs or drawings may take up to two hours of your time before we have the interviews. I will ask your permission to use some of your photographs or drawings, or videos, in my research. You are not obligated to give me permission to do so. Questions will be open-ended. These interviews will be recorded with your permission.

Once I have analyzed the information (interviews, photographs, drawings), I will arrange to share with you, by telephone, or online meeting, what I have found and to hear what you think about how I have interpreted the data. Your contributions will be used to help me write an accurate and more complete description of your leisure experiences in my research.

There is no cost to you for participating in the research, and no compensation is offered for participating. Participating in this research is entirely voluntary. You will receive a gift card for $50 to a grocery store as a token of my thanks for your participation. However, if you withdraw from the study early for any reason, you will still receive the gift card.

Below I have provided a table showing the time commitment needed to participate in this research:

Table 3

Time Commitment Required for Research Participation

Activity	Time (approximate)	Reason
Pre-participation online meeting. **(Optional).** Meet with researcher before the research to learn about the research, and the researcher, before deciding to participate.	30-45 minutes	Meeting with the researcher online or by telephone is to provide you with the opportunity to talk to the researcher to hear about the research study, and to ensure that you feel comfortable participating.
Online/telephone Interviews	60-90 minutes. (we will have 2-3, 30-minute online interviews). Each online/telephone interview will be approximately 30	Interviews, or one-on-one conversations online or by phone about your leisure. In one interview we will also discuss

Activity	Time (approximate)	Reason
	minutes in length, but may be shorter or longer. **Arranged at your convenience**.	the photographs or drawings/other artistic forms you have chosen.
Taking photographs, or making drawings/or writing a poem/journal/performing a dance or song (online meeting)	1-2 hours (approximate)	I will ask you to review your photographs and/or drawings /or other artistic forms, and to select those you wish to describe and discuss during an online interview.
Sharing findings (optional)	30 minutes (1 x 30 minute online meeting)	During these online meetings, I will share my findings with you, and we will discuss these findings together. **This is optional.**
Time commitment (total)	2.5 - 4.45 hours (spaced according to your availability and what is convenient for you)	

Benefits and Risks

By participating in this research, you will have an opportunity to share your thoughts about your leisure experiences before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, and such knowledge can help researchers like me, and immigrant serving agencies, by increasing our knowledge of African mothers and daughters' experiences of leisure as they settle in Canada, and their experiences of leisure before and during the pandemic.

During the interview I will ask you some questions about your background so I can learn a little about you, and about your leisure experiences before you came to Canada, your leisure experiences before and during the pandemic; what you do when you do something that brings you enjoyment, pleasure, or fun, and what those experiences mean to you.

Remembering may raise stressful memories of your past experience. I want to assure you that you do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to, and you can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Should you feel upset when recalling memories of your past experiences and need assistance managing your distress, we will terminate the interview immediately to allow you recover. I will also provide you with immediate referrals to mental health counselling services nearby if necessary.

Voluntariness

If, even after the interview, you decide that you would prefer to withdraw from the study, you may do so by contacting the researcher. Jane Hurly can be contacted by email at jane.hurly@ualberta.ca or by phoning me at 780-782-9207, or you may withdraw during an interview. If you choose to withdraw and would prefer me not to use your data, I will delete the interview recordings and any transcripts that have been made of your interviews, as well as any photographs and drawings I have on file. Your data will not be included in my analyses.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Your real name will not be used to identify you to protect your privacy and anonymity, if you choose. I will use a pseudonym (fake name) for you instead if you prefer. Any photographs you take that include yourself or other people will be digitally manipulated (faces blurred) so that no one in the photograph can be identified by others. All the data (audio-recordings, transcripts, photographs, drawings, field notes) collected will be kept securely on a password-protected computer in a locked office. All files will be encrypted, kept securely and confidentially in a locked cabinet and only my study supervisor and I will see them. The University of Alberta Research Ethics Board also has permission to access to the data.

Study data, including personal information about you will be securely stored for a minimum of five years (as per University of Alberta policy) after the study is over, at which time it will be destroyed.

The data will be used in the production of my doctoral dissertation, and articles for academic journals. Although I will use direct quotations from the transcripts of your interviews, because I will use a pseudonym (fake name) to identify you, anyone reading the manuscript will not be able to identify you from the direct quotations used. I will share the findings of this research at academic and settlement conferences.

When the study is complete, if you would like a copy of the results, please provide me with your contact information and I will ensure that you receive a copy by email. The findings will also be shared with immigrant-serving agencies. In addition, I will also share the findings with parks agencies, such as Alberta Parks, and municipal agencies, such as The City of Edmonton's Activities, Parks and Recreation division.

Contact Information

If you have any further questions about this research study, please contact me, Jane Hurly, at the email and phone number listed on the front page of this letter.

The plan for this study has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. This office is independent of the researcher.

If you have questions about your rights on how research should be conducted, and your rights as a research participant you can call the Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615. If you would like to participate in this research, you may contact me by email at jane.hurly@ualberta.ca or by phoning 780-782-9207.

Consent Statement

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told who to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

I consent to the use of my photographs, portrait, pictures or drawings, and my words (in direct quotations from the interview transcripts) in Jane Hurly's dissertation, and for publication in future academic publications that she will prepare. I understand that such academic papers, when published, will be available to other learners and scholars and I approve the use and copy of the photographs and/or drawings, and my words as direct quotations from the interview transcripts as described above. The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of the manuscript(s), including non-exclusive world rights in all languages.

_____   _____
Participant's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____   _____
Name (printed) and Signature of   Date
Person Obtaining Consent

Appendix B: Interview Guide

This guide was used for both mother and daughters.

Introductory question

- I'd like to know a little about you. Could you tell me about yourself?

Transition questions
- What does leisure mean to you?
- Tell me about the kinds of things you liked to do before the pandemic.
- How has the pandemic affected your leisure, doing the things you choose that give you pleasure and happiness?
- What do you do for leisure now that brings you pleasure or enjoyment?

Mother/daughter/sister
- Tell me about your mother/daughter/sister
- Do you and your mother/daughter do anything together, or have leisure together, doing things that you choose to do for enjoyment, fun, or pleasure?
- What do you most like doing for fun/pleasure/enjoyment with your mother/daughter?
- How has the pandemic changed your leisure with your mother/daughter? Can you tell me about that?

Friends
- What about friends? How did you and your friends have leisure together before the pandemic, and what do you do now?
  How does it feel to do that? (Describe the experience of doing that)
- Tell me about something that you did **before the pandemic** that you really enjoyed that has not be possible since the pandemic. How has that made you feel?
- Can you think of a time, **since the pandemic**, when you have done something, or something you now do, that brings you pleasure of joy? Please describe your feelings or the emotions you experienced.

Family members
- Do any other family members live in Canada? If so, did you have leisure with them/or things together than you enjoyed **before the pandemic**?
  - ○ How have you had to change the way you enjoy leisure with other family members **since the pandemic**? Tell me more about that.

Church community/ethnic community
- Tell me about some of the things you and friends, or members of your community/**church**/synagogue/temple/mosque liked to do before the pandemic.
  - ○ What do you do now? Tell me about that.

Nature/Outdoor leisure
- How do you experience nature in your leisure?

          ○   Does your mother/daughter come with you/do things in nature with you?
          ○   Do other friends/family?

- What has been the **biggest change in your leisure since the pandemic began**? Can you describe how that change has made you feel?
- What **would you like to do most** in terms of your leisure when the pandemic is over? Tell me about the experience of doing that.

Photo-elicitation: photos and drawings

Introductory questions:
- Did you enjoy taking photographs of your leisure? OR Did you enjoy making the drawings?
- Tell me about the experience of taking photographs/making drawings.

Transition questions
- Did you enjoy going through your photos? OR Did you enjoy working with the art supplies? (Tell me about that)
- What did you like about making these drawings/taking these photos? How did it feel to reflect on your photos/drawings?
- Do you have a favourite one? Can you describe that image/drawing and what it means to you?

Key question
- Tell me about this photo/drawing. (Feelings, emotions, description of what is lived, etc.)

These are the *basic questions* for each photo or drawing, with invitations to move beyond the interview guide.

Closing questions

- Is there anything about your leisure, or things you like to do for enjoyment and pleasure that you'd like to add, or tell me more about?
- Is there anything that you'd like to tell me about that I haven't asked you in connection with your leisure, or what you choose to do for pleasure and enjoyment?
- Is there anything about any of the photos or drawings we've discussed today that you'd like to add, or talk about some more?
- Is there more you'd like to share about your leisure?

Appendix C: Gadamer's (2004) Theory of Hermeneutic Experience

In this appendix I provide a more comprehensive introduction to, and history of, Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy. I elucidate the key concepts of Gadamer's hermeneutical project, as follows (a) the concept of being (*Dasein*), (b) the meaning of truth, and (c) understanding (*verstehen*). The concept of understanding is further expounded under the following sub-headings: (i) prejudice, tradition, history, and horizon, (ii) the hermeneutical circle, (iii) language, the gateway to understanding, and (iv) phronesis – the application of ethical wisdom for the common good.

The Gadamerian Hermeneutical Philosophical and Phenomenological Approach

"The task of hermeneutics is to clarify this miracle of understanding,

which is not a mysterious communion of souls, but sharing in a common meaning."

(Gadamer, 2004, p. 292).

Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer are considered three of the most prominent German philosophers in the phenomenological understanding of beings, but Gadamer is regarded as the most prominent figure in the development of philosophical hermeneutics in the 20th Century, according to Malpas (2018). Gadamer's life's work owes much to Heidegger (1988) who described philosophy as pre-eminently ontological, and, as such, he saw it as "not a *science* of beings, but of *being*" (p. 11, italics in the original). Philosophy is, according to Heidegger, primarily concerned with unfolding the truths of the human experience of being in the world. Therefore, the task of the philosopher is to make visible and enunciate the lived experience and meanings of human beings, but it does so by being fully aware that she is influenced, as each of us is, by our unique histories, experiences, values, and beliefs, or "fore-

meanings" in philosopher/phenomenologist Hans-Georg Gadamer's (2004) terminology. Consequently, Heidegger, who had studied with Husserl—considered the founder of phenomenology—evolved the 'existential turn' in phenomenology focused on answering the ontological question of understanding ways of being (Gadamer, 2004; van Manen, 2014) and how humans make sense and meaning of their being. Heidegger's phenomenology and hermeneutics of existence (Grondin, 2006) represented a departure from Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. Husserl's phenomenology emphasized that, to see the things themselves, the interpreter was required, or thought able, to suspend or bracket her knowledge or pre-understandings of something in a presuppositionless space to see a thing primordially, as though before encountering it (though it were familiar to them) for the first time. Gadamer (2004), in breaking with Husserl's insistence on transcendental consciousness (the requirement to bracket or to attempt to transcend one's knowledge, biases, and history to 'see' or encounter something as though for the first time), declares Husserl's phenomenology "continues the transcendental enquiry of Enlightenment philosophers Kant and Fichte in striving for objectivity in the search for truth" (p. 236). One of the hallmarks of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology—if not *the* most notable hallmark—is the epoché and reduction (van Manen, 2014). These terms refer to the act of suspending one's own knowledge or understanding or beliefs, or way of seeing a thing, to 'see' it or experience something anew as though never encountered before. Husserl also appropriated the term *bracketing* from mathematics as a way of indicating that during the epoché one should narrow or reduce one's focus to think about or examine only the thing or phenomenon inside the brackets at it were, and not on anything outside the brackets (van Manen, 2014). Doing so, would enable one to move from the natural attitude (our taken-for-granted attitude about experiences and things) to the phenomenological attitude, whereby we have

bracketed out our knowledge and beliefs. We have transcended them, and we have reduced our wide, uncritical gaze to concentrate only on the thing itself.

To Gadamer (2004), we, as humans and sentient beings, are always interpreting the world around us, and he averred that it is simply not possible to bracket our pre-understandings (or prejudices) because we are all always in the midst of our histories and traditions. These cannot be set aside at will or transcended for the sake of objectivity. Nor should they be. In conducting my research, this means that I was, as researcher, fully present in each interview, and that meant my acknowledgement that as a historically-situated woman, my history and prejudices could not be bracketed out or suspended. I am always enrobed in my own historicity. As such, based on this self-understanding and being aware that each of us in the conversation is similarly situated, I was aware and open to what the other interlocutor brought into being through our shared conversation.

Gadamer's philosophy considers hermeneutics to be the "art of interpretation or understanding, and . . . always signifies an ongoing, never completable process of understanding, rooted in human finitude and human 'linguisticality'" (Moran, 2000, p. 248). In essence, Gadamer located language and the understanding of the spoken word, particularly through conversation, as revealing the true experience of our being-in-the-world. As Moran has emphasised in describing Gadamer's project: we can never arrive at an absolute truth of experience because our interpretation and understanding of the meaning of language in what is said may change over time as the interlocutors or interpreters of text find new meanings emerging from the subject matter they are discussing. Such reflection leads always to greater self-understanding in the unfolding of a being's experience of being in the world. So, what is being? For Martin Heidegger, the concept of *Dasein* lies at the heart of understanding being

(Davidson, 2013) and this understanding also informs Gadamer's (2004) philosophy

The Concept of Being

Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*, in essence, that of 'being there' or 'there being' (Davidson, 2013). emphasized the "in-the-moment" presence and immediacy of the in-the-world experience, even when recalling it from the past, yet feeling it and experiencing it as though it were happening in the present (p. 322). To elucidate the 'being there' of everyday existence or experience, Heidegger inferred, involves both description and interpretation (Heidegger, 1988). Gadamer (2004), a disciple of Heidegger's, argued that interpretation of the world and understanding being comes through language and the linguisticality of our existence. Gadamer was deeply influenced by Heidegger's concept of language as central to the understanding of a being's being and extended and advanced Heidegger's thinking.

However, he does not slavishly follow Heidegger's thinking. According to Dostal (2006) the chief difference between Heidegger and Gadamer is in their modes of thinking: Heidegger is a meditative thinker and Gadamer a dialogical one. To clarify: Heidegger's focus on conversation and dialogue is an engagement and conversation "with the gods" (p. 257) rather than an exchange with another human being. For Gadamer a conversation is not a private inward meditation (or a subjective one only) but is instead the act of entering into a dialogue of sharing with and listening to another person. Meanings thus made are intersubjective: they are meanings shared with others.

Gadamer proposed that the interpretation of language and texts involves a "fusion of horizons, a dialectical interaction between the expectation of the interpreter and meaning of the text" (Polkinghorne, 1983, as cited in Laverty, 2003, p. 25). Gadamer posited that hermeneutic philosophy should focus not on the methodological to know truth, but on the ontological

illuminations of human lives—their ways of being. This is not to say that Gadamer thought

methods were unimportant—they certainly were for the natural sciences—but in his hermeneutic

philosophy it is understanding and the interpretation of the ontological through language, text,

art, and dialogue that are preeminent (Gadamer, 1976). Hermeneutics, averred Gadamer (2004)

"denotes the basic being-in-motion of *Dasein* [being there or there being] that constitutes its

finitude and historicity, and hence embraces the whole of its existence of the world" (p. xxvii). In

other words, our being-in-the-world experience is permeated by the finiteness of our

understanding and knowledge, the historical tradition that envelopes us, that has shaped us, and

all that we have experienced in the past and present. These knowledges and ways of being are

tightly woven into our being and inscribe and describe who we are, affecting every aspect of our

lived experience and our attempts to make the world around us intelligible (Wachterhauser,

2006). Gadamer (2004) appropriated and elaborated two crucial facets of Heidegger's thinking in

his own hermeneutic philosophy: one is the role of art and poetry in connection with the nature

of truth. The second is Heidegger's understanding that truth is ephemeral and may never fully be

revealed. The truth will always be partially disclosed; it can never be fully transparent as it is

always affected or overlaid with shifting nebulae of ideas, insights, and interpretations resulting

in closedness or concealment. Or there may be shifts in those factors that allow for momentary

unconcealedness until circumstances change once again. Before illuminating the principal facets

of Gadamer's philosophy, it is important to elaborate what he meant by 'truth,' particularly given

its ephemeral nature in Gadamer's (2004) understanding of it.

The Meaning of Truth

Gadamer does not proffer a "theory of truth" (Risser, 1996, p. 159), nor does he attempt

to provide definitions of truth. Gadamer does, however, in the Platonic tradition, see that truth is

most closely associated within the beauty (*aletheia* or truth) of works of art, which, though the artist may not be there to interpret them for the viewer, can be interpreted by the viewer in her own way. As Gadamer (2004) averred, if we begin with the "ontological view that being is *language*" (p. 481, italics in the original) we can accept that it is the beautiful, defined by St. Thomas as knowledge, that provides the enlightenment to see a thing revealed in its being. Risser (1997) has argued that Gadamer meant that "We are … already in the truth, and we bear witness to our entanglement with truth when we find ourselves caught up in the effort of finding common ground whereby what is said by the word or presented by the performance speaks in a new voice" (p. 152). What is important is the understanding of the experience through words, and through the articulation of words we may glimpse truth, gossamer though it may be. Gadamer (2004) expressed this most eloquently: "Understanding then, does not consist of a technical virtuosity of 'understanding' everything written. Rather, it is a genuine experience (*Erfahrung*)—i.e., an encounter with something that asserts itself as truth" (p. 483).

**Understanding (*verstehen)*

> "All understanding is interpretation, and all interpretation takes place in the medium of a language that allows the object to come into works and yet is at the same time the interpreter's own language."

(Gadamer, 2004, p. 390)

Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy is grounded in the belief that all understanding of the world occurs through the interpretation of language (Crotty, 1998; Figal, 2006; Gadamer, 1976, 2004; Grondin, 2006; Lawn, 2006; Moran, 2000). The primary foci of the dialogical exchange are reflexivity, equality, and reciprocity—a knowing and self-understanding of the interpreter (Moran, 2000, Grondin, 2006). In coming to an agreement, primarily through

"dialogue, language, and conversation" (Grondin, 2006, p. 41) the interlocutors seek to understand, listen, respond, and interpret what they hear. Then they begin again the oscillating back and forth motion of communion, interpretation, responding and understanding. The element of self-understanding is crucial to the "understanding of understanding" (Moran, 2000, p. 252) because in self-understanding we can be more acutely attuned to the pre-judgments or prejudices that may work "behind our backs" (Gadamer, 1976, p. 38), influencing our understanding. Only in this manner "do I learn to gain a new understanding of what I have seen through eyes conditioned by prejudice" (p. 38).

Prejudice, Tradition, History and Horizon in Gadamer's Hermeneutics

Gadamer (1976; 2004) vigorously revived and defended the idea of prejudice—a word often considered in a negative light in the modern understanding of it—seeing it as pivotal in understanding the being of a being. These natural and essential facets of human existence were, in Enlightenment thinking, seen as intruding on absolute and confirmable truth, and therefore prejudicial to its attainment. However, it is precisely the idea of prejudice in the original sense of that word as a *pre-judgment* rather than a bias typically perceived today in a negative way as unfounded judgment, that lies at the core of hermeneutical philosophy in Gadamer's (1976; 2004) phenomenology. In fact, Gadamer (2004) averred that prejudice in its original understanding "means a judgment that is rendered before all elements of what determine a situation have been finally examined" (p. 273). Rather than meaning that one has judged falsely, it means that one's prejudices or *pre-judgments* can have both a positive or a negative impact on understanding subject matter. Gadamer (1976) has made clear that "It is not so much our judgments as it is our prejudices that constitute our being" (p. 9). While admitting that making such a statement is provocative, Gadamer has emphasized that 'prejudices' are not "necessarily

unjustified and erroneous so that they inevitably distort the truth" but instead "are simply conditions whereby we experience something—whereby what we encounter says something to us" (p. 9). The important point Gadamer makes is that every human being comes to every human interaction, conversation, text, or work of art, with her own prejudices about the world, the weight of her own experiences, history, and life knowledges that make up her historicity or tradition, and they cannot be suspended to arrive at truth. But prejudices are not obstacles to greater understanding, according to Gadamer (1975), who argued that "hermeneutical reflection fulfils the function that is accomplished in bringing all of something to conscious awareness" (p. 38). In addition, by deeply reflecting on a pre-judgment or prejudice we hold, we can consider whether our prejudices are justified or not.

Tradition. For Gadamer (1975, as cited by Smith, 1993) humans, as sentient beings, are always part of tradition. Gadamer (1976, 2004) understood and articulated tradition in the historical sense as meaning the passing down of a skill or knowledge from generation to generation, with the word 'tradition' itself stemming from the original meaning of the Latin word *tradere.* Our histories, and therefore, our traditions, and the prejudices within our traditions are with us always. As Lawn (2006) noted, "We cannot escape tradition as we are always in it" (p. 36). Therefore, an individual who says they can suspend their own prejudices and biases is deluding themselves:

> A person who believes he is free from prejudices, relying on the objectivity of his procedures [methods] and denying that he is himself conditioned by historical circumstances, experiences the power of the prejudices that unconsciously dominate him as a *vis a tergo* [powerful, dominating force]. A person who does not admit that he is

dominated by prejudices will fail to see what manifests itself by their light. (Gadamer,

2004, p. 354)

Gadamer (2004) emphasized that "to be situated within a tradition does not limit the

freedom of knowledge but makes it possible" (p. 354) and that acknowledging our prejudices

enables their shining a path, beacon-like, so that we think and see with greater openness.

Therefore, the intent is not merely to regard the past as historical, and somewhat anachronistic,

distant, and removed from relevance to one's present day being, but omnipresent and persistent

in its influence on our being. It is also liberating in that, being aware of the mantle of tradition

and historicity that swirls over our lives, we can open ourselves to new experiences with a fuller

appreciation of who we are. As such we can be more finely attuned and awake to the tradition

and historicity of others as we engage in conversation to find agreement and common meaning.

History and Horizon. We are informed by our histories—our experiences of our past,

the character of people around us, such as parents, teachers, friends and community members,

the social milieu in which we lived, and the culture of the country where we now reside. All

these personal, cultural, and environmental factors and situations have shaped our life worlds.

According to Gadamer (2004) these factors, as well as our own experiences, thoughts, and ideas

form our horizons of knowledge and understanding about the world. A horizon, according to

Gadamer (2004) is the standpoint from which we view the world.

It is our horizons of historical knowledge, bounded by time and space, tradition, and

prejudice that we bring to every interaction with others, and, as we attempt to come to an

agreement or common understanding of something, or in our reading and interpretation of texts.

Each of us is similarly influenced. Because of the limits of our horizons, truth is ever-elusive

because our horizons shift as we explore and interpret texts, or speak with each other in

conversation. As Mangion (2011) contended, when we read or hear words, we understand them anew with each reading, "since something new is disclosed by language" (p. 175). It is the words and language, our dialogical exchanges and the linguisticality of our lives that permits understanding of the world.

Gadamer (2004) referred to this malleable sense-making of our own traditions or histories melding with those of others with whom we are communicating, or in texts we are reading, as seeking to *fuse our respective horizons of historicity and tradition*. This concept is capably elucidated by Zuckert (2002):

> To *expand our horizon*, we must not only identify the way in which things from the past
> are different; we also have to ask how they can be combined with or otherwise affect our
> current understanding. That is, in Gadamer's now-famous terminology, we must
> ultimately seek to *fuse horizons*. (p. 206, italics added)

In summary, Gadamer (2004) argued we do not stand apart from our histories, prejudices, and tradition at any time. We are, in fact, inescapably part of history, tradition, and our prejudices, that "far more than [our] judgments, constitute the historical reality of [our] being" (p. 278). Our phenomenological understanding of our factical lives and therefore our self-understanding does not unfold because the interpreter employs a technique or tactic. Instead, self-understanding comes about because of our self-awareness of our situatedness in history and tradition. When we acknowledge that we are situated in history and tradition, we are fully present in the world.

The new or heightened understanding of which Gadamer (2004) spoke develops from the ways in which we approach a conversation, text, or work of art. First, we must examine the whole of the matter, then the parts before returning to the whole to divine a clear understanding

(Crotty, 1998). This oscillating movement in the hermeneutical interpretation denotes the circularity of understanding and is called the hermeneutical circle.

The Hermeneutical Circle

The circle of understanding is a feature of all hermeneutic philosophies, including those of Heidegger and Gadamer, but Gadamer's (1976, 2004) invocation of the hermeneutical circle, describes not so much a circle as a circling-like action, underscoring that the critical element lies "in the oscillating movement between the whole and the part" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 191). It is this near-and-far examination, akin to using a magnifying glass, as one views first the whole to gain a sense of a thing's entirety. Then, knowing that one cannot possibly understand the whole from a distance, magnify the parts to explore further. Doing so engenders a better understanding of the whole. After examining the parts attentively and refocusing on the whole of a thing, we are able to pull into view and consciousness a more nuanced and informed understanding of the whole. Gadamer (2004) has referred to the hermeneutical rule "that we must understand the whole in terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the whole" (p. 291). Gadamer (2004) claimed that by continually moving between the whole and the parts anticipated understanding would be able to move to actual understanding (p. 291). However, Gadamer emphasized that the goal is not to try and enter into the mind of the author of a text, for example, but to understand, interpret, and elucidate the author's perspective that inspired the work. Though Gadamer, in this latter instance, described the interpreter coming to an understanding of text, in my own research, my aim was not to enter the mind of the participant as I interviewed her, but for us both to be in relationship in sharing a back-and-forth exchange about something. My aim was to provide an open, egalitarian space for us to explore, through language, experiences of leisure in such a way that we both achieved greater understanding of the matter under discussion.

Grondin (2006) has enunciated the major hallmarks of Gadamer's concept of the hermeneutic circle of understanding as follows: (a) that interpretation oscillates between the whole and the parts of the subject matter, (b) the circle is focused on the interpretation of text and language, coming to agreement, (c) the circle is never-ending because interpretation and understanding entail the constant revisiting of the subject matter as individuals oscillate between the whole and the parts, revise their interpretations, and make allowances and changes to their interpretations as different manifestations of truth and knowledge come into view (Dunne, 1993), and (d) interpretations are informed by the past and by tradition, and by our prejudices.

The interlocutors' focus, it must be emphasized, is always on the subject matter (Gadamer, 2004) and, in fact, to lose sight of the subject matter and the individual with whom the conversation is being held, distracts and detracts from the interpreter's search for agreement, meaning, and truth through language. Gadamer (2004) explicated though, that for all our attention to historicity and prejudice in coming to understanding of the dialogical or textual, the true meaning may elude us and be ephemeral and elusive because

> . . . the discovery of the true meaning of a text or a work of art is never finished; it is in fact an infinite process. Not only are fresh sources filtered out that obscure true meaning; but new sources of understanding are continually emerging that reveal unsuspected elements of meaning. (p. 298)

Still, Gadamer (2004) did not mean that no understanding is ever possible, but that a fuller understanding, and truth comes about only through and by language. According to Moran (2000), "Language is where our understanding, our mode of being in the world, comes to realisation" (p. 270). Language, therefore, reveals something of the very essence of being.

Language: The Gateway to Understanding

"Language is the medium in which substantive understanding and agreement

take place between two people."

(Gadamer, 2004, p. 386)

Language is pivotal to understanding. Therefore, as we engage in conversation with another, we seek both common ground and a common understanding of something upon which we can agree. Gadamer (1976, 2004) has maintained that for conversations or discussions to be fruitful, interlocutors must focus their attention on the subject they are discussing, so that they are not distracted, and deeper understanding can occur. He proffered the example of the buoyant art of the game, wherein the players are focused on the ball rather than solely on each other. What is important is play, not the players or the rules of the game, but the in motion-ness of being caught up in momentum of the game. As Linge, in the editor's introduction of Gadamer's *Philosophical hermeneutics* (1976) contended, "This element of buoyancy—of being borne along by the subject matter . . . suggests the inadequacy of trying to comprehend understanding from the perspective of the subjectivity of the author or the interpreter" (p. xxii) alerting us to the importance of focusing on the subject matter itself. Risser (1997) has cautioned, though, that the de-centring of the players in thrall of the game from focusing on themselves to focusing on the subject matter (or the ball) does not imply 'losing' themselves or becoming detached. Instead, such intent focus fosters greater self-understanding as well as a fuller, mutual understanding of the subject matter.

On the Speculative Nature of Language and Being Open. The interlocutors must also allow for the speculative, uncertain nature of any exchange. Gadamer (2004) offered that, "Even in the most everyday speech there appears an element of speculative reflection, namely the intangibility of that which is still the purest reproduction of meaning" (p. 465). This notion of

speculation in all human communication and language use points to the myriad possible

interpretations there might be in our use of language to achieve understanding. Most importantly,

the possibility of numerous interpretations underscores the ephemerality, multiplicity, and

plasticity of understanding and meaning. Figal (2002) has described the importance of openness

in such an exchange of ideas as equally involving both listening and addressing one another, and

emphasising that

> [O]ne is prepared for a conversation only when one is prepared to listen, that is, when one
>
> is prepared to let the other say something. And one shows that one is capable of a
>
> conversation by talking in a way that corresponds to the preparedness for conversation of
>
> the other and not by using it as an opportunity to carry on a monologue. (p. 107)

Furthermore, coming to an understanding and agreement through language is not merely

a shifting of one's position, or stating one's point of view, "but being transformed into a

communion in which we do not remain what we were" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 371). Engaging in the

hermeneutic interpretation of texts, or in a dialogical exchange with another person, means one

must be ready "to place one's own convictions in question and to take seriously what the other

says" (Figal, 2002, p. 107) to advance understanding of the meaning of the matter. Figal's (2002)

point speaks to the importance of deeply attentive listening during the interview and allowing the

person with whom one is in conversation to fully express herself. In addition, interlocutors

should feel that they are in the company of those who respect them and treat them with dignity.

Feeling comfortable and at peace with others means that we are more easily able to open

ourselves and freely offer our thoughts on what we are discussing and to focus on it. If we think

that we are in the presence of benign and friendly others, it enables us to relax and perhaps let

down our guard a little. This goes to Gadamer's (2004) point that people assuming or feeling that

they are "bound together in friendship" (p. 320) and that they are in the company of receptive others are open to giving and receiving each other's ideas.

The Logic of Question and Answer. It is the logic of back-and-forth, of question and answer, that "gives the hermeneutic experience its true dimension" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 367). However, questioning is not used inquisitorially or as a means of gaining power over the other, or to gain the upper hand with a more compelling argument. "By questioning one holds on to the matter at hand of the conversation, and by questioning one keeps the conversation open, so that it can dialectically come to completion," and permit the "freedom of the conversation" (Figal, 2002, p. 108). Only in this way will we become transformed by what we offer and what we learn, and the interweaving of our horizons (the standpoint from which we view the world and encompassing our tradition and history) through a conversation binds us in a third way to deeper understanding, elevating and transporting us well beyond our original horizon of understanding. It also holds the possibility of revealing to us "the strange and astonishing expression of another person" (p. 109). Even in that astonishing reveal, our understanding is always bounded by the finiteness of our existence.

The Boundedness of Our Finitude. Humans are finite beings, with horizons of understanding limited always by their histories, traditions, and prejudices (Gadamer, 1976, 2004). As such, our finitude greatly influences our interpretation and understanding of the world. Risser (1997), argued that one of the most important lodestars of Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy is finitude, which recognizes that the finiteness of our human existence limits our being-in-the-world experience, and therefore nothing can ever be fully and completely known. Being that comes into being as language is finite, but the possibilities for understanding are

infinite. As such, we never come to a final determination or foundation (Dostal, 2006) as a result of our interactions, and that is not the aim.

Because experience is, "the experience of human finitude. The truly experienced person is one who has taken this to heart, who knows that he is master neither of time, nor the future" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 351). Such knowledge of the finite self, knowing one occupies a certain space and time in the greater scheme of things, fosters openness to new experiences. Risser (1997) has added that finitude is rooted in Heidegger's (1988) concept of facticity—the facts of our being—that go well beyond anything that can be determined by third-person investigation to the core of who we are—our self-knowledge, self-concept, and self-understanding. As Crowell (2017, *Facticity and transcendence*, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, para. 2.1) explained, humans do not think of themselves from a third person perspective. Therefore, in the elucidation of 'facticity' from an existential philosophical perspective, though it is possible for one to think of oneself in the third person, doing so would negate the ineffable essence of one's being "because the kind of being that I am cannot be defined in factual, or third-person, terms."

Gadamer (2004) emphasized that the facts of our being and the finitude of our existence limits the extent of our understanding, and therefore our horizon. This does not mean the end of understanding but betokens the infinite possibilities of understanding well beyond our understanding. After all, when we point to the horizon, Gadamer notes, we always point beyond the horizon, and not just to the edge of what we can physically see. We are, therefore, creatures of infinite optimism, open to an array of interpretations and understandings we do not yet possess, yet we are eager to encounter—and to bring other understandings (and self-understanding) into being through language as we fuse our horizons in an attitude of openness, and toward productive melding. Such optimism encourages us, as researchers, to create an

empathic, encouraging environment—one in which my enthusiasm for my project pervaded my interactions with participants.

Through my own enthusiasm, I thought it important to convey to my study participants that I was both delighted and honoured for them to have agreed to participate in my study and that I regarded them with respect and dignity, so that this set the groundwork for a productive conversation. I use the word 'productive' purposely because Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy has been criticized by critical philosophers, such as Habermas, who have found his theory too nebulous and questionable (Moran, 2000), particularly in terms of coming to agreement through dialogue. According to Habermas agreement and shared understanding can "also be an exercise in power and domination" (Moran, 2000, p. 284) that can have catastrophic consequences.

I proffer here two examples of such consequences, including the events that unfolded in Rwanda in the 1990's, or in Nazi Germany during World War II (1939-1945), when inflammatory dialogues and *agreement* about what was required by leaders of their citizens to impress abhorrent and preposterous ideologies, led to genocide. However, Gadamer's (2004) project emphasizes the productiveness of the meaningful conversation as unfolding in the *ethical application of actions that enhance the common good*. Here he turns to the Aristotelian concept of *phronēsis* to illuminate the *raison d'etre* of his project: the application of ethical wisdom in the service of humanity.

Phronēsis: Applying Practical Wisdom for the Common Good

To Gadamer (2004), the purpose of hermeneutical interpretation in search of understanding and truth is grounded in the useful applicability of what we learn through dialectical interchanges with each other, or through the interpretation of texts. The phronetic aims of hermeneutical interpretation in Gadamer's philosophy, are moored in the Aristotelian

concept of phronesis, that involves both perception and reasoning *and* having the moral character (Rabinoff, 2018) to act wisely and ethically (Dunne, 1993) in life. For example, a judge might make wise decisions in court, but be lacking in understanding of her children's needs and neglectful of them.

Phronesis is considered an intellectual virtue, that, by attending to the particulars of a situation, being aware and receptive to how one thinks about those particulars, one can make thoughtful and right choices (Dunne, 1993). For example, in an earlier study with refugee women from Africa living in Canada (Hurly, 2019), I found that participants, all of whom were mothers, were alert to, and sensitive to their own needs for leisure, as well as the changing needs of their rapidly acculturating children. They were guided by their Christian faith, and the *communitas*[20] of their ethnic community belonging, to make leisure choices for themselves and their children in accord with their personal ethics in support of achieving the felicitous life, or eudaimonia (Hemingway, 1988)

Technical Knowledge versus Practical Wisdom

Gadamer (2004) drew a clear distinction between practical (ethical) wisdom and technical knowledge (*techne*). *Techne* describes the acquisition of a practical skill, such as a craftsman or craftswoman might have, or might learn, or the skills of a scientist to perform an action with precision. This means that the individual learning to play a lute, sew a theatrical costume, or perform a gymnastic routine, follows a set of instructions. Such a deployment of technical skill does not require the application of ethical knowledge. It requires only the remembering of how to complete a task. Gadamer (2004) explained: "We learn a techne and can also forget it. But we do not learn moral knowledge, nor can we forget it" (p. 315). Warnke

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[20] *Communitas* may be described as a sense of unity among a group of people, who feel bound together by shared ideals, or a way of life, beliefs, traditions, an interest, or an activity (Turner, 2012).

(2006) cautioned that applying ethnical knowledge is not straightforward (such as applying a technical skill one has mastered), because the acts of being ethical and virtuous are intertwined with our ideal of how to act virtuously and ethically. Therefore, the ideal of ethicality to which we strive is not independent of our actions to realize that ideal.

Warnke (2006) provided the example of courageous behaviour, arguing that the act of courage is not independent of the person demonstrating courage whether they are fighting a war or being a conscientious objector. Courage as a virtue and a moral or ethical stance takes on a different meaning for individuals demonstrating courage according to their individual interpretations of that virtue. As Warnke (2006) argued, "we make and remake our ethical knowledge and ourselves in these changing circumstances, in the actions we take to apply the ethical knowledge we already possess" (p. 85). Gadamer (2004) also underscored the importance of relationship in explaining difference between the application of practical wisdom and technical skill or knowledge. No relationship is needed between those seeking or receiving technical advice. However, when we seek or receive practical wisdom, relationship is all important. Gadamer (2004) explicated this relationship as one bound in friendship and empathy.

> Both the person asking for advice and the person giving it assume that they are bound together in friendship. Only friends can advise each other, or put it another way, only a piece of advice that is meant in a friendly way has meaning for the person advised. Once again we discover that the person who is understanding does not know or judge as one who stands apart and unaffected but rather, he thinks along with the other from the perspective of a specific bond of belonging, as if he too were affected. (p. 320).

 Gadamer (2004) decried the modern era's shunning or turning from the concept of practical or ethical wisdom in the Aristotelian sense (or perhaps in not understanding the

difference) that instead equates 'practical' with 'technical' knowledge, valorizing instead the notion of praxis as putting to use a skill one has learned. Whereas, for Gadamer (1975, as cited by Bernstein, 2006, p. 269) the application of a technical skill could not be further removed from the hermeneutic philosophical understanding of it.

In terms of the application of practical or ethical wisdom, Gadamer (2004) used the examples of the interpretation of law and theological interpretations of Holy Writ. If the interpreter of such text merely interpreted these exactly as written in their historical context but sought no way to apply them to herself or to the contemporary situation so that others might see the relevance of such texts to themselves in their present situations, the interpretation, and therefore understanding, would be incomplete. Gadamer (2004) explained:

> This implies that the text, whether law or gospel, if it is to be understood properly—i.e., according to the claim it makes—must be understood at every moment, in every concrete situation, in a new and different way. Understanding here is always application (p. 308).

From a leisure studies perspective, a phronetic researcher must be attentively alert, sensitive, respectful, and attuned to the realities of participants as they are enunciated. She must still herself, be mindful of not rushing to interpret. She must allow the sense of the spoken and unspoken, inflections, body language, facial expressions and the environment to seep and settle, to permeate her consciousness so that she can be fully open to every nuance (Hurly, 2021), allowing them to enter and transform both her understanding and self-understanding. Even then, interpretation and understanding will be ever incomplete, and never absolute, as what has been experienced is revisited later and must be viewed and faithfully contextualized in time and space. In addition, the knowledge that develops from, for example, a study involving African immigrant women and their experiences of leisure, must be suffused with virtue (Dunne, 1993). However,

animating phronesis is not a not a separate 'activity' of doing good and thereby claiming to have acted phronetically. Phronesis stems from the experience of eudaimonic being and doing, and the striving for excellence (Dunne, 1993) which are inseparably encompassed in Aristotle's leisure philosophy (Hemingway, 1988; Owens, 1981).

In addition, in emphasizing the practical focus of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, Rorty (1982, as cited by Risser, 1997) pointed to Gadamer's common ground with pragmatism and the understanding,

> …that philosophy is not a transcendental operation of securing first principles as its way of making sense of the world. The pragmatist and the hermeneut of philosophical hermeneutics do not want to separate reason from the practice of life, and in this sense both are fundamentally Socratic: there is the 'willingness to talk, to listen to other people, to weigh the consequences of our actions upon other people'. (p. 115)

Smith (1993) contended that all understanding is, at the heart of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, both a practical task and accomplishment—and that because humans are, at their core, "ethical and moral beings, understanding is at its core ethical and moral" (p. 197). In making this claim Smith underscored one of the most important hallmarks of Gadamer's project: that the morality and ethicality of philosophical hermeneutics grounds it steadfastly in the unfolding of the understanding of the human experience of the life world. Still, Gadamer (1976, 2004) steered clear of offering a method for how such unfolding and interpretation might occur, and his emphasis on the necessity of application in hermeneutical reflection and interpretation in service of the greater good should not be construed as his leaning toward the methodological as applied in the natural sciences. As Dostal (2006) clearly states, when Gadamer refers to "method" in his magnum opus, *Truth and Method,* he is not referring to "a set of procedural

rules, but rather the discipline of attending to things" (p. 251). Gadamer did not subscribe to Husserl's phenomenological method, stating instead that the project of hermeneutics is to interpret and describe the "human experience of understanding" (p. 251), not to become strangled in methodological orthodoxies. The goal of his enterprise is philosophical, and, in his philosophy the goal of hermeneutic interpretation is simply this: to unfold the "phenomenon of understanding" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 321).

Gadamer did, however, point out that while hermeneutical reflection and interpretation embrace self-reflection leading to self-understanding, they should not be thought applicable only in the human sciences. In fact, Gadamer (1976) argued, such reflection in the natural sciences may also be fruitfully applied to "serve the methodological endeavour of science by making transparently clear the guiding preunderstandings in the sciences and thereby open new dimensions of questioning" (p. 39). He argued eloquently that the Enlightenment's objectivist science, anchored by its theoretical and methodological understanding (and servitude) and belief in "a detached neutral viewpoint which at the same time can see all sides of the matter" (Moran, 2000, p. 269) is enrobed in its own traditions and prejudices as well. However, human understanding is not only limited by history and tradition, but because we are finite beings, our finitude also limits the extent and horizon of our understanding.

The theory of hermeneutic experience (Gadamer, 2004) has rarely been used in the study of leisure (Hurly, 2021; see also Hurly, 2019). Yet, when combined with Aristotle's holistic philosophy of leisure as embracing the development of the whole person in striving to achieve excellence in all facets of their lives (Owens, 1981), these two philosophies together forge alchemic tools to explore leisure (Hurly, 2021).

While Bouwer and van Leeuwen (2017) have questioned the relevance of Western philosophy to leisure studies involving culturally diverse people, however, I think that both Gadamer's (2004) theory of hermeneutic experience, and Aristotle's philosophy of leisure (Hemingway, 1988) are both appropriate and suitable. That is because Gadamer's (2004) philosophy stresses the equality of interlocutors, the willing embrace of our histories, prejudices, tradition, and finitude, while Aristotle's philosophy stresses the importance of leisure in striving to achieve the virtuous and excellent life in which one thrives and finds joy and fulfillment (Bouwer & van Leeuwen, 2017; Holba, 2013; Hurly, 2021; Owens, 1981). This alchemic fusion of philosophies provides not a method, a theory to scaffold, or a hypothesis to falsify, but an ethical guide for sitting with, and coming alongside another, and being open to the surprise and wonder of their world in the unfolding of a conversation. In summing up the relevance of entwining the philosophies of Gadamer (2004) and Aristotle (Owens, 1981), I would conclude:

> In entwining Aristotle's notion of leisure with Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy and phenomenology we mindfully focus our attention and gaze instead on unfolding the ontological: the intersubjective, lived experience of leisure. I contend that in this way we can transcend matters of culture, sex, gender, race, age, ability, or ethnicity. We can be humbly open to the concealed, the unsaid, the unimagined, the unknown, the unexplored, waiting patiently for the voice of the other to sound (Hurly, 2021, p. 11).