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**Recreation Policies and Programs for New Immigrants to Canada: A Case Study of
Spanish-Speaking Immigrants in Windsor, Ontario**

By

Matias Ignacio Golob

**A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Faculty of Human Kinetics
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Human Kinetics
at the University of Windsor**

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2008**

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I explored, through document analysis and interviews, how community recreation leaders can create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in leisure based physical activity among recent immigrant adults. The document analysis revealed opportunities for ethno-cultural recreation practices may be constrained by dominant values and norms entrenched in government policies and documents. Absent from the recreation policies were recommendations to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians. Interviews with municipal recreation administrators indicated fiscal restraints challenge municipal recreation from attending to the specific needs and interests of ethnic minority immigrants in the community. Interviews with Spanish-speaking recent immigrant adults revealed ethno-cultural recreation traditions are favored. An analysis of the three sub-problems revealed decision makers would benefit from understanding the cultural context of immigrant groups. Programs developed need to consider the interaction between leisure constraints and leisure facilitators.

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This thesis is dedicated to the sources of my existence - my parents. Your unwavering faith and confidence in my abilities and in me is what has shaped me to be the person I am today.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Given their sheer number and significance to the future of Canada¹, recent immigrants in Canada are difficult to overlook. Many immigrants, particularly those that are characterized as visible and/ or ethnic minorities, often have to contend with multiple barriers that act together to restrict access to social and cultural opportunities (Taylor & Doherty, 2005). According to Stodolska (1998), immigrants may experience a number of barriers related both to their minority status and to problems with adaptation to the new cultural and economic environment. Members of immigrant groups may not only experience unique types of constraints but they may also differ in terms of how they are affected by and how they perceive common types of constraints. Language difficulties, unfamiliarity with the host country's way of life, and experiencing discrimination can have a significant effect on the leisure experiences of newcomers (Stodolska). As a result, recent immigrants undergoing socio-economic and cultural transitions within the host country demonstrate decreased levels of leisure time and structured physical activity (Tremblay, Bryan, Perez, Ardern, & Katzmarsyk, 2006).

Preservation of diverse cultural heritages and traditions is a central tenet of multiculturalism. Federal multicultural legislation mandates respect for the values and traditions of the various cultural communities that make up the Canadian mosaic (Karlis, 2004). In large and small ways, individuals within the dominant culture are enriched not

¹ According to the 2006 census, the proportion of foreign-born Canadians was the highest in 75 years (20% of the total population). The admission of immigrants in 2005 and 2006 was at its highest level since the 1980s; 262,200 and 251,600 newcomers, respectively, were admitted in those two years. This high level of annual admission of immigrants and the relatively slow rate of natural growth of the population explain why the proportion of the foreign-born in the Canadian population has been increasing since the 1990s. Population projections indicate that by 2017 immigrants will make up 22 percent of the Canadian population. More significantly, it is predicted that by the year 2025 all of the population growth in Canada will happen as a result of immigration (Statistics Canada, 2008).

only by opening themselves to those people whose roots lie elsewhere, but also by respecting and welcoming diversity (Tirone & Pedlar, 2000).

According to Seefeldt, Malina, and Clark (2002), recent immigrants have been identified as a vulnerable group whose health status declines upon immigrating to the new host country. Researchers have demonstrated that despite immigration policies to select the ‘best’ immigrants², New Canadian immigrant adults often do not adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle upon immigrating to the new host country. Consequently, despite having superior health in relation to the Canadian-born population when they first arrive in Canada, immigrants lose this advantage over time (Hyman, 2004; Williams, 1993). The relationship between physical activity and health becomes significant when we acknowledge the findings of Tremblay et al. (2006), who reported that immigrants are less likely to be physically active compared to non-immigrants. A recent study by Tremblay et al. (2005) found that the prevalence of leisure-time physical activity is lower for the majority of recent immigrant ethnic groups living in Canada. These findings suggest that more targeted programs and interventions may be needed if the 2010 provincial physical activity target³ is to be realized.

² Immigration policies select the “best” immigrants on the basis of education, language ability, and job skills, all of which have been correlated with healthy lifestyles, and better levels of health (Seefeldt et al., 2002).

³ Ontario’s sport and physical activity strategy, “*Active 2010*,” has a mandate to increase Ontario’s rate of sport participation and physical activity so that by the year 2010, 55 per cent of Ontarians are physically active (Government of Ontario, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

How can community recreation leaders create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in leisure-based physical activity among recent immigrant adults?

The overall objective of this study was to examine how community recreation leaders can facilitate positive outcomes and minimize constraints to participation in physical recreation for recent immigrant adults in Canada. Through my analysis of three sub-problems, I investigated how national and Ontario government policies and municipal recreation agencies attend to the needs and desires of ethnic minority immigrant adults. I also explored the perceived opportunities and challenges to participation experienced by Spanish-speaking recent immigrant adults who reside in Windsor, Ontario. My concern rests with the increasing emphasis by governments at all levels to promote and endorse leisure activities that are physical in nature, and how this may constrain ethnic minority immigrant adults from experiencing non-traditional leisure activities. Building on theoretical assumptions of social construction and duality of structure, I examined the legitimations and attributions of national and Ontario government recreation policies to investigate if policymakers recommended specific resources to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians. After documenting the recommendations of national and Ontario government recreation policies, I conducted interviews with municipal recreation administrators to investigate how they create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in physical recreation among recent immigrants adults. For the third sub-problem, I explored the perceived benefits and challenges to physical

recreation for Spanish-speaking immigrants who are recent arrivals to Windsor, Ontario, Canada. The data collected has been triangulated and used to explore the overall research question. I thus reflect on how decision makers (i.e., policy makers, community recreation administrators) can facilitate positive outcome and minimize constraints to participation in physical recreation for recent immigrant adults in Canada.

Operational Definitions

Culture

According to Adams and Markus (2004), “it is not necessary to develop a definition of culture that has universal approval; however, it is important to recognize that a working definition has important implications for research” (p. 343). It is beyond the scope of my research to examine and deconstruct the multitude of definitions given to culture. Instead, I draw on the work of Groeschl and Doherty (2000), who conclude that most of the developed definitions of culture may be reduced to a couple of key elements. They suggest that culture provides shared meanings among a group by which common problems may be understood and mastered, and that such shared meanings shape the behaviours, attitudes, and practices of the individual. “Culture thus shapes every area of life, gives meaning to personal and collective experience, and frames the way people locate themselves within the world, perceive the world, and behave in it” (Corin, 1995, p. 273). I draw on this understanding of culture to confirm that the meanings, behaviours, and practices attributed to recreation are not natural, but rather constructed social realities that emerge from shared cultural meanings. According to Paraschak and Tirone (2008), we continuously construct the ways we see ourselves according to the social world in which we live. Our human experiences, including those that solicit physical movement,

are given meaning and explanation through collective understandings. Thus, “the shared meanings among a group influence and naturalize the ideas individuals have towards a practice” (Blaxter, 2004, p. 27); recreation becomes what people, in interaction, define as recreation.

Ethnicity

A review of the existing literature indicates that the inadequate operationalization of the notion of "ethnicity" has not only posed conceptual problems in research, but has also created difficulties with regard to subsequent approaches to recreation programming for ethnic groups (Karlis & Dawson, 1995). Ethnic groups can be categorized according to racial, minority, immigration, or national status, yet each of these notions is different and make up only a part of the notion of ethnicity. According to Tremblay et al. (2005), “ethnicity” implies cultural similarities among individuals; “race” implies biological traits indicative of meaningful genetic similarities. Washbourne (1978) argued that ethnicity should not be defined as an individual’s membership in a particular cultural group by virtue of birth or ancestry, but rather as one’s identification with that group. For the purposes of this research, ethnicity shall refer to the values, beliefs, and behaviours we share in common with a sub-cultural group to which we most closely identify based on common country of origin, language, religion, or cultural traditions (Hutchinson, 1988). Gomez (2002) introduced the specific construct of sub-cultural identity, and defined it as “the extent to which one identifies with a culture other than the dominant (majority) one” (p. 133).

Acculturation

Gomez (2002) adopted Floyd and Gramman's (1993) assertion that ethnicity or sub-cultural identity must be considered within the broader context of cultural assimilation, which may be measured by acculturation or "the process whereby diverse groups retain their own cultural norms while adopting aspects of the dominant culture" (Gomez, 2002, p. 133).

Recent Immigrant

Consistent with the definition of recent immigrants in contemporary Canadian research (Hyman, 2004; Tremblay et al., 2006), a recent immigrant is defined as a foreign-born individual who has resided in Canada for a period of no longer than five years.

Physical Recreation

The government of Canada utilizes a broad definition that classifies any body movement of skeletal muscles that expends energy as physical activity (Health Canada, 2007). With respect to recreation, the national government defines recreation as "all those things that a person or group chooses to do in order to make their leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable and more personally satisfying" (Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council [ISRC], 1987, section 1.4). For the purposes of this study, I combine these definitions to define physical recreation as all physical activities that a person or group chooses to do in order to make their leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable and more personally satisfying.

Free Time

According to Juniu (2000), for most Spanish-Speaking societies, the word “leisure” connotes idleness and a nonproductive time. This term has a negative connotation, whereas free time is understood to be time for oneself and relaxation. Consequently, in the interview guide used to query Spanish-speaking immigrant adults I have substituted ‘free time’ at all points in the interview when questions of leisure arose.

Assumptions

Duality of Structure

In accordance with Giddens’ (1984) notion of duality of structure⁴, the perceived presence of factors such as financial and human resources and accessible facilities can act to encourage or inhibit the range and style of options available to individuals. An individual’s actions are thus influenced by the perceived possibilities that exist within the structural boundaries in which he or she lives. The social construction of reality based on dominant cultural ideas and values may thus shape and limit the choices for what is possible. This study operates with the assumption that dominant values entrenched in the delivery of recreation services may limit opportunities for ethnic minority immigrant adults to participate in traditional and/or non-traditional leisure activities. The introduction of a multicultural platform, which encourages the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians (Canada, 1988), may not be enough to prevent dominant ideas from specifying the meanings and practices attributed

⁴ Duality of Structure assumes that social construction exists – taking the position that nothing just “is” and/or just “happens” (Giddens, 1984). Rather, individuals (agents) act and make decisions within existing perceived social structures. Duality of structure involves an interaction between structures and agency. According to Giddens (1984), agency is the ability of a person to act or refrain from acting within a situation, while structures are the boundaries, created through rules and resources, which shape how people act.

to recreation. Although the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1988) established the creation of ethnic community organizations to maintain and preserve the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities, including recreation, these organizations are created and run by volunteers, most of whom lack formal training in leisure and recreation (Karlis, 2004). According to Cockerham (2005), “choices and chances operate in tandem to determine a distinctive lifestyle for both individuals and groups” (p. 255). Individuals therefore align their goals, needs, and desires with their probabilities for realizing them and choose a lifestyle according to their assessments of the reality of their resources and circumstances.

Ethnic minorities should have the same opportunities as the dominant majority to practice ethno-cultural recreation activities.

Consistent with Tirone and Paraschak (2008), I believe that movement opportunities in Canada should provide the opportunity for all individuals to generate a feeling of pride in their cultural heritage. Participation in recreation cannot be forced upon us. We decide to participate because we think it will be fun and possibly rewarding. In fact, the defining quality of recreation is the freedom to participate or not (ISRC, 1987). In a multicultural state, groups differ in the meanings they attach to specific behaviours and such meaning differences need to be understood (Johnson & Malgady, 1999). Accordingly, Canadian governments need to ensure opportunities for ethnic minorities to practice ethno-cultural recreation activities are not constrained by dominant values entrenched in the delivery of recreation services.

According to Freiders (2003), “the interests that are likely to become vested in societal institutions are those that are related to a set of opportunities or threats (p. 47).

Policymakers and decision makers do not generally attend to social problems unless the dissatisfaction these generate make them politically vulnerable (Frieders, 2003). The fact that dominant values and practices prevail in the major institutions within which all citizens and cultural groups participate would suggest that there are more rights and powers accorded to the dominant groups (Li, 1999). This is not to suggest that cultural minorities in Canada need to be protected from changing; rather they need to be respected and allowed to explore alternative visions, so that their ways of knowing are not erased by the decisions of the majority. According to Herberg (1989), the ideas embedded within the dominant cultural practices in public and private spheres can implicate and endanger the practices of a minority cultural group.

Social construction of recreation meanings and practices

Researchers who have investigated the characteristics of culture inform us that the social reality of humans is constructed through behaviours and attitudes in accordance with shared cultural meanings. Human experiences are given meaning and explanation through collective understandings. Thus, the shared meanings among a group influence and naturalize the ideas individuals have towards recreation; recreation becomes what people, in interaction, define as recreation (Blaxter, 2004). The implicit meanings that are contained within policies impact the development of recreation programs and services directed at communities. “The ‘scientific’ knowledge upon which we draw, the institutional arrangements to which we refer, and the public figures against which we measure ourselves all play an important role in determining our sense of ourselves” (McGannon & Mauws, 2000, pp. 75-76). It is thus important to understand the interests that are held in place by the construction of meanings attributed to the dominant culture.

Political agendas have shaped the development of recreational services and programs.

Since its inception as a formal responsibility of the state, physical activity has extended its recreational and military functions for use as an instrument to build and unify the nation, to develop high performance sport and to enhance positive effects in health. Researchers (Macintosh, Bedecki, & Franks, 1988) claim the philosophy of excellence that was entrenched in the Canadian sport system during the 1970's has become a powerful ideology in the sense of an unobservable structure within which the interests of recreation and mass participation were sidelined. Despite the introduction of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), which officially committed Canadian governments to the amelioration of inequalities, "the actual effect of the building of a (national) Canadian sport system has been to subordinate issues of access and equity to the demands of political agendas" (Macintosh & Whitson, 1994, p. 81). Physical activity has been used strategically as a political symbol through which national cultural identity could be fostered. As a result of government involvement during the early years of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act (1960s and 1970s), policies and program recommendations for recreation have been constructed in a direction that provides the greatest political payoff for government, often without regard for many groups' needs (Misener, 2001). Bercovitz (1998) claims that during this period, "[physical] recreation and amateur sport has oscillated between a sport and a fitness focus, depending on the extent that either could be used as a springboard for fulfilling

broader socio-political and economic agendas” (p. 322).

The health benefits derived from leisure-based physical activity have subordinated “other” gains.

In contrast to the freely chosen aspect of leisure and recreation, existing public recreation services may be dominated by national objectives to achieve health gains through physical movement. According to Blaxter (2004), “health promotion has emerged in the last thirty years in Western culture as a response to the increased costs of illness and disease, and the need to develop preventative health practices as life expectancy continues to rise” (p. 27). These dominant practices and meanings may deter certain individuals from participating in physical recreation, and may serve to further alienate them from using services and programs provided by community recreation centers.

Interpretations of health have evolved over the course of human history; the diversity and transformation of interpretations affirms health to be a construct of culture. The meanings, practices, and attitudes attributed to health change with living conditions, eating patterns, and popular culture (Cockerham, 2005). Consequently, the meanings, behaviours, and practices attributed to health are not natural, but rather constructed social realities that emerge from shared cultural meanings (Corin, 1995). In a multicultural state, governed by laws that protect the cultural heritage of the individual, it is imperative to recognize that, “the meanings and practices attached to health are not universally shared, and thus may not be valued and practiced by all individuals” (Blaxter, 2004, p. 28). Dominant ideas pertaining to health meanings and practices entrenched in the delivery of recreation services may serve to marginalize culturally diverse individuals,

including ethnic minority immigrant adults.

According to Glouberman (2001), the majority of Canadians have adopted the idea that being physically active will bring about better health; even when physically active lifestyles are not adopted, the impact of not doing so on individual health is acknowledged. Blaxter (2004) suggests that the ideas endorsed and promoted by governments serve to define what is healthy and how to maintain, protect, and promote a state of health. Furthermore, Cockerham (2005) observes that, “leading a physically active lifestyle is associated with notions of choice, responsibility and blame; it has become a means by which institutions and authorities, as well as individuals, are held accountable and encouraged to regulate themselves” (p. 255). The focus on reducing the prevalence of non-communicable diseases through physically active lifestyles has influenced people’s perceptions and attitudes towards physical activities performed during ‘free time’. In large part due to efforts by national and provincial governments, structured physical activities have come to dominate our use of recreation in our desire to maintain and improve health. Federal government directorates responsible for sustaining and improving the health and well being of Canadians endorse and promote active living as a habitual practice (Health Canada, 2007). Engagement in physical activity during ‘free time’ is considered responsible behaviour for the maintenance and improvement of health (Blaxter).

Theoretical and Practical Justifications

According to the 2006 Canadian Census (Statistics Canada, 2008), the immigrant population continues to grow at a rapid pace; population projections indicate the immigrant population will grow by as much as 64% in the next ten years, and account for

all growth in the Canadian population beginning in the year 2025. Windsor, Ontario claims to be the fourth most ethnically diverse city in Canada. If recreation professionals want to address the needs of their community, multicultural issues must be addressed. Multiculturalism as a policy was created in 1971 to encourage all levels of governments to develop strategies to manage diversity. Understanding how policymakers have historically framed multicultural issues is important for future advocates to comprehend so that they can voice their concerns effectively within the Canadian system.

To effectively serve the recreational needs of a culturally diverse Canada and increase the levels of physical activity amongst new immigrant adults, researchers recommend providers understand the “cultural context” of the participant or potential participant (Karlis, 2004; Paraschak & Tirone, 2008; Seefeldt et al., 2002; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000). Extensive research has been conducted to determine the factors that inhibit and encourage physical activity participation among the general population (Seefeldt et al.). What is required is research to determine the particular constraints to adopting a physically active lifestyle faced by diverse population groups in our society. Contemporary national and provincial strategies seeking to increase physical activity levels of all Canadians⁵, legitimized by a growing concern for the health of Canadians, need to be supported by research examining the specific needs of marginalized groups in society. There are diverse cultural meanings, related to physical movements, held by recent immigrants that can be described as different from the meanings of the dominant group (Tremblay et al., 2006). Understanding those factors that are specific to a group may lead to the development of positive policies and practices for disadvantaged groups.

⁵ The National government introduced the Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy in 2005; the Province of Ontario introduced Active 2010 in that same year.

Furthermore, “the leisure industry [public and private] may very well benefit by diverting some of their resources and efforts to attract ethnic minorities, since it is in their interest to increase participation by people who, at present, do little or nothing at all, but want to do more” (Verma & Darby, 1994, p. 158). Additionally, by examining and understanding the ways that diverse cultures shape their identities through physical movement, we may expand the ways that we shape our own identities through physical movement (Paraschak & Tirone).

This study was developed to add to the academic understanding of theories that seek to explain the relationship between one’s ethnic identity and recreation participation. The study was based on the Ethnicity and Public Recreation Participation Model (Gomez, 2002) (see Appendix A). The EPRP Model reflects the major concepts discussed in the literature and demonstrates how the causal relationships between these concepts were conceptualized based on prior research (Gomez, 2006). Specifically, the EPRP Model examines the relative influence of sub-cultural identity (Washbourne, 1978), acculturation (Floyd & Gramman, 1993), socio-economic status (Washbourne), perceived benefits (Klobus-Edwards, 1981), and perceived discrimination (West, 1989), on recreation participation. The use of the model has been adapted to reflect changes made to the model by Taylor and Doherty (2005) in their study of sport, recreation and physical education participation among recent adolescent immigrants to Canada. In particular, I have adopted Taylor and Doherty’s inclusion of general barriers or challenges to participation. The addition of general barriers or challenges to participation was considered by Klobus-Edwards to be culturally based.

This study will also benefit the research participants. Both recreational administrators and Spanish-speaking recent immigrants may benefit from: (1) an increased awareness of recreation resources in the community at large; (2) delivery of programs appropriate to the identified needs and desires of recent immigrants, in particular the Spanish-speaking community; (3) increased satisfaction; and (4) an extension of tax-based recreation dollars to facilitate a greater variety of recreation opportunities to a greater variety of recreation participants. According to Karlis and Dawson (1995), understanding the constraints experienced in the pursuit of physical activity can assist public sector recreation practitioners alleviate such constraints through an adaptation of selected recreation activities that cater more effectively to the needs and values of culturally diverse groups and individuals.

CHAPTER 2: POLICY ANALYSIS

How do selected national and Ontario government documents attend to minimizing constraints and facilitating opportunities for ethnic minority immigrants to participate in physical recreation?

Introduction

National and provincial government policies addressing recreation shape the way municipal recreation departments, sport organizations, and other associations organize opportunities for individuals (in this case, recent immigrant adults) to participate in recreational physical activity. According to Chalip (1996), “policies are used to direct, redirect, or constrain social, political, and economic behaviour” (p. 311). To increase the percentage of physically active immigrant adults, it is helpful to analyze existing national and Ontario policies to determine if they align with laws preserving the multicultural heritage of Canadians (i.e., *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* of 1988) and if they encourage or inhibit opportunities for recent immigrant adults to participate in mainstream and ethno-cultural recreation activities (i.e., discrimination). I begin with a preliminary history of national, federal, and provincial government involvement in recreation, to provide the historical context for the policies that are analyzed in this thesis.

Literature Review

The Changing Face of Canada

Canada is considered a pluralistic society due to the presence of large numbers of individuals from diverse cultures. The Canadian population is comprised of many different ethnic groups, and immigration is a consistent feature of the growth of the Canadian population. During the first sixty years of the twentieth century, most

immigrants came from European nations, such as the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands (Statistics Canada, 2007). Karlis (2004) informs us that a large number of European migrants came to Canada between 1951 and 1971. In the 1980s, most immigrants arrived from Africa, Central and South America, and Southern Asia (Statistics Canada, 2007). This trend continues today; “the makeup of Canadian society is constantly evolving as a cultural mosaic” (Karlis, 2004, p .67). The 2006 census reports 58 percent of recent immigrants were born in Asia and the Middle East, 16 percent in Europe, 11 percent in the Caribbean, Central and South America, 11 percent in Africa, and 3 percent in the United States. Windsor, Ontario, claims to be the fourth most diverse city in Canada (City of Windsor, 2007). The 2006 census reports 22,185 individuals, or eleven percent of the Windsor population was comprised of recent immigrants. Of these, 2,135 claimed Latin American status (Statistics Canada, 2008).

Managing Diversity: The Canadian Multiculturalism Act

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau proclaimed Canada a multicultural society in 1971 as an answer to “governing and managing the problems of diversity and multiplicity that emerged in Canada in the 1960’s” (Hall, 2000, p. 209). The federal government recognized the legitimacy of the cultural contribution of ethnic groups (other than the charter groups of French and British) to the development of Canadian society (Frieders, 2003). Hall explains multiculturalism as “the social characteristics and problems of governance posed by any society in which different cultural communities live together and attempt to build a common life while retaining something of their ‘original’ identity” (p. 210). Increasing diversity among the Canadian population warranted multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of Canada (Li, 1999); the inception of a multicultural

policy in 1971 made certain that successive governments would foster a society that recognizes, respects, and reflects a diversity of cultures so that citizens of all backgrounds could feel a sense of belonging and attachment to Canada (Hall). According to James (2005), multiculturalism was introduced to lead members of society to view their well being as interconnected and thus to treat one another as equal partners in all social and economic relations.

Following the inception of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), revisions were required to the original policy on multiculturalism, leading to the introduction of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* in 1988. Expanding on the *Multicultural Policy* of 1971, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* of 1988 states that,

The government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society; the government is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada. (Canada, 1988)

According to Li (1999), “the explanation and emphasis on multiculturalism has changed over time, subject to the influence of electoral, social, and political pressures” (p. 150). The objective of a Multicultural Policy in the first two decades (1970’s and 1980’s) was of cultural retention; assisting groups to retain and foster their identity (James, 2003). Following the introduction of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* in 1988, the emphasis of a multicultural policy shifted to promoting both cultural retention and social equity, assuming that the liberal state should remain culturally neutral in the

provision of public services (Li). Hall (2000) informs us that within Canada, multiculturalism seeks to integrate the different cultural groups into the 'mainstream' provided by a universal individual citizenship, tolerating only in private certain particularistic cultural practices. Hall suggests that,

A conception of multiculturalism within Canada has developed to create a common public culture whereby the government encourages and promotes the idea of 'shared citizenship'....[Within the idea of shared citizenship] A bundle of rights, responsibilities and obligations are conferred to the individual. Successful integration into the common culture occurs through the provision of public services and public institutions (p. 209).

Minority groups adapt to the dominant Canadian norms and in exchange are accorded equality of rights and treatment. This occurs in keeping with the paradoxical idea of fostering a society that recognizes, respects, and reflects a diversity of cultures (James, 2005). Ethnic groups can maintain their cultural distinctiveness in primary group relations that take place mainly in their private life, but otherwise participate collectively in the same major institutions of society under the conditions as prescribed by acceptable norms and practices of the dominant group (Li).

Preservation and Enhancement of Multicultural Heritage

The successful adoption of a Canadian policy on multiculturalism is based on the construction of a culture and legal system that values individual rights (Frieders, 2003). Individual rights have been institutionalized in Canada following the adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), with its intention of structuring equality of the individual as the principle value in Canadian society. The Charter

acknowledges that diversity is an essential element of Canadian society; it also acknowledges that if persons are found to be disadvantaged because of ethnic origin, then affirmative action is permitted to remedy the situation (Breton, 1989). According to Helly (2003), “Section 27 of the Charter creates an obligation to preserve and promote the multicultural heritage of Canadians, but only if it does not come into conflict with individual rights” (p. 13). Two sections were added to the Charter to ensure that the multicultural face of Canadian society would be preserved. These sections are:

Section 15(1): Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Section 15(2): Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. (Canada, 1982)

What the Charter inherently stipulates is the creation of a system that puts equality of the individual before any collective or group equality, leading to an inability to cultivate cultural values through public policies and institutions. “The neutrality of the state is said to secure the personal autonomy and liberty of the individual to pursue his/her conception of the ‘good’ life, provided it is done in private” (Hall, 2000, p. 230). Distinct cultural differences may be portrayed, constructed, and emphasized only in the domain of private life, where social equality is seen to not be affected (Hall,).

According to James (2005), a multicultural political platform was introduced to safeguard the interests of ethnic minorities and keep in check the norms and practices of dominant groups. Yet, the norms and practices of the two charter groups (English and French) have prevailed in the public sphere, and individuals, irrespective of their ethnic origin, participate according to those prescribed norms and practices in major institutions (James; Li, 1999). Consequently, members of other groups may find themselves in a minority position, unable to influence, let alone imprint, political institutions and culture with their own beliefs, preferences or norms of behaviour (Helly, 2003). The discourse by which individuals draw their conception of physical activity and make sense of such terms may be restricted and thus contribute to a lack of participation in physical recreation practices and behaviours (McGannon & Mauws, 2002).

A multicultural political platform may not be sufficient to ensure the preservation of a multicultural heritage. Opportunities for ethno-cultural recreation practices may be constrained by dominant values and norms entrenched in government policies and documents. Adopting the meanings of the dominant cultural group as universal will sustain practices that may not be valued and/or practiced by new immigrant members of the population (Karlis, 2004). According to Karlis and Dawson (1995), “numerous studies have demonstrated that minorities may remain culturally distinct from the remaining population even when adapting and conforming to the values and institutions of the majority” (p. 167). Policies created without the input of multiple and diverse stakeholders are bound to be constructed in terms of the dominant meanings shared by policy makers (James, 2005). “Public recreation policies may reinforce/normalize that certain values and meanings are etched into its definition and goals; values are simply

factored in, rather than policy makers acknowledging they play a central role in an individual's motivation to act within any social context" (Karlis & Dawson, p. 178). Consistent with theories on ethnicity and recreation participation (Washbourne, 1978), policy makers need to identify and address sub-cultural norms and values or, at the very least, ensure dominant cultural norms and values are not unconsciously entrenched in recreation policies.

Existing Government Responsibilities in Recreation

To date, a national policy on recreation has not been formulated. Nevertheless, it is assumed by convention that recreation is important for the social welfare of the people of Canada (Karlis, 2004). Recognition by policy makers of the capacity for physical activity to contribute to a wide range of social objectives has resulted in an intricate network of government agencies that maintain an influential role in shaping physical recreation in Canada. According to Macintosh and Whitson (1994), "this is in large part due to governments' failure to recognize physical activity and recreation as a basic right, therefore requiring public expenditures on physical recreation to be legitimized by the achievement of some other public good" (p. 61). However, the *National Recreation Statement* of 1987, jointly signed by the Canadian federal, provincial and territorial governments, has established the various roles and responsibilities for each level of government.

According to the *National Recreation Statement* (1987), "Government is by no means the central primary provider of recreation opportunities" (ISRC, 1987, section 1.7). Nonetheless, governments of all levels occupy an important and influential position in the delivery of recreation opportunities. Burton and Glover (1999) created an

explanatory model that outlines the five roles that governments may take in delivering public services. According to the authors, governments can assume the role of: (1) direct provider; (2) enabler and coordinator; (3) supporter and patron; (4) arm's length provider; and (5) legislator and regulator. As you move down the list of the five roles, the amount of direct involvement on the part of the government agencies decreases. As a direct provider, "a government department or agency develops and maintains leisure facilities, operates programs, and delivers services using public funds and public employees" (Burton & Glover, 1999, p. 373). When a government department acts as an enabler and coordinator, it will "identify organizations and agencies which produce leisure services for the public and help coordinate their efforts, resources, and activities" (Burton & Glover, p. 374). Similarly, when a government department acts as a supporter and patron, it "recognizes that existing organizations already produce valuable public leisure services and can be encouraged to do so through specialized support" (Burton & Glover, p. 734). Furthest away from government's direct influence is the role of arm's length provider (Hensley, Markham-Starr, Montague, & Hodgkinson, 2006). "This requires the creation of a special purpose agency which operates outside the regular apparatus of government" (Burton & Glover, p. 373). According to Hensley et al. (2006), the governments' role of legislator and regulator affects many of our actions as both providers and consumers of recreation opportunities. This role operates in the background of many parts of our work and leisure life because we must abide by the laws passed by various levels of governments.

Federal Role and Responsibilities

The federal government maintains a role in recreation that primarily includes those activities that are national and international in scope (ISRC, 1987). In keeping with the emphasis on “activities that are national in scope,” the *Physical Activity and Sport Act* of 2003 governs the federal responsibility for recreation-related matters. Mainly, the federal government maintains responsibility for promoting health and well being through physical recreation (Karlis, 2004). Existing contributions to develop, promote, and encourage recreation at the federal level stem from two Directorates: the Department of Canadian Heritage, and Health Canada. The responsibility for physical activity is allocated to the Minister of Health, while the responsibility for sport is under the Minister of Canadian Heritage. The Department of Canadian Heritage boasts a mandate to promote and encourage intercultural understanding and citizenship participation (Canada, 2007). Health Canada is responsible for helping Canadians maintain and improve their health. To achieve this goal, Health Canada seeks to encourage Canadians to take an active role in their health, such as increasing their level of physical activity (Health Canada, 2007). Healthy Living programs endorse physical recreation as a means to maintain and improve health. Active Living programs, endorsed by Health Canada and shaped by health promotion initiatives, strive to encourage Canadians to protect their health through regular participation in physical activities.

Provincial Role and Responsibilities

Although it may appear as though the federal government has an overall responsibility for recreation, the constitutional responsibility for recreation falls under the jurisdiction of the provinces. Provincial responsibilities primarily include coordinating

programs, providing information and financial resources to program delivery agencies, planning and supporting research. The *National Recreation Statement* (1987) mandates the responsibilities of the provinces in recreation; however, the provinces' and territories' views on recreation vary, with each having some type of government unit responsible for recreation. In this study, I delimit my review of provincial government involvement to the province of Ontario.

Following the declaration of the *National Recreation Statement* in 1987, the province of Ontario issued the *Community Recreation Policy Statement* in that same year, indicating the provincial government is not the primary provider of recreation services but rather assists and enables the municipalities, commercial and voluntary sectors to provide recreation opportunities and services (Government of Ontario, 1987). The *Community Recreation Policy Statement* states that:

Governments at all levels are not and should never be the primary providers of recreation services. The primary role of government is to assist and enable the provision of the wide range of recreation services to meet the needs and interests of their constituent citizens. (Government of Ontario)

Furthermore, in 1987 the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation constructed guiding principles for the provision of recreation in the province, including: (1) recreation is a fundamental human need for persons of all ages and is essential to a person's physical and social well-being and to overall quality of life; (2) recreation services should comply with the intent and spirit of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Human Rights Legislation* and should provide opportunities for both genders, all age groups, all ethnic groups and special interests groups; and (3) each municipality has the

responsibility to ensure the availability of the broadest range of recreation opportunities for every individual and group consistent with available community resources and needs (Government of Ontario).

Existing responsibility for recreation falls under the Ministry of Health Promotion, administered by the Sport and Recreation Branch, and the Ministry of Tourism. The Ministry of Health Promotion encourages involvement in sport, recreation and physical activity for the health, social, and economic benefit of Ontarians and the communities in which they live (Government of Ontario, 2007a). Through its support of the sport and recreation sectors at the provincial and local level, the Ministry helps meet the government's priorities in health, education, job creation and economic growth and promotion of voluntarism (Government of Ontario, 2007a). In contrast, the mandate of the Ministry of Tourism is to foster tourism and develop opportunities for recreation through tourism (Government of Ontario, 2007b).

History of National and Ontario Government Involvement in Physical Activity and Recreation

My document analysis has been delimited to a selected number of government documents published from 1983 to 2006. To provide context, the next section provides a brief historical review of national, federal and provincial government policies and documents in physical recreation. This historical review focuses on government involvement since the turn of the 20th century. The principal purpose of the review was to uncover some of the dominant historical ideas, rationales, and attributions for national and Ontario government involvement in physical recreation.

*National, Federal and Provincial Government Involvement in Recreation Preceding the
1961 Fitness and Amateur Sport Act*

Karlis (2004) informs us that several benefits (including physical, social, and psychological) resulting from participation in physical activity were recognized by the majority of Canadians by the turn of the twentieth century. However, despite advantages offered as evidence to support, develop and promote physical activity during leisure-time, federal and provincial governments only became involved in recreation to address the issues that arose during the great depression of the 1930's (Karlis). Pro-rec programs introduced by the province of British Columbia in 1934 highlighted the benefits of physical recreation for maintaining social order (MacFarland, 1978). The program was to offer all citizens of the province the opportunity to participate in recreational activities free of user fees (Karlis). The main objective of the program was to combat enforced idleness for unemployed young men⁶ (Karlis). This objective was subsequently expanded by the national government with the enactment of the Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act of 1937, also known as the Purvis commission (McFarland). According to Karlis, the Act was significant in that it marked the beginning of an era for federal-provincial programs in support of physical recreation and physical fitness. Nevertheless, the purpose of the Act was limited in scope and purpose; it was designed to promote and assist in the training of unemployed young people (between the ages of 16 and 30) to prepare them for gainful employment in Canada (McFarland).

The *National Physical Fitness Act* was established in 1943 with a mandate to “encourage, develop and correlate all activities related to physical development of the

⁶ During the great depression physical recreation became a pressing concern for provincial and federal governments (Karlis, 2004).

people through sports, athletics, and similar pursuits” (Sawula, 1977). The success of pro-rec programs during the 1930’s provided impetus for increased government involvement in physical recreation; recognition that physical recreation enhances social, physical, and moral well being provided the rationale for increased government involvement. The Act provided for the appointment of the National Council on Physical Fitness, which was charged with the responsibility of encouraging, developing, and correlating all activities relating to physical development of the people through sports, athletics, and other similar pursuits. According to McFarland (1978), the National Council provided leadership, while agreements signed between the provinces and the federal government enabled funding for the development of municipal recreation programs. The successful development of municipal recreation came as a result of the Act (Karlis, 2004). For example, the Act facilitated the inauguration of provincial recreation services in Ontario in 1945 under the Physical and Health Education Branch of the Department of Education (Karlis). Three years later, the Universities Adult Education Board and the Department of Education created the Community Programs Branch, which would help Ontario communities plan and develop recreational activities. As a result, by 1947 Ontario had one hundred municipal recreation communities⁷ (Skerrett, 1992).

The *National Physical Fitness Act* was repealed in 1954. As a result, provinces were left on their own to support fitness and recreation initiatives (Westland, 1979). According to Macintosh et al. (1988), the federal government repealed the Act because “it was not happy with the way in which the provinces were using the funds nor with the independence status of the Fitness Council” (p. 23). Karlis (2004) suggests this changed

⁷ McFarland (1978) informs us that the province of Ontario was later than many other provinces in inaugurating provincial recreation services, but once off the mark it led the way in its encouragement of local initiative in the provision of recreation opportunities for all.

the relationship between the federal government and the provinces, and placed increased responsibility on the provinces for the implementation and provision of recreation services. Conversely, McFarland (1978) suggests that the effects of the repealed Act were less than might have been expected. According to McFarland, the *National Physical Fitness Act* had stimulated the growth of provincial programs to the extent that by the time of its repeal in 1954, the majority of them (provincial programs) had become well established. Although the Act was repealed in 1954, there remained in seven of the nine provinces provincial government agencies that were able to continue and expand their services as the years progressed (McFarland).

Bill C-131: An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport

It was not until the adoption of Bill C-131, *An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport* (1961), that the federal government made a formal long-term commitment to become involved in and responsible for the physical fitness level, amateur sport participation and recreational opportunities of Canadian citizens (Anderson, 1974). In the face of criticism⁸ and the growing value of sport on the international stage⁹, the Act was a catalyst for the provision of funding for Canadian participation in national and international sport and the creation of federal-provincial cost-sharing agreements (Karlis, 2004). The Act established the broad framework of power and structures within which the federal government could develop its policies and programs of assistance (Anderson).

⁸ After receiving a copy of the Canadian Sport Advisory Council's report prior to his honorary presidential address to the Canadian Medical Association, Prince Phillip accused Canadians of being in a state of sub-health (Paraschak, 1978).

⁹ There was concern about Canadian international athletic performances and in particular, the country's sagging reputation in Olympic and World Cup hockey (Macintosh et al., 1988). Additionally, the growth in television coverage would enhance the significance of sport in the lives of Canadians.

The programs and events ensuing from the early years of the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act* would shape and influence the future direction of government involvement in the development and promotion of physical recreation. The 1960's marked an increase in the number of government-subsidized programs for the development and establishment of amateur sport and physical recreation. Funding was provided for facility operation, promotion and information, grants for National Sport Organizations, scholarships for research and professional study, and technical and training aids for sport (Karlis, 2004; Macintosh et al., 1988; McFarland, 1978; Paraschak, 1978). Federal assistance to the provinces was made through agreement with the ministers of the co-operating provincial departments; under the agreements the federal government reimbursed the provinces for sixty percent of the cost of approved projects (McFarland). This occurred even though there were no clear-cut operational objectives in the early stages of the Directorate (Anderson, 1974). The Act brought physical recreation and amateur sport under the direction of the Department of National Health and Welfare, forming a practical relationship on the basis of their common role as proponents of physical movement.

According to Macintosh et al. (1988), the tangling and union of mass participation with high performance sport made possible through the introduction of the Act legitimized the federal government's role in the development and promotion of both sport and physical recreation. This, in turn, reduced the broad aspect of recreation activities. McFarland (1978) informs us that the interpretation of 'fitness' was not nearly as broad following the inception of the Act, as was the interpretation by the earlier National Council on Physical Fitness. Drama, music, dance, and art projects that were enthusiastically promoted from 1944-54, were only approved under the *Fitness and*

Amateur Sport Act if they included physical activities as a part of a general leadership program (McFarland). Recreation and sport developed according to the needs and desires of those individuals and organizations in control.

National Unity, International Pride and Prestige

Despite the federal government's aspiration to meet two broad objectives – mass participation and excellence in performance - it became apparent to the federal government through the 1960's that the marriage between mass participation programs and the development of elite athletes was becoming increasingly hard to hold together (Macintosh et al., 1988). "The federal government was attracted to the growing public interest in and prestige of international and professional sport; because of its high visibility and popularity, high performance sport had the potential for a much more attractive political pay-off than did mass sport and fitness programs" (Macintosh et al., 1988, p. 163). According to Macintosh et al., success in high performance sport was not only attainable with a substantially smaller outlay of money (compared to mass participation initiatives), but could be easily verified in quantitative terms. Towards the end of the 1960's, many politicians believed that with a redefinition of the state's role in sport, the federal government could directly use sport to enhance national unity¹⁰ (Macintosh et al.).

To address competing and conflicting viewpoints concerning the desirable scope and direction of federal government involvement in sport and recreation, newly elected Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau made good on his election promise and commissioned a three member Task Force to investigate amateur sport in Canada. The *Task Force Report*

¹⁰ For example, staging the first Canada Games in Quebec City in 1967 counteracted the divisive national issues facing Canada at the time (Macintosh et al., 1988)

on Sport for Canadians, presented in 1969, was the first independent report by the Canadian government of professional and public opinion on what was generally considered the weak links of the national amateur sport system, along with proposals to resolve those weaknesses (Anderson, 1974). Despite the notion by federal bureaucrats that the results were limited and not backed by substantial research (Macintosh et al., 1988), the report would serve to significantly influence the future course of government involvement in sport and recreation. Anderson contends the *Task Force Report* was restricted by time, finance, and expertise, all of which became powerful limitations underlying the study's final content and recommendations. To appease the belief by some bureaucrats that the report was too narrowly focused on elite sport, the National Advisory Council commissioned P.S. Ross and Partners to carry out a subsequent report to examine and make recommendations on the state of physical recreation, fitness and amateur sport (Anderson). Although many of the references were in line with the objectives set out in the *Task Force Report* (1969), "the main recommendation to come from the *P.S. Ross Report* (1969) was for increased federal government involvement in recreation" (Macintosh et al., p. 61).

Consistent with recommendations in the *Task Force Report* (1969) and the *P.S. Ross Report* (1969), the federal government introduced the *Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians* in 1970, presenting for the first time a positional statement by the federal government detailing their involvement and actions, along with the rationale for their involvement (Anderson, 1974). According to Macintosh et al. (1988), "the moment was ripe for the government to declare its visions for the future of sport and recreation" (p. 68). Throughout most of the 1960's, federal involvement in sport was limited largely to

cost sharing arrangements with the provinces and awarding grants to national sport governing bodies (Macintosh et al.). But the failure of these early efforts to improve Canada's performance in international sport, coupled with the awarding of the 1976 Olympic Games to Montreal, legitimized the federal government's interest in becoming more directly involved in the development of rational and performance-oriented sport (Macintosh et al.). As a result, the *Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, introduced in 1970 by National Health and Welfare Minister John Munro, established the groundwork for all future developments at the national level (Harvey, Beamish, & Defrance, 1993). The new policy contained a great deal of rhetoric about maintaining the federal government's commitment to mass sport and participation programs. Increasing opportunities for participation in sports and recreational activities for the greatest number of Canadians was to be the declared point of the policy (Munro, 1970). But its real intent was to improve the standards of top athletes in Canada (Macintosh et al.). The programs proposed in the document were focused primarily on competitive, elite sport (Macintosh et al.), signaling the federal government's committed overt support for high performance sport (Lowe, 2006).

The *Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians* expressed the sustained desire of the federal government to consider sport and recreation as interwoven segments (Macintosh et al., 1988). The policy attempted to please all parties, suggesting that elite and mass physical recreation were uniform parts of an integrated structure. Government actors assumed that better international performances would not only increase pride and promote national unity, but would provide motivation for more participants (Macintosh et al.). Through its integration with physical recreation, competitive sport could reap the

benefits of a wider base, increased participation, quality athletes, and greater international success (Macintosh et al.). The policy expressed implicitly that international excellence in sport would arrive as a consequence and not as a goal of mass participation. As a result, expressions of concern for mass participation became secondary to the development of high performance athletes.

With increased independence and substance, the tangling of recreation and sport that was conventional in the 1960's was no longer necessary in the 1970's to support the development of high performance sport. As a result, federal involvement in recreation became problematic. According to Macintosh et al. (1988), recreation did not fit with the rational and objective values pervading the Canadian sport system at the time.

Consequently, the provincial governments wanted full legislative power over matters relating to recreation; however, the federal government was not prepared to do so during the early 1970's. Physical recreation and mass sport participation served to feed the development of elite athletes. Despite the provinces' inability to possess full legislative powers over recreation, in 1974 two National Conferences of Provincial Recreation Ministers drafted a definition for recreation and called for provincial governments to consider recreation as a social resource and service in the same way as health and education were regarded (Skerrett, 1992). Specifically, the provinces objected to the limited definition of recreation that the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate adopted, and insisted that physical recreation programs were primarily the prerogative of the provinces.

Efforts to broaden the development of sport and recreation were accentuated in 1971 with the creation of two separate directorates: Sport Canada and Recreation Canada.

This restructuring was purported to be a step towards enhancing the objectives of the *Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians* (Misener, 2001). Sport Canada was to oversee the development of high performance sport in the pursuit of sporting excellence. Recreation Canada was to provide opportunities for all Canadians to participate in physical recreation and improve their fitness level (Munro, 1971). The separation allowed the federal government to focus on ways to promote its policy objectives, rather than continuing to fund the debate between sport and recreation (Misener, 2001).

Physical Activity and Health: Forming a Relationship on the Basis of Positive Health

Gains

During the 1960's and 1970's it became apparent to Canadian governments that the health gains made by the advancement of biomedicine were reaching a limit; other means of promoting and preventing health were necessary to control the increasing costs of health care. Once again government actors discovered that the promotion and encouragement of activities that are physical in nature could serve a public good. The penchant for continued federal involvement in recreation during the 1970's would be supported by a growing awareness of the health gains achieved through activities that enhance physical fitness. Recreational activities that entailed physical exertion and movement contributed to the health of Canadians, and thus provided the impetus for federal involvement. The *10 Year Master Plan* developed by the National Advisory Council on Fitness and Amateur Sport (1972) emphasized the growing need to consider physical fitness as a preventative health measure, linking motivation and participation with health (Macintosh et al., 1988). As a result, the Fitness and Amateur Sport directorate adopted a limited definition of recreation; that is, "only those activities that

involved a substantial physical aspect” (Macintosh et al., p. 102). The Provincial Ministers for Sport and Recreation were opposed to this limited definition, introducing an all-encompassing definition for recreation in 1974, and asserting recreation should be the mandate of the provinces.

The federal government did not like the idea that “recreation meant ‘free choice’ by individuals about the type of activity, the time of participation, and the place for the activity” (Macintosh et al., 1988, p. 103). The federal government became interested in promoting and encouraging structured physical activities that could be readily measured. Fitness represented a more concrete and measurable endeavour than recreation (Macintosh et al.). “The affinity for measuring physical fitness status and programs was consistent with the rational approach that was pervading sport – the preoccupation with objective measures of performance, record keeping, and striving towards and exceeding previous high standards of performance” (Macintosh et al., p.102). According to Macintosh et al., physical fitness programs could be justified easily on the instrumental grounds that they contributed to the health of Canadians and, therefore, to an increase in productivity and output in the Canadian economy, coupled with a reduction in health care costs.

The move towards rationalized instrumental physical fitness programs was enhanced by the presence of Marc Lalonde as Minister of National Health and Welfare (Macintosh, 1988). Lalonde is recognized for suggesting that medical care is not the most significant determinant of health. The Lalonde Report (1974), or *A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians*, as the report was officially titled, discussed the determinants of health, the nature of the health field, and strategies for improving health and reducing

illness. More specifically, the document introduced an important new idea about going beyond medical care to improve the health of Canadians. The report suggested that the greatest improvements in health in the future were likely to come through changes in individual lifestyles (O'Neill & Pederson, 1994). Exercise was seen as one of the positive steps Canadians could take to improve their lifestyle and subsequently their health (Macintosh et al., 1988). The focus of the 'new perspective on health' was to expand the responsibility of the individual to make health conscious decisions, and to practice preventative health measures (Evans, Barer, & Marmor, 1994). The Lalonde report was created without any external or internal consultation (Pinder, 1994, cited in O'Neill et al., 1994); nonetheless, the report became a powerful tool for legitimizing federal involvement in the provision and promotion of physical fitness.

Responsibility for Recreation Handed to the Provinces

In 1978, Iona Campagnola, Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, acknowledged the withdrawal of the federal government from recreation; Ottawa would instead concentrate on a more limited concept of fitness and physical recreation (Karlis, 2004). The federal government would maintain a presence in mass participation physical recreation because of its link to high performance sport (Skerrett, 1992). The 1979 federal green paper, titled *Toward a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation*, implied that responsibility for recreation was to be handed over to the provinces. Recreation ceased to be a mandate of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch, and the name Recreation Canada disappeared in 1980 (Macintosh et al., 1988).

With a clear and broad definition of recreation, with the primacy of provinces in recreation confirmed, and with the publication of a federal discussion paper, the stage

was set for the provincial ministers to commission the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council (ISRC) to develop a paper to articulate the responsibilities of different levels of government and to provide cooperative strategies (ISRC, 1987). As a result, at the 1983 conference of Provincial/Territorial Ministers, an *Interprovincial Recreation Statement* was affirmed. Subsequently, in 1987, Federal/Provincial Ministers agreed to amalgamate a federal role statement into the existing 1983 Interprovincial Statement and declared a *National Recreation Statement* (ISRC, 1987). The main purpose of the National Recreation Statement was to define the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government and of the private sector in the provision of recreation opportunities.

Summary

To better understand the trends in government recreation documents published from 1983-2006, I conducted a historical literature review of national, federal, and provincial government involvement in recreation.

The Federal government legitimized their involvement in sport and recreation during the 1960's with the introduction of the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act* (1961). The federal government attributes their involvement to the promotion of national unity, development of a sport system that can develop athletes to compete at international levels, and improvements in the health of Canadians. The Act was a catalyst for the provision of funding for Canadian participation in national and international sport and the creation of federal-provincial cost-sharing agreements. Toward the end of the 1960's it became apparent to government offices that the marriage between mass participation programs and the development of elite athletes was becoming increasingly hard to hold

together. Reports that the health benefits of medicine were reaching a limit shifted the focus of federal government involvement from recreation to fitness during the 1970's. Several landmark events, including the creation of ParticACTION in 1971, the 1972 National Conference on Fitness and Health, and the release of the Lalonde report, *A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians*, in 1974, provided the impetus for the evolution of fitness in Canada. As a result, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate adopted a limited definition of recreation; that is, only those activities that involved a substantial physical aspect. The Provincial Ministers for Sport and Recreation were opposed to this limited definition, instead introducing an all-encompassing definition for recreation in 1974, and asserting that recreation should be the primary mandate of the provinces. The federal government did not like the idea that recreation meant 'free choice' by individuals about the type of activity, the time of participation, and the place for the activity. The federal government became interested in promoting and encouraging structured physical activities that could be readily measured. As a result, in 1978, Iona Campagnola, Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, acknowledged the withdrawal of the federal government from recreation; Ottawa would instead concentrate on a more limited concept of fitness. The 1979 federal green paper, *Toward a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation*, implied that responsibility for recreation was to be handed over to the provinces.

Having defined/adopted a clear, broad definition of recreation and having confirmed the primacy of provinces in dealing with recreation, the provincial Ministers for recreation commissioned the ISRC to develop a national recreation framework. At the 1980 Ministers conference in Toronto, an agreement was reached to develop a document

that included the definition, roles, and meanings of recreation. The resolution passed at the first Minister's conference in Edmonton in 1974 became significant to the creation of future national and provincial documents; it states:

Whereas recreation includes all of those activities in which an individual chooses to participate in his leisure time and is not confined solely to sports and physical recreation programs but includes artistic, creative, cultural, social and intellectual activities;

and whereas recreation is a fundamental human need for citizens of all ages and interests and for both sexes and is essential to the psychological, social and physical well-being of man;

and whereas society is rapidly changing and leisure time is increasing: be it therefore resolved that this Conference recognize the fact that recreation is a social service in the same way that health and education are considered as social services and that recreation's purpose should be (a) to assist individual and community development; (b) to improve the quality of life; and (c) to enhance social functioning. Such recognition will indicate the constitutional responsibility of the Provinces and Territories in recreation services. (IRSC, 1983)

Directional Proposition

Despite increased efforts by Canadian governments to increase the physical activity levels of all Canadians, the literature indicates ethnic minority immigrants are less physically active than the average Canadian. This has led me to believe that the recreation needs and interests of ethnic minority groups in Canada have been excluded from policy deliberations. Despite population projections indicating an increasingly

diverse population, I initially believed national and Ontario government policies have been developed according to dominant conceptions of social problems. I also expected that dominant political agendas (i.e., positive health gains, optimizing resources) have legitimized the attributions contained in national and provincial recreation policies and documents. I expected to find national and Ontario governments have, over time, reduced their involvement in recreation with the creation of intergovernmental partnerships and collaborative efforts. Finally, I expected to find that policies addressing physical recreation have been created without the input of various stakeholders, including ethnic minority groups.

Methodology

I have analyzed nine government documents from 1983 to 2006. The nine documents I analyzed helped me to understand how national and provincial recreation policies have addressed the specific needs and interests of ethnic minority immigrant adults. Data was collected to investigate trends in recreation policies beginning with the Interprovincial Recreation Statement (1983). The eight national and Ontario government documents I have included in my thesis are related to policies that affect the delivery of community recreation services in Windsor, Ontario. I have also included a municipal document, *Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy* (2006), developed by the city of Windsor, in my investigation. This document represents the most recent 'access' policy developed by the City of Windsor. This document was included to help me examine how the attributions of national and provincial policies affect the creation of recreation programs and services for ethnic minority immigrants in Windsor, Ontario.

The nine government documents I analyzed are as follows¹¹:

1. *Inter-provincial Recreation Statement* (1983)
2. *National Recreation Statement* (1987)
3. *A Community Recreation Policy Statement* (Province of Ontario, 1987)
4. *Physical In-Activity: A Framework for Action* (Federal/Provincial/ Territorial, 1997)
5. *Towards a Canadian Sport Policy: Report on the National Summit on Sport* (Federal/Provincial/ Territorial, 2001)
6. *The Canadian Sport Policy* (Federal/Provincial/ Territorial, 2002)
7. *Active 2010* (Province of Ontario, 2004)
8. *Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy* (Federal/Provincial/ Territorial, 2005)
9. *Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy* (City of Windsor, Ontario, 2006)

The method I employed for document analysis draws from Chalip's (1995) policy analysis framework¹². Analysis of each document followed a specific procedure to ensure consistency and thus support the collection of more accurate information. The policy analysis framework developed by Chalip (1995) has been adapted to determine if the legitimations (rationale) and attributions (solutions) of national and provincial recreation documents have included or excluded the needs and interests of ethnic minority groups in Canada. According to Misener (2001),

¹¹ I have numbered the documents in chronological order and use those numbers when referring to the documents in my document analysis results section.

¹² Chalip's (1995) Policy Analysis Framework contains five elements: focusing events; operative legitimization(s); problem definition; problem attribution(s); and decision frame(s) (p.5).

The legitimations critique allows for an examination of policy goals to determine the rationale underlying the development of policies. The attributions critique focuses on the presumed cause of social problems that direct policy creation, by identifying recommended actions towards addressing the problem. This analysis thus allows for the systematic identification of policies/recommendations pertaining to specific groups. (p. 20)

Based on Chalip's (1995) policy analysis framework, I developed a document analysis framework (see Appendix B) to identify the following: key actors, focusing events, problem definition(s), legitimations(s), attribution(s), and specific policy(ies)/ recommendation(s)/ programme(s) in reference to the preservation of diverse cultural heritages. According to Chalip (1995), legitimations and attributions commonly arise in relation to focusing events; thus, it is useful to concentrate in particular on events that are advanced as prime examples of the policy problem. Legitimations and focusing events generate the problem definitions and problem attributions that frame subsequent policy discourse (Chalip, 1995). Expanding on Chalip's framework, I also examined whether the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988), as a formal rule, has been included in government documents. To ensure consistency, in each document I identified policy(ies)/ recommendation(s)/ programme(s) for ethnic minority groups related to resources (human/ financial/ material). Rules cannot be understood apart from resources, and vice versa. Giddens (1984) identifies the dynamic between rules and resources as fundamental to duality of structure: "Rules cannot be conceptualized apart from resources, which refer to the modes whereby transformative relations are actually incorporated into the production of social practices" (p. 18). Rules govern behaviour of actors. Rules can either

be formal (e.g., written constitutions, policies and procedures), or informal. Informal rules are social norms or codes of practice that direct acceptable behaviour.

Chalip (1996) argues that this type of analysis “advances social knowledge and ethical debate as a consequence of the resulting confrontations among varied interpretations” (p. 312), and thus is likely to challenge dominant social and political ideologies. For example, failure to increase physical activity participation levels to date on the basis of health gains warrants an analysis of dominant ideology to examine how such paradigms may serve to limit the capacity for governments to effectively promote physical activity.

To ensure consistency, I began by identifying the key persons involved in creating the document and focusing events that may have framed the policy issue(s). I then identified the rationale(s) for each policy, and the solution(s) proposed. By identifying the legitimations and attributions of each policy, I was able to identify the problem definitions. Where possible, I identified specific policy(ies)/ recommendation(s)/ programme(s) for ethnic minority groups related to resources (human/ financial/ material). Some documents did not address the preservation of diverse Canadian heritages or make concessions for ethnic minority groups. The procedures used to analyze each document followed these steps:

1. Identify key actors and focusing events
2. Identify legitimation(s) stated in the policy
3. Identify problem definition(s)
4. Identify attribution(s) stated in the policy

5. Identify specific policy(ies)/ recommendation(s)/ programme(s) for ethnic minority groups related to:

- Human Resources
- Financial Resources
- Material Resources

The data collected was then organized into categories to help me identify possible limitations of the proposed and/or accepted solutions. According to Chalip, the use of a policy analysis framework can help the analyst “to identify points of illogic, to facilitate criticism of the driving assumptions, and to locate significant considerations that have been excluded from policy deliberations” (1995, p. 5). The policy analysis framework I am using helps me “determine what realms of knowledge might be significant components of the policy problem yet have not been considered” (Chalip, 1995, p. 10). Analysis of the information collected from this framework helped me explore the legitimations and attributions of national and provincial recreation policies. This analysis allowed me to determine if the needs and interests of ethnic minority groups were excluded from policy deliberations. In association with the data collected in sub-problem three, this analysis also allowed me to identify those perspectives that were excluded from the policy process.

Results

Introduction

To examine how Canadian governments have addressed the recreation needs and interests of ethnic minority immigrants, I examined eight national and Ontario government documents, and one municipal government document created, from 1983 to

2006. The period follows the formal recognition of the primacy of the provincial mandate in recreation (1980) and the constitutional amendment to include the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982). This period is also marked by the inception of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1988).

My findings present common themes in recreation after the formal provincial declaration of their primacy in recreation. I outline how the legitimations and attributions of recreation policy have changed and evolved from 1983-2006. My research question, “How do selected national and Ontario government documents attend to minimizing constraints and facilitating opportunities for ethnic minority immigrants to participate in physical recreation?” is addressed by explaining how documents have incorporated formal rules that have been developed to preserve diverse Canadian heritages. I outline any resources (human/ financial/ material) identified in the policies for the preservation of diverse Canadian heritages. The results are divided into two main sections: trends in recreation policy and preservation of diverse Canadian heritages.

Trends in Recreation Policy

The following section presents my findings of trends from the document analysis. The results have been grouped into five common themes: personal autonomy in recreation choices, optimizing resources, health gains, active living approach, and population health approach. In each section, I describe how the theme has been attributed as a rationale for government involvement in recreation. I also present the solutions recommended by policy makers. Where possible, I present key actors and focusing events that have influenced the solutions presented in the documents.

Personal Autonomy in Recreation Choice

Driven by a political climate of rationalization and economic restraint, national and provincial recreation policies that emerged in the 1980's (1, 2, 3) framed recreation participation in terms of personal responsibility and choice. The *Interprovincial Recreation Statement* (1983) was developed to reduce the public's dependency on the government to provide direct services. The policy (1) was created to address an increasing demand for recreation services; there was a need to define the roles of provincial and municipal governments in recreation as a result of growing consumption and interests by individuals in recreation and leisure good and services. As stated in the *Interprovincial Recreation Statement* (1983), and later reiterated in the *National Recreation Statement* (1987),

Government is by no means the central primary provider of recreation opportunities... Government has a responsibility to nurture the development of private and commercial opportunities that can develop the economic base and thus reduce demands on the tax base. In addition, the Government sector should provide support to reinforce the effectiveness of the non-profit sector by providing appropriate support services, including assistance in identifying the optimum roles of Government and the private sector in providing recreation opportunities in the local, regional and/or National context. (ISRC, 1987, 1.8)

Recreation policies introduced in the 1980's (1, 2, 3) affirm the individual is personally responsible for becoming the provider and recipient of recreation experiences. The 1987 *National Recreation Statement* clearly articulates that the onus for recreation participation is on the individual:

Leisure in our democratic society will always remain the prerogative of the individual; that the individual should be both a provider and recipient of leisure services; and that recreation has an almost unlimited potential to develop life skills through enjoyable experiences; create cohesive communities; and promote and maintain healthy independent lifestyles which contribute significantly to the quality of life in Canada. (IRSC, 1987, 1.2)

Five documents (1, 2, 3, 4, 9) recommend government agencies provide support services to reinforce the effectiveness of the private sector in delivering recreation services. The *Interprovincial Recreation Statement* (1983) recommended governments should make every effort to provide for unmet recreation needs through the development of initiatives by: (a) existing community groups, organizations or agencies; (b) the establishment of community associations; (c) the private and commercial sector; or, if none are feasible, (d) direct involvement of the Municipality authority.

It is recognized that individuals should freely identify and pursue recreation activities of their choice. As far as possible opportunities for participation should be initially developed and managed by individuals or groups of individuals, independent of Government involvement. Where additional resources are required and economies can be gained from collective action, community scale resources and organizations should be cooperatively developed or utilized to meet recreation needs. (ISRC, 1983, 2.4)

For example, the 2006 document, *Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy*, indicates,

Parks and Recreation will aim to be the provider of the first resort for recreational facilities and services that are not generally provided at an affordable rate by the private sector or for those services not provided at all by the private sector (City of Windsor, 2006).

According to the *National Recreation Statement* (1987), the management of clubs and societies, the provision of leadership and instruction, and the coordination of recreation programs are dependent on the volunteer. Consequently, the 1987 recreation policy drafted by the Province of Ontario (3) indicates the provincial government will make available incentive grants to municipalities to train volunteer leaders.

Optimizing Resources

All nine documents analyzed identify reduced government funding in their recommendations for fostering inter-governmental cooperation and intersectoral collaboration. The 1997 document, *Physical Inactivity: A Framework for Action*, suggests that without intergovernmental cooperation, recreation services would not survive. “The resource capacity of local level public institutions to manage their traditional range of services is being eroded, resulting in a concentration on core services, for which physical activity and related program areas, notably parks and recreation, are often considered secondary” (p. 8). Documents introduced in the 1980’s and 1990’s (1, 2, 3, 4) indicate fiscal constraints made it necessary for government agencies to work collaboratively towards common goals to ensure political and organizational survival.

Physical inactivity: A Framework for Action (1997) was developed,

To identify appropriate and cost-effective strategies to influence current physical activity patterns of inactive Canadians; to identify realistic roles for the federal,

provincial and territorial governments, acting both individually and collectively; to stimulate coordination and collaboration among partners, within and outside government, with the ability or potential to contribute to implementation of the Framework for Action. (p. 1)

Most documents (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9) suggest many recreation opportunities are provided through volunteers, non-profit and commercial agencies, organizations and societies. The *National Recreation Statement* (1987) recommends provincial governments act as leaders and supporters by providing resources to municipal governments and the non-profit sector, including incentive grants, training of volunteer leaders, and encouraging new programs and facilities through advice and consultation (ISRC, 2.3). Accordingly, recommendations mentioned in all the documents encourage cooperation among various and diverse governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and commercial organizations. Government documents (1, 2, 3, 4, 9) mention the need to reduce duplication and make better use of public resources. As stated in the *Interprovincial Recreation Statement* (1983), and later reiterated in the *National Recreation Statement* (1987),

The purpose of providing such a definition of the roles and responsibilities of different levels of Government and the private sector, in the provision of recreation opportunities, is to minimize duplication of effort and to ensure that all resources can be directed to meet the recreation needs of the 80's in a coordinated responsive and effective manner. (ISRC, 1987, 1.6)

The 2006 municipal document, *Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy*, states, "Parks and Recreation will strive to ensure the most effective use of City resources

to maximize all opportunities for partnership development, sponsorship and grant development and fiscal responsibility” (City of Windsor, 2006, 5.0).

The need for enhanced collaboration and intersectoral cooperation is recommended in five documents (5, 6, 7, 8, 9). The 2001 document, *Toward a Canadian Sport Policy: Report on the National Summit on Sport*, was created to outline recommendations brought forward by key stakeholders from various governmental agencies, the voluntary sector, and the private sector, concerning the creation of a national sport policy. The authors of the 2002 *Canadian Sport Policy* legitimize the solutions of this policy through recommendations brought forward in previous documents (2, 4, 5). The 2002 *Canadian Sport Policy* “maintains the existing alignment of governmental responsibilities, as defined in the *National Recreation Statement* (1987) and other agreements, and increases intergovernmental collaboration” (p. 3). In addition to emphasizing increased communication and collaboration amongst all the stakeholders, the *Canadian Sport Policy* (2002) commits all governments to setting targets for enhanced participation. Consequently, national and provincial targets were developed (7, 8) to address physical inactivity. *Active 2010* (2005) builds on the foundation of the *Canadian Sport Policy* to develop an amateur sport and physical activity strategy. In developing *Active 2010*, the Province looked at how it could contribute to the goals of the *Canadian Sport Policy* and respond to the specific needs within Ontario. Physical activity strategies (7, 8) encompass an integrated approach to delivering affordable, accessible and sustainable physical activity programs and services to increase the percentage of Canadians who are physically active. The 2005 Provincial document, *Active 2010*, justifies the need for collaboration:

Active 2010 has been built on collaboration. It has been developed on the premise that no one sector can bring about significant change in Ontario alone. It will require the collective action of provincial organizations, stakeholder groups and countless communities and volunteers across Ontario. (p. 7)

Governments alone will not be successful in creating a physically active society. It will take the combined efforts of many partners, including the health sector, the volunteer recreation sector, education, amateur sport, social services, business and industry, and municipalities to build an active, healthy Ontario. (p. 28)

Health Gains

All nine documents examined mention health gains as a rationale for policy recommendations. The *Interprovincial Recreation Statement* (1983) suggests physical recreation is important for maintaining good health and reducing health care costs (ISRC, 1983, 1.2). The *National Recreation Statement* (1987) legitimates provincial and municipal government involvement on the basis that it can reduce demands on the tax base by promoting recreation practices that reduce health care costs.

Documents (4, 7, 8, 9) indicate that recreation policies, programs, and services are profoundly intertwined with health promotion and physical activity strategies. According to the 1997 national document, *Physical Inactivity: A Framework for Action*, “Governments have traditionally supported participation in physical activity for recreation, fitness and sport purposes. Only recently have most governments recognized physical inactivity as a significant health issue” (F/P/T Advisory Committee, 1997, p. 2). At a conference of Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for fitness, active living, recreation and sport (1995), the Ministers recognized that physical inactivity

represents a major health risk and that physically inactive Canadians are a priority for government attention. Concern over physically inactive Canadians prompted recommendations in six documents (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) for multiple government agencies to promote and endorse physical activity. *Physical Inactivity: A Framework for Action* (1997) was developed to, “provide a foundation for individual provincial/territorial governments and the federal government to determine priorities and initiatives concerning the issue of physical inactivity.” (p. 2). Consequently, multiple documents (6, 7, 8) recommended that provincial and municipal governments, community organizations, and sport associations provide more opportunities for individuals to become physically active. The 2002 *Canadian Sport Policy* states, “As a way to be physically active, participation in sport contributes to the adoption of a healthy lifestyle and prevention of disease and illness. Physical activity is fundamental to positive human development and contributes to healthier, longer, and more productive lives” (p. 5). Other documents, such as *Active 2010* (2005) and the *Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy* (2005) affirm the state’s interest in addressing physical inactivity:

Governments, citizens, and sport and physical activity stakeholders across the province are expressing increasing concern about the inadequate level of physical activity and sport participation, and the resulting impact on health and quality of life (*Active 2010*, 2005, p. 5).

Given the trends in current eating and physical activity patterns, and in the consequent increases in rates of overweight and obesity, decisive action is required by all partners and sectors with an interest in improving the health of Canadians. (*The Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy*, 2005, p. 3)

Thus, physical inactivity is defined as a problem in five documents (4, 5, 6, 7, 8); prompting national, provincial, and municipal strategies and policies (6, 7, 8, 9) to recommend actions to increase the levels of physical activity. The *Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy* (2006), created by the city of Windsor, states healthy living as a fundamental principle. The document (9) indicates, “Parks and Recreation will seek to provide a range of recreation facilities, programs and services to help foster healthy lifestyle habits and active living” (City of Windsor, 2006).

Active Living Approach

In the *National Recreation Statement* (1987) provinces joined with the federal government to create a national recreation statement. The *National Recreation Statement* (1987), states that, ‘Fitness and Amateur Sport Canada affirms the aforementioned federal role in recreation and, in this respect, will make decisions related to its assigned mandate in physical recreation and physical activity’ (ISRC, 2.6). According to the *National Recreation Statement* (1987), the federal government will contribute to the development of recreation in Canada by “developing and circulating nationally, promotional and resource materials which will encourage individuals to participate in recreation activities” (ISRC, 1987, section 2.6).

My findings indicate that the Active Living ideology¹³, which gained prominence in the late 1980’s, was adopted and endorsed in the recommendations of six documents (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). The legitimization of Active Living prompted recommendations to promote and support recreation activities that are physical in nature (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9).

¹³ In 1986, the concept of ‘Active Living’ emerged at the Canadian Summit on Fitness as a way of bridging the individual and social determinants of physical activity. By expanding the definition of what constitutes physical activity, Active Living claims to be more accessible and appealing to the public than the previous prescriptive exercise model (Bercovitz, 1998).

Popular recreation activities, including gardening, walking and cycling were endorsed as a means to curtail rising health care costs and increase exercise involvement levels. Four documents (4, 7, 8, 9) formally identify the Active Living approach in their recommendations. The two other documents identified (5, 6) make no formal reference to Active Living; however, the recommendations stated in these documents imply Active Living exists as an informal rule. For example, the *Canadian Sport Policy* (2002), “draws on the broadest definition of sport, reflecting the collective determination of governments and the sport community to ensure that the Policy covers the widest array of activities (p.2).

Population Health Approach

The Population Health¹⁴ approach and the strategic directions proposed in *Strategies for Population Health* were adopted by the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers of Health in 1994. Three documents (4, 7, 8) link recommendations to the population health approach. The Population Health approach legitimizes recommendations that have the greatest potential to positively affect the health of Canadians. The Province of Ontario’s physical activity strategy, *Active 2010*, affirms, “Attention will be focused where the greatest benefits can be realized” (Government of Ontario, 2005, p. 7). The legitimization of Population Health prompted recommendations in three of the documents (4, 7, 8) to target special segments of the population.

Documents recommend service providers target special audiences, including: children and youth, older adults, women, aboriginal communities, ethnic minorities, and other

¹⁴ As an approach, population health focuses on the interrelated conditions and factors that influence the health of populations over the life course, identifies systematic variations in their patterns of occurrence, and applies the resulting knowledge to develop and implement policies and actions to improve the health and well-being of those populations (Hayes & Dunn, 1998).

segments of the population. The recommendations contained in the documents to address the specific needs and interests of ethnic minority groups will be discussed in the next section.

Preservation of Diverse Canadian Heritages

Canadian laws (i.e., *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*) have been introduced to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians. This section outlines specific recommendation(s), policy(ies), and programme(s) contained in the documents, for the preservation of diverse Canadian heritages.

Recreation policies drafted in the 1980's (1, 2, 3) were created to define the roles and responsibilities of various levels of governments in an effort to reduce the public's dependency on the government for direct service provision. The legitimization of reduced government involvement prompted documents (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8) to recommend personal responsibility for recreation choices. The definition of recreation (1974), adopted in the *National Recreation Statement* (1987), stipulates an element of choice; that is, the freedom to choose based on personal needs and interest. The focus on personal autonomy has prompted recreation policy makers in the 1980s (1, 2, 3) to recommend that individuals seek recreation activities of choice through volunteer organizations, non-profit agencies and commercial agencies.

The delivery of recreation services is much more dependent on local decisions and self-help based on volunteerism than parallel social services such as health and education. This independent style and reduced dependency for day-to-day direction or financial support should not reduce or diminish the interest or initiatives of Provincial or Territorial Governments in providing the assistance,

leadership and recognition that is so essential to the coherent development and maintenance of this system. This is particularly true in respect to the volunteer who provides the main energy source to power the provision of direct recreation services. (ISRC, 1987, 2.1)

According to the *National Recreation Statement* (1987), the role of the provincial government is to provide resources to the municipal government, which is acknowledged as the primary agent in the delivery of equitable public recreation services (ISRC, 1987, 2.2).

Municipal governments are closest to the people; they are likely to respond more flexibly, more quickly and more effectively to the needs of the community in matters of recreation. For this reason the municipality is the primary public supplier of direct recreation services. (ISRC, 1987, 2.3)

The *National Recreation Statement* (1987) recommends service providers comply with the intent and spirit of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Human Rights Legislation*. A *Community Recreation Policy Statement* (1987) recommends municipalities provide equal services to all its constituents: "Recreation services should comply with the intent and spirit of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Human Rights Legislation* and should provide opportunities for both genders, all age groups, all ethnic groups and special interests groups" (Government of Ontario, 1987, p. 12). The *National Recreation Statement* (1987) recommends municipalities should modify programs to integrate special populations, and undertake regular assessments to determine community needs or interests not being met through existing programs.

My findings indicate that beginning in the 1990's, documents have recognized the need to consider the specific requirements of population sub-groups, including ethnic minorities. Six of the documents (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) recognize the need to identify and modify physical activity and recreation programming to create supportive environments for participation and address barriers to participation for under-served segments of the population. The 1997 document, *Physical Inactivity: A Framework for Action*, recognizes the growth in population of individuals from ethnic minority groups; the framework recommends municipal recreation agencies provide outreach programming to cultural minorities. The framework recognizes that in many instances, the policies, guidelines and design of physical activity facilities and natural environments do not take into consideration the circumstances and needs of much of the population, particularly those outside of the mainstream.

The removal of discriminatory barriers limiting opportunities for physical activity, and so affecting individual health and well-being, is a primary responsibility of government. Both environmental and systemic causes of inactivity among these groups must be addressed. (F/P/T Advisory Committee, 1997, p. 32)

The framework recommends government agencies should review their policies to determine how they may best address physical inactivity as a health issue:

Certain segments of the broader population are targeted because they are at significantly higher risk due to inactivity, have greater needs resulting from barriers that limit opportunities for participation, or offer considerable potential for behaviour change over the long term. (F/P/T Advisory Committee, 1997, p. 12)

Building on the recommendations of the *Physical Inactivity Framework* (1997), the *Report on the National Summit of Sport* (2001) recommends that factors related to ethnicity need to be taken into consideration to improve accessibility. Consequently, documents produced in the new millennium (6, 7, 8, 9, 10) provide recommendations to create supportive environments and address barriers to participation for ethnic minority groups. Despite recommendations to address the needs of ethnic minority groups, none of the documents contain recommendations to include ethnic minority groups, or representatives of these groups, in policy deliberations. The 2002 *Canadian Sport Policy* identifies sport as an important component of culture. “We express ourselves and celebrate our communities through sport” (2002, Introduction section). The *Canadian Sport Policy*, building on the *National Recreation Statement* (1987), recommends enhanced participation¹⁵ can be achieved by encompassing a broad definition of sport. Nevertheless, the document did not specify the inclusion of diverse ethnic groups to define or expand the definition of sport (and recreation). Absent from the documents were references to the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. According to the *Canadian Sport Policy*, “Initiatives, programs, and resources will be directed to the broadest possible participation, ensuring quality and accessibility for, and the inclusion of, all communities in Canada” (p. 16). Yet, ethnic minority groups were not specified in the document:

Sport is welcoming and inclusive, offering an opportunity to participate without regard to age, gender, race, language, sexual orientation, disability, geography, or economic circumstances. Participants have access to affordable sport opportunities that are appropriate to the level of activity chosen and provide

¹⁵ The *Canadian Sport Policy* (2002) was developed to make the sport system more effective and inclusive (F/P/T Ministers for Sport, Fitness and Recreation, 2002). To achieve its objective, the policy identifies four goals: enhanced participation, excellence, capacity, and interaction.

opportunities for personal achievement. (F/P/T Ministers for Sport, Fitness and Recreation, 2002, p. 13)

Other documents (7, 8, 9) recommend special provisions to create a supportive environment and address barriers to participation for ethnic minority groups. The 2006 document, *Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy*, states:

Parks and Recreation recreational facilities, programs and services will strive to provide a range of services that reflect the diversity of interest and culture in our community. Parks and Recreation will continue to encourage cross-cultural participation and seek to expand its programs to include activities of interest to Windsor's diverse, multi-cultural community. (City of Windsor, 5.0)

National and Provincial physical activity strategies (7, 8) link addressing the needs of new Canadians and ethnic minority groups to the Population Health approach. According to the Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy (2005),

The Healthy Living Strategy is grounded in a Population Health approach, which strives to address some of the root causes that lead to poor health outcomes. This approach focuses on the living and working environments that affect people's health, the conditions that enable and support people in making healthy choices, and the services that promote and maintain health. (p. 10, 2.1)

The physical activity strategy for the province of Ontario, *Active 2010* (2005), suggests individuals and families are more likely to participate in sport and physical activity if they have access to affordable and safe parks, trails and recreation programs and community facilities (p. 21). "*Active 2010* is based on the understanding that it requires not only educational and promotional activities targeting the individual, but also

efforts to reform organizations, policy development, economic support and environmental changes” (p. 28). Consequently, the strategy recommends that the removal of barriers for ethnic minority groups is integral to the implementation of the strategy and the realization of the vision and the goals. The strategy recommends municipal recreation departments, “Provide coaching and physical activity leadership training opportunities for volunteers within ethnic communities” (Government of Ontario, 2005, p. 31).

Chapter Summary

In a time of fiscal restraint, recreation policies created in the 1980’s clarified and reduced the government’s responsibilities for direct service provision. Provincial governments assumed the role of leader and supporter, citing that the individual is responsible for being the provider and recipient of recreation choices. Non-profit organizations, community organizations, and commercial agencies were called on to service the recreation needs of individuals. Municipal government agencies would then be responsible for providing equitable recreation services that were not provided by the non-profit or profit sectors.

The health gains possible from participation in leisure-based physical activities emerged as an important rationale for government policies seeking to increase physical activity levels. Documents developed during the 1990’s acknowledged that the traditional roles assumed by governments in the provision of recreation services were not enough to motivate a growing sedentary population. Intergovernmental collaboration and cooperation were recommended so that provincial and municipal recreation agencies could work towards increasing the physical activity levels of Canadians. The Active Living and Population Health approaches were used as rationale for recommendations to

curtail the effects of physical inactivity on the health of Canadians and reduce health care costs.

Few provision are made in documents to address the recreational interests of ethnic minority immigrants. However, the government's interests in increasing the percentage of physically active individuals have been attributed to the Population Health approach. Consequently, documents have begun to address the specific needs and interests of under-serviced segments of the population. Existing national and provincial strategies seeking to increase the percentage of physically active Canadians have made recommendations to address the specific needs and interests of new Canadians and ethnic minority groups linked to the Population Health approach.

CHAPTER 3: RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES: THE ROLE OF THE MUNICIPALITY

How do municipal recreation administrators in Windsor, Ontario create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in physical recreation among recent immigrants?

Introduction

In this chapter, I outline my findings from the interviews conducted with municipal recreation administrators. The information was gathered to help me better understand how recreation leaders can create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in sport and physical activity. The interviews were conducted to: (1) explore how national and provincial documents and policies have influenced recreation programming at the municipal level; (2) investigate how collaboration and cooperation among community partners has facilitated recreation participation for ethnic minority immigrant adults; and (3) explore opportunities for recreation leaders in Windsor, Ontario to create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in sport and physical activity.

Literature Review

Delivery of Recreation: The Role of the Municipality

Acknowledging that no two municipalities have identical social, political, economic, and demographic characteristics, Karlis (2004) suggests it is important for municipal decision makers to explore the needs and trends of their respective community to best provide necessary recreation programs and services. Working in collaboration

with other government agencies, sport organizations and community organizations, community recreation leaders must take action to find ways to reach minority groups who are found to be underserved or who exhibit special needs (Canadian Heritage, 2002; Government of Ontario, 2005). According to Seefeldt et al. (2002), availability, access, and the quality of facilities, programs, and services available through the local sport and recreation system become key factors influencing the physical activity patterns of individuals. Public recreation practitioners in collaboration with community organizations can help recent immigrant adults translate the messages of national and provincial strategies into action by providing local opportunities for participation in ethno-cultural physical recreation activities (Karlis).

According to the *National Recreation Statement* (1987), municipalities are the front line of the sport and recreation system in Canada; it is the governmental level where the recreation needs of the general public are directly addressed through the offering of recreation services. "Municipal governments are closest to the people; they are likely to respond more flexibly, more quickly and more effectively to the needs of the community in matters of recreation. For this reason the municipality is the primary supplier of direct recreation services" (ISRC, 1987, section 2.3). The basic role of the municipality is to ensure the availability of the broadest range of recreation opportunities for every individual and group consistent with available community resources (ISRC, 1987). As a result, they (municipal governments) have a mandate to encourage the development of recreation programs and facilities, and to act as a catalyst for recreation development in the community (Karlis, 2004). Municipal Parks and Recreation Departments are the community leaders in providing widespread access to places and spaces for play and

physical activity (Spangler & O'Sullivan, 2006).

While the *Community Recreation Policy Statement* (Government of Ontario, 1987) states the role of the provincial government is one of enabler and coordinator, the role of the municipality is much more complicated. Municipal governments may inherently assume multiple roles (Karlis, 2004). According to Karlis, recreation departments exist for a number of reasons, including: (1) to provide recreation that because of its nature inculcates values/ideals to the user; (2) to provide opportunities for recreation to disadvantaged clients; and (3) to provide those opportunities deemed valuable by society that, because of their nature, would not be provided by the private sector. For example, The Department of Parks and Recreation for the city of Windsor, Ontario has a mission "to offer residents and visitors diverse opportunities to improve their health and quality of life" (City of Windsor, 2007); this is accomplished by offering more than 8,000 leisure and recreation programs accessible through community centers and pools (City of Windsor). In addition to providing physical spaces and places, parks and recreation programs are concerned with societal factors that shape and influence peoples' ability to access and participate in leisure-time physical activity (Spangler & O'Sullivan, 2006).

Glover (1999) suggests municipal governments traditionally have operated using a direct-provider role. However, Hensley et al. (2006) inform us that as municipalities have faced financial constraints, many have shifted to a model where they have transferred services to community groups while providing financial or in-kind support to these groups, thus moving toward an enabler and coordinator or a supporter and patron model. According to the *National Recreation Statement* (1987), "the role of the private

sector is critical in the community context. Commercial outlets, voluntary cultural, sport and recreation agencies, private clubs, and educational institutions play a vital role in providing community recreation opportunities” (ISRC, 1987, section 2.3). Consequently, certain groups in the community will have more opportunities to participate in recreational activities of choice. Organizations and groups serving new immigrant adults (i.e., ethnic community organizations, social clubs, local businesses) administered by volunteers who have no formal training in recreation cannot be depended upon to address minimizing constraints and facilitating opportunities for recent immigrants to engage in physical recreation. Nonetheless, if physical recreation opportunities are created by community organizations serving recent immigrant adults (i.e., YMCA, ethnic community organizations), they will most likely be created to achieve the objectives of government policies. This occurs because programs and services offered to recent immigrants by non-profit organizations (i.e., Multicultural Council of Windsor Essex County, YMCA) are funded through government grants, most of which are structured with specific guidelines. Accordingly, recent immigrant adults may experience specific constraints to participate in physical recreation activities not found among the general adult population, such as the promotion of structured physical activities and sports practiced by the mainstream.

Despite the contribution of recreation to the well being of individuals and communities, recreation is among the first targets when it comes to government cuts (Slack, 2003). As a result, we have witnessed a reduction in the number of services offered and an increase in user fees. Slack informs us that the vast majority of municipal recreation departments charge a user fee for at least some of their programs: over 90%

charged user fees for some of their aquatics, athletic and arts programs; 87% charged for after-school programs; and 70% charged for youth drop-in programs. This is important because user fees constrain those who cannot afford the fees, and also limit opportunities for diverse services and programs offered by municipal recreation departments.

According to Karlis and Dawson (1995), the services offered by mainstream recreation agencies often overlook the diverse recreation needs arising out of the diversity of ethnic cultures, focusing instead on servicing the 'majority'. "Dominant interests tend to become centered in institutional life in ways that seek to exclude the full range of available human practice" (Gruneau, 1988, p. 21). Consequently, ethnic minority immigrants may be further marginalized and overlooked in the provision of recreation services. For this reason, a number of programming possibilities need to be taken into consideration so as to better respond to the recreation needs of all sub-groups of society. "A failure to recognize and value recreation concepts that differ from those of the dominant culture constitutes an imbalance of power between dominant and minority groups" (Li, 1999, p. 158).

The Delivery of Recreation Through Partnerships

According to Hensley et al. (2006), no agency or entity can thrive alone; it is imperative to seek out the new, inclusive, innovative, flexible, and commonly focused opportunities. By forming partnerships, it is possible to reduce the duplication of existing services, reduce costs, and produce effective organization (Hensley et al.). Partnerships are one of the principal ideas underlying government policies on recreation. In light of declining municipal expenditures on recreation as a result of fiscal restraint, municipal recreation departments may form partnerships with other government agencies, sport

organizations and community organizations, to deliver recreation opportunities to the community. Several of the five roles that governments take in recreation service delivery proposed by Burton and Glover (1999) involve partnerships. For example, when a government agency acts as an enabler and coordinator or a supporter and patron for community ethnic organizations, they are involved in a partnership.

Although the intent of collaboration is to ultimately benefit the recipients of the service (Hensley et al., 2006), Verma and Darby (1994) advise us that partnerships do not always benefit the community at large. “Partnerships only function effectively when partners have established common goals” (Verma & Darby, p. 44). As a result, partnerships may serve to inhibit participation in physical recreation among recent immigrant adults. For example, culturally diverse adults who do not identify with the dominant cultural values placed on health gains from physical recreation may experience discrimination and reduced opportunities to practice ethno-cultural recreation practices. When municipalities assume the role of enabler and coordinator or supporter and patron they may serve to legitimize dominant cultural recreation norms amongst all providers of recreation. Ultimately, partnerships in the delivery of recreation services may implicitly inhibit ethnic minority immigrants from participating in recreation activities of choice.

Community Partner Organizations Serving New Canadians Ethnic Community

Organizations

Canada’s Multiculturalism Act (1988) allows for the establishment of ethnic community organizations, which can help to fulfill the leisure and cultural needs of ethnic community groups in Canada (Karlis, 2004). According to Karlis, it is through ethnic community organizations that Canada’s multiculturalism policy is experienced. The

government of Canada provides a number of financial incentives (e.g., grants) to help support the existence and sustainability of these organizations and their cultural-specific programs and recreational activities (Karlis). Members (immigrants and their descendants) work together mostly through volunteer efforts to organize, operate and implement the ethno-cultural specific services of their respective ethnic community organization, including recreation (Karlis). Karlis reports that these organizations fulfill a number of roles, such as providing a place for social contact, the maintenance of ethnic ties and the maintenance of cultural and linguistic traditions. Tirone and Pedlar (2005) report that ethnic community organizations provide opportunities for immigrants to learn the language skills necessary to get jobs and to achieve a sense of belonging; these organizations assist immigrants in finding important sources of social support, whether that is in employment opportunities, leisure, education, or shelter. Research conducted by Karlis and Dawson (1995) reveals that programming for ethno-cultural specific recreation needs takes place mostly within the ethnic groups themselves. Community-wide, non-profit ethnic organizations tend to address these needs (Karlis). They play a key role not only in the promotion but also in the maintenance of ethno-cultural recreation practices. This occurs despite the fact that most of these organizations have little, if any, formal training or education in recreation studies and the provision of recreation services (Karlis).

Canada's Multiculturalism Act has established the possibility for Canadians to participate in the recreation activities pertinent to their ethnic culture. According to Karlis (2004), the Act has contributed to the diverse and pluralistic nature of recreation services in Canada both within and outside of ethnic community organizations. Nevertheless,

despite the financial support, the impetus for the maintenance of ethnic cultural and recreation services falls primarily into the hands of the members of ethnic groups and their ethnic community organization (Karlis). In essence, it is the responsibility of Canada's ethnic population to fully implement Canada's multiculturalism policy. As a result, a number of factors make some ethnic community organizations more powerful and more likely to sustain ethno-cultural traditions than others. Size, time period in Canada, lobbying strength and geographical location are determining factors for how these organizations promote the traditions of their ethnic heritage (Karlis). Larger, more established ethnic community groups may have strong lobby groups to encourage the provision of their ethno-specific recreation activities. Consequently, more recent ethnic minority groups may be at a disadvantage mainly due to their limited time in Canada (Karlis).

The Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County

Funded by a number of government agencies, the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County is charged with meeting the needs of the region's ethnically diverse population. Assistance is primarily directed towards newcomers who need guidance and counseling through the period of adjustment; volunteers also provide translation and interpretation services.

The Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP) supports the early and effective settlement of newcomers to Windsor/Essex County. Its objective is to help newcomers settle, adjust, and contribute to life in Windsor/Essex County. Part of the program is to educate newcomers on various aspects of their life in the new city, including leisure, sport and recreation opportunities. This is accomplished by linking newcomers with

community resources and through practical guidance. This program is available only to recent immigrants who have been in Canada for five years or less.

In association with the NSP, the Multicultural Council offers the Host Program. The Host Program is designed to assist newcomers with their integration process by matching them with resident Canadians - someone who lives here and can help them settle in. The Host Program is a program meant to bring Canadians and newcomers together, to make newcomers feel welcomed in the community. The Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada funds the Host Program. The Host Program has two special programs for youth: Student Ambassador Club, and Circle of Friends. The goal of the Student Ambassador Club is to welcome newcomer children and teenagers and make them feel at home in their new school. Circle of Friends is a support group for newcomer youth 13-17 years old. The group meets once every week for two hours, to assist the newcomer youth find new friends from all over the world who are sharing the same experience. In Circle of Friends, the newcomer youth participates in different types of organized activities, discussions, workshops including guest speakers, and field trips. No Host Program initiative provides recent immigrant adults with opportunities to meet other fellow newcomers or participate in organized activities, discussions, etc.

YMCA

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) have had an enduring mission since 1912 to facilitate the "growth of all persons in spirit, mind and body and in a sense of responsibility to each other and the global community" (YMCA Canada, 2007). The YMCA of Windsor-Essex County provides programs for New Canadians, with the purpose of assisting newcomers

in language training and offering opportunities of self-improvement and self-reliance through spiritual, mental and physical development. YMCA settlement counselors facilitate access to various community agencies, government departments and the private sector. Although settlement counselors target health issues, no mention is given in the description of settlement services of opportunities to facilitate sport and recreation opportunities.

Despite the appeal by national and Ontario government recreation policies (i.e., *National Recreation Statement*, 1987; *A Community Recreation Policy Statement*, 1987) for community organizations to provide recreation opportunities, recent immigrant adults may be underserved and marginalized. Even though some ethnic community organizations provide ethno-cultural specific recreation activities (Karlis & Dawson, 1995), these organizations are often run by volunteers who have no formal training in recreation and therefore cannot and should not be depended upon to address minimizing constraints and facilitating opportunities for recent immigrants to engage in physical recreation. Financial restraint should not be used as an explanation by governments for reduced programs and services to groups within the community. Consistent with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Human Rights Legislation*, the basic role of the municipality is to ensure the availability of the broadest range of recreation opportunities for every individual and group (ISRC, 1987). Dominant interests should not be solely institutionalized in the delivery of municipal recreation opportunities. In accordance with the strategic approaches of *Active 2010* (Government of Ontario, 2005), municipal recreation departments should create supportive environments for participation and

address barriers that negatively impact participation in physical recreation among recent immigrants.

Directional Proposition

I anticipated municipal recreation administrators are shaped by the legitimations and attributions contained in national and provincial policies. I expected to find recreation administrators are aware of issues arising from the cultural diversity of the community; however, I anticipated program and funding cutbacks (e.g., program cancellations at the provincial level, municipal budget cuts) have limited the abilities of recreation administrators to address minimizing constraints and facilitating opportunities for ethnic minority immigrant adults to participate in physical recreation.

Methodology

Introduction

Following the document analysis, interviews were conducted municipal recreation administrators in Windsor, Ontario to explore how they create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in physical recreation among recent immigrant adults. I investigated the extent to which national and provincial documents and policies have influenced recreation programming at the municipal level. I examined how collaboration and cooperation among community partners has facilitated recreation participation for ethnic minority immigrant adults. I also explored opportunities for recreation leaders in Windsor, Ontario to create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in sport and physical activity. On the recommendation of one of the administrators interviewed from Windsor, a fourth interview was conducted with a

recreation administrator from Mississauga, Ontario¹⁶. Interviewing administrators from two different municipalities allowed me to compare and contrast how two Ontario communities create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in sport and physical activity for ethnic minority immigrant adults. Furthermore, interviewing an administrator from an Ontario community with a large percentage of immigrant population contributed insights and suggestions for the data analysis. A semi-structured interview guide was devised based on the recommendations and attributions of national and provincial recreation policies, and pertinent factors said to affect the recreation participation of ethnic minority groups and new immigrant adults.

The use of a semi-structured interview process was chosen to allow for a more interactive interview (Kirby, Greaves & Reid, 2006). The semi-structured interview uses an interview guide to ensure that certain information is elicited from all respondents. While a number of predetermined questions are typically asked of all interviewees, the interviewer has sufficient flexibility to digress when approaching the 'world from the subject's perspective' (Bercovitz, 1996, p. 377). In other words, the interviewer is free to probe and clarify information in greater depth. This enables the interviewer and the interviewee to create and participate in conversation. Thus, although the researcher approaches the interview with a pre-defined agenda, the researcher also listens to and attempts to understand the way that respondents organize, interpret, and construct their social worlds (Bercovitz, 1996; Kirby et al., 2006). Furthermore, the semi-structured interview format ensures that the same information is obtained from each respondent,

¹⁶ Mississauga is a city with approximately three times the size of Windsor in terms of population; with over 50% of the population comprised of Canadian immigrants.

thus facilitating data analysis through quick location, organization, and comparability of responses across respondents (Bercovitz, 1996).

The interview guide used consists of 15 questions (see Appendix D) and related probes to focus the interview. This guide served as a checklist during the interview to ensure that all relevant questions or topics were covered. The wordings, sequence of questions, or questions themselves, were adapted to specific respondents in the context of the actual interview. The interview guide was developed in conjunction with a review and analysis of national and provincial government documents and common themes that emerged from my literature review on factors said to affect the relationship between ethnicity and recreation participation.

Sample And Sample Selection

Following a pilot interview¹⁷ to ensure the suitability of my interview guide, I conducted interviews with three recreation administrators from the city of Windsor. Participants were selected on the basis of their positions as recreation administrators. When choosing administrators for interviews, I was able to ensure both genders were represented. Two of the administrators interviewed occupied managerial positions in community recreation centers. These individuals worked directly with members of the community to deliver recreation programs and services. Data was collected to understand how community recreation centers attend to the needs of ethnic minority immigrant adults in their community. The other administrator interviewed was responsible for managing all the recreation facilities in Windsor and developing business opportunities for the Parks and Recreation Department. Interviewing this individual provided

¹⁷ To contribute to the validity of the interview guide, pilot testing of the interview procedures and techniques was carried out using a former employee of a municipal Recreation Department.

information regarding the provision of existing and future recreation services and programs for ethnic minority immigrant adults in the city of Windsor.

Locating and contacting the Director of Recreation for the city of Windsor, who recommended and referred me to specific individuals within the organization, established the sample from Windsor. Potential interviewees were initially contacted by email, explaining the nature of the research and requesting an interview. The sample was expanded to a recreation administrator from Mississauga upon a recommendation from one of the interview participants¹⁸. The interview with the administrator from Mississauga took place following the three interviews with the administrators from Windsor. The administrator interviewed from Mississauga was selected by emailing the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department in Mississauga a letter of information explaining the nature of the research and requesting an interview with an administrator from the Parks and Recreation Department. A recreation administrator from the city of Mississauga, who also served as a Community Development Officer agreed to participate in the study contacted me. I traveled to Mississauga, where I conducted the interview. This sampling strategy does not attempt to generalize findings to all recreation administrators employed by the city of Windsor or to all municipal recreation administrators employed in the Province of Ontario. Rather, it is used to explain common themes or patterns that emerged from the data collected.

The questions were open-ended so the length of the interview was based on how much information each participant could provide. With the permission of the participant,

¹⁸ During the interview with one of the administrators employed by the City of Windsor (W1), it was suggested that I interview an administrator from the municipality of Mississauga. According to the administrator (W1), Mississauga has become a role model for the provision of services to ethnic minority immigrants. The administrator (W1) suggested that interviewing an administrator from Mississauga could inform my research and expand my recommendations for the city of Windsor.

the interviews were tape recorded. Sometimes the processes of gathering data and analyzing data overlap. A researcher should thus try to avoid imposing meaning for one respondent's interview onto the next (Kirby et al., 2006). In keeping with this concern, all the interviews were completed before they were transcribed and studied. The audio data was transcribed verbatim, and thoroughly reviewed and compared with notes taken during the interviews. Inductive analysis was used to analyze the data. This is a dynamic process where the researcher constantly moves 'back and forth between the data and concepts, and between individual ideas and research explanations in order to fully describe and explain what is being researched' (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 124). Thus, I surveyed the data for recurring regularities. I examined the transcribed interviews, and based on the information gathered, I developed common themes as a method to organize the data. This process allowed me to group the data according to patterns that emerged rather than patterns assumed at the beginning of collection.

Participants were informed of their right to refuse to answer any question, or withdraw at any time during the data collection phase of the study. The participants were informed that confidentiality could not be assured given that their positions may be well known. I obtained permission from all participants to use their positions and names in this study. However, for the purposes of reporting my findings, I will only reveal the position that each individual occupies within his/her respective department and municipality¹⁹.

Corporation of the City of Windsor

W-1 Manager of Community Facilities and Business Development

¹⁹ Revealing the job title of the administrators provides context with regards to roles and responsibilities.

W-2 Recreation Supervisor, Community Programming Parks and Recreation

W-3 Recreation Supervisor, Community Programming Parks and Recreation

Corporation of the City of Mississauga

M-4 Community Development Officer and Recreation Supervisor Parks and Recreation

Results

Introduction

The average length of each interview was 48 minutes, ranging from 34 minutes to 75 minutes. The results from the interviews with administrators from the city of Windsor are presented first. Following the results from the data collected from administrators from Windsor, I present some of the contributions and insights that were shared by the administrator interviewed from the city of Mississauga. The data collected has been categorized into four main themes: benefits, equity, influences, and trends. In ‘benefits’ I outline the benefits to recreation participation reported by the interviewees. The ‘equity’ section outlines approaches to equitable recreation services for ethnic minority immigrants. The ‘influences’ section outlines specific influences that were reported by the interviewees to affect the delivery of recreation services at the municipal level. Finally, in the ‘trends’ section, I outline some of the trends reported by the administrators in the delivery of public recreation, including recommendations to create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in physical recreation among ethnic minority immigrant adults.

Subject profile Overview

All four administrators interviewed are Canadian citizens born in Canada. Two of the administrators chosen for this study are male and two are female. Three of the

administrators have been working for their respective municipal recreation departments for over 20 years. The other administrator has been employed by the municipality for over 20 years, but has worked in the recreation department for only the past two years. I did not obtain the specific ages of the participants; however, their experiences indicate they are all over the age of 45. Three of the participants have university degrees; one of the participants has a master's degree.

Benefits

This section outlines the benefits of recreation as reported by the interviewees. Common sub-themes regarding the benefits of recreation that emerged in the interviews include health, empowerment, balance, quality of life, holistic attributes (social, physical, mental), and integration.

All three administrators indicated recreation is essential to a well-balanced lifestyle that can improve an individual's quality of life, while teaching important life skills.

W3²⁰: Being a graduate of human kinetics, I understand the benefits of recreation. I also understand that it provides part of the balance you need in your life, it doesn't necessarily have to be competitive. For example, I have two dogs I walk twice a day. I walk three to four miles per day, I always have and there are obvious benefits to that. It has always been an important part of my life; I grew up playing sports, I grew up going to day camps, participating in swimming. I am a graduate of this process. I believe it is a lifelong skill. The longer you stay active the healthier you will remain. So for me it's a personal commitment to health.

²⁰ In the results, I will italicize direct quotes from my interviews.

W2: So many councilors are so concerned with our roads and sewers. While yes we need good roads and sewers, we also need good community centers and parks; it becomes a quality of life issue.

W1: I think in the balance of lifestyle you need to have the physical activity, but there needs to be the fun part of it as well. So perhaps it might be a learned skill through a recreation opportunity, like learning to sew, or learn to cook Filipino food; and then there's the physical side of it. So there is a well-rounded approach.

All three administrators reported they believe opportunities to participate in recreational activities are particularly important for children.

W1: What you have often is generational usage; so the child might start there on a pre-swim, and then I might go to beginners swim, and then he might also go to kitty campus, then they might have a learn to draw, then they might go to gymnastics, then they might learn soccer. So the child grows up through our community centers because of the affordability of the programs.

W3: I think we should be teaching lifelong skills and sports; tennis, swimming, golf, walking and hiking, biking are good things because they're relatively low cost, but you can do those relatively your whole life.

All three administrators reported health as a benefit of recreation participation. One of the administrators mentioned the need to increase the focus on the health benefits:

W3: We need to change that focus to the health benefits because by getting kids active and by getting them involved in some sort of activity you reduce the risk of health diseases. It is not a basic need, is a fundamental need for health reasons, mental and physical.

Two administrators (W1, W3) indicated recreation is beneficial to integrate new members into the community.

W3: We provide rooms for immigrant groups to come in and do their own recreation. For example, a group who come in and rent the gym for an hour and a half to play v-ball, or they will have a social event, and then from there you can start building a connection to the quote unquote traditional programs. And that is something that has a health benefit as well, but unfortunately we cannot quantify this to the guys giving us the dollars.

Equity

This section outlines approaches to equitable recreation services for ethnic minority immigrants. Common sub-themes regarding equitable recreation services that emerged in the interviews include language, culture, recreation fees, accessibility, affordability, and awareness.

All three administrators noted provisions are made to address language barriers.

W1: We tried to make programs are that are extremely accessible by the culture. For example, in the College Avenue area we have many Middle Eastern immigrants; as a result, we have employees that speak the language.

Two administrators (W1, W3) reported the city of Windsor provides a translation/interpreter service over the phone. Translation services can help immigrants interpret the information found in activity guides (print material) or information regarding recreation programs found online (W1). According to one administrator (W1), print material in different languages would be great, but not possible considering the many languages that exist in the community.

W1: It would be great to print programming in different languages. Because you as a child may have learned English fluently, and understand, but when you bring a pamphlet home about the program to your parents who are not fluent they may not understand. But which one do you choose?

Two of the administrators (W2, W3) indicated they make efforts to hire staff that is reflective of the community they serve.

W3: I probably have one of the most diverse staffs of any community center; I have someone from the Philippines, Ghana, Vietnam, Syrian-born, a Croatian, and the Hungarian. I think it is vital that my staff represent the community.

The administrators agreed immigrants are after programs and services where there is very little or no cost involved. One of the administrators (W2) reported new immigrants are “too busy” looking for jobs and taking care of their basic needs; as a result, they are not interested in recreational programs (W2, W3). People on assistance have access to an already discounted system to recreation services (W3). According to one administrator (W3), it’s the working poor, who make too much money and are out there working for very little, who cannot afford recreation fees.

W3: Part of it is the cost structure in Canada. You come from an area where you are not used to paying \$60 for a 10-week class. So where does the money come from, when all of a sudden there is a fee for recreational activities. For a lot of immigrants when they come to Canada, their basic needs are their number one priority: food, shelter, and housing. In our system, the way it is set up, social assistance does not provide for anything else other than basic needs.

One administrator (W1) reported the recreation department she works for is very actively involved in encouraging participation at all levels for individuals with identifiable or non-identifiable disabilities. The recreation department makes accessible recreation opportunities for new Canadians by providing them with information about funding opportunities that are available to them (W1). Another administrator suggested programs offered by community recreation centers are cheaper than joining a private fitness club (W2).

Even though administrators recognized user fees are perceived as a barrier for ethnic minority immigrants, administrators reported they believe there is not much they can do to reduce or eliminate the associated costs. Increasing fees, resulting from reduced financial resources from the municipal government, and increasing wages of instructors who are unionized, all work to restrict the diversity of recreation programs offered (W2, W3).

W3: And part of this is the cost of our buildings, I can't change, you know if my gym is to be rented at \$40 an hour, that's what I have to charge. There is no flexibility. The bottom line is the bottom line. City Council and CAO are looking at this, well too bad it's a nice program but you are not making any money on it.

One of the administrators (W2) reported she would love to have programs in different languages (for example a Spanish day camp), but with part-time staff, you can't expect to always have the staff on hand to offer such programs; continuity is essential to justify the development of a program.

According to one administrator (W1), cultural differences are more significant as a perceived barrier for recent immigrants than participation fees.

W1: Very few Asians are on ice skates in this country. It is not necessarily an affordability issue, it's a cultural issue- that's just not something they do; it is not an Olympic kind of sport they practice in their native country. In their culture you practice a sport because there is an end result, for example as a career; you don't just go because it is fun.

The other two administrators did not indicate culture is the most pervasive challenge, but they agreed that cultural barriers challenge ethnic minority immigrant adults from participating in recreation programs offered by community recreation centers.

W3: Second thing is the type of programming we provide, for example, somebody from Africa. Putting them on skates, and putting them on ice does not make sense if it's their first time. It's interesting that if we get them in, and we get them happy, they will come back. But if you give them a negative experience right off the bat they will never come back.

All three administrators suggested more recreation programs are needed that address cultural barriers.

W3: Why would we throw them into a traditional North American program, why would we not put them in a program that they're more comfortable with? For example, as opposed to putting them on skates and on ice when they are not used to either the cold or the slipperiness, why not introduce a soccer program?

W1: For example, the Asian culture does not believe, by in large that recreation activities should be for fun, [they believe] they should be primarily for education value and enhancement of a person's life. That being said, teaching something

other than the traditional reasons, but bringing them into an atmosphere where they learn something and still have fun [would be valuable].

All three administrators indicated provisions are made by their organization to address cultural barriers.

W1: Windsor has a large Middle Eastern population. So, for example, women cannot be in the same room with other man with their faces exposed for example. So what we're trying to do is establish a swimming class for them so that they can still have their privacy, enjoyed the recreation activity, and it is an integrated program so that anyone can go not just them. So it allows everyone to participate, but provides a respect for that culture difference and allows them to still have some physical activity.

W3: We offer a diversity-training program. In fact, last year one of my largest trainings was on diversity for all of our youth staff. We are starting to reflect what the community wants.

All three administrators reported municipal Recreation Centers offer an assortment of programs to address diverse cultures. Two of the administrators (W1, W2) mentioned popular Indian and Asian activities, such as belly dancing, tai-chi, and cooking classes are offered at some recreation centers in Windsor. Two administrators (W1, W3) indicated they are continually involved in developing programming for ethnic minority groups.

W1: We are currently working on a couple of programs with the MCC [Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County] on a new immigrant policy

to allow for new Canadians to integrate into sports and recreation programs they are not familiar with from their own cultural background.

One administrator suggested the ethnic community should initiate culture specific programming.

W3: They will come forward; for example, a Muslim population when I was working at Water World they wanted to access the swimming pool, but the woman were not allowed to be in the presence of men, they had to wear their hijab. So we had to get window coverings and give them an opportunity.

One of the administrators (W2) reported giving talks and presentations about recreation opportunities to groups of new immigrants. The administrator reported presentations take place at the offices of New Canadian Settlement Services.

Influences

This next section outlines specific influences that affect the delivery of recreation services at the municipal level. Common influences reported include government policies, public opinion, financial resources, and partnerships.

None of the administrators reported having a role in the creation of national and provincial recreation policies. As indicated by one of the administrators (W3), the Association of Parks and Recreation for Ontario is the voice for their needs and concerns.

W3: I truly believe that as a member of Parks and Rec Ontario they advocate for our ideas and what we think. I don't think one person can do it, you need to go as larger group, but you also have to quantify [how your programs will benefit, be self-sustaining, etc.].

As reported by one of the administrators (W1), the mandate of the Recreation Department is to provide a wide range of affordable opportunities for the community. Municipal recreation policies reflect policies developed by national and provincial governments (W1, W2).

W2: Basically the centre aligns its goals with the goals of the government. That is, if the government endorses and promotes active living, we will as well.

When asked about the development of the *Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing policy* (2006), none of the administrators reported being included in policy deliberations. One of the administrators (W1) indicated she was not employed by the city of Windsor during the creation of the policy; the other two administrators (W2, W3) indicated an outside consultant was hired to draft the policy. As indicated by one of the administrators (W2), municipal recreation policies typically mirror policies created in other Ontario communities. The Parks and Recreation Department updates their policies on a regular basis (W1).

W1: We currently update the policy on a regular basis so it's part of their yearly annual budget process, which acknowledges changes to the fee structure and participation rate. And so we may make changes to allow for more participation; for example in swimming we have reduced some areas of the family pass so that people can now become more actively involved at a lesser fee.

Recreation Departments use census data and demographic breakdowns of each area to develop and initiate new programs (W1). Recreation programs are developed according to the perceived needs and interests of the community. As indicated by all

three administrators, public opinion and interest influences the type of recreation programming that is developed and made available.

W3: It is the community's facilities, I get to run it, get to plan and organize it, but it is the community facility. So I need to listen to them. I am an individual who is very involved in the community; I sit in a number of committees, which allows me to be connected to the community.

Budget restrictions demand recreation administrators make good use of limited resources.

W2: Our taxpayers are our customers. You have to justify to taxpayers how and why you are spending their money on recreational programs and services.

Administrators reported recreation programs must be self-sustaining financially to survive. Programs are evaluated based on attendance and participation (W1, W2, W3); if there are not enough participants to run a program, the program is either cancelled or postponed.

W3: Doing well is meeting more than the minimum number required for [an] extended period of time. Usually what I do is give the program one to two years to develop, meaning I may run the program with a lower registration number than I need to but it will run; you have to be patient also. I think that's where we lack in this society that we're not very patient, we want things right away, we want things to work right away. Things take time to build them, guide them, and support them.

Recreation programs are evaluated on their potential to generate revenue and exist without debt (W1, W2, W3).

W2: Recreation programs are quantified and based on dollars and cents – a program survives and is created based on its ability to sustain itself and not lose money.

W3: Also our focus in North America is on the bottom line, are you making any money, because if you're not making any money, sorry we cannot support you anymore.

Recreation programs for children and youth are prevalent. All the administrators indicated the main targets of recreation programs are children and youth. Furthermore, two administrators (W2, W3) reported immigrant parents are likely to fund recreation programs for their children to become integrated and make friends, but they will not spend money to participate in recreation programs themselves.

W2: If we keep kids active when they're young they will become healthy and active adults. They'll have fewer problems to deal with.

W3: Part of it is dollars, because a lot of parents give their dollars to the children first as opposed to themselves. You know they want their kids to be healthy, but it is also very important that they remain healthy, and keep active.

According to the administrators, children's programs are subsidized by grants and through partnerships with the private sector. All three administrators mentioned the Jumpstart program sponsored by Canadian Tire, which provides funding for low-income families to become participants. Partnerships with other private organizations are also mentioned (W1, W3). Partnerships with non-profit organizations are sought by administrators to provide recreation opportunities.

W1: We are involved with the Southwestern Ontario Recreation Guild, which has a strong program that seeks to get people involved in physical recreation to combat some of the unfortunate diseases that arise from physical inactivity.

The Administrators agreed partnerships with community organizations are essential to service the needs and interests of population sub segments, such as ethnic minority immigrant adults. The administrators indicated the need to use community resources to provide recreation programming for ethnic minority immigrants.

W1: You need to partner up with the Teen Health Center, the health unit, the MCC [Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County], the Board of Education. All of those have to work together to continue the educational process on an ongoing basis. No one person can complete this task - it's impossible.

Two administrators (W1, W3) suggested recreation departments ought to work closely with community partners to deliver efficient and equitable recreation programming to all individuals.

W3: I try to work with the community, so as to not duplicate efforts. A program that is running well somewhere else I would not offer here. Because if I get half of them, and they get half of them, then neither is efficient.

W1: They [New Canadian Settlement Services] do definitely play [an] important role in the community at providing new Canadians with every piece of information I can possibly think and services that are available to them.

Despite agreeing that public recreation programming should reflect the interest and needs of ethnic minority groups, most administrators (W1, W2, W3) reported the provision of recreation opportunities remains the prerogative of the individual.

W1: I think the greatest challenge is people realizing that in order to have recreational activity in their lives they have to integrate [it] as a behavior, not as a task. And make commitments to change. So it is about change in behavior.

W2: Programs have to be funded by individuals – only about 50% of the centre costs are subsidized.

Trends

The following section outlines some of the trends in the delivery of public recreation, including recommendations to research the needs and interests of ethnic minority immigrants, propose administrative reforms (i.e., hiring practices), and enhanced collaboration with private sector and community organizations servicing new immigrants.

The administrators agreed researching the needs and interests of ethnic minority immigrants and developing programs to satisfy their needs and interests is necessary.

W1: We need to research the programs that are important to them. [We need to] provide programs that are respectful of new Canadians and [be] able to integrate them into our culture at the same time. So it's kind of integration. Not only of us being respectful of their situation [but] also helped to ease into some of the things that are important here in our society.

W3: We need to respect their values, and figure out how we can incorporate them into our programs.

One administrator (W1) made reference to census data and population projections in his recommendations to modify existing programming to address the needs of ethnic groups in their communities. According to another administrator (W3) recreation agencies,

including community recreation facilities, should be staffed by individuals representative of the community they serve.

W3: The benefits of having someone from that community means you will have them coming to use your facility. They feel comfortable. I think that it is important that the community center staff reflect the ethnic makeup of the community it is serving; if that's what you see outside, that's what you should see in here.

Most employment positions offered by recreation departments are part-time (W2); as a result, administrators (W2, W3) indicated they do not have the staff to offer diverse programming or to make modification to programming to serve ethnic minority groups.

W2: The challenge lies in finding staff and resources to run diverse programs – planning and commitment is hard to do when there is a high turnover of staff. You cannot depend on a staff member to stay and keep them.

Fiscal restraints have hindered the ability of for the administrators (W1, W2, W3) to hire more staff to offer more programs and make modifications to existing programs to serve diverse populations.

W3: You have to give a program the ability to grow, and that takes time. You cannot expect to open the doors and everyone just comes in, no matter how good the program is.

According to one administrator (W3), more financial resources are needed from federal and provincial governments to address the particular needs and interests of a culturally diverse community.

W3: In Windsor we have a unique opportunity in that we are one of the most diverse communities in the country. We can become a leader in the provision of

diverse recreational opportunities. Yet, we don't always get the attention in dollars from the provincial and federal governments. Sometimes I think the line is drawn at London, and nothing exists below.

One administrator (W3) suggested costs should be subsidized for new immigrants who cannot afford recreation programs. User fees deprive new immigrants concerned with their financial welfare from experiencing the multitude of benefits from community recreation programs.

W3: But I think especially with the new immigrant population it all comes down to dollars and cents unfortunately. The way our system is set up accommodating for soft services, they hit the basic needs, but they don't hit the other needs, and I think recreation is in need.

One administrator (W2) indicated she believes the federal government will introduce a physical activity tax credit for adults, similar to the one currently offered to parents of young children, to offset the costs of physical activity programs including recreation.

All three administrators suggested better communication channels are needed to reach ethnic minority immigrant adults. Language difficulties remain a challenge to communicating the benefits of recreation and the diversity of recreation programs offered by community centers (W1, W2, W3).

W3: The biggest thing is communication for new immigrants, especially when they first come to Canada. That is one of the biggest issues they face is not being able to speak the language or understand the language.

According to one administrator (W2), a problem is that a lot of immigrants did not have community centers in their native countries; as a result, they don't know that community

centers exist, nor do they know what these centers have to offer. Recreation programs could be better promoted and communicated to new ethnic minority immigrant adults by New Canadian settlement organizations (W3). Immigrants often don't trust government services, including recreation centers (W3).

W3: The immigrants talk about how [in] the old country way, parents usually allow kids to play where you can see them. I can't say this is specific to any culture, but coming here parents don't trust community centers for their kids to go, it may not be safe, and it is run by government so I don't want to put my name on a government form because back home if you disclose anything to a government you cannot trust the government; there is a trust issue.

Recreation administrators need to bridge these trust gaps that are established with new Canadian services (W3). Recreation programs could be integrated with programs to teach new immigrants the English language:

W3: So rather than show the new activities as well as trying to learn English, why don't we put them in a situation where they can re-create socially and start to meet other people and start to get a grasp of the language.

As suggested by the administrator (W3), the challenges of hiring staff that can communicate in diverse languages can be overcome with enhanced collaboration with new settlement services.

W3: Or we can go to settlement services, who hire those kind of people anyways, and they're doing that work, and give them a little bit extra money to run recreation, and to improve the quality of life. They are in position to do it; we are not even in a position to do it.

Another administrator indicated the workplace is an excellent place to communicate the benefits of recreation to ethnic minority immigrant adults:

W1: Most of the new immigrants and Canadians are working. As working people, they all have an employer so what we tried to do is reach the employer and educate them in the workplace.

Contributions and Insights from the Interview with the Administrator from Mississauga

Consistent with the findings reported by Windsor administrators, Municipal recreation policies developed in Mississauga reflect the attributions of policies developed by national and provincial governments. The administrator from Mississauga reported the need to increase the focus on the health benefits of physical recreation.

M4: We are starting to reflect that we should maybe invest tax dollars for physical programming...The biggest thing we notice of [what] physical activity surveys tell us every year, [is that] walking is the most popular activity pursued by people. So we are trying to build more trail systems in response to that. We have hired the first ever park-programming person to try to program outdoors things to get people outside and more active.

Consistent with the findings reported by Windsor administrators, public opinion and interest influences the type of recreation programming that is developed and made available (M4). Recreation programs are developed and evaluated on their potential to generate revenue and exist without debt (M4).

M4: The mayor has preached user fee policies. Mississauga is a debt-free city, perhaps the only one in Canada. One of the reasons is that the mayor insists on user fees for everything. Programs are dollar based [return on investment]. So

nothing is free, and we have had relatively high user fees for longtime, and this has been a barrier to allowing new immigrant groups to participate.

The administrator suggested municipal recreation agencies should do a better job to address the needs of ethnic minority immigrants in their community.

M4: What we have to recognize, is that the born Canadian population is now a minority in certain communities like ours. We are still throwing out those programs to appeal to the middle class family with two children and a mortgage. We are missing the bigger demographic in our community.

According to the administrator, new programs and programs for ethnic minority groups cost money that isn't necessarily there.

M4: They're missing a significant portion of the community with user fees, the haves and have not's. The gap is getting wider within our society, and if you don't provide quality of life opportunities for people who cannot afford them, they will grow up socially deprived.

The administrator reported he was recently assigned the responsibility of leading a discussion and development of an access policy for his recreation department. He suggested representation by ethnic minority groups at the managerial level (M4).

M4: Our department is not good at hiring diverse populations. Except at the front line, at the program coordinator level there are mostly white, Catholic Protestant leaders, many of which don't even speak other languages. If we are to be successful in outreach, we need to hire people that speak that language and are sensitive, and have a foot in each culture, the North American mainstream and the culture of the community we are trying to reach. When the management does

not understand the principles and importance of integration, and the experience of moving and living in a new country and having to integrate, they don't think about it. They start talking about their clients instead of the community. They only consider their clients, the people that come and pay for the programs; that is, those who bite the bait.

Administrators from Windsor suggested the ethnic community should initiate culture specific programming. In contrast, the administrator from Mississauga suggested it is the responsibility of the municipality to be a leader for ethnic communities and develop and support initiatives for their involvement in recreation activities. The administrator suggested recreation programs developed for ethnic minority groups must be supported by municipal recreation agencies and embraced and carried on by community ethnic organizations (M4). As an example, the administrator explained the leadership role assumed by his municipality to create a supportive environment for the Muslim community to use community pools.

M4: The Muslim community makes up a large percentage of the immigrant community, and it encapsulates many areas. They are the next biggest demographic in Mississauga next to the Catholic and Protestant community. The Muslim community generally doesn't swim, and they don't know how to swim. It's male and female, there are restrictions with dress code and being in the water with only males or females. So that is two big reasons why we never get any Muslim lifeguards, and without Muslim lifeguards there is no role model to encourage the Muslim community to get in the water. So the issue is how do you make your service more inclusive?

The administrator reported the recreation department worked with the Ontario Lifesaver Society and the Muslim community to recruit young women who would be interested in training to become lifeguards. *“This way they will be able to become lifeguards and teach other people how to swim”* (M4). To do this, they had to set up a private rental program, where they could cover the windows and have only female staff to teach them. The Ontario Lifesavers Society sponsored the test material, and a community development fund covered the costs of pool rentals and instructors.

M4: The objective of this program was to create role models for the community. But there's still the question of politics. How do you justify the program to the media, subsidizing this program for this community, why don't you do it for other communities? Why them? How do the politicians perceive this, do they support this?

The administrator reported the municipality developed the program, but its continuation will depend on the Muslim community.

M4: We are hoping the Muslim community will embrace this program and will want to be mobilized to sponsoring more of this, and provide the funding for such programs. City provided funding for this program to lead as a role model to show that these kinds of programs can work, now it's up to the Muslim community to pick it up [where] we left off and sponsor more of these programs. And let's work together; we will still make our pools available, our staff available. Maybe some of the newly trained Muslim girls will want to give back to their ethnic community and help to train future lifeguards or swim instructors.

The administrator suggested partnerships with private organizations are needed to offer more recreation opportunities (M4). Private sponsorships have made possible a number of recreation opportunities for children (M4).

M4: So in the last few years we've teamed up with corporate sponsors, such as Wal-Mart, to offer activity programs for children. We are not putting any municipal dollars into it; rather corporate dollars are sponsoring these programs for free activity for kids.

The administrator suggested enhanced collaboration with New Canadian settlement organizations could communicate the benefits of recreation to New Canadians. New Canadian Settlement Services are often the first place of contact for new immigrants (M4). Settlement agencies are usually addressing the physiological hierarchical needs of new immigrants: food and a place to live, transportation, and other essentials. Recreation is more near the top (M4). The administrator suggested improved collaboration between municipal Recreation Departments and New Canadian settlement organizations would facilitate integration for new immigrants.

M4: The principle of integration, at least as I know it best, is to help people first integrate amongst themselves in their own language and within their own kind, and when they [have] got that basis for socializing, then you encourage that group to start integrating into [the] mainstream... You can't expect people to arrive here without knowing a word of English, and bang, join an exercise class right away; it just does not work like that... Very few settlement services get it that recreation can be an important vehicle for helping immigrants settle in, and to have some quality of life and integrate ultimately.

Chapter Summary

To complete the second phase of my study, data was collected from three recreation administrators employed by the City of Windsor. On the recommendation of one of the administrators interviewed from Windsor, a fourth interview was conducted with a recreation administrator from Mississauga. The semi-structured interviews were conducted to: (1) explore how national and provincial documents and policies have influenced recreation programming at the municipal level; (2) investigate how collaboration and cooperation among community partners has facilitated recreation participation for ethnic minority immigrant adults; and (3) explore opportunities for recreation leaders in Windsor, Ontario to create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in sport and physical activity. The data collected from administrators employed by the city of Windsor were divided into four main themes: benefits, equity, influences, and trends. The data collected from the administrator from Mississauga was included to contribute to the data analysis.

The first section presented my findings on the benefits of recreation as reported by the interviewees. The results indicate recreation administrators endorse and promote the health benefits of recreation activities. Recreation can enhance the physical, social, and emotional wellbeing of all people, regardless of age, sex, ability, ethnicity, or race. All four administrators suggested recreation is a fundamental human need; recreation forms part of a well-balanced lifestyle that can enhance an individual's quality of life. The administrators indicated opportunities to participate in recreation are particularly important for children, who can be taught lifelong skills to remain healthy and reduce the risks of health ailments and disease.

The second section reported approaches to providing equitable recreation services for ethnic minority immigrants. According to the interviewees, recreation departments and community facilities seek to provide equal opportunities for all individuals to participate. The interviewees indicated provisions are in place to address language and cultural barriers. Nevertheless, the administrators agree more needs to be done to create supportive environments and address barriers to participation for ethnic minority immigrant adults. Financial constraints prevent recreation administrators from providing more programs and modifying existing services. The interviewees indicated more public funding is needed to assist new immigrants challenged by user fees. Additional funding is also needed to develop and sustain new programs that can address cultural barriers. My findings indicate municipal recreation departments can work with ethnic minority groups to develop recreation programs that address cultural barriers and enhance communication channels between recreation providers and ethnic minority groups.

The third section outlined specific influences that affect the delivery of recreation services at the municipal level. The results indicate national and provincial policies influence municipal recreation programming. Recreation departments must quantify the development of new programs; the life of a program or service is determined by its ability to be self-sustaining. Programs for children and youth supported by government grants and private organizations comprise the majority of programs offered by municipal recreation departments. National and provincial physical activity strategies influence the type of activities promoted and endorsed by municipal recreation departments. Government cutbacks for recreation services have limited the amount of programs and

services offered by recreation departments; partnerships are essential for creating and supporting new recreation programs.

My final section outlined some of the trends in the delivery of public recreation, including recommendations to create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in physical recreation among ethnic minority immigrant adults. The administrators agree researching the needs and interests of ethnic minority immigrants and developing programs to satisfy their need and interests is necessary. The interviewees suggest cultural barriers could be addressed by changing the hiring practices, particularly at the managerial level. The interviewees suggested recreation agencies, including community recreation facilities, should to be staffed by individuals representative of the community they serve. All four administrators agree the greatest challenge is communicating the opportunities for recreation available to new immigrants. The data collected suggested enhanced collaboration with New Canadian Settlement Services, and reaching ethnic immigrant adults at their place of work.

CHAPTER 4: PERCEIVED OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN PHYSICAL RECREATION

What are the perceived opportunities and challenges to participation in physical recreation experienced by Spanish-speaking recent immigrant adults who reside in Windsor, Ontario?

Introduction

Members of ethnic communities, through a variety of constraints, may not have the same opportunities to participate in recreation activities of choice as members of the dominant culture. Consequently, an essential step in promoting physical activity through recreation is to determine the strength of the interactions among determinants that are essential to the development and maintenance of a physically active lifestyle (Seefeldt et al. 2002). “Research ought to focus on interpreting recreation behaviour in relation to the sources and strength of people’s attachment to their ethnic identity” (Karlis & Dawson, 1995, p. 166).

Literature Review

Constraints to Recreation Participation Among Ethnic Minority Immigrants

Research on leisure constraints suggests that participation in leisure activities is dependent on how people negotiate through constraints (Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey, 1993). The constraints model was originally developed by Crawford and Godbey (1987), and was further modified by Crawford, Godbey, and Jackson (1991) to explain constraints on leisure. The model groups leisure constraints into three primary sources: structural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Jackson (1997) defined constraints as “factors that are assumed by researchers and perceived by individuals to inhibit or prohibit

participation and enjoyment in leisure” (p.461). Burns and Graefe (2007) report that this model has a clearly defined hierarchy, beginning with constraints that affect preferences (intrapersonal constraints) and leading to those that affect participation (structural constraints). According to Jackson et al. (1993), each level must be overcome for an individual to face the subsequent level of constraint. Given the absence of or negotiation through intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints, participation would then result from the absence or negotiation of structural constraints (Burns & Graefe, 2007). The model suggests individuals are not passive; instead, they often successfully or unsuccessfully negotiate through constraints (Crawford et al., 1991). Thus, it is not necessarily the absence of constraints that enables people to participate in recreational activities but their negotiation through those constraints.

A subsequent study by Jackson and Rucks (1995) found that people often negotiate through a specific constraint by adopting negotiation strategies related to that particular constraint. The authors postulated that this information was valuable in understanding that people rearrange things in their lives so that they can participate in leisure opportunities. Hence, the removal of wide-ranging constraints to participation will not necessarily increase participation patterns among ethnic minorities (Tirone, 1997). According to Arab-Moghaddam, Henderson, and Sheikholeslami (2007), the pre-determined definition and categorization of constraints limit, rather than facilitate, explanations of leisure behavior. Tirone suggests constraints models may be useful for investigating challenges for those people who experience life as part of the dominant cultural group; but it may not necessarily be helpful with ethnic minority people, who do not necessarily share the same value placed on leisure, as do dominant cultural groups.

Samdahl (2005) argues that constraints models narrow the analysis to a focus on leisure activity participation and fails to address the cultural context of individuals.

Raymore (2002) suggests we should not assume that all people should be interested in all forms of leisure or that the patterns of all lives should equate to the same leisure opportunities and interests. Immigrant adults may hold distinct recreation interests (Karlis, 2004), and may be challenged by particular factors associated with immigration (Stodolska, 1998). Raymore proposes that to fully understand recreation involvement we need to understand both facilitators and constraints, and how they work together to produce participation and non-participation and their accompanying experiences. According to Raymore, “Acknowledging the resources that encourage or allow participation, in addition to those that may limit or prohibit, may improve our understanding of leisure and our provision of leisure opportunities” (p. 39). Thus, we need to not only inquire about the constraints to recreation participation, but also about the resources that immigrant adults have (i.e., ethno-cultural traditions, values, meanings) that have helped them access and experience leisure. Through this process we can begin to understand how both facilitators and constraints work together to produce participation or non-participation (Raymore)²¹. Raymore adapted the constraints model developed by Crawford et al. (1991), and developed a nested model (see Appendix E) to explain how leisure constraints and facilitators help us understand participation. The nested model demonstrates that intrapersonal facilitators and constraints can only be understood in the context of interpersonal and structural facilitators and constraints (Raymore, 2002).

²¹ According to Raymore (2002) facilitators are not merely the opposite of constraints, or constraints stated in the positive. Rather, they are two distinct concepts that in some instances may be related but are not necessarily so.

Approaches to the Study of Ethnicity and Recreation

Despite the appeal for more research investigating the leisure and recreation practices of ethnic subgroups, research remains limited (Coakley, 2001; Gomez, 2002; Stodolska, 1998). Several researchers (Gomez, 2002; Karlis, 2004; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000; Floyd, 1998) have suggested this may be due to the inadequate operationalization of concepts such as ethnicity and culture, which has not only limited research in the area, but in turn has also created difficulties with approaches to recreation programming for ethnic minority groups. According to Gomez (2006), “The ethnicity and recreation literature has been fragmented due to inconsistencies of measurement, reproduction, and operationalization” (p. 245). The literature suggests researchers who have focused on investigating the recreation practices of ethnic subgroups have used divergent theoretical models, thereby creating inconsistencies in methodological frameworks, which ultimately result in findings that lack reliability (Gomez, 2002; Hutchinson, 1988).

Many of the differences in ethnic minority under participation have been explained using the marginality/ethnicity theories. However, Gramann and Allison (1999) caution that these theories are “...simplistic versions of social processes. When people, regardless of their race or ethnicity, have limited access, resources, and opportunities to learn and engage in recreational pursuits, their participation will usually be low” (p. 291). What these conceptual models do suggest, however, is that differences in recreation participation do exist between ethnic groups. Floyd (1998) recognized the need for alternative approaches to understanding racial and ethnic variation in leisure behaviour and preferences. The following sections provide a review of the theoretical explanations said to affect recreation participation.

The Marginality Theory

According to the Marginality Theory, by occupying a subordinate class position, minorities have had limited access to society's major institutions, which negatively affects life chances and lifestyles, which is then reflected in reduced participation in certain forms of leisure (Floyd, Shinew, McGuire, & Noe, 1994). The Marginality Theory was advanced by Washbourne's (1978) assertion that the history of inequality in resource allocation could be an important factor constraining recreation pursuits of Black Americans as well as other ethnic and racial minorities; his research findings demonstrated that Blacks were somewhat more constrained by the cost of activities and by transportation problems than were their White counterparts. Seefeldt et al. (2002), found socio-economic status to be a pervasive factor inhibiting physical activity adherence among ethnic minority immigrants. Recent Canadian income data and poverty studies report that ethnic minority families are failing to secure the same income levels as Canadian-born families (Kazemipur & Halli, 2001). Although 80 percent of new immigrants report that they found work in Canada during the first two years of residency, only 42 percent of them found work in the fields in which they had trained, and many of these people work at jobs that provide little more than subsistence wages. Accordingly, participation in recreation is limited by lack of money for registration fees, equipment, and clothing (Paraschak & Tirone, 2008).

Paraschak and Tirone (2008) acknowledge that the marginality perspective helps explain why some minority group Canadians do not choose the same sports as the dominant, majority population; however, they note that this perspective falls short when applied to those immigrants and ethnic minority people who are not poor, and who have

somewhat different sport participation patterns. A study by Tirone and Pedlar (2000), for example, found south Asian adolescent immigrants' desire to participate in ethno-cultural recreation practices affected their leisure patterns.

The Ethnicity Theory

In contrast to the Marginality Theory, the Ethnicity Theory does not acknowledge the effects of resource constraints on recreation participation patterns. It suggests instead that differences in recreation participation result from variations in norms and values in ethnic/racial groups. "The relationship between ethnicity and recreation is thus based on the understanding that recreation is a key experiential element of culture" (Karlis & Dawson, 1995, p. 169). The Ethnicity Theory assumes that ethnic/racial groups interact and maintain contact with the dominant cultural group while at the same time preserving a distinct sub-cultural identity. Consequently, the difference in cultural norms and values is expressed in differential recreational activity preferences (Karlis). This explanation suggests that regardless of socioeconomic status, cultural processes are more important in explaining variations in leisure participation patterns (Floyd et al., 1994). This is consistent with Karlis, who asserts that under participation in mainstream leisure by new immigrants is explained by the lack of accessibility and opportunities to participate in ethno-cultural activities. Karlis insinuates that ethnicity influences the patterns of participation; what we prefer and actually participate in is largely influenced by the values, beliefs, and traditions of the culture(s) to which we belong.

Numerous researchers have suggested that the perception of specific activities as appropriate or not is a culturally based determination that varies among ethnic groups (e.g., Coakley, 2001; Karlis & Dawson, 1995; Tirone, 1997; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000).

Research by Meeker and associates (1973) provided one of the earliest explanations of the role of ethnicity in recreation behaviour that stressed the centrality of ethnic value systems. Yet, it was not until Washbourne (1978) noted that there might have been “powerful forces within community that discourage participation in white activities” (p.178), that a number of studies emerged which mentioned ethnic characteristics as possible constraints on leisure and recreation. In a review of factors affecting levels of physical activity in adults, Seefeldt et al. (2002) report that researchers who have focused on problems associated with initiation, compliance and adherence to programs of physical activity have learned that the stimuli to become and remain active are largely determined by cultural factors.

In a study on Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans, Irwin, Gartner and Phelps (1990) examined the influence of cultural differences on the group’s recreational styles. Their findings suggested that differences between the groups were related more to cultural differences than socioeconomic or social class variance. Hutchinson (1987) conducted an observational study in thirteen neighbourhoods and regional parks in Chicago to determine ethnic and racial variations in White, Black, and Hispanic leisure and recreation. The results suggested that White and Black individuals participated in activities oriented towards smaller groups, while Hispanic individuals participated in family and family extended groups. This is supported by Juniu’s (2000) review of literature, which indicates there are systematic cultural differences between White and Hispanic groups, including differences in family structure, social values, and social participation.

Research by Scott and Munson (1994) examined the relationship between

recreational interests developed during childhood or adolescence and those enjoyed during adult life and found that adult participation is positively related to recreational experiences and involvement during childhood and adolescence. Consequently, the values and norms immigrant adults associate with recreation may be different than what is promoted and offered in their host community, ultimately affecting the pattern of recreation participation. Johnson (2000), in a study on the perceptions of barriers to physical activity, reports that although recent immigrants valued preventative health action, they exhibited a low level of understanding, or perception, that physical activity could actually preserve health. Furthermore, Johnson found that this barrier could be overcome by raising the 'fun factor' so that exercise became part of other socially rewarding activities such as joining in collective prayer, taking the family to the park, or some similar community-based activity.

Discrimination and Acculturation

Researchers in the 1990s advanced the marginality and ethnicity theories with the inclusion of discrimination (West, 1989) and acculturation (Floyd et al., 1993). West's study of Blacks' and Whites' use of urban parks in Detroit, Michigan advanced the inclusion of discrimination as a theory to describe the recreation patterns of minority groups. According to Gomez (2002), West's contribution to diversity recreation studies is important because he underscores three major initiatives. First, West found no support for the ethnicity/racial perspective as an explanation for Black under participation. Second, West noted that the policy problem is not one of "access to recreation areas by minorities, but rather the quality of recreation facilities and services" (p. 25). Policies regarding recreation (in West's case, urban parks) needed to focus on bringing the parks

to the users, not bringing the users to the parks. West's third contribution was a challenge to leisure researchers "to face more directly the issues of race relations" (p. 25). As a result, discrimination theory was incorporated as an additional explanation for the under-representation of minority groups in public recreation settings (Gomez, 2006).

Floyd and Gramman (1993) expanded the marginality and ethnicity paradigm by arguing for the inclusion of acculturation as a factor affecting recreation. Theirs was an attempt to integrate concepts from Washbourne's Marginality-Ethnicity Theory (1978) and West's discrimination theory (1989) with assimilation theory. The study by Floyd and Gramman examined the effects of acculturation and assimilation on outdoor recreation among Mexican-Americans. Their findings suggested that the recreation behaviour of highly assimilated Mexican-Americans was more similar to Anglo-Americans than to less assimilated Mexicans. Consequently, their findings re-conceptualized the marginality-ethnicity paradigm within a larger perspective – assimilation theory (Gomez, 2002). Floyd and Gramman suggested the degree of assimilation of a group is a meaningful factor to describe the effects of culture on recreation and the intra-ethnic variation on recreation behaviour; changes in an individual's level of acculturation and assimilation have an effect on recreation participation. According to Floyd and Gramann, "The assimilation perspective is broad enough to encompass the marginality-ethnicity paradigm and can also accommodate a perceived discrimination dimension" (p. 84).

Yu and Berryman (1996) explored relationships between leisure constraints and factors such as self-esteem and acculturation level. Their findings suggest that the perceived importance of certain constraints, including language problems, inability to

find recreation partners, and lack of money or lack of awareness of existing opportunities, were negatively related to self-esteem levels. These findings are consistent with Stodolska (1998), who suggested immigrants are likely to experience certain constraints on leisure that are not applicable to the general population, including insufficient language skills or not feeling at ease among the mainstream. Furthermore, constraints with dynamic characteristics, such as post-arrival stress, depression, anxiety, and alienation are likely to modify the usual constraints patterns (Stodolska). Besides the presence of a certain set of constraints that are specific to ethnic minority populations, other constraints commonly encountered by the mainstream can be reinforced for those minority members who are not well adjusted (Stodolska).

The Ethnicity and Public Recreation Participation Model

Gomez (2002) examined and assessed the key constructs of theoretical models in an attempt to introduce a more complete illustration of the relationship between ethnicity/race and recreational participation. As a result, Gomez developed the Ethnicity and Public Recreation Participation Model (EPRP) to build a comprehensive model that integrates the major concepts discussed in the literature. Specifically, the EPRP was able to demonstrate the arrangement of causal relationships that are present between concepts that have been conceptualized through prior research. For recent immigrants in particular, ethnic origin appears to be a resource for participation in recreation (Karlis & Dawson, 1995). Gomez (2006) contends that prior to the EPRP: (1) the relationship between ethnicity and actual participation was unclear; (2) the nature of interaction between sub-cultural identity and socioeconomic status required further exploration; and (3) theoretical models were needed that included acculturation as a factor affecting

recreation. Specifically, the EPRP Model (2002) examines the relative influence of sub-cultural identity (Washbourne, 1978), acculturation (Floyd & Gramman, 1993), socioeconomic status (Washbourne), perceived benefits (Klobus-Edwards, 1981) and perceived discrimination (West, 1989) on recreation participation.

The application of the EPRP Model is limited due to its nominal use in research to date. Nevertheless, studies that have used the EPRP Model have provided empirical support for the ethnicity, marginality, discrimination and acculturation theories. Gomez (2006) conducted a study on Puerto Rican immigrants in the United States; the study found the relationships in the model to be consistent with those hypothesized in the literature, although the nature of the relationships was re-conceptualized. Taylor and Doherty (2005) adapted the EPRP Model to examine the perceived benefits and challenges of sport, recreation and physical education participation among recent adolescent immigrants to Canada. Their study provided validity for the EPRP Model; their findings support many of the relationships among constructs predicted by Gomez (2002). Sub-cultural identity, perceived benefits, discrimination and challenges (adapted from the constructs investigated by Gomez in 2002) were described by the research participants as having an influence on their attitudes and experiences towards sport and recreation participation (Taylor & Doherty). Furthermore, Taylor and Doherty found the use of focus group interviews to be significantly useful in uncovering unique benefits and challenges to participation.

Researchers employing the EPRP model suggest future research should further adapt and add items to capture the essence of each of the different theories that explains the relationship between ethnicity and recreation participation. (Gomez, 2002; Gomez,

2006; Taylor & Doherty, 2005). According to Gomez (2006), “In general, the more items the better the reliability...” (p. 261). This is consistent with the recommendation of Taylor and Doherty, who claim “Any related research must include, and explore further, specific culture-based benefits and challenges to participation that were not considered in the Gomez (2002) model” (p. 236). In spite of recent findings that provide statistical and empirical support for the constructs hypothesized in the EPRP model, researchers (Gomez, 2006; Taylor & Doherty) maintain more studies are needed, specifically among other ethnic groups, to confirm and further modify the relationships among the constructs. Taylor and Doherty suggest qualitative research can greatly enhance our understanding of the relationship between ethnic variables (i.e., EPRP Model, 2002) said to affect recreation participation among ethnic minority groups.

The literature has clearly demonstrated that ethnicity represents a critical dimension in the selection of recreation experiences for Canada’s immigrants and their descendants (Karlis, 2004). With a mandate to increase the physical activity levels of all Canadians, including vulnerable groups (e.g., *Active 2010*, Government of Ontario, 2005; *The Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy*, Public Health Agency of Canada, 2005), municipal recreation departments, sport organizations, and community organizations serving recent immigrants need to examine and understand factors that may serve to inhibit or encourage participation in physical recreation. Research outlines that constraints among recent immigrants include low socioeconomic status, lack of access to suitable activity programs, concerns for safety, and language problems (Juniu, 2000; Seefeldt et al., 2002; Stodolska, 1998; Yu & Berryman, 1996). Research by Juniu informs

us that Spanish-speaking immigrants experience similar constraints as other ethnic immigrant groups.

Nevertheless, despite the appeal for more research investigating the leisure and recreation practices of ethnic subgroups, research remains limited (Coakley, 2001; Gomez, 2002; Stodolska, 1998). Several theories have emerged that seek to explain the interrelationships among factors identified in the ethnicity/race and recreation literature, including Ethnicity-Marginality (Washbourne, 1978), Discrimination (West, 1989), and Assimilation (Floyd & Gramman, 1993). In an attempt to introduce a more complete illustration of the relationship between ethnicity/race and recreational participation, Gomez (2002) developed the Ethnicity and Public Recreation Participation Model (EPRP) to demonstrate the arrangement of causal relationships that are present between concepts that have been conceptualized through prior research. My research seeks to advance our understanding of the constructs of the EPRP Model by inductively investigating the perceived opportunities and challenges to participation in physical recreation experienced by Spanish-speaking recent immigrant adults who reside in Windsor, Ontario.

Directional Proposition

Canadian immigrant adults have been found to be less physically active compared to non-immigrants, leading me to believe factors associated with ethnicity constrain leisure participation. Consistent with the literature, I expected to find that recent immigrant adults are challenged by specific constraints to leisure participation not found among the general adult population. I anticipated my findings would support and extend our understanding of the constructs contained in the EPRP Model (Gomez, 2002). I

developed an interview guide to probe the effect of geographic relocation, expecting to find the process of adaptation to a distinct colder climate constrains recent immigrant adults from participation and enjoyment in leisure activities. I expected the results would assist me in answering the main research objective. By answering the main research question, I anticipated my study would help researchers and practitioners interested in increasing the levels of physical recreation among recent immigrants who arrive from a distinct and different climate.

Methodology

Following the collection of data for the second sub-problem, immigrant adults residing in Windsor, Ontario, whose first language is Spanish, were interviewed to explore the perceived benefits and challenges to participating in physical recreation. The data was collected to help me better understand how recreation leaders and community organizations serving new immigrants can create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in sport and physical activity. A semi-structured interview guide was devised based on common themes found in the literature. The use of a semi-structured interview process was chosen to allow for a more interactive interview (Kirby et al., 2006). In addition to the variables adopted from the literature, the interview guide was developed to explore the effect of geographic relocation (i.e., climate and physical environment) as a variable that interacts with other culture-specific variables to explain recreation involvement.

The elements of the interview guide were developed, in part, by adapting the culture-related variables used to explain recreation and leisure involvement in the Ethnicity and Public Recreation Participation Model (Gomez, 2002). In harmony with the

construct variables of the EPRP model, the interview guide contained questions pertaining to acculturation, sub-cultural identity, perceived benefits, perceived challenges²², and actual participation. The investigation was not limited to factors addressed in the literature. Semi-structured interviews in the native language of the participants were used to reveal factors not currently addressed by the literature.

Consistent with the suggestion by researchers (Gomez, 2006; Taylor & Doherty, 2005) for additional themes to explore the relationship between ethnicity and physical recreation participation, the interview guide contained questions that explored the effect of environmental adjustment for new immigrant adults. Specifically, questions were asked to explore if the Canadian climate is a perceived benefit or a challenge to participation for recent immigrant adults who emigrated from a distinct geographic location. Although no previous studies have attempted to measure or take into account the affect of geographic relocation on recreation participation, it may be a perceived constraint to ethnic immigrant groups whose previous recreational activities were performed in a distinctly different physical environment.

Sample and Sample Selection

Following a pilot interview to ensure the validity of my interview guide, I conducted interviews (see Appendix F for English version; see Appendix G for Spanish version) with six Spanish-speaking adults who had recently immigrated to Canada, and who reside in Windsor, Ontario. Three males and three females were chosen for the study. Participants for the study were recruited with the assistance of individuals connected to the Hispanic community in Windsor, Ontario. A letter of information was

²² The EPRP Model originally proposed by Gomez (2002) contains a construct that measures perceived discrimination. Taylor & Doherty (2005) adapted this construct in their study to include perceived challenges experienced by recent adolescent immigrants.

written in English and Spanish, and distributed to potential participants. I asked several of my personal contacts to give the letter of information to potential interviewees on my behalf, explaining my research and asking them to contact me if they were interested in participating. Letters of information were also posted in the facilities of local organizations servicing Spanish-speaking immigrants. Interested participants were asked to contact me, at which time I determined if they were suitable candidates, and if they were, we arranged for a time and place to conduct the interview. The interviews were completed at a time and place convenient to the participant. The questions were open-ended so the length of the interview was based on how much information each participant could provide. With the permission of the participant, the interviews were tape-recorded. The conversational-style questioning and option to conduct the interview in English or Spanish allowed for flexibility in terms of inherent language issues and acknowledgement of cultural values and sensitivities. The possibility existed that the interviews would be rather lengthy and contain information not significant to this study; as a result selected transcriptions were used to transcribe the interviews. All of the audio data from the six participants was collected prior to transcribing and analyzing the data. The use of selected transcriptions enabled me to translate the data and control for differences in sentence structure between the Spanish and English languages. To reduce the limitations that rise from translation and selected transcription, I answered all of the interview questions beforehand (see Appendix H). Following the translation and transcription of the data, the transcribed data was read and examined with my answers to the questions to draw out personal influences to examine and analyze the data.

The criteria for choosing these participants included: the individual's willingness to participate; Canadian landed immigrant or permanent citizen, native to a Spanish speaking nation, who has resided in Canada for no more than five years; adult between the ages of 18-49 years; resident of Windsor, Ontario; physically and mentally able to perform mainstream recreational activities. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, all participants were asked to provide a different name to report the findings. The following is a list of participants, with the country of origin in brackets:

- A – Gilin (Mexico)
- B – Mark (Argentina)
- C – Carlos (Mexico)
- D – Cristina (Mexico)
- E – Veronica (Venezuela)
- F - Olga (Argentina)

Results

Introduction

I have obtained information from six Spanish-speaking adults who had recently immigrated to Canada, and who reside in Windsor, Ontario. After conducting a pilot interview with a Spanish-speaking immigrant adult that resides in Windsor, Ontario, I completed my six interviews. The average length of each interview was 32 minutes, ranging from 22 minutes to 37 minutes. The interviews were conducted in no particular order. All of the participants choose to have the interview conducted in the Spanish language. As a result, the audio data was translated and transcribed into the English language. The findings are presented with respect to the model constructs (EPRP Model,

Gomez, 2002) upon which the study was based. The data is categorized into five main themes that coincide with several concepts found in the literature: acculturation, sub-cultural identity, perceived benefits, perceived challenges, and participation patterns in physical recreation activities.

Subject Profile Overview

The deeper meaning of the information shared by the subjects in the study arises from the context. To help readers understand the relationship between the themes identified and their potential underlying meaning, I provide brief profiles of all six subjects in this phase of my study. All participants in this study are Canadian Citizens, born outside of Canada. Three of the participants were born in Mexico (A, C, D), two were born in Argentina (B, F), and one was born in Venezuela (E). All of the participants have resided in Canada for a minimum of two years, and a maximum of five. All of the participants immigrated directly to Windsor, Ontario, where they currently reside. All of the participants chose Windsor because they had family and friends who resided in the community and would be able to help them settle. The average period since immigrating to Canada is three years and ten months, ranging from two years and four months, to five years. All six participants indicated their primary language used at home is Spanish, and all six participants chose to have the interview conducted in the Spanish language. Four of the participants are married with children (A, C, D, F), one of the participants is divorced with children (B), and one of the participants is single without any children (E).

Subject Profiles

A. Gilin is a 40-year-old male born in Mexico, who has been living in Canada for the past three and a half years. Gilin emigrated from Mexico because he and his wife believe

Canada offers more opportunities for their two young children (ages seven and twelve). Gilin learned the English language upon arriving in Canada, partly to meet the requirements to obtain employment. Although he reported a preference for communicating in Spanish, Gilin welcomes opportunities to practice the English language. Gilin reported very little involvement in physical recreation activity since immigrating to Canada. Back in Mexico, Gilin enjoyed regular participation in outdoor activities such as soccer, basketball, and running.

B. Mark is a 43-year-old male born in Argentina, who has been living in Canada for the past five years. Mark immigrated to Canada with his wife and three children. Mark reported a basic understanding of the English language prior to arriving in Canada; as a result he was able to obtain employment without further education. However, Mark indicated he is not confident with his proficiency of the English language; Mark prefers to communicate in the Spanish language when given the choice. Mark reported very little involvement in physical recreation activity since immigrating to Canada. Back in Argentina, Mark played soccer with family and friends on a regular basis.

C. Carlos is a 38-year-old male born in Mexico, who has been living in Canada for two years and nine months. Carlos left a 'good' lifestyle in Mexico to come to Canada with his wife and young child. Carlos has a university degree, but he has yet to find suitable employment. Back in Mexico, Carlos was self-employed and had much more free time to devote to leisure activities, including sports and exercise. Carlos enjoys playing squash and cardiovascular activities (i.e., running, bicycling); however, he has not been active in any of those activities since immigrating to Canada. Carlos learned the

English language prior to arriving to Canada, and does not perceive language as a barrier, but reported he still prefers to converse in the Spanish language.

D. Cristina is a 36-year-old female from Mexico, who has been living in Canada for the past five years. Cristina emigrated from Mexico to live with her Canadian born husband, whom she met while vacationing in Edmonton, Alberta. Cristina is a stay at home mother of two children, who reported regular physical activity. Cristina indicated she exercises at a fitness centre three times a week. Cristina reported she does not enjoy the exercise, but does it to avoid gaining weight. Cristina reported she enjoys dancing and outdoor sports such as walking and volleyball, but has not participated in any of these activities since immigrating to Canada.

E. Veronica is a 23-year-old female born in Venezuela, who has been living in Canada for three years. Veronica emigrated from Venezuela with her mother to study in Canada and to move closer to her sister, who resides in Windsor, Ontario. Veronica reported having some knowledge of the English language prior to arriving to Canada, and developing her proficiency in English with enrollment at a local college. Veronica reported she has made new friends since arriving in Canada, who have taught her some new recreation activities, including tennis. Nevertheless, Veronica reported very little involvement in physical recreation activities since immigrating to Canada. Back in Venezuela, Veronica enjoyed social recreation activities, including baseball and swimming.

F. Olga is a 47-year-old female born in Argentina, who has lived in Canada for the past five years. Olga came to Canada with her three children two months after her husband, who had come first to secure housing and employment. Olga reported she can

communicate in the English language, but cannot write or read in English. Back in Argentina, Olga enjoyed participating in outdoor activities such as walking and aerobics. Olga reported no involvement in physical recreation activities at the time of the interview.

Acculturation

Gomez (2002) defines acculturation as “the process whereby diverse groups retain their own cultural norms while adopting aspects of the dominant culture” (p. 133).

Questions in the interview guide were constructed to inductively investigate the acculturation level of the study participants. In particular, the interview guide contained questions that investigated the language of preference for the participants of my study. The following presents my findings with regards to the level of acculturation.

All the participants expressed a preference for communicating in their native language, with all six participants indicating they speak primarily Spanish at home. Two of the participants with children (C, D) report they do so to ensure their children retain part of their native culture.

Carlos: For my child, everything has been facilitated by the system, the school where he learned English very fast, but still, we only speak Spanish at home to try and ensure he retains the language.

Four of the participants (A, B, E, F) reported taking ESL (English as a Second Language) classes when they first arrived in Canada. The two participants who did not take ESL classes had learned the English language prior to arriving in Canada. Three participants (A, B, F) indicated the main reason they took the ESL classes was to obtain a job. For the male participants (A, B, C), finding suitable employment was the most important thing

upon arriving in Canada. They reported that the Canadian government required that they take a proficiency test before they could be eligible for employment. Nonetheless, the participants who enrolled in ESL classes reported that although they are able to communicate in English, they do not feel confident communicating in the English Language.

Mark: People understand me, but I know I don't speak it well. I went to an English school, but it was all day, and you can't work if you're attending the school. So either work or go to school. And when you arrive you need the money.

Sub-cultural Identity

The following section presents my findings on sub-cultural identity. Washburne (1978) argued that ethnicity should not be defined as an individual's membership in a particular cultural group by virtue of birth or ancestry, but rather as one's identification with that group. Despite this early assertion, ethnicity has continued to be typically measured by cultural background alone (Gomez, 2002). Thus, Gomez introduced the specific construct of sub-cultural identity (EPRP Model, 2002), defined as the extent to which one identifies with a culture other than the dominant one (2002, p. 133). Questions in the interview guide were developed to investigate the extent to which the participants identified with their own background culture.

Participants reported a strong identification with their own background culture. The participants reported a strong identification with recreational activities they engaged in in their native country (A, B, C, D, E, F), and a disinterest in popular Canadian activities (A, B, C, D). The following are some of the answers the participants gave regarding their recreation interests and reasons for participating:

Veronica: *I played a lot of baseball, with my friends. ...That's what we did in my native country, we do activities in groups in outdoor spaces, to be outside. I enjoyed the outdoor activities. But here it is not very common, especially for women.*

Carlos: *I don't like hockey. Most of the programs offered I don't like or understand. For the kids it is okay because they start seeing their little friends who do these activities and want to join it.*

Gilin: *I don't know of activities that I can do during the winter here. The activity guide is more for children. I would like it if there was a facility or club where I could go play basketball, because running cannot happen here, not in the winter.*

Mark: *The time to socialize is very different in Argentina. In Canada the free time is reduced by work and school responsibilities are always busy or something. In Argentina, we made time. Here it is almost like you have to schedule or plan free time, you have to make appointments. Spontaneity does not exist in Canada. The perspective on time is very different in Canada.*

All participants reported a strong identification with the health meanings and practices of their native culture. One of the participants (A) reported he travels back to Mexico regularly for health check-up. Five of the six participants (A, B, C, D, F) reported deterioration in their health condition since immigrating to Canada. Olga explains, "*When I arrive to Canada I gained a lot of weight. With not having many friends or things to do, the only thing one does is stay at home and watch TV and eat. And not eat good things.*" Common conditions reported by the participants included weight gain (A, C, D, F), increased stress (A, B, C), and depression (B, D, F). All the participants indicated the

absence of disease as a measure of their health. For example, Gilin believes he is healthy so long as he can perform his daily tasks and responsibilities; *“In Mexico a person says he is healthy because he doesn't have illness; he feels good, he can walk, he can work, he can do various activities, that's the way I think.”*

Perceived Benefits

The following section presents my findings on the perceived benefits to leisure participation. Based on the premise that people from different cultures may be expected to want different things from their sport and recreation experiences, Gomez (2002) contended that the perceived benefits of participating will vary with the extent to which individuals identify with their own sub-culture or the dominant culture, and those unique benefits will influence their participation (Taylor & Doherty, 2005). Questions in the interview guide were developed to investigate their perceived benefits from participation in physical recreation activities.

All participants identified physical/health benefits and fun as the strongest reasons for participating in physical activity as a form of recreation.

Olga: In Argentina I went to the gym but I also walked in the morning, it was beautiful to walk, and I felt really good. But here, because it is cold, you use the gym as a way to escape your house, do something active. It's not the same as being outdoors.

Cristina: I love to go dancing; in Mexico, we would go every weekend dancing. I attended dancing classes as well. Play volleyball, and things like that. But it's not the same here in Canada.

The male participants (A, B, C) indicated family activity as an important benefit of physical recreation.

Mark: I played soccer with my son. Before arriving to Canada I would play soccer with friends and family. Upon arriving in Canada I was employed with a landscaping company and the work was very physical. As a result, I did not have time to do much other activities – but I would really like to do more things with my son.

The female participants (D, E, F) reported the social aspect of recreation as an important benefit.

Olga: I love to exercise, but I need to have a motive, or someone to do it with....(in Argentina) Go to my children's schools and we would play games with the other parents, for example volleyball and things like that.

Veronica: ...there was a group of us that always got together to do activities in Venezuela. It's not like that here in Canada.

Additional benefits reported by the participants included: the opportunity to learn and practice English (A), relaxation (B, C, F), and relief from stress (C, D, F). Four of the six participants (A, B, D, E) indicated they would participate more or would be more motivated to participate in recreational activities conducted in their native language. One of the participants, Gilin, reported activities in the English language could help him practice and improve his ability to communicate in the English language:

Gilin: Actually, I don't mind it that it is in English now, because you want to practice it you want things in English so you can learn the language. But at the

beginning yes, it would have helped to have information in Spanish so that I could understand it better.

Perceived Challenges

The following section presents my findings on the perceived challenges to recreation participation. This concept was adopted from Taylor and Doherty (2005), who adapted the EPRP Model (2002) to investigate the strength of “general” barriers or challenges to participation. The interview guide was developed to investigate the perceived challenges to participation in physical recreation activities. In addition to common themes identified in the literature, the interview guide contained questions that investigated the effect of geographic relocation and adaptation. The findings on this subject are presented at the end of this section.

Five of the six participants (A, B, C, E, F) indicated that they immigrated to Canada to improve the quality of life for themselves and their dependents. Nonetheless, all of the participants reported challenges to their recreation participation that they did not encounter in their native country. The participants described the settlement process as challenging, citing adaptation to their new host country as difficult and confusing.

During the interviews, the participants identified a variety of challenges to participating in recreation activities. The participants identified not having enough free time and a lack of opportunities as the greatest limiting factors to their recreation participation. The colder climate emerged as an important challenge of leisure participation during particular periods of the year. The participants specifically noted a lack of information and unfamiliarity with activities as barriers to overcome to participate in recreation activities during the winter period. Several variations in perceived

challenges were reported by gender and years in Canada. The following paragraphs discuss in detail the perceived challenges reported by the participants and the variations in the data collected according to gender and years in Canada.

Free time

With regard to free time, the participants specifically indicated that the challenges of physically demanding jobs and longer working hours, family responsibilities, and household tasks have reduced the amount of time reserved for leisure. Physically demanding jobs with longer working hours are perceived to have limited the amount of free time for four of the six participants (A, B, E, F). Carlos owned a business in Mexico and was able to delegate tasks to his employees; as a result he had more time for recreation.

Carlos: My work responsibilities were much different in Mexico. I owned a shop; as a result, I had more time and was able to delegate tasks. As an employee here, I take orders and have to work under someone. That's why in Mexico I had time to think about doing exercise.

However, Carlos has not been able to secure a job in the field he has been trained for; as a result, he had to accept a position at a greenhouse picking tomatoes.

Carlos: I hold a university degree in psychology from Mexico, but I came to Canada to work in the greenhouses in Leamington. It is a very physically demanding job, but I started there because of friends who worked there. From there I moved to work for a shop that built kitchen counters, then construction work, and so on.

Number of years in Canada has positively affected the amount of free time perceived by Carlos. However, although he notes having more free time, he reports spending that additional free time with his family; he is not interested in spending that time doing physical activities (C). However, Carlos indicated during his interview that he might be interested in participating in leisure activities with his family.

Mark took a job with a landscaping company upon arriving in Canada to provide financial resources for his family. He reported that the physical demands of the job and long working hours have drastically reduced his time and interest in leisure activities.

Mark: Upon arriving in Canada I was employed with a landscaping company and the work was very physical. As a result, I did not have time to do much other activities.

Veronica, a College student, reports her free time had been drastically reduced as a result of work and school obligations.

Veronica: I had much more responsibilities upon arriving here. Especially school responsibilities and having to work. The only breaks I had were my breaks at work and breaks at school, such as during lunch. And in the weekends, I used the time to rest and study.

Olga is employed as a truck driver and reported working long hours for a prolonged time away from home. When she is home, Olga indicated not having any time or interest in physical recreation activities.

Olga: But now with my work, I get home and there's not much I want to do. I have equipment at home, but I never use it. I don't have time, I get home and there is other things I need to do.

All three female participants (D, E, F) reported household tasks and family responsibilities as a challenge. In their native countries, the participants were able to hire maids and babysitters at a cheap cost to assist them with the tasks and responsibilities of the house and the family. The relatively high costs of these services in Canada, coupled with a reduced budget, have eliminated their ability to afford these services. As a result, the women participants reported being challenged by household and family responsibilities. Cristina noted family responsibilities as the greatest challenge to participation in recreation activities:

Cristina: In my case it was good because he (husband) is Canadian. So I did not arrive as refugee, looking for a job, or anything....Coming from a country where we have a lot of help this is a difficult adjustment. This takes up a lot of time, so there is a lot of things you cannot get to. Once my two children enter school, I believe this will change a bit.

Lack of opportunities

All the participants reported a lack of opportunities as a challenge to recreation participation. The participants specifically noted the challenges of not being able to communicate (A, B, E, F), not having many friends (A, B, D, E, F), lack of information about suitable programs (A, B, C, D, E, F), and unfamiliarity with activities (A, B, C, E). The participants suggested that language difficulties were surmountable barriers to participation. Only one of the participants (F) agreed that the English language is a perceived challenge to participation. Four participants (A, B, E, F) reported language was a barrier and a challenge when they first arrived to Canada, but they suggested this feeling has since eroded.

Veronica: At first it was hard, especially because I did not speak English. But after a few months it became easier, as I began to understand and communicate with others.

However, the findings suggest that language difficulties intimidate and inhibit participants' participation in recreation activities. The participants indicated a lack of confidence in their proficiency of the English language as a challenge. Three participants (A, B, F) reported that although they can communicate in English, they don't feel comfortable and may feel excluded. These participants reported that language difficulties induce feelings of exclusion and discrimination. The participants who indicated they are challenged by language explain:

Olga: When I first arrived I cannot work or study so I had a lot of free time. Afterwards I look for work, but it was not comfortable at any of the jobs. All the places I went to treating me like an immigrant. I went to the gym occasionally. Sometimes I did exercises at home. At home I can do this without having anyone watching me. And I can listen to the music I like.

Gilin: Canada is a very open country, which receives many immigrants, but at the same time they segregate them, and discriminate. That's why communities stick to themselves, and don't open up to others. Because they have been discriminated at first, they block out and form their lives with what they know. There is one or two people who always try to integrate with the mainstream, but generally most are affected by the cultural shock.

Mark: Life in Argentina is much different than it is in Canada. We think one way as Latinos, and they think another way. The social aspect is also very difficult to

adapt to, one says I came here for a better life but I feel displaced, like I don't belong.

There was no significant variation in perceived discrimination by gender or by years in Canada. The findings do indicate, however, that there is an association between perceived discrimination and acculturation, such that participants who do not feel confident communicating in the English language are more likely to feel excluded or looked down upon.

The majority of participants reported they would participate more if there were opportunities to socialize with other Hispanics (C, B, D, E).

Mark: Always, when you find yourself surrounded by individuals who speak your native language you are much more comfortable.

Veronica: I would feel more comfortable, more confident speaking my native language. Nobody looks at you, you're not necessarily different.

Carlos: For me it has also been difficult to find individuals within the Hispanic community that have the same interests as I do. For example I don't know of any Mexicans who are interested in mountain bike that live in Windsor.

Lack of information

The participants reported being challenged by a lack of information about suitable recreation programs and services offered in the community. Five of the six participants (B, C, D, E, F) mentioned not being exposed to recreation opportunities when they arrived to Windsor. Only one of the participants, Gilin, reported obtaining a *Community Activity Guide* from the New Canadian Settlement Office. Gilin was given an *Activity*

Guide, but not knowing how to read or speak English, he was unable to understand or ask questions regarding its content.

Gilin: There was the Activity Guide at the New Canadian Center, but we didn't know how to use it, or read it since we didn't know English.

None of the other five participants reported obtaining or receiving any information upon immigrating to Windsor about recreation opportunities in the community, including pools, arenas, and community centers. Gilin did manage to enroll his children in recreational programs,

Gilin: We went to the class, but the instructor told us we had to go register first. That's when we went to Edward Street Center; they asked what level they were at, how old the children were, if they knew how to swim, etc.

Some of the other participants with children have also enrolled them in recreational programs, citing the opportunity to facilitate their children's integration into the new culture. However, none of the participants have themselves enrolled or considered enrolling in a recreation program. Three of the participants (C, E, F) don't know where recreational facilities are located in the city. Most participants (A, C, E, F) have never stepped foot in a community recreation facility, and all the participants reported no interest in the activities offered.

Carlos: Most of the programs offered [as described in the Activity Guide] I don't like or understand. For the kids it is okay because they start seeing their little friends who do these activities and want to join it.

Mark enrolled his children in swimming classes at the YMCA, but cannot afford and would not pay for himself.

Mark: *My children go to the pool at the YMCA, but through school. Personally, I've never been there, but you have to pay anyways. In Argentina there was some, but they were all free.*

Several participants indicated more information would facilitate opportunities for them to participate in recreational activities.

Carlos: *So, I think even though I don't know, that a membership at a gym will be very expensive. When in fact, it may be much cheaper than I expected. Same with other sports and activities, that's why information is critical.*

Gilin: *Other than the activity guide there is no information on events and things happening in the community. I am not informed of events in sports that I could be part of. For example, sometimes they put on events and nobody knows about them. I don't know any other source of information other than the Activity Guide. There's no place where it says there is an event of this, or this happening on this date for you to go.*

Mark: *There is very little information provided. Usually this information is obtained through word of mouth.*

Cristina: *I continue to have a very small base of knowledge. I know very few people here, especially Canadians. I know there are leagues of soccer, individuals get together in Sundays to play, the fathers of children. So they get a chance to socialize, exercise, relax all in one afternoon. It would be good if there was such a thing for women. Or for Hispanics.*

Olga: First of all I don't know where to go. And secondly, these programs are usually done for the youth. I don't have any information, for example saying this is my age and this is the activities that are available for my age.

The findings indicated a lack of information regarding recreation opportunities may be attributed to the level of exposure. Despite numerous services and organizations established in the community to help new immigrants, the participants were more comfortable having family and friends help them settle into their new host country. Five of the six participants (A, B, C, D, E) had family living in Windsor who helped them locate jobs, find housing, and enroll their children in schools. Three of the participants (A, C, E) visited a New Canadian Settlement office, two of the participants (B, D) were referred to the YMCA for assistance, and one of the participants contacted the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County (C). The participants visited settlement services offices to translate documents (B), fill out government forms (A, B, C), and enroll in ESL courses (A, B).

Canadian weather

The participants reported the distinct weather in Windsor inhibits participation and enjoyment in leisure activities. All six participants emigrated from warm weather climates. When asked how the Canadian weather impacted their participation in physical recreation activities, the participants reported Canadian winters are perceived as a challenge to participation. Participants reported a lack of motivation to leave their homes for recreation activities during the winter months:

Gilin: It's like there is no desire to go outside; with the cold weather you have no energy nor desire to go outside, you want to stay in. You don't even want to go

outside to take your children and transport them from place to place. When it's not too cold it's not too bad. But when it's cold you don't want to leave the house.

Veronica: I don't last as long outside in the winter as I do in the summer. My hands get frozen, it is hard to move them after a while. I think because I come from a warm weather climate, the cold feels much colder than it actually is. I don't really like to do things in the winter.

Carlos: For me, leaving the house later in the day during winter is not enjoyable nor easy. If it is dark, I no longer want to leave the house.

The findings suggest the participants are challenged by a lack of information and unfamiliarity with ways of engaging in leisure activities during colder months of the year. Although only one of the participants reported regular participation in physical recreation (D), all of the participants reported participating in recreational activities during the summer. Activities reported by the participants included walking (A, B, C, D, F) running (C), basketball (C), tennis (E), mountain biking (A), volleyball (D), and soccer (A, B, C). The participants reported they do not participate in any of those activities or any other recreation activities during the winter months. The following responses suggest that unfamiliarity with winter activities challenged the participants' recreation participation during the winter months.

Carlos: ...for me, winter is very long and dreadful. I have no idea what kind of activities I could do in this weather. I am not accustomed to winter activities.... I would like as a hobby to one day learn how to ski. But not ice-skating, and I don't know what other activities there are, perhaps I need more information. But definitely, the weather affects me greatly. I much rather have warm weather.

Cristina: I went to the YMCA as a new immigrant, my husband referred me there. But it was too far from my home, so I went very few time. And with the weather, with the snow, the change in weather deterred me. I wasn't going anywhere in those conditions.

Gilin: ...sometimes in the summer, we played basketball, went to the parks, ran, but only during the summertime when it's warm. This is when you use the parks, when it's warm in the summertime. I will not go to a park during the winter when it's cold.

All of the participants reported being challenged by the distinct Canadian climate; as a result, there are no variations in the data according to years in Canada or gender.

The data indicates the participants' lack of information and unfamiliarity with winter activities, compounded by an inability to afford the financial costs of recreation, challenges all six participants to participate in recreation activities of choice during the winter months.

Carlos: I have a bike that I can use during the summer but not in the winter, but if I could sign up to a gym I could remain active during the winter.

Financial fees associated with recreation

The participants reported being challenged by the costs associated with recreational activities. Recreation activities are considered by the participants as luxury items, not essential needs (A, B, E, F). As a result, the participants reported there is no money left over to spend on recreational activities and programs (A, B, D, E, F).

Olga: *...when one arrives to Canada they arrive with just the clothes on their back. So you have to buy everything, and pay rents, so at first paying for exercise is not an option. It is like a luxury.*

Two of the participants (B, E) reported that in their native country they did not have to pay to use community recreation facilities such as pools or gymnasiums.

Cristina: *They [recreation facilities] cost money; everything costs money. [It would be good] if there were more things that do not cost money, or that had a fee but wasn't as much.*

Two participants indicated that they would like to join a fitness centre if they could afford it (B, C).

Carlos: *If I had more money, or more secure job, I would stop worrying. If I had a larger income I would have a way to pay for membership to a gym without having to worry where I would get the money to pay for it. And if I had more free time, I could exercise during times that are more convenient for me.*

Cristina reported the costs of childcare challenge her recreation participation. Cristina reported she would like to go out on weekends and dance like she used to regularly in Mexico, however, she does not have anyone to watch her kids, and babysitters are reported to be too expensive.

Cristina: *It is too expensive having children and going out to dance. Dancing is a physical activity. But it is very difficult to find someone to watch the children, it's a hassle, so instead decide to not go.*

Transportation

Two of the participants (E, F) reported transportation as a challenge to recreation participation.

Olga: When you don't have a vehicle it is very difficult to get around. With a vehicle it's much more convenient and easy to get around.

Veronica, the other participant who perceived transportation as a challenge, suggested public transportation modes are not supportive of her needs.

Veronica: Bus routes and schedule need to be better. A lot of times the buses come only every hour, and they stop running at 6 p.m. on weekends. So it is very difficult to coordinate to go anywhere. So if I had to do, or want to do any activity that is past 6 p.m., I have no way to get back home.

Patterns of Participation

The following section presents my findings on the patterns of participation in recreation activities reported by the six participants. The participants were asked whether they considered themselves physically active individuals; what activities they enjoy; and where and how often they engage in leisure-based physical activity.

All of the participants reported participating in recreation activities in their native country. Five of the six participants (B, C, D, E, F) considered themselves physically active²³ before immigrating to Canada. Only one of the participants (D) reported being physically active at the time of the interview. Despite leading a physically active lifestyle, Cristina does not enjoy going to the gym.

²³ The questions in the interview guide did not specify what constituted a physically active lifestyle. Rather, it remained open to the interpretations of the participants. The objective was not to quantify their levels of involvement, but rather to compare and contrast their level of involvement before and after immigrating to Canada.

Cristina: I exercise, and go to the gym, but I do it more because I have to, not necessarily because I enjoy it. I go because I know I should, I know it's good for me. But it's not something I particularly like. I go so that I do not keep gaining weight.

Another participant, Olga, reported she joined a fitness centre for a period of time but felt out of place and eventually stopped going.

Olga: I had a gym membership for a while, but cancelled it because I didn't like the atmosphere. I don't know why, but it seems that all the people that go to the gym, it is like they don't have any incentive to go to the gym. All of my friends have stopped going to the gym.

Because only one of the participants reported year-round participation in leisure-based physical activity, no variations or associations were found in the data according to gender or years in Canada. Similarly, none of the perceived benefits and perceived challenges to participation can be used to distinguish variations in participation patterns according to gender or years in Canada. However, the colder Canadian climate emerged as a factor influencing the participation patterns of the participants. All six participants reported occasional participation in recreational activities during the summer months, and little participation in recreation activities during the winter months. The participants indicated leisure activities of interest to them take place in outdoor spaces during the warmer months of the year.

Chapter Summary

Although most participants reported adaptation to the new host culture gets easier with time, participants continued to be challenged to participate and enjoy leisure

activities. The participants reported that the effects of some perceived challenges (i.e., language difficulties, time restrictions) diminished with years in Canada. Nonetheless, the participants continued to be challenged by these and other factors to participate in recreation.

The results indicated recent immigrant adults do not perceive recreation as an essential need. For some of the participants, most notably males, securing employment was the most important task upon arriving in Canada. Consequently, the participants reported learning the English language is only important to the extent that it may secure employment. The findings revealed that financial obligations challenged the participants from developing their proficiency in English with years in Canada. The results suggest that a lack of proficiency in the English language was associated with feelings of exclusion and inhibit some participants from recreation participation.

The participants described a lack of motivation and desire to participate in recreation activities during winter months. Participants reported a preference for recreation activities they enjoyed in their native country and a dislike and disinterest for traditional Canadian winter activities. The participants indicated they have not been exposed to opportunities and information about winter activities.

The participants indicated a lack of opportunities challenged their recreation participation. Most participants reported very little exposure to community recreational programs and facilities. The participants indicated they have not received or sought any information regarding recreational programs and facilities upon arriving in Windsor. Most of the participants reported they had family and friends help them settle in to the community, with most of the participants reporting very little assistance was sought from

organizations servicing the needs of new immigrants to the community. The participants who did report some knowledge of community recreation facilities and programs, indicated that they believe community recreation facilities and centers are developed for children, are expensive, and don't provide programs or opportunities for activities of interest to them.

All of the participants described the costs of recreation as a barrier to participation. Many of the participants came to Canada with very little; as a result, they had to secure housing and manage their limited funds to purchase essential goods. As a result of limited financial resources, there was no money left over to spend on recreational activities and programs. The participants reported community recreational programs and services are not common in their native countries. As a result, participants reported most of the recreational activities they participated in were done in the outdoors. Most participants reported they did not pay for recreational programs in their native countries, nor are they accustomed to recreational activities performed indoors. Most of the participants described partaking in recreational activities they are familiar with during the warm summer months, but reported no participation in any physical recreation activity during the winter months. The participants indicated the costs of programs and facilities as a challenge during the winter.

The participants reported less free time to participate in recreational activities in their new host country. Participants perceived their free time is being challenged by longer working hours, family responsibilities, and household chores; obligations and responsibilities they were not accustomed to performing in their native countries.

Additional challenges reported by the participants include a lack of social support, transportation, and childcare services.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

To answer the main research problem, ‘How can community recreation leaders create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in physical recreation among recent immigrant adults? I have reflected on the findings across all sub-problems. I explore the ways each sub-problem helps answer the broader research question, by examining the relationships between the sections of each sub-problem and how each sub-problem relates to the others, and tying the results back to the literature to identify ways my findings support, extend and challenge existing research.

Sub-Problem #1

How do selected national and Ontario government documents attend to minimizing constraints and facilitating opportunities for ethnic minority immigrants to participate in physical recreation?

Chalip (1996) suggests only a limited number of social problems are ever tackled by policymakers. For an issue to get onto the policymaker’s agenda it must arguably be in the local or national interest for government to project its activities into the realms implicated by the policy concern (Chalip, 1996). As predicted, my critical analysis of national and Ontario documents produced from 1983 to 2006 revealed a variety of rationales and attributions that shape the way municipal recreation departments, community organizations, and other associations structure opportunities for people (in this case, recent immigrant adults) to participate in leisure physical activity. The policy analysis revealed that three central legitimations for recreation policies have been argued

since 1983: personal autonomy in recreation choice, optimizing resources, and health gains. The following section discusses how each of the legitimations have shaped and formulated the attributions contained within the documents examined.

Personal Autonomy

The policy analysis revealed that policymakers advocate personal autonomy. Following the declaration of provincial primacy in matters related to recreation, policies were developed to detail the various roles of governments in relation to recreation. Driven by a political climate of rationalization and economic restraint, national and Ontario government policies that emerged in the 1980's framed recreation participation in terms of personal responsibility and choice. As stated in the *National Recreation Statement* (1987), "Leisure in our democratic society will always remain the prerogative of the individual" (ISRC, 1987, section 1.2). The rationale of personal autonomy was introduced by Provincial Recreation Ministers in 1974, who defined recreation as "all those things a person or group chooses to do in order to make their leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable, and more personally satisfying" (ISRC, 1987, section 1.4). The legitimation of personal autonomy prompted recommendations for governments at all levels to reduce their involvement in the provision of direct recreation services (ISRC, 1987). According to the *National Recreation Statement* (1987), "the individual should be both a provider and recipient of leisure services" (ISRC, 1987, section 1.2). Policymakers recognized that individuals should freely identify and pursue recreation activities of choice. As far as possible, opportunities for participation should be initially developed and managed by individuals or groups of individuals, independent of government involvement (ISRC, 1983).

Existing recreation policies affirm the individual is free to participate in recreation activities of choice. Policymakers suggested individuals could pursue traditional and nontraditional recreation activities through community organizations, non-profit organizations, and commercial organizations. The municipality, as the primary public provider of recreation opportunities, would be the provider of equal recreation opportunities that are not generally provided by the non-profit and profit sectors.

Optimizing Resources

According to Bercovitz (1998), one solution to the sagging economy of the 1980's was to shift responsibility for social problems from the government to individuals and the community. As proposed in my directional proposition, the policy analysis revealed national and Ontario governments have, over time, reduced their involvement in recreation through intersectoral cooperation. The *Interprovincial Recreation Statement* (1983) marked the beginning of the government's shift away from program and service provision toward a strategic leadership, facilitating, and collaborative role. In defining the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government, policymakers in the 1980's legitimized a reduced government role in recreation by suggesting many recreation opportunities are provided through volunteers, or non-profit and commercial agencies (ISRC, 1987). The *National Recreation Statement* (1987) recommended provincial governments assume the role of supporter and enabler, and provide resources in the form of incentive grants and training of volunteer leaders for municipal governments and the non-profit sector. Policymakers suggested that incentive grants to municipalities to train volunteer leaders from ethnic communities would provide ethno-cultural recreation opportunities for ethnic minorities. However, a number of factors make some ethnic

community organizations more powerful and more likely to sustain ethno-cultural traditions than others (Karlis, 2004). Larger, more established ethnic community groups may have strong lobby groups to encourage the provision of their ethno-specific recreation activities. Consequently, more recent ethnic minority groups may be at a disadvantage mainly due to their limited time in Canada (Karlis). Policymakers' concern was for reduced dependency on tax-based dollars to fund recreation opportunities, rather than for implementation of programs that would operate to offer ethnic minority groups opportunities for ethno-cultural recreation activities.

Fiscal restraint and government cutbacks in the 1980's and 1990's demanded municipal recreation agencies optimize resources to ensure political and organizational survival. As anticipated, the rationale of reduced government involvement prompted recommendations in all the documents for fostering intergovernmental collaboration. Policymakers recommended enhanced collaboration to deliver equitable recreation opportunities for individuals and groups. Several documents indicated that without intergovernmental collaboration, municipal recreation agencies would be unable to provide recreation opportunities for the community. This concern linked to the ineffective use of limited government funding. Policymakers had to ensure equitable opportunities were provided to all individuals with limited financial resources. Accordingly, policymakers recommended municipal recreation departments target under-served segments of the population. Municipal governments were encouraged to support and develop partnerships with community organizations and the private sector. The *Interprovincial Recreation Statement* (1983) recommended governments should make every effort to provide for unmet recreation needs through the development of initiatives

by: (a) existing community groups, organizations or agencies; (b) the establishment of community associations; (c) the private and commercial sector; or, if none are feasible, (d) direct involvement of the Municipality authority. Policymakers did not recommend administrative reforms or resources to ensure that the multicultural heritage of Canadians would be preserved or encouraged through partnerships with community organizations (i.e., ethnic community groups, sport associations). The concern of policymakers was that municipal recreation agencies and community organizations receiving government funding or government resources comply with the intent of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Human Rights Legislation*.

Health Gains

According to Hensley et al. (2006), the governments' role of legislator and regulator affects many of our actions as both providers and consumers of recreation opportunities. This role operates in the background of many parts of our work and leisure life because we must abide by the laws passed by various levels of governments. As anticipated, the policy analysis revealed national and provincial documents endorse and promote recreation activities that are physical in nature, encouraging individuals and groups to participate in recreational activities that involve physical activity. Policymakers suggested that increasing overall levels of physical activity to reduce health care costs and improve the health of all Canadians requires action by many government and non-government sectors. Consequently, municipal governments, community organizations, non-profit organizations and commercial organizations have been encouraged to promote and provide recreation activities that include physical activity.

Concern over physical inactivity prompted recommendations for enhanced collaboration between public recreation services and public health agencies. The policy analysis indicates recreation policies are profoundly intertwined with health promotion strategies. The 'Active Living' and 'Population Health' approaches have figured prominently in the documents analyzed. For example, The 'Active Living' approach links popular physical recreation activities with health gains. Bercovitz (1998) informs us that the federal Ministry of Fitness and Amateur Sport adopted the Active Living approach in the late 1980's in an attempt to shift public attention away from a rigorous, prescriptive exercise model. Popular recreation activities, including gardening, walking and cycling, were targeted and promoted as a means to curtail rising health care costs and increase exercise involvement levels. The document, *Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy* (2006), identifies healthy living as a fundamental principle. The document indicates the municipality will seek to provide a range of recreation facilities, programs and services to help foster healthy lifestyle habits and active living.

Policymakers and stakeholders involved in policy deliberations recommended government agencies target special audiences, including: children and youth, older adults, women, aboriginal communities, ethnic minorities, and other under-served, or at-risk segments of the population. Policymakers recommended government agencies, including municipal recreation departments, become more involved in providing opportunities for under-served groups to remain physically active. The policy analysis indicates the concern was for addressing the economic and social costs of physical inactivity, rather than to promote and endorse the multiple benefits of leisure-based physical activity. For example, the 1997 document, *Physical Inactivity: A Framework for Action*, suggests,

“The removal of discriminatory barriers limiting opportunities for physical activity, and so affecting individual health and well-being, is a primary responsibility of government” (F/P/T Advisory Council, 1997, p. 32).

The difference is subtle, but profound. If recreation providers focus on addressing barriers to participation in physical activity, then the values and meanings of the dominant culture (i.e., improve personal health, reduce health care costs) are being endorsed and promoted by municipal recreation agencies. The results suggest opportunities for ethno-cultural recreation practices may be constrained by dominant values and norms entrenched by policy makers in government policies and documents. If recreation is to remain the personal choice of the individual, then public recreation agencies should not endorse and promote the health gains of physical activity. Adopting the meanings of the dominant cultural group as universal will sustain practices that may not be valued and/or practiced by new immigrant members of the population (Karlis, 2004). For example, the results suggest recent immigrant adults may not perceive physical activity to be important for preventing future health ailments. Policies that address recreation must do a better job to ensure dominant cultural meanings and practices do not specify and limit the interpretation of recreation for new Canadians. Recreation should not be connected to the objectives and values of other government agencies (e.g., Public Health Agency of Canada).

Preservation of Diverse Canadian Heritages

Recreation policies drafted in the 1980's were created to define the roles and responsibilities of various levels of governments in an effort to reduce the public's dependency on the government for direct service provision. The concern over reducing

public funding prompted policymakers to recommend that the individual is personally responsible for being the provider and recipient of recreation opportunities. Nevertheless, the policy analysis revealed policymakers recognized the need to address the specific needs of under-serviced segments of the population²⁴. Public recreation providers needed to comply with the intent of Canadian laws created to protect the equality of the individual.

The solutions affirmed in recreation policies seek to ensure equitable recreation opportunities for all individuals. The *National Recreation Statement* (1987) recommended public service providers comply with the intent and spirit of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Human Rights Legislation*; municipalities should modify programs to integrate special populations, and undertake regular assessments to determine community needs or interests not being met through existing programs (ISRC, 1987). All of the documents contained recommendations to make sure certain equitable recreation opportunities are provided by municipal recreation agencies. In spite of economic constraints and budget restrictions, municipal recreation agencies have a mandate to provide equal opportunities. Policymakers recommended public recreation providers should identify and modify recreation programs to create supportive environments for participation and address barriers to participation for under-serviced segments of the population. For example, the 1997 document, *Physical Inactivity: A Framework for Action* suggests,

²⁴The idea that individuals have the ability to make a free choice and so can be blamed for a lack of participation in recreational activities came under fire in the 1980's. Government documents published in the 1980's, including the Epp report (1986), and to a greater extent the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986), shifted the focus from 'victim blaming,' which had resulted from the focus on individual behaviour following the Lalonde report (1974).

Certain segments of the broader population are targeted because they are at significantly higher risk due to inactivity, have greater needs resulting from barriers that limit opportunities for participation, or offer considerable potential for behaviour change over the long term. (F/P/T Advisory Committee, 1997, p. 12)

Recreation policies developed during the 1980s inherently stipulated that the individual is personally responsible to seek and experience activities of choice. As indicated in the *National Recreation Statement* (1987), it is through community organizations, non-profit organizations, and commercial organizations that individuals can pursue traditional and non-traditional recreation activities. Policymaker's relative inattention to the particulars of ethno-cultural recreation development stems from dominant policy attributions for equality of the individual (e.g., *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*), rather than the preservation and enhancement of diverse Canadian heritages (i.e., *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*). Those attributions trivialize the preservation of diverse Canadian recreation practices. Recreation policies created in the 1980's suggest the impetus for the maintenance of ethnic cultural and recreation services falls primarily into the hands of the members of ethnic groups and their ethnic community organization (Karlis, 2004). In essence, recreation policies maintain it is the responsibility of Canada's ethnic population to fully implement Canada's multiculturalism policy.

My investigation suggests dominant ideas regarding recreation conduct have infringed on the personal autonomy of the individual with regards to recreation choices. The social construction of recreation based on dominant cultural ideas and values may

thus shape and limit the choices for what is considered possible or essential for new immigrant adults. Consistent with McGannon and Mauws (2002), the discourse by which ethnic minority immigrant adults draw their conception of recreation and make sense of such terms may contribute to a lack of participation in physical recreation practices. The introduction of a multicultural platform, which encourages the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians (Canada, 1988), may not be enough to prevent dominant ideas from specifying the meanings and practices attributed to recreation. Consequently, ethnic minority groups may be unable to influence, let alone imprint, recreation policies with their own beliefs, preferences or norms of behaviour (Helly, 2003). Policies created without the input of multiple and diverse stakeholders are bound to be constructed in terms of the dominant meanings shared by policy makers (James, 2005).

While there were several policy recommendations that pertained to underserved groups that could be directed at ethnic minority groups, none of the recommendations were directed at preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians. The policy analysis revealed the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1988) had not been included as an attribution in any of the documents explored. Absent from the documents were recommendations for preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians. The concern was for addressing structural and social barriers to participation, rather than for the removal of dominant values or inclusion of diverse forms of recreation that may serve to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians. Language in policies recommending the creation of 'supportive environments' is presented as a way of overcoming leisure constraints, rather than as a facilitator of participation or something

that affords leisure involvement. Policymakers recommended that barriers to participation should be identified and removed for under-serviced segments of the population, including ethnic minorities; however, no recommendations or resources are mentioned to enhance and preserve the multicultural heritage of Canadians. Policymakers did not suggest administrative reforms to assure provision of non-traditional recreation opportunities; nor did policymakers attempt to create supportive environments for ethnic minority immigrants by endorsing culturally neutral recreation opportunities. This is particularly important considering ethnic minority immigrant adults may be constrained from participating by intrapersonal factors (i.e., ethnicity) (Hutchinson, 1987; Irwin et al., 1990; Karlis & Dawson, 1995; Seefeldt et al. 2002; Stodolska, 1998). Public recreation policies may reinforce/normalize that certain values and meanings are etched into its definition and goals; values are simply factored in, rather than acknowledging they play a central role in an individual's motivation to act within any social context (Karlis & Dawson, 1995).

Sub-Problem #2

How do municipal recreation administrators in Windsor, Ontario create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in physical recreation among recent immigrants?

The second sub-problem was developed to explore how municipal recreation administrators in Windsor, Ontario create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in physical recreation among recent immigrant adults. The data collected was organized into four categories: benefits, equity,

influences, and trends. The findings are discussed in relation to the results from the policy analysis.

Most of the administrators interviewed have been employed by their municipal Recreation Department for over twenty years. The participants reported that they did not have an active role in national and provincial policy deliberations or formulations. One of the participants (W3) suggested Parks and Recreation Ontario voices the concerns and needs of recreation administrators across Ontario. Despite not shaping recreation policies, the data suggests recreation administrators are shaped by policies. The results indicate the recommendations of policymakers limit the roles of municipal governments as providers of diverse recreation opportunities. Consistent with the rationale found in recreation policies, all four administrators interviewed agreed recreation is essential for a well-balanced lifestyle that can enhance an individual's health and overall quality of life. Municipal recreation programs can teach life skills, facilitate integration, and promote independent lifestyles to segments of the population found to be underserved or requiring special attention. According to one of the administrators (M4), recreation is the least threatening medium for getting people to integrate into mainstream society. Constrained by government cutbacks, recreation administrators reported they do not have the necessary resources to offer non-traditional recreation programs. Municipalities can only respond to the particular needs of the community within the scope of recommendations of national and provincial policies. Policymakers did not recommend means by which municipal recreation departments can create conditions that might preserve and enhance the multicultural heritages of their communities.

Community Recreation agencies use census data and participant surveys to develop recreation programs that reflect the needs and interests of the community. Two administrators referred to census data and population projections in their recommendations to modify existing programming to address the needs and interests of ethnic groups in their communities. The administrators interviewed have recognized the challenges to providing equal recreation opportunities to a growing number of ethnic minority groups. However, the administrators indicated municipal recreation programs and services are based on participation; if there are not enough participants to run a program, the program is either cancelled or postponed. Traditional and non-traditional recreation programs and services are created to be self-sustaining; if the program is not subsidized by a government grant or private organization, then user fees are implemented to offset the cost of the programs. Consistent with the recommendations found in the policy analysis, administrators reported programs for children and youth are prevalent. The administrators indicated government grants and funding from private organizations make possible the creation of various programs for disadvantaged children and youth.

The findings from this study indicate recreation activities that include physical activity have been endorsed and promoted by municipal Recreation Departments. For example, the Recreation Department for Windsor hired a park programmer to develop programs to get people more active in the outdoors. This finding is consistent with recommendations contained within policies for government agencies to promote and endorse physical activities for health gains. Budget restrictions demand municipal recreation departments adopt practices that have been legitimized by policymakers (i.e.,

enhanced intergovernmental collaboration to promote physical activity) to ensure organizational and political survival.

The basic role of the municipality is to ensure the availability of the broadest range of recreation opportunities for every individual and group consistent with available community resources (ISRC, 1987). Policymakers acknowledged Canadian laws introduced to protect the equality of the individual in social, economic, and cultural life (e.g., *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*) in their recommendations that community recreation agencies provide equal opportunities for minority groups who are found to be under-served or who exhibit special attention. Accordingly, the administrators reported their organizations seek to provide equitable recreation opportunities for ethnic minority immigrants in the community. The administrators described several initiatives to create supportive environments and address barriers to participation for ethnic minority immigrants. Strategies to address language barriers include staffing community centers with individuals who are fluent in more than one language and referring members to translation services provided by the municipality. The administrators reported that specific cultural barriers are addressed by hiring individuals who are representative of the community, offering diversity training for staff, offering an assortment of recreation programs, and modifying facilities and programs to include groups that otherwise would be unable to participate (i.e., covering pool windows for Muslim women).

Recreation administrators recognized ethnic minority immigrants are constrained by user fees. User fees deprive new immigrants concerned with their financial welfare from experiencing the multitude of benefits from community recreation programs.

Reduced operating budgets constrain community recreation employees from offering programs and services at reduced cost to ethnic minority immigrants. This is at odds with the *Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy* (2006), which states “Parks and Recreation will strive to ensure that the pricing of its recreational services does not preclude or diminish participation” (City of Windsor, 2006, section 5). The administrators agreed more should be done to address the financial challenges to participation experienced by ethnic minority immigrant adults. Partnerships with private organizations and government grants provide the necessary funding to create and manage recreation opportunities for children and youth. No subsidies or resources have been reported to address economic constraints for ethnic minority immigrant adults.

The findings indicate municipal recreation agencies are challenged by resource constraints. The potential to provide diverse recreational opportunities and address cultural barriers is restricted by budget limitations. The administrators indicated more financial resources are required from federal and provincial governments to address the particular needs and interests of ethnic minorities. However, the policy analysis revealed no specific resources had been allocated by policymakers to preserve and enhance diverse recreation practices for ethnic minority groups. The administrators reported that they attempt to staff community centers and recreation facilities with individuals whose backgrounds are similar to the clients. One administrator suggested more individuals from ethnic minority groups should be hired at the managerial level. However, wages and reduced operating budgets have limited the ability to hire qualified individuals who reflect the ethnic makeup of the community they serve. In addition, most positions in recreation facilities and community centers are part-time.

Recreation administrators reported that modifying facilities and programs for ethnic minority immigrants is not an expense that has been figured into their budgets. This finding is at odds with recreation policies that recommended municipalities undertake a regular assessment to determine community needs or interests not being met through existing community programs (ISRC, 1987). The recently formulated *Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy* (2006) stipulates, “Parks and Recreation will strive to provide a range of integrated, accessible services to the entire community that are responsive to current needs and trends” (City of Windsor, 2006, section 5). Furthermore, the policy indicates Parks and Recreation will seek to remove cultural barriers that prevent Windsor residents from participating in recreation (City of Windsor, 2006).

The administrators agreed more should to be done by municipal recreation departments and community partners to address cultural barriers for ethnic minority immigrants. The administrators suggested recreation programs need to be respectful of ethnic minorities residing in their communities. Municipal Recreation centers offer an assortment of programs to address diverse cultures; however, the administrators indicated new Canadians often don’t know such programs exist. According to one administrator (W2), the majority of immigrants did not have community centers or publicly funded recreation facilities in their native countries; as a result, they don’t know that community centers exist, nor do they know what these centers have to offer. All four administrators reported that language difficulties remain a challenge for communicating the benefits of recreation and the diversity of recreation programs offered by community centers.

Most administrators indicated they are continually working with ethnic groups and

community organizations serving ethnic minority immigrants to provide equal opportunities for participation in physical recreation. For example, the municipality of Mississauga has created a program to develop Muslim swimming instructors and lifeguards. According to one administrator (M4), it is the responsibility of the municipality to be a leader for ethnic communities and to develop and support initiatives for their involvement in recreation activities. Partnerships with the Ontario Lifesaver Society and the Muslim community made possible the financial resources needed to develop the swimming leadership program for Muslim women (M4).

All four administrators indicated partnerships with community organizations are essential to service the needs and interests of ethnic minority immigrant adults. Consistent with the findings of the policy analysis, the administrators suggested municipal Recreation Departments should work more closely with community organization servicing new immigrant adults to deliver equitable recreation programming and optimize limited resources. According to Karlis (2004), public recreation practitioners in collaboration with community organizations can help recent immigrant adults translate the messages of national and provincial strategies (e.g., *Active 2010*) into action by providing local opportunities for participation in ethno-cultural physical recreation traditions. Community organizations servicing new Canadians can promote and communicate the benefits of recreation and inform new Canadians of the services offered by the community. According to one administrator (M4), improved collaboration between municipal Recreation Departments and new Canadian settlement organizations would facilitate integration into the mainstream for new immigrants. New Canadian Settlement Services are often the first place of contact for new immigrants; as a result,

ethnic minority immigrants often develop trust relationships with these organizations (M4). One administrator (W3) suggested recreation programs could be integrated with programs to teach new immigrants the English language, thus providing a solution to staffing issues.

Sub-problem # 3

What are the perceived opportunities and challenges to participation in physical recreation experienced by Spanish-speaking recent immigrant adults who reside in Windsor, Ontario?

To answer the third sub-problem, the results were organized into five categories: acculturation, sub-cultural identity, perceived benefits, perceived challenges, and participation patterns. The results were categorized with respect to the model constructs of the EPRP Model (Gomez, 2002), upon which the study was based. Rather than constructing an 'isolated island of knowledge,' new studies should be build on what we already know (or believe we know), by exploring whether existing knowledge can be supported, rejected or extended (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). The findings are discussed to extend our understanding of those factors said to affect recreation participation among ethnic immigrant groups, and to provide fresh ideas that can contribute toward the development of improved policies, programs, and structures for increasing the physical activity levels of new Canadian immigrant adults.

Tremblay et al. (2005) reported that the prevalence of leisure-based physical activity is lower for the majority of recent immigrant ethnic groups living in Canada as compared to non-immigrants. My findings provide support and context for this finding. Only one of the participants reported year-round participation in leisure-based physical

activity. The other participants reported occasional participation in leisure-based physical activity. Most of the participants reported frequent participation in outdoor recreational physical activities during the warmer months of the year, and no participation in any recreational physical activities (indoor or outdoor) during months of the year when it is cold (as perceived by the subjects). It should be noted that my interviews took place in the middle of winter, which may have affected how the subjects answered the questions. Nevertheless, the results propose recent immigrant adults are less likely to be physically active during the winter period compared to non-immigrants. These findings suggest environmental conditions can inhibit participation in leisure activities for ethnic minority immigrant adults.

As anticipated, the results indicate ethnic minority immigrants are challenged by factors associated with geographic relocation (i.e., climate and physical environment). The participants reported the winter climate in Windsor as a perceived challenge to leisure participation during several months of the year. Participants described a lack of motivation and interest to leave their homes for leisure activities during the winter. The findings suggest the participants' lack of interest in, and unfamiliarity with winter activities are limiting factors to participation and enjoyment in leisure. This is not to say that failure to adapt to a distinct climate can explain reduced participation patterns among immigrant adults, but rather that it may help to understand and uncover specific leisure constraints perceived by recent immigrant adults. The participation patterns of the subjects studied suggest unsuccessful adaptation to a distinct weather patterns may inhibit participation and enjoyment in leisure activities for ethnic minority immigrant adults.

That is, the subjects were unable to negotiate through the challenges presented by distinct weather conditions.

Leisure Constraints

The literature suggests participation in leisure activities is dependent on how people negotiate through constraints. According to Burns and Graefe (2007), the constraints model has a clearly defined hierarchy, beginning with constraints that affect preferences (intrapersonal constraints) and leading to those that effect participation (structural constraints). The results of this study suggest the participants were unable to overcome constraints attributed to their sub-cultural identity.

The subjects reported participation in outdoor leisure activities during the warmer months of the year. This finding suggests that at certain periods since their arrival to Canada, the participants were able to successfully negotiate through the three levels of constraints proposed by Crawford et al. (1991). This is consistent with the study by Jackson and Rucks (1995), who found that people often negotiate through a specific constraint by adopting negotiation strategies related to that particular constraint. In the absence of structural constraints (user fees), interpersonal constraints (discrimination) and intrapersonal constraints (cultural tradition), the subjects reported participation in physical recreation. During colder months, the participants reported that a lack of interest in mainstream activities inhibits leisure participation and enjoyment. The participants indicated they have less energy and motivation to exercise during colder months. Hence, the removal of wide-ranging constraints to participation will not necessarily increase participation patterns among ethnic minorities (Tirone, 1997). The participants described a connection between leisure and outdoor spaces in their native countries that they

believe is only possible in a warm climate. For example, one of the participants indicated, “running cannot happen here [in Windsor], not in the winter” (Gilin, Mexico).

Outdoor spaces (in the native country) were important grounds for social interactions, family events, and leisure experiences. One participant who joined a fitness centre upon arriving in Canada to remain active during the winter described her struggle to connect to the indoor environment: *In Argentina I went to the gym but I also walked in the morning; it was beautiful to walk, and I felt really good. But here, because it is cold, you use the gym as a way to escape your house, do something active. It's not the same as being outdoors (Olga, Argentina)*. The results suggest that at least initially (first five years), immigrant adults may only be interested in leisure activities they enjoyed in their native countries. This is consistent with the findings of Scott and Munson (1994) who reported adult participation is positively related to recreational experiences and involvement during childhood and adolescence. Thus, leisure opportunities for recent immigrant adults need to align with their ethno-cultural traditions and values.

My findings provide some support for a number of relationships proposed by Gomez (2002). As suggested by Gomez, perceived challenges and perceived benefits attributed to sub-cultural identity are important intervening variables that affect participation. Gomez posited, and my findings support, a relationship between the participants' sub-cultural identity, perceived challenges and patterns of participation. As expected, the results indicate socio-economic status limits ethnic minority immigrants from participating in recreation. Recreation activities that incurred costs were described by the participants as luxury items, not essential needs. Many immigrant adults arrived in Canada with only the bare essentials and limited financial resources; as a result, they had

to secure housing and manage their limited funds to purchase essential goods. There is no money left over to spend on recreational activities. Facility fees, lack of transportation, and childcare fees were reported by the subjects to constrain leisure participation. Most of the participants reported they would participate more in recreational physical activity if costs were reduced or removed, particularly during the colder months of the year.

The findings suggest new immigrants are not accustomed to paying for recreation activities. The participants indicated the leisure-time physical activities they engaged in in their native countries did not have user fees. Two of the participants reported that in their native country they did not have to pay to use community recreation facilities such as pools or gymnasiums. These findings support the prediction by Gomez (2002) that sub-cultural identity and perceived challenges explain variations in participation. The findings provide support for the Ethnicity Theory in that participation in recreation for ethnic minority immigrants is not merely limited by a lack of money, but rather by a limited conception and understanding of why recreation fees are present. The results support the findings of Paraschak and Tirone (2008), who suggested that the marginality perspective falls short when applied to those immigrants and ethnic minority people who are not poor, and who have somewhat different sport participation patterns.

As expected, my findings support findings by researchers (Seefeldt et al., 2002, Stodolska, 1998, Yu & Berryman, 1996) who indicated recent immigrant adults are constrained by language problems, inability to find recreation partners, not feeling at ease within the mainstream, and a lack of awareness of existing opportunities. For the male subjects, securing employment was the most important task upon arriving in Canada. Consequently, the participants reported that learning the English language is only

important to the extent that it may secure employment. The results suggest that leisure participation and enjoyment in the new host country is inhibited for those individuals who lack proficiency in the English language. The findings of this study provide support for authors who indicated constraints commonly encountered by the mainstream can be reinforced for ethnic minority immigrants who are not well adjusted (Seefeldt et al.; Stodolska, 1998). The subjects perceived less free time to participate in leisure activities in their new host country. The data results indicated the participants have a different conception of 'time'. Participants reported that they perceived their free time is being challenged by longer working hours, family responsibilities, and household chores; obligations and responsibilities they were not accustomed to performing in their native countries.

This study supports the finding that ethnicity is an important aspect of a person's identity (Floyd et al, 1994; Karlis, 2004; Hutchinson, 1987, Irwin et al, 1990; Juniu, 2000). My findings indicate cultural processes are most important in explaining variations in leisure participation among ethnic minority immigrant adults. Consistent with Karlis (2004), the recreational activity preferences reported by the interviewees indicate a strong identification with their own background culture. This does not dismiss the significance of other factors in shaping the participation patterns of peoples. All subjects represent individuals who were shaped through a unique set of socialization processes, and who in turn shaped their own recreation patterns on the basis of what they judged to be important. Nevertheless, the impact of ethnicity on recreation patterns is profound. The patterns of participation reported by the participants indicate ethnicity (i.e., intrapersonal constraint) represents an important dimension in the selection of recreation

experiences for ethnic minority immigrant adults. The subjects studied indicated they are challenged by a lack of opportunities to participate in recreation activities they are familiar with; they described a disinterest in popular Canadian activities. Yet, many of the physical activities reported to be of interest to the participants (e.g. walking, running, basketball, baseball, volleyball, and dancing) are popular recreation activities in Canadian culture. Thus, my findings suggest it is not a limited choice of recreation activities that challenges the participants, but rather the way of 'doing' recreation. As suggested by Karlis (2004), "what we prefer and actually participate in is largely influenced by the values, beliefs, and traditions of the culture(s) to which we belong" (p. 88). Recent immigrant adults may not know how to 'do' leisure when they (as participants) are removed from their familiar recreational environments²⁵.

Leisure Facilitators

A danger that arises from systematic and detailed analysis of social phenomena (i.e., leisure constraints) is that problems are often deconstructed into a number of smaller factors in a way that undermines understanding of the original problem as a whole (Samdahl, 2005). Raymore (2002) proposes that to fully understand recreation involvement we need to understand both facilitators and constraints, and how they work together to produce participation and non-participation and their accompanying experiences. The potential facilitating role of available opportunities has to be considered. When immigrating to a country with a different culture, ethnic minority

²⁵ Based on the assumption that recreation meanings and practices are given meaning through dominant ideas and values, the dominant ways of recreating in Canada may not align with the values and practices accorded to recreation activities by immigrant adults. For example, one of the participants (Cristina) reported not being able to 'experience' recreational dancing as she had in her native country. She reported that dancing was very important to the Mexican culture, but not in Canada.

adults will not have some aspects of their culture available, but at the same time new opportunities will become available.

My findings indicated recreation administrators considered recreation to be a fundamental human need, essential for a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Raymore (2002) suggests the constraints approach is limited by the assumption that recreation is desired or needed by all peoples. If someone doesn't participate in an activity it must be because they can't, and if they do participate they must have overcome or negotiated constraints to achieve participation (Raymore, 2002). Policymakers cannot assume that all people should be interested in all forms of leisure or that the patterns of all lives should equate to the same leisure opportunities and interests. Policymakers recommended public service providers comply with the intent and spirit of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Human Rights Legislation*; municipalities should modify programs to integrate special populations, and undertake regular assessments to determine community needs or interests not being met through existing programs (ISRC, 1987). Accordingly, administrators indicated they modify recreation programming and community facilities to create equal opportunities for ethnic minorities. Policymakers and recreation administrators operate under the assumption that recreation is 'desired' and 'needed' by all individuals, including ethnic minority immigrants. The policy analysis suggested ethnic minority groups have not been included in policy deliberations; policymakers have made recommendations to address the needs and interests of ethnic minority groups without consulting what it is they actually need and desire. Similarly, recreation administrators revealed community recreation centers provide programs and services according to the (voiced) needs of the public. Rather than assuming immigrants to

Canada have a desire or need for certain forms of leisure, policymakers need to include representatives from ethnic minority groups in policy deliberations.

My findings suggest leisure experiences for ethnic minority immigrant adults are facilitated by opportunities to 'do' recreation as they did in their native countries. This is consistent with the findings of Scott and Munson (1994), who reported adult participation is positively related to recreational experiences and involvement during childhood and adolescence. The participants reported social networks, opportunities to exercise outdoors, opportunities to practice the English language, and family oriented activities as facilitators to leisure involvement.

The results indicate recent immigrant adults would benefit from more information about indoor facilities available in the community to participate in activities of interest to them. Indoor facilities can provide settings for immigrant adults to practice ethno-cultural recreation activities and learn about other forms of recreation practiced by the mainstream. The subjects studied indicated they are not aware that there are facilities and programs in the community where they may engage in leisure activities of interest to them. Most participants reported very little exposure to community recreational programs and facilities. Some of the participants reported they did not know community recreation facilities exist. Immigrant adults who reported some knowledge of community recreation facilities and programs indicated the programs and facilities are developed for children, are expensive, and don't provide programs or opportunities for activities of interest to them.

Community recreation facilities can facilitate new social networks, provide a medium for learning new forms of recreation and practicing the English language, and

improve and sustain the health of ethnic minority adults. The participants reported social networks facilitated their participation in leisure-based physical activity in their native countries. Most of the participants reported recreation participation in their native countries occurred in the company of friends and family. For the male participants in particular, leisure activities that include multiple family members may increase the likelihood that they will partake in leisure activities. Johnson (2000) argued that although recent immigrants valued preventative health action, they exhibited a low level of understanding, or perception, that physical activity could actually preserve health. The data provides little support for this statement; all the subjects agreed participation in leisure-time physical activity is beneficial for their health. Recent immigrant adults report a deteriorating state of health with time since immigrating to Canada. The findings suggest ethnic minority immigrants would be interested in opportunities to participate in physical activity to improve their current state of health. Mandatory language training could incorporate recreation activities to teach immigrant adults popular Canadian leisure activities and inform them of programs and facilities in the community that support both traditional and non-traditional recreation opportunities. Social interactions initiated through recreation can also help recent immigrant adults learn and improve the English language.

Chapter Summary

Preservation of Diverse Canadian Heritages

As anticipated, recreation policies have been developed according to dominant conceptions of social problems. Dominant values and meanings were etched into problem definitions and policy recommendations; meanings were simply factored in, rather than

acknowledging they play a central role in an individual's motivation to act within any social context (Karlis & Dawson, 1995). As expected, recreation policies have been created without the input of various stakeholders, including ethnic minority groups. While there were several policy recommendations that pertained to underserved groups that could be directed at ethnic minority groups, none of the recommendations were directed at preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians. The concern was for addressing structural and social barriers to participation, rather than for the removal of dominant values or inclusion of diverse forms of recreation that may serve to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians. Dominant legitimations revealed by the policy analysis (i.e., personal autonomy, optimizing resources, health gains) were found to influence the values and attitudes of municipal recreation administrators.

Leisure Constraints and Facilitators

As anticipated, recent immigrant adults are challenged by specific constraints to leisure participation not found among the general adult population. The administrators interviewed reported several initiatives are either in place or are in the development stages to create supportive environments and address barriers to participation for ethnic minority immigrants. Strategies to address language barriers include staffing community centers with individuals who are fluent in more than one language and referring members to translation services provided by the municipality. The administrators reported specific cultural barriers are addressed by hiring individuals who are representative of the community, offering diversity training for staff, offering an assortment of recreation

programs, and modifying facilities and programs to include groups that otherwise would be unable to participate (i.e., covering pool windows for Muslim women).

As anticipated, the findings indicated recreation administrators have recognized ethnic minority immigrant adults are challenged by constraints not found among the general adult population. However, recreation programs are created to be self-sustaining; if the program is not subsidized by a government grant or private organization, then user fees are implemented to offset the cost of the programs. As predicted, administrators reported that fiscal restraint and hiring practices have inhibited the ability of municipal recreation services to address the specific needs and interests of ethnic minority immigrant adults. This finding was found to be inconsistent with the 2006 document, *Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy*, which states “Parks and Recreation will strive to ensure that the pricing of its recreational services does not preclude or diminish participation” (City of Windsor, 2006, section 5). My findings indicated that government-subsidized programs, and programs funded by private organizations are prevalent. These tend to be geared towards children and youth.

Understanding the participation patterns requires knowledge of not only the challenges and opportunities perceived by the individual, but also the environment in which the individual exists. My findings suggest social (i.e., past recreation interests) and societal influences (i.e., promotion of health gains) interact with the individual to produce participation or non-participation. My findings indicated recreation administrators considered recreation to be a fundamental human need, essential for a balanced and healthy lifestyle. However, the results suggest ethnic minority immigrants may not be ‘interested’ or ‘could do without’ recreation physical activity. Hence, the removal of

wide-ranging constraints to participation will not necessarily increase participation patterns among ethnic minorities (Tirone, 1997). My findings suggest leisure constraints and leisure facilitators work together to produce participation or non-participation. The subjects reported occasional participation in free outdoor activities of interest to them during the warmer months of the year, and almost no participation in physical recreation during the colder months of the year.

My findings suggest leisure experiences for ethnic minority immigrant adults may be facilitated by opportunities to 'do' recreation as they did in their native countries. According to Raymore (2002), a more complete approach to understanding participation patterns can be achieved by considering the individual and his or her interpretation of that environment and his or her relation to it. The concept of facilitators recognizes those resources that give people the "freedom to" participate (Raymore, 2002). The participants reported social networks, opportunities to exercise outdoors, and family oriented activities as facilitators to leisure involvement. Community recreation facilities can facilitate new social networks, provide a medium for learning new forms of recreation and practicing the English language, and improve and sustain the health of ethnic minority adults.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In this thesis I investigated how community recreation leaders can create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in physical recreation among recent immigrant adults. To address the research question, three sub-problems were answered: (1) How do selected national and Ontario government documents attend to minimizing constraints and facilitating opportunities for ethnic minority immigrants to participate in physical recreation? (2) How do municipal recreation administrators in Windsor, Ontario create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in leisure-based physical activity among recent immigrant adults? And (3) what are the perceived opportunities and challenges to participation in leisure-based physical activity experienced by Spanish-speaking recent immigrant adults who reside in Windsor, Ontario?

To understand how national and provincial recreation policies have addressed the specific needs and interests of ethnic minority immigrant adults, I analyzed nine government policies/documents from 1983 to 2006. The eight national and Ontario government documents I have chosen to include in my thesis are related to policies that affect the delivery of community recreation programs in Windsor, Ontario. I have also included a municipal document, *Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy* (2006), developed by the city of Windsor in my investigation. The analysis drew from Chalip's (1995) policy analysis framework to determine if the legitimations (rationale) and attributions (solutions) of national and provincial recreation documents have included

or excluded the needs and interests of ethnic minority groups in Canada. To ensure consistency and a more accurate collection of data, I developed a document analysis framework to identify the following: key actors, focusing events, problem definition(s), legitimation(s), attribution(s), and specific policy(ies)/ recommendation(s)/ programme(s) in reference to the preservation of diverse cultural heritages.

In the second sub-problem, I interviewed three recreation administrators employed by the City of Windsor, and one administrator employed by the city of Mississauga. Interviews were conducted to explore how municipal recreation administrators in Windsor, Ontario create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in physical recreation among recent immigrant adults. Interviewing administrators from two different municipalities allowed me to compare and contrast how two Ontario communities create supportive environments for participation and address barriers that negatively impact participation in sport and physical activity for ethnic minority immigrant adults. A semi-structured interview guide was devised based on the recommendations of national and provincial recreation policies, and pertinent factors said to affect the recreation participation of ethnic minority groups and new immigrant adults. The audio data was transcribed verbatim, and thoroughly reviewed and compared with notes taken during the interviews. The data was organized and analyzed according to common themes that emerged from the literature and from the policy analysis.

To explore the perceived opportunities and challenges to participation in leisure-based physical activity experienced by recent immigrant adults, I interviewed six adults who immigrated to Canada within the last five years who resided in Windsor, Ontario,

and reported Spanish as their native tongue. Semi-structured interviews in the Spanish language permitted flexibility in terms of inherent language issues and acknowledgement of cultural values and sensitivities. The elements of the interview guide were developed, in part, by adapting the culture-related variables used to explain recreation and leisure involvement in the Ethnicity and Public Recreation Participation Model (Gomez, 2002). In addition to the variables adopted from the literature, the interview guide was developed to explore the effect of geographic relocation (i.e., climate and physical environment) as a variable that interacts with other culture-specific variables to explain recreation involvement. The possibility existed that the interviews would be rather lengthy and contain information not significant to this study; as a result selected transcriptions were used to transcribe the interviews. The data was then organized and analyzed in relation to common variables contained in the literature.

Conclusions

Sub-Problem #1

The policy analysis revealed recreation policies were created to define the roles and responsibilities of various levels of governments and the private sector in an effort to reduce the public's dependency on the government for direct service provision. The concern over reducing public funding prompted policymakers to recommend the individual is personally responsible for being the provider and recipient of recreation opportunities (ISRC, 1987). Only when an individual or a group is found to be disadvantaged should public agencies provide recreation services to ensure equal opportunities. Policymakers recommended public service providers comply with the intent and spirit of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Human Rights*

Legislation; municipalities should modify programs to integrate special populations, and undertake regular assessments to determine community needs or interests not being met through existing programs (ISRC, 1987). The concern was over equality of recreation services. Policymakers did not recommend public service providers comply with laws introduced to preserve and enhance diverse Canadian heritages. Absent from the documents were references to the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1988).

Sub-Problem #2

The results from this study indicated municipal recreation administrators are shaped by the recommendations of policymakers. My findings indicate that the implicit meanings contained within policies impact the development of recreation programs and services directed at communities. The administrators interviewed agreed recreation is essential for a well-balanced lifestyle that can enhance an individual's health and overall quality of life. Municipal recreation programs can teach life skills, facilitate integration, and promote independent lifestyles to segments of the population found to be underserved or requiring special attention. The results indicated policy solutions constrain the ability of municipal governments to act as providers and supporters of diverse recreation opportunities. Challenged by government cutbacks, recreation administrators reported they do not have the necessary resources to offer non-traditional recreation programs. My findings suggest municipalities can only respond to the particular needs of the community within the scope of recommendations of national and provincial policies.

Sub-Problem #3

Consistent with the literature, the results indicated ethnic minority immigrant adults are challenged by a number of factors not found among the general population. As anticipated, socio-economic status challenges ethnic minority immigrants. The administrators interviewed suggested, and my results confirmed, user fees constrain new Canadian immigrant adults from participation in recreation activities. Only one of the participants reported year-round participation in recreational physical activity. Most of the participants reported frequent participation in outdoor recreational physical activities during the warmer months of the year, and little participation in any recreational physical activities during months of the year when it is colder. These findings potentially suggest ethnic minority immigrant adults have a difficult time adapting to the meanings, attitudes, and values of mainstream recreation practices. Unfamiliar and 'disinterested' with traditional recreation opportunities, unable to secure new social networks, and unable to afford and/or identify with recreation fees, ethnic minority immigrant adults are constrained from participation. My findings provide support for the Ethnicity Theory. My results suggest recreation interests and the meanings accorded to recreation and physical activity are formed and held in place by cultural meanings attributed to ethnic identity. The findings provide support for the Ethnicity Theory in that participation in recreation for ethnic minority immigrants is not merely limited by a lack of money, but rather by a limited conception and understanding of why recreation fees are present.

Theoretical Implications

Consistent with the literature, my findings indicate immigrant adults have to contend with multiple barriers that act together to restrict participation in recreation

activities. The results support a recommendation by researchers suggesting recreation providers need to understand the “cultural context” of the participant or potential participant. Spanish-speaking immigrants are particularly challenged with adaptations to a distinct geographic environment. Accordingly, policymakers need to ensure opportunities for municipal recreation agencies to offer ethno-cultural recreation activities are not constrained by dominant values entrenched in the recommendations of recreation policies. Ethno-cultural recreation activities should be encouraged by Canadian governments seeking to increase overall physical activity levels and preserve the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

Dominant cultural ideas embedded in recreation policies shape and limit the recreation choices available to new Canadian immigrant adults. The policy analysis revealed a multicultural platform might not be enough to ensure the multicultural heritage of Canadians is preserved and enhanced. Ethnic minority immigrants, challenged by a number of factors associated with adaptation to new ways of life, cannot be expected to recreate ethno-cultural recreation traditions. As suggested by the results, ethno-cultural recreation traditions are constructed by the ‘particulars’ surrounding the activity, including social networks and connections with the environment in which the activity takes place. Policymakers attribute equal opportunities for ethnic minorities to the removal of structural barriers (e.g., attention to language difficulties, facility design). What is needed is attention to the intrapersonal barriers to participation for ethnic minority immigrant adults. Municipal recreation agencies would benefit from the allocation of specific resources to research and develop the needs and interests of ethnic minority immigrants in their communities. Identifying the enabling and constraining

factors in respect to the conditions specifically found among new immigrants and devising alternative programs and strategies when the constraining factors outweigh the enabling ones are part of a necessary planning strategy for increasing participation in physical activity levels among recent immigrants. Research into these dimensions provides us with a better understanding about the attitudes and experiences towards recreation of new immigrant populations, which can then be used to minimize negative outcomes and facilitate positive ones. In addition to increasing levels of physical activity among new Canadian immigrant adults, such actions would facilitate the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of the community.

Many of the variables said to affect participation patterns among ethnic minority immigrant adults were supported by my findings, but were not specific or conclusive enough to support or challenge the arrangement of causal relationships between variables proposed by Gomez (2002). For example, this study did not ask questions to reveal the socio-economic status of the participants. The focus was to investigate how constraints to participation, such as user fees, interact with cultural factors to determine participation patterns. The findings of this study suggest the cultural 'meanings' accorded to recreation interact with other variables to affect participation patterns. Thus, it is not necessarily the presence or absence of constraints that distinguish participants from non-participants, but rather the interaction between factors. My findings suggest the phenomenon of ethnicity cannot be understood apart from other variables affecting recreation participation. In particular, my findings suggest age and life cycle patterns are important variables to consider for future research.

Practical Implications

Understanding the role played by various cultural factors is critical to increase recreation participation patterns among immigrant adults. The results indicated recent immigrant adults have a difficult time adapting to the ways of the new host country; thus they prefer ethno-cultural recreation traditions. Policymakers need to recognize that cultural meanings and attitudes influence the participation patterns of ethnic minority groups, and therefore ensure the interests and needs of new Canadians are sought out during policy deliberations. Recreation administrators working with ethnic minority groups should not assume that recreation is 'desired' or 'needed' by all people. Recreation administrators need to consider both constraints and facilitators to participation and develop strategies that teach new Canadian immigrants skills and to appreciate different leisure activities and leisure environments. Public recreation agencies seeking to increase physical activity levels among ethnic minority immigrants would benefit from understanding facilitators to participation. The results from this study suggest that understanding leisure facilitators can assist decision makers when developing recreation education programs for ethnic minority immigrants. For example, the administrator from Mississauga described a program developed by his organization to train Muslim women to become swimming instructors and aquatic leaders. Muslim women would be facilitated to participate in swimming programs where the instructor was of Muslim origin.

Recreation administrators must move beyond the recreation site and go out into the community they are serving. Enhanced collaboration with organizations serving new Canadians could address some of the challenges reported by the administrators. For

example, educating new immigrants about the benefits of recreation in conjunction with English education would facilitate opportunities for immigrant adults to learn about mainstream activities and meanings accorded to physical recreation. These organizations are staffed with individuals who speak various languages, and understand the processes and difficulties of adaptation to a new host country. In addition, the organizations can help recreation administrators develop programs and generate solutions to create supportive environments for ethnic minority immigrant adults to become engaged in both mainstream and ethno-cultural recreation activities. Recreation administrators could train staff and volunteers to educate new Canadians about the benefits of recreation and inform them of opportunities to participate in traditional and non-traditional recreation activities. Recreation administrators should not expect ethnic community organizations to develop and provide physical recreation opportunities for new immigrant adults. Nor should they assume organizations serving new immigrant adults would inform individuals about recreation opportunities in the community. The use of this study's findings could aid the development of recreation education programs that are appropriate for ethnic minority immigrant adults.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Qualitative research typically results in a large amount of diverse but connected data. As a researcher, it is important to be very familiar with those data and understand every aspect of them. In this type of research, subjective involvement in the process is not seen as a danger for validity, and the researcher does not try to deny a connection with the material (Kirby et al., 2006). According to Thomas and Nelson (2001), the insight, sensitivity, and integrity of the researcher can serve to strengthen the research. For me as

an immigrant from a Spanish-speaking nation, this kind of relationship with the topic opens doors to deeper understanding, as I may be able to identify with the experiences of the participants in the study. My autobiography (Appendix I) explains how I, as a researcher, might be connected to the question. This insight enables the reader to interpret my analysis of the data in this light. According to Gramann and Allison (1999), how we think about things, the questions we ask, and the interpretations that we make of the things we come to know, is significantly influenced by our overall life experiences. I have, however, attentively looked for comments that challenge my understanding of recreation facilitators and constraints in order to try and recognize my subjective biases. To minimize the effect of any subjective researcher bias I have broken down the main objective of my research into three sub-problems. By breaking down the research question into small components that still make sense by themselves, the data set becomes manageable for thorough analysis (Kirby et al., 2006). In addition, I have answered the interview questions myself (Appendix H) before interviewing the immigrant participants, stored the answers, and compared and contrasted my answers to those collected to address research limitations as a result of personal background. My answers were used to reduce the influence of personal background when translating the data from Spanish to English.

I delimited my study with selected transcription of the data collected from the immigrant participants. This was done primarily to address limitations associated with translating data in relation to differences in sentence structure. Nonetheless, a limitation of this method is that some aspects of the interviews may have been left out as a result of the translation process.

Sample Selection

According to Thomas, Nelson, and Silverman (2005), “the selection of participants in qualitative research is purposeful, which in essence means that a sample from which one can learn the most is selected” (p. 349). Consequently, qualitative research does not require large samples (Thomas et al., 2005). I delimited my study to Spanish-speaking immigrants residing in Windsor, Ontario. As a result, there is an automatic limitation of how well the group studied represents all ethnic minority immigrant groups. Although the study consisted of a detailed examination of a single case (i.e., Spanish-speaking immigrants), the underlying assumption is that this case is representative of many other such cases (Thomas & Nelson, 2001). That is not to say that the findings from this study are applicable to all ethnic minority groups, but rather that the findings of this research, together with other similar case studies, may play a part in confirming or refining knowledge about the influence of ethnicity on recreation participation. This is consistent with Mitra and Lankford (1999), who suggest case studies merely reflect the immediate purpose of the research: to discover and clarify the complexities of a single phenomenon.

My investigation addresses the suggestion that research on ethnic minorities should attempt to “...discover patterns that can be generalized to all immigrant groups, while at the same time isolating unique characteristics of certain minorities” (Stodolska & Yi, 2003, p. 50). It is through this process that we may be able to extend the knowledge base so that recreation practitioners can better serve the public. Thomas and Nelson (2001) suggest, “the case study’s ultimate worth may be that it provides insight and knowledge of a general nature for improved practices” (pp. 281-282). In addition, by delimiting my

study to Spanish speaking immigrants, I have constructed my research so that the knowledge gained from this is a real resource for the participants of this study and for the recreational administrators who serve them.

Most of the research that has investigated the effect of ethnicity on recreation participation among immigrants in Canada has been conducted on children and youth; this is no surprise considering most recreation programs are created to serve this group. I believe that addressing the needs of the adult population is just as important. Adults are more likely to develop chronic diseases linked to physical inactivity and obesity. Additionally, adults serve as role models for our youth. We should not expect the youth of our communities to engage in regular physical activity while the adult population continues to be sedentary. Accordingly, my study has been delimited to recent immigrant adults between the ages of 18 and 49 years. By studying the effect of ethnicity on physical recreation patterns, I anticipated my findings would facilitate opportunities for adults to sustain physically active lifestyles after immigrating to Canada. When choosing participants for the study, I was able to ensure both genders were represented in the study. No relationship existed between any of the participants other than the criteria for participating in the study.

A delimitation of the study is that the sample is from one geographic location. Perceived challenges and benefits associated with recreation opportunities are being collected according to the experiences of one particular group (Spanish-speaking immigrants) in one geographic location (Windsor, Ontario). The findings cannot be generalized to other groups in the same location, or the same group in another location. However, it is the perceived challenges and benefits experienced as a result of recreation

opportunities, including adapting to a different climate, that I was interested in exploring. To ensure consistency in describing and interpreting the data, I used a theoretical conceptual framework (EPRP Model, Gomez, 2002). Although the findings may have revealed perceived challenges and opportunities specific to the group under study, the results provided support for the literature, and extended our understanding of those factors said to affect recreation participation among ethnic minority immigrant adults. Such knowledge may assist researchers and practitioners seeking to increase physical recreation participation among recent ethnic minority immigrants.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study identified future needs in the following areas. First, extensive research has been conducted on leisure constraints. More research is needed to investigate leisure facilitators. My findings suggest leisure experiences for ethnic minority immigrant adults may be facilitated by opportunities to ‘do’ recreation as they did in their native countries. This would allow researchers to identify the interplay of constraints and facilitators to leisure participation. This would potentially allow researchers to determine which factors have the greatest potential to increase participation patterns among new Canadian immigrant adults.

Second, the focus of my study was to explore how municipal recreation leaders in Windsor, Ontario can facilitate participation and address barriers for ethnic minority immigrant adults. As a result, my study was delimited to interviewing three municipal recreation administrators from Windsor, Ontario, and one recreation administrator from Mississauga, Ontario. The administrator from Mississauga provided valuable insight for administrators in Windsor and other municipalities to consider. Thus, it would be useful

to conduct a study across multiple municipalities to investigate how recreation is facilitated for ethnic minorities throughout the province of Ontario. The results could be used to develop municipal access policies and enhance collaboration across municipalities to address the emerging needs of a multicultural society. Another suggestion would be to conduct similar research in larger and smaller communities in Ontario. This type of research could examine how the size of ethnic communities within municipalities affects the preservation of diverse physical recreation practices, and the extent to which ethnic minority immigrants participate in both mainstream and ethno-cultural physical recreation activities according to the size of the ethnic community. This type of research could also explore how leisure constraints and facilitators according to the size of the ethnic community affect ethnic minority immigrants.

Third, results from this study suggest ethnic minority immigrant adults have difficulty adapting to their new physical environment. However, as this was a case study of Spanish-speaking immigrants, results are specific to this particular group and thus not generalizable to other ethnic minority immigrant groups. Future research could explore the perceived challenges and opportunities to participation for other ethnic minority groups. This would allow researchers to examine whether the results gathered from one ethnic group of immigrants are case-specific, or if there are generalizable factors applicable to recreation programming for multiple ethnic groups. Furthermore, this study was delimited to adult immigrants who have resided in Canada for no longer than five years. Future studies could benefit from including immigrant adults who have resided in Canada for longer periods. It would also be useful to expand the number of research participants to investigate variations according to age, gender, and socio-economic statu

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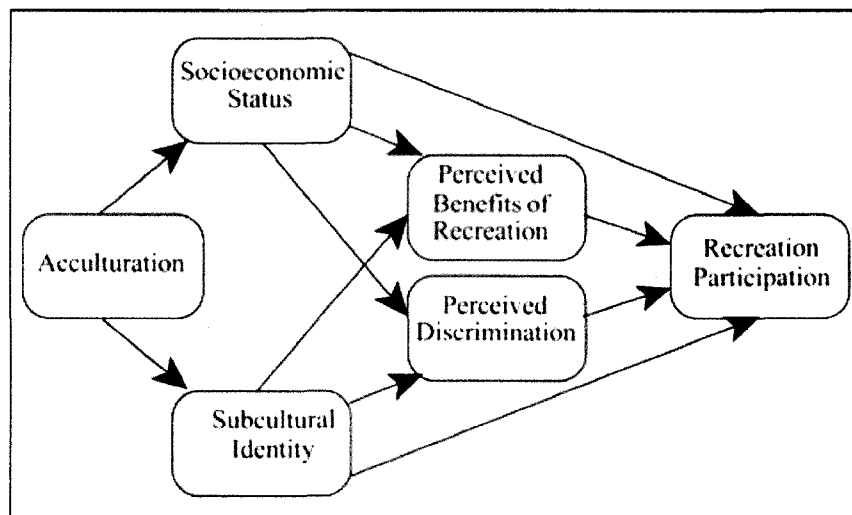
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APPENDIX A

The Ethnicity and Public Recreation Participation Model (Gomez, 2002)



The EPRP model reflects the major concepts discussed in the literature and demonstrates how the causal relationships between these concepts were conceptualized based on prior research (Gomez, 2006). Specifically, the EPRP model (2002) examines the relative influence of sub-cultural identity (Washbourne, 1978), acculturation (Floyd et al., 1993), socioeconomic status (Washbourne, 1978), perceived benefits (Klobus-Edwards, 1981), and perceived discrimination (West, 1989) on recreation participation. The term ‘sub-cultural identity’ was meant to reflect Washbourne’s (1978) initial conception of ethnicity; that is, the extent to which one identifies with a culture other than the dominant one. Gomez also adopted the assertion by Floyd et al. (1993) that ethnicity or sub-cultural identity must be considered within the broader context of cultural assimilation, which may be measured by acculturation or “the extent to which one identifies with a culture other than the dominant (majority) one “ (Gomez, 2002, p. 133). According to the EPRP (2002), language preference is believed to measure one’s level of assimilation into the dominant culture, thus having a direct influence on the strength of the individual’s sub-cultural identity. According to Gomez (2002), the relationship between sub-cultural identity and participation is meant to reflect the Ethnicity Theory. In similar fashion, the relationship between socioeconomic status and participation reflects the Marginality Theory. The use of ‘perceived benefits’ reflects the work of Klobus-Edwards (1981). Based on the premise that people from different cultures may be expected to want different things from their sport and recreation experiences, Gomez contended that the perceived benefits of participating will vary with the extent to which one identifies with his/her own sub-culture or the dominant culture, and those unique benefits will influence their participation (Taylor & Doherty, 2005). Finally, Gomez incorporates the concept of perceived discrimination from West (1989), suggesting perceived discrimination may be a deterrent to participation in recreation.

APPENDIX B

Document Analysis Framework

Document Name:**Date Created:**

Key actors	
Focusing event(s)	
Problem definition(s)	
Legitimation(s)	
Attribution(s)	
Reference to preservation of diverse cultural heritages (i.e., ethnic minority groups, new Canadians)	Policy(ies)/ Recommendation(s)/ Programme(s)
	Resources (Human/ Financial/ Material)

APPENDIX C

Sample Document Analysis Framework

Document Name: Interprovincial Recreation Statement**Date Created: 1983**

Key actors	Provincial Ministers responsible for Recreation and Sport Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council (ISRC)
Focusing event(s)	Federal government moves away from recreation, instead focusing on fitness aspect. Provincial Recreation Ministers endorse definition of recreation (1974) that includes activities that are not confined solely to sport and physical recreation. Constitutional responsibility for recreation handed to provinces and territories in 1978. Publication of federal paper " <i>Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation</i> " (1980). Conference of the Recreation Ministers in 1980 commissioning the ISRC to develop a paper which would clearly articulate the responsibilities of different levels of government and encourage mutual cooperation.
Problem definition(s)	The problem was to define the roles of provincial and municipal governments in recreation as a result of growing consumption and interests by individuals in recreation and leisure goods and services.
Legitimation(s)	Growing demand for and consumption of recreation and leisure goods and services. Recreation is a social service in the same way that health and education are considered social services. Recreation assists individual and community development. Improves quality of life. Enhances social functioning. Geographic communities remain the focal point for recreation activities. Recreation is a personal matter – just as individuals should accept personal responsibility for maintaining good health, people need to develop and provide for their recreational needs, independent of government involvement. Reduced dependency on government to provide direct services.
Attribution(s)	Recreation in our democratic society will always remain the prerogative of the individual. Define roles of various levels of government, and the private sector, to minimize duplication of efforts. P/T Government assumes a leadership and supporter role; not the primary provider of recreation opportunities. Government is responsible to nurture the development of private and commercial opportunities to reduce the demands on the tax base. Recreation opportunities provided and dependent on the volunteer and private sectors. Each P/T develops its own policy in line with this policy and provides sufficient resources to attain the objectives of this policy. Observe and analyze recreation trends and issues for the purpose of keeping recreation policy current.

	<p>Provide resources to municipal government through grants, training of volunteer leaders, encourage new programs and facilities. Support inter-governmental cooperation. Integrated approach to delivery of recreation services. Consider the designation of an advisory body that represents all P/Ts. Where additional resources are required and economies can be gained from collective action, community scale resources and organizations should be cooperatively developed or utilized to meet recreation needs. Municipalities are closest to the people; for this reason, they are the primary public supplier of direct recreation services. The basic role of the Municipality is to ensure the availability of the broadest range of recreation opportunities for every individual and group consistent with available community resources. The policy gave the ISRC powers to make recommendations to the Recreation Ministers and Deputy Ministers, as well as to provide a forum for exchange of information among the provinces and with the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch (federal). The ISRC becomes the Council for cooperation between F/P/T governments. Creation of a three-year issue and action program – a proposed list of issues and activities is to be developed in order to set priorities, ensure continuity and encourage the best use of the available resources. This is to be reviewed annually at the Minister's conference.</p>
<p>Reference to preservation of diverse cultural heritages (i.e., ethnic minority groups, new Canadians)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Policy(ies)/ Recommendation(s)/ Programme(s)</p> <p>Municipalities should modify programs to integrate special populations – ensure equitable recreation opportunities. Undertake regular assessment to determine community needs or interest not being met through existing programs. Comply with the intent of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Human Rights Legislation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Resources (Human/ Financial/ Material)</p> <p>Make every effort to provide for unmet recreation needs through the development of initiatives by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) existing community groups, organizations or agencies, (b) the establishment of community associations, etc. (c) the private and commercial sector or, if none of the above are feasible, (d) direct involvement of the Municipal authority.

APPENDIX D

Municipal Recreation Administrators Interview Guide

Name:

Position:

Interview Date:

Introduction Statement

Thank you for taking the time to do this interview. The information you provide is very valuable to my study. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes to complete. If you agree, I would like to record the interview using an audiotape to help make sure that I have your exact words. This also ensures an accurate representation of your experience as a recreation leader within the City of Windsor. Because your position within the city is well known, it is unlikely that I can assure you confidentiality. The information you share with me today will only be used for the purposes of my research. I will use the information gathered from this interview to examine ways in which recreation leaders can attend to minimizing constraints and facilitating opportunities for recent immigrant adults to participate in physical recreation. Upon completion of my research, I anticipate the formulation of program and service suggestions for use by your department. I would like to remind you that it is your right to refuse to answer any of the questions or to stop the interview at any time. If you have any questions or do not understand what I am asking, please do not hesitate to ask me to clarify my comments more fully.

Municipal Recreation Administrators Interview Guide

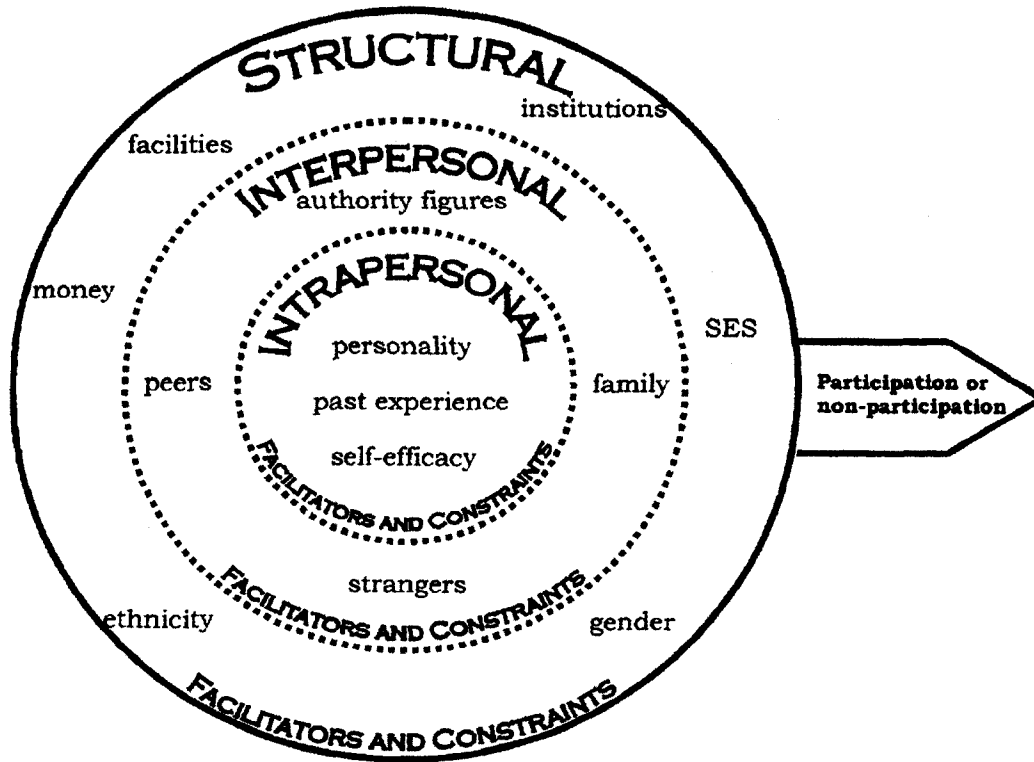
1. **Tell me why recreation is important to you?** *Explored dominant ideas entrenched in their personal understanding of recreation. This question was used to identify the extent to which recreation policies have shaped and influenced the recreation administrators interviewed.*
2. **Did you have a role in the creation of or any national or provincial document/policy that affects the delivery of recreation opportunities?** *Municipal government employees were important stakeholders in the creation of The Canadian Sport Policy (2002), Active 2010 (2004), and the Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy (2005).*
If the answer is no, do you believe you should be consulted in the future, when government documents and policies are drafted? Why/ Why not?

- 3. Windsor recently formulated the Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy. Did you have a role in the creation of this policy? What was it?** *One of the governing rules and regulations of Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy created by the city of Windsor in 2006 states that the Department of Parks and Recreation will strive to provide a range of services that reflect the diversity of interest and culture in the community.*
- 4. In light of decreasing physical activity levels among Canadians, the provincial government has introduced a provincial strategy (Active 2010) to increase the percentage of individuals who are physically active. How has this strategy affected the way your department operates?** *Explores the benefits to physical recreation promoted by the Department of Parks and Recreation. Active 2010 Strategy identifies four strategic approaches that directly contribute to the government's priorities and are integral to the implementation of the strategy and the realization of the vision and goals.*
- 5. How are user groups or potential user groups identified in the community?** *Explores how the Department of Parks and Recreation seeks to provide recreation opportunities for all. According to the National Recreation Statement (1987), the basic role of the municipality is to ensure the availability of the broadest range of recreation opportunities for every individual and group consistent with available community resources.*
- 6. How do you evaluate, and ultimately continue, cancel or modify a program or service?** *Municipalities should undertake a regular assessment to determine community needs or interests not being met through existing community programs (National Recreation Statement, 1987). According to the Interprovincial Recreation Statement (1983), municipalities should undertake a regular assessment to determine community needs or interests not being met through existing community programs.*
- 7. Can you describe programs or service created to encourage cross-cultural participation and address the interests of Windsor's diverse, multi-cultural community?** *The Parks and Recreation User Fee and Pricing Policy created by the city of Windsor in 2006 also states that cross-cultural participation will be encouraged and the department will seek to expand its programs to include activities of interest to Windsor's diverse, multi-cultural community.*
- 8. How does your organization create supportive environments for participation in physical activity among ethnic minorities?** *Creating a supportive environment is a strategic approach of Active 2010.*
- 9. How does your organization address barriers that negatively impact participation in physical activity among ethnic minorities?** *Removal of barriers that negatively impact participation among vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities, is a strategic approach of Active 2010.*

10. **How are cultural and language barriers addressed in the delivery of recreation opportunities?** *Addresses potential barriers specific to recent immigrants.*
11. **How does your organization motivate New Canadian immigrants to become and remain physically active?** *Promotion is a strategic approach of Active 2010; ethnic minorities have been identified as a target audience by the strategy. Education is a strategic approach of Active 2010. However, according to the National Recreation Statement (1987), individuals should freely identify and pursue recreation activities of their choice.*
12. **Are there partnerships formed with other municipal or provincial departments, or community organizations to create and or promote programs to increase physical activity levels among New Canadian immigrants?** *According to the National Recreation Statement (1987), government is by no means the central primary provider of recreation opportunities; municipal Parks and Recreation Departments have assumed the role of supporter and patron to facilitate recreation opportunities for all.*
13. **Does your organization provide any assistance or support to private and/or non-profit community agencies serving the recreation needs of new Canadians?** *According to the National Recreation Statement (1987), the role of the private/ not-for profit sector is crucial.*
14. **What do you think are the greatest challenges to offering recreation opportunities for new Canadians?**
15. **In your opinion, how can we best address the needs and preferences of new Canadians to the community?**

APPENDIX E

Nested Model of Leisure Constraints and Facilitators (Raymore, 2002)



APPENDIX F

Recent Immigrants Interview Guide

Subject Profile

Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Transgender	Marital Status: _____
What is your country of origin? _____			
How long have you been in Canada? _____			
What is the primary language you use to communicate at home? _____			
Choose a name that will be used in the study to report your data. This will help to assure anonymity for the information you share in the interview. _____			
Consent form received: Y/N		Consent to record the interview: Y/N	
Interview Date: _____			

Interview Guide

1. **What was the reason for your immigration to Canada?**
2. **How would you describe your process of immigration?** *According to the EPRP Model, acculturation to the new host country has a direct effect on socioeconomic status and sub-cultural identity. (Gomez, 2002).*
3. **Have you experienced any hardships in moving to Canada?** *Pervasive among ethnic immigrant groups are low socioeconomic status, language barriers, low self-esteem, post-arrival stress, depression, anxiety, and alienation (Seefeldt et al., 2002, Stodolska, 1998; Yu & Berryman, 1996).*
4. **Are there any organizations that have helped you get settled into Windsor?** *For example, organizations serving new Canadians in the city of Windsor include the YMCA, and the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County.*
5. **Did any organization(s) provide you with information or opportunities for you and/or your family to participate in physical recreation activities?**

- 6. Have you enrolled or participated in any programs to learn the English Language? Why or why not?** *Information obtained from interview with recreation administrators indicates ESL programs may be a great opportunity to integrate and teach immigrants about the importance of physical activity.*
- 7. Do you consider yourself a physically active individual?** *The EPRP Model suggests perceived benefits of a recreation activity will affect actual participation in the activity (Gomez, 2002). Perceived benefits are meant to reflect the work of Klobus-Edwards (1981). According to the EPRP Model (Gomez, 2002), a perceived benefit has a direct effect on participation. Research by Tremblay et al. (2006) found that recent immigrants are less physically active than immigrants, who were less active than non-immigrants.*
- a. **What are some physical recreation activities you enjoy?**
 - b. **Why do you enjoy these activities?**
 - c. **Do you have access to these activities in Windsor?**
 - d. **If yes, where and how often do you partake in these activities?**
 - e. **If no, why not?**
- 8. Do you believe physical recreation activities enhance your health and wellness?** *National and provincial strategies (i.e., Active 2010, Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy) seek an increase in the percentage of Canadians who are physically active for the prevention of chronic diseases and maintenance of health.*
- 9. How do you measure your health status?** *Information obtained from interviews with recreation administrators reveals immigrants align themselves with “back home” health indicators. Several researchers (Juniu, 2000; Hutchinson, 1987; Floyd & Gramman, 1993) have reported Spanish-speaking cultures have strong familial ties, and prefer to do recreational activities in groups.*
- 10. Are you informed about programs and services offered by community recreation centers?** *Programs created for new immigrants, including the New Settlement Program (NSP), administered by the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, are intended to educate new immigrants about recreation opportunities, including those offered by local community centers.*
- 11. If the answer is yes, how did you access this information? (internet, friends, ESL, activity guide, newspaper, etc.)**
- 12. Has your amount of free time changed since immigrating to Canada? Why/ Why not?** *The leisure time of recent immigrants is constrained and reduced through the process of immigration (Juniu, 2000; Seefeldt et al., 2002; Stodloska, 1998).*

13. **Do work obligations/ commitments limit your ‘free time’?** *Although 80 percent of new immigrants report that they found work in Canada during the first two years of residency, only 42 percent of them found work in the fields in which they had trained (Kazemipur & Halli, 2001). In addition, Juniu (2000), reports the free time of new immigrants is constrained by increased work obligations and responsibilities.*
14. **Do family obligations/responsibilities limit your ‘free time’?**
15. **What are some barriers that challenge you or prevent you from participating in physical activities during your free time?**
16. **Do costs for registration, equipment, and clothing prevent you from participating in recreation activities?** *Recent Canadian income data and poverty studies report that ethnic minority families are failing to secure the same income levels as Canadian-born families (Kazemipur & Halli, 2001). Accordingly, participation in recreation is limited by lack of money for registration fees, equipment, and clothing (Paraschak & Tirone, 2008).*
17. **Does language present itself as a barrier to participate in sport and physical activities?** *Language barriers have been found to affect participation in sport and physical activity among recent immigrants (Stodolska, 1998; Yu & Berryman, 1996).*
Would you participate more if there were recreation opportunities in Spanish?
18. **In your opinion, how accessible and safe are community facilities (such as pools, arenas, community recreation centers), parks and open spaces in the community?** *Seefeldt et al. (2002) report lack of access is a constraint pervasive among recent immigrants.*
19. **How has the Canadian weather and physical environment impacted your participation in physical recreation activities?** *Recent immigrants may not feel at ease with the distinct climate (Yu & Berryman, 1996). Recent immigrant adults may also be concerned for their safety in performing sport and physical activities in a different climate (e.g., injury due to new activity) (Seefeldt et al., 2002).*
20. **In what ways could municipal Parks and Recreation Departments make efforts to meet your needs with regards to being physically active on a regular basis?**
21. **If the conditions of your life were to change, for example if you had additional income or additional free time, would your level of participation in physical recreation increase?**

APPENDIX G

Guía de la entrevista

Sexo: __ Masculino __ Femenino __ Transgender Estado civil: _____

¿Cuál es su país de origen? _____

¿Cuanto tiempo ha estado usted en Canadá? _____

Cuál es la lengua primaria que usted utiliza par comunicarse en casa?

Elija un nombre que se utilícese en el estudio para divulgar sus datos. Esto ayudará a asegurar anonimato para la información que usted comparte en la entrevista.

Fecha de la entrevista: _____

Preguntas

1. ¿Cuál era la razón de su inmigración a Canadá?
2. ¿Cómo describiría usted su experiencia con trasladarse a Canadá?
3. ¿ha experimentado dificultades en trasladarse a Canadá?
4. Hay alguna organización o comunidad que le ha ayudado en colocarse en su nueva comunidad?
5. ¿E usted participado en algún programa para aprender la lengua ingles? ¿Por qué o por qué no?
6. ¿En llegar a Canadá, recibió usted información sobre oportunidades para que usted y/o su familia participe en actividades de recreación? Por ejemplo actividades físicas, ejercicio, deporte, etc.
7. ¿Esta usted enterada de programas y servicios para participar en actividades físicas ofrecidos por la municipalidad?
8. ¿Si la respuesta es sí, cómo es que usted tuvo acceso a esta información? (Internet, amigos, ESL, guía de la actividad, periódico, etc.)
9. Se considera usted en buen estado físico?
 ¿Cuáles son algunas actividades físicas que le gusta a usted?
 ¿Por qué le gusta estas actividades?
 ¿tiene acceso a estas actividades en Windsor?
 ¿Si sí, donde y cuantas veces (al mes) participa en éstas actividades?
 ¿Si no, por qué no?
10. ¿Cómo mide usted su estado de salud?
11. ¿cree usted que actividades físicas son necesarias para su salud y estado de ser?

12. ¿A cambiado la cantidad de tiempo libre que usted tiene desde inmigrase a Canadá? ¿Por qué?
13. ¿Esta su tiempo libre limitado por las obligaciones/responsabilidades de su trabajo/familia?
14. ¿Me puede explicar algún otro obstáculo que le limitan o previenen de participar en actividades de recreación durante su tiempo libre?
15. ¿Se le presenta como un obstáculo los gastos para el registro y el equipaje necesaria para participar en actividades físicas?
16. Participaría más en programas de recreación, si los gastos serán más bajos or si había gastos asociados con las actividades recreativas?
17. Se le presenta a usted el idioma ingles como un obstáculo para participar en deporte y actividades físicas?
Participaría más usted en programas de ejercicio y deporte si podría participar en su lengua maternal?
18. Que es su opinión sobre los centros de recreación públicos? Son accesibles? Son agradables? Como pueden ser creados mejor para usted? son cómo es accesible y caja fuerte es la comunidad instalaciones (piscinas, arenas, centros de recreación, parques)
19. Como le afecta a usted el clima Canadiense con respeto a actividades físicas?
20. Qué actividades físicas participa usted durante los meses del invierno?
21. de qué maneras podría la municipalidad hacer más fácil para que usted participe en sus programas favoritos de ejercicio y deporte?
22. Si las condiciones de su vida cambian, por ejemplo si usted tuviera más dinero, o más tiempo libre, participaría usted en más actividades físicas?

APPENDIX H

Recent Immigrant Interview Guide (Answered by the researcher)

1. What was the reason for your immigration to Canada?

I had no choice - my parents decided to move my family to Canada when I was ten years old. I acknowledge they made this decision for the best of the family. The economic and political environment in my native country did not have a prosperous future.

2. How would you describe your process of immigration?

It was much harder for my parents than it was for me. Upon arriving in Canada I was enrolled in school right away, which helped me integrate. I was put in a special class to learn English – I hated this. I did not want the special attention or to feel as though I was different. I did not know many people, so I mostly hung around with my brothers and extended family (cousins). My parents enrolled me in hockey during the second year, which helped me meet others and make friends. Through school and sport experiences I began to make friends who helped me integrate and discover traditional Canadian activities. My parents, on the other hand - I could tell that felt lonely, overworked, and questioned the move. They came over with very little, so they had to work hard to establish themselves. They dedicated their days to work and taking care of their young family. They rarely went out on their own, to socialize or to be active outside of daily chores. I remember my mother, who really enjoys exercise and running, felt guilty anytime she went for a run or went to the gym, so she avoided being active or did it when everyone was asleep or integrated it to get to work (ran or biked to work).

3. Have you experienced any hardships in moving to Canada?

Having to make new friends, eating new foods (sometimes), feeling and experiencing discrimination – for the first few years feeling as though I was an outsider, did not naturally fit in with the rest.

4. Are there any organizations that have helped you get settled into Windsor?

I am not sure, but the ethnic community and family helped to get us settled in.

5. Have you enrolled or participated in any programs to learn the English language? Why or why not?

Through school, it really helped me meet new people and integrate into Canadian society. I know my father took these courses as well.

6. Did any organization(s) provide you with information or opportunities for you and/or your family to participate in physical recreation activities?

I don't know. I did attend a summer camp at a local community center my first summer in Canada for a week, and I went to the local pool during the summer on a regular basis. During the winter I played ice hockey.

7. Are you informed of recreation programs and services offered by the community?

Yes, although I have never really took the time to look at the programs offered. I believe a lot of programs are created for kids and seniors. Not really of interest to me.

If the answer is yes, how did you access this information? (internet, friends, ESL, activity guide, newspaper, etc.)

Community Activity Guides are delivered to my house, I also know of the re-connect program on the web.

8. Do you consider yourself a physically active individual?

Yes, I exercise daily. I make it a point - a personal responsibility to be active on a daily basis to maintain my physical fitness. I also use activity to de-stress, to think and analyze, as a reflective exercise, to feel good, to boost my energy, to increase my body temperature (especially during the winter).

What are some physical recreation activities you enjoy?

I enjoy both social and individual activities; I enjoy running, biking, swimming, hiking, playing sports such as volleyball, basketball, soccer, golf, tennis, etc. I also enjoy mind/body and aerobic exercise routines.

Why do you enjoy these activities?

Keep me physically healthy, mentally alert, a distraction, a chance to socialize with friends, meet new people.

Do you have access to these activities in Windsor?

If yes, where and how often do you partake in these activities?

Yes, I create the opportunities, I seek places to go (i.e., rent a gym) setup teams to play in leagues (v-ball) round-up friends, run along the river, gym at home, hiking in parks, sports in parks.

If no, why not?

9. Do you believe physical recreation activities enhance your health and wellness?

Yes, they allow me to experience the full benefits of optimal health – allowing me to do and experience many physical activities and social interactions.

10. How do you measure your health status?

How I feel (absence of illness), risk management (eat well, and be active to prevent disease), by standards placed by experts as to what is good/bad (for example, I feel bad and guilty when I don't exercise)

11. Has your amount of free time changed since immigrating to Canada? Why?

Yes, I came as a child – had lots of free time, my only responsibilities were to go to school, help around the house, and have fun! Now as an adult, I don't have much free time because I spend a great deal of my day on responsibilities I have assumed (i.e., education, work, house restoration) Society deems I become a responsible citizen by contributing my share. However, I always find the time to exercise.

12. Do work obligations/ commitments limit your 'free time'?

Yes, but I make it a point to exercise daily – perhaps then this is not necessarily free time, rather something I feel I must do?

13. Do family obligations/responsibilities limit your 'free time'?

Actually, I think they are whom I like to spend my free time with. Relaxing usually means leaving the house and being with people I love and like to be around with. They form my experiences during so called 'leisure time.'

14. What are some of the challenges that limit or prevent you from participating in physical activities during your free time?

Cold weather, I like to do things outdoors (so for example, playing tennis in the winter I would love, but time and cost don't justify it)

15. Are costs for registration, equipment, and clothing an obstacle?

Not to be physically active, but yes to do specific activities. I don't participate in certain activities that are beyond what I consider worthwhile use of my limited resources (time and money).

16. Would programs that are free of charge increase your participation?

Yes, I would do a greater range of activities if they were more accessible.

17. Does language present itself as a barrier to participate in sport and physical activities?

No. I have been in Canada for over 17 years now, but it was an issue when I first came to Canada.

18. Would programs in your native language increase your participation?

Perhaps to help me maintain my native language; as well, I may be able to meet other individuals from my native country, and I may be able to help them remain active. So I do think programs in my native language would help more than just those who do not

understand the English language. It could be a great way to integrate new immigrants into the mainstream- by bringing in new and established immigrants together.

19. In your opinion, how accessible and safe are community facilities (such as pools, arenas, community recreation centers), parks and open spaces in the community?

I am not sure about the hours and dates of programs, but I do feel they are safe and accessible. Although during the winter you would not see me going to any of these without a car. The public system in Windsor is not good enough to use to travel, especially in the cold.

20. How has the Canadian weather and physical environment impacted your participation in physical recreation activities?

I am not fond of the cold Canadian winters! I do like winter activities, such as cross-country skiing, snowboarding and ice-skating, but I'd much prefer outdoor activities in warm weather. I do use community parks and trails during the winter months.

21. In what ways could municipal Parks and Recreation Departments make it easier for you to participate in their programs?

Subsidize programs during the winter months; create support groups; provide more programs that are targeted at special groups (i.e., spinning class, outdoor hiking group).

22. If the conditions of your life were to change, for example if you had additional income or additional free time, would you participate more in physical recreation activities?

Yes, I would play tennis in the winter, more skiing, yoga, and other activities that require greater financial and time commitments.

APPENDIX I

Researcher Autobiography

I was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where I lived the first ten years of my life. Searching for a better life, my parents immigrated with our family to Canada in 1991. With five young children, my parents sacrificed familial, social, and cultural ties to give their children the opportunity for an enhanced quality of life. As a child, this was not an easy thing to comprehend. I was unaware of the possibilities that existed beyond my understanding of the world, and was reluctant to find out. I developed my personal identity through interactions with the particulars of my native country; I did not understand how a geographic and cultural alteration could serve to benefit my family and me.

The process of immigration was facilitated by the Canadian public school system. I was provided with the opportunity to learn a new language (English), make new friends, and experience activities and traditions native to Canada. Among others, I was introduced to the sport of hockey and (American) football, I learned how to build forts made out of snow, play British bulldog, and enjoy sledding. In large part due to those enriching leisure experiences I became acculturated to the new host country. Through physical movement I was able to retain fond memories of my childhood and embrace new cultural values and traditions.

At fifteen, I was afforded the opportunity to spend a summer in Spain with my mother's sister, her husband, and their three children. Although their traditions and values resembled those of my immediate family, I was hesitant to experience change; I was comfortable with the ways in which my life was unfolding. Nevertheless, my parents

believed it would be an enriching cultural experience and a good opportunity for me to retain and practice my native language. Upon arriving in Spain, I was enrolled (along with my three cousins) in a summer recreational program hosted by a local community group. The program took place in a local gymnasium, three times a week for half a day. I was introduced to traditional Spanish sports, games, and recreational activities. I also introduced them to traditional Canadian sport and games. By the end of the summer, most of the individuals registered in the program had learned to rollerblade, and had the chance to try a modified version of hockey. Upon returning to Canada, I eagerly shared with friends the games and sports that occupied my time in Spain. It was during this early stage in my life that I developed an interest in understanding the positive ways that physical movement shapes and enriches the lives of individuals. I came to believe physical movement shaped my personal identity in the same way that diverse cultures shape individual identities through physical movement.

My understanding of physical movement through sport and recreation was greatly enhanced through my degree in Human Kinetics. I developed a critical understanding of physical movements and what they mean to the construction of individual and group identities. In conjunction with my academic preparation, I began working part time as a personal trainer at a local fitness centre. I believe that's what we do as advocates of physical movement – we attempt to share with others what we cherish about physical movement. In some way, we wish that these individuals might also come to benefit from participating in physical recreation. Working with adults seeking to enhance their well being through physical movement, I recognized the need for more programs and services that provide meaningful opportunities to engage in physical movement. I began to

question the ways by which dominant cultural ideas may serve to inhibit the preservation of personal identity through physical movements. My experiences traveling abroad have exposed me to a myriad of cultures, many of which hold distinct meanings, values, and traditions in relation to physical movements. Consequently, I have developed an interest in advocating for the preservation of diverse physical recreation practices. I strongly believe that movement opportunities in Canada should provide the opportunity for all individuals to generate a feeling of pride in their cultural heritage. Ethno-cultural physical movements serve to preserve and retain our personal identity.

In 2005, I founded a business to help adults in the community benefit from physical movement through engagement in meaningful physical activities. In addition to personal services, I have facilitated the creation of walking groups and outdoor exercise classes that are provided to individuals at no charge. Nonetheless, I realize barriers that extend beyond user fees confront individuals, particularly immigrant adults. This thought process has led to the focus of my research, which seeks to investigate how community leaders can address facilitating opportunities and minimizing constraints for vulnerable groups to engage in physical recreation.

APPENDIX J – ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER



Today's Date: December 19, 2007
 Principal Investigator: Mr. Matias Golob
 Department/School: Kinesiology
 REB Number: 07-249
 Research Project Title: Recreation Policies for Recent Immigrants to Canada: A Case Study
 of Spanish-Speaking Immigrants in Windsor, Ontario
 Clearance Date: December 18, 2007
 Project End Date: May 31, 2008

 Progress Report Due:
 Final Report Due: May 31, 2008

This is to inform you that the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board (REB), which is organized and operated according to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* and the University of Windsor *Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects*, has granted approval to your research project on the date noted above. This approval is valid only until the Project End Date.

A Progress Report or Final Report is due by the date noted above. The REB may ask for monitoring information at some time during the project's approval period.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. Minor change(s) in ongoing studies will be considered when submitted on the Request to Revise form.

Investigators must also report promptly to the REB:

- a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

Forms for submissions, notifications, or changes are available on the REB website: www.uwindsor.ca/reb. If your data is going to be used for another project, it is necessary to submit another application to the REB.

We wish you every success in your research.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maureen Muldoon".

Maureen Muldoon, Ph.D.
 Chair, Research Ethics Board

cc: Dr. Victoria Paraschak, Kinesiology
 Mark Curran, Research Ethics Coordinator

This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.

VITA AUCTORIS

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