Parent-School Interaction in a Post-Migration Context: An Analysis from the Perspectives of English-Speaking Single Mothers with Children Enrolled in the French-Language Public School System in Montreal, Quebec, Canada

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Abstract

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Concordia University, 2022

This study examines educational disadvantage in immigrant Canadian children and youth residing in the province of Quebec and attending public schools in the city of Montreal, a plurilingual, multiethnic, multiracial and multicultural city. Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1979, 1986) socio-ecological perspective of human development and intersectionality (Collins, 2009, 2015; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991; Jiwani et al., 2021) were used to conceptualize the intersecting inequalities experienced by single-mother families in a post-migration context in Quebec. Inductive analysis of the data uncovers the unique challenges faced by single mothers in relation to their children's education in Quebec, which has been largely neglected in the literature. Some of these challenges include linguicism, discrimination, racism, and inadequate pedagogical practices among multilingual immigrant youth in Accueil high schools.

The following insights emerge from interviews with twelve English-speaking immigrant single mothers: immigration is a feminist practice; urgent reforms are required to minimize educational injustices in Accueil schools; and a deceiving immigration environment is promoted by Canada and Quebec internationally.

Keywords: immigrant women; single mothers; educational disadvantage; immigrant Canadian children and youth; Quebec; immigrant Allophones; refugees; ethnocultural and racialized women.

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My gratitude goes to my dearest son who has been my light and inspiration, ever since he nudged my belly very gently. Thank you, Angel, for showing up in my life!

Dedication

I dedicate this body of work to all the mothers participating in this research study.

Thank you for your trust and for sharing your life experiences with me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Immigrant Educational Disadvantage

Despite advancements in education, comparative studies indicate that in immigrant-receiving countries such as the United States and Canada, children of immigrants underperform academically (Crul & Schneider, 2010; García Coll & Marks, 2012; García Coll et al., 1996; Heath & Brinbaum, 2014; Shavit & Blossfeld, 1993). This phenomenon is known in the literature as "the immigrant performance disadvantage," and is a term describing the education gap between immigrant and non-immigrant student populations (García Coll & Marks, 2012; Heath & Brinbaum, 2014). For children of immigration, growing up is filled "not only with normative developmental tasks of childhood but also with the necessary adaptations to new cultural frameworks and demands" (García Coll & Marks, 2012, p. xi). In Canada and the US, even with considerable support from parents, children whose parents are first generation immigrants not only underperforming academically, but are less healthy and less well-adjusted than their immigrant parents (García Coll & Marks, 2012).

Discrepancies between parents' high aspirations and expectations, their sustained efforts to help their children in school, and low educational outcomes point toward significant barriers and school-related challenges experienced by immigrant-origin children and youth (IOC&Y). The term immigrant-origin children and youth is used in the literature to identify "those who have at least one foreign-born parent. They include both the first generation who were born outside the host country and second-generation immigrants who were born within the host country" (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018, p. 781). In this study, the term IOC&Y defines the first-generation immigrant children and youth whose parents are not born in Canada. In Canada and in Quebec, the term Allophone is used in official documentation to describe a person (child or

adult) who has a first language that is not English, French, nor an Indigenous language (Noakes, 2020).

Low Educational Outcomes

The low educational attainment of immigrant children is associated with several factors such as the unfavourable socio-economic backgrounds of immigrant families, low parental involvement in education, and inequitable public education systems criticised for reproducing social injustices mainly because of culturally unresponsive schooling policies (Chudgar & Luschei, 2009; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Fuchs & Wößmann, 2007). Furthermore, while there are similar patterns between immigrant youth and working-class majority youth, immigrant students sustain additional ethnic penalties on top of class disadvantages experienced by children from non-immigrant backgrounds (Heath & Brinbaum, 2014).

Educational Disparities. Generally, there has been little success in reducing disparities in educational experiences across racial classifications and socio-economic status (N. E. Hill et al., 2017). In addition, many other characteristics residing within the student and in community and school contexts influence the school adjustment of immigrant children (Cummins, 2012; Pianta & Walsh, 1996; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Given the complexity of these factors, Bishop and Noguera (2019) argue that "policy responses to disparities in education have proven to be largely inadequate in reducing persistent differences in academic outcomes, commonly referred to as the achievement gap" (p. 124).

Immigrant Performance Disadvantage in Canada. With the highest immigrant student populations globally, the Canadian education system remains in the top ten educational performers worldwide (OECD, 2013, 2015). Furthermore, Canada is more equitable than many other Western countries concerning educational outcomes for its immigrant-origin students, who

benefit from a positive learning environment and teachers with at least a bachelor's degree (OECD, 2010, 2012). According to Harris et al. (2021), Canada is multicultural, values diversity, and has educational outcomes identified as excellent and equitable, with above-average performance and lower than average impact of socio-economic status and immigrant status. However, the narrative that portrays Canada as being more equitable than other immigrant-receiving nations (OECD, 2015) has been challenged by recent studies that bring attention to the experiences of diverse students in Canadian public schools (Abada et al., 2009; Cheng & Yan, 2018).

Less known outside its borders, "a plethora of problems and issues in schools related to equity, diversity, and human rights" (Carr, 2008, p. 4) and biased testing and assessment (Fox & Cheng, 2007; Solano-Flores & Trumbull, 2003; Valdés & Figueroa, 1994) confront the Canadian society (Garnett, 2012). In the rest of Canada, minority students who are IOC&Y and learn French as a second language in English public schools have similar challenges in their integration efforts to the host society. Gérin-Lajoie (2012) argues that teachers across Canada often lack adequate professional training to teach IOC&Y from diverse backgrounds. IOC&Y who belong to racial or ethnic minority groups experience discrimination in Canadian schools on several dimensions: through discriminatory conduct of teachers (Jamil, 2014; Oakes, 2005); discrepancies in school discipline (Bottiani et al., 2017); and a lack of religious accommodation (Berger, 2002, 2014; Bakali 2018b; Bilge, 2010; 2013; Rymarz, 2012).

Related to these issues, Galante (2021) highlights the importance of plurilingual instruction through the introduction of new plurilingual and pluricultural competencies to guide language teaching and learning for multilingual students. Plurilingualism is the ever-existing social phenomenon of individuals using different languages to communicate in a fluid way

(Canagarajah, 2009). Moreover, little is known about critical and creative endeavours for equitable language in education via plurilingual pedagogies (Galante, 2020). As most immigrant-receiving societies do not equip teachers and schools with culturally-responsive pedagogies, the unique needs of IOC&Y have not been proactively addressed by educational and integration policies (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). Such systemic inadequacies create educational maladjustment in IOC&Y to the extent that a "lack of understanding the needs of students, along with preconceived notions of cultures and identities of communities of colour have resulted in a partial eradication of student cultures, and the creation of vulnerable, stigmatized, and marginalized student populations" (Paris & Alim, 2017, p. 39).

Educational Outcomes across Provinces. Immigrant children in British Columbia, Ontario and the Atlantic Region have better educational outcomes when compared to their immigrant peers (OECD, 2007). One such possible explanation is the socio-economic status of their immigrant parents, as "the comparatively positive situation of students with an immigrant background in Australia and Canada may, in part, be a result of selective immigration policies resulting in immigrant populations with greater wealth and education" (OECD, 2007, p. 109). Nevertheless, Canada's education system had significant educational gaps across provinces between IOC&Y and those born in non-immigrant families (Anisef et al., 2010; Cobb-Clark et al., 2012; Hochschild & Cropper, 2010; Riederer & Verwiebe, 2015; Schnepf, 2007; Toohey & Derwing, 2008). In addition, a recent study conducted by Volante et al. (2017) indicate these discrepancies in educational outcomes among provinces:

> educational achievement of immigrant children in Canadian schools is atypical concerning the international community because immigrant student groups significantly outperform non-

> migrants in some provincial jurisdictions and significantly underperform in other provincial jurisdictions in reading, mathematics, and scientific literacy. (p. 330)

Moreover, it seems that "in spite of its large and growing proportion of immigrant students, the immigrant performance gap is not consistently reported across Canada" (Volante et al., p. 347).

While some Canadian provinces have been more successful than others at improving the educational outcomes of immigrant children, some have fallen behind in reducing inequities in schools (Bilgili et al., 2015; Brochu et al., 2013; Schleicher, 2006). For example, in Quebec educational gaps for first-generation immigrant students have been persistent over time particularly for racialized immigrant children and youth (Bakhshaei & Henderson, 2016). Quebec's Council of Education (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation [CSE], 2016) confirm that social justice and school equity are at elevated risk in Quebec, particularly in Montreal's public schools where 84% of all elementary students are living in the worst conditions of disadvantage. The report added:

> If we continue in the current direction, our school system, increasingly segregated, runs the risk of losing its equity […]. The state is responsible for ensuring that all schools are in good condition and able to provide quality educational services and stimulating educational experience for all its students […] The Council also aims at […] preventing Quebec from backing away from its achievements in school justice or social justice at school. (CSE, 2016, pp. 2-3, personal translation)

Subsequently, educational equity is a major concern for Canadian policymakers, particularly in individual provinces where efforts to reduce educational gaps between immigrant and non-immigrant students have had low impact: "Although Canada ranked significantly higher than the international average in the utilization of effective integration policies, the challenge of migrant

integration is still a pressing concern for nationaland provincial governments" (Volante et al., 2017, p. 339).

Immigrant Performance Disadvantage in Quebec. Low immigrant educational outcomes have been the focus of current educational research in Quebec (Magnan & Darchinian, 2014), where public schools have a double responsibility of immigrant education and their socio-cultural integration (Charette, 2016; Cuko, 2016a, 2016b). Given the higher dropout rates in immigrant racialized students of South Asian origin in the Montreal area (Bakhshaei & Henderson, 2016; Lewis & Elin, 2018), some of the studies argue that Montreal's French-language public schools have become places where lower educational outcomes have been perpetuated by non-inclusive educational practices and curriculum (Ghosh, 2004; Hohl & Normand, 2000; Lewis & Elin, 2018).

Quebec's educators attribute the academic disadvantage of IOC&Y to low parental engagement in the academic trajectories of their children (Cuko, 2016a) and a lack of French language skills (Cuko, 2016b; Vatz-Laroussi et al., 2008). Conversely, immigrant parents reported that schools demonstrated a lack of sensitivity to their cultural heritage, race, and ethnic origin (Beauregard et al., 2014). In addition, communication between parents and schools is an ongoing issue which will be described in detail in the following sections. Though Quebec immigrant adults can attend Francization programs without cost, parent-school communication is problematic for individuals with limited French language abilities and cannot communicate with schools in any other language. Many immigrant, Allophone parents rely on English, Canada's other official language, to communicate about issues impacting their children in Quebec's French-language public schools located on the Island of Montreal, a multilingual city inhabited by large diversity of plurilingual individuals (Galante & dela Cruz, 2021).

Altghough the law does not explicitly prohibit any other language, Quebec's complex linguistic context discourages, and even penalizes, formally or informally those using English during their interactions with public institutions. For those immigrant Allophones who prefer to speak in English or who have low French language abilities, the linguistic context creates tensions and numerous consequences for themselves and their Allophone children.

The interaction between immigrant parents and schools is described as problematic and linked to the immigrants' insufficient language skills in French and inadequate knowledge of the Quebec's school system (Kanouté et al., 2016). In fact, Tardif-Grenier et al. (2018) argue that parents must first learn French and only afterwards would they be ready to communicate with the teachers and collaborate with the schools. This type of reasoning avoids acknowledging the needs of immigrant, Allophone children whose educational trajectories depend on parental support and successful parent-school communication.

To tackle immigrant academic underperformance, researchers focus on immigration policy and its impact on Allophone children (McAndrew, 2016; McAndrew et al., 2015); the socio-economic status of children' families (Volante et al., 2017); and educational equity in schools (Bakhshaei, 2016; Charette, 2016; Kanouté & Lafortune, 2011; Lewis & Elin, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

In Quebec, immigrant performance disadvantage is characterized by school delays and high rates of non-completion among Allophones (Kanouté, 2006). The gravest of these two forms of educational disadvantage occurrs in Montreal's French-language public schools where 62.8% of the students are of immigrant origin (Comité de Gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal [CGTSIM], 2021). Although there is an "acute crisis of academic underperformance in Quebec's immigrant students attending primary and secondary French-language public schools"

(Bernhard, 2010, p. 87), the overall school dropout rate declined steadily in the past ten years from 24.6% in 2009 to 15.9% in 2017 (Ministère de l'Education, de l'Enseignement Supérieur [MEES], 2017). However, the Ministry of Education published in 2021 contrasting data regarding the 2017-2019 graduation rate of immigrant Allophone children and youth who leave school without a diploma or a qualification:

> For 2018-2019, the increase in the rate of exiting students without a diploma or qualification is also particularly felt among those who are behind in their schooling, students from immigrant backgrounds (1st generation), and students from disadvantaged backgrounds for whom the rate increased from 39.6% to 40.8%, and from 22.1% to 24.8% respectively, between the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 years" (MEES, 2021, Comments, para. 5, personal translation).

Poverty and Marginalization

Understanding poverty and marginalization of Allophone children and youth are essential aspects of immigrant performance disadvantage in Quebec, a province in which newly arrived immigrant families are more likely than non-immigrant families to be in a situation of poverty because of the professional de-skilling, insufficient language skills, and acculturation stress (Beiser et al., 2002; Bakhshaei, 2016). Quebec's Ministry of Education acknowledged that poverty in Montreal is a severe issue impacting immigrant and single-mother families who tend to gather in specific neighbourhoods (St-Jacques & Sévigny, 2003). As a result, in 2011, Quebec's Ministry of Education issued a poverty map of families with children under 18 years-old living on the Island of Montreal. On that occasion, Comité de Gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal (CGTSIM, 2020) ranked the underprivileged schools (écoles défavorisées) and

determined the geographical concentration of low-income families in school territories (territoires scolaires).

Compounded Disadvantages

The underprivileged school index (index de défavorisation) is the official term used by the Quebec Government to determine the concentration of poverty in each neighborhood school. The one-to-ten gradation index demonstrates the wealth discrepancies among neighborhood schools along with disproportionality of educational opportunities (MEES, 2017). This index is calculated annually, and it is based on the following indicators: the family income of the students enrolled in school, the unemployment rate of their parents, new immigration status, maternal education level, and the number of female lone-parent families with children enrolled in that specific school. Another important aspect is the marginalization of single mother families and the impacts on the educational trajectories of their children. The percentage of single-parent families headed by a woman with children under the age of 18 on the Island of Montreal remained higher than the Quebec and Canadian averages (Table 1). Although it is a great advancement to recognize the status of single motherhood as precarious, the educational disadvantage of IOC&Y from immigrant single-mother families residing in marginalized neighborhoods should be better understood as a distinct social phenomenon particularly for racialized populations.

Table 1

Percentage of Single-Parent Families Headed by a Female Among Families with Children Under the Age of 18

Census year	Island of Montreal	QC average	Canadian average
2006	22.9%	18.6%	18.0%
2011	22.2%	18.7%	18.5%
2016	21.2%	18.7%	18.4%

Note: Adapted from Statistics Canada, Canadian Census (2006, 2011, 2016)

Focus of This Study

This qualitative study explores parent-school interaction from the perspective of twelve immigrant, refugee, ethnocultural and racialized (IRER) single mothers with children enrolled in the publ school system in Montreal's urban neighborhoods, where many immigrants to Quebec settle upon their arrival in the province. In addition, the study includes several contextual factors impacting the educational trajectories of IOC&Y enrolled in French-language public schools in Montreal, from the perspective of their mothers. The women participants self-identified as first-generation immigrant, English-speaking single mothers involved in the education of their children.

While this study explores parent-school interaction in a post-migration context, it is based on the unique challenges single-mother families face in connection with the schooling of their children in the French-language public school system. Canada's public education system is divided linguistically: the English-language system and French-language schools. Both the English and French language systems have private and public options. The public school system in Quebec is comprised of primary school ("école primaire") for children in grades 1 to 6 and secondary school levels 1 to 5 (école sécondaire). In addition to the regular program, the school system offers Accueil (Welcome) classes as a Francization program delivered across Quebec's public schools exclusively to children who need to acquire French language skills. Given that schooling plays a significant role in the socialization, cultural transmission, integration of all children, including the IOC&Y, C. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015) argue that "schools are the

setting in which the immigrant child must first systematically cross the boundaries between the home culture and the host culture on a daily basis" (p. 28).

Overall, this qualitative inquiry uncovers the perspectives of IRER single-mother families who experience multiple negative and painful encounters and concurrent challenges interacting with the education system. The characteristics of unproductive and unsettling family-school interactions described by the participants, seem to represent mutually reinforcing dynamics that reproduce educational disadvantage among some of the IOC&Y.

Educational Equity

Educational equity refers to impartiality in the distribution of educational resources and fairness in the treatment and assessment of students regardless of their background (Espinoza, 2007; Jacob & Holsinger, 2008; Secada, 1989). Moreover, equitable education and stimulating learning experiences are formative experiences that impact a child's development and lifelong opportunities (García Coll et al., 1996). According to these definitions, the fundamental mission of public education would be to ensure that every student, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, and religion, has access to an equitable education.

The focus of this study is to identify the structural power dynamics that might reproduce systemic educational disadvantage in Quebec's public schools for IOC&Y of single-mother families. The concept of educational equity is essential for several reasons: IOC&Y in Montreal attend écoles défavorisées (underprivileged schools) located in territoires scolaires (school territories) with a high concentration of low-income families. Having to overcome systemic barriers such as racism and discrimination, and anti-immigrant attitudes, IOC&Y are most likely to be at an educational disadvantage. As well, future studies can identify specific ways to alleviate these systemic barriers.

Intersecting Inequalities

In this study, IRER single-mother families are underrepresented minorities within Canada's and Quebec's cultural and linguistic majorities. In a post-migration context, the IRER single mothers participating in this study are exposed to multiple intersecting inequalities (Jiwani, 2019) stemming from the erasure of their intrinsic value within society because of their gender, reduced socio-economic power, racialized background, foreign-born status, family status, and low French-language abilities. Intersecting inequalities highlight the attitudes and beliefs of the host society towards IRER single-mother families and the impact of these on children and their mothers. In addition, inequalities are revealed by the ways in which gender intersects with family status, country of origin, socio-economic status, and religion.

The pre-migration privileges identified by the participants include the following aspects: all participants had higher education (are educated immigrants), possessing all the necessary resources required to emigrate to Canada (including social, cultural, linguistic, and financial capital) that allowed them to pass the medical examinations and the interviews required to obtain legal entry in Quebec. However, the participants' multiple and sustained efforts were devalued or ignored by the dominant majority of the host society.

Upon settlement, the IRER single mothers negotiated their belonging and settlement needs and pointed out issues and barriers that made their integration painful while interacting with the receiving society. These painful points were usually shaped during their attempts to remediate the unfair experiences of their children while at school. The social locations of mothers, such as socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and language, intersect with the politics of everyday life (Cole, 2009) and shape the experiences and educational outcomes of IOC&Y (García Cole et al., 1996).

While the IRER single mothers haveseveral advantages stemming from their privileged pre-migration backgrounds, they ae dispossessed of these advantages during post-migration settlement including the interactions they have with the schools of their children and the host society. While their children's educational outcomes are the focus of this study, the intersecting inequalities affecting mothers are valuable contributions in understanding the structural nuances of the educational disadvantage of IOC&Y in Montreal's urban schools. Therefore, this study shows in more depth the mother-child interdependencies and how intersecting inequalities impact this type of family system.

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 1: Introduction

The introduction chapter of this dissertation captures elements that connect gendered systemic issues across time and space encountered for those raising children in a post-migration context. Educational outcomes of immigrant children are linked not only to family factors but also to educational policies and the socio-economic factors in which schools operate. Discussing the ecology of disadvantage and educational equity in an urban context, Raffo (2011, 2013) argues that it is impossible to separate education policy from neighbourhoods and society at large. The introduction also mentions how neocolonial, racialized immigrant integration discourses (Bakali 2018a, Bilge, 2013a; 2013b) impact the Canadian and Quebec context in which schools and families carry on their daily functions. All these are important introductory notions that are mentioned by the participants of this study.

Chapter 2: Context of the Study

Chapter two covers the intersecting inequalities affecting IRER single-mother families. In order to understand the nuances of educational disadvantage in a post-migration context, this chapter highlights the following topics: gender inequality; the feminization of poverty and migration; the status of immigrant women in Canada; and the overall context of immigrant reception as conceptualized by Suárez-Ozorco et al. (2009; 2016). In addition, the social, economic, linguistic, and political aspects of intercultural integration in Quebec's society are the subject of thischapter. An overview of language policies and immigrant education were necessary to present the context of reception as a powerful setting which shaping the unequal interaction between participants and schools. The topics covered in chapter two reveal the ways in which immigrant Allophone educational disadvantage is a structural, context-specific issue which was contoured by pre-migration conditions coupled with specific, post-migration factors existing within Quebec society.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This chapter introduces the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1979, 1986) a theoretical framework known for investigating parent-school collaboration as well as the influence schools have on the educational trajectories of immigrant children. Chapter three also contains a literature review section that covers the following topics: pedagogical practices, teachers' attitudes towards IOC&Y, educational equity in immigrant receiving societies more generally, and a discussion about several structural barriers encountered by immigrant families during their interactions with the public school system. As only a few studies are available, the literature review could not include studies on single mother families, which constitutes an important gap this dissertation aims to fill by focusing on IRER single mothers' perspectives.

Chapter 4: Positionality

Intersectionality (Collins, 2019; Collins & Bilge, 2020; Crenshaw, 1991; 2010; Crenshaw & Bonis, 2005) is introduced in chapter 4 in order to communicate this inquiry's critical and feminist aspects. It provides the vocabulary for expressing a nuanced understanding of the power dynamics present in all interactions between immigrant parents and schools. Intersectionality allows for understating parent -school interaction by considering the gendered and racialized perspectives of women who are also single mothers acculturating in an intercultural mono-lingual policy environment. According to Jiwani (2019), immigrant women from racialized backgrounds in Canada hold multiple, intersecting, socially-constructed identities while experiencing multiple intersecting inequalities. The English-speaking IRER single mothers who reside in Quebec are a particularly marginalized minority Their education, work experience and pre-migration value system is constantly erased and minimized by schools. The IRER single mothers are also more vulnerable to abuses of power coming at them from several directions: as racialized women, immigrants, and single mothers.

Chapter 5: Methodology

This chapter presents in more depth the methodological choices specific to the focus of this study. In order to investigate the disproportionate power dynamics within the parent-school interaction, a critical, feminist, intersectional perspective complements the ecological system theory.

Rationale for Choosing Single Mothers as Participants. Starting in the late 1980s, the percentage of single-mother families has grown in the US and Canada from a minority of all low-income families to a substantial majority (Goldberg, 2010; Vespa et al., 2013). In Canada, more immigrant women than men are single parents. In 2006, 11% of immigrant women aged 15

and over were single parents. Unless the single mother benefits from the advantages of being career-oriented and middle class (Avery, 2016), the literature indicates that a single mothers' experience in Canada typically includes socio-economic challenges associated with childcare (Wiegers & Chunn, 2017), causing mothers to feel stressed and overwhelmed (Knoef & Van Ours, 2016).

Insofar as the poverty rate for single mothers in Canada is four times that of the general population (O'Connor et al., 1999), the socio-cultural experiences of single, immigrant women interacting with the public school system in Canada and Quebec remained under-documented (Browne et al., 2017; Zhu, 2016). Furthermore, the gender dynamics in schooling, including patriarchal and ethnic-racial power and authority, have also been under-examined. As the build-up of structural barriers drastically affect immigrant single-mother families, this study attempts to contextualize the realities of single motherhood and the systemic conditions influencing the educational outcomes of their children.

Lam et al. (2020) examined how intersections of gender and ethnicity affect single immigrant mothers regarding self-perception, socio-cultural experiences and acculturation process. However, the compounded impact of these processes on the educational outcomes of IOC&Y is not well understood, particularly in Quebec's context where the process of double linguistic acculturation of immigrants to both English Canada and French Quebec is under-documented.

While immigrants' and refugees' experiences fluctuate due to the different circumstances posed by their immigration trajectories, there are some commonalities in their lived experiences. According to Schultes and Vallianatos (2016), one such similarity focuses on women's roles in the family institution along with the pressures and responsibilities they face in "creating" and "reproducing" families physically and socially in the post-migration context. Another

commonality is mothers' impact on their children's education and development in a post-migration context. During the settlement process, motherhood responsibilities include, among many others, helping their children adjust not only to a new school but equally to a foreign society, whose norms and values differ from the culture of origin.

Rationale for Choosing the Topic of Parent-School Interaction. School-family partnerships (Christenson & Reschly, 2010) constitute an essential alliance that influences children's educational success, their social and economic upward mobility, and participation in civic life. Numerous studies focused on the importance of parent-school collaboration internationally (Bergset, 2017; Ee, 2017; Fleischmann & de Haas, 2016; Frisby & Jimerson, 2016); in the Canadian context (Ali, 2008, 2012; R. Basu, 2011; Gérin-Lajoie, 2012; Christenson & Reschly, 2010); and in Quebec (Bakhshaei, 2016; Beauregard et al., 2014; Bernhard, 2002, 2010; Charette, 2016; Cuko, 2016a; Deslandes, 2006; Deslandes et al., 2015; Dumoulin et al., 2013; Gergel & St. Jacques, 2012; Hohl, 1996; Kanouté, 2006; Kanouté & Calvet, 2008; Kanouté et. al., 2008; Vatz-Laaroussi et al., 2008). Although some of these studies focused on the parental self-efficacy of women in an international context (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001; Benza & Liamputtong, 2017), and those of immigrant single mothers in Quebec (Gergel, & St. Jacques, 2012), there seems to be a lack of focus on understanding educational disadvantage of IOC&Ys from the perspectives of their mothers.

Chapter 6: Findings

The analysis of the data indicates that school delays and school refusal among IOC&Y are attributed to the structural characteristics of the public education system and schooling policies (Chudgar & Luschei, 2009; Dei, 1999; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Fuchs & Wößmann, 2007; Schlicht et al., 2010). All participants revealP having high aspirations and expectations for

themselves and their children before emigrating to Canada. Prior to emigration they believed that a good education would be and should be a path to successful integration in Quebec society. With no exceptions, the participants had expected a modern education system with bilingual education in both French and English and with student-centred instruction. Upon arrival, the participants describe having negative experiences while interacting with the school system. The reality of a monolingual and not a bilingual school system was an aspect that they did not expect before emigrating to Canada. Children who excelled in school in their countries of origin lost interest in studying, and upon undergoing painful school experiences, they started to exhibit behaviours related to school refusal.

The school referred children who exhibited school disengagement behaviours either to youth protection services or to medical services for ADHD treatment. Participants mention an absence of preventive measures concerning student disengagement, inflexibility in applying rules, particularly language laws, and an overall lack of appreciation for the immigrants' cultural capital, education, and sincere efforts to juggle multiple languages. Interpersonal tensions and asymmetrical conflicts persist throughout the educational experience in both the Accueil and the regular program.

Unforeseen experiences of discrimination, racism, linguicism and Islamophobia constituted overwhelming structural barriers to academic achievement for IOC&Y. From the participants' perspective, these negative encounters and repeated interactions diminished the wellbeing of their children, who suffer from a lack of motivation to learn and a lack of interest in attending school. In both the regular and Accueil programs, student disengagement and school refusal behaviours prove to be the most alarming signals and are an added stressor for both children and their mothers. In the view of the participants, the Accueil program designed exclusively for

intercultural integration and Francization of IOC&Y was not welcoming of the diverse cultural and social capital of IOC&Y. All participants with children attending the Accueil program expressed a high level of dissatisfaction with the reduced curriculum and the unfair assessment strategies used to advance students from the Accueil program and into the regular program. Many of the critical incidents experienced by students and/or their parents referred to inadequate teaching and learning during Francization, a lack of accountability regarding educational delays of IOC&Y, and lack of transparency about the overall functioning of the Accueil system.

The most painful experiences recounted by the participants took place during the first five years of integration. Even for those mothers with prior knowledge of French, parent-school communication is challenging in a French-only environment that lacks translation services or provisions for accessing multilingual information. In addition, critical incidents detail maternal dissatisfaction with asymmetrical tensions at school and an overall adverse school climate in both the regular and Accueil programs.

Overall, all participants in this study perceive that some of the teachers in the Accueil program act inequitably towards children and parents with limited knowledge of French. Communicating only in French (during face-to-face interactions or written notes) was an unachievable standard by many newly arrived immigrants. When teachers and administrative support staff in schools would communicate only in French, the participants expressed having significant difficulties accessing translation supports. Most participants believe that an adverse school climate and inexistent support during parent-school interaction existed and created additional challenges and barriers for parents, who frequently feel unprepared and helpless.

In the participants' views, communication differences are handled by the school in an ineffective manner that reinforced a deficit view of immigrants. Race, gender, religion, and the

use of English as a common language are the subject of highly charged tensions between parents and schools. Critical incidents reveal micro-aggressions, insults, and overt discrimination towards women and their school-aged children. The participants perceive an adverse school climate. Conflicts with male authority figures such as teachers and school principals are perceived as having a drastic negative impact on their girls and teenage daughters. One participants' daughter experienced depression; another daughter refused to go to school for three months. Consequently, both mothers became concerned with the suicidal ideation of their daughters. Such traumatic experiences are rendered invisible and vulnerable children understood that fitting in requires silence, making oneself disappear, and internalizing racism.

Generally, mothering school children alone in a post-migration context is more challenging than initially expected by the participants in the study. All the racialized women in the study experienced multiple and concomitant forms of discrimination based on their race, ethnicity, gender, and use of language while grappling with the combined effects of linguicism, racism, and Islamophobia. During the interviews, the participants thought critically about the impact schooling had on their children. The mothers argue that teachers of IOC&Y should demonstrate values of inclusiveness, mutual respect, social justice, and educational equity. The mothers empower their children by challenging the requirements of schools when such requirements were ignored and/or denied the diverse needs of IOC&Y. By asserting their knowledge, experiences, and visions of fair educational practices, these mothers advocate for their children who experienced difficulty adjusting to a new culture and education system. In conclusion, the findings of this study demonstrate that schools should respect and protect children's rights concerning educational equity by at least acknowledging the contradictions and devastating injustices that took place within the walls of schools.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter attempts to place these findings in a broader context. In response to the difficulties IOC&Y and their families encountered, governments of immigrant-receiving societies seek to design innovative policies to manage diversity and successfully integrate immigrants and their children into their new society (Dauvergne, 2016). Socio-cultural approaches to integration encompass immigrants' active participation in their communities' social and cultural lives and affiliation with the identity of the host country (King & Skeldon, 2010). In addition, structural approaches to integration consider immigrants' prospects in the labour market, housing, education, and political and citizenship rights (Spencer & Charsley, 2016).

Variations in adjusting to a new culture have been referred to using the terms integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Sam & Berry, 2010). Psychological wellbeing and socio-cultural competence level indicate how individuals acculturate and how well they adapt (Berry, 1997). Those who integrate are engaged in both their culture of origin and in the larger society and are better adapted than those who acculturate by orienting themselves to one or the other culture through assimilation or separation (Berry, 2003; Berry & Hou, 2021). Marginalization is present when immigrants indicate the lowest psychological wellbeing levels and cannot identify with their heritage culture or host culture (Sam & Berry, 2010).

Concluding Thoughts

Paradoxes and the Integration of Immigrants

While these two kinds of integration models are relevant and required for the successful adjustment of immigrants, Kolnberger and Koff (2021) argue that the notion of immigrant integration itself presents multiple paradoxes. One such paradox is about immigrant women

whose social positions in structures of the receiving society such as work, family, and education are not considered by governments legislating policies related to the integration of immigrants (Anthias, 2013; Anthias et al., 2012; Bilge, 2010; 2013). Another paradox is related to the neocolonial, colour-blind discourses and frameworks that regard IRER people as others or minorities who need accommodation in the dominant, majority group (Bakali, 2015; Jamil, 2014; Schinkel, 2018).

Critical views of integration approaches acknowledge pre-existent hierarchical power structures that negatively impact the successful integration of immigrants in the receiving society (Anthias, 2013, Bakali, 2015; Bilge, 2010; 2013; Mahrouse, 2010). For example, Schinkel (2018) argues that the integration of immigrants has been shaped by neocolonial forms of knowledge promoting a nativist view of migrant-others which sustains a classed and raced form of dominance. Bilge (2013b) notes that within Canada, Quebec's heated debate of reasonable accommodation is located within a neocolonial, post-racist integration of immigrant discourse. Bilge (2013b) states "I consider the Quebecois accommodation debate as a ritualized enactment of national belonging through which legitimate subjects of the nation reassure themselves about their power and assert their right to conduct the conduct of others" (p.164).

Furthermore, Favell (2019) explains how policies regarding the integration of immigrants are based on dominant ideologies, e.g., integration is an individual's responsibility to meet the demands of the state and the receiving society at large. Likewise, structural, and socio-cultural approaches to immigrant education are systematically criticized (Bakali, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2017) for creating educational inequalities mainly because of "the divide that exists between many educational institutions and the students they are supposed to serve" (Paris & Alim, 2017,

p. 95). Such dynamics negatively impact school completion and educational outcomes of Allophone children and youth enrolled in Quebec's public school system.

Integration policies of the receiving society at both federal and provincial levels have a significant impact on the adjustment of immigrant families into the new society (Suarez-Ozorco, 2000; 2008; 2015).The educational disadvantage of IOC&Y from immigrant single-mother families is investigated and conceptualized in relation to public education policies (Backali, 2018a, 2018b; Fine,1991; Fine & Ruglis, 2009; Ruglis, 2011; Tuck, 2011, 2013) and urban neighborhood schools (R. Basu, 2011; Cummins, 2000, 2001, 2012; Murnaghan & Basu, 2016; Raffo, 2011, 2013). More specifically, the IRER educational disadvantage was understood as "a dialectic of school pushout" (Tuck, 2011, p. 817) conveying the impact of educational policies on IOC&Y in Quebec. The term pushout describes "those components inside schools that detain and derail students' secondary school completion." (p.818)

This qualitative inquiry is aligned with participants' vision to advocate for equitable schools mandated to integrate minorities into the host society and was rooted in values that challenge "the status quo of schooling and society where inequality is taken for granted" (Donmoyer, 2001, p. 194). The findings in this study are consistent with significant trends in the literature, indicating that immigrant single mothers "are more vulnerable to marginalization, discrimination, and mental health problems" (Lam et al., 2020, p. 51). Single mothers are at a disadvantage along dimensions of income, health, wellbeing, and how society perceives them and their children. For example, time and money are much more limited in single-parent families than two-parent families (Himmelweit et al., 2004). Although this is a likely consequence when one parent instead of two must fulfill the day-to-day parenting responsibilities, it is considered a factor that puts the IOC&Y of a single-mother household at a more significant disadvantage.

Moreover, while single motherhood could be empowering for a woman (such as when leaving an abusive situation), there are still many negative stereotypes and challenges to face when confronted with the need to raise, nurture and advocate on behalf of their children at school (Lam et al., 2020).

Chapter 2: A Post-Migration Context

In order to present and better understand the evolving context of immigrant reception in Montreal, this chapter has two main sections: one dedicated to single-mother families, and the second focused on the characteristics of immigrant reception in Quebec, Canada.

The first section of the chapter tackles the overall condition of single-mother families in a post-migration context. It provides an overview of gender inequalities (Chant, 1997; 2003; 2006), including the feminization of poverty (Goldberg, 2010), a social phenomenon impacting women globally (Kim & Choi, 2013). The section connects the feminization of poverty with additional systemic issues affecting single-mother families (Motapanyane, 2016; Sidel, 2006) in the Canadian context (Bourhis et al., 2010; Berry & Hou, 2021; Schultes & Vallianatos, 2016), such as racism, visible minority status, and immigration status (Lam et al., 2020). This approach brings forth contextual elements with the particularities of gendered marginalization, dynamics of dispossession and its impact on the educational outcomes of immigrant Canadian children residing in Quebec raised in single-mother immigrant families.

The second section of this chapter details the multi-level context of immigrant reception (C. Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). These levels encompass the host society's pre-existent social, economic, and policy environment. The context of immigrant reception (C. Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018) emphasizes the participants' social, economic and policy settlement in the Canadian context and the province of residence. The social aspect covers the overall climate in Canada and Quebec (the province of residence). The economic aspect of the context of reception details the hardships faced by minorities, limited access to work opportunities of immigrant women and single-mother families within Quebec. Finally, the policy aspect of immigrant reception introduces the reader to the school system, immigrant integration, and the relationship between

Quebec's policy of interculturalism simultaneously coexisting with Canadian multiculturalism. It also explained pre-existent inequalities and language-related tensions impacting English-speaking minorities.

Single-Mother Families in a Post-Migration Context

Gender Inequalities

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand actively recruited immigrants (Dauvergne, 2016). In 2016, Canada had 3.954 million immigrant women and girls, marking the highest proportion of immigrants among Canada's female population in 100 years (Statistics Canada, 2016). If this trend continues, by 2031, 47% of Canadians will have at least one parent born outside Canada belonging to a minoritized group (Peláez et al., 2017). While many women around the globe are still to this day facing horrific situations, such unprecedented advances in the freedom of mobility experienced by single-mother families have costs and consequences that are not acknowledged by immigrant research studies.

The growth of single-parent families is one of the most profound transformations of family life globally (Cherlin, 2009; Goldberg, 2010; Motapanyane, 2016) and constitutes a growing trend in western countries such the US, Canada, England, France, Germany, Sweden and Japan (Utrata, 2015). Most individuals heading one-parent families continue to be mothers (Motapanyane, 2016). Much of the evidence indicated that single-mother families tend to be disadvantaged at systemic and individual levels relative to two-parent families (Kendig & Bianchi, 2008). While single mothers have been stigmatized, demonized, and marginalized from colonial times (Sidel, 2006), single fathers are generally perceived as reliable members of our society and better parents when compared to women who share the same parental responsibilities (O'Reilly, 2021).

Feminization of Migration

Parreñas (2001) argues that migration is a movement from one set of gender constraints to another, for women. Comparing the status of women before and after the migration process, Al-Ali (2015) confirms that gender inequality is a global issue to the extent that an immigrant woman navigates between two unequal gender regimes: her country of origin and the country of settlement. While immigrant women tend to leave their homes because of economic, political, environmental, and social difficulties (Di Giovanni, 2014), they often anticipate a better quality of life for themselves and their families and seek improved educational opportunities for their children (Abrego, 2014; Orozco, 2009). For some women, migration constitutes the only way to support themselves and their children (Momsen, 2003). In some cases, for the single, abandoned, separated or divorced women with children to support, their search for freedom from traditional gender roles is of utmost importance in their motivations to migrate (Mohanty,2003a). Therefore, a feminist perspective highlights the ways in which migration impacts women and men differently (Boyd & Grieco, 2003) mainly because gender differences exist in both sending and receiving communities.

Feminization of Poverty

Diana Pearce (1978) coined the term “feminization of poverty” to question the causes of rampant poverty among women and children (Sidel, 2006). Research with women from marginalized groups must address the structural barriers contributing to a disproportionately high rate of poverty among women and their dependents (Denmark & Paludi, 2008).

Sassen (2002) observed the feminization of survival in the context of international migration in which households, whole communities, and states are increasingly reliant on the labour efforts of women, sometimes in precarious and exploitative conditions. Chant (1997; 2003; 2006)

demonstrated through her research the need for a better understanding of gendered poverty from the perspective of women and argued that poverty is not just about limited or low income but also about the feminization of responsibility of raising children. Chant (2006) adds a more nuanced understanding of the feminization of poverty and proposes instead "the feminization of responsibility and obligation" (p. 206) as "the best term to sum up women's increasing liability for dealing with poverty (responsibility), and their progressively less choice other than to do so (obligation)" (p. 217). The World Economic Forum Measure of Women's Empowerment comprises several more dimensions such as: economic participation, economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment, and health and wellbeing as essential dimensions in determining the economic situation of women (Lopez-Claros & Zahidi, 2005).

Feminization of Poverty in Canada. The feminization of poverty is prevalent in affluent societies such as Canada, the US, England, France, Germany, Japan, and Sweden (Brady & Burton, 2016; Goldberg, 2010; Hurst et al., 2015; Kramarae & Spender, 2004). This phenomenon impacts women from all levels of Canadian society, including immigrant women. Although 68.8% of recent female immigrants aged 25 to 44 are principal applicants admitted under the economic class and held a bachelor's level credential or higher (Statistics Canada, 2013), they are twice more likely to be living in a low-income situation than Canadian born women with the same education level (Statistics Canada, 2005). As the social construction of race has multiple penalties for racialized individuals, especially racialized women (Danto & Ansloos, 2020), the gendered nature of poverty in Canada has fundamentally affected the quality of life of immigrant women of colour, to the point that we are facing a deepening racialization and feminization of poverty in Canada (Kwok & Wallis, 2008).

Immigrant Reception

In the view of Suárez-Orozco et al. (2018), the context of immigrant reception has three essential dimensions: the social, the economic, and the legal dimensions. First, the social dimension represents the broader economic opportunity structures that shape the experience of resettlement, the degree of either a welcoming or dysfunctional and dangerous climate, and the acceptance of unique minority cultural identities by the larger culture. Second, in addition to the socio-cultural factors, the economic dimension comprises of the recognition of foreign credentials, employment access, and upward mobility opportunities of immigrants. Finally, the legal dimension outlines the context around the policies regulating immigrants' management and settlement into the new society.

The Social Dimension

Suárez-Orozco et al. (2018) describe the social context as the overall sentiment of the receiving society had towards immigrants, which included the general level of xenophobia and the level of acceptance and media representations of immigrants. They argue that the social context of reception constitutes a "social mirror" (p. 787) for IOC&Y and their families because it shapes their identities and integration pathways in significant ways. They contend that the social welcome mat profoundly influences the development of immigrant-origin children, with the ethos of reception shaping immigrants' identities. This social mirror- the general social and emotional atmosphere and the collective representations of immigrants that new arrivals encounter upon their settlement in the new country- is an important context of immigration.

In recent years, an increased flow of refugees and migrants has triggered a revival of anti-immigration sentiments in some countries in the European Union, the United States, and in Canada. Studies show that immigrants in Canada struggled to belong to a society that does not

always recognize and acknowledge their unique strengths, efforts, and values (Bergset, 2017; Changkakoti & Akkari, 2008; Charette, 2016). In a survey conducted with over forty thousand immigrants in Canada, Reitz and Banerjee (2007) found that visible minorities are less integrated into Canadian society than their white counterparts. Furthermore, Reitz (2012) cautioned that:

> for visible minority immigrants, disparities grow over time and with more experience in Canada. This is true despite the high levels of education and employment success of the second generation. The analysis shows that the effect of minority status becomes more harmful for those with more extended time spent in Canada, as well as for their children. The trends for the second generation are most pronounced for Blacks, but they are prevalent among all racial minorities. (p. 536)

Regarding racial inequalities in Canada, Sealy-Harrington and Hamilton (2018) underline that visible minorities experienced discrimination at three to four times the rate of white Canadians. The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics document a sharp increase in police-reported hate crimes with approximately 2,073 incidents, up 47% over the previous year (Armstrong, 2019). The data indicates that in 2017, 43% of all reported hate crimes were motivated by hatred based on race and ethnicity and 41% by hatred of religion. Muslims, Jews, and Black populations were the most targeted groups, especially in Ontario and Quebec (Armstrong, 2019). The Ethnic Diversity Survey conducted in 2003 indicates that in Quebec, 8% of Francophones, 14% of Anglophones, and 30% of visible minority respondents, regardless of linguistic background, were victims of discrimination (Bourhis et al., 2007). Similar and more recent studies indicate that discrimination remains a perversive phenomenon across Canada (Bourhis, 2020; Reitz et al., 2017). In addition, gender-based discrimination and violence against women are troublesome and pressing national issues. A three-year-long inquiry found that Canada is complicit in race-

based genocide against Indigenous women, and "despite their different circumstances and backgrounds, all of the missing and murdered are connected by economic, social and political marginalization, racism and misogyny woven in the fabric of the Canadian society" (BBC, 2019, June 3).

Roggeband and Verloo (2007) describe the portrayal of immigrant groups in policy documents issued between 1995-2005. More than other Canadian provinces, Quebec followed European trends regarding the politicization of attitudes toward immigrant women, especially those with visible religious beliefs. In June 2019, Quebec's National Assembly passed Bill 21 that limits the rights of individuals to wear religious symbols while working in public institutions. This bill disproportionally impacts women wearing the hijab. This policy is considered proof of anti-Muslim systemic discrimination that creates additional socio-economic barriers for those belonging to minoritized groups in Quebec (Bakali, 2015, 2018a, 2018b). In her study, Fleras (2021) explains some of the additional burdens and barriers resulting from the policy context. Fleras (2021) points out the mechanisms through which these policies create and reinforce negative images of immigrants that are distorting and demeaning. Such deficient views and narratives not only impact adults who are criticized for low parental engagement in education but also their children who are failing to adjust, demonstrated by school disengagement and school refusal behaviours.

Overall, this section introduced social issues such as the prevalence of prejudice and discrimination suffered by minoritized populations in Canada, including Indigenous, African Canadians, Francophone minorities in English Canada, and English-speaking communities in Quebec (Bourhis, 2008). This section equally surfaced the impact of prejudice and discrimination in Quebec on the wellbeing of historically stigmatized communities (Bakali,

2018a, b; Bourhis, 2020) and the socio-economic status of the English-speaking minority in Quebec (O'Donnell, 2013; O'Donnell et al. 2021).

The Economic Dimension

According to Taylor (2012) the major motivation of immigrants is to create new opportunities for themselves and their children:

> the major motivation of immigrants into rich democracies is to find new opportunities, of work, education, or self-expression, for themselves and especially for their children. If they manage to secure these, they – and even more their children – are happy to integrate into the society. It is only if this hope is frustrated, if the path to more rewarding work and education is blocked, that a sense of alienation and hostility to the receiving society can grow and may even generate a rejection of the mainstream and its ethic. (p.414)

Upon settling in Canada, the economic inequalities in the context of immigrant reception revealed disproportions in earnings derived from paid employment, underemployment, and household incomes. When combined, these pre-existent inequalities create an adverse context for immigrant reception. For example, in Montreal, a quarter (22.6%) of its residents are immigrants born outside Canada (Statistics Canada, 2012). These newly arrived immigrant families in Quebec are more likely than non-immigrant families to be in a situation of poverty because of the professional de-skilling, insufficient language skills, and acculturation stress (Beiser et al., 2002; De Koninck & Armand, 2011; McAndrew & Bakhashaei, 2012, 2016; Palacios, 2012; Savard, 2007).

A study indicates that in 2016, even when employed, immigrants living in Montreal, regardless of their education level, are five times more at risk of being the working poor than non-immigrants (Leloup et al., 2018). According to the same study, "immigrants, immigrant

women, and visible minorities are overrepresented in lone-parent families living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods" (Leloup et al., 2018, p. 22).

Economic Marginalization. According to the 2011 National Household Survey (Statistics Canada, 2013), residential segregation is linked to a high concentration of poverty in specific neighbourhoods. According to the same survey, out of all low-income neighbourhoods in Canada, 35.8% are in Montreal, a percentage much higher than Toronto (15.7%) and Vancouver (7.1%). Perez et al. (2019) argues that "residential segregation is the grouping of individuals into well-defined spatial neighbourhoods that emerges from local interactions amongst social, economic and environmental factors" (p. 2). Overall, the concentration of disadvantage in Montreal has long-term consequences on the quality of life and the development and educational achievement of IOC&Y.

Marginalization and French Linguistic Abilities. Another critical aspect of Quebec's immigrant economic reception is related to the use of language. Das (2008) stated that linguistic choices often override the racial, cultural, and socio-economic affinities that migrants share upon their arrival in Quebec. In the past thirty years, studies have shown that non-Francophones in Quebec are more likely to be living in poverty (Jedwab, 2017/2018; O'Donnell, 2013; O'Donnell et al., 2021; Statistics Canada, 2016). Such predicaments indicated significant socio-economic disparities between Quebec's English-speaking and French-speaking communities (Bourhis, 2008; Corbeil et al., 2010; Floch & Pocock, 2008; Jedwab, 2004; 2017/2018; O'Donnell, 2013; Watson, 1996).

The Policy Dimension

Multiculturalism and interculturalism are the two ideological orientations used by the government to justify decisions, discourses and policies that impact the lives of people who

emigrate to Canada. The reception of immigrants by the host society impacts the society at large including the lives of the new Canadians settling in one of its multicultural provinces. The frameworks or approaches used formally or informally by the provincial government apparatus inevitably shape immigrants' settlement experience and the educational trajectories of their children. Although multiculturalism has been discussed as a lived reality, as an ideology or theory, when applied, in practice, Brant (2020) notes that:

> There is a fundamental difference between the Quebec and Canadian approaches. Canadian multiculturalism is a federal policy and is officially enshrined in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. Conversely, Quebec interculturalism is not, strictly speaking, either a policy or a law." (Interculturalism, para.16)

While Italy, Germany, France, and other recognized countries around the globe implement interculturalism in their educational settings, in the province of Quebec this practice has been contested by immigrant Allophones who emigrated to Canada and chose Quebec as their province of residence. Therefore, in this dissertation, I argue that interculturalism, while it coexists within or in parallel with Canadian multiculturalism, it overrides the Canadian values that attract international migration to this country. Consequently, their coexsistance creates unique and compounded disadvantages for immigrant women and children settling in Quebec. While still benefiting from multiculturalism, its value system, and international recognition, Quebec rejects this framework and sees multilingualism and pluricultural individuals as a threat to Quebec's national interests. This unclear status has profound implications in the design of immigration policies as well as the application of intercultural policies in schools, particularly in Accueil schools mandated with the integration of Allophone children and youth via Francization.

English/French Colonial History. Canada's linguistic, cultural, and immigrant integration policies enacted over the past four decades have sought to promote multiculturalism within a bilingual framework (MacIntyre et al., 1998). However, multiculturalism was not well received by Quebec society because of its colonial history in English Canada. According to Proulx-Chénard (2021), Quebec contested the equal status given to immigrant groups settling in Canada:

> Multiculturalism is accused, among other things, of putting all other cultures on an equal footing with Quebec's Francophone culture. A statement by former prime minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau sowed the seeds of controversy. In a speech to the House of Commons in April 1971, he stated that "while there are two official languages [in Canada], there is no official culture." It was a pivotal moment, which contributed to the popularization of interculturalism. (Interculturalism, para.7)

Interculturalism in Quebec. In Quebec, interculturalism remains the dominant approach to immigrant integration. Proulx- Chénard (2021) explaines interculturalism, stating that:

> Interculturalism is a model for living together developed in Quebec during the 1980s and represents its approach regarding the integration of newcomers and minority groups. This approach is the Quebec response to the federal government model, i.e., Canadian multiculturalism. The philosophy behind interculturalism is based on the idea that equality between the cultures in Quebec requires francisation and secularization of the public domain. Due to the controversies and debates surrounding the policies regarding reasonable accommodation, an official policy regarding the concept of interculturalism has become essential. The report from the Bouchard-Taylor Commission (2007–2008) continues to represent the most significant consultation effort regarding interculturalism. The *Charte de la langue française* (Bill 101) is one of the major pillars of the intercultural approach. However,

> *to date, there are no laws to provide a framework for this model of integrating minorities* (emphasis added). (Interculturalism, para.1)

As the history of British colonialism created intergenerational disparities and long-term poverty among French Canadians (Kastoryano, 2018), historically, this group has faced many struggles for recognition and self-government as a national group within Canada's multicultural mosaic (Boswell, 2017/2018). As a result, Quebec asserted itself as a distinct nation and a majority whose identity, culture and language must be preserved through intercultural policies. Bouchard (2011) defined interculturalism as a theory of immigrant integration, responsible for the management of ethnocultural minority groups:

> At the macro-social level, interculturalism is concerned with defining principles and general guidelines for integration. The second level is interculturality which refers to the microsocial scale of neighbourhoods, community relations, and the daily life of institutions (schools, hospitals, workplaces, etc. (p. 444)

Furthermore, Quebec's identity, culture and language must be preserved and protected through intercultural strategies such as Francization and secularization of immigrants, rather than multiculturalist ones (Bouchard, 2011, 2015). The three pillars of interculturalism were further explained by Jamil (2014):

> In the past forty years, Quebec has undergone massive political, economic and social transformations, establishing French as the official language of the province, reducing the institutional power of the Catholic Church, proclaiming Quebec as a secular society and highlighting the importance of gender equality as a core value. (p. 2324)

Language, Culture, and Immigration in Quebec. While federal bilingualism is acknowledged and critiqued, Quebec is a unilingual province with an independent immigration

process and a different education system, both shaped by the ideology of interculturalism. Quebec education and Quebec immigration are regulated by the provincial legislature (Reitz & Zhang, 2011). Quebec has a 1991 agreement with the Federal government called the Canada-Quebec Accord, giving Quebec power over immigration:

> However, the Gagnon-Tremblay-McDougall Agreement (1991), also known as the Canada-Quebec Accord, was the most important agreement made between Canada and Quebec in matters of permanent and temporary immigration. This document gave the province significant powers, allowing it to accept applicants who were able to work. With this agreement, the province gained complete control over the selection process of economic immigrants, as well as their integration and Francization. In other words, Quebec can manage the entry of its future permanent residents. At present, the Ministry of Immigration, Francization and Integration is responsible for managing the candidates for permanent immigration, based on its own selection criteria. (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2021)

Interculturalism in Quebec has also been scrutinized due to tensions regarding the secularization of Quebec society, for example, prohibiting anyone who performs a public function from wearing visible religious garb or symbols. Interculturalism does not seem to align with Canadian values promoted by multiculturalism. In other parts of this country teachers, nurses and even elected representatives are allowed to wear the type of clothing that represents them. Bilge (2013b) argues that secularization and reasonable accommodation in Quebec has been "an ongoing, raceless debate rooted in colonial hidden racialized power dynamics" (p.158). The ongoing issues of secularization of IRER women marked the policy context of immigrant reception as an intercultural space in which the dominant ideologies of the majority shape power relations between majority and minoritized populations in Quebec. In response, they are being

contested by the minoritiezed groups under multiple grounds of discrimination: economic, religious, and linguistic.

The Linguistic Context of Immigrant Reception and Integration

The Canadian Official Language*s* Act (OLA) (1988) specifies English and French as the two official languages of Canada, and Anglophones and Francophones as having equal rights and responsibilities under federal jurisdictions. However, Quebec rejects federal bilingualism as it applies to those areas under provincial jurisdiction. For instance, Canadian national parks and federal government offices and jobs are bilingual in Quebec. On the other hand, Quebec has its own Official Language Act (Bill 22, 1974) that makes the province's official language French. The integration and education of immigrants in Quebec has to be only in French. Also, in Quebec, there is Quebec's Charter of the French Language (Bill 101, 1977) which addresses the place of French in government, the courts, the education system, businesses, and signage:

> Bill 101 profoundly changed Quebec. The 1977 law made state institutions, certain workplaces, and commercial signs predominantly French. Since the law's adoption, the English-speaking minority has experienced population loss, economic decline, and school closures, but also a growing organizational vitality and increased participation in Francophone Quebec. (O'Donnell et al., 2021 p. 5)

Bill 101 also determines if immigrant children go to French, not English-language schools. Strengthening Bill 101, the most recently proposed Bill 96 entitled "An Act Respecting French, the Official and Common Language of Quebec," has been tabled in 2021. According to McKenna (2021), a reporter from the national press Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) if the Quebec legislature adopts Bill 96 there will be more limitations for the English-speaking groups:

> The 100-page bill, if passed, would toughen sign laws, and strengthen language requirements for businesses, governments and schools. It would create a new French-language commissioner and extend language requirements to businesses with 25 employees or more, down from 50. Government agencies would have to use French exclusively in their written and oral communications, with few exceptions, while businesses would have to ensure the "net predominance" of French on signs that include more than one language. Other provisions would cap enrolment at English CEGEPs and grant new powers to the French-language watchdog (OQLF). (McKenna, 2021, May 13)

Overlap of Federal and Provincial Language Regimes. There is a complex overlapping system of language regimes that shape the immigrant experience: the provincial OLA (Bill 22, 1974), the federal OLA (1988), as well as the federal Indigenous Languages Act (2019). This means that Quebec recognizes federal bilingualism but not within its own public institutions which are under provincial jurisdiction (which should be monolingually French). However, for the Anglophone linguistic minority in Quebec there are some distinctions. There is a historic access to education and health in English for right-holders. These distinctions are outside the scope of this study and are not going to be discussed in this dissertation.

Educational Integration and Intercultural Education

The implementation of education reform dates back to 1998, when Education Minister Pauline Marois issued a new educational policy titled “A School for the Future. Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education,” stressing the importance of Qubeec citizenship and detailing the role of schools in the social, educational, and linguistic integration of newly arrived immigrants. This policy outlined the role of schools concerning intercultural education, the socio-cultural and linguistic integration of immigrant families in Quebec society,

and the Francization of all immigrants (Gouvernement du Québec – Ministère de l'Éducation, 1998).

As a result of this policy, public schools undertook the integration of newly arrived immigrant students through Francization. In the view of Kymlicka (2003), this approach to immigrant education is closer to an isolationist approach because the state represents the language, values, culture, religion, and history of the dominant group. Steinbach (2010) notes in her research with immigrant youth enrolled in Accueil that:

> Immigrant students reported impressions of the inauthenticity of their French language learning in closed Accueil classes due to their isolation from regular stream classes. The data indicate a striking segregation between students of immigrant origins and host society youth in this school, revealing problematic aspects of the system of Accueil classes and the exclusionist school discourses that prevail. Policy implications include the necessity of creating inclusive school discourses and providing intercultural education for all students" (p. 95).

While the impact of these policies on immigrant performance and educational disadvantage remains a gap in the literature, the educational success of Allophone children in Quebec public schools is well documented (McAndrew et al., 2015). Research demonstrated the successful integration of Allophone students in both the regular program (De Koninck & Armand, 2011) and the Accueil program (Vatz-Laaroussi et al., 2008).

The Francization of Immigrants. Castonguay (1998) notes that "Bill 101 gave a notable boost to Francization by making public education in French compulsory for children of future immigrants in Quebec" (p. 51) and streamed all immigrant children from English into French-language schools (Bourhis, 2008; Bourhis et al., 2007; Bourhis et al., 2010). Considering that

French-language education is at the heart of the Quebec identity, learning French is seen as of utmost importance for the successful integration of immigrants (G. Bouchard, 2015). Furthermore, as "the learning of French and its adoption as a common language of the public life are necessary conditions for immigrant integration" (Carens, 2000, p. 115), Bill 101 intends to integrate the immigrant population within the Francophone majority through the process of Francization (Robert & Tondreau, 1997). Given Quebec's socio-political context, Kastoryano (2018) states that "the school as a site of intercultural policy was obviously not a coincidence" (Interculturalism, para 21).

The Accueil System. The Accueil system was created in 1969 as a service focused only the Francization of non-francophone students (Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport du Québec [MELSQ], 2008, p.148, personal translation). In 1996 the Accueil service became a "classe d'accueil, classe de francization" and it opened up subjects taught in regular program ([MELSQ], 2008, p. 148, personal translation).

> In addition, the "Initiation to Quebec life" component of the Accueil system was introduced to make students aware of their new living environment. It is in the continuity of this process and in order to broaden it that the Ministère de l'Éducation adopted in 1998 the Policy on School Integration and Intercultural Education, entitled "A school of the future", whose orientations relate not only to school integration but also to intercultural education and the learning of citizenship. (MELSQ, 2008, p. 148, personal translation). See Appendix A for more information about the evolution of Accueil.

On paper it is exclusively for the integration of immigrant children who arrived in Quebec in the past five years, do not have the French language skills to attend a regular program, and whose maternal language is not French, English, Inuktitut, or other Indigenous languages

(Vermette et al. 2000). When there are many immigrants, it seems that an entire building can be dedicated to form an entire Accueil school system where plurilingual and pluri-cultural students are allowed to interact with each other only in French. Regular schools offer Accueil classes for the Allophone student population living in an area where there are no Accueil schools.

Immigrant students immersed in the Accueil system receive French-only language instruction for 7 to 10 months in four school subjects only: French, Mathematics, Arts and Sports. Children in the regular program have access to the full curriculum and interact with children of non-immigrants. The full curriculum includes the addition of science and technology, geography, history, etc. According to Róbert (2010), "the majority of educational policy recommendations argue that heterogeneous grouping of students, less education segregation is best suited for students" (p. 16). Furthermore, institutional arrangements are also part of the larger environment, and influence students' educational achievement (Willms & Kerckhoff, 1995).

The Accueil system was structured as a systemic process of French-language education and organized according to the model of closed special classes with multi-age, multi-ethnic and multi-level groups of students clustered together based on their level of French (Ferland & Rocher, 1987). Cumming-Potvin et al. (1994) state that the integration of immigrant students in Quebec schools presents several significant challenges:

> The diversity of the original languages and educational attainments of newly arrived pupils does not favour standardized measures; a poor perception of teachers and principals, despite the official statistics on the subject, concerning language skills and the academic performance of immigrant students; the latter would slow down the pace of regular program and have problems of adaptation in school; and the diversity of regulations stemming from the school laws and the bodies of the Ministry of Education does not always favour change. (p. 680)

In conclusion, the dominant discourse about the Francization of IOC&Y in Accueil could be considered biased. While the Francization of immigrants is a linguistic approach, Accueil schools prevent the slowing down of Francophone students (enrolled in the regular program). While Bill 101 states that French is the official language for immigrant education, the use of other languages while at school is not explicitly forbidden. However, Bill 101 outlines French as the only language required in the workplace, thereby discouraging the use of other languages.

More research at the intersection of language policies, immigration and education is necessary to understand if educational disadvantage is directly impacted by French-only parent-school interaction and French-only student-student interaction while at school.

Summary

The first part of this chapter discusses issues of IRER single-mother families in a post-migration context, gender inequalities, feminization of migration, and feminization of poverty. It relevance lies in the connections between socio-economic disparities which impact immigrant women and their children disproportionally, especially in Quebec and linguicism and discrimination constituting additional penalties for IRER single mother families. The second part discussed the context of immigrant reception, including the social, economic, legal and linguistic dimensions and immigrant integration and education. Overall, this chapter unearthed some linguistic tensions and asymmetrical power dynamics between immigrants and the host society. Given the complex social fabric of Quebec's society, the context of immigrant reception must be considered a significant factor in the development and educational attainment of Allophone children.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This chapter introduces Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1974, 1979, 1986) and its application in examining family-school partnerships. The literature reviewed brings forth issues related to immigrants' education influenced by schools, communities, policies, and socio-cultural conditions external to the child or the family system. Furthermore, the review maps the factors that help or hinder family-school partnerships such as teachers' attitudes, testing and assessment, and supportive relationships. The family factors shaping educational outcomes are parental attitudes and involvement in education. Among the barriers impacting family-school interactions are low socio-economic status of immigrant parents, language barriers, cultural biases, racism and discrimination in schools, and a deficit view of immigrants.

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1974, 1979, 1986) recognizes the importance of human development in context. It stresses the complexity of human growth's behavioural, cognitive and phycological dimensions of human growth resulting from a series of reciprocal processes. Such processes are interdependent and occur over time between a person, the surrounding systems, and the broader socio-cultural environment or context. For example, this theoretical framework underlines that student achievement is not just a linear process resulting from the child's abilities alone but reflects an ecology of overlapping interactions. Although both families and schools strongly influence successful childhood development, parent-school interaction is essential for educational achievement and healthy child development.

Bronfenbrenner's framework advances several research areas established by general and contextual systems theory (D. H. Ford & Lerner, 1992; Pianta & Walsh, 1996). The following aspects of the theory are most relevant to this study:

a) People are open systems with continual and reciprocal interactions with their surrounding contexts.

b) An individual's outcomes result from complex links or relationships formed between systems and contextual factors in the environment.

c) Systems operate at many different levels, from proximal to distal.

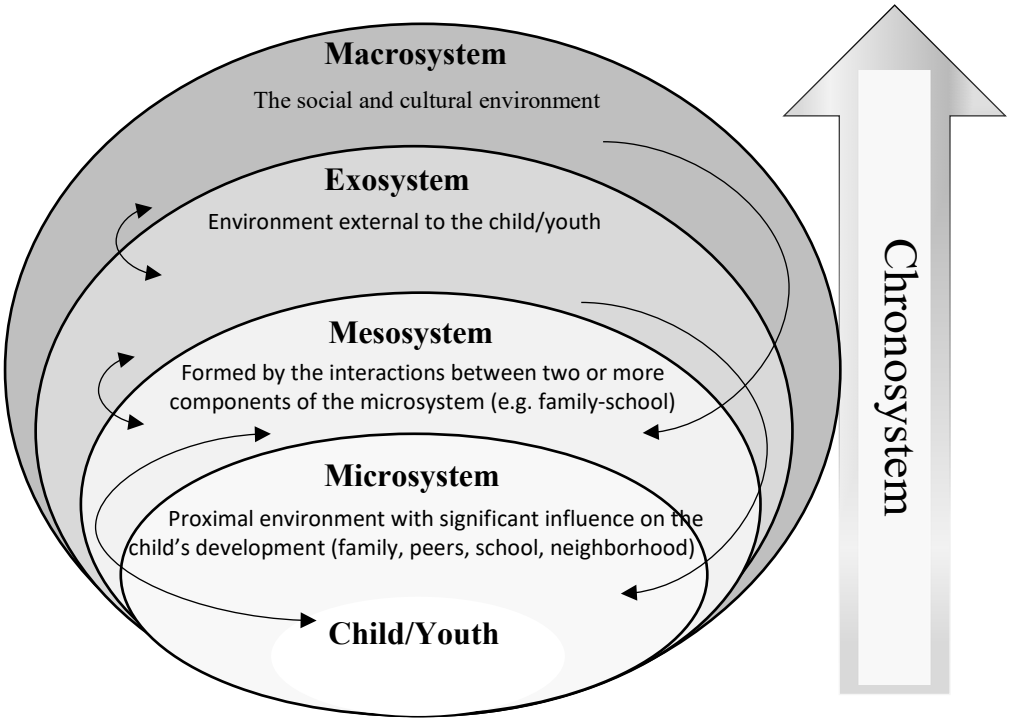
d) Relationships between systems are more than the sum of their parts.

e) Systems and patterns of interaction change over time.

Based on the type of relationships formed over time between an individual and the surrounding setting, this developmental context was conceptualized as a nested structure ranging from the most intimate or proximal to more distal ones (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Bronfenbrenner's Ecology of Human Development



Note. Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1986).

Microsystem

Within the nested structure exemplified by Figure 1, the microsystem represents a proximal setting of development in which the child has sustained interactions over time with other members of the microsystem. A microsystem is defined as "the pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relationships experienced by a developing person in a particular setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, as cited in Johnson, 2008, p.2). For example, families, schools, neighbourhoods, and peer groups represent typical developmental settings that directly influence the child's educational trajectory and development.

Mesosystem

The mesosystem is defined as the developmental context formed by two microsystems in constant interaction. The family-school mesosystem is the most relevant for this study because the interactions between schools and parents significantly influence the developing child. School-family partnerships (Christenson & Reschly, 2010) and family-school-community (Epstein, 1996, 2010) constitute essential alliances that influence children's educational outcomes.

Defined as interconnected and interdependent to distal settings, the mesosystem comprises the mutual relationships, links, and transitions experienced by a person moving back and forth from one micro-system to another. At the mesolevel, influences intersect in significant ways internally in the mesosystem and externally in the interaction with the other environmental layers. Epstein et al. (2002) extended Bronfenbrenner's initial model (1974) of a mesosystem and advanced that the neighbourhood setting plays an essential role in human development in addition to the family-school mesosystem. Therefore, the educational adjustment of children depends on the school, family, and community to work together and

promote student learning and development (Boulaamane & Bouchamma, 2021a, 2021b; Epstein, 2018).

Exosystem

The exosystem is represented by "conditions and events in settings where the child does not participate directly, but it affects the micro-and mesosystems in important ways" (Clarke et al., 2009, p. 63). Thus, for example, the parent's workplace, school board decisions, and community-based resources are distal settings of development that indirectly impact a child's life. In this study, the application of immigrant policies by the education system in Quebec and the employment of IRER participants, underemployment, and/or barriers to employment belong in the exosystem.

Macrosystem

The macrosystem is formed by the larger context comprising the socio-economic and legal institutions impacting the individual. It encompasses the values, laws, customs, resources, lifestyles and opportunity structures within a particular culture or subculture that impact development over time (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). According to Ryan (1976), government legislation influences microsystems especially when juxtaposed with family-school interactions. However, Bronfenbrenner failed to pay in-depth attention to certain aspects of the macrosystem. Regarding the socio-economic and legal features, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2018) extended Bronfenbrenner's macrosystem framework, which helps us understand in more depth the impact of the host society on IOC&Y development. Therefore, the context of immigrant reception in Quebec, highlighted in the previous chapter, becomes a lens of consideration.

The macrosystem in this study also features Quebec's policy context, which is either embedded within or co-exists in parallel with the larger Canadian macrosystem. These two macrosystem layers, the province of Quebec with its distinct culture, language and immigrant

integration approach and the macrosystem of Canadian federalism, contrast, and at times, work in opposition. Given the open nature of the socio-ecological model, the IRER single-mother families acculturate to both English Canada and French Quebec. Therefore, the ongoing contradictions/tensions between these two nested environments can influence the overall adjustment and wellbeing of English-speaking Allophones.

Chronosystem

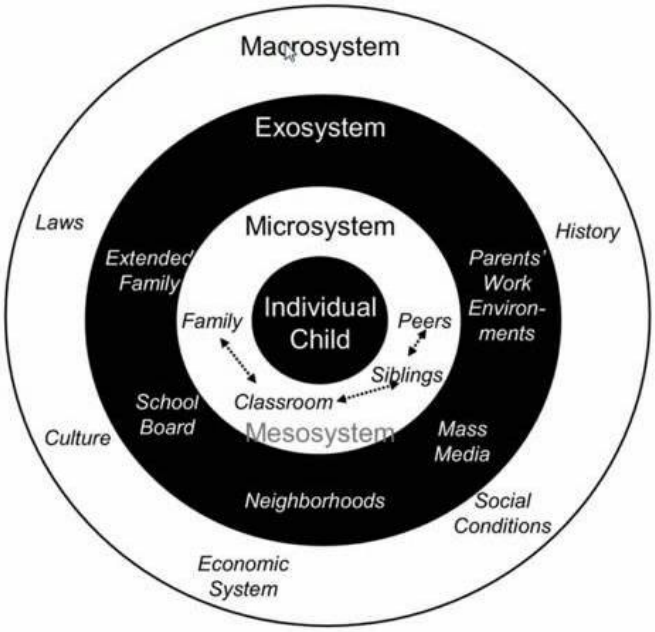
Lastly, the chronosystem is the outer circle of influence, describing the historical context and significant historical events that can alter developmental trajectories through their influences on more proximal ecological settings. This system consists of all of the environmental changes that occur over the lifetime which influence development, including major life transitions. Therefore, immigration could be seen as a disruption that occurs over time and drastically influences children and adults' life trajectories. Kiang et al. (2016) highlight the limitation of the chronosystem as conceptualized by Bronfenbrenner. They argue for focusing more specifically on the experiences of ethnic minority youth. "García Coll and colleagues proposed an *integrative model* for understanding ethnic minority children's development that puts social stratification, racism, and oppression at the center of developmental science" (p. 997).

Influence and Power in the Ecosystem

The educational adjustment of children depends on the school-family-community to work together and promote student learning and development (Epstein, 2013, 2018). Interpersonal interactions within the school, institutional practices, and community-level circumstances are of great significance for children's development (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Epstein's Model of Overlapping Spheres of Influence



Note. Figure indicating family and school connections. Adapted from Epstein (1997).

The theory of overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein 2013) advances the importance of interpersonal relationships in school- home settings (at the mesolevel) where asymmetrical power dynamics either support or hinder children's learning and holistic development. In home-school settings, the concept 'spheres of influence' clarifies that not all interactions are equal because they hold various degrees of influence as "spheres can be pushed together or pulled apart by practices and interpersonal interactions in each microsystem" (Epstein, 1990, p. 2).

Educational practices and teacher-parent interactions are part of these spheres of influence. Epstein et al. (2002) and Epstein (2013) argued that these interpersonal interactions within the school, institutional practices, and community-level circumstances overlap with each other and disproportionately impact child development over time (Figure 2). As explained in Chapter 1, Quebec's urban public school rankings are determined by the socio-economic

status of a neighbourhood's population. Spheres of influence intersect or overlap, affecting children's developmental and educational trajectories. Therefore, a child's scores in mathematics might be a combination of overlapping and cumulative school-family-community factors. This overlap is an important aspect throughout the study because it addresses issues related to accountability. IRER single mothers cannot be and should not be the sole party responsible for their children's educational achievement from this theoretical view. Consequently, Montreal's educational policies would do well to consider Bronfenbrenner's and Epstein's frameworks when designing interventions to reduce educational inequalities in its poorest neighbourhoods. Similarly, the interactions forming over time between different microsystems are imbued with asymmetrical power dynamics called "power settings" (Epstein et al., 2002) which should be acknowledged by teachers and principals when interacting with parents especially recently arrived immigrant parents with reduced French language abilities. Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests that:

> The developmental potential of a setting is enhanced to the extent that there exist direct and indirect links to power settings through which participants in the original setting can influence the allocation of resources and the making of decisions responsive to the needs of the developing person and the efforts of those who act on his behalf. (p. 256)

Power settings and overlapping spheres of influence give rise to assumptions about pre-existent power dynamics and social inequalities bringing attention to the reception of IOC&Y in schools and the interaction between their IRER parents and schools. Moreover, the education system shapes equity, fairness and the distribution of resources that unfavourably impact the educational outcomes of plurilingual students enrolled in certain multilingual neighbourhood urban schools. If some of the IRER parents might have little access to power sources, or have insufficient abilities to effectively communicate in French, they find

themselves in a position that does limits their abilities to directly advocate on behalf of their children.

Therefore, in the context of immigrant reception in Quebec, the socio-economic status of parents, combined with language proficiency could be conceptualized as a power setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1976, 1979) established through interactions between a microsystem (family unit led by a single mother), the exosystem (application of policies in and by institutions) and government policies (macrosystem). However, in this particular power setting, the school is not necessarily a microsystem but an extension of the exosystem, representing Quebec's majority's interests when legislating policy and regulations.

Literature Review of Parent-School Interaction

School performance and adjustment are influenced by a multitude of characteristics that reside within the student, experiences in schools, community contexts, and influences of culture and society (Abada et al., 2009; Cheng & Yan, 2018; Cummins, 2012; Pianta & Walsh, 1996; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1979, 1986) ecological model provides the ground for a more nuanced understanding of familial processes affected by external conditions. Following the model developed by Christenson and Reschly (2010), school-family partnerships are conceptualized as a mesosystem influencing children's educational success, their social and economic upward mobility, and participation in civic life.

This section covers the relevant literature written in both French and English on parent-school interaction, and describes multiple aspects that can either benefit or hinder the development of IOC&Y upon settlement in Canada. A review of school factors that influence educational outcomes reveal the following elements: teachers' attitudes and expectations; testing and evaluation; supportive relationships; and parental involvement in education (Pratt-Johnson, 2015). In addition, several structural barriers lead to low immigrant parental

involvement in school-based activities attributable to racism and discrimination, a deficit view of IOC&Y, low education and socio-economic status of IOC&Y's parents, language and social barriers in context; and cultural differences and unfair treatment of children in schools (Arapi et al., 2018; Bakhshaei, 2015; Turney & Kao 2009).

The central insight resulting from this review is linked to an acute misalignment between the schools' priorities and the parental concerns regarding the education of immigrant Allophone children and youth in Quebec. Several studies indicates that families' cultural and social capital are insufficient when coming up against structural barriers, particularly when faced with incidents of racism and discrimination within schools. Consequently, when parents have no proper channels to influence school decisions, they tend to disengage or stop interacting with schools (Larochelle-Audet et al., 2018; Paccaud et al., 2020).

Parent - School Interaction

Numerous studies focus on the importance of parent-school collaboration internationally (Bergset, 2017; Ee, 2017; Fleischmann & de Haas, 2016; Frisby & Jimerson, 2016; Noguerón-Liu, 2017). Nevertheless, school involvement reveals tensions and incongruencies regarding expectations, values, and educational priorities for immigrant families. While some research studies conducted with parents of IOC&Y (Lewig et al., 2010; McBrien, 2005, 2011) have suggested that immigrant parents are passive or less involved in the education of their children, others have argued that "language rules bind the process of engaging with the education system, and values that privilege some people and exclude others" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994, p. 299).

Canadian Context. In the Canadian context (Alfred & Guo, 2012; Ali, 2008; R. Basu, 2011; Bernhard, 2010; Christenson & Reschly, 2010), analyses of parent-school interaction noted how low parental self-efficacy and engagement in education was shaped by schools, teachers, and the education system as a whole. Some of the studies emphasized how

exercising agency has proved to be difficult for immigrant parents (Liu, 2019) whose modalities of supporting their children were not acknowledged by the schools as valid forms of parental involvement (Anthony-Newman, 2019, 2020). Ali (2008) noted that "the normative images and processes they use in raising their children are different from those used by the dominant society around them" (p. 149) especially for multilingual learners (Chiras & Galante, 2021). Differences regarding parental involvement in education are influenced by cultural practices (Abada et al., 2009; Cheng & Yan, 2018).

Quebec Context. In the Quebec context Galante et al., (2022) advocated for the advantages of implementing critical plurilingual pedagogy in educational contexts. While most research studies focus on the performance of Allophone students, school failure and school delays for this student population have also documented educational outcomes (Beauregard & Grenier, 2017; Beauregard et al., 2014; Bernhard, 2002, 2010; Charette, 2016; McAndrew et al., 2015; Vatz-Laaroussi et al., 2008). Among other factors, low engagement of immigrant parents was generally associated with a lack of adequate language skills and knowledge of Quebec's education system (Cuko, 2016a, 2016b; Dumoulin et al., 2013; Hohl, 1996; Kanouté, 2006; Kanouté & Calvet, 2008). Complex relationships between parents, community contexts and urban schooling were also explored to understand the factors that influence educational achievement (Deslandes, 2006; Deslandes et al., 2015). Although some of the studies focused on the experience of immigrant English-speaking immigrant women in Quebec (Chouakry, 2015), and immigrant single mothers in Quebec (Gergel & St. Jacques, 2012), there are no studies to date documenting the overlapping spheres of influence between schools and English-speaking immigrant single mothers in Quebec. Generally, gender specific research that illuminates the views of mothers in a post-migration context is missing in the literature.

School Factors Influencing Educational Outcomes

According to the literature, schools are often a primary location where "ability is measured, constructed, and concretized through the allocation of access to resources and varying programs or academic opportunities" (Parekh et al., 2018, p. 402). Furthermore, schools are embedded in socio-political and neighbourhood contexts. Pedagogy, curricula, and relationships between individuals significantly impact students and their families.

Teachers' Attitudes and Expectations. Numerous studies explain that experiences with teachers in classrooms make a difference in students' learning outcomes (Hamre & Pianta, 2001, 2005), shape school climate (Marks & Pieloch, 2015), and impact student achievement (Rowan et al., 2002; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). However, extensive research points out that teachers who have limited experience working with diverse populations have little or no training in adapting the curriculum to accommodate culturally diverse learners (Guo et al., 2009; Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004; Ngo, 2009; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009; Solomon et al., 2005).

This means that most teachers represent the dominant culture and its views and attitudes. Since it is well known that Canadian education has historical roots in assimilationist and racist policies of Aboriginal peoples' social, economic, linguistic, and spiritual ways of being (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2020) there is a concern about the impact of dominant attitudes on children's developmental outcomes. Low expectations from IOC&Y might be also caused by deficit-based perceptions of the students' immigrant background.

Testing and Evaluation. Dei (1999) argues that education systems produce, police and standardize knowledge about subordinate social groups. Along with educational disparities, the standardization of testing and evaluation practices has been considered biased and possibly leading to educational inequalities in the Canadian education system (Earl et al., 2015). An important aspect of teachers' abilities to remain fair and objective is related to the

institutional structure of schools (Ladwig & McPherson, 2017; Parekh et al., 2018). When reframing schools as institutions, biased testing and evaluation raised significant concerns and prompted an urgent international report by UNESCO (2019) that examined teacher training, inclusive curriculum, and the advancement of social justice principles in schools.

Supportive Relationships. Not only schools but also parental attitudes towards education (Gardner & Lalonde, 1985; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2014) and parenting styles determine schooling outcomes ((Moon et al., 2009; Morrison & Cooney, 2002). In contrast with the previous research showing low parental engagement at home, substantial evidence confirmed that immigrant parents have high educational expectations and are invested in the success of their children (Kanouté & Calvet, 2008; Nanhou & Audet, 2008; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; C. Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009a; Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2011; Valdés, 1996). Similar findings indicate that parental involvement is "a priority for the immigrant parents who chose to immigrate to Canada to facilitate their children's education" (Beauregard et al., 2014, p. 189).

In post-migration contexts where the school language differs from the home language, immigrant parents have also influenced their children's attitudes towards second language learning (Bartram, 2006; Gardner & Lalonde,1985; Gardner et al., 1999). Dagenais (2003) and Dorner (2015) found that while immigrant parents value multilingualism, they still prioritize their maternal language and culture of origin at home (Curdt-Christenson, 2009; Ramos-Sánchez, 2007; Shannon & Milian, 2002; Whiting & Feinauer, 2011). Bicultural and multilingual integration theories argue that immigrants do better when they stay firmly connected to sending and receiving cultures (Basu, 2015; Cummins, 2001; Kircher et. al., 2022).

Parental Involvement in Education

Parental involvement in education has gained support among education theorists and policymakers across many countries and has been seen as an effective way to improve student academic performance (Kelley-Laine, 1998). Hill and Taylor (2004) explain parental involvement in terms of the overall purpose of such a long-term contribution, "parents' work with schools and with their children that benefit the children's educational outcomes and future success" (p. 149).

More specifically, according to Gonzalez-DeHass et al. (2005), such involvement typically should involve at least some of the following aspects:

a) Participating in parent-teacher conferences and/or school-based interactions.
b) Participating in school activities, and/or functions.
c) Engaging in activities at home including but not limited to homework.
d) Engaging in children's' extracurricular activities.
e) Assisting in the selection of a student's courses.
f) Keeping abreast of a student's academic progress.
g) Reaction to a student's academic grades.
h) Imparting parental values (attitudes about the importance of effort and academic success).
i) Exercising parental control and/or autonomy support offered in the home environment (p. 108).

Studies also indicate that parental involvement increased when communication is done in a respectful, engaging and not demanding manner (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Epstein et al., 2002; Walker et al., 2005; Suárez-Orozco, 2018). Task-orientated models of parental involvement in education underlined roles and activities such as parent-teacher contact and

participation of parents in pre-determined school-based activities that did not necessarily match the parents' concerns (Epstein et al., 2002; Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009).

Models of Parental Engagement. Other models of parental involvement investigated the role of healthy, balanced relationships between teachers and parents, including trust, mutual respect, and responsibility. These were found as necessary conditions for establishing equitable interactions and relationships among teachers and students (Antony-Newman, 2019; Clarke et al., 2009; Gagnon et al., 2006). In an institutional context such as schools, positive regard, perceptions of competence and integrity of teachers were associated with high trust in parents and higher levels of engagement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Manning et al., 2006; C. Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009; C. Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). In these studies, integrity, fairness, equity, transparency, and accountability created the conditions for inter-personal trust to develop over time. Conversely, the same studies found that processes based on competition, top-down interactions, deception, and covert power dynamics can diminish trust in an organization and create toxic organizational cultures. Unfortunately, schools are not exceptions to this rule.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model for parental engagement (1997, 2005) suggests that a parent's motivation to become involved in schooling is based on self-efficacy, life circumstances, and the perception that the school appreciates the parents (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). They encourage researchers and practitioners to ask new and more challenging questions about the quality of involvement and student-parent interaction. They call for an examination of the quality of participation from multiple perspectives, not just those that focus on the frequency of parental involvement. Critics of the parental involvement literature have signaled its limitations and questioned the empirical evidence regarding the effects on student achievement of family-school collaboration (Drummond & Stipek, 2004).

The cultural assumptions underlying the calls for parental involvement have received little attention (De Carvalho, 2000; Lareau, 1987). De Carvalho (2000) found that the cultural assumptions underlying demands for parent involvement provided advantages for particular social groups. As the expectations of school-based parental involvement worked well for the parents sharing the same school culture, it created pressures for socially vulnerable groups, such as immigrants. While both home-based and school-based activities were seen as integral parts of parental involvement, these authors argue that it was essential to distinguish the overall purpose of each of these types of activities.

As parents engaged in helping children learn at home, they often perceived schooling as a form of extending, prioritizing and, at times, enforcing specific school activities within the family setting. The differences in home-based and school-based activities suggested that "education is not the same as schooling, and there is value in exploring the moral and political significance of pedagogical spaces, processes and relationships outside the walls of institutions" (Suissa, 2017, p. 256).

Furthermore, the assumption held by schools that effective parental involvement at home would solve the IOC&Y low educational achievement is problematic. Eccles demonstrates that when the three influences on children (school, family, and community) overlap, positive developmental outcomes are achieved. The overlap indicates the interdependencies between different spheres of influence in child development (Marschall, 2006). The following section covers literature looking at some of the tensions that, at times, hinder the involvement of IOC&Y parents in school activities.

Structural Barriers to Parental Involvement

Parent-school interaction has not always been problem-free (Boulaamne & Bouchamma, 2021a, 2021b). Several educational researchers identified tensions and conflicts that hindered parental involvement and their sense of self-efficacy concerning their children's education

(Moon et al., 2009; Peña, 1998; Riches & Curdt-Christenson, 2010). For example, Olivos (2006) placed the tensions between immigrant parents and schools within the context of broader social relations, which usually reflects the values of white, middle to upper-class English-speaking students and "negates the cultural capital that bicultural students bring to class" (Olivos, 2006, p. 78). Guo's (2012) qualitative study with immigrant parents in Canada revealed that teachers perceived immigrants' knowledge as inferior, incompatible or irrelevant in the Canadian context, and most often misinterpreted the behavious of plurilingual students in the classroom due to a lack of cultural, linguistic, or religious knowledge that students use at home regularly to interact with their families. Instead of using the principles of plurilingual pedagogy (Galante, 2020), these instances might reproduce socially unjust routine educational practices, along with a deficit model of thinking about IOC&Y students (Skrla & Scheurich, 2001) and victim-blaming (Ryan, 1976).

Education and Socio-Economic Status of IOC&Y's Parents. The socio-economic status of families along with the education level of the mother seems to be the two main characteristics of successful school-parent interaction. Mothers with low levels of education, poor living conditions and precarious working conditions usually decrease school-based involvement (Vatz-Laaroussi et al., 2008; Soutullo et al., 2016). Such findings indicate tensions between parents and schools. The requirements and demands imposed on teachers to deliver a good education, and their requirements towards parents clash with the realities of low-income families who have limited resources required in school-based activities or extracurricular initiatives organized by schools (Dronkers & Kornder, 2015; Hachfeld et al., 2010; Jonsson et al., 2014). This reality generates negative attitudes towards low-income parents and it might even lead to biases and a lack of recognizing IRER parents as valuable collaborators, resulting in a passive type of parental involvement (Ali, 2008; Beauregard et al., 2014; Olivos, 2006). Therefore, a lack of resources coupled with a lack of interest in

school-based activities should not necessarily be understood as a lack of interest in the education of their children. It might simply mean a resistance or a lack of interest in the activities proposed by teachers and school personnel.

Language and Social Barriers at the Meso-Level. Drawing on the testimonies of different actors in the school sysem, Kanouté et al. (2016) suggests that in Quebec, a lack of French language skills is a known communication barrier encountered by immigrant parents when trying to interact with schools. Beauregard et al. (2014) suggests that "limited knowledge of the dominant language affects the development of a relationship with the school, and translation alone does not remediate this problem" (p. 177). As language barriers usually represent more significant cultural differences that remain tacit, the level of parental involvement is low even if translation services are available to immigrant parents (Beauregard et al., 2014). This suggests that parental involvement is problematic. Given that most Allophone parents with children in Accueil have reduced linguistic abilities and a limited mastery of the host culture, unspoken misunderstandings reinforce communication gaps and interpersonal tensions.

One possible explanation for such gaps is revealed by analyzing verbal and non-verbal interactions between immigrant and non-immigrant women. Bucca (2014) argues that immigrants encounter socio-cultural and linguistic challenges such as prejudice and negative stereotypes even during everyday interactions. Her study suggests that intercultural communication is a series of strategic interactions involving communicative competencies that come into play when one person in a position with more formal power communicates with another person that has less ability to shape requests or demands. In her view, communication is not only about language ability because "communication goes beyond the simple exchange of information and becomes an interpersonal exchange" (p. 33).

The requirements of immigrant integration in Quebec, schools promote the values and the expectations of the receiving dominant population of Quebec and not those of the Allophone children. To that point, Beauregard et al. (2014) states that

> the differences in values and practices of parents and school staff that are both implicit and explicit and the attitudes of school personnel along with their stereotypes toward immigrant families can have more impact on the family-school relationship than language (p. 177).

Effective immigrant education strategies with Allophones could focus on placing more reasonable demands on IOC&Y parents who do not know how the system functions, inadequate teacher training, and possible scarcity of mutual respect.

Cultural Biases and Dynamics at the Macro-Level. The literature shows that some teachers in Quebec see immigrant parents as lacking the required motivation and desired interest to effectively engage in their children's schooling (Nobert, 2018; Prévôt, 2008; Tremblay et al., 2015). However, the literature also suggests that a low motivation or interest could reflect an unproductive dynamic resulting from the teachers' devaluation of the parents and the parents' unfavorable perceptions of the school system. Thus, teachers' ability to facilitate student success might be undermined by their lack of understanding plurilingual families, and the socio-cultural capital immigrant parents bring into the host country (Bernhard, 2010).

Another possible explanation for low parental involvement is the teachers' lack of cultural sensitivity during family-school interactions because immigrant integration and educational policies neglect this as an essential strategy (Crosnoe, 2005; N. E. Hill & Torres, 2010) in multilingual schools. Teacher training could improve family-school collaboration by acknowledging parents' diverse values, cultures, languages, and religions in implementing educational strategies (Guo, 2011, 2012). More recent studies also point to a systemic deficit

of the receiving societies in a context in which immigrants' social and cultural capital is ignored, having as one of the consequences, a low engagement in school-based activities (Ali, 2012; Bergset, 2017; Charette, 2016; Changkakoti & Akkari, 2008).

Overall, it seems that teachers' negative perceptions about parents and their negative perceptions about teachers could go back and forth over time in a vicious circle. As a result, a negative pattern within the school-family mesosystem perpetuates systems dynamics and inequalities. Instead of finding clear solutions, both teachers and parents pass accountability and responsibility without acknowledging the macro aspects influencing their interactions.

Burdened Forms of Parental Involvement. Another distinction worth making is that immigrant parents might demonstrate their involvement in education differently than the school expects. Charrette (2016) finds that in Quebec, the intense mobilization of immigrants parents in their children's schooling remains invisible. According to Charrette (2016), high parental involvement remains unrecognized by the teachers; some of the modalities of involvement of recently arrived immigrant parents often involves private French-language tutoring, doing additional homework with their children, hiring a professional translator to communicate with the school, and opting for private school despite limited financial resources. For these parents, schools remains unresponsive to their choice of parental involvement in the education of their children. Studies suggests that parents usually struggle when they realize that teachers do not see their involvement in education as a valuable contribution (Ali & Kilbride, 2004; Ardelt & Eccles, 2001). Moreover, the lack of recognition and legitimacy of alternative ways of parental involvement undermine immigrants' emotional and cultural capital (Pratt-Johnson, 2015).

Summary of the Literature Review and Conclusions

The chapter presented Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological System Theory and its central concepts, including the notion of power settings and overlapping spheres of influence. Parent-school

interaction was seen as a mesosystem with a significant influence on the development of children and youth. The literature covered an extensive list of studies in both French and English related to parent-school interaction. It drew attention to the relationship between immigrant parents and schools, some of the influences situated at the macro level and shaping discontinuities between home and school cultures, particularly value difference, expectations, and communication patterns.

Tensions and challenges of parent-school interactions were discussed concerning persistent structural barriers that prevented immigrant parents from effectively addressing their concerns and influencing the academic trajectories of their children in a positive direction. In Quebec, however, the pressure points between immigrant families and schools were minimized and framed by researchers in neutral terms as misunderstandings between equal parties within the mesosystem (Cuko, 2016a, 2016b) or negative narratives promoted by both the schools and the parents (Vatz-Laaroussi, 2008; 2011; Vatz-Laaroussi & Steinbach, 2010).

Need for Critical Feminist Intersectional Research Studies

The review identified a significant gap concerning the educational disadvantage of Allophone children and youth in Quebec. Most studies on parent-school interaction in Quebec conceptualize parent-school collaboration without acknowledging their intersecting and socially constructed identities as immigrants, Allophones, and racialized and minoritized groups. Furthermore, the studies reviewed assume that schools act in the best interests of children and youth yet failing to interrogate how the deficiencies of our education system might reproduce educational disadvantage.

Another shortcoming of the studies indicates the tacit assumption that schools act towards IRER parents as if they must duplicate at home the teacher's approaches. The school usually argues that for the benefit of the student, the parent must follow the school's agenda at home.

Such standards or requirements, suggest that the school system mostly understand the parents' role as a subaltern's position (Spivak, 2006). Subalternity is therefore a state of someone without formal power, someone who is not to question the educational policies, schools' expectations, or the school's culture. In this context, there seems to be a need for a feminist methodology that critically investigates these tacit assumptions but from the perspectives of the one that is considered or seen as a subaltern. In this study, the experiences and perspectives of Allophone IRER single mothers provide an entry point for a more systematic investigation of parent-school interaction. Finally, the research studies reviewed mostly ignored the pre-existent social inequalities impacting IRER single mothers in a post-migration context; the formal and informal power of teachers have at school and in the homes of their students; the dynamics of a colonial legacy in Canadian and Quebec curriculum; and the language-related issues that do not allow IRER parents to use English or any other languages during every day communication with the school system. Last and not least, the politicization of immigrant education in an economically depressed province coupled with a robust assimilationist immigrant discourse constitute Quebec's unique context of immigrant reception.

In conclusion, for IRER single mothers, parenting alone in a post-migration context, without a safety net or additional family support, means increased burdens and additional worries that might influence the educational and developmental trajectories of Allophone children. Furthermore, when mothers in general, and IRER single mothers in particular, go missing from educational research, the silencing strategies of the dominant culture and its push-out practices of schools cannot be effectively counterbalanced. Tuck (2011) defined school push-out as "the experiences of youth who have been pressured to leave school by people or factors inside the school, such as disrespectful treatment from teachers and other school personnel, violence among students, arbitrary school rules, and the institutional

pressures of high-stakes testing" (p.818). Consequently, educational injustice will have long-term, undocumented, and compounded implications on the lives of IOC&Y.

Chapter 4: Critical, Feminist, and Intersectional Subjectivities

> All knowledge that is about human society, and not about the natural world, is historical knowledge, and therefore rests upon judgment and interpretation. This is not to say that facts or data are nonexistent, but that facts get their importance from what is made of them in interpretation… for interpretations depend very much on who the interpreter is, who he or she is addressing, what his or her purpose is, at what historical moment the interpretation takes place. (Edward Said, 1978)

The ontological foundations of this qualitative study are rooted in critical, feminist, and intersectional perspectives meant to interrogate the socially unjust structures in immigrant education from the perspective of IRER single mothers. Chapter four describes each perspective concerning this study and their overlap.

Critical Perspective

Schwandt (2014) argues that critical social science is known for "rejecting the idea of disinterested social science, emphasizing attending to the cultural and historical conditions on which the theorist's intellectual activity depends" (p. 51). Therefore, a critical perspective was the philosophical approach shaping this research study. Based on the review of the literature, the educational inequity regarding immigrant children in Quebec's public schools is evident; therefore, a critical perspective was the philosophical approach shaping this research for emancipatory commitments to reducing educational inequalities of IOC&Y. Critical theory interrogated school injustice and educational disadvantage of IOC&Y from the participants' perspective in ways that reflect power dynamics across multiple environmental levels. Critical ontology, rooted in historical realism, asserted a constructed reality shaped at the macro level by social, cultural, political, and economic forces. These directly affected the IRER single mothers participating in this study and, indirectly, their children.

In addition to exposing injustice in schools, the critical perspective proposed a need for transparency about one's situatedness based on social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic,

and gender antecedents (Fay, 1987). Likewise, a critical epistemology is transactional, subjectivist and it asserts that all understandings are unique and have been shaped by their interactions with others in a specific context. Therefore, I situated myself and the participants within a majority-minority framework, in which the reception and integration of immigrants in Quebec society are the central forces shaping individual understandings of lived experience in a post-migration context.

Researchers using a critical inquiry approach must make explicit assumptions about the nature of reality, including how social injustice and subjugation shape people's experiences and understanding of the world (Bhattacharya, 2017). Therefore, my underlying assumption is that the education system can play an active part in the social reproduction of educational disadvantage for IOC&Y. Schools are also sites in which parent-school interactions can create unique and opposing subjectivities or ways of knowing. Such dynamics influence the (educational) reality experienced by Allophone children and their families. Furthermore, this study identifies the locations of power shaping parent-school interactions including language and other forms of communications used to perpetuate dominant ideologies in the education of immigrant children.

Critical Positionality Statement

I argued that school-family interactions are *mostly deficient,* especially in the Accueil program. Although I am aware of the good intentions of teachers and their genuine desire to help immigrant families integrate into Quebec society, as an immigrant Allophone single mother, I have been openly pointing out the slow and inadequate measures that perpetuate educational inequalities. As an immigrant with double Romanian Canadian citizenship, I have also argued that interculturalism is a reasonable and perhaps successful integration of immigrants; however, in Quebec, interculturalism has been implemented within and in parallel with the larger and more dominant Canadian English multiculturalism. This creates a

unique context of immigrant reception in Quebec characterized by several distinct features: immigrants who settle in Quebec must undergo a double Canadian/Quebec acculturation process; their expereinces are taken for granted by the host society; the educational contributions of multilingual, multicultural IRER women and children, remain undervalued by schools and teachers.

Feminist Perspective

> We have still to collectively make feminist revolution. I am grateful that we are collectively searching as feminist thinkers/ theorists for ways to make this movement happen. Our search leads us back to where it all began, to that moment when an individual woman or child, who may have thought she was all alone, began a feminist uprising, began to name her practice, indeed began to formulate theory from lived experience. (bell hooks, 1994)

By taking on a feminist perspective in education (Fine,1991; Fine & Ruglis, 1993; Ruglis, 2011; Tuck, 2011, 2012, 2013; Tuck & Yang, 2014), I accentuated the gendered power relations (Leavy & Harris, 2018) of parent-school interaction and the disproportionate impact schools have on the developmental and educational outcomes of IOC&Y from single-mother families. The literature on family-school partnerships considers parents and teachers as equal collaborators. This study makes explicit that social relations are not genderless, and it brings attention to the socially constructed meanings of womanhood and single motherhood resulting from a variety of patriarchal contexts, legacies and values. From this perspective, if parent-school interactions should be discussed as mother-teacher interaction, these interactions are not colour-blind either.

When talking about her lived experience as a Black woman raised in segregated America, bell hooks (1994) states that feminism is necessary to “demonstrate the myriad ways gender differences were socially constructed, the institutionalization of inequality by patriarchy as a system of domination in all areas of our lives” (p. 83). This belief system has become a central paradigm in feminist theory (Cho et al., 2013; Lutz et al., 2011; Oleksy, 2011). For

example, the feminist perspective of this study recognized that patriarchy erased gender, class, and race in ways that the experiences with racism and discrimination of IRER women and their children by teachers and school principals are rendered invisible. As exemplified in an earlier chapter, racism and other forms of discrimination along with the stigma of single motherhood, significantly decrease the wellbeing of the participants and their children. Therefore, a feminist framework proposes to be "grounded in the set of theoretical traditions that privilege women's issues, voices, and lived experiences" (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 3).

Feminist standpoints "challenge dominant positivist and empiricist natural and social science, and offer alternative locations to begin research, namely, from the location of the marginalised" (Ellis & Fopp, 2004, p. 1). The topic of immigrant educational disadvantage and the choice of participants in this study reveals that the education system acknowledges that IOC&Y children attending "écoles défavorisées" on the Island of Montreal are at high risk of school dropout. My initial feminist standpoint offers a counternarrative for school burnout and school failure. I started this study with pre-existent notions about Allophone's school delays and school incompletion in Montreal. In my understanding, educational disadvantage in Quebec is primarily caused by pushed-out mechanisms (Tuck, 2011) existing within the school system particularly in the Accueil system. Perpetuated by neocolonial educational ideologies and curriculum, push-out practices are part of a larger circuit of dispossessing IOC&Y from IRER single-mother families of the educational advantages of good quality education.

Mohanty (2003a, 2003b) argues that when considering women's lives from developing countries, racial and class differences are often overlooked by feminist studies that standardize women into one homogenous group. While IRER women have a subordinate status within the receiving society, an immigrant mother is expected to raise children according to the traditional cultural and social expectations imposed on her country of origin

and the Western values of Quebec society. As sometimes incompatible with the value system of the women, these sets of expectations create tensions and could constitute additional stressors for both the mother and her children.

Feminist Statement

> I understood the significance of gender inequality at an early age. Our daily life was full of patriarchal system -the use of coercion, violent punishment, verbal harassment, to maintain male domination. As small children we understood that our father was more important than our mother because he was a man. (bell hooks, 1994)

I only came across feminism as a perspective during my doctoral studies when I learned how to name some of the disempowering beliefs and experiences I held along the way. As an immigrant to Canada, my new Canadian citizenship afforded me many liberties and a sense of purpose I had never felt before emigrating. I had the chance to discover myself, find employment and even start my graduate studies. During my settlement, Canadian multiculturalism was a source of multiple privileges I was unaware of at the time. By deciding to continue my studies, I relocated from Toronto to Montreal. At the time, I did so without even realizing this change in provincial residence represented a second immigration process within the Canadian territory. Despite having my newly gained Canadian passport, I experienced many losses upon relocating from Toronto to Montreal. Because Quebec is a monolingual province, I was no longer able to interact in English with schools or other public institutions. My toddler son, also a Canadian citizen, had to discontinue the studies he started in Ontario (in English) and had to be registered in the Accueil system along with the newly arrived, Allophone immigrant children. Although he has Canadian citizenship, he is also labelled as an Allophone, and his children will be also labelled as Allophones. During the process of moving from Ontario to Quebec, I became aware that the rules of this country are not the same for all his citizens. For us, Canadians residing in Quebec, but born outside the borders of this country, rules are and will be different.

While we both lost the benefits of accessing education in a known language, I felt that our Canadian citizenship did not mean much on the territory of Quebec. Accordingly, not having access to Quebec's English school system, felt like a penalty in comparison to the privilege given in this country only to the right holders. From a feminist perspective, my understating is that the two "founding" nations were privileged/protected as linguistic rights holders. In order to experience not being a right holder, I only had to cross an invisible border between Ontario and Quebec to realize the multiple negative challenges of immigrating to Canada, and then again to Quebec. I felt a loss of social status upon my arrival in Montreal, which overnight, changed from a high-recognition one, as a new Canadian who gained her citizenship, to one in which, according to the laws, I was a nouveau arrivant, an Allophone in Quebec, whose mother tongue was explicitly indicated by the language laws as being neither English nor French.

From a feminist view, however, I perceived that one part of my newly acquired identity became invisible while another was accentuated. The invisibility and the erasure of the newly acquired identity made me realize that I will always be just another immigrant woman in this province, a subaltern (Spivak, 2006). This is a stereotype meant to erase the social-cultural and linguistic capital that should make IRER women unique and valued people in the host society. However, Spivak (2006) would certainly not deny the social agency and lived existence of gendered and racialized (subaltern) women, but she pointed out that these identities are given to women by "the systems of political and economic representation" (p. 66 - 67) of the host society.

Therefore, a feminist perspective was necessary to address the stigma and precarity impacting immigrant single mothers and their children in this province. In addition, this research choice could potentially impact the education practices related to IOC&Y because

there is a need for non-dominant voices to be considered on issues that impact them directly (Leavy & Harris, 2018).

Intersectional Lenses

Collins and Bilge (2016) argue that "within scholarly literature, intersectionality has been conceptualized as everything from a paradigm, concept, framework, heuristic device, and theory" (as cited in P.H. Collins, 2019. p.3). Intersectionality-informed research also focuses on analyzing power dynamics and those interactions that negotiate visibility or the invisibility of power, namely structural, disciplinary, cultural, and interpersonal (Crenshaw, 1991).

Crenshaw (1991) coined the term intersectionality to explain how the life experiences of Black women are dominated by two oppressive systems: patriarchy and racism. Crenshaw argues that racism and patriarchy are two interlocking systems of oppression constraining the life opportunities of Black women in unique ways. This research study demonstrates that the lived experiences of all women from racialized communities experience racism while interacting with the school system. Crenshaw also argues that structural intersectionality refers to the junction of race, gender, and class domination. In contrast, political intersectionality highlights a complementary view according to which "women of colour are situated within at least two subordinated groups that frequently pursue conflicting political agendas" (1991, p. 1252). Bilge (2013) and Collins and Bilge (2016) criticize white feminists for whitening intersectionality, and by not paying enough attention to race and social justice issues in their studies. The main takeaway from this approach is the need to interrogate more deeply how "the broader social landscape of power and hierarchy influences life opportunities" (Anthias, 2013, p. 12).

Andersen and Collins (2007) claim that when discussing race, class, and gender from an intersectional perspective, it is important to acknowledge that individuals might hold marginalized and privileged identities simultaneously. Collins (1990) contours how the

matrix of domination is multi-dimensional and "people experience and resist oppression on three levels: the level of personal biography; the group or community level of cultural context created by race, class, and gender; and the systemic level of social institutions" (Collins, 1990, p. 227). The idea that subjects are positioned in frameworks of multiple, interacting forms of oppression and privilege through socially constructed categories such as gender and race/ethnicity – has become a central paradigm in intersectional feminist theory (Cho et al., 2013; Lutz et al., 2011; Oleksy, 2011). For example, linguicism in Quebec becomes another dimension through which marginalization could be experienced by those immigrants residing in Quebec; having insufficient French language abilities places them in a vulnerable position especially if they raise children attending the French public school system. This inquiry reveals how the dominant ways of knowing perpetuated by the current school system might lead to educational inequity for those Allophone children who are raised in plurilingual single mother families and attend urabn schools with a high index of poverty.

Boyd and Grieco (2003) emphasize that research with immigrant populations has its shortcomings if it perpetuates gender insensitivity and stereotypes regarding the experiences of racialized and minoritized groups. Roggeband and Verloo (2007) indicates that most often, researchers portrayed immigrant women as being:

> rather traditional, poorly educated and passive. Some exceptions to this rule are mentioned and put forward as role models. Still, overall, there is little attention to the differences and nuances that exist under the "immigrant women" umbrella term. Differences in age, class, education, cultural and religious orientations, ambitions, lifestyle, or choices are not made visible. (p. 284)

Therefore, as Matsuda (1991) argue, intersectionality encourages us to ask "the other question": "When I see something that looks racist, I ask 'Where is the patriarchy in this?' When I see something that looks sexist, I ask 'Where is the heterosexism in this?" (p. 1189).

However, most research conducted by members of the dominant majority lacks in explicitly stating their own positionality, particularly in relation to public institutions funding their research.

Rationale for Using Intersectional Lenses

It seems that dominant ideologies are constructed and reinforced by a dominant majority whose cultural reproduction depends on institutions, including schools. Those negatively impacted by these structures interpreted their lived experiences as a social injustice produced and reproduced by those in power. Based on neutral standards, school spaces implement the ruling ideology of merit-based assessments. As a result, the educational disadvantage of Allophones concealed the fact that social differences are transformed into social inequalities, not least by schools as a public institution.

Intersectionality provides the framework for interrogating the impact of social inequalities in ways that reflect the diversity of IRER participants in this study and their lived experiences of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, language, immigration, and family status. Social change via intersectionality-informed research is necessary for advancing the life opportunities of IRER single mothers and their children impacted by socially unjust dominant worldviews.

The lived experiences of IRER single mothers participating in this study reveal how women experience oppression in varying configurations and varying degrees of intensity (Andersen & Collins, 2007; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991; Spivak, 2006). Events ranging from critical incidents to prolonged periods of stress caused by intense psychological pain such as the overlapping of racism, sexism, linguicism, and Islamophobia. This study considers that each woman's lived experience is unique. The intersectionality perspective instead of questioning her perceptions and doubting her understanding of events or critical incidents, it becomes a modality of validating her perspective and offers a sense of veracity perhaps lost during her interactions with the school or with the host society.

Overlap of the Three Perspectives

> Developing intersectionality's potential as a critical social theory rests on at-tending to questions of how we know what we know (the truths of epistemology), what social actions are possible within the complex social inequalities that organize our daily lives (the politics of power), as well as our agency and actions in response to the social injustices that confront us (the commitments of ethics). Together, these themes of truth, power, and ethics shape the contours of social change. They also constitute cutting-edge concerns for sustaining intersectionality's critical analysis. (Collins, 2019)

The overlap of critical, feminist, intersectionality perspectives offers a compelling discussion for social change and prepares the grounds for system intervention from the perspectives of those impacted by social inequalities. As well, the overlap offers an analysis of cumulative social inequalities in a post-migration context (educational disadvantage of IOC&Y), the necessity and urgency for action (from the perspective of IRER single mothers) in a particular social context (Quebec's French-language public schools).

A critical, intersectional feminist ontology sees not only gender but other several dimensions (race, immigration status, language, religion) as central entry points towards destabilizing social injustice and creating proper conditions for effective interventions (social action). Therefore, this research undertaking represents my engagement in social justice issues and possibilities for future informed action.

Moreover, the underlying assumption of this study is that intersecting inequalities (Jiwani, 2019) lead to the educational disadvantage of Allophone children and the further marginalization of IRER single-mother families in a post-migration context. I investigate parent-school interaction by looking into the domains of formal and informal power teachers and school have in shaping the educational disadvantage of Allophone children enrolled in the public schools in Montreal. The interviews conducted with IRER single mothers detail the perspectives of self-identified English-speaking immigrant single mothers with children in French-language public schools. The study's findings reveal some particularities that might

make immigrant single-mother families an increasingly marginalized and racialized group in Quebec.

By interrogating the macro forces from gendered, feminist perspectives uncover how the task of transforming the educational opportunities of Allophone is not only challenging but very difficult to define and frame as social justice issue. Our patriarchal society contributes to the IRER single mothers' compounded challenges and perpetuates inequalities for their children. The paradox of such an undertaking is in the realization that the participants are, to various degrees, both the beneficiaries and the disenfranchised of a neocolonial school system. Emancipation might be somehow attained by making visible the social injustice located outside an individual's control to transform educational practices.

The overall purpose of a critical, feminist, intersectional perspective to parent-school interaction was to advance research on the nature of the oppression of IOC&Y as understood from the perspectives of their mothers (Bastia, 2014; Collins 2009a; 2019; Mohanty, 2003a, 2003b) and to create conditions for informed action that prevents the further marginalization of IRER single mothers in Quebec. In addition, this work highlights the reality that immigrant single mothers are often perceived as poor and uneducated, speaking with an accent that places them at a disadvantage compared to those with more social and cultural capital.

Reflexivity

> I came to theory because I was hurting-the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend-to grasp what was happening around and within me. Most importantly, I wanted to make the hurt go away. I saw in theory then a location for healing. (bell hooks, 1994)

To be reflexively involved in the research design of this study means to examine how the research processes of research and knowledge production are shaped by the researcher's preconceptions, values, social positions, and interests (Jootun et al., 2009).

In the design of this research study, I draw on various ways of knowing and embedded my understanding gained through personal experiences as a Canadian-Romanian citizen, an immigrant in Quebec and an Allophone interacting with the Accueil and regular school systems in Quebec. Haraway (1988) argues that:

> our situated location - our particular biography, history, and positionality - does not have to be perceived as a barrier to achieving knowledge or truth but instead can offer each of us a unique way of seeing the world, a "focusing device" so to speak, through which we may be able to catch, see, and/or understand phenomena in ways that others cannot. (as cited by Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007, p.11)

Thus, I became what Collins (1986) describes as having the "creative potential of personal and cultural biographies" (p. 14) to advance social justice pursuits through my research. From some of my pre-existent knowledge, I assume that the nature of the challenges and barriers to successful integration in the new society could be overwhelming for English-speaking IRER women with children enrolled in the public French school system in a post-migration context.

Before starting this research, the suppositions I held were informed by my experience, which I reflexively used as a "focusing device". Subsequently, I linked the impact of the current language policies in Quebec to the educational outcomes of IOC&Y and to the quality-of-life experienced by immigrant mothers. The participants also interrogate parent-school interactions, acknowledge their perceived powerlessness and analyze the Accueil system via the junctures of racism and sexism in relation to the education system.

The socio-economic status of IOC&Y's parents and school segregation in Accueil are interpreted as dimensions of power that intersect and perpetuate educational disadvantage in Quebec. Linguicism is conceptualized as a significant cause of the marginalization of English speaking immigrant single-mothers residing in Quebec and raising children attending the urban public schools.

Finally, while theory could be a liberatory practice, my intension is to have a similar impact on the participants. Since the actions and dedication of the women participants in this study were louder than any words, the purpose of this research is not about giving voice to the silenced but rather amplifying them in the context of current literature. Overall, the purpose of this endeavor is to bring forth their expertise and build on their knowledge and experiences as IRER women, Allophone mothers, and educators of plurilingual children and youth.

Relationality

As multiple contingencies and contrasts were played out during the interviews (Jiwani, 2019), relationality is another anchor of this intersectionality-informed study. Race and religion are the contrasts erased by my whiteness which made at times, power dynamics invisible. Although I experienced a sense of mutual connection during the interviews, it is essential to mention that the research process was enmeshed in invisible power dynamics and socially constructed hierarchies that placed me in a privileged position.

When talking to plurilingual women who settled in Montreal, I introduced myself as a Canadian, born in a communist country in Eastern Europe, and as a single mother. While my positionality might be quickly criticized, I intended to emphasize that an immigrant woman could state her status and some details of her journey in simple words and without shame or additional explanations. Although I might call myself an immigrant because I left my country of origin, until I earned my Canadian citizenship, I was a permanent resident living in Ontario. I do not see the reason for calling an Allophone. Although the terms Anglophone, Francophone, or Allophone, have their purpose in “managing” immigrants and allocating funds for special programs, the term Allophone or immigrant could have negative connotations. For people like me, it might be internalized as being the perpetual other,

someone who is not from here, a forever outsider who is either a threat to the province's social, linguistic, and economic stability or a potential problem that must be managed.

Immigrant Single Mothers. While all the women participants perceive the emigration process as an initially empowering and exciting alternative, they also spoke about tough times as single mothers, confronting negative stereotypes and coping with unforeseen challenges while interacting with the school system. As this feminist inquiry aims at making visible those that are rendered invisible, the epistemic entanglement concedes the categorical messiness of our lived experiences; the intermeshing and interlocking of gender, class, and race transcend any essentialist claims about IRER single mothers as being uneducated and in need of help to raise their children.

Additionally, I share a similar trajectory with the immigrant women participants in the Montreal area who had school children enrolled in a public school. In that sense, the participants and I shared a social location as immigrant single mothers and as Allophones with mother tongues other than English and French and whose school children enrolled in the French public school system. During the interviews, the use of the English language was a connector. I positioned myself as a mother, an immigrant woman and as a Canadian Romanian who communicated in English better than French.

Outsider/Insider. As Collins (1986) would say, I was an outsider/insider exploring the intricate matrix of our differences. I disclosed, when appropriate, some of my experiences as a mother interacting with the school system. Hesse-Biber (2014) asserted that "Collin's distinction of insider/outsider was taken a step further by feminists like Michelle Fine (1992) who emphasizes the distinction's fluidity: one can be an outsider in a social context while being an insider in another" (p. 7). I was an insider as an immigrant but an outsider to the social injustice and suffering of being the target of violence by a dominant white society as a racialized minoritized woman with children who are also racialized.

Given the socio-political context, speaking with each other in English was another juncture where our experiences as single mothers seemed to have brought us together. Speaking in English has become a social behaviour discouraged in Quebec, and it is considered a deviant behaviour that is punished in schools. It became clear that the women participants were outspoken, and they seemed unapologetically determined to express their views and perspectives on how the culture of schooling might have affected their children. I noticed very early in the interviews that the participants' level of interpretation was more advanced than initially expected: they did not only share their perspectives with me, but at times they formulated powerful analyses of the school system in Quebec and the impact it has not only on their children but on immigrant children in general. They knew that research mattered, and knowledge has the potential to influence future educational policies and practices.

Privileged Positionality.

Despite the commonalities that I shared with the twelve women, I became aware of my privileged positionality. I had access to the university's social network, the status associated with a doctoral study in progress, and I had the privileges afforded by my whiteness embedded in Eastern-European societies. Furthermore, after speaking with the mothers of girls, I was in awe of their courage and strength. I realized that raising children in a society that reinforced gendered inequities, immigrant-origin girls from racialized backgrounds are at a higher risk of exploitation than boys. For me, it seemed that raising a boy in a post-migration context in Quebec seemed easier than raising a daughter who is more vulnerable to sexual harassment and exploitation in schools and society at large. At the same time, raising an immigrant boy is challenging in relation to assumed pathological masculinity associated with immigrant and/or racialized young men and the state violence perpetrated on racialized bodies.

Although reflexivity is important for recognizing the lack of objectivity in research processes and findings, qualitative research has none-theless often failed to adequately address power dynamics during the research process (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). During the interviews, a critical analysis of my own privileged position situated me across multiple and shifting dynamics of privileged positions.

Whiteness. As a set of normative cultural practices, whiteness "is visible most clearly to those it definitively excludes and those to whom it does violence. Those who are securely housed within its borders usually do not examine it" (Frankenberg, 1993; as cited by Reilly, 2020). Therefore, as Reilly (2020) explained, "whiteness is more than pigmentation; it is a set of power relations. Racism is a multidimensional, highly adaptive force designed to keep these power relations in place" (p. 47).

Another aspect of my entangled positionality was the realization that many of my experiences interacting with the school system were privileged by my Eastern European origins. For example, racism towards minorities in Romania is prevalent, and whiteness as skin colour is considered superior quality. Therefore, I followed Frankenberg's (1993) definition of whiteness as being multidimensional.

> First it [whiteness] is a location of structural advantage and privilege. Second, it is a standpoint, a place from which white people look at themselves, at others, and at society. And thirdly whiteness refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed that determine a wide range of values, beliefs, actions, and norms. (Reilly, 2020, p. 46-47)

My country of origin and the Romanian culture significantly influenced how I currently think, learn, live, and behave. French scholar Etienne Balibar's (2009) work on racism without racists speaks that racism becomes transmuted in culture, and then culture is usually blamed, making racism invisible. Therefore, I acknowledge whiteness and inherited

privileges associated with whiteness. This meant that my research could not remain comfortably blind to racism but acknowledge its pervasive nature and make it visible as experienced by the participants in this study and their children.

Education. As a Canadian citizen, abled, heterosexual woman of Eastern-European origins, I benefited from an education system with similar values to the ones that I had. While entangled in the oppressive systems of colonialism and benefiting from its many privileges, I was also aware that the power dynamics at play during the interviews had multiple layers of advantages and disadvantages. One of the privileges as a graduate student was doing PhD-level research on a topic that touches on my personal experience. Thus, I was able to interrogate how my scholarly identity was shaped and subsequently shaped institutional dynamics.

Empathetic Internal Validity. While some participants seemed to look up to me for my privileged position, I felt uncomfortable when they assumed that my life as a single mother and as an immigrant was without hurdles. I was surprised by their level of disclosure during the interviews. Most of the participants felt safe sharing painful experiences caused by racist attitudes and behaviours directed towards their children or themselves. For brief moments, I felt a sense of connection and what Levin (2000) calls empathic identification:

> The transpersonal fulfilment of our initial, pre-personally organized intercorporeality is not a confusion of identities, but rather a deeply felt compassion- an openness and readiness to be moved by compassion- and uncompromising respect for the other as other, the other as different, but for whose difference one is capable, nonetheless, of feeling some bodily grounded sympathy. (p. 301)

Building trust with the participants was, at times, challenging because I was in the role of the listener. Although listening is an active role, I was holding the space for their stories to unfold, and at times I felt triggered to offer solutions or advice. During these interactions,

empathetic internal validity (Dadds et al., 2008) was woven into our interactions. The participants and I were somehow transformed by our interactions which felt transformative in the context of shared lived experiences of single motherhood in a post-migration context.

Contribution to the Field. The underlying assumption that informed the design of this research study was that the experiences of immigrant single mothers can afford multiple and unique challenges that are not yet documented by the current literature.

This supposition prompted me to focus my inquiry on parent-school interaction as a phenomenon that revealed the agency of immigrant women interacting in institutional settings and the interdependency between people, the school system, and the larger social context.

The socio-political context entanglement and the impact of policies on institutional settings and people were relevant to this inquiry. For example, the way schools apply Bill 101 has been challenged by immigrants who are not proficient in French. Multiple forms of discrimination negatively impact the wellbeing of IRER single-mother families and the educational outcomes of immigrant children.

When IOC&Y fall behind, it is vital to analyze how immigrants' integration at the exolevel and macrolevel intersect with the educational practices with IOC&Y at the microlevel and mesolevel and how it might result in educational disadvantages. In the context of this research, a lack of communication during parent-school interaction is problematic. Without alternatives or viable solutions, language could be understood from the perspective of participants in this study as a tool of the majority to impose their dominant ideologies. Language, therefore, became a social location in which interpersonal relations, school justice, and disciplinary measures intersect with single mothers' race, gender, and immigration status.

Chapter 5: Methodology

A qualitative research methodology (Bhattacharya, 2017; Leavy & Harris, 2018) was chosen for this study to explore the subjective experience and parent-school interaction from the perspective of immigrant women who are also single mothers. To reveal the complexity and richness of the interactions, an intersectionality-informed framework (Crenshaw & Bonnis, 2005) complemented the study by addressing notions of power, discrimination, resistance, and resilience which are integral in highlighting differences and commonalities within and across different groups of women of colour, including the immigrant women (Collins, 1986, 1990, 2019; Jiwani, 2019). According to Nunez (2014b), "The multidimensional lens afforded by intersectionality, as well as its focus on power dynamics, makes it an especially promising conceptual framework to address educational equity" (p.86).

Intersectionality in education (Núñez, 2014a, 2014b) and qualitative methodologies brought forth the voices of differently situated individuals and addressed power imbalances in education (Collins, 2009a; Hankivsky, 2014; Núñez 2014a, 2014b).

Intersectionality

Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991, 2010; Collins, 2009b; Collins & Bilge 2016, 2020) informed several aspects of this study: I framed the research issue by identifying multiple social justice issues related to the educational disadvantage of IOC&Y; the data collection process was informed by searching for the experiences of IRER single-mother families; and the interpretation of the findings was viewed through identifying the impact of intersecting power structures such as racism, sexism, Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments from people resenting the school system.

This study also benefited from Spivak's (2006) reminder about essentialism, a worldview that amalgamates people under one identity category and erases differences. The term "immigrant single-mother" is prevalent to express the perspectives of IRER women

participants within the colour blind, genderless, current literature on parent-school interaction. The term "immigrant single mother" was not meant to perpetuate the stigmatized social position of mothers and children of single-mother families. The term single-mother families in a post-migration context is meant to bring attention to the immigrant reception context of the host society and the experience of single motherhood. However, from an intersectional perspective, this could be problematic because the category of immigrant carries stigma and could also be understood as an essentialist category that does not reflect the diverse experiences of refugees, ethnocultural, and racialized women.

Therefore, the term "immigrant single-mother" should be understood as a unique family configuration, a unit or a system led by IRER single mothers without or with limited family ties in Canada. The immigrant single mother in this study brings forth the experience of coming up against multiple challenges related to her own and her child's double acculturation (English/French), and mothering tasks carrying a tremendous set of responsibilities, including resources that must be allocated in responding to the child's developmental and acculturation needs including the requirements of schooling. Overall, differentiating from other single mothers, English-speaking immigrant single mothers in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, compounded a unique set of experiences with multiple intersecting inequalities and penalties affecting both the mother and the child. Gender, therefore, was inevitably intersected by race and class and other social categories and multi-level systems and processes of power (Hankivsky, 2012a, 2012b, 2014; Lutz et al., 2011).

Lines of Difference

When using an intersectional lens, Núñez (2014b) argues that in order "to address educational opportunity and equity, more educational research is exploring variations within and between racial/ethnic groups' experiences and outcomes along with social categories including race, ethnicity, gender, and class" (p. 85). Núñez (2014a) reasons "that

intersectionality research has continued to reveal at least fourteen categories or lines of difference, including race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, national belonging, religion, language, phenotype, and able-bodiedness" (p. 85). Thus, listening to the experiences of *English-speaking immigrant single-mother* families in the Montreal area involved an important methodological decision. It required an awareness regarding their invisibility (in terms of gender and race) in the public sphere, and it brought attention to individual differences of IRER single-mother families and how institutional context shapes the reactions of the institutions (school via teachers and principals) to these families (single mother and child as a single-mother family unit). The institutional reactions during parent-school interactions or the unpleasant or hurtful incidents might appear small in isolation. However, their combined impact is particularly harmful to both the mother and the child/youth. To this point, the data on school achievement reviewed in this dissertation frequently mentioned the systematic inequalities of educational outcomes for racialized and ethnic minority groups of IOC&Y.

Intersectional Unit of Analysis. The "immigrant single-mother family" included Allophones IRER single mothers and their IOC&Y. Their experiences interacting with the school system were considered as part of the larger majority-minority structure of interculturalism. Chapter 2 in this study explained pre-existent social inequalities and injustice (i.e., poverty of women, reduced wellbeing, racism, and others) and the multilevel challenges experienced by women in both pre-and post-migration contexts. For example, pre-existent studies found specific challenges impacting IRER women such as: the combined stigma of immigration and single motherhood; the economic cost/financial sacrifice of migration combined with the challenges of securing an income leading to the feminization of poverty for immigrant single mothers; and the pre-existent negative immigrant reception context in which they landed, included anti-immigrant sentiments, racism and Islamophobia.

Parent-school interaction was established in this study as a nuanced experience, contingent on institutional and interpersonal factors. It took place in a complex policy context, where provincial language-related regulations framed the immigrant's reception and integration model. These contradicted the expectations of the IRER participants in this study. As the application of integration models was often disconfirmed by the complexity of everyday life experienced by the participants, these variations of experience stand for what Davis (2008) characterized as "lines of difference" (p. 81) or those characteristics that represent the views of individuals from non-dominant groups. Lines of difference represent the non-standard understandings of "educational reality" and reveal the educational inequity of IOC&Y from the perspectives of their racialized single mothers. Therefore, when compared to the dominant views of education within a group, differences bring forth diversity in all its forms. The diversity of backgrounds, experiences and understandings was usually marginalized or rendered invisible by the dominant society.

The following characteristics guided the choice of participants: each person interviewed self-identified as a woman born outside Canada who spoke and understood English; was a single mother, had children enrolled in a French-language public school in Quebec, and lived in the Montreal area. Upon selecting participants, the following lines of difference were considered: gender (women), being born outside Canada (immigrant or refugee), family status (single mother which is a non-normative category) and language (self-identified English-speaking, able to understand and speak English). These lines of difference intersected with Quebec's unique education system and the policy context of immigrant reception and integration within Quebec society.

In addition to Núñez's taxonomy (2014a, 2014b), this study revealed how language abilities, marital and immigrant status intersect in practice, particularly when contextualizing what appears to be individual characteristics of several lines of difference. Therefore, "single

motherhood in a post-migration context" is an intersectional unit of analysis. Similarly, in this study, the English-speaking IRER single mothers in Quebec represented an intersectional group.

Method

Qualitative interviews drew the experiences and perspectives of twelve participants on the topic of parent-school interaction rather than parent-school collaboration or partnerships. Their experiences were elicited and refined through interpretation, compared, and contrasted dialectically, intending to generate one (or a few) constructions on which there is substantial consensus (Bhattacharya, 2017; C. E. Hill et al., 1997; S. J. Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Saldaña, 2021).

Ethics Process

The study complied with Concordia's standards of ethical conduct. I applied for the ethics certificate and followed the protocols for *ethical conduct for research involving humans. See* the ethics clearance certificate in Appendix B.

Recruitment

Recruitment focused on women who could speak and understand English and could sign the terms described in the consent form without the help of a third party. Please see Appendix C for a detailed description of the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The recruitment process involved using a bilingual (English and French) poster that was posted in educational institutions, stores, public libraries, cultural centres and community organizations serving ethnic groups, immigrants, refugees, women, and after-school programs located in Montreal neighbourhoods that traditionally have a high density of immigrants. In addition, a bilingual French-English poster/flyer was distributed to comply with Quebec's language policies. This flyer was also sent via email, Facebook, and LinkedIn to various other organizations. See

Appendix D for the poster that was used. The recruitment of participants extended over six months during spring, summer, and fall of 2018.

Sampling Procedures

A purposeful approach to sampling (Hesse-Biber, 2014) was employed to capture the multiple realities of immigrant single mothers' parent-school interaction in Quebec. The target population for this study was foreign-born single mothers who spoke English with children enrolled in French public schools in the Montreal area. The term "single mother" was defined as women who had the exclusive primary caregiving role of a child under 18, with no other adult in the household, and no one else providing for the child's emotional, educational, developmental, or financial needs.

Due to a large influx of immigrants and refugees, the Montreal area was chosen as the research setting for this study. Rather than choosing participants with children attending a specific school, the sample was widely inclusive of neighbourhoods on the Island of Montreal and its surroundings. After the interview, a snowballing sampling technique (Parker et al., 2019) was used to access other foreign-born single mothers.

Selection of Participants

The potential participants responded to the call for participation either by email, phone, or text. With each potential participant, a conversation took place over the phone. I described the study, its purpose, information about maintaining confidentiality, and directions regarding participating in the study. During the initial phone conversation and just before scheduling an interview, I ensured that the respondents fit the criteria for the study. Thirty-one respondents expressed an interest in participating in the research, but only fourteen women met the criteria for the interview.

Criteria of Selecting the Participants. Fifteen women respondents did not meet the inclusion criteria for the following reasons:

a) They arrived in Quebec after the year 2000.
b) They did not currently have children enrolled in French public schools in Quebec.
c) The women did not yet have school-aged children since their children were infants or in daycare.
d) The women were not able to express themselves in English and required a translator.
e) The respondents had a common-law partner for more than one year.

Arriving in Quebec after the year 2000 was a selection criterion chosen purposefully. It was linked to the policy context implementing a new educational approach regarding the Francization, educational integration and intercultural education (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec [MEQ], 1998). In addition, the respondents who did not qualify for the study were asked if they could distribute the flyer to other women in their network.

During the data collection, all participants had school-aged children enrolled in public schools. The children's ages ranged between 6 and 17 years old, and they attended kindergarten, primary or secondary schools in French in the Montreal area. Women recruited were born outside Canada and were living alone in Quebec with their children. From a total of fourteen interviews, twelve were included in this study. Although one of the participants fit all criteria, her interview data were excluded from the analysis after careful consideration because the respondent and I had earlier interactions in overlapping social circles. Another woman seemed to fit the criteria for the study, but during the interview, she mentioned that her son was her younger brother. I remunerated this respondent for her time, but the study's interview data was not included.

One woman, who wanted to participate in the study but was not interviewed because her children were in pre-school, argued that she should be allowed to participate because her interaction with her child's daycare was essential for the health and wellbeing of a young child who cannot express himself. Such conversation suggested that further research with

immigrant single mothers interacting with other service providers in Quebec should become a research priority. The impact of linguistic discrimination on the life of women with young children is under-documented.

The Participants

The study was based on qualitative interviews with twelve immigrant single mothers, foreign-born women who spoke English, settled in Montreal after 2000 and had school-aged children at the time of the interview. Upon reaching data saturation (Hesse-Biber, 2014), I considered that this sample size was wide enough for the exploratory nature of this study. The participants did not "tick" a box in a demographic questionnaire for a particular "race" or "background." However, during the interviews, the participants self-identified as women, mothers, single mothers, and immigrants who are also Asian, Black, Latina, Iranian, and African. For these reasons, the participants were referred to as immigrant, refugee, ethnic and racialized (IRER) single mothers. The nine immigrant racialized women were: Shiveh, Persheng, Pepa, Huei Ru, Lin, Yoruba, Nevis, Charissa, and Dalal. The other three participants Arpi, Cindy, and Eleonor self-identified as being European or Eastern European. The interviews revealed complex issues covered by the literature review and other relevant aspects for this population group.

The participants arrived in Montreal from various places around the globe: Armenia, Bulgaria, China, United Kingdom, Honduras, Iran, Nigeria, Saint Lucia, Syria, and the United States. In order to understand the background of the participants and their perspectives, it is essential to mention that only three of these women emigrated with their former spouses, and only one had a close family member in Quebec. Nine of these women had no support from the fathers of their children, and they reported that the entire load of childrearing responsibility was on their shoulders. The following twelve women (pseudonyms) were selected for the study and participated in semi-structured interviews:

Persheng. Persheng is an Iranian woman in her early 40s who emigrated with her son to Quebec in 2016. She completed her Masters in Science in her country of origin and had high aspirations for herself and her son. She spoke English, and upon her arrival in Quebec in 2016, she continued to learn French. She is a permanent Canadian resident with no other family in Canada, and at the time of the interview, she was looking for a job. Her son was 11 years old when they arrived in Canada, and he started the Accueil program in an urban school in Montreal. Upon successful completion of his Francization in the Accueil system, he was eligible for the regular program. As well as teaching French, the purpose of the Accueil system is to promote the values of interculturalism. As I understand these processes, the Francization of immigrant children takes place in Accueil and in the Regular programs each having a differentiated pathway. The Francization of adults is a separate process.

Yoruba. She is woman from Nigeria who crossed the border from the United States to Quebec in January 2018. She is in her mid-thirties, has completed an MBA and speaks English very well. She is married, but she is mothering three boys alone: a baby, a toddler, and an 11-year-old boy. At the time of the interview, she was a stay-at-home mother attending her toddler and baby full-time during the day, taking care of her two youngest children and waiting for a hearing with the Refugee Board. Her eldest son is in a primary school in the Montreal area, attending the Accueil program.

Shiveh. Shiveh is an Iranian woman in her late forties, with two Masters degrees and extensive work experience in her country of origin. She speaks English and attends a Francization program while her daughters are at school. Her husband obtained an investor's visa a while ago, and after they separated, Shiveh moved to Canada from Iran with her two daughters. She arrived in Quebec in 2017 with her 12-year-old daughter, who started high school in an Accueil school in an urban area in Montreal. Her other daughter is in college.

Shiveh has no other family ties in Canada, and her financial situation is precarious because she does not speak French and cannot find any employment.

Eleonor. Eleonor was born in Bulgaria, is fully bilingual in English and French, and has a full-time job working in French. She emigrated to Canada from the United States of America in 2001 with her husband at the time, and ex-husband at the time of the interview. Upon her arrival in Quebec, she completed her university studies, found suitable employment, and had two daughters: a seventeen-year-old who just graduated from high school and a younger one in primary school. She is now divorced, but her ex-husband is involved in the education of their daughters. Eleonor's daughters had satisfactory results in school. However, her older daughter did not adjust well after she started high-school. Some of the teachers strongly suggested that she needed to take medication for attention deficit disorder. After visits to doctors and without a diagnosis for attention deficit disorder, her mother decided that medication was not a viable solution.

While her older daughter struggled in the French system and failed one year of high school and then transferred without notice to another high school where she was also failing, her mother enrolled her in an adult education program in the English public school system. Upon this change, Eleonor's daughter excelled at her studies and completed all required examinations in English. Moreover, to graduate at the same time as her peers, Eleonor's daughter worked extra hard and combined two academic years into one. Please note that in Quebec, immigrant children who are 16 years or older could transfer and attend adult education programs provided by the English public school system.

Arpi. Arpi, a multilingual Armenian woman in her early thirties, emigrated to Canada in 2012 with her son and her now ex-husband. She has one bachelor’s degree in pedagogy and psychology from her country of origin and one graduate diploma from a Quebec university. At the interview, her son was 9 years-old, attending the regular program in a French public

school. Arpi works full-time, but she is dissatisfied with her career due to Quebec's lack of promotion opportunities. She speaks Russian, Eastern Armenian, was fully bilingual in English and French. She described her French as good-enough to obtain employment but not enough to be given a raise or a promotion. When Arpi wanted a raise in her salary or looked for another job, she encountered challenges linked to reduced proficiency in French, assessed by employers as not being good enough for a promotion. Although Arpi's ex-husband lives in Quebec, she is the one who takes care of her son full-time during the week and interacts with the school.

Huei-Ru. Huei-Ru is a Chinese woman in her forties, a stay-at-home mother with a university degree from China. She accompanied her minor son, who obtained an International Student Visa to study in Quebec. They arrived together in 2017, and her son started school in the Accueil class, where he had severe difficulties learning French. Huei-Ru attends Francization classes full-time and has difficulties communicating with the school system that addresses her only in French. Based on her experience, she believed that the receiving society in Montreal is not welcoming of racial minorities and had a negative perception about the immigrant integration process promoted by interculturalism. She seemed very discouraged by the quality of education provided to immigrant children in Accueil high-schools and she feared that her son's educational setbacks will prevent him from enrolling in a well-ranked university program. Huei-Ru's own professional prospects in Montreal seemed deem and she provided compelling arguments justifying her perceptions and beliefs.

Charissa. Charissa is a single mother of three school-aged children, two daughters and a son, all born in Quebec and attending a primary French public school. She is in her late thirties and has both an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree completed in Quebec. Although Charissa spoke Spanish and English and studied French for many years, she believes that she is not proficient in her third language (French). As a Latina woman born in

the United States of America, Charissa mentioned that she moved to Quebec with her husband at the time, and ex-husband at the time of the interview. She converted to his faith, Islam after they got married and she wears a hijab. However, after her divorce, she decided to maintain her religion. Charissa experienced first-hand overt hateful racism as a Muslim woman wearing a hijab and a native English-speaking single mother who emigrated from the United States of America to Quebec. According to her faith, her two school-aged daughters also wear the hijab.

Dalal. Dalal is a Syrian woman in her late thirties who arrived with her husband in Quebec in 2007. She has been separated for several years and is raising her 8-year-old son alone without any support. She has a degree in French literature from her home country, but she changed her profession to work in the corporate sector in Quebec. Her ex-husband moved away to continue his studies, and she has no other family ties in North America. She speaks English and Arabic with her son but speaks French at work and her son's school. After other immigrant children severely bullied her son in the Accueil school, she thought the only solution was to change her residence. As the school was given the status of “écoles défavorisées” it operated with insufficient resources. The school according to Dalal, was a school for immigrants, and the principals and teachers were not prepared to effectively change or diminish the culture of bullying that characterized the school climate. Dalal decided to make a financial sacrifice and relocate to an affluent neighbourhood hoping that her son will have better learning conditions.

Cindy. Cindy was born in the United Kingdom and immigrated to Quebec in 2005 with her husband at the time, and ex-husband at the time of the interview, and two daughters, both of whom are enrolled in the public French public system. Her youngest is enrolled in pre-school, and the older one is in third grade. After her ex-husband relocated from Canada for another job in Japan, Cindy decided to remain in Quebec with her daughters. She is in her

mid-thirties, speaks English at home with her daughters, studies French, and is looking for a job. She disclosed that her Quebecois boyfriend mainly communicated on her behalf with the school, and therefore her interaction with the school was going well all the time. Her daughters did not have any issues adapting to the school system; Cindy's worries were linked to her family's economic survival. She mentioned that her French was not good enough to get a job despite her efforts to attend Francization courses and speak French with her boyfriend all the time. As the access to employment was limited, she was very concerned about the future. Relying on her ex-husband for child support payments, she knew she would not have any other financial support if he decided to interrupt the payments. Cindy is the only participant that maintained some of her pre-migration privileges and her experience is the exception mentioned in the following chapters.

Nevis. Nevis is originally from the Caribbean Islands; she is a refugee and arrived in Quebec in 2015 with her boy, who was four years old. She speaks Creole, English and French, and completed a one-year university diploma in French upon settling to Montreal. She is in her late 20s and has a few family members in Montreal. She is employed and enjoys her work, but her dream is to go back to school and complete a university degree. Her son is in second grade in a regular school.

Pepa. In her late thirties, Pepa emigrated from Honduras in 2016 with her five-year-old daughter, enrolled at the time of the interview in a pre-school program in a French public school. She has an Engineering degree, a master’s degree, and work experience in her field from her country of origin. She speaks three languages, Spanish, English, and French, and attended a one-year student exchange program in Quebec prior to emigrating to Quebec. Pepa obtained a permanent resident status as a skilled worker but was unable to find work. She is currently enrolled in a three-year pre-university technical program (DEC) in French, has no

other family ties in North America, and has had issues interacting with the school system in Montreal.

Lin Huiyin. Lin Huiyin is a Chinese woman in her early forties who emigrated ten years ago to complete her graduate studies in Quebec. She owns a business and has a comfortable financial situation in Quebec. She lives with her seventeen-year-old daughter, who was enrolled in the Accueil program for a few years. Later on, her daughter was moved into the regular program. Lin Huiyin, who has limited proficiency in French, initially understood that her daughter started the regular program. Then without her knowledge, her daughter was transferred to an Accueil program where she had significant educational delays. When Lin's daughter passed the French tests and finally advanced in the regular program, she experienced overt racism and was bullied by boys in her school. Consequently, the daughter refused to attend school for several months. Lin's daughter is now in a private French high school and is advancing well in her studies.

An overview of the participants' demographics is provided below (Table 2).

Data Collection

Participants reached out to the phone number provided on the flyer. Before scheduling an interview, I introduced myself and explained the purpose of the study. Two participants mentioned that they do not want to review the questions and the consent forms prior to the interview. Ten participants however, wanted to receive the consent form and the interview questions before deciding whether they will participate in the study. They received an electronic version of the consent form via email along with the interview questionnaire. I answered emails or phone calls to those who had specific concerns about their interview participation. I made sure that the participants understood the requirement of signing the

consent form just before they agree to participate in the study and before we started the interview (Bhattacharya, 2007).

Table 2

Overview of Self-identified Participants' Demographics

Variable	Distribution
Education level (Completed either in Canada or in their countries of origin)	Graduate level studies (after 4 years of university) (7) Undergraduate degree in university (4) One-year university certificate (1)
Status in Canada	Refugee (2) Permanent resident (5) Canadian citizenship (5)
Marital status	Never married (3) Divorced (5) Separated (3) Living apart (1)
Minor children	Pre-school (2) Primary (4) Secondary (6)
Family ties in Canada	In Montreal (1) Ex-husbands in Montreal (3) In Ontario (1) Other provinces in Canada (0)
Neighborhood (participants' self-defined socio-economic neighborhood status)	Wealthy (5) Low wealth (7)

Ethical Considerations

Depending upon the participants' availability, ten interviews took place in person at a convenient location in their neighborhood, and two were conducted over the phone. I

responded to all questions and concerns during the pre-interview phase to safeguard the participants' confidentiality and reduce potential risks.

Issues about confidentiality, data storage, and any potential risks were discussed with each participant. Before participants signed the consent form, I reminded them that they could withdraw anytime during or after the interview without explanations. One participant did not agree to be audio recorded but allowed me to take extensive notes throughout the interview. With participants' consent, eleven of the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. When asked, only three participants showed an interest in reviewing their interview data transcripts. I sent them the transcripts via email for verification and final approval of the participants.

Upon receipt of the interview transcripts, none of the participants chose to withdraw from the study and add, remove, or reframe specific passages from the transcript.
Taking into account the transportation costs and babysitting fees, a compensation of twenty dollars was offered at the end of the interview or was transferred electronically into the participant's bank account. Two participants refused the financial compensation.

The Interviews

The data collection involved twelve semi-structured interviews. Each interview was scheduled for one hour and was held face-to-face or over the phone. The interviews lasted for approximately one hour and fifteen minutes, but three participants felt the need to speak in more detail about their experiences. Each interview was based on a set of pre-determined questions (Appendix C). The interview questions were derived from the parent-school literature reviewed in an earlier chapter and from my personal experience interacting with the school system.

Although the semi-structured interview protocol consisted of scripted questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2014), I carried out the interviews with the approach of seeing participants as

"co-equals talking about mutually relevant critical issues and experiences" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 634). Similarly, Fontana and Frey (2005) suggested that "a feminist interviewing ethic redefines the interview situation. This ethic transforms interviewers and respondents into co-equals who are carrying on a conversation about mutually relevant, often biographically critical, issues" (p. 703).

Before, during, and after the interview, I developed a rapport, trust and reciprocity with the participants to minimize the inherent imbalance of power (Leavy & Harris, 2018) since I was the one who framed the inquiry and the interview questions. Therefore, when I was asked about my personal experiences, I shared with the participants that I also was an immigrant single mother. Furthermore, when the participants displayed deep emotions recounting negative experiences interacting with the school system, I also shared some of my insights to alleviate the suffering of the participants.

Interview Questions. The research participants answered a set of five broad semi-structured questions with multiple follow-up questions. These questions focused on the women's pre-migration expectations and their post-migration experiences interacting with the school system. Answers to these questions revealed participants' perceptions concerning parent-school collaboration, including the quality of curriculum, children's engagement in learning and learning experience. At the end of each interview, participants were asked to make recommendations that, from their perspective, could support the academic success of immigrant children in Quebec schools.

All audio recordings were transcribed to text and then uploaded in the MAXQDA (Verbi software, 2018) for analysis. Each of the twelve data sets were then coded in several cycles.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process involved a reflexive understanding of the participants' narratives generated during the interviews (Leavy & Harris, 2018; Oakley, 1981). I reflected on the

meanings that participants created according to their perceptions of truth and reality, as manifested in their everyday lives and their children's lives and from their subjective experiences. I also reflected on my similar experiences and the emotional closeness I felt towards the participants and their experiences.

The following interrelated and iterative stages informed the inductive analysis, which did not have a pre-established hypothesis. First, based on the qualitative guidelines provided by Saldaña (2021) and Bhattacharya (2017), I read each transcript multiple times to understand the participants' experiences across lines of difference. Second, I coded the transcript by labelling chunks of data into manageable but meaningful units of analysis. Finally, codes, categories, and themes were identified based on an inductive constant comparative analysis used to develop concepts from the data by coding and analyzing simultaneously (Boeije, 2002; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

The data was examined thoroughly, several times, each interview data set at a time. For example, after the first interview was read several times and coded, the second interview data set was compared with the previous one, the third was compared with the first and second interview data, and so on until the last interview. Then the method was applied across the interviews within the same descriptive category attributed to the participants (participants with children enrolled in Accueil). A comparison was then made across distinct categories of participants (Boeije, 2002). For example, the data from participants with children enrolled in the Accueil program was compared with the data generated from attending school in a regular program class. During the analysis, this distinction proved to be important in the ways that illuminated how the participants' children experienced educational disadvantage.

According to C. E. Collins (2012), "describing a subsample is useful when researchers recognize that participants differ in some manner that is meaningful and noticeable" (p. 125). As explained in a previous section of this chapter, the "immigrant single mother" is an

intersectional group who interacted with the school system via the Accueil or in regular programs in which their children were enrolled. Therefore, within the intersectional group of "immigrant single mothers," the "immigrant single mothers with children in Acceuil" and the "immigrant single mothers with children in the regular program" were considered intersectional subsamples.

Coding Cycles

Coding methods involved identifying phrases, keywords and even paragraphs that stood out in the data sets. Chunks of data contained a list of overlapping codes and sub-codes that were identified and converged in sense-making units as categories and then themes. As per Saldaña's (2021) qualitative coding methods, eclectic coding procedures were applied for all twelve data sets. Though one of the interviews was not audio recorded, I received permission from the participant to take extensive notes during the interview. These notes were typed and coded following the same procedures as the other transcripts. Below I provide a short description for attribute coding, affective coding and in vivo coding, along with a rationale for choosing each of these coding methods.

Attribute Coding. Attribute coding identified descriptive information about the participants such as gender, race, education level, and immigration status of the participants and their children. It also gathered information related to the types of neighbourhoods the participants lived in, the type of school the children attended, and whether they were enrolled in a regular program or the Accueil program.

Affective Coding. Affective coding focused on the participants' emotions, values, conflicts, and judgements: unpleasant interactions, surprising experiences, divergent views, asymmetrical power dynamics, conflicts, and others.

In-vivo Coding. According to Saldaña (2021), the in-vivo coding method is "a literal coding or the verbatim coding of the data and draws upon the exact words used by the

participants in the study" (p. 74). This coding procedure preserved participants' views and experiences in the coding framework itself. Its purpose was to make visible the worldviews and the experiences of an already marginalized group who are excluded by the school system.

Second Cycle Coding

Clustering was applied at different levels of the data and highlighted new data dimensions. Clustering involved combining codes into categories and similar categories into main themes. This clustering tactic was given to the process of forming categories out of similar codes and iterative sorting. Illustrative quotes were selected to connect the findings to the participants' voices, emotions, and understandings of the research topic. I reflected on the previous phases during this phase and identified the most salient themes.

Despite its merits for exploring new social phenomena, qualitative inquiry has been criticized by policymakers for its subjectivity. Therefore, during the constant comparative analysis, I adopted an extra measure to enhance the credibility and traceability of the analysis. I decided to underline the perspectives shared by the participants and used the Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) approach (Hill, 2012; Hill et al., 1997) to compare and contrast the unique views and experiences of the participants.

The Consensual Qualitative Research Approach. The CQR approach (Hills et all 1997; Hill 2012) was modified and adapted and was used to identify and sort common themes across all datasets. This study used this method "during a cross-analysis, which involved developing categories to describe consistencies in the core categories across cases" (Hill et al., 1997, p. 523).

According to Van den Berg and Struwig (2017), the adapted CQR method provided a more rigorous approach to conducting qualitative analysis by offering the researcher concrete guidelines throughout the process. In order to differentiate between pre migrations expectations and post-migration experiences, the findings of this study were structured on a

time continuum. Moreover, the participants' personal lives as women and as mothers interacting with the school system were presented separately despite multiple overlaps between these two intersecting and sometimes inseparable identities. Therefore, the participants' pre-migration expectations related to personal life and the education of their children were presented separately from the post-migration experiences interacting with the receiving society (as women) and the education system (regular and Accueil) as mothers.

By using CQR typology, the themes identified under each of these dimensions belong to three categories: general, typical and variant themes. Hill et al. (1997), describes a general theme as encompassing the views of all the participants with a maximum of one exception (100% or 90%). A typical theme was shared by most participants (more than 50%), and a variant theme was comprised of the views of a minority portion of the participants (less than 50%). This procedure was important to gauge the strength of each theme which I present and explain in more depth in the Chapter 6 of this dissertation. However, the findings of the data analysis are structured into thw main phases and placed on a time continuum: before emigrating, with the hopes and expectations of th eparticopants for themselves and their children and after settling in Montreal, interacting with the schools of their children and the host society.

One of the benefits of this approach was about identifying a range of similarities variations across the data sets: the shared experiences of the participants during the pre-and post-migration process, in both personal lives and regarding education but also their unique experiences or incidents that were not common to all the IRER participants. Another strength of CQR was the view of participants as experts in the research topic. During the data analysis, CQR instructs researchers to stay close to the participants' experiences, and it "emphasizes that the participants are the experts on their inner experiences and that researchers learn about the phenomenon from the participants" (E. C. Hill et al., p. 522). Staying true to the data and

allowing the participants' voices to shape the analysis was an important decision that showed in concrete ways how IRER single mothers interacted with the school system.

However, CQR as a methodology was meant to provide a framework for multiple researchers who consensually would be conducting the data analysis procedures and interpreting the data.

Chapter 6: Findings

This qualitative study engaged IRER single mothers as individuals who are able to understand and communicate complex life experiences. As they shared their perceptions of the processes of emigrating to Canada and settling in Montreal, and raising school children in a post-migration context, both gendered and racialized dimensions of single motherhood became visible through the data analysis. The findings considered the migration process comparatively, on a continuum**,** before and after immigration. The data analysis revealed that women's lives do not simply start upon their arrival in Canada; instead, pre-migration life contexts and decision-making significantly influenced their post-migration experiences in Montreal.

The participants offered insights into their life experiences during the interviews and spoke about their perceptions of school injustice from their unique perspectives. Prior to migration, each participant had limited knowledge about Canada and Quebec. Even if they were somehow aware of the universal challenges encountered by immigrants, they were not prepared to deal with the unique barriers posed by linguicism in the Quebec education system, the lack of family support, and their marginalization based on their gender, race, and single-mother family status. Finally, the IRER single mothers talked about their lives prior to migration, discussed the motivations behind the decision to migrate to Canada and reside in Quebec and recounted painful interactions with the public school system in both regular and Accueil systems.

Overarching Themes

The findings of this study are grouped along a time continuum: the participants' pre-migration hopes and expectations and their post-migration experiences in Canada. These overarching dimensions illustrated several intersectional understandings of the women's lives as racialized immigrants and/or as single mothers in relation to: Canada as a country of

second citizenship; Quebec, as a province of residence; the intercultural integration of their children in Accueil, and the urgency to overcome racism, discrimination, and the anti-immigrant sentiments perceived during their interaction with the host society.

Personal Life and Regarding Education - emerged as interdependent and overlapping dimensions of women's lives during the analysis. While every immigrant's experience is unique, this study revealed that the women shared many common hopes for the future in the pre-migration context while experiencing oppression and marginalization as racialized single mothers in the post-migration context. CQR was used throughout the analysis to identify similar and different experiences of IRER participants. These similarities and differences are exemplified in the tables of this chapter.

Personal Life - encompasses the participant's understanding of their inner resources and abilities as women in the broader social context, pre and post migration. Personal Life in the pre-migration context included more generally the participants' hopes and expectations before leaving their countries of origin anticipating the process of emigrating to Canada and settling in Quebec. It emphasized the participants' emigration process as a significant life decision (or life turning point) and some of the factors that led to their choice. The participants believed that Canada offered many opportunities inexistent to women in their countries of origin: economic stability, safety, high standards of living, a politically stable country, and a good education system for their children. Finally, Personal Life in a post-migration context included the experience of residing in Quebec, living in Montreal as well as the insights gained by the participants in retrospect, while they tried to make sense of some of their pain, cultural hardships, and the structural barriers to employment and career development.

The second category - Regarding Education - emphasized the parenting role of the participants as mothers of IOC&Y interacting with two different education systems: Accueil

and regular, as well as their impacts on both the child and the mother. Regarding Education in a pre-migration context was about the hopes and expectations of the participants for their children's educational outcomes prior to moving to Canada. Education in a post-migration context encompasses the participants' perceptions of the low-quality education available to IOC&Y, their gendered interactions with the school system, and the systemic factors influencing educational disadvantage.

Pre-Migration Hopes and Expectations

Personal Life

Five sub-themes characterized the participants' pre-migration hopes and expectations (Table 3). These are: Self-image, Inclusive Democracy, and Better Life Opportunities highlighted the participants' views of themselves while transitioning into a new context; and Student-Centered and World-Leading Education are the two sub-themes pertaining to education. These are analyzed below with supportive quotes from the interviews.

As the participants anticipated starting a new life in Canada, three main themes emerged as illustrative of their pre-migration hopes and expectations: Positive Self-image, Inclusive Democracy, and Better Life Opportunities. Based on a positive self-image, these themes described how participants anticipated better life opportunities in an inclusive country, whose fair laws would offer equal opportunities to all women, including immigrant single mothers from diverse ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds.

Self-Image. This subtheme encompassed the participants' view of their personal abilities and qualities. Initially, participants reported having a positive self-image that contributed to their decision to emigrate to a new country and start a new life in Quebec. Prior to emigrating, the participants reported that they had perceived themselves as capable, strong, smart, confident, independent, and ambitious women, capable of creating a better life for

themselves. Pepa, who emigrated from Honduras with her daughter, mentioned how she perceived herself: “I think it took much courage to come here by myself with a kid.”

Table 3

Participants’ Pre-migration Hopes and Expectations using CQR categories

Major themes and subthemes	General	Typical	Variant
Personal Life			
Positive self-image	∨		
Courageous		∨	
Determined	∨		
Hard-working		∨	
Confident	∨		
Well-educated	∨		
Inclusive democracy	∨		
Just state and institutions		∨	
Stable economy			∨
Welcoming society		∨	
Nation of immigrants		∨	
Respect for diversity		∨	
Better life opportunities	∨		
As single mothers		∨	
For women and girls		∨	
Gender equity			∨
Personal safety			∨
Protection of women’s rights		∨	
Fresh start		∨	
Career opportunities		∨	
Regarding Education			
World-leading		∨	
Bilingual (English and French)	∨		
Equitable	∨		
Access to good jobs		∨	
More modern			∨
Student-centered	∨		
Diverse needs			∨
Balanced education		∨	
Great teachers		∨	
Stimulating curriculum		∨	

All five participants who arrived without a spouse and emigrated with their dependent child(ren) felt confident in their abilities as both women and single mothers. Based on pre-migration knowledge about Canada, most participants characterized their pre-migration expectations as exciting, filled with career opportunities, and a better quality of life as women. While acknowledging the upcoming challenges, they had felt prepared to start a new life.

All participants relied on their educational credentials, solid work experience, and the financial resources required to settle in Quebec successfully. Given that not all women experiencing hardships in their countries of origin can emigrate, all women participating in this study were privileged in a pre-migration context. They expected that education, work experience and financial resources were reliable sources of power that would help them in the post-migration context. However, such privileges were erased in the post-migration context, where they became increasingly marginalized. Some participants mentioned that they expected to have some difficulties learning French and adapting to a new culture. However, as they did not anticipate the actual costs of Quebec integration and the time it takes to learn a new language, they somehow believed that such difficulties could be surpassed much faster, with hard work and determination.

Inclusive Democracy. This subtheme was based on the hopes shared by all participants to integrate into a society that is democratic, respects human rights, welcomes immigrants, protects women, and has a stable economic system. Participants mentioned that Canada's international reputation as an inclusive democracy was one of the main reasons prompting them to move and live in Canada. They did not expect that their gender, ethno-cultural and racialized backgrounds would ultimately contribute to decreased wellbeing.

For example, Persheng believed that there were no limitations for immigrants to achieve success and an excellent social position. "The minister of immigration, right now, is an

immigrant, and here, in Canada, you can achieve anything." Other participants shared Persheng's views and believed that Canadian society was equitable and progressive in the reception and integration of immigrants. Most of the participants expected inclusiveness, and upwards social mobility in a country where people from all over the world could live in harmony while maintaining their cultural heritage or religious practices.

Part of this subtheme was the IRER's expectations in relation to Canadians as hospitable people, who have multicultural values, and are knowledgeable and appreciative of both English and French cultures. Other pre-migration expectations regarding Quebec included: the best quality of life for women and a diverse province that values bilingualism. As Huei-Ru conveyed, "I always thought that Canada is a multicultural country. So, if I come to Montreal, I can see more cultures and different people." Similarly, Nevis mentioned that diversity is one of Canada's strengths and "this is what makes it so good here and some people want to make a good life here and make many efforts to come here."

Better Life Opportunities. This theme captured the need expressed by the participants to have improved lives and futures as Canadian citizens. It also refers to favourable conditions for single mothers who desire to live in a society fostering greater social justice for women and girls.

Several participants felt compelled by the necessity to emigrate in order to have a better quality of life than in their countries of origin. For example, the women who arrived in Quebec with their children (six participants out of twelve) felt empowered by having the choice to emigrate and start a new life, where they thought that they would have a better quality of life for themselves and their children and better career opportunities.

> It was hard but you, it was some kind of real starting a new life. You are born again. It was exciting. You will learn a lot of new things. You will grow up. Now here we can talk- we are not afraid of anything. We have rights. We have right to be myself. You can be

yourself here, but you know in some kind of country you cannot talk, you do not have liberties. (Persheng)

Surprisingly, the women participants who were married when they arrived in Canada felt that immigration was more a necessity than a personal choice. Arpi mentioned that she wanted to emigrate because, in Armenia, women are subject to patriarchal social expectations that she could not escape. Like many other women in her country, she felt stuck because she was living with her in-laws and did not see how she could build an independent family life in those conditions. Cindy emigrated to Quebec because her ex-husband wanted to advance his career and work for a multinational company that offered him a better job than he had in the UK. Their stories exemplified both the privilege of immigration but also the marginality experienced in the pre-migration context where the lives of women were subordinated to the lives of men.

Having a deep appreciation for Canadian values, all women interviewed expressed a keen interest in starting a new life for personal or professional reasons. Persheng associated emigration with a sense of new beginnings and a completely fresh start: “It was a real excitement starting a new life. You are born again, learn many new things.”

When thinking about starting a new life in Canada, gender equity, personal safety, and fulfillment were the main aspirations of the participants. Regardless of their pre-migration marital status or socio-economic situation, the participants mentioned freedom from established gender roles and access to better life opportunities as motivators to immigrate to Canada. A prevalent view was that the Canadian government was fair towards women, with institutions that are protective of women’s rights, freedoms, and liberties. In the words of Shiveh, personal fulfillment was mentioned in relation to gender equality and better life opportunities as women: “Here I

can talk, I have rights, and I am not afraid. I have the right to be myself. But in my country [Iran], you know, women do not have many liberties."

Participants were very informed about Canada's policies that protect women against violence. Several participants mentioned that Quebec had the most equitable, reasonable cost of living among the Canadian provinces. Having the lowest rate of poverty for women and girls and the lowest rates of violence against women, Quebec was considered by the participants to be a secure place and an affordable province for single mothers.

Shiveh decided to immigrate to Montreal to provide her two teenage daughters with better life opportunities:

> I searched for many laws about Canada, and I chose Quebec. In Quebec, it is the best for women, for girls. All the laws are good; there are many benefits for women here. I saw research on the Internet that there is the least crime in Canada, the least violence against women and girls, much less than in other provinces in Canada. So, yes, I saw statistical matters and papers about this matter.

Regarding Education

During the analysis, the theme of Regarding Education was broadly defined as participants' expectations for inclusive education and a socially-just schooling process. It included curriculum, the quality of instruction, pedagogical practices with IRER children and interactions between students, parents, and teachers. Most participants had high pre-migration expectations regarding the educational opportunities for their children and did not expect that their children would not adjust properly in the host society.

The mothers stated that they had based their pre-migration expectations on information learned about the Canadian education system prior to migration. As a result, they assumed that their children would benefit from culturally relevant teaching and an education system

that had the reputation of being one of the best in the world both in terms of academic and personal achievement: “I read that Canada’s education is world-leading and an excellent system for children” (Lin).

Student-Centered Education. This theme emphasized the pre-migration hopes and expectations of the participants for a student-centred education system that meets the needs of an increasingly diverse population of schoolchildren. Student-centered refers to modern instructional approaches and academic-support strategies to address IRER’s students distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, and cultural backgrounds. The participants also hoped that a student-centred education would positively impact the overall development of their children, including a sense of belonging to a new society and good educational outcomes.

The participants hoped that the Canadian education system would be fair and inclusive of diverse cultural backgrounds and would address the learning needs of all new Canadians residing in Montreal. Yoruba stated that Montreal is the best place in the world to be a student, and Cindy wanted her daughter to benefit from such a unique opportunity:

> Montreal is a beautiful city because everyone is different, is from another place. Moreover, it is suitable for children to see the differences. In school, they need to learn to respect all people white, Black, different cultures, different ways of dressing and speaking. (Cindy)

Stimulating and Joyful. The participants expected that their children would benefit from a student-centred educational approach that is stimulating and joyful. The participants mentioned safe schools, dedicated teachers, and upward mobility through education as expectations before immigrating to Quebec. They also highlighted safety, emotional and psychological wellbeing, time to rest at home, and other essential aspects for their children. Arpi, Nevis, and Dalal mentioned that they wanted their children to do well in school, but at the same time, they hoped that it would not be exhausting for parents and children. Arpi

stated that although education is essential, "I do not want to create stress for my child. I teach my child to take it easy. He did his best - for me, he is doing well. That is enough for me." Unlike in their countries of origin, the mothers assumed that teaching methods in Canada would be structured in more inclusive ways and would consider the emotional and psychological wellbeing of the students. They also expected supportive teachers that appreciate and respect the students' diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

Holistic Student Development. The participants expected schools to encourage their children to broaden their world knowledge and excel as human beings. However, Lin, Persheng, Shiveh, and Eleonor were dissatisfied with their home countries' highly competitive education system, disregarding their children's emotional needs. Huei-Ru mentioned that her son was not doing well in her country of origin because the stress caused by unreasonable educational demands hindered her son's emotional development. Huei-Ru specified that "parents have very high expectations and teachers even higher, so students have to study up to twelve hours a day, and also take extra tutorials on Saturday and Sunday." She criticized the education system of her country of origin and underlined that her pre-migration expectations mainly were related to the emotional wellbeing of her son.

World-Leading Education System. A world-leading education was a subtheme that comprised the hopes and expectations of participants of a high performing education system that was recognized internationally for its modern and innovative pedagogies superior to those received in their countries of origin. It included a curriculum that prepares children with 21st Century knowledge, credentials, and leadership skills; and a bilingual French and English education that is equitable, inclusive, modern and secures access to a better quality of life.

> I always thought that Canada is a multicultural country. So, if I come to Montreal, I can see more cultures and also for my child broader knowledge of the world, more learning

> from people from all over the world. I read that Canada education is world leading, very good system for children. (Huei-Ru)

Modern Curriculum and Bilingual Schools. The participants assumed that the education would be superior to what they had experienced in their country of origin. For example, Dalal mentioned, "Before I emigrated, I thought that the school would be better, more modern. Like more things to learn about, a better education."

Bilingual education was one of the valuable features that participants believed would support their children to integrate into Canada and enable access to a global job market after the children completed their studies. Nevis stated, "When I came here, I knew that my son would go to French school, but I was hoping everything would be bilingual. We wanted him to learn both languages, not just French." Arpi stated that bilingualism would be an advantage for her son. "I wanted him to learn both French and English because I think it will be easier for him in the future to have a good job." Although all the participants were aware that Quebec is a French-speaking province, they also thought that French and English would be equally important.

Self-Fulfillment. Without differentiating between the Canadian and Quebec education systems, the participants predicted that their children would adapt well in school, achieve academic success, and ultimately complete a bachelor's degree. As Persheng underlined, education is a significant factor in achieving social recognition in her country of origin. However, her pre-migration hope was that a good education would also lead to a sense of personal fulfillment and self-realization. "Of course, I want him to go to university, to have more options in life, but I want him to be happy in life, to have a good life." Finally, the participants hoped to find an excellent teaching and learning environment informed by a modern curriculum that prepares children for college and future careers.

Post-Migration Experiences

Although all participants shared common hopes and expectations about social justice issues, freedom from oppression, and equal rights for women and girls, after arriving in Canada, their perspectives changed drastically. The following sections reveal how gender, race, and the French linguistic abilities were sources of multiple and intersecting inequalities impacting not only the mothers but also the educational trajectories of their children. This section demonstrated concretely how anti-immigrant sentiments, racism and discrimination were present in society (exosystem), schools (microsystem), and during mother-school interactions (mesosystem). The compounded intersectional racism and discrimination perceived by mothers decreased their wellbeing significantly and resulted in these family units becoming increasingly vulnerable to prolonged precarity. This negatively impacted their IOC&Y, whose school refusal and disengagement from learning were reactions to an unfair, unwelcoming and increasingly punitive school system.

Personal Life

Regarding the participants' personal lives, five themes characterized their post-migration experiences: Anti-immigrant Attitudes and Behaviours, Decreased Wellbeing, Downward Social Mobility, Personal Sacrifice, and Intercultural Immigrant Integration (see Table 4). Overall, based on the participants' perceptions, anti-immigrant sentiments and unjust treatments were sources of power used by the majority population to further marginalize their efforts to integrate with the host society. While this section of the data analysis seems to be more related to immigration experiences, the ecological framework revealed how different environmental levels interact and influence educational outcomes. This means that dynamics at the exo and macro levels impacts the meso-level parent-school interaction. Futhermore, racism and discrimination resulted in reduced quality of life, reduced access to career opportunities, increased stress and a continuous source of personal suffering. These themes

are detailed below and accompanied by illustrative quotes from the interviews with the participants. While the focus of this research was on parent-school interaction, these sub-themes were more related to the immigration experiences of IRER single mother families in Montreal.

Table 4

Participants' Post-Migration Experiences in Personal Life using CQR categories

Major themes and subthemes	General	Typical	Variant
Personal Life			
Anti-immigrant attitudes & behaviours		∨	
Intersectional Discrimination		∨	
Racism (9)		∨	
Sexism (3)			∨
Xenophobia (2)			
Linguicism (9)		∨	
Islamophobia (1)			∨
Downward social mobility	∨		
Precarity		∨	
Underemployment		∨	
Unemployment			∨
Career stagnation			∨
Lack of recognition		∨	
Uni-cultural adaptation	∨		
Decreased wellbeing	∨		
Personal life on hold		∨	
High stress	∨		
Social isolation		∨	
Loss of confidence	∨		

Anti-Immigrant Attitudes and Behaviours. Following the CQR typology this theme is a typical one. However, *all nine* women belonging to racialized immigrant minorities experienced intersectional discrimination based on their place of birth (immigration), national or ethnic background (nationality and ethnocultural communities), use of English instead of French, race, gender, religion, and/or single mother status. Moreover, as a

consistent core theme across the data sets, the experience of discrimination or being discriminated against, exemplified how anti-immigrant sentiments propagated consciously or unconsciously by members of the host society, negatively impacted the mothers, and by extension, their school-age children. The participants thought that attitudes and behaviours held by members of the host society were present in schools, public and private settings, and in the workplace. These were associated with systemic barriers for IRER families that led over time to downward social mobility and decreased wellbeing. This is an intersectional analysis of the data based on multiple incidents perceived by the participants and reported in this section from the perspective of IRER single mothers. Based on CQR, I represented these incidents as separate from each other (Table 4). However, because of structural factors present in the analysis (further explained in Chapter 7), it was difficult to fully differentiate among intersecting forms of discrimination.

Intersectional Discrimination. All nine immigrant racialized women experienced racism upon settling in Montreal and detailed their perceptions and painful experiences as racialized, immigrant women. As evidenced in Table 4, all nine immigrant racialized women (Shiveh, Persheng, Pepa, Huei Ru, Lin, Yoruba, Nevis, Charissa, and Dalal) experienced discrimination on at least two intersecting lines of difference: racist-sexism or sexist-racism, and linguicism.

Yoruba, who is a single mother from Nigeria with three children, shared her painful experiences of racism and xenophobia from her neighbours and linguicism at the school of her son. She recounted an incident in which the upstairs neighbour threatened her and her children:

> I live in the basement and the neighbour upstairs started to bang in the door with his legs, telling me in French all sorts of things. He said that my kids are bothering him, and he always screams to go back to my country. But he lives upstairs. He also said that he will

> cut their tongues. I do not understand what kind of people are here. He puts music really loud in the night and I cannot say anything about the noise because I'm afraid of him.

After several negative interactions with the neighbor Yoruba had a hard time getting out of the house and interacting with other people. In her case, experiences of racist aggression from a man made her feeling vulnerable and unable to protect her children. She also experienced verbal aggressions in the bus while talking in English with her children:

> I live in Lachine and when I go to get groceries, I have to get the bus with my two toddlers. This is very difficult especially in the winter because we are not used to this freezing cold. There is always something happening, the kids aren't happy, and I am exhausted. I see them how they look at me and snap all sorts of comments. I don't even understand but I can tell is not good.

Such incidents altered Yoruba's initial trust and hopes she had prior to migration to Canada. Her social isolation was a way of protecting herself and her children from the daily experience of negative comments, insults, and hurtful actions from some of the members of the receiving society.

Echoing Yoruba's experiences with everyday racism, Nevis notably mentioned being afraid of losing her son: "It seems that is *too easy to lose them* - and why? Do you know what I mean? Fear is always there." In this quote and without further explanations, Yoruba's dread referred to high incidence of young black male being disproportionately imprisoned or murdered. The tremor in her voice while she shared her feelings and her facial expression expressed the constant fear racialized parents have. For both Nevis and Yoruba, fear was not a feeling that comes and passes but a recurrent state of high stress, a reality of structural racism and compounded discrimination as women, single mothers of boys and racialized English-speaking minorities in Quebec.

Persheng and Shiveh mentioned feeling very depressed because of lack of employment mainly due to linguicism. Both women had master's degrees from Iran, attended Francization and afterward, applied for numerous jobs without success. While giving up on having careers, they expressed the need for "any kind of job." Shiveh said she "would do anything" just to get a job and have a normal life. Persheng just like Shiveh, felt stuck in Quebec not knowing what else she should do next. Both Persheng and Shiveh looked into moving out from Quebec, but they could not afford the relocations costs to another Canadian province. Persheng stated that "I can't afford a second immigration" and Shiveh noted:

> My ex-husband got us here on the business visa. All was good when we had the money, they wanted our money in the bank. But now, he's and that's all gone. I was hoping that my daughter will improve at school, but now all she wants is to go back to Iran.

Huei Ru and Lin emphasized not only linguicism but also that Asians were treated very badly upon settlemen, and worse than they expected. Huei Ru stated "I knew there will be problems, but never imagined so much racism in Canada." Lin also mentioned how both the Francophones and Anglophones in Quebec might have anti-immigrant sentiments and discriminate against Chinese women:

> So now, I think maybe Quebec is only good for French people, Francophones, not a good place for us. And also, but I always see that even English, Anglophones, sometimes they don't like Chinese people.

Overall, this theme provided insights into how the participants perceived disadvantage related to gender and race in a patriarchal and predominantly white society. This section also revealed that the participant's experiences as immigrant single mothers remained invisible in a society in which racism and discrimination are normalized by what they (the participants) perceived as being unjust, unwelcoming, and unfair context of immigrant reception and integration.

Islamophobia. The data revealed one very painful and frightening incident detailed and analysed by Charissa during the interview. She wears a hijab and described in detail howwhen speaking English to her daughter, another non-immigrant parent, who had children in the same school, attacked her in the schoolyard, in the presence of children and school personnel:

> And the first school that they went to, we had an issue where someone was actually spitting at me, and he was also yelling at me. A father was yelling at me in French, he was screaming very bad words to me in front of everyone.

Charissa, was compelled to report the incident to the school's principal (also a man), but the principal said that he had no time available the day of the incident, and subsequently he postponed the scheduled meeting and told the mother that "there is nothing he could do". Charissa, who identified herself as a Latina woman born in the USA, emigrated to Quebec and experienced the compounded effects of sexism, racism, and Islamophobia twice: in relation to the other parent, whose violence was normalized by the principals' silence and lack of proper and immediate action against hateful acts; and during the parent-school interaction, when the principal refused to address the incident to Charissa and inflicted by the action of the racist father when he heard her speaking in English in the courtyard.

As exemplified in the following quote, the single mother participating in this study argued that Islamophobia was just one part of compounded discrimination experienced by her in Montreal. As a self-identified as a visible minority woman who speaks English and wears a hijab she said the following:

> Well, there, in Canada, they believe in multiculturalism, and multiple cultures are being acknowledged. But here in Quebec, it is not the case because they believe that multiculturalism is a failed experiment and that there is only one culture that matters. But here is the big problem because *the racism and discrimination that we see everywhere*

> (emphasis added) have been legalized within the language laws. Because the law 101 they can say to you anything, and it silences you for everything else. Whatever you are trying to say, they say this is the law; *you must speak only French (emphasis added)*. But they do not address that. In fact, I am a visible minority.

This quote exemplified that for Charissa, Quebec and Canada are two separate and not overlapping locations. It also exemplified a critical, feminist, intersectional analysis provided by Charissa while talking about her own experience with compounded discrimination and systemic barriers for visible minority women. All racialized mothers in this study communicated the dysfunctionality of what was perceived as being compounded or intersectional discrimination, impacting the lives of IRER single mother families in which children have a unique developmental hardships that must be properly understood by educators, policy makers and the society at large.

Intersectional Analysis of the Islamophobic Incident. Although in the data collected from the interviews, there was only one isolated incident of Islamophobia, it demonstrated how patriarchal attitudes, interculturalism, whiteness and its structural power relations were embodied, enacted, and reproduced by a male school principal who covered up the abuse of a male co-national, non-immigrant parent with children in the same schools with Charissa's children. The intercultural policies while intended to be neutral in their content, in their practical application, further marginalized the single mother.

This incident demonstrated the ways in which certain regulations are applied without flexibility. "This is the law. You must speak only French" is a consistent message repeated by teachers and principals to Charissa but also to Nevis, Shiveh, Yoruba, Pepa, Lin and Huei Ru. For these participants, language policy was used to protect the linguistic rights of a majority and ignore the rights of minorities to report abusive situations.

Moreover, an intersectional analysis of Charissa's incident revealed the mechanisms through which IRER women could be silenced during their interactions with schools.

Decreased Wellbeing. The subtheme of Decreased Wellbeing captured the significant decline in the emotional, physical, mental, and social comfort of the participants. Decreased wellbeing referred to specific negative situations that contributed to a lack of accomplishment and personal fulfillment in the immigrant women who participated in the study. They recounted feelings of helplessness and high stress, frustration, social isolation, and lack of access to activities aimed at achieving physical vitality or career satisfaction.

High Stress. Due to compounded integration challenges, all of the women experienced decreased wellbeing after settling in Quebec, particularly all nine women from racialized communities. They experienced high stress and feeling isolated due to financial constraints and the fear of hateful racism against themselves or their children.

A critical, feminist, intersectional analysis of this theme was applied to Yoruba's and Nevis's experiences of single motherhood in a way that revealed the impact of cultural and racial barriers (such as systemic racism and discrimination) experienced by Black women in Canada and in Quebec. While both of the participants anticipated cultural discrepancies and a certain degree of racism, the participants laid out the additional burdens felt by an English-speaking, Black immigrant single mother in Quebec.

In her interview, Yoruba, described how feeling socially isolated and depressed led to a combination of social and personal stressors: being the target of hateful comments while walking in her neighbourhood made her reluctant to get out of the house, which made her feel even more depressed and increasingly socially isolated. Her overall sense of safety and wellbeing decreased, and without having the necessary resources, she felt stuck, angry, and trapped in a house, a neighborhood and a province that was not at all was she was hoping for prior to migration.

Combined with downward social mobility, decreased wellbeing placed them in a unique position of disadvantage. Nevis compared the consequences of being a single mother in her country of origin and in Quebec:

> Also, it is the fear, not knowing if you have food for the next day. I know it is trivial, but it is important. Like, here, I must work all the time and cannot afford to get sick. I must work all the time. Back home, if I did not have food, I could go to the grandmother, my sister; it was always enough to help. Whereas here, if you do not pay the rent, you end up on the streets. These are real fears I did not have before I emigrated.

Perheng, who was a single mother before arriving in Quebec, also mentioned that her experience was much more difficult than she initially expected: “I never thought of such bad treatment of my son, I never thought this would happen to me in Canada.” The racism and discrimination experienced by Persheng’s son affected the mother’s perception of schooling and the overall parent-school interaction. The experiences of high stress detailed by all non-racialized women, carried the intersectional compounded penalties of being IRER single mothers in Quebec.

Social Isolation. Social isolation was experienced not only in relation to racism and discrimination but also in having their personal “lives on hold”. As single mothers, some of the participants felt that they had to put aside their own needs and aspirations. “My personal life has been on hold since I arrived here” (Nevis). Nevis reflected on how her own sense of isolation negatively impacted her son. Nevis thought that single motherhood was more difficult in a post-migration context because her son lacked friend and she lacked support from family.

> Here it was just him and me; I took him to swimming lessons, we went to the park, spent a lot of time together but then again, it was just him and me. Back home, we would have a lot of kids coming to play, and he was not alone. (Nevis)

Overwhelmed by a sense of exhaustion associated with full time, uninterrupted primary care of her son, Nevis had to put her career dreams on hold:

> I feel very lonely, it is exhausting, and I cannot even afford to get sick. My personal needs are not at the forefront. Like I would like to continue my studies, study a law degree, but maybe when he gets older, when it doesn't affect him as much if I am not with him all the time.

Huei Ru linked the feeling of having compromised her career with exhaustion and the overall vulnerability that resulted from taking care of her son who had problem in Accueil learning French.

Dalal also made an important distinction between engaging in activities and experiencing a lack of belonging; she suggested that her son might mirror her own sense of isolation and helplessness. Her situation was similar to other single-mother participants in this study who had no family in Canada, felt tired most of the time and overwhelmed by the responsibilities of being a single mother, and not having the time nor the resources to pursue personal interests or desires:

> I am a single mom, and for me, life is about just dropping him to school, going to work, picking him up, doing homework and sleeping and then again, the same thing. That is all, work, school, homework, and his after-school activities. (Pepa)

Downward Social Mobility. Downward social mobility was a theme that captured the participants' self-perceived social position in a post-migration context when compared with their lives prior to migration. It involved having fewer personal and professional fulfillment opportunities in Quebec than they had in their countries of origin. Upon settling in Quebec, participants reported having the following experiences that deflated their pre-migration hopes and expectations: a lack of recognition for their diplomas and qualifications, prolonged

periods of unemployment or underemployment, career stagnation due to insufficient knowledge of French, linguicism, and prolonged financial precarity.

Precarity and Unemployment. A lack of career opportunities due to insufficient knowledge of French was an overarching concern and a significant source of stress for most of the women interviewed. In addition, the participants felt that the lack of recognition for their qualifications and competencies was an insurmountable barrier and led them to believe that they would have few opportunities for a better life. For example, Pepa explained that after her arrival, her experiences did not meet her pre-migration expectations. Upon her arrival, her French was insufficient to find a job, and her credentials were not recognized:

> My field is civil engineering, and I qualified for the skilled worker application. Before, I was with a project that came over here, and I did some of my studies for my Master's degree here, in Quebec. Well, after I emigrated, I found out that my French and my degree do not count here. I started with Francization courses, and this year I am focusing on writing. Right now, I am back to school studying in a technical college program.

In this example, the downward social mobility is evident: the participant thought that she was prepared for a job in a field where she had a master's degree from a French Quebec University gained prior to her immigration to Quebec along with work experience (internship) in Quebec. However, contrary to her expectations, she spent her savings going back to school in a pre-university technical program (DEC) that would eventually secure a lower-paying job than an engineering position. This is also an example of structural discrimination. While Pepa was accepted in Quebec based on her prior education and work experience in Honduras, upon settlement, what seemed to be an advantage was no longer serving her.

Underemployment and Career Stagnation. Even for those participants who completed their French courses, had lived in Quebec longer than five years, and had a job,

underemployment and career stagnation was a reality that impacted on the quality of their lives. They perceived underemployment as a systemic barrier rather than a lack of French training. Job discrimination and anti-immigrant attitudes led to limited advancement at work and less income over time. Dalal mentioned, “I have a job in a bank because I know French. I have a BA in French literature from my country, but it is not like I can speak French without flaws, like a native.” Another example was provided by Arpi, who spoke four languages. While she felt competent in doing her job, she addressed the structural barriers that immigrants experience in the workplace: “Employers complain when you make one spelling mistake, and they do not want to give you a raise. Is it still discrimination, no? My salary cannot just stay the same forever.”

Although occupational downgrading and underemployment was a reality among those interviewed, the participants predicted that it was just a transitional phase, and it would eventually come to an end after a few years. Unfortunately, participants like Eleonor, Arpi, Dalal and Charissa who spoke French well but with an accent felt limited in their job opportunities even after ten years of living in Quebec.

Unicultural Integration. Unicultural immigrant integration was a theme based on the participants’ comparison between Quebec’s integration policies and Canada’s multiculturalism and bilingualism. This theme includes the perceptions of participants in relation to French as the only language of communication.

Learning French. Learning French and respecting Quebec’s distinctive culture were considered priorities by all participants, with one exception. Yoruba was the only participant who could not attend French courses because she had to take care of her three boys full time and could not afford daycare. Although the participants attended Francisation courses, volunteered, and continued their education in Quebec, they thought that their ongoing efforts

and financial sacrifices were not appreciated by the host society, whose integration standards seemed unattainable.

Several participants revealed that they lost hope in having successful careers and integrating in Quebec. Arpi mentioned:

> But second immigration to another province, I do not have the strength, it is very difficult. I do not feel secure in terms of finding a new job here. They put such an accent on the French, and that I find that it is too much! You see, I did not expect that when I immigrated to Canada.

Attending Francization Programs. With one exception, the participants reported that they attended French courses and tried to help their children improve linguistic competencies at home. However, all participants mentioned that they preferred Canada's bilingualism and the multicultural values adopted in other parts of Canada. Nevis highlighted that bilingualism should be a choice in all Canadian provinces. "I understand French, I can learn it, but it should always be an option to be bilingual. I do not object to French, but I do not like it is imposed on us." As a justification, Nevis continued to explain that language is very personal choice based on one's own preference and ability: "Also, it is good to express yourself in the language that you are good in it. For me, it is clearly in English. For example, when I am stressed, I cannot speak in French."

Cindy, who emigrated from the UK with her two daughters, mentioned that as an immigrant whose mother tongue is English, she believed that the linguistic climate in Quebec limits one's agency either in the short-term or long-term:

> I have put my daughters in a French school. I know I don't have a choice, but I would have chosen that anyway because I always saw a long future in Quebec, and I think it's better for them to be bilingual because they're going to have the English at home anyway.

Cindy, as a woman born in UK, with English as her mother tongue, had no access to the English-speaking public school system. Therefore, her settlement and acculturation process was also considered in this theme. The reason why Cindy had no access to the public school system in English it's limited by the Bill 101 who offers language privileges only to the rights holders in Quebec.

Several participants felt pressured to adapt to a unilingual environment. Yoruba described the pressure as an imposition of the law. "Whatever you are trying to say, this is the law, you must speak only French." Arpi echoed similar sentiments towards Quebec's uni-cultural environment and mentioned:

> Here they put such an accent on the French, and I find that it is too much! You see, I did not expect that when I immigrated to Canada! They are forcing it on you, everything has to be in French all the time. It is really not bilingual, it's one language always, only French.

Personal Sacrifice. Overall, the participants' feelings and experiences suggested that raising school-aged children in a post-migration context was more challenging than they initially expected. As Charissa mentioned, "My expectations were naïve. I didn't really know much about the system at all, how the Quebec system - even how the Canadian system works." Despite concerns and negative feelings, the participants emphasized that for them, going back to their country of origin was no longer a choice.

Some of the women mentioned that obtaining Canadian citizenship was a sacrifice, and a cost they had to pay in exchange for escaping sexism and oppressive situations in their countries of origin. Despite compounded challenges and decreased wellbeing, they felt safer in Canada than in their countries of origin. Moreover, they expressed that the hope that their children would have better lives was worth all the sacrifices that the immigration process seemed to require from them.

Self-doubt. The post-migration experiences highlighted a significant contrast between initial hopes and expectations and the actual reality of integration into the receiving society of Quebec/Canada. This quote revealed the overall sentiment of self-doubt and disorientation in relation to previous knowledge and information that seemed deceiving:

> It was my choice or maybe a mistake. I thought Quebec has a good culture for girls. I think I was imagining; it was a dream, I guess. Now I can see it was not true. Before we came here, I searched many laws about Canada, and I chose Quebec because I read that Quebec is the best place for women for girls. All the laws are good here for women; there are many benefits for women and girls here. I saw research on the Internet that there is the least crime in Canada, the least violence against women and girls, much less than in other provinces in Canada. So, yes, I saw statistical matters and papers about this matter, and I saw it was good when I visited Montreal three years before we emigrated, the first time we had to come here to visit. So, I searched again, and I thought that Montreal was even better, the best city in the world to be a student. But you see, there are many differences, long distance between what we can see on the website or on the paper, and what we live, what we can touch with ourselves here. (Shiveh)

Just like Shiveh, other participants realized that there were significant discrepancies between their initial expectations and the everyday reality of settling in Quebec. Pepa, Dalal, Arpi, Persheng, Charissa, Yoruba, Eleonor, and Lin Huiyin, shared similar observations and concerns related to the gap between their pre-migration hopes and the disappointing and painful post-migration experiences.

Regarding Education

This theme comprised the post-migration experiences of participants interacting with two distinct educational programs: the Accueil and the regular program.

Table 5 outlines the following general themes that marked the experiences of all nine participants with children in Accueil: Negative School Climate, IOC&Y Educational Disadvantage, Communication Barriers, and School Refusal and Disengagement.

Table 5

Participants' Post-Migration Experiences in Accueil Program using CQR categories

Major themes and subthemes	General	Typical	Variant
Negative school climate	∨		
Unfair treatment		∨	
Racism and discrimination		∨	
Lack of adequate measures		∨	
Educational disadvantage	∨		
School segregation	∨		
Educational delays	∨		
Communication barriers	∨		
Use of language		∨	
Rules and procedures		∨	
School disengagement	∨		
Low motivation		∨	
Academic failure			∨
School refusal			∨

Table 6 describes the themes of post-migration experiences regarding education in regular program: School Refusal and Disengagement, Low Expectations from Teachers, Limited Access to Services, Maternal Strategies, and IOC&Y Educational Disadvantage. These themes are outlined below and analyzed with supportive quotes gathered from the interviews. Regular educational programs are those in which students learn all subjects and attend school along students born in Quebec. Nine of the participants interviewed had children in the regular programs.

Post-Migration Experiences in the Accueil Program. A significant part of Quebec's Francization initiative for school-aged children, the Accueil program, is mandatory for newly arrived Allophones who do not have the language skills to attend a regular program. Students

Table 6

Participants' Post-Migration Experiences in Regular Program using CQR categories

Major themes and subthemes	General	Typical	Variant
IOC&Y educational disadvantage		∨	
Socio-economic status		∨	
Neighborhood level	∨		
School level		∨	
School refusal and disengagement	∨		
School refusal			∨
Lack of interest in learning			∨
Deficit view of IOC&Y& mothers	∨		
Negative feedback		∨	
Low expectations from teachers	∨		
Limited access to services	∨		
Transportation	∨		
Translation services	∨		
Access to adequate information	∨		
Maternal strategies	∨		
Advocate		∨	
Complain			∨
Resist		∨	
Do nothing			∨
Compensate	∨		

must attend the Accueil program full time for a maximum of one academic year, during which they only learn French, Mathematics, Physical Education, and Arts. Accueil classes are composed exclusively of immigrant students from multi-ethnic, multi-faith and multiracial backgrounds. They are expected to learn from their teachers about Quebec's culture and society.

The participants mentioned during the interviews that their children do not interact or never even meet Quebec-born peers. Shiveh mentioned how she perceived inadequate instruction in the Accueil Program. She described how the grouping of children is based on French levels (writing, reading and verbal abilities) rather than age. While such a method for teaching French as a second language might be helpful for some adults, anecdotal evidence circulating among Allophones suggests that many adults who complete the whole Francization program still have difficulties finding employment because the employers think "their insufficient knowledge of French" is not going to benefit the workplace. Several participants strongly disagree with the way French was taught to children. If children do not improve while learning French all day long at school, then parents perceived that the problem was not at home but at school, in teacher training. Shiveh mentioned that her daughter was not doing well. "In the Accueil where my daughter is, there are three grades, secondary 3, 4 and secondary 5. My daughter was 12, and there are 14 years old and 16 years old children in the same class!"

Therefore, without proper knowledge of French, the students cannot communicate with each other at all. Since public schools in Quebec receive a ranking based on the socio-economic status of the parents (explained in chapters 1 and 2), the Accueil Programs are offered by urban schools with a high immigrant population. Nine of the twelve participants had children enrolled in Accueil, and all were dissatisfied with the Accueil program's impact on their children. Yoruba's impressions are representative of all the participants who had similar dissatisfaction with the Accueil Program:

> I was expecting much more for my children. Educationally, I expected much more, you think that Canada is so much more advanced, but in reality, it is worse here than in a third world country! Honestly, the problem we have is that our education is not recognized here. But ours is much better than what we have over here.

Negative School Climate in Accueil Program. School climate in the Accueil Program was a theme that included a range of immigrant reception and integration practices used by the school and assessed by the participants. The school climate for immigrant reception in Accueil included several elements: the intercultural norms, goals, and values of teachers used in the classroom; the Accueil pedagogy in relation to teaching French as a second language to IOC&Y; and intercultural communication between teachers, IOC&Y students, and their parents.

A positive school climate generally prevails when IOC&Y and their IRER parents feel safe, respected and appreciated. A welcoming school climate would involve a warm and friendly reception and inclusive Francization pedagogical practices that would make the IOC&Y and their parents feel accepted and respected for their diversity.

However, a negative school climate was a theme that captured the unfair treatment of immigrant students in Accueil schools and a lack of adequate channels or mechanisms to report the abusive treatment of children while at school.

School climate was described by the participants as a significant source of stress and disappointment, especially when seeing the suffering and maladjustment of their children due to unfair anti-immigrant attitudes, racist and discriminatory behaviours. According to all participants with children in Accueil Program, the program was unwelcoming of immigrants and hostile towards racially, ethnically, religiously diverse students.

> And now my daughter said, no, she wants to go back. Because she did not have a good environment for a teenager, a welcoming environment, and acceptable environment. With all of the things is reject, she is rejected because you are immigrant. Because you invite us! You wanted us. My ex-husband has paid 125.000 dollars ten years ago to be accepted in Canada. (Shiveh)

Unfair Treatment towards IOC&Y in Accueil Schools. The unfair treatment referred to bullying, intimidation, racist attitudes, discriminatory behaviours, offensive school-parent communication, and aggressions experienced by children while at school. All participants with children in Accueil discussed the anti-immigrant sentiments they or their children experienced first-hand. All participants acknowledged that all IOC&Y children should enjoy going to Accueil Program and should benefit from positive interactions without being punished, intimidated, threatened, hit, or yelled at.

Racism and Discrimination. All nine women interviewed who belong to visible ethnic and racial groups experienced multiple forms of discrimination during their interaction with the school system. The participants also felt concerned for their children while at school, mainly because they knew that some of the teachers, school personnel, and parents had prejudiced attitudes towards IOC&Y.

Bullying, intimidation, and discriminatory treatment of children by the teachers were also identified and grouped as critical incidents. Pepa whose daughter started preschool in Accueil was very surprised to witness one teacher screaming at the young children: “Well, I saw them screaming at the kids. I am not used to see that in the school! They were really strong against a five-years old child, and I think it was too much!”

Yoruba felt shocked to hear that an Accueil Program teacher who happened to be from her own country was hitting the children.

> My son told me that the teacher is hitting the children, pulling them by the ears, just like in my country. And he does that because children do not understand French, they cannot understand, and also because that’s how it used to do it back home. But here is Canada. I did not come all the way to have the same bad treatment we had back home.

In the light of such incidents, all participants pointed out a lack of effective channels to report abusive behaviours in schools.

The participants underlined that overt and covert bullying and intimidation could seriously impact children's mental health and wellbeing while depriving them of their fundamental rights to education. When teachers invalidated the negative experiences of their children concerning teachers' racist and discriminatory behaviours towards students, some of the mothers engaged in more extracurricular activities, volunteering at school, or trying to talk to the teacher on a regular basis, not just during parent-teacher meetings. The participants contested the notion that their children's experiences were not real experiences and paid close attention to what went on at school or how their children felt about the experiences they had during class time.

Shiveh for example, mentioned that teachers should be aware of the many challenges faced by IOC&Y:

> Why mistreat them? This should not be, because they are children! Immigrant children from other countries have many pressures on their shoulders because now they are in another environment, another country, with another language, other friends, other school, another school, everything is changed!

Intense Emotional Distress. In the opinion of several participants, teachers were underprepared or lacked the motivation to create a welcoming school climate for IOC&Y students in Accueil. Parent-school interactions became volatile and lacked mutual trust and respect. Parents perceived that the poor infrastructure of schools were linked to a lack of appreciation for their children, who had to go to overcrowded segregated schools lacking resources, a proper physical appearance, without basic politeness from the part of some of the teachers. There were issues about perceived educational injustice and a sense of helplessness when the mothers felt that their children were trapped in an education system that placed them at a disadvantage from the start. Several mothers mentioned that their children's transition into a new school and culture seemed to be marked by intense emotional

distress and tension. Witnessing the distress of their children created similar feelings in the mothers who could not distance themselves from the pain experienced by their children.

According to the participants, these negative experiences diminished the wellbeing of their children, who started to exhibit a lack of motivation to learn and who lost interest in attending school. Shiveh, Persheng, Eleonor, Huei-Ru, Charissa, Nevis, and Lin detailed the ongoing worries and prolonged distress in relation to negative experiences such as racism and discrimination of their children while at school.

Structural Barriers. After settling in Quebec, the majority of the participants mentioned structural barriers to successful integration. Eleven out of the twelve participants faced discrimination, sexism, racism, and linguicism while interacting with the school. According to Lin, her daughter experienced racism and discrimination in school:

> My daughter got discrimination against her by classmates. So, in the Welcome/Accueil class, she felt very well because all of the students were from different parts of the world, the whole world. However, in the regular program, I think there is severe discrimination because I did not believe in Canada; she first told me that others did not like her face and made fun of her. But I did not realize. I just thought, okay, she is a teenager. So now, she pays more attention to her face than to her school, and she wants surgery for her eyes to look like the other children.

Shiveh stated that generally, according to the daughter, her school was a hostile environment:

> But the last year and this year we had had bad experiences there no humanity behaviour for immigrants in Accueil. For us, the same with the Korean children, because she has many Korean friends at school. I can't find it. Everyday in the basement, with a boring French teacher, and harassment, and a racist man, the teacher… it is not important, religion is politics, I do not like it. Humanity is the first thing, first thing.

> I have friends Canadians, Quebecois, they speak French and English, both, sometimes they help my daughter and me. But I claim it from the educational system. Not from the people. But the education system is not good for us, does not have a good plan, not good programs, in our country we can say the strategy plan.

Negative Impact on Learning. The mothers explained in detail during the interviews how negative experiences had a profound negative effect on the family unit and on their children's adjustment, particularly because the children perceived school as a hostile, unhealthy learning environment in both Accueil and regular program. When their children refused to go to school or felt depressed, or lost interest in learning altogether, the mothers linked their children's responses to the inefficacy of intercultural education. According to the mothers, an unwelcoming immigrant reception culture fostered the unfair treatment and biased assessment of IOC&Y in Accueil schools. In addition, the lack of reporting mechanisms made them question the purpose of intercultural education, the impact of Accueil schooling experiences on educational outcomes, and the overall integration of IOC&Y in the receiving society.

Lack of Reporting Mechanisms in Accueil Schools. All incidents mentioned by the mothers remained unresolved or remained unreported because of fear of retaliation or lack of responsiveness from those in power. They mentioned that there are no complaint procedures to address the abuses of power produced within the school system. Several participants said that their written complaints to school administrators and to the Ministry of Education ended up being time-consuming but unsuccessful. Others mentioned intense frustration and anger due to their unsuccessful attempts to report abusive situations and practices within the school.

The lack of reporting mechanisms inflicted a fear of retaliation in some of the mothers who remained silent about what they perceived as being abuse in schools.

For example, Persheng mentioned how she tried to communicate that the Accueil teacher bullied her son:

> Because I am not sure, somebody said first go straight to the teacher and say to her, "Please stop this kind of manner towards my child!" If she does not stop, then go to the principal. But you know, I am afraid to do any action. If I would know my rights, yes, I could do something. But I do not have any information about what my and my son's rights are in this situation. How could I solve it? Where should I go? Because it was bothering the bullying of my child by the teacher, it was not normal behaviour! I did not have a lot of information. If I have some information, what should I do, what is my right, where is the start for this kind of problem. If you hit a car, if something happens, you call 911. But for these kinds of things? These things are also very emotional. There is no chance I could move my son to another Accueil Program or class; there is no other Accueil-school where I can put him. I feel stuck with him in a very hurtful situation that I cannot resolve. There is no other option! If I knew what should I do, I could start from where what is my right. You know, it will help us.

The lack of formal mechanisms to report, resolve and prevent racism and discrimination in schools contributed to a hostile school climate in which teachers and parents were at odds with each other. Charissa recounted how taking action was very difficult in situations when teachers are those that perpetuate injustice:

> I know from a friend who is Asian, and her husband is Latino. She was in the parent committee and went to meetings with the principal, the director, and the other people on the school board. So, they were saying bad things about Latino and Black people, not knowing that her husband is Latino. She is married to a Black Latino person, and she was furious about how the principal was making fun of people like her husband. She said that "I cannot go against all these people you know; they are all sharing the same views in

private at the expense of the children." So, we know that it exists, we are not ignorant, and that is how they also talk to me.

A lack of reporting mechanisms was also mentioned by participants in relation to grades, and unfair assessment by the teachers. In response, intensified school involvement started to be an additional stress factor that placed the responsibility for educational outcomes on the shoulders of the mother. All the mothers in the study described feeling very stressed because of a lack of private time. The mothers mentioned that they lacked time at home and their lives became dominated by school-related tasks. Time at home scheduled around homework and learning French created high stress in the children and their mothers who felt a sense of burn-out, a lack of joy and diminished wellbeing.

Consequently, the participants developed alternative strategies for challenging unfair attitudes and behaviours. Depending on one's resources, some of the informal strategies that the participants recounted during interviews included: active advocacy against unjust and abusive treatment; silent resistance against racism and discrimination; changing schools by moving their residence to another neighborhood; and raising awareness of structural barriers to a safe and welcoming Francization process in Accueil for IOC&Y.

Maternal Strategies. Maternal strategies were a theme that captured the actions taken by mothers to remediate the unfair treatment experienced by their children while attending school. Their strategies involved advocacy, resistance, formal and informal complaints, and even direct confrontations with teachers and principals. Keeping silent for some mothers who decided not to act was also a strategy to prevent the escalation of a conflict, or in response to inequitable power relations, when they perceived that the odds were stacked against their children. All mothers encountered many obstacles dealing with the school system, yet most of the strategies did not seem to have resolved the issues brought forth with principals and teachers.

Focus on Prevention. While school achievement was a top priority for most participants, the participants emphasized that a good education should foster their children's wellbeing and socio-emotional development. Eleonor, whose daughter was an excellent student but started to have difficulties while entering high school, underlined the importance of preventive measures involving psychosocial interventions for those who have difficulties adjusting to high-school. Other participants mentioned that school delays could be prevented if there was an interest in creating support systems for children with minor difficulties in some subjects. All the mothers with one exception advocated on behalf of their children, suggesting different strategies to the teachers and principals but without results. Eleonor suggested that school delays could have been avoided if the teachers would have signalled or told her before the grading of final examination that her daughter is at risk of failing the class. Similar concerns were expressed by Shiveh who wanted to understand how her daughter was assessed and why was she failed the French examination after previous grades and feedback from the French teacher indicated that she is progressing and had 80% in her French tests. The exception in this study was constituted by a white, single mother who was born in England, who had a Francophone boyfriend helping her interact with the school and with the teachers. Her daughters did not have issues integrating in the school and their language adaptation was happening in a regular class.

Over-Engagement at Home. As their children continued to lose their motivation to learn and go to school, most of the participants described how they had no other choice but to invest all of their "free" time, energy, and limited financial resources in French tutoring, extra homework, and communication with the school. They felt that their children would not attend school without their continuous efforts, and that otherwise their children's educational outcomes would be failure. Overall, the engagement of the participants in homeschooling became a compensatory strategy for inefficient teaching. Therefore, the mothers tried to

counteract school refusal, school disengagement, and the mental health issues of their children with extra resources. These circumstances were described as unfair and exhausting, creating unnecessary stress for the mothers and the children. Charissa explained how having three school-age children made the morning routine a difficult task at times, especially in the winter. While she had to prepare the two daughters, her son would refuse to dress up and go to school, and therefore, she was sometimes unable to get the children at school on time. One of her two daughters would be penalized by the teacher when she arrived to school late. Charissa strongly disagreed with the manner in which the school would punish the children ofsingle mother families.

Extra Time and Resources for French. Another compensatory strategy mentioned by all mothers was the provision of additional support in French. For example, some mentioned that their children received low grades in both written assignments and oral presentations, which impacted on their self-efficacy and ability to advance in the next grade. Mothers perceived the Accueil teachers as lacking basic pedagogical competencies. When teachers used French to teach French as a second or third language to multilingual and multicultural IOC&Y immigrant student body, then, from their perspectives, the teachers did not provide any transitional staging for the learning of a new language. Moreover, the mothers perceived that the social aspect of integration was lacking and Accueil focused exclusively on linguistic issues.

For the mothers, Accueil was perceived as a way of blocking IOC&Y from advancing in school at the same rate as the non-immigrant students of the same age. According to the mothers, the children were penalized for being born in another country and the parents were punished for having had the courage to emigrate. Consequently, the mothers had to try to minimize the impact of educational malpractice on the educational trajectories of their children.

In response, the mothers' efforts involved financial sacrifices to hire French tutors or investing significant amounts of time towards helping their children to adjust to the cultural norms of interculturalism required by schools.

Lin was worried that her son would have significant learning delays because of his difficulties in French in Accueil. While attending her Francization courses full-time, she felt very guilty for not having the appropriate resources for extra hours in French. Lin mentioned that it might take her years before she could get a job and afford a private tutor. For Lin and her son, the future in Quebec did not look promising at all.

Dealing with Intersecting Penalties. Dalal's story illustrates many of the maternal strategies used by other participants (Shiveh, Persheng, Huei Rei, Youruba, and Eleonor) who struggled with the mental health issues experienced by their children due to teacher- student interactions while at school. As a single mother in a post-migration context, Dalal is one of the twelve women interviewed who had to counteract systemic barriers such as bullying of her son in a school with inadequate resources. Although employed at a bank, she felt that her resources were insufficient (time, money for child psychologist and moving to another neighborhood). As a full-time employee and a full-time single mother parenting alone in Montreal with no family other than her son, she felt overwhelmed by the impact schooling had on her young son. Dalal mentioned that her 7-year-old son was frequently bullied while attending the neighbourhood's public school in a low-income area on Montreal Island. Until she could relocate to another neighbourhood and access a safer school, the participant mentioned that she and her son felt stuck and scared for the entire school year. Although the school administrators were very understanding and supportive of the mother and the child, they could not find a solution to prevent the bullying behaviour within the school. It seemed that throughout the school year, she employed three main strategies: advocating (without results) for a safer school climate that benefits not only her son but the entire student body;

(mal)adapting to an unsafe school climate which only caused more pain and uncertainty for the child who felt scared to go to school. When this situation impacted on her son's mental health, who became more anxious and developed a severe resistance to going to school, Dalal's last strategy was to resist the circumstances she could not change.

Finding a New School. Finding a different school was a concern mentioned by all participants with one exception. Due to the lack of effective interventions, Dalal mentioned that she had no alternative but to enroll her child in "a new school, a better school in a good neighbourhood, where he can use the bathroom without being bullied." Finding a new school was mentioned as the only viable alternative that most single mothers in this study could not afford because it involved relocation and the expenditure of financial resources such extra time and energy, moving fees, expensive rent for a smaller apartment, lack of savings and an augmented anxiety at the thought of losing employment.

Communication Barriers. Communication barriers referred to the inability of the school to adequately inform parents and children about the purpose, the rules and the procedures governing the Accueil program system itself. The first set of barriers encountered was concerning the enforcement of a French-only policy and the prohibition of speaking English or any other language. Although it is common knowledge that French is the official language in Quebec, the participants were shocked to find out that in Quebec, education for immigrants is not bilingual and that immigrant children are not allowed to talk to each other in any language other than French at school. Moreover, in the participants' views, communication differences were handled by the school in an ineffective manner, particularly when the requirement was that newly arrived parents who do not understand French must bring a translator with them to school while interacting with teachers, school principals or other employees involved in the school's administration.

Lack of Transparency. Consequently, the participants considered that the application of language rules in the Accueil Program ignored the realities of newly arrived immigrants and placed their children at a disadvantage. Furthermore, in the view of the participants they were not given appropriate information about the process of Francization. Examples included a lack of information about the initial criteria for grouping IOC&Y in various levels within the Accueil program and a lack of transparency regarding the criteria for advancing IOC&Y from one level of French to another in Accueil classes. This created conflicts between parents whose children received good grades during the year and some of the teachers who failed them. Several participants mentioned that they were not able to predict advancement even if their children received good grades.

The decisions taken by the teachers were unclear to parents and communicated in ways that they could not understand. For example, Yoruba mentioned that although her son attended elementary school for a year, she did not know his level or grade. Yoruba thought that her son should be already attending high school, but she struggled with understanding the consequences of such an educational delay: “Honestly, I do not know in what grade he is in. They only give us the level in French, like Niveaux Trois, or level three. Because I do not understand French, the teachers do not want to speak with me in English at school, so I do not understand what he has to do further, and he does not understand either.”

Lack of Translation Services. Even for those mothers with prior knowledge of French, parent-school communication was challenging in a unilingual environment that lacked translation services or access to multilingual information. While teachers and school staff refused to communicate with parents in English, the participants expressed difficulties accessing translation support during class meetings or one-on-one consultations with teachers. Most of the participants felt that non-existent communication support systems created barriers to parent-school interaction and to student success. For example, Shiveh

mentioned that a teacher refused to speak with her in English during a meeting with the parents whose children were enrolled in the Accueil Program. She recounted the humiliation she experienced when the teacher showed her the door in front of all the other parents and refused to communicate with her. Given her sustained efforts to learn and practice French, Shiveh mentioned that communication barriers should be met by the Accueil Program teachers with more understanding: "Give me time, I am new here, I do not know French very well, but I am trying my best."

The second concern was related to what participants perceived as unclear evaluation criteria and rules applied by teachers to assess their children' graduation from the Accueil program and entrance into a regular program. In a French-only environment Having difficulties accessing relevant information about the school system left participants confused about the purpose of the Accueil program. In the view of the participants, the schools had unclear or unfair discretionary procedures for evaluating students' progress in French. Moreover, they found that teachers did not want to disclose the assessment criteria for the successful transition from Accueil to a regular program. Shiveh recounted how she could not understand the evaluation criteria and felt that her daughter was not fairly assessed:

> I wrote a letter to the teacher, saying, I am sorry I do not know why my daughter has to stay in Accueil Program. You said to me that my daughter was doing well, and you compared, you showed me a schedule that compared all of the students, and my daughter was among the five students in your class that got 80% in the class. And then I went to the director, and she said that is the teacher that decides everything.

Overall, the participants found that the disciplinary measures regarding language inhibited learning and created a hostile school environment. In particular, the Accueil Program experience seemed to be marked by tensions around language barriers and value differences. In addition, some incidents between students and teachers resulted in conflicts between

parents and teachers. Without proper mechanisms to understand each other's needs and constraints, the interaction became unpredictable, and the learning environment was not conducive to developing relationships based on mutual trust and respect.

Educational Disadvantage. Having access to fair educational outcomes meant that IOC&Y could access well-funded schools and benefit from learning resources, varied and stimulating learning experiences, transparent assessment methods, and timely feedback from teachers. As a theme in this study, Educational Disadvantage referred to the Accueil Program's detrimental impact on the participants and their children. It included two subthemes: pedagogical failure and school segregation. Educational disadvantage was a theme mentioned by all participants that had children in the Accueil Program. Participants described the Accueil Program as "being broken and inefficient" and they believed that the segregation of children into that program instead of the regular program, coupled with inadequate instruction methods, resulted in educational delays and school disengagement. They believed that these limitations placed their children at a significant educational disadvantage while hindering their successful integration into Quebec society.

Pedagogical Failure. The participants explained the notion of the educational disadvantage of IOC&Y as systemic and pedagogical failures. From the participant's perspectives, adding to this situation was a lack of expertise in intercultural competencies, an inability to engage in effective communication with a diverse student body and poor abilities to teach French as a second language in Accueil Program. In addition, the participants mentioned educational disadvantage as a consequence of school segregation, which is constituted by the physical separation of IOC&Y children in different buildings, with poor infrastructure where the Accueil Program was taught separately and away from where native children study. While Yoruba thought that "the education in the Accueil Program is worse than in a third world country," Huei Ru remarked that the education system in Quebec was

very similar to the Chinese schooling where everything was imposed on children. There was no acknowledgement of diverse learning needs.

***School Segregation*.** School segregation involved the separation of newly arrived IOC&Y in separate buildings and classes. The separation was perceived as cultural isolation of immigrants who could not interact with other children from the regular program. This separation was enforced during lunchtime, during free time in the schoolyard, and while attending after-school activities. The participants were also very dissatisfied with the poor infrastructure in the schools and the lack of resources allocated to Accueil Programs. In addition, there were no school personnel who could respond to the questions and inquiries of parents about the Accueil system. Based on their personal experience in interacting with the Accueil system, Persheng, Shiveh, and Huei Ru, shared their perceptions and subjective interpretations of the situations. They identified that providing a limited curriculum and separating immigrant children for educational purposes as an inefficient educational strategy.

The participants perceived that the Acceuil system lacked an inclusive school climate. Teachers who demonstrated intolerance in class towards other cultures and languages also manifested a top-down approach to parent-school interaction. Based on the perceptions of the participants, the teachers imposed communication procedures that were considered too strict and unaccommodating of the children's needs. Therefore, based on multiple negative experiences, the participants expressed doubts about the purpose of immigrant education and thought that the school system had brought the dominant culture into the classroom and imposed it on immigrant children. This resulted in children's maladjustment. Shiveh described this separation as an inappropriate way to treat children who have become increasingly isolated:

> We are talking about children, children, not adults! This separation is not suitable for them. She was going into depression. My daughter, yes, I can diagnose her because I have

> a Master's degree in health, I can recognize it. My daughter was going into a depression because of these: only the French teacher, the mathematics teacher, and not a happy environment. It is a dying environment, depressed.

Educational Delays. Educational delays refer to the result of inadequate pedagogy that led to keeping students in Francization for longer than six months, or much longer than one academic year. In relation to the inadequate teaching and learning methods, some of the participants mentioned that there was a lack of accountability on the part of the teachers regarding the educational delays of children enrolled in Accueil classes.

In contrast, others believed that the system was inefficient because it focused only on French and lacked qualified teachers who knew how to teach French as a second language. Several participants, such as Perhseng, Shiveh, and Huei-Ru, mentioned that their children did not progress properly in French and lost interest in learning. Huei Ru mentioned that the pedagogical approach used in Accueil to teach French as a second language to children and youth was not adequate for her son. Huei Ru stated that, “The teacher is using French to teach French, and he does not understand anything. Before, I had lots of expectations and hopes, but now, I have many worries." Shiveh mentioned that she had to pay for additional tutoring in French because "my daughter is learning nothing in school.”

Moreover, participants said that teachers' low expectations and inefficient methods might have had long-lasting negative impacts on their children's academic achievement. For example, Huei-Ru stated, "He is too advanced for mathematics and not doing well in French. He is trying but has no improvement. I study with him, but he is very slow to learn the language for a 14-year-old." All the other participants with children in Accueil shared similar observations and experiences of intense dissatisfaction with the Accueil system.

Low Motivation to Learn. Huei Ru, Shiveh, and Lin, who had high school-aged children, described how their children lost motivation for learning. School failure was attributed to

inadequate instruction, a curriculum that is uninterested in their children and a school culture that does not recognize cultural differences. Huei Ru stated that she felt stuck since she had no other option but to let her child attend a school where he received poor instruction:

> They are ok in primary school as teachers. I heard good things, but now, there is no good education in his high school. I cannot change his school; I cannot transfer him to another class. I do not like that I have no other options!

While learning French took up the majority of the school day, participants reported that their children became bored with the lack of variety and consequently, they disengaged from learning altogether. Children were retained in the Francization program sometimes for years until they demonstrated an improved level of French. A telling example was provided by Lin, whose teenage daughter was in an Accueil program for two academic years instead of one. Her mother did not understand how the Accueil system functioned, and she did not realize that upon transitioning into the regular program, her daughter would be two grades behind those of her age.

Negative Learning Experiences. Even the participants whose children transitioned from Accueil into the regular program without delays and within one academic year thought that Accueil was not an effective program for immigrant education. The participants were very dissatisfied that IOC&Y attending Accueil are penalized by not having access to the whole curriculum. In addition, they are not interacting with children their own age because groupings are based on French ability, and they are not allowed to learn or speak any other foreign languages. In some cases, the participants reported that children felt marginalized, depressed, isolated from mainstream society. Without a good improvement in their mastery of French, students showed a drastic decline in school engagement and even refused to go to school.

Falling Behind Right from the Beginning. Some of the participants complained that their children fell behind in terms of their knowledge when compared to children of the same age attending school in their countries of origin or in other parts of Canada. A primary concern was that newly arrived IOC&Y had fewer educational opportunities than their peers enrolled in regular programs. As the Accueil program is a deviation from the standard curriculum participants felt it was already an educational penalty when compared themselves with other newcomers outside of the province whose children could advance in all subjects. Shiveh stated that:

> All regular program students can go to the laboratory, study science, play instruments, and do many things. But in Accueil, nothing like that. Just French literature and mathematics. There is a very dying, yes, dying environment because the children are naturally very energetic, full of life, and they want to learn different things.

Some participants from low-income neighbourhoods mentioned that their children started school in Quebec even at a more significant disadvantage. The schools in their neighbourhoods had high dropout rates or poor infrastructure factors that negatively impacted the children's educational performance. These participants believed that their children were at even a more significant disadvantage in Acceuil schools with a low ranking and high poverty index than other children enrolled in well-performing French-language public schools, private schools, or English public-school systems. These views were vital because they understood the ranking system and experienced it first-hand. Arpi mentioned:

> For example, some schools are considered high in terms of security, exams passed, etc. We figured out that the school in my area was not good at the time. They finally closed the school down for renovations; apparently, it was very, very bad. The new school they gave us is 15 minutes by car. I do not understand, we have an English school down the road, but we are not allowed to put him over there. I still find the education in the English school

> board is much better. With English, he would have more options in the future. I do not understand why don't we have a choice? It makes me so angry! Why don't they research to see what works better for the immigrants?

School Refusal and School Disengagement. Conversely, school disengagement captured a lack of desire to learn and refusal to go to and attend classes in the Accueil Program.

In participants' views, school disengagement was linked to a lack of stimulation during class time and negative attitudes from the teacher and other students. In most cases of disengagement, the parents reported that their children showed a drastic decline in motivation for continuing their studies. Five of the participants had five children attending Accueil Program who refused to go back to school. One of the five children refused to go to school for three months while others refused to attend school for shorter periods of time. Three of these five children attended high school and expressed a strong desire to return to their countries of origin. Although the boys met many of the challenges, girls and teenage daughters of single mothers seemed to be most affected by the school climate and weak interactions with the male authority figures such as teachers and principals.

Lin remembered when her teenage daughter refused to go to school for three months. She mentioned that the overall wellbeing of her daughter deteriorated, and she felt unable to help her. For this participant and her daughter, Accueil was "the most difficult time for me, and I think it was in the recent years, just that period my daughter quit school. I got desperate." She mentioned that her daughter refused to attend the regular program due to bullying and racist attitudes from her schoolmates:

> In China, she was a top student, but here she quit the school for several months. She didn't want to go to school for three months, and she only stayed inside the house. She did not want to go out anywhere. So, I tried my best to encourage her to go back to school. She no longer liked her face because other students laughed at her and made fun of her eyes all

> the time. She tried to make her face look different, and more like the regular program kids that have big round eyes and smaller-shaped face. I did not realize how bad it was. Also, when I went with her to school, I noticed that she was really afraid of two boys. I told the principals, but they did not do anything.

For other participants such as Persheng, Yoruba, Huei-Ru, and Dalal, the Accueil Program also caused unforeseen adversities. Seeing their children distressed, depressed, and losing motivation in learning, caused significant stress for the participants who tried to help but did not always know how to stop the hurting of their children nor how to resolve the causes. From the perspective of the participants, school refusal and disengagement were alarming signals that, for their children, the Accueil schools were unwelcoming causing them maladjustment in unforeseen ways.

Post-Migration Experiences in Regular Program

Regular programs are those in which Allophone students learn all subjects and are allowed to attend classes with students born in Quebec. Nine of the participants interviewed had children in the regular school program. The post-migration experiences regarding education in regular programs (see Table 6) included one typical theme, IOC&Y Educational Disadvantage, and three general themes: School Refusal and Disengagement, Low Expectations from Teachers, Limited Access to Services, and Educational Disadvantage. These themes are analyzed below, with supportive quotes gathered from the interview data.

School Refusal and School Disengagement

As seen in the theme related to the Acceuil program, the issue of school refusal and disengagement persisted even when the children moved into the regular program. All the participants with children enrolled in regular high schools, mentioned student disengagement as being the main challenge for their children. The mothers felt concerned because they felt they had lost the influence they used to have when the children were younger. According to

the mothers, school refusal and disengagement was not mentioned as a significant issue for those with children in regular primary schools. However, school refusal behaviour mentioned by four participants was a significant issue for their children enrolled in secondary programs.

The participants expressed dissatisfaction with what they considered to be the low quality of instruction in school. They mentioned that negative views towards immigrant children and their parents might also contribute to school disengagement of IOC&Y. Eleonor said that when her teenage daughter lost motivation in learning, she was transferred without notice to another school where she was placed one grade down. After passing the entry exams, the daughter underperformed, and she was transferred to another high school where she lost interest in learning and repeated one academic year. When her daughter turned sixteen years old, Eleonor transferred her daughter from the French-language public system into the adult education program offered by the English-language public school system. In this new program, her daughter felt better about school, accelerated her learning, and completed two academic years in one.

Eleonor mentioned that her daughter managed to graduate from high school without delays and at the same time as her friends. This was the sign of a wonderful academic recovery and a great sign of resilience. Eleonor reflected on her daughter's progress and linked her academic performance to a positive school climate: “How come one school system managed to pick up the same child, motivate her, make her an excellent student, boost her self-esteem, and the other system made her feel like an outsider?”

Lack of transparency regarding assessment criteria and insufficient resources allocated to urban schools were other factors that, according to the participants, led to the disengagement and academic failure of their children attending a regular school. Safety issues were mainly mentioned concerning bullying but also concerning racism and discrimination. The participants did not know how to counteract the school disengagement and school refusal

behaviour of their children. Lin mentioned that her daughter refused to go to school because of the bullying she experienced. Nevis, Dalal, and Charissa mentioned that their children were exhausted when they arrived home after a long day of school and that it was challenging to have them sit down and do their homework. For those parents whose children refused to go to school, there are drastic repercussions such as placement of the child in the youth protection system. As a result, according to Eleonor (who also works with families in need of alternative interventions), immigrant parents are leaving the province:

> They are packing; they are going away because they do not want the institution to come and take their kid away when they refuse to go to school. But there is no other solution to help the child when it does not work for the child. How is that?

In order to prevent school disengagement or school refusal behaviours, some participants mentioned that, when possible, teachers should have tried to adapt their teaching methods to the needs of the students. For example, Huei-Ru noticed that the schools in Quebec have the same rigid methods and school requirements her son faced in China. She observed that teaching in Quebec seemed similar with the one they had in China. She perceived teachers are too strict in the application of requirements and in her opinion, this might have led to school disengagement of her son:

> Every child has his advantage or shortcoming. Teachers should help the individual student to overcome the shortcoming. Nevertheless, here, they teach every student the same way. It is the same teaching style as back home; it does not help him much.

The participants suggested that the education system as a whole, including teachers should be held accountable for the school disengagement of immigrant children. In the opinion of a few participants, teachers should be more proactive in creating a positive learning environment.

Push for Medication. This subtheme captured the teachers' advice to provide medication to children who did not perform well on tests or could not focus well enough during class time. More specifically, teachers blamed either the child or the mother for student disengagement while at school. In addition, this theme captured a lack of preventive or alternative pedagogical methods employed during class time.

Participants thought that the school as a system lacked preventive measures and teachers did not show an interest in creating adequate classroom interventions. Some teachers recommended medication to the mothers whose children became impatient during class time or showed a lack of interest in learning activities. The participants mentioned that their children complained at home that schooling was often dull, or the teaching methods used by teachers were rigid and intolerant.

Nevis recounted how she resisted the teacher's opinion that her son might have attention deficit disorder. She rejected the teacher's assessment of her son and refused to believe that medication would have increased school engagement:

> They told me I should check him for attention deficit disorder, and they recommended seeing a specialist. I told them that he was fine, he did not have any deficit, and I did not want him to be medicated. So, I did not sign anything, but one time someone came to school without my consent and assessed him. After that, they said, “Your son is very articulate, very intelligent, he is very aware of his surroundings, and he does not have any issues.”

Nevis was very concerned that from her perspective, her son's liveliness, curiosity and need for connection were wrongly assessed by the teacher as a disorder that needed medication. In her view, the teachers and the school failed to see her son's gifts, the impact of the collectivist culture he was brought up in, and his amicable, open personality.

Eleonor had a similar concern about medicating her teenage daughter after the learning specialist could not diagnose her with any disorders. From the perspective of this mother, the school lacked prevention mechanisms that could help immigrant children to remain interested in school:

> And until this moment, I have heard many, many people from my community complaining that teachers are telling them that 'maybe your children have attention deficit disorder'. How come? Ninety-five percent of the immigrant people that I know have children with attention deficit disorder? Also, I was, oh, my gosh, all our children have deficit? Honestly, I was questioning this type of diagnosis, but everybody at school was pushing for medication without trying any other alternatives. For my daughter, because she did not have a diagnosis, I did not give her medication. Medication cannot be the only solution. Meanwhile, I started studying to understand the challenges, to form my philosophy. To understand that there are many ways to treat it and medication is just a piece of many factors, there should be other strategies, including prevention.

Deficit Views of Students. This theme included the quality of teaching strategies used with IOC&Y, repeated negative feedback to students and their parents, and disciplinary measures. All mothers with children enrolled in regular schools expressed that generally teachers had elevated expectations in French, but they appeared indifferent to results in other subjects where a mediocre performance was considered “good.” Overall, the participants thought that the public system in Montreal provided mediocre instruction, and it was meant to "keep their children in the middle" or to work in low-paying jobs. As Persheng recounted, "At the regular school education is ok, not bad, but it is not sufficient. It prepares them to be in the middle, like to get a job at McDonald's or something."

Negative Communication or Feedback. Some of the mothers expressed an overall dissatisfaction with the teachers' communication style who preferred writing about negative

feedback. From their experiences, parent-school interaction was only about problematic behaviours or low grades, which led mothers to lose confidence in what they perceived as the differential treatment shown by the teachers to the non-immigrant children. Eleonor stated that:

> Good communication with the school is an expectation. However, I see that all Quebecois parents have more informal exchanges with the teachers, but for all of us immigrants, it is more formalized, all communication in writing, at all times. The Quebecois parents would stop by; they would say, hi, hello, how was my son doing today? But for us immigrants, there is no communication unless the kid has problems and is crushing.

The teachers' attitudes significantly impacted negatively on both the mother and the child, particularly those single mothers with no other family ties in Canada. For example, Nevis recounted how the feedback from teachers discouraged her and made her feel that she did not meet the standards and expectations of the school:

> Every time I got a note, it was that he did something negative. I never received a note saying today that your son was doing excellent. So, it was all negative, and I would read them and say, “this is not my son!” Finally, I went to school and said, “Not sure what you do with him here, but my son is not like that. I do not recognize him in these notes.” Each time I would see the note, I felt like such a failure, it was terrible, but I stood my ground. I started telling the teacher that they needed to encourage him to be different from him because he is a very good kid and smart.

Low Expectations from Teachers. Low academic achievement and underperformance of IOC&Y was linked to the low expectations of the teachers. In contrast with the Accueil Program, the parents perceived the regular school as more favourable to the education of IOC&Y. Although the regular school system was overall better providing the full range of subjects, the participants still thought that the curriculum and the teaching practices were

outdated. Mothers thought that the teachers' low expectations of children were perceived in the classroom which led to them internalizing these views and losing interest in doing better than expected of them.

Although non-migrant parents might share similar views, the perceptions of the participants contradicted their pre-migration expectations of good schooling is in an advanced democracy, like Canada. Others thought that the teachers would focus more on learning and academic achievement in a regular school rather than the provision of negative feedback and the management of behaviour. Eleonor expressed dissatisfaction with what she perceived as the low expectations from the teachers and school personnel:

> It was the school system that was crushing her. That was my analysis. Because the system was trying to convince us that our culture and we, as a family, are a big problem for her. But then we changed school and a lot of things changed for her.

The mothers interpreted the low expectations from teachers as a sign that their children's academic future was already assessed as being unpromising because they were born into IRER families. Under this premise, the mothers perceived that the teachers' high expectations were reserved (perhaps unintentionally), for those students who were not IOC&Y. When a child from a single mother family has no other authority figures or lacks a paternal figure, it was understood by the participants that positive regard from the teachers could contribute to positive child development, improved self-esteem, and increased motivation for learning. Low expectations reinforced a deficit view of IOC&Y and their parents who in turn, lost their trust in the education system as a means for achieving upward socio-economic mobility. Most participants also mentioned that the school system did not prepare their children for a competitive job market or for acceptance into a good university program. However, with the globalization of the workforce, the mothers thought that their children might be at greater disadvantage if they wanted to return to their countries of origin.

Limited Access to School Services

School services refer to additional resources, activities or assistance needed by students and their parents. It included school bus transportation, lunch programs, after-school programs, parenting workshops, and extracurricular activities. Nine of the participants mentioned that the inadequate access of their children to school programs or services was a source of stress that created disadvantages for them as immigrant single-mother families who were new to Quebec. Limited access to school bussing, the high cost of uniforms, and inadequate access to critical information were some of the difficulties encountered by the participants and their children. Several mothers mentioned that extra help in French was available in good schools but that in the immigrant schools, the parents were expected to find private tutors or learn French along with their children so they could help them. Several participants mentioned that they were not allowed to bring their children with them when attended meetings with the children. As single mothers with no other family ties in Canada, they had to pay a babysitter for several hours.

Yoruba, Pepa, Perhseng, and Arpi mentioned severe difficulties in relation to school access caused by inadequate transportation to and from school. Some participants mentioned that long distances to school were problematic, especially for young children or children new to Quebec who did not know French and could easily get lost in an unfamiliar setting, especially in the winter when the daylight hours are shorter. The participants mentioned that arriving to pick up their children from school around 3:30 PM was problematic. Some of the working mothers would not afford the after-school programs, nor did they have access to school bus services. Limited access to afterschool programs because of financial burdens was an issue for all the mothers that had several young children.

Unreliable and Taxing Communication Channels. Similar to the issues experienced in the Accueil system, the mothers perceived that language barriers remained an issue during

parent-school interactions. The participants had difficulties helping their children when they could not understand the written materials about school activities, the learning requirements such as homework, and other pertinent information regarding their children's health. Google translation was mentioned as a necessity, but according to some of the mothers, it was time-consuming and a highly unreliable resource. Moreover, for those with only a basic grasp of spoken French, responding to written notes was another challenge, especially when the communication involved a situation that required a complex response to the issues raised by the teachers.

Shiveh, Huei Ru, Perheng, Charissa, and Pepa mentioned that access to information in multiple languages, including English, would benefit their children tremendously because parents would then be capable of providing help that was better, more efficient and more timely. Moreover, an important observation was that the provision of valuable and timely information to parents of immigrant children should be seen by school personnel as an educational basic service. The participants perceived that some of the interactions were meant to promote Francization and parents were treated in a condescend manner, as immigrants who are learning French and not as adults with parental authority, life experience and expertise in childrearing and education. In the views of the participants requiring translators to communicate with schools was not a productive strategy, mainly because it was disempowering for the participants who were unable to meet these criteria for parent-school interaction.

Pepa underlined the importance of good educational services such as school-related communication between school and parents: "Crucial information like health and food, books, materials, they should give it to you so you can understand in your language or English. Is not like I will not learn French because of that." Without a proper communication system, each mother had to find ways of compensating for the lack of services. As a result,

both the mothers and their children experienced more communication barriers to intercultural integration.

Educational Disadvantage

According to the participants, educational disadvantage persisted not only in Accueil but also in the regular program. As an overarching theme in this study, it captured the participants' experiences in interacting with low-performing public schools, and the detrimental impact that schools with limited resources had on the educational outcomes of IOC&Y from single-mother families. Mothers perceived that the negative impact on their children could have been avoided if the teachers had better intercultural competencies and were better trained in dealing with a diverse student body:

> Unfortunately, his teacher was teasing the children, especially those who came from Iran. She started teasing the children, laughing at them. For example, when he was drawing she made jokes she was teasing him why you did not bring this kind of materials. But we did not know to buy those kinds. But she resisted, she persisted. My son came home. Lots of things. He did not want to continue he did not want to go to school. (Persheng).

In addition, the participants interpreted many situations as tense because of what participants believed as the unnecessarily strict application of school rules, language laws, and disciplinary measures. As a result, many critical incidents negatively impacted their children in ways that could be avoided by simply being more respectful and inclusive.

Attending Poorly Ranked Schools. A predominant view of the participants was that their children did not benefit from a fair public education system in Montreal's French-language public schools. The quality of education varied, and it was determined by the formal ranking of the public school system as explained in the Introduction chapter of this dissertation. For example, improving life outcomes is linked to the graduation rate and entry of well-ranked

programs at a good university such as McGill for English-speaking students or Universite de Montreal for French-speaking students: “I found it hard you know, to be a doctor, a dentist a lawyer, you know, have a good job. I think it’s very competitive. But I don't know if he would he be successful or not. I am not sure what he has to do in the future to be accepted in a good university”.

For the participants in this study, settling in a low-income neighbourhood meant that their children did not have or had limited access to full educational opportunities. Some of the participants mentioned that schools in their neighbourhood were in poor condition and lacked the primary resources required for the excellent functioning of the school.

> We read in Canada press (publication) we found out all these info about the ranking of the schools. For example, some schools are considered high, in terms of security, exams pass, etc. We figured out that the school in my area was not good at the time. They finally close the school down for renovations, apparently, it was very, very bad. (Arpi)

No Access to Well-Ranked Public Schools. In their opinion, an excellent public school was a well-ranked school where children achieve academic success and benefit from proper infrastructure, good teachers, and a positive learning environment. However, for most immigrant single mothers interviewed, these good schools were out of their reach because they were in Montreal's wealthy neighbourhoods. Even for those with stable employment, access to well-performing schools for their children was not something they could afford. Arpi explained that she did not know about the ranking of schools before she emigrated:

> I read all about the ranking of the schools after we arrived here. For example, some schools in wealthy neighbourhoods are assessed as superior in school climate, educational resources, graduation rates, etc. So, yes, I figured out that the school in my area was not good at all because it had a poor ranking compared to other public schools in Montreal.

Lack of Mutual Respect. Most mothers believed that politeness and mutual respect should be at the core of all interactions with both teachers and children. Charissa mentioned that her interactions with the school were most unpleasant, and she found that the teachers were condescending:

> I do not get the please, or "I am sorry we cannot do that for you" or the kind or calm voice. I do not get that basic politeness that we are all accustomed to in this society; that is normal. I do not get that respect at all. I see that they have the capacity to be polite. I see how teachers do that with other parents at school, but when they talk to me, they do not.

Nevis mentioned that feedback was not used constructively by teachers but was, in fact, a way of communicating a negative view of herself as a mother and of her son. Charissa substantiated that "It is like these are the rules, you have to follow them, and if not, tough cookies for you. It does not feel like we are in the same team, that we want what is best for the child.

Overview

Overall, the transition of IOC&Y and their mothers to a new culture seemed to be marked by compounded tensions around language barriers and value differences in education. Some incidents between IOC&Y students and teachers resulted in conflicts between parents and teachers. Without proper mechanisms to promote understanding of educational needs and constraints, parent-school interaction became volatile, lacking mutual trust and respect and creating an adverse school climate that did not promote learning. According to the mothers, a hostile school environment was not conducive to productive parent-school interactions. Overall, all participants in this study perceived the application of language policies in the Accueil program either as unfair or too strict for children and parents with limited knowledge of French. Such a requirement imposed on parents by the schools demonstrates a severe deficiency in the public educational services for IOC&Y. While teachers and administrative

support staff in schools would refuse to communicate with parents in English, the participants expressed having significant difficulties accessing additional language and translation supports. Most of the participants felt that an adverse school climate and inexistent support for communication existed and created additional challenges and barriers for the parents, who most often felt unprepared and helpless.

In the views of the participants, communication differences were handled by the school in an ineffective manner, reinforcing a deficit view of immigrants. Race, gender, religion, and the use of English were the subject of highly charged tensions between parents and schools. Critical incidents that were recounted that revealed micro-aggressions, insults, and overt discrimination towards women and their school-aged children. The participants perceived that an adverse school climate and conflict with male authority figures such as teachers and school principals were as having a drastic impact on their girls and teenage daughters. One mother mentioned that her daughter experienced depression, while another daughter refused to go to school for three months, and both women became concerned with the suicidal ideation of their daughters.

Overall, mothering school children alone in a post-migration context was more challenging than initially expected by the participants in the study. The racialized women in the study experienced discrimination based on their race, ethnicity, gender, and use of language, while grappling with the combined effects of linguicism, racism, and Islamophobia. The participants thought critically about the impact schooling had on their children.

The mothers argued that schools teaching IOC&Y should demonstrate values of inclusiveness, mutual respect, social justice, and educational equity. They empowered their children by challenging the requirements of schools that ignored and denied the diverse needs of IOC&Y. Moreover, some of the mothers asserted their prior knowledge, experiences of

educating at home their children, and the visions of a 21st Century education system when interacting with the school. By advocating on behalf of their children who experienced a difficult time adjusting to a new culture and education system, they also demonstrated feminist ideals in relation to multilingual pedagogy.

In conclusion, as it will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter, the findings of this study demonstrated the need for a positive learning climate in schools where respect for children's developmental needs and protection of their rights must lead to improved quality of education and educational outcomes. In order to actively promote educational equity, the school system should acknowledge the obvious contradictions mentioned in policy discourses of interculturalism and devastating injustices that take place within the walls of schools. The gaps between what is said and what is actually done represents the focus of the Discussion chapter.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter presents an interdisciplinary discussion of the findings. It reflects the complexity of the participants' experiences and adds unique contributions to the theoretical and empirical studies conducted in a post-migration context with single mother families in Quebec. Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1976, 1979, 1986) socio-ecological perspective on human development was used to map the experiences of single immigrant mothers by levels of the educational ecosystem in which families and schools experience communications failures leading to poor educational outcomes of the immigrant children. The intersectional perspective (Collins, 2009, 2015; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991) was used to explain the structural power and contextual factors that led to diverse forms of inequalities experienced by IRER single mothers across the ecosystem.

The first section provides an explanatory background including an overview of critical incidents and their significance in a context that led to the intersecting penalties for the participants and their children. The interactions between multilingual families and school microsystems are discussed in the second section along with the impact these might have on the developmental and educational trajectories of Allophone IOC&Y in Quebec. While the third section places the overarching themes of the study across Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem, an analysis of these themes from an intersectional perspective is covered by section four. The main insights resulting from this study and the implications they have on theory, research and practice are covered in fifth and sixth sections. The seven and last part of this study identifies several boundaries of this inquiry.

Explanatory Background

As the findings chapter captured and amplified the participants' voices by bringing forth their experiences it also underlined the urgency for a more equitable school system. Given the current tensions and structural power dynamics impacting education in Quebec, the concerns

of those who challenged "the status quo of schooling and society where inequality is taken for granted" (Donmoyer, 2001, p. 194) remain unresolved. Based on the findings of this study, critical incidents reveal both structural and contextual factors that negatively impact the educational outcomes of immigrant children in the French public schools of Montreal.

Critical Incidents

All participants in this study with one exception encountered critical incidents involving the school system. While occurrences are given significance by those involved, they do not have to be monumental; they are relatively minor or mundane happenings that could take place in anyone's life, at school, at home or in society. As Roach and Kratochwill (2004) argued that events attain criticality via the justification, significance, and meaning given to them by participants, parent-school interactions are the main generators of critical incidents encountered by the participants in this study. Language, but also race, and socio-economic status were some of the issues that generated many reasons to be concerned about the future of their children in the province of Quebec.

Linguicism according to Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins (2000), captured the invisible mechanisms through which dominant ideologies and structures legitimize and reproduce unequal divisions of power and resources between groups with different maternal languages. As the participants recounted critical incidents impacting the quality of their lives and the educational outcomes of their children, they disputed the quality of education. They challenged schools for giving too much attention to language and ignoring other school subjects. Because the participants mentioned significant differences between a good school in an affluent neighbourhood and a bad school in a disadvantaged area, the socio-economic status of women became significant for the educational trajectories of their children. As public schools in Quebec receive a ranking based on the socio-economic status of the parents,

the Accueil schools are predominantly situated in an urban area with a high IRER population and a low socio-economic status.

Structural and Contextual Factors

Critical incidents were also encountered in relation to ethnicity and racialized backgrounds. Ethnic and racial penalties impacting IRER single-mother families in Quebec might have been intensified by racialized discourses of reasonable accommodation (Bilge, 2015) and linguicism (Jiwani et al., 2021). For racialized women, reduced linguistic abilities are grounds for abuse and further exclusion from public life. For example, Jiwani et al. (2021) argue that:

> the focus on language and culture occlude attention to the systemic realities of racial discrimination in Quebec; that they conceal, by standing in for, exclusionary practices that are used to 'other' particular groups. In doing so, emphasis is placed on the 'cultural' failures of racialised groups to integrate into Quebec's Francophone public culture. To put it another way, while immigration from Francophone countries was encouraged, those arriving, though fluent in French, were not always embraced in the province. Systemic racism, predicated on physical and cultural differences, continue to exist. (p. 255)

In conclusion, several structural aspects were identified as most relevant to this research study: the socio-economic status of children' families (Volante et al., 2017); the racialized backgrounds of underrepresented minorities (9/12 participants); and the widespread racism and linguicism impacting the school system.

After identifying some of the structural factors that might negatively impact the educational disadvantage of first-generation Canadian children in Quebec, tho contextual factors were identified as most relevant for immigrant education in Quebec.

First and the most important contextual factor is the coupling of immigration and educational approaches as an inseparable whole in Quebec. This context specific type of

influence is functioning as an interdependent and inseparable requirement that shapes the educational trajectories of immigrant children in Quebec. As explained in chapter three, it represents a power setting formed between the microlevel (school) and the exolevel (interculturalism or Allophone education and integration via schooling).

Resulting from this study, the second context specific factor that negatively impacts the educational outcome of immigrant children is the linguistic (but also physical/locational) segregation required of immigrant children in Accueil schools. Specific to Quebec, this type of French-only approach taught in separate buildings (such as the Cote St Luc Accueil Highschool) to plurilingual immigrant children is not effective according to the participants in this study.

All these dimensions have been described separately in the findings chapter to simplify the experience of single motherhood in a post-migration context. However, the structural and the contextual factors combined, demonstrate that IRER single-mother families constitute an intersectional unit of analysis. The complexity of the findings is discussed in more depth in the next sections of this chapter in order to illustrate the impact of the socio-environment on minoritized family configurations.

Socio-Environments Influencing IOC&Y

IRER Single-Mother Microsystem

This study revealed how first-generation Canadians of IRER single mothers are a particularly vulnerable group due to systemic inequalities that disproportionately impact this family configuration in Quebec. The IRER single mother family was understood as a unique configuration microsystem formed by the mother and the child, revealing the complexity of mothering in a patriarchal society in which the role of the mother "is continually shaped and reshaped by gendered assumptions, culture, and the context of the historical moment in which motherhood is being examined" (Ross, 2016, p. 4). According to the findings of this study,

IRER single-mother families settling in the province of Quebec, are constantly being classed, racialized and ethnicized by a school system whose representatives (teachers, principals, staff) interact differently with first-generation Canadians to this province than with Francophone or Anglophone Quebec-born individuals.

A great concern for the most mothers was the inability of protecting their children from racism and discrimination in a school system that seems indifferent to the specific issues of long-term educational disadvantage impacting first-generation plurilingual Canadian children studying in Quebec's public school system in Montreal. Within the single-mother family microsystem the child indirectly, by being a body to be protected, nurtured and trained (Ruddick, 2004) influences the parents. Therefore, mothers' and children's experiences must be considered in future educational interventions, better family support services, and improved forms of home-school collaboration. In conclusion, for the first generation Canadians residing in Quebec are at higher risk of marginalization. This has serious implications for the children of single mothers families in a post migration context. The low socio-economic status of the single mother usually means that her plurilingual children attend a low-ranked neighbourhood school and, consequently, they might be at a high risk of school dropout and school incompletion.

Atypical Forms of Maternal Engagement in Schooling. Maternal strategies demonstrated forms of parental engagement (Charette, 2016) concerning unfair practices or abuses of power experienced by their children in schools. Atypical forms of parental engagement in this study were mentioned by every single mother participating in this study. For example, when one of the participants did not know what to do when a teacher slapped her son at school she felt powerless and angry and started to think critically about the school and the education system. In addition to the shock caused by such an unexpected critical incident, she noticed that there are no formal mechanisms to report such incidents. Even if

such mechanisms existed, the cost of translation fees involved in the reporting of such incidents would have inevitably become a burden on her family system. Unfortunately, communication barriers seemed to be linked to her inability to write in French a complaint of such complexity. Consequently, she felt stuck, unable to protect her son nor to prevent such incidents in the near future. Similar feelings were expressed by other participants whose complaints were rejected by principals because they did not bring a personal translator. Another example of atypical parental engagement was mentioned by several participants who prepared written complaints about unfair assessment, and after sending them to the Ministry of Education, they never received a response.

Maternal cautiousness. These examples of involvement accentuated the impossibility of mothers to influence the educational system at microlevels and exolevels, while creating doubt and uncertainty about their decision to settle in Quebec. Findings suggest that the mothers relied mostly on their emotional and cultural capital but, the self-reliance was not sufficient to convert care into educational success (Reay, 2004). Therefore, when coming up against a lack of reporting mechanisms and a lack of transparency regarding testing and assessment, the participants doubted the purpose of immigrant education and the educational practices used with first-generation Canadian children in Quebec's French language public schools, particularly in the Accueil system.

When unable to protect their children from the harmful experiences involving racism and discrimination in schools, along with the disengagement of their children from schooling and learning, the mothers' wellbeing decreased as well. This study finds that a characteristic of post-migration stress for single mothers was linked to the process of witnessing the emotional suffering of their children without being able to intervene. However, their conviction that some of the teachers discriminated (consciously or unconsciously) against their children, prevented some of the mothers from reaching out and asking for support from the school.

In a system that does not have any preventive mechanisms, this vicious circle of needing help, but being afraid to ask because of uncertainty and not knowing what might happen to their children, is a sign of maternal cautiousness rather than parental disengagement. This study finds that maternal engagement in school activities is determined by the degree of trust in the system. Low trust results in maternal cautiousness interpreted by other studies as being a sign of parental disengagement. The findings presented in chapter six demonstrate that the mothers' reaction to the requirements of schools is indicative of low trust and high disappointment in the quality of education delivered to their children in Quebec schools.

While experiencing negative emotions such as guilt, anger and resentment, the mothers in this study, rejected the deficit view of teachers during school-parent interactions. Because the educational practices observed seemed to clash with their mothering values (empathy, respect, patience) and perceptions of a just and fair education, they persistently questioned the evaluation methods they observed in the respective schools (transparency, accountability, reciprocity). Overall, this study finds that the immigrant performance disadvantage for first-generation Canadian students residing in Quebec seems similar to the minority students in the United States where, even with significant parental investment in education, IOC&Y do not perform well academically (N. E. Hill & Torres, 2010; Hu-DeHart & García Coll, 2011; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015).

Positionality and Agency. The positionality and agency of the participants had shifted during settlement in Montreal. Although immigrant women often must adjust their mothering strategies to new societal structures across time and space (di Giovanni, 2014), this adjustment represented a particularly complex process in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Concerning the increasingly politicized discourses of immigrant reception in Quebec, the intersection of single motherhood, racialized backgrounds, and immigration must be further developed as an explanatory tool for equitable educational policy and practices with

immigrant children that provide targetable support and services to first-generation Canadian children and their IRER single mothers. In the light of these findings, future research is needed to identify the formal channels to report abuse in schools and ways in which parents can mobilize to effectively protect their minor children?

The School Microsystem

According to the participants with children in the Accueil program, the following factors were associated with educational disadvantage of plurilingual Canadian children: a hostile school climate due to unfair treatment; a lack of reporting mechanisms that prevented mothers from addressing these issues with teachers; communication barriers due to limited knowledge of French during parent-school interaction; educational disadvantage caused by school segregation and educational delays for plurilingual Canadian children; and school refusal and school disengagement because of low motivation and academic failure.

Such issues, when persistent, contributed to the immigrant performance disadvantage with diminished developmental outcomes and lower educational achievements for IOC&Y (Heath & Brinbaum, 2014; García Coll & Marks, 2012). While a lack of adequate language skills leads to school delays (Wolf et al., 2008), school delays are persistent with perfectly linguistically assimilated IOC&Y across countries and cultures (García Coll & Marks, 2012).

The participants in this study indicated the following main factors associated with the educational disadvantage of IOC&Y enrolled in the Regular program: low expectations from teachers when compared to expectations of non-immigrant students; limited access to services such as transportation to and from school, and translation services; barriers accessing adequate information about the school system; and, school refusal, school disengagement and a general lack of interest in learning. These factors are going to be discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

In the participants' views, both the Accueil and the Regular school programs hampered the educational success of IOC&Y. According to their perceptions, the approaches to education and integration were outdated and ineffective in preparing their children for a global future in the 21st Century. Moreover, the participants perceived that public schools in Quebec do not promote a student-centered learning environment and the current schooling structure in Accueil hindered rather than helped plurilingual Canadian children' academic learning and integration.

Systemic Dysfunctionalities. Overall, the most difficult experiences related to schooling of IOC&Y were reported to have occurred during the first five years of integration. However, compared to their countries of origin, the study participants expressed higher expectations about what constitutes good educational practices in Quebec, the equitable treatment of IOC&Y in schools, and the meaning of the word Accueil (or Welcome).

Trying to make sense of the dysfunctionality of the schooling experience, the participants thought that an adverse school climate and racism and discrimination constituted the main two factors that resulted in the low level of motivation of their children, some of whom refused to go to school or lost complete interest in academic learning. Girls and teenage daughters of single mothers seemed to be affected the most by the school climate and unproductive interactions with the male authority figures such as teachers and principals. In addition, a push for medication in several cases was seen by the mothers as an unacceptable way for resolving the lack of interest in schooling.

While the responses to school injustice were justified, the mothers continued to send their children to school because of fears related to the long-term consequences of school dropouts. The contradiction was also seen in the mothers' efforts to change school culture by talking to teachers and other parents, making formal complaints with principals, and unsuccessful grievances filed at the Commission Scolaire de Montreal. Such dysfunctionalities were

unacceptable to the participants who tried to remediate this situation without success. A sense of injustice, anger and powerlessness were expressed in relation to schooling experiences in both the Accueil and Regular systems. A loss of self-efficacy was not experienced by mothers in relation to educational content, but it was experienced in relation to their inability to protect their children from the harm experienced at school.

Teaching and Learning Outcomes. The participants expressed dissatisfaction with the low quality of instruction, educational infrastructure, and school leadership. Their beliefs aligned with Guo's (2012) research findings indicated that schools are embedded in the socio-political context. Therefore, the pedagogical relationships, ideas and individuals that populate schools and classrooms do have a significant impact on the educational trajectories of IOC&Y. For example, the participants in this study perceived those teachers had adopted an overall deficit view of immigrants and racialized minorities students. Therefore, teaching outcomes should be linked to the learning outcomes of students who spend more time at school than at home.

For children of single-mother families, the significance of grades was associated with being valued by an authority figure with tremendous influence over their development. Therefore, in the participants' views, low expectations from teachers and uninteresting teaching practices distanced students from academic learning, influenced their confidence in themselves and their learning abilities, skills and knowledge, and their successful adjustment to the host society. To diminish the harmful effects of such outcomes, Guo (2012) argued that schools must become adaptable learning systems that respond to the needs of multicultural and multilingual taxpayers and "connect to the cultural spaces and images of schooling and learning that care about the communities of newly arrived Canadians" (p. 134).

Accountability for Parents and Schools. The IRER migrant mothers participating in this study did not view teachers as responsible for fixing the broader issues of immigrant

education. However, they thought that schools should not perpetuate racism and discrimination, should be held accountable for what happens in the classroom and for IOC&Y educational outcomes. The participants suggested that the school system should be held accountable for school refusal and an unsafe school climate. Moreover, schools should at least acknowledge the perceptions of the mothers' related to the low-quality level of instruction, unfair testing and assessment, outdated curriculum, and lack of knowledge and expertise in teaching French as a second language to a multicultural and multilingual body of students. Mothers also emphasized that educators and school personnel should be willing and competent at providing optimal schooling experiences for the IOC&Y already marginalized by social and cultural forces.

School Climate. According to the IRER single mothers participating in this study, a positive school climate is of utmost importance to secure educational equity in Quebec's public school system. In addition, the findings underlined the impact of school climate on the students' wellbeing and the interdependency between student success and positive relations between teachers and IOC&Y and their parents. The participants thought that as much as a positive home environment contributes to academic success, a positive school climate is necessary for helping students achieve their academic potential and prevent school delays, school refusal and low motivation in learning. The implications of such findings are mostly related to the teachers' attitudes and their impact on children's' development. Encouraging and nurturing teacher-student interactions and relationships will likely foster a better environment for personal development and educational adjustment in a new school and culture.

Perceptions of Fairness. Research shows that when students perceive that they are treated fairly, when schools promote social inclusion and a cooperative environment, and when teachers are more supportive than punitive, students' academic learning improves. However,

according to the reports of the mothers in this study, the opposite was true. Furthermore, adjustments to the educational strategies based on continuously identification and recognition of the IRER students' needs seemed to be an effective way to improve active participation in learning. Sound, evidence-based research is vital to developing good policy and community development. However, a primary obstacle in education is realizing its role as a tool for social justice and the significance of leadership preparation for social justice work within the school walls. It seems that without explicit training, teachers and school leaders cannot and will not advocate for the complex changes required of them.

Overall, at the micro-level, the findings underlined the urgency of the problems faced by Quebec public schools and the immediate need for inclusive education and the holistic development of their students. More than developing academic skills, the promotion of socio-emotional and cognitive skills at school is essential for educational success. Therefore, in a post-migration context, prioritizing a positive school climate in both Accueil and Regular programs is a must for successful intercultural education and integration which in turn will alleviate school refusal and disengagement. In designing more effective educational policies for children of immigration, a better understanding is required of the experiences of immigration, immigration stress, and acculturation affect risk and protective factors (Dalla, 2009). Adopting innovative teaching and learning strategies for immigrant education in schools and creating a positive and welcoming school climate is an urgent need for IRER children and youth. A modern approach would involve strategies that are informed by the latest research and not political agendas that instead of creating a second-class citizenship system it rather recognizes the strengths of plurilingual first-generation Canadians to Quebec's distinct society.

Parent-School Interaction Mesosystem

The mesosystem refers to points of connection between children's everyday contexts. One reason why the mesosystem is important in development is because IOC&Y may experience similar, or quite different and even contradictory socialization experiences, in different microsystem settings. While education could be a positive experience for children belonging to the majority population and their parents might experience productive interactions with the school, the opposite was the case for the mothers participating in this study. The findings chapter addressed issues of parental communication and collaboration with the schools, identifying that the lines of communication between school and the home are prone to misunderstandings. This research also indicated that communication breakdowns between parents and school occurred mainly when there is a difference between the language of home and school (Moon et al., 2009; Peña, 1998; Riches & Curdt-Christiansen, 2010).

In the participants' views, negative parent-school interactions were predominant, mainly when the mothers tried to address problematic teacher-student interactions. Formal parent-school interactions, including both written notes in the agenda and face-to-face interactions with the teachers or school personnel, were described as largely unpleasant. Part of the unpleasantness was related to the anticipation of negative teacher feedback or difficult interactions. This had the effect of promoting further school disengagement on the part of students and intensified efforts from their mothers.

Benza and Liamputtong (2017) found that an immigrant mother's negative interactions with the school contribute to a sense of inadequacy and inferiority concerning family and community, as well as in relation to her children's schoolwork. In contrast with these findings, the mothers in this study persisted in their efforts to address the unfair assessment of their children and required additional explanations from teachers when their children were not doing well in French. Ardelt and Eccles (2001) suggested a strong correlation between

mothers' self-efficacy beliefs and children's self-efficacy beliefs, which in turn was indirectly related to children's academic success, especially in the most disadvantaged families. This research findings were not supported by this study, in which IRER single mothers expressed an unshakable belief in their own abilities as mothers and in the educational aptitudes of their children.

While previous research argued that immigrant mothers internalize a negative self-concept, blaming themselves for the shortcomings of their children (Al-Deen & Windle, 2017; Benza & Liamputtong, 2017), in this study, the mothers thought that the educational disadvantage of their children was due to systemic dysfunctionalities. With one exception, the participants expressed how teachers and principals usually engaged in unidirectional communication focused on instructing the parents of IOC&Y on how to carry on with the pedagogical work at home, especially in French and Mathematics.

While mothers expressed the need for more informal, face-to-face communication style with the schools, a top-down interaction seemed to be preferred by teachers, especially in the Accueil program where written notes had been the norm. To build productive relationships, all mothers believed that politeness should be the basis for all interactions. Overall, the mothers' educational background and their ongoing overinvolvement in school motivated their children to continue school. The mothers identified systemic issues impacting immigrant education and addressed their underlying causes with confidence and accuracy.

Inequitable School System. Protecting their children from racism and discrimination was mentioned as a strategy of migrant mothering at the meso-level during parent-school interactions. The participants' lack of self-efficacy in tackling systemic barriers became evident when the impact of their actions on the school system proved to be minimal or inexistent. However, their dedication, time and effort did have a positive effect in alleviating the suffering of their children to a certain degree in relation to schooling. While the

participants described their migration experience as a source of empowerment, freedom, and self-determination, the challenges they faced when interacting with the school system, such as perceptions of racism and discrimination, linguicism, diminished the abilities they felt they had in a pre-migration context.

Language Barriers. Even for those mothers with prior knowledge of French, parent-school communication was challenging. Due to a lack of a common language during face-to-face communication, and a lack of translation services, the participants talked extensively about language barriers to emphasize the communication breakdown during parent-school interaction. As mothers struggled to speak French, the use of English did not seem to be acceptable in the Accueil school system. Most participants expressed that using English in an "only French" school environment was perceived by the school system as disrespectful, threatening or even insulting to the Quebecois majority.

As this study shows, these rules often result in an intolerance towards the use of any other languages including English and it has economic implications for immigrants. Quebec's monolingualism has socio-demographic and economic implications. Mardell (2021) noted that it drives people away from the province because "part of what monolingual language policies do is create a regional economic market where bilingualism isn't valued" (p. 83). Out of province migration (provincial exodus) has been an ongoing concern "Since 1971, 600 000 Anglophones have left Quebec for other parts of Canada" (Mardell, 2021, p. i). It remains unclear however, how many immigrants have left Quebec. Therefore, as many participants in this study mentioned, there is an urgent need for inclusive plurilingual education in Quebec, especially in Accueil, where children are multilingual. According to Kircher et al. (2022), parents of multilingual children value and encourage multilingualism at home and at school.

Blindspots. Although the linguistic tensions mentioned appeared well described some of the newly arrived participants seemed somehow unaware of Quebec's socio-historical context

within Canada. For example, the mothers did not realize how their actions contributed to the balance of power between teachers and their children during school time. The ongoing tensions between teachers and parents, seemed to have impacted negatively on the overall wellbeing of the children and their educational trajectories. Similarly, some of the school personnel seemed unaware of how the inflexible application of French language regulations might place IOC&Y children at a more significant educational disadvantage, mainly because their parents could not understand the school's requirements. Unfortunately, this situation seems to be one major challenge to productive parent-school collaboration in Accueil program. Unfortunately, for several mothers interviewed in the study, the only viable alternative identified to effectively counteract the educational disadvantage of their children was to leave and relocate to another province. Overall, according to the IRER participating in this study, the characteristics of intercultural integration and the racism and discrimination present at all environmental levels negatively impacted on the effectiveness of mother-school interactions. Since the interdependency between mother and child(ren) is strong especially in single mother families, it also diminished the overall wellbeing of the family unit.

Themes Spanning the Ecosystem

By contrasting and comparing the pre-migration expectations and post-migration experiences in the narrative of the participants, personal experiences were revealed across multiple environmental levels and within an active system of relationships and interactions. According to Rosa and Tudge (2013), “Bronfenbrenner redefined the concept of the macrosystem as "the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other extended social structure"(1993, p. 25). The following main overarching themes were identified as spanning the ecosystem: racism and discrimination; linguicism and anti-immigrant attitudes; factors influencing the educational

disadvantage of IOC&Y in Accueil; and family stressors. These are going to be discussed in the next section at the levels identified in the ecosystem.

Racism and Discrimination

A vital feature of any definition of discrimination is its focus on behaviour. Discrimination is distinct from racial prejudice (attitudes), racial stereotypes (beliefs), and racism (ideologies) that may also be associated with racial disadvantage (Quillian et al., 2006). According to its most simple definition, racial discrimination refers to unequal treatment of persons or groups based on race or ethnicity. In the view of Pager and Shepard (2008), in identifying "racial discrimination, many scholars and legal advocates distinguished between differential treatment and disparate impact" (p. 182). Consistent with the findings of this study, differential treatment occurred during parent-school interactions when IRER were treated unequally because of their race. Disparate impact was experienced by the participants in this study when IOC&Y were treated equally according to Accueil program's educational rules and procedures, without acknowledgement from teachers that these rules and procedures were constructed in ways that favour members of one group over another (Reskin, 2012). Critical incidents also occurred in the classroom, where no explicit racial content was mentioned. However, the teachers' deficit attitudes had the consequence of producing or reinforcing racial disadvantage of IOC&Ys. Moreover, language-related issues were barriers to combating racism and discrimination in an effective manner.

Racism and Discrimination in the School Microsystem. The policing of behaviour, especially for black children begins in the education system, and perhaps rather than demanding conformity to dominant norms, there needs to be relationship building with immigrant communities. The lack of formal mechanisms to report, resolve and prevent racism and discrimination in Quebec schools perpetuates low educational outcomes for IOC&Y. The current education system does not acknowledge that racism and discrimination

are not isolated incidents. Consistent with the findings of this study, racism and discrimination in schools have been observed as complex mechanisms that systematically and invisibly push children out of school, dispossessing them of educational opportunities and a good-quality of life (Fine, 1991, 1993; Fine & Ruglis, 2009; Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013).

While race is undeniably a social category through which relations of power are organized, race is not a matter of biology but a "purely imaginary social fabrication whereby people's physical and phenotypical differences are made into absolute differences" (Ng, 2005, p. 210). Racialized ideologies existing at all levels of the system perpetuate these fabrications, and a divisive social discourse negatively impacts school culture and the educational outcomes of IOC&Y. Recent studies indicated that a negative school culture was based on a prevalence of racism and discrimination coupled with a lack of adequate resources, strategies and policies to counteract these damaging attitudes and behaviours (Ali, 2008; R. Basu, 2011; Guo, 2012). Consequently, school disengagement behaviours and school refusal have been prevalent among IOC&Y (Rumberger, 2011; Schneph, 2007).

Deficit view of IOC&Y Mesosystem. Overall, a deficit view held by teachers attributed to educational disparities that created a shortfall in children and youth or their parents (Lipman, 2011; Suárez-Orozco, 2000; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009a). In a study involving 42 focus groups with immigrant parents in Canada, Ali (2008) found that while many children complained to their parents about incidents of racism and ethnic bias and discrimination at school, the immigrant parents could not advocate on behalf of their children. As these obstacles have been externalized from school culture, or as 'being out of schooling practices,' these conceptions relinquish educators and school leaders from the responsibility of providing conditions for high academic achievement in racially diverse IOC&Y (D. Y. Ford et al., 1999; Gay & Howard, 2000).

In response to these systemic injustices, Bernhard (2002) found that immigrant parents needed to understand their position of marginality and start creating empowering strategies when facing with unfair situations at school. Bergset (2017) also identified parental involvement outside of the mainstream research categories. More specifically, confronting widespread issues such as prejudice and discrimination is not considered a typical form of parent-school collaboration. The parents who disclosed their children's problems with racism and discrimination described how their initiatives to tackle difficult conversations were unsuccessful (Bergset, 2017). Moreover, parents who experienced prejudice, racism, and discrimination when interacting with their children's school described their experience as being silenced during conversations and, inevitably, over time, lowered their self-efficacy as parents (Matthiesen, 2015).

Canadian and Quebec's Exceptionalism at the Macrosystem. Canadian exceptionalism (Fleras, 2018; Thobani, 2007) is a narrative perpetuated by Canadians who proudly believe their country is a fair, multicultural society without racism. Such narratives of fairness played an essential role in the pre-migration expectations of the migrant mothers who participated in this study. Although the participants strongly believed in "the mythical Canadian narrative of inclusivity and diversity" (Henry, 2017, The Conversation, para. 5) with its values, positive beliefs and attitudes towards immigrants from all backgrounds, their post-migration experiences were far from what they initially imagined and expected. The mothers expressed disappointment regarding a lack of social justice and inclusion and felt less motivated about what it meant to start a new life as immigrants among Canadians.

> Canadians widely believe their country to be a peaceful, multicultural country without racism. Yet human rights activists and critical race scholars provide evidence that inequity is woven into the fabric of Canadian institutions and normalized in everyday practices. The absence of racism and racists is one of Canada's "fable-like" racial stories. In Racism

> Without Racists, scholar Eduardo Bonilla-Silva says we tell and retell ourselves the same moral story. (Henry, 2017, The Conversation, para. 6)

Their experiences and perceptions of racism and discrimination challenged the Canadian exceptionalism discourse and its racialized roots of tolerance and pluralism (Satzewich & Liodakis, 2017). For the visible religious minorities in Quebec, this reality had an added layer of discouragement. Bilge (2013b) signaled how reasonable accommodation is a form of racialized governmentality with racial subtexts used for racial exclusion and subjugation of religious minorities:

> "tacit common language, together with unarticulated shared assumptions and entitlements upon which it relies, is racially structured, shaped by the dominant racial formation in Quebec and oriented by its white habitus" (p. 158).

Overall, from the participants' perspectives, the findings of this study suggested that racism and discrimination are systemic barriers preventing IRER single mothers and their children from achieving the Canadian dream in which they believed prior to migration.

Linguicism and Anti-Immigrant Sentiment in Quebec.

Communication issues related to linguistic differences have been an ongoing source of discord between immigrants and the receiving society on the Island of Montreal (Bourhis, 2020). English-speaking immigrants as a sub-group could experience increased social isolation in Quebec due to linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins, 2000).

As the participants in this study acculturated to both Canadian culture and Quebec society, they embraced and promoted the multilingual and multicultural development of their children. The immigrant's family double acculturation process of the immigrant families is much more complex, and it involves complex interactions with the host society belonging to both English (Anglophones born in Quebec) and French (Quebecois) and representing the dominant cultures and languages in Canada. While these two cultures are always taking into

consideration and emphasized in this study, it is important to mention a dimension that is equally important for the Allophones or the new Canadians residing in Quebec. As the vast majority lives in a plurilingual Montreal (Galante & dela Cruz, 2021), their acculturation involves continuous efforts to negotiate their identities and language preferences marked by complex socio-cultural and linguistic adjustments to the host society. Their everyday adjustments, linguistic efforts and emotional investments often are minimized, and evaluated as not not good enough, or remain invisible to the host society, members of the dominant Canadian (English and French) cultures. In order to achieve an equal and pleasant human interaction, the participants often switch from one main cultural domain to another, when interacting with Anglophones or Francophone Quebecers.

Therefore, while negotiating their sense of belonging in either English or French, immigrants in Quebec could end-up being excluded or devalued by both of the dominant groups. Those without jobs and struggling to achieve upward social mobility are socially and economically marginalized by factors belonging in the macrosystem and/or exosystem. Moreover, just as the experiences of their children in Accueil, they do not have the opportunity of interacting with Anglophones nor with Francophones born in Quebec. During the Francization programs they tend to form friendships with other immigrants. Consequently, the broader issues of immigrant settlement (macrosystem/exosystem) lived by mothers were also felt by their children. In other words, interdependency between microsystem reveals how the wellbeing of children in this study is intimately tied to the wellbeing of their mothers.

Linguicism in the Micro and Mesosystems. Language-related conflicts with schools, teachers and principals proved to be highly taxing for the mothers and their children. A deficit view of immigrants indicated discrimination based on language in relation to the use of the English language in schools. Moreover, according to the perceptions of IRER

participating in this study, it seems that the "ici on parle Francaise/here we speak (only) French" argument evoked by Quebec's school system representatives seemed a strategy used to silence the expression of injustices perceived in schools. Furthermore, the participants in this study suggested that the unfair assessment of their children might be linked to their use of the English language during parent-school interactions. The findings suggested that the participants in this study became acutely aware that they were trapped in a mutually reinforcing systemic tension manifested at the exolevels -and macro levels.

Linguicism in the Exosytem. According to the participants, the integration of immigrant single-mother families in Quebec proved to be more challenging than initially expected because of what seems to be defined as language barriers regarding education. Overall, despite prolonged efforts to learn French and attend the Francization program, the participants in this study perceived that Quebec's intercultural immigrant integration policies do not provide IRER women with the socio-economic safety nor the professional recognition they expected prior to immigration. Acknowledging the impact of the immigrant context of reception on successful integration outcomes, the findings of this study suggest that the anti-immigrant sentiments experienced by the participants was linked to linguicism and additional penalties stemming from the application of Bill 101.

While laws and regulations could be seen as neutral, their applications and implications in everyday life are not. Penalties are well articulated for those that do not respect the language policies (Appendix F). As this study suggested, the policy context has profound implications for immigrants, including on the educational outcomes of IOC&Y and the wellbeing of IRER single-mother families. Therefore, the policy context and its application might be understood as a complex power dynamic between a majority that legislates and governs (French Quebecers) and a minority (referring to IRER as a minority subgroup). To this point, Barbaud (1998) argued:

> French language was associated from the time of Conquest, with the exercise of political power collectively assumed by a society already conscious of its distinctness. It is through this convergence of language and power that one should describe the linguistic situation in Quebec. (p. 177)

Interculturalism within Multiculturalism at the Macrosystem. Quebec's interculturalism-within-multicultural Canada is a larger socio-political dynamic stemming from the macro level with impacts described by the immigrant single mothers and their children at the micro-meso-and exo-environmental levels. García Coll et al. (1996) integrative model highlighted how racism, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression contributed to the macrosystem of children's environments.

Current language policies and cultural practices in the exosystem and macrosystem have symbolic and material implications in Quebec schools, where some of the teachers seem to have anti-immigration attitudes, a deficit view of IRER and cultural biases towards IOC&Y. Therefore, based on the perceptions of IRER single mothers in this study, linguistic discrimination perpetuated social inequalities at the intersection of race, gender, educational level, and socio-economic status.

Discussing language politics in education, Tollefson and Tsui (2014) stated that language policy, the power of the state, and inequality are represented in dominant ideologies that form matrices of domination. This entanglement at different environmental levels might have unintended consequences as "Minority students are disabled or disempowered by schools in very much the same way that interactions with societal institutions disempower their communities" (Cummins, 2001, p. 23). Furthermore, to that point, Battiste (2000) argued that for children whose languages and cultures are different from the mainstream, the educational system could lead to a form of "cognitive imperialism" or "cultural racism," defined as "the

imposition of one worldview on a people who have an alternative worldview, with the implication that the imposed worldview is superior to the alternative worldview" (p. 192).

Factors Influencing the Educational Disadvantage of IOC&Y in Accueil

The Accueil Microsystem. The participants expressed high expectations about what constitutes good educational practices, the equitable treatment of IOC&Y in schools, and the accurate meaning of the word Accueil (or Welcome). As per the findings of this study, school refusal, and disengagement, along with a negative school climate and communication barriers, created a culture of low expectations and school delays for children in Accueil. This is consistent with other research that suggested that despite some educational achievements of Allophones in Quebec schools back in 2011, 50% of immigrant children in Accueil experienced significant learning delays before entering the regular schooling program (De Koninck & Armand, 2011). The lack of culturally relevant pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995) coupled with a deficit view of IOC&Y and their parents (Cummins, 2007a; Cummins, 2007b; Guo, 2011) could constitute an alternative explanation for the academic failures? of IOC&Y attending the Accueil program. During the Francization process, in the Accueil program, most often, students lost interest in learning, and their families started to lose trust in the education system (Cuko, 2014, 2016; Tardif-Grenier et al., 2018). Upon a satisfactory acquisition of French-language skills, students could transfer into a regular class or school. Although Francization is a process intended for a maximum of ten months, studies have shown that 30% of the immigrant student population spends at least two years or more in Accueil (McAndrew & Ledent, 2012). Unfortunately, there is no recent data that indicates the rate of successful Francization in Accueil schools on the Island of Montreal.

Cultural-Linguistic Segregation. According to the participants in this study, students in Accueil classes are often placed in separate buildings and prohibited from speaking any other language. This exemplifies the link between environmental levels. A change in the exosystem

impacts the microsystem and mesosystem. Anecdotal evidence known among Allophones but not documented by previous research studies points out to the frequency of punishment of IOC&Y in schools when they try to communicate with each other in a common language. In one Montreal school, the penalty for using English, was to copy at home, line-by-line from the French dictionary, the word anglaise. Magnan and Darchinian (2014) found that in both primary and secondary schools, "this relative linguistic coercion i can be explained in part by the linguistic minority status of French-speaking Quebecers in Canada and North America as a fragile majority" (p. 394).

Furthermore, teachers and school personnel are mandated to apply "French-only" policies in schools during parent-school interactions. Consequently, first-generation Canadian parents whose proficiency in French is limited must bring a translator with them at school during parent-school interactions. This measure was perceived as a penalty by newly arrived Allophones. Such language policies placed the burden of translations services on the shoulders of immigrant families. For single mothers with multiple children, this measure might have accentuated their precarious economic status, and indirectly, created more barriers for the successful integration of plurilingual, first-generation Canadians in Quebec. The aggregation of such factors must be acknowledged in the future by researchers, practitioners and policymakers. In order to resolve critical incidents and assure a better quality of immigrant education in Quebec, the education system must create adequate accountability mechanisms that encourage parental involvement in education and promote school justice for all students.

Ongoing Conflicts in the Mesosystem. In her research studies with immigrant parents, Cuko (2014, 2016) found that parents were highly dissatisfied with the Accueil system because they did not seem to understand the purpose of the Francization. Cuko (2014) asserted that the purpose of socio-cultural integration through the teaching of French

language remains either unknown or incomprehensible to the immigrant parents (p. 286, personal translation). Contrary to Cuko's research findings, for IRER mothers in this study, the Accueil system created huge barriers to the educational adjustment of their children. The IRER participants in this study understood very well that social and educational segregation meant the following: purposeful separation of the IOC&Y from French Quebecois children and the placement of IOC&Y in the Accueil system, in different buildings, with curriculum reduced to four subjects (arts, sports, mathematics and French, with no targeted after-school support systems designed specifically to meet the emotional needs of the IOC&Y, and with language-related interdictions. Therefore, based on the experiences of the participants, this study finds that Accueil was not an effective *educational* pedagogy, but more of a strategy "d'intégration scolaire" (school integration). Again, the school is seen as an extension of the social field, and part of the context of reception of immigrants described in chapter two of this dissertation. Ignoring the differences that exist between education and integration, 'education through integration' is not an effective approach and negatively impacts immigrant children residing in Quebec province and attending French language public schools on the Island of Montreal.

Cuko (2016) concluded that the negative perceptions of the Quebecois education system in general, and the Accueil classes in particular, were due to the parents' lack of knowledge about Quebec's public school system as "parents have little knowledge of the Quebecois school system, and their perception of the Accueil system is the result of multiple misunderstandings and incomprehension at various levels" (Cuko, 2016, p. 285).

Such an interpretation of systemic dysfunctionality in Accueil resembled the "blaming the victim" approach prevalent in most of the research studies conducted with Allophones in Quebec. This seems to be a social consequence that absolved the government from any

responsibility of alleviating it. However, the trend of normalizing educational penalties remained invisible and perhaps unknown to the policy makers and teachers.

Educational equity will remain a concern for IRER parents as long as Quebec's Ministry of Education does not share data concerning the following: number of complaints they receive regarding unfair language assessment; the number of students passing and/or failing the mandatory French examinations in the public school system both Accueil and regular; the number of students who are kept in Accueil longer than six months. Last but not least, the Ministry of Education does not share the data on the graduation delays of immigrant children and youth in the regular program and the reasons for these delays. Therefore, as the efficiency of teachers teaching French seemed problematic, an assessment of pedagogical practices is necessary to reduce school delays (Beauregard & Grenier, 2017) especially in Accueil high schools.

Immigrant Education in the Exosystem. According to the participants, the rules and regulations of schools were perceived by IOC&Y and their IRER single mothers in this study as sustaining and reproducing educational inequities across ethnicity, race, language, and socio-economic background (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Within a majority-minority integration framework described in an earlier chapter, the education system was designed differently for IOC&Y. Designed as a majority-minority framework, the interactions of Accueil teachers with IOC&Y and their parents are inevitably minoritized, classed, racialized, and ethnicized by those who embody the majority's values and norms. Reflecting on the political context of relationships, Suissa (2017) argued that “Education is not the same as schooling, and there is value in exploring the moral and political significance of pedagogical spaces, processes and relationships outside the walls of institutions" (p. 875).

While education is important for immigrant parents (Beauregard et al., 2014), schooling should not be a source of suffering for children and a burden for their families. The findings

suggested that there is a discrepancy between policy and practice, between immigrant educational policies and intercultural schooling practices, especially in Accueil schools. According to the participants in this study, the Quebec education system requires better educational policies and school practices that pay more attention to the needs of IOC&Y's and their families. Immigrant education should be seen as a holistic process that considers the impact of power relations embedded within a majority-minority framework and the emotional and social integration-related needs stemming from this for power imbalance.

Policy makers might consider how foreign language learners learn a new language and use it in their everyday lives, including helping their children acquire new linguistic abilities. Furthermore, the most appropriate way to learn and assess students take the learners' lived histories, identities, and experiences into account (Olivos, 2006). Current research also shows how people use their languages in complex ways to affirm their identities (Galante & dela Cruz, 2021). Therefore, as long as immigrant integration and education are applied with inflexibility, the Francization program and educational outcomes of immigrant students struggling in Accueil will hardly improve.

Overall, the IOC&Y of the IRER participants in this study encountered educational delays, school disengagement, school refusal, and suffered as a consequence of going to school. According to their mothers, the Francization in Accueil led to unforeseen, unjust and outrageous educational penalties that took a toll on plurilingual, first-generation Canadian children's emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, I would argue that the Accueil system as an educational design for IOC&Y from underrepresented families, constitutes an intersectional penalty that impacts their developmental outcomes. Therefore, based on the findings of this study, I would argue that Accueil creates the grounds for the future second class Quebec citizens.

Family Stressors across the Ecosystem

The IRER single mothers participating in this study were the primary caregivers in single-mother families, responsible for meeting all the child's developmental needs, including childrearing resources, schooling, and the children's integration needs in a post-migration context. With only one exception, the IRER single-mother families participating in this study struggled consistently with multiple intersecting challenges, not only as ethnicized and racialized immigrant women but also as single mothers. While participants struggled with their own integration challenges, they also had to attend to overcoming multiple barriers faced by their children. As mentioned in chapter six, the exception in this study was a participant born in England, who had a Francophone boyfriend helping her navigate the school system.

The anti-immigrant attitudes and behaviours perceived by the participants and by their children in school led to compounded discrimination evidenced by multiple and intersecting incidents of racism, sexism, xenophobia, linguicism, and Islamophobia. Decreased wellbeing due to high acculturation stresses led to an overall sense of social isolation and fear of the future. Downward social mobility due to factors in the exosystem evidenced by prolonged unemployment, underemployment, career stagnation, and a lack of professional recognition of the parents, impacted the education and integration outcomes of the children.

These negative experiences were present in schools (at the micro-level) and during parent-school interaction (at the mesolevel), as well at all the other environmental levels (exolevels and macrolevels) described by Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1976, 1986). Previous research with immigrants, refugees, and ethnocultural and racialized (IRER) populations in Canada demonstrated how generally, parenting school-age children during the early years in Canada takes a higher toll on women's emotional wellbeing when compared with immigrant women who arrive without children (Browne et al., 2017; Man, 2004). In this

study, the participants described how their children being shunted in a monolingually resistant school system served to further isolate mothers and children, increasing stress, strain, and compromising well-being and mental health.

The findings of this study are consistent with the existing literature (Kim & Choi, 2013; Kwok & Wallis, 2008) that emphasized how language barriers, precarity, career stagnation, discrimination, and combined stigma of immigration and single motherhood, contributed to the acculturation stress of IRER single-mother families.

Mother-Child Interdependency. The notion of wellbeing was conceptualized as being consistent positive social interactions leading to the emotional safety of IOC&Y and contributing to their academic learning. Bergnehr (2018) proposed a holistic, relational view of children's agency acknowledging both negative and positive aspects. Therefore, an ecological framework must consider both the parents' influence on a children's developmental outcomes and the children's experiences in schools, agency or lack of agency, bi-directionality and intergenerational interdependence. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's framework (1976), child-mother interdependence was a bi-directional process. Previous research in Quebec schools demonstrated that educational disadvantage is prevalent among IOC&Y students, and it was linked to the acculturation stress (Browne et al. 2017; Kanoute, et al., 2016; Zhu, 2016). This study demonstrated that a child's schooling had a substantial impact on the wellbeing of the mothers and their overall quality of life.

Post-Migration Stress in the Family Microsystem. Considering mother-child interdependence was helpful for a nuanced understanding of the unique pressures impacting IRER single-mother families with inexistent ties in Canada. These stresses, termed by Bergnehr (2016, 2018) as interdependent acculturative stresses, decreased their overall wellbeing and led to the educational disadvantage of their children. In this study, the opposite of wellbeing was conceptualized as post-migration stress, indicating a prolonged state of

precarity, emotional distress and/or recurrent worries about the future occurring from migration. This type of stress dominated the everyday life of the immigrant single-mothers families participating in this study. Participants indicated a prolonged state of discomfort, unhappiness and recurrent worries which dominated their everyday lives. Sources of stress for the IRER mothers participating in this study were: multiple forms of discrimination, prolonged precarity, and the need to respond to all the needs of a developing child without support from other reliable adults.

When talking about her daughter's experiences at school, one mother described this type of stress as "the system was crushing her" (Eleonor). According to some of the participants the single mother with no other family ties in Canada is usually the only one who notices the impact of school-related issues on her child's development. For some of the IOC&Y, the single mother is the only one able to minimize the impacts of negative experiences through different maternal strategies. As another mother described, the protective strategies of single mothers are demanding to the degree that a mother's life is "placed on hold" (Nevis).

Cumulative Challenges. The post-migration stress was experienced as more time, effort, personal resources to integrate than one is capable of providing without sacrificing personal health or wellbeing. It also revealed the existence of cumulative disadvantages that immigrant women who are racialized minorities and single mothers encountered in different aspects of their social life. As immigrant women, they were negatively affected by at least several intersecting challenges: immigrants trying to rebuild their lives in a new country and as women in a male-dominated society. In addition, as visible minority women and immigrant single mothers, they had to face stereotypes and institutional barriers, which amplified post-migration stress. As experienced on multiple levels across the social-ecological model, stigma and discrimination magnified the stress. Not only was the stress cumulative, but it was also felt across a range of settings. Lam et al. (2020) asserted that cumulative challenges affect the

single immigrant mother's experiences and their children's development and mental health (Dziak et al., 2010).

Disconfirming Stereotypes in the Mesosystem. All mothers in this study rejected the social construction of inferiority imposed upon them and their children by the school system and society at large. Contrary to the negative stereotypes that portray IRER women as poor, passive and/or uneducated (Boyd & Grieco, 2003), the participants in this study were educated and actively involved in their children's educational success. As the participants invested all their resources to support their children's educational trajectories, they emphasized that healthy development and emotional well-being should remain a priority at home and at school. While the mothers' sustained efforts prioritized their children, they criticized the education system for not having the same goals.

Consequently, the social forces existing at the macro level, the combined stigma of single motherhood immigration, posed significant challenges in the successful integration of single-mother families in Quebec society. With limited access to employment, compromised careers and a continual state of mental and physical exhaustion, their adjustment became less of a priority. As a result, Lam et al. (2020) proposed that "there is a need for additional research about how the intersections of single motherhood and immigration affect this complex family system" (p. 58).

This study revealed how the mothers navigated through the intersection of gender, race, socio-economic status and immigration status concerning their children's experiences while at school. While their experiences and the experiences of their children intersected on several axis of power, the interdependence between mother and child evidenced their cumulative effects on the family microsystem. This suggested that the category of single mother and immigrant woman in this study are inseparable dimensions with bi-directional implications from the mother her child(ren) and from the child(ren) to the mother. Furthermore, while

women from all backgrounds are more at risk to experience disadvantage, stigma, and/or social exclusion, the IRER single mothers in this study experienced these inequalities as a family unit. Therefore, the educational disadvantage of IOC&Y from single-mother families is a topic for further research.

Stigma of Single Motherhood in the Exosystem and Macrosystems. As a sense of belonging provides a close and secure relationship to host society members, the stigma of single motherhood in a post-migration context prompted feelings of exclusion, accompanied by decreased respect and appreciation as a member of society at large and the school community. Adding to the acculturation stress affecting immigrant single-mother families in Canada's two-parent-dominated society, single mothers are seen "as too incompetent to raise their child in a father-absent environment" (Lam et al., 2021, p. 57).

While single mothers bear the stigma of otherness, shame, loss of status, and social exclusion (Wiegers & Chunn, 2017). However, Roggeband and Verloo (2007) indicated that in policy documents issued between 1995–2005, immigrant women were seen as becoming a 'growing problem' for the receiving societies. Moreover, as explained further in this study, all the other IRER mothers who experienced racism and discrimination reported high stress and cumulative challenges in their efforts to integrate into Quebec.

Other studies indicated that immigrant-receiving societies commonly perceive immigrant mothers everywhere as threats to a nation's integrity (Tyler, 2013; Erel et al., 2017) due to their childrearing beliefs, values, and maternal practices, which contradict Western values and Western parenting standards (Tajima & Harachi, 2010). Such studies might reflect the need to justify the exclusion and marginalization of immigrants via racist attitudes and oppressive contexts of reception.

Intersectional Analysis of Overarching Themes

As explained in an earlier chapter, microsystems constitute environmental levels that are proximal or closely tied to the developing individual, and therefore, they have a strong influence on human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1976, 1986). School and family are two microsystems that have a strong influence on the educational outcomes of children. However, in this study the schools seem to have a larger influence on the immigrant children and their families than families have on the school system. While the power setting concept (Epstein, 2018) described in Chapter 3, explains that such influence is due to the allocation of resources and the mandatory nature of schooling, it does not clarify how it impacts the educational disadvantage of Allophone IOC&Y raised in single mother families in Montreal.

Intersectionality (Collins, 2009, 2015; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991) provides a plausible explanation. In the receiving context of Quebec, such a disproportionate influence of schools is connected to the power relations "coming from" or generated by the dominant French majority within Quebec at all levels of Bronfenbrenner's model (1974, 1979, 1986). Collins (2009) identified intersecting systems of domination such as race, class, and gender in four distinct yet interrelated domains of power: structural (decision making and control about how things are done), hegemonic (authority of one group over another), disciplinary (exercise of structural and hegemonic power over corrections of those deviating from the norms), and interpersonal (one individual with access to a source of power over another individual, who cannot access structural, hegemonic or punitive power sources).

For example, provincial laws governing the education system, while neutral in their intent and formulation, are produced and reproduced by the dominant society (provincial government representing the people of Quebec). Within these laws, schools have their rules and regulations about how school must function and operate within Quebec society. The rules and regulations regarding immigrant integration and education are produced and reproduced

within the intercultural model of immigration which, as explained earlier it the dissertation, are based on relations between minority-majority framework. Members of the dominant society, such as teachers and school principals, consciously or unconsciously use the intercultural framework to remind IRER minorities about the norms and values of Quebec society: secularization and integration through Francization.

However, the (un)intended consequences of these reminders exclude those that do not fit the norms from public life in Quebec (e.g., the children of IRER single mother participating in this study). The exclusion of minoritized groups is punitive in and of itself, and it is done either overtly or in covert ways, most often by invoking the "language laws" (meaning immigrant integration rules and regulations within the schools). According to the IRER single mothers in this study, the rules and regulations about language, when imposed by the dominant majority group, have the effect of erasing racism and discrimination, silencing grievances and making invisible those that want to communicate those grievances.

Therefore, linguicism in Quebec includes markers of whiteness, markers of superiority, and entitlement: it communicates that one's language and culture could be "defended" or "enforced" even if another one might be insulted, humiliated, and silenced in the process of defending it. Jiwani et al. (2021) argued that "This dynamic is left invisible by an analytic lens that registers language as the only and primary issue at stake, and immigrants, Allophones, and racialized minorities as peripheral to issues designated by a binary French-English divide" (p. 251). This power dynamic was described by the participants as a cause of ongoing suffering and stress. The majority's covert and overt dominance requires the mindset of entitlement to govern IRER minorities, and when pushed a little too far because of the hegemonic and structural power of schools, it became a punitive modus operandi with Allophone IOC&Y and their parents.

Structural barriers to employment, constant negative feedback, low expectations, racism and discrimination constitute experiences that lead to intersecting penalties. These reminders are not about universal values and principles but rather about regulating how an outsider (an Allophone, an immigrant, a newcomer) must and should integrate into Quebec. When verbal and oral communication becomes the focus of endless debates in schools, media, and civic life, I would argue that these are worrying signs of increased dominance on the four dimensions of intersectionality: structural, hegemonic, punitive, and inter-personal.

Although race, French language and religion are found in the entire international Francophonie, or French community, Quebec's colonial legacy has been challenged by the new settlers (Allophones) residing in this province. Bronfenbrenner's model underlined that Quebec is a provincial subsystem of a larger federal system. Within this configuration, interculturalism co-exists, resists, and contests the multicultural Canadian model of integrating immigrants to this country. According to this study, at the provincial level, in Quebec, and more specifically in the plurilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural Montreal, race, the use of French language, and religion have been identified as specific contextual factors influencing the quality of interaction and the power balance between parents and schools in Montreal.

According to the IRER women single mothers participating in this study, these dynamics manifest in all four domains of power and at all levels of the Bronfenbrenner's model. Therefore, findings suggested that racism, sexism, Islamophobia, and linguicism are present across all levels of the socio-ecologic model. While more studies are required to understand Quebec's local context in which intersecting inequalities disproportionately impact plurilingual, first-generation Canadian children in Quebec, this study highlighted how this phenomenon unfolds from the perspectives of their mothers.

Three Concluding Insights

Three insights emerged from this study: 1) for the participants in this study, immigration is a feminist practice; 2) urgent reforms are required to improve the educational outcomes of Allophone students in Quebec public schools; 3) the gap between the immigrants' hopes and expectations and post-migration experiences are indicative of a deceiving immigration environment promoted internationally by both Quebec and Canada.

Immigration is a Feminist Practice

For the IRER single mother participating in this study, immigration represented a feminist practice. Hopes and expectations they had prior to migration were compared with their experiences upon settlement in Montreal and then placed in a transnational broader context in which Canada has an impeccable reputation regarding its immigrant integration policies. Canada is also known internationally as a defender of women's rights and a leader in gender equality for Canadian women. The Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) of 1985 stated that all men and women in Canada have the right to equality, equal opportunity, fair treatment, and an environment free of discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, marital status and family status. Moreover, according to Global Affairs Canada (2018)[1]

> Canada is a global champion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, both at home and abroad. On May 25, 2018, Canada issued a call to action to establish a first of its kind partnership to mobilize unprecedented levels of resources to create a sustainable and predictable source of funding for women's organizations and movements in developing countries. Canada committed up to $300 million to help

[1] https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2018/05/canada-announces-new-partnership-to-fund-gender-equality-and-empower-women-and-girls-in-developing-countries.html

establish this partnership, which will bring together the philanthropic community, the investing community, the private sector and civil society into a single platform to leverage more than $1 billion in assets working for gender equality.

This type of social campaign with its promises of equality appeals to women living in countries with undemocratic regimes. Prior to migration the participants hoped for a better society, safety from violence, socio-economic stability, and a chance to live a better life. Therefore, taking the risk of emigrating to Quebec, Canada seemed to be the only way of achieving a better life. These hopes and expectations for the IRER single mothers in this study embodied the Canadian dream.

Feminist values linked their knowledge and experience of injustice to the desire for change, progress, and growth opportunities. By refusing to stay trapped in the patriarchal values and social structures of their countries of origin, the IRER single mothers in this study were confident, self-reliant, proud of their education and work experience, and invested all their financial resources in the immigration process. Furthermore, they trusted that in Quebec, Canada, their lives and their children's lives would be better and not worse than in their countries of origin. However, upon settlement, the linguistic, racial, ethnic, and religious tensions had socio-political and economic implications for the IRER single mothers and their children. Those participants silenced by racism, sexism, and linguicism realized that their feminist ideals are more threatened by the combined effects of these forms of marginalization. Over time, with one exception, the impact of systemic discrimination placed all the IRER single-mother families in a prolonged state of post-migration stress. Consequently, most of the IRER single mother families in this study also experienced prolonged precariousness and social marginalization.

Feminist Solidarity. Instead of starting a new and better life, the women in this study considered that immigration was a life-changing event that arrived with the additional

burdens of starting all over again in a foreign environment. Such immigration outcomes are often reported in studies about immigrant women described as victims or marginalized bodies in need of rescue. On the contrary, this study accentuated the women's fearlessness and determination despite the immense pressures they experienced. Upon settlement, the women maintained their feminist ideals and continued to pursue their aspirations for themselves and their children even when not having an adequate support-system. Their ongoing efforts prove that they did not act as victims of inequality but as women who can identify, articulate, and disrupt the status quo in schools and society at large. Furthermore, the findings of this study, replaced the deficit view of IRER women and their children with feminist stories of resistance and resilience without minimizing their hardships.

In conclusion, one important contribution of this inquiry was related to women's solidarity beyond their national identities. In their quest for educational justice, participants refused to have their voices silenced by intercultural French-only policies. Overall, women in this study demonstrated a type of feminism that places motherhood at its centre (O'Reilly, 2021). In the tensed context of Quebec's nationalist policies, their active forms of involvement might become a noticeable challenge.

Reforms for Plurilingual, First Generation Canadian Children in Quebec Schools

Rosa and Tudge (2013) discovered that "Bronfenbrenner was unable to find answers to the many questions asked by those with responsibility for social policies—questions primarily related to practical questions about the lives of children and their families" (p. 245). This study provides a series of findings and practical implications for those in need of inspiration.

As education and integration are linked into an inseparable whole resulting from the specific contextual factors of Quebec, they are not to be used interchangeably.

This study finds that participants place a great importance on two *integration* aspects: their ability to speak French and their children's school performance in French. As education

should represent more than just learning French, research with/and about immigrants French is the most important aspect of the integration process. As highlighted by this study, integration is done for newcomers in specific settings, where *all* immigrant children are learning how to integrate in French from a handful of teachers.

In many cases, the relationship between immigrant parents and schools could not be collaborative or form equal relationships. This situation is primarily caused by the insufficient language abilities of parents with children in Accueil. As many parents are also going through the process of Francization in special schools for adults, they most often still have to develop adequate communication abilities. Until proper command of French is achieved they cannot effectively communicate with schools without paying for a translator. Schools do not offer translation services either because they have insufficient resources for translators or have no translators that can be used for parent-school communication.

The participants who spoke French good enough found that their language skills were not helpful when communicating contentious issues related to racism, discrimination, and the wellbeing of their children while at school. The communication breakdown also demonstrates the need for urgent educational reforms for Allophones with children in Accueil.

Those who did not speak French felt embarrassed in front of their children and the teachers. Inability to communicate effectively decreased parental authority, mainly when mothers had to negotiate or advocate with the school system on behalf of their children. Negative interactions with the school contributed to a sense of inadequacy when assisting children with homework. In contrast, the school system held mothers accountable for the educational disadvantage of the Allophone children and youth by pointing out an insufficient practice of French while at home. In response to these expectations, this study found that the IRER mothers felt that schools, especially Acceuil schools, have a significant influence over their children's academic trajectories.

A Call to Action. The participants perceived that their love, attention, concern, care and prior education remained invisible to the teachers who devalued their maternal authority, cultural heritage and prior education. Sustained efforts were insufficient to compensate with maternal care and support for educational inequity. In addition, maternal strategies that challenged the status quo demonstrated the need for ethical inquiry into pedagogical practices in the Accueil system. Moreover, the findings suggested a need for public consultation of the IRER population regarding immigrant integration and education.

The participants underlined the need for inclusive plurilingual education and had the following suggestions: improve transparency regarding the Accueil system; provide information about Accueil in ways and languages that parents would be able to understand; make significant changes in the assessment methods used in Accueil, adopt student-centered approaches with a multicultural curriculum; acknowledge that French is a third language for many of the students, and therefore it requires different strategies for teaching and learning; increase recognition of plurilingual learners and the value of multilingualism in schools; promote channels to report abuses of power that happen at school; provide better training for teachers; ensure bilingualism as an option during parent-teacher interaction; translate school materials in multiple languages; allow for friendly, informal teacher-parent interaction; provide positive feedback not only negative feedback; and encourage excellence in schools beyond the learning of French. Another suggestion was to translate this research in many languages so that immigrant parents would be better informed prior to making a decision to emigrate to Quebec.

Without an honest conversation about the maladjustment of the Allophone children and youth within the public-school system there will continue to be high public health costs associated with school incompletion, school delays, and school refusal. The socio-economic issues related to funding of neighborhood Accueil urban schools should also become part of

the discussion on equitable education in Quebec. Therefore, instead of pointing the finger at the deficiencies of immigrant parents, future research should investigate best practices in the application of educational policies for plurilingual students in the Accueil system.

In order to improve educational outcomes of plurilingual, first-generation Canadian children, the complex aspects of teacher accountability and school inequities in Quebec French public schools must be examined and understood in practical and actionable terms.

A Deceiving Immigration Environment

From the perspectives of the participants, both Canada and Quebec created a deceiving immigration environment that concealed the true conditions required to successfully integrate in Quebec. The deception was identified in the macrosystem and the exosystem, impacting IRER single-mother families. Environmental deception was experienced by the participants in relation to the entanglement of complex, paradoxical, and conflicting layers of federal/provincial levels of governmentality. From the participants' perspective, a two-layered macrosystem and a two-layered exosystem benefit the Francophones and the Anglophones of the province. As explained in Chapter 2, Canada's right holders benefit from a complex overlap of linguistic acts. This overlap represents a fragmentation of the Canadian social fabric into which the Allophones/immigrants are placed at the socio-economic bottom in Quebec. Overall this study found that the immigrant women participating in this study felt deceived by the immigration system of Quebec and the integration policies existing in the rest of Canada.

Canada's Parallel Immigrant Integration Models. Lee (2016) argued these two parallel narratives created ongoing tensions between Canada's multiculturalism and Quebec's intercultural citizenship framework of integrating immigrants into the host society. The IRER participants in this study struggled to understand the split between these paradigms and talked about their difficulties living in a French-only Quebec. The participants tried to find the

overlap between these apparently competing integration models. However, this study found that participants in this study prefer Canada's bilingualism and multiculturalism. However, the tensions and contradictions between the federal macrosystems and provincial exosystem resulted in confusion and frustration.

The IRER women participating in this study perceived that they were perhaps caught between French and English historical colonial rivalries still competing with each, over attracting a well-educated work force that might also increase birth rates or bring their own children with them. In a pre-migration context, the IRER single-mother participants in this study thought Quebec was part of Canada and both had a unitary approach to integrating immigrants expect that French was mostly used in Quebec. They also thought that bilingualism in Quebec is not a divisive issue but on a contrary, a quality that schools provide to its immigrants as competitive advantage on the international job market. In a post-migration context however, the participants in this study noticed that the English and French, the federal and provincial governments have different political agendas, and promote immigrant integration policies that seemed to be at odds with each other. Although they emigrated to Canada, upon arrival and settlement, they felt stuck in Quebec, a province whose socio-economic performance is below their hopes and expectations.

Comparing IRER's Integration Outcomes. Nevertheless, by comparing their integration efforts related to learning French to the integration outcomes of other new Canadians across Quebec's borders, the participants in this study perceived that their integration could have been more successful in any of the other Canadian provinces than in Quebec. They also perceived that multilingualism, and their foreign (social, cultural, linguistic) capital might constitute barriers to upward socio-economic mobility in Quebec.

In this study, the English-speaking IRER mothers expressed a preference for Canada's bilingualism and the Canadian federal government's multicultural values. Moreover, they

could not reconcile their expectations with Quebec's interculturalism policy based on a majority-minority framework to immigrant education and integration. Despite the critiques of multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 2003; Thobani, 2007; Walcott, 2016) that bilingualism creates two founding societies at the top, and immigrant others below, multiculturalism remained aspirational.

Overall, the tensions and contradictions experienced by women in this study revealed confusion regarding the conflicts between Canada and Quebec and was manifested in their post-migration subjective experiences. Based on the findings, the participants in this study emigrated to a multicultural, bilingual Canada. However, according to the participants, they seemed to remain stuck in Quebec, which promotes itself as a unilingual province and a unique entity (stateless nation) within the Canadian federation. For these reasons, perhaps we should understand that from the perspective of IRER single mothers, at the beginning of the 21st Century, Canada and Quebec were two distinct socio-historical locations.

In conclusion, the gap between pre-migration expectations and post-migration experiences is indicative of a deceiving immigration discourse advanced by both Canada and Quebec internationally.

Implications for Theory, Policy, and Practice

Measures to Reduce Educational Inequalities

Overall, this study found that the IRER single mothers' involvement or over-involvement in schooling cannot counterbalance the social forces coming from the microlevel, mesolevel, exolevel, and macrolevels, whose combined effects placed plurilingual, first-generation Canadian children at an educational disadvantage in Quebec's French public schools. In order to reduce and effectively counteract school refusal, educational delays and low motivation in learning, policymakers should design innovative policies for immigrant education and reform the curricula, especially in Accueil. Furthermore, high parental involvement without

educational reforms proved insufficient to positively influence the educational opportunities of plurilingual, first-generation Canadian children in IRER single-mother families residing in Quebec.

To counteract some of such challenges, the Ministry of Education created in 1960 was restructured several times. The Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports was established in 2012-2013, with a budget allocated exclusively to the French-language school boards for the reception and Francization of immigrant students. In order to respond to the needs related to the linguistic, school adjustment and social integration of immigrant students, the government funding targeted the following areas: additional language support in French for Allophone students; additional support in the students' original language; other resources for immigrant students in situations of significant academic delay; and school and social integration services for students and their families (Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement Supérieur [MEES], 2017). Funding was allocated to strengthen family-school partnerships, hire specialized personnel and provide translation services in schools. A significant feature for the successful integration and reception of immigrants was creating and implementing easy-to-follow protocols (MEES, 2019).

According to the participants, the existing protocols were not applied in schools as intended by the policymakers. As a result, disadvantaged schools in urban areas lacked resources were understaffed, and many teachers were overwhelmed by the multitude of issues they had to face. Although such protocols are well-intended and the vast majority of teachers and school administration have a high level of integrity and professionalism, exceptions seem to exist in schools where the critical incidents described in Chapter 6 remain unaddressed. Another measure to reduce educational inequalities would be focusing on the latest research on plurilingual pedagogies, language acquisition in multicultural settings, and those that merge acculturation and developmental theories and frameworks. Offering an alternative to

the malfunctioning of the Accueil system is one important measure that reduces educational gaps for Allophones IOC&Y in Quebec. Improved curricula for multilingual students, modern teaching practices, a transparent use of resources, and a balanced parent-school collaboration, are some ways of reducing the educational disadvantage of IOC&Y attending public schools in Montreal.

Critique of the Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's social ecological model (1974;1976; 1979,1986) provided a compelling theoretical basis for considering home, school and social contexts in concert. One of the strengths of this theoretical approach is the focus on parent-school collaboration as a mesosystem, embedded system within Quebec's society which is part of Canada with its Canadian multiculturalism and history of settler colonialism. Rosa and Tudge (2013) stated that "ecological environments are constituted in a phenomenological field that orients the developing person's actions and interactions" (p. 248). The environment should thus be considered as it is perceived and understood by the person, meaning that it is partly constituted of the world of imagination and fantasy (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). From a methodological perspective, a phenomenological analysis analyzes how each participant perceives the setting and its various elements (Bronfenbrenner,1976).

However, according to this theoretical view, racism and discrimination are not used by the representatives of a majority to socially exclude, shame, and oppress immigrants, refugees, ethnocultural and racialized (IRER) minorities; instead, these are just perceptions of one's imagination. Moreover, individuals themselves might choose an emotional response to conditions in the environment that contradict personal expectations and standards. The participants' perceptions in this study constituted their subjective understanding of the interactions with the people representing Quebec's dominant culture. Just as anthropologists immerse themselves in unfamiliar contexts, the participants in this study found themselves

enclosed in the socio-cultural settings of the host society and interpreted their experiences as outsiders/insiders: as Allophones trying to adapt and integrate into Quebec society, but also as insiders, as self-identified new Canadians arriving in multicultural Canada.

Overall, this theoretical approach while useful as systems theory, has not fully captured the asymmetrical power dynamics, particularly the "overlapping systems of oppression and inequities …increasing evidence of school pushout among diverse youth, and growing economic disparities" (Santos & Toomey, 2018, p. 8). More specifically, Bronfenbrenner's framework was insufficient in addressing the unique aspects of single-mother families and educational inequities of marginalized IOC&Y attending urban neighborhood schools in Quebec's plurilingual multicultural Montreal described in more detail at the front of this discussion chapter. Reskin (2012) argued that "according to a systems approach it is impossible to explain race-linked disparities within a single subsystem, much less to come up with remedies for those disparities" (p.18).

Therefore, Intersectionality was instrumental in evidencing how parent-school interaction could be conceptualized as a power setting nested within Quebec's policy context; and how anti-immigrant sentiments influenced the maladjustment of IOC&Y attending the public school system on the Island of Montreal, Quebec. The intersectional perspective was necessary to shift the focus away from individual characteristics to the broader systems (Godfrey & Burson, 2018) and redirect it towards the dynamics through which marginalizing institutions such as the Accueil system was seen by the participants in this study as a central axis of power, represented by the majority holding dominant views within Quebec society and Montreal's plurilingual, multicultural city.

Alternative Model. The integrative risk and resilience (IRR) model (Suárez-Orozco et. al., 2018) is a framework for understanding both the acculturation and developmental trajectories of IOC&Y adaptation. According to Juang & Syed (2019), the IRR model

(Suárez-Orozco et. al., 2018) is based on the four following nested contextual levels of influence including: the individual (e.g., social-position variables such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and legal status), within microsystems (e.g., family, school, peers), within political-social contexts of reception (e.g., national attitudes and policies regarding immigration), and within global forces (e.g., climate change, poverty, conflict on a transnational or global scale).

Considering immigrant children's adaptation on a global level, this model acknowledges that developmental boundaries occur far beyond the country and culture in which children live (p. 243). In order to better understand how integrative models, regard acculturation and developmental theories, Juang and Syed (2019) suggested that the IRR model (Suárez-Orozco et. al., 2018) requires an interdisciplinary, multilevel approach and that researchers can use the intersectionality perspective to investigate social positions outlined by the IRR model. (Suárez-Orozco et. al., 2018).

Boundaries of this Inquiry

The Chronosystem

The chronosystem is the outer circle of influence, describing the larger historical context of the world system shaping and constraining over space and time the trajectories of a wide range of systems from simple to complex, from individuals to nation-states (macrosystems). Within the chronosystem, immigration could be understood as a transnational process (Kastoryano, 2018. The macro dynamics of this level can be identified in the socio-historical trends such as global wide increased precarity of single mother families and the feminization of poverty and immigration. Kiang et al. (2016) stated that "historical events also affect development by shaping children's proximal social contexts and, thus, their ethnic socialization" (p.1000). For example, the Canada-Quebec Accord (1991) was a historical event that gave Quebec power over immigration and streamed immigrants into different

integration systems. Quebec is also a province within Canada with a majority of Francophones establishing the rules for everyone in the province as if the province was an independent nation with its own cronosystem in the past forty years. This aspect also remained outside the scope of this study. However, while important for child development, an in-depth consideration of the chronosystem remained outside the boundaries of this inquiry whose main focus was on the mesosystem (parent-school interaction).

Settler Colonialism and Education. Although immigration is interlocked with the history of settler colonialism in Canada, Indigenous education and the history of residential schools in Canada and Quebec were not included in this inquiry. While the study focused on Quebec's Allophones/IOC&Y as a distinct population group within Canada and Quebec, the school system is intimately linked to colonial power dynamics. Tuck and Fernandez (2013) stated that "the field of curriculum studies has played a significant role in the maintenance of settler colonialism. Early curriculum scholars conceived of educational projects through logics of replacement in which the settler ultimately comes to replace the Native" (p. 76).

The success of Allophone children in French-language schools, including Accueil was mentioned in this dissertation (Chapter 1). However, more research is needed to fully understand the cultural, psychological, and social costs associated with school completion in Quebec French-language schools.

Method

The interviews with twelve immigrant mothers constituted the only qualitative data gathered for this study. Although the sample is sufficient for a small qualitative study, interviews with their children could have expanded my understanding of educational inequity in Quebec's schools. Similarly, interviews with the school principals or teachers could have provided another opportunity to expand the views of parent-school interaction and the impact these interactions might have on single-mother families.

One defining aspect of the research was that all participants are highly educated immigrant women. The participants had attended at least one higher education institutions either in Canada or in their countries of origin. One strength of the study is that it included women from all over the world, from different backgrounds, age, and socio-economic status.

During the study, the sex and gender of the participants were not discussed. Although all participants self-identified as women, this study did not focus on the experiences of immigrant single mothers from the LGBTQIA+ spectrum. LGBTIQA+ stands for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual and the sign "+" stands for other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual). This limitation was not intentional. The bilingual recruitment posters were emailed and distributed in person to organizations serving the LGBTIQA+ communities in the Montreal area.

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Appendix A

Linguistic, Educational and Social Integration [2] /L'intégration linguistique, scolaire et social

Le rôle que joue l'école québécoise dans la promotion de l'égalité des chances nécessite la mise en place de moyens particuliers en vue de répondre aux besoins de certains élèves. Pour l'adolescent immigrant nouvellement arrivé et non francophone, le besoin premier est de s'intégrer à sa société d'accueil. Il doit apprendre le français, langue commune de la vie publique, et s'approprier le fonction- nement de son milieu scolaire et de la société en général. Le programme d'intégration linguistique, scolaire et sociale est donc un passage, une passerelle qui facilite l'intégration à la classe ordinaire. Il précise les apprentissages essentiels devant permettre à l'élève immigrant non francophone d'acquérir le plus rapidement possible une connaissance fonctionnelle du français, de comprendre la culture scolaire et sociale de son nouveau milieu et d'amorcer le dévelop- pement de conduites et d'attitudes appropriées pour s'y intégrer harmonieusement.

Si, au moment de sa création en 1969, la classe d'accueil a été conçue comme un service centré sur la francisation des élèves non francophones, les acteurs du milieu ont progressivement saisi la nécessité d'élargir cette perspective. Ainsi, l'un des principes directeurs du programme d'études *Français, classe d'accueil, classe de francisation* (1986) était de permettre à l'élève de «s'ouvrir sur les matières enseignées dans les classes ordinaires » (p. 16). De plus, le volet « Initiation à la vie québécoise » était alors introduit pour sensibiliser l'élève à son nouveau milieu de vie. C'est dans la continuité

[2] Source : Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport du Québec, 2008, p.148

de ce cheminement et de façon à l'élargir que le ministère de l'Éducation s'est donné en 1998 la Politique d'intégration scolaire et d'éducation interculturelle, intitulée *Une école d'avenir*, dont les orientations portent non seulement sur l'intégration scolaire mais également sur l'éducation interculturelle et sur l'apprentissage de la citoyenneté.

Dans cette foulée, la présente partie du Programme de formation aborde les aspects linguistique, scolaire et social de l'intégration de l'adolescent non francophone récemment installé au Québec. Ces aspects sont présentés sur un pied d'égalité et dans une interrelation dynamique où chacun alimente et enrichit les deux autres. Comme son titre l'indique, le programme d'intégration linguistique, scolaire et sociale retient trois compétences à développer :

– Interagir en français;

– S'adapter aux pratiques scolaires québécoises;

– S'intégrer à la société québécoise.

Bien que son appellation soit différente, le programme du secondaire est conçu dans le même esprit que le pro- gramme d'accueil du primaire. La compétence *Interagir en français* est la même au primaire et au secondaire. Les deux autres compétences vont toutefois plus loin que la compétence du primaire *Se familiariser avec la culture de son milieu*. Cette situation s'explique par la différence entre les besoins de formation et d'intégration d'un élève du primaire et ceux – plus importants et surtout plus complexes – d'un élève du secondaire.

Appendix B

Ethics Clearance Certificate

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant:	Aurelia Roman
Department:	Faculty of Arts and Science\Applied Human Sciences
Agency:	N/A
Title of Project:	Parent-School Collaboration in Quebec from the Perspective of Immigrant Women who are also Single Mothers
Certification Number:	30009459

Valid From: June 12, 2019 To: June 11, 2020

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

_____

Dr. Richard DeMont, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix C

Inclusion Criteria (to Participate in the Research Study)

Please note that the following inclusion and exclusion criteria have been submitted, reviewed, and accepted as valid by the Office of Research at Concordia University.

The selection of participants focused on recruiting mothers born outside Canada who were parenting school aged children alone. Their children were (parenting alone school children) enrolled in the French public schools in Quebec. to be included in the study, mothers were screened for their ability to communicate in English and had moved to Canada in the past 18 years (since 2000 or later).

Mothers that are involved or have been involved with Youth Protection Services will not be selected to participate in the study.

I took into consideration that generally, newly arrived immigrant women, refugees and asylum seeker claimants WERE (are) considered an at-risk group. However, given the scope of this research project and the interview questions, the participants selected were not judged to be at risk of any foreseeable harm.

Age, sex and gender. The participant identified herself as a woman, was older than 18 years old, and was born outside of Canada (foreign-born).

Women-led household (as marital status). The participant is an immigrant woman who is parenting alone without the support of a partner. The participant might be “single” or “alone” by choice, through separation, divorce, or other circumstances.

For the purpose of this study the participant must be an individual who is in charge of her household, lives with her minor child(ren), and is the primary caregiver and provider of her child(ren), regardless of her religion, race, ethnic background, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or educational level.

Status in Canada. The participant was included in the study regardless of her status in Canada. This means that the participant could have been a permanent resident, refugee, Canadian Citizen or has a temporary visa.

Arrival in Canada. The participant emigrated to Canada in the past 18 years (since 2000 or later). Please see below the rationale for the proposed changed in the criteria of inclusion:

In 1998, the Quebec Ministry of Education (MEQ) issued a policy on school integration and intercultural education (MEQ, 1998). The policy provides guidelines that specify the responsibilities school have in matters of immigration management, the integration of immigrant families in Quebec society, and the responsibilities of teaching establishments to provide proper instruction in French. Therefore, the year 2000 stands for the beginning of a new policy environment not only for the newly arrived immigrants with school children but also teachers, school administrators and the larger Quebec society

Language. For the immigrant population, the language of the interview might be a barrier to participate in a research study. In order to participate in this research, the participant must be comfortable expressing herself in English, is able to read and/or fully understand the terms stated in the Consent Form.

Current residence. The participant currently resides in Quebec and is the primary provider and caregiver.

Children. The participant is a woman parenting alone and has minor child(ren) attending a French public school in Montreal area. The child can be attending either an elementary or a secondary school.

Other criteria. Since having to provide childcare for young children or paying for transportation might prevent participants from being included in this project, I provided a $20.00 honorarium to participants, so they can be included in this research if they so desire.

Exclusion criteria

a) The participant is not a single mother (currently in a common-law relationship or lives with a spouse/partner for more than 6 months);

b) The participant is not the sole provider of her children;

c) The participant is or has been involved with Youth Protection Services. This exclusion criteria stays within the scope of this project which is solely focused on parent-school collaboration and does not involve a third institutional party;

d) The participant has moved to Canada before 2000;

e) The participant does not speak English and/or read the Consent Form drafted in English;

The participant does not have child(ren) enrolled in school;

f) The participant does not have a child(ren) enrolled in a French public school;

g) The participant was born in Canada and it is not an immigrant or refugee.

h) The participant is a man.

Rationale for these criteria:

The purpose of this research study is solely focused on parent-school collaboration from the perspective of immigrant women and it excludes the views of immigrant men. This exclusion criterion is based on previous research studies (Sidel, 2006; Wiegers & Chunn, 2015; Motapanyane, 2016) that have shown that women in general and immigrant women in particular experience stigma and discrimination when parenting alone. The stigma augments social inequalities.

At the same time, single fathers regardless of their personal circumstances, are perceived as being better parents than single mothers (O'Reilley, 2015). Moreover, Donnato and Gabaccia (2016) argue that migration impacts women and men differently. Therefore, this research is purposefully grounded in feminist intersectionality to better understand how immigrant women who are single mothers interact with educational institutions (schools).

Appendix D

Flyer Recruiting Participants

Research Interview with IMMIGRANT LONE MOTHERS about PARENT-SCHOOL INTERACTION in Quebec

I am a woman raising my child(ren) by myself Yes / No

I moved to Canada after 2000 Yes / No

I speak English better than French Yes / No

I have experience interacting with the French public-school Yes / No

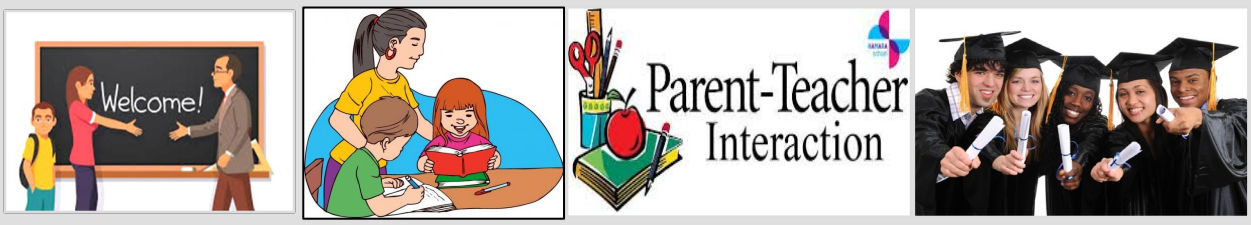
Participation in this research involves

- One confidential conversation in English (about 60 minutes)
- $20 cash compensation to thank you for your participation
- Share your experience interacting with the school of your child

Study title: *Parent-School Interaction from the Perspective of Immigrant and Refugee Women who are Parenting Alone School Children Enrolled in French Public School in Quebec*

For more information, or to schedule an interview please contact the researcher at (514) 692-9789 or aurelia.roman@concordia.ca

This study has Ethics Certification from Concordia University



Appendix E

Interview Questions

1. How old are your children and what age were they when you arrived in Canada?

2. Thinking back, before you moved to Canada/Quebec, what were your hopes and aspirations regarding the education of your child(ren)?

   Prompting questions:

   Were those aspirations met? In what ways are they met/ unmet?

3. Upon your arrival in Quebec, tell me about your overall experience interacting with the school of your child(ren)?

   Prompting questions:

   Tell me about your communication with the teachers?

   Tell me about your regular parent-teacher meetings?

   What is the overall experience communicating others in the school (secretary, principal)?

   What are some of the things that you think shape these interactions with school personnel?

   Can you share a story/incident that represents your relationship with the school?

4. How are your child(ren) doing in school?

   Prompting questions:

   Does your child need additional help in some of the subjects? If yes, in what ways?

   Tell me about your involvement with homework.

   Are there any other people involved in the education of your child? If yes, in what ways?

5. Currently, how would you assess the educational opportunities of your child(ren)?

   Prompting questions:

   In your opinion, what are specific support systems that your child might needs in order to do well in school?

   What access do you have to supports like these?

Appendix F[3]

Bill 101

Quebec's Exosystem/Policy Context of Reception and Settlement

The office québécois de la langue française

Article 161. The Office shall see to it that French is the normal and everyday language of work, communication, commerce and business in the civil administration and in enterprises. The Office may, among other things, take **any appropriate measure** to *promote* French.

The Office shall help define and develop the francization programs provided for in this Act and monitor their application.

Article 187. **The conseil supérieur de la langue française (8 memebrs)**

(1) a chair, for a term not exceeding five years; and

(2) seven persons, chosen after consultation with the bodies which the Government considers representative of consumers, **educational circles, cultural communities**, unions and management, for a term not exceeding five years

Article 205. Anyone who contravenes any of sections 78.1 to 78.3 and 176 or an order issued by the Minister under section 128.3 or by the Office under section 177 commits an offence and is liable to a fine of $700 to $7,000 in the case of a natural person and $3,000 to $30,000 in all other cases.

No penal proceedings may be instituted against a person if the alleged failure to comply makes the person liable to the disciplinary measures referred to in section 204.32

Article 207. The minimum and maximum fines prescribed by this Act are doubled for a second offence and tripled for a subsequent offence.

In addition, if an offender commits an offence under a provision of this Act after having previously been found guilty of an offence under such a provision and if, without regard to the amounts prescribed for a second or subsequent offence, the minimum fine to which the offender was liable for the first offence was equal to or greater than the minimum fine prescribed for the second offence, the minimum and maximum fines for the offence become, if the prosecutor so requests, those prescribed in the case of a second or a subsequent offence, as applicable.

This section applies where prior findings of guilty were pronounced in the two-year period preceding the second offence or, if the minimum fine to which the offender was liable for the prior offence is that prescribed in section 206, in the five-year period preceding the second offence. Fines for a third or subsequent offence apply if the penalty imposed for the prior offence was the penalty for a second or subsequent offence

Allophone / Plurilingual and English-speaking first generation Canadians/IRER single-mother families

The participants in this study perceived that Bill was enforced by some of the school representatives in a inapropriate/punitive manner.

3. https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/document/cs/c-11