Racialized Risks, Queer Threats: Refugee Experiences of

"Sanctuary" in the City of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

There appears to be a gap in the literature that examines the intersectionality of identities for the refugee subject, especially for queer refugees. As well, there is a prevalence of heteronormative discourses throughout the literature. In all cases, homophobic violence is named but I will argue this is not *the* problem; it is merely a symptom of a broken system rooted in discourses of securitization and heteronormativity. Currently, migration to Canada is overseen by an increasingly over-securitized state which treats refugee claimants as threats to the nation. Concomitantly, the cultural adherence to traditional, white, heteronormative identities adds another dimension of risk for racialized, queer refugee subjects. This research study examines the experiences of resettlement for racialized and queer refugees in Toronto – a city that claims to be a sanctuary for such refugee claimants. The findings show that although queer refugees are generally safe from blatant and overt forms of violence post-migration, they still feel the need to resort to strategic methods of discretion, as it takes time to unlearn the fear and insecurity that exists as a result of experiencing trauma in the previous country. The interviews demonstrate that although some queer refugees may have to overcome internal and external challenges in their resettled lives, ultimately the action of migrating to Canada has opened up a multitude of promising possibilities.

Keywords: Resettlement, Race, Queer, Refugee, Heteronormativity, Securitization, Discretion, Religion, Mental Health, Technology, Stigma

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Academic literature surrounding the migration and settlement of queer refugees has predominately surfaced in the past 16 years. According to Ford (2007) being queer[1] requires a conscious decision to live outside of a particular, heterosexual social norm. Some argue that to be queer also rests outside a white race norm (Carter, 2011). This adds another level of queer experience for queer refugees who migrate from the global South. There are social rewards and punishments that are associated with conforming to norms related to gender, class, race, etc. (Ford, 2007), yet the punishment of being stigmatized is given to those who choose to publically express a queer sexuality. Queer refugees, in both sending and receiving countries, are not often discussed in the media or any popular and public forums. According to the key informant in this study, refugee lawyer El-Farouk Khaki [2], the recognition of heteronormative violence towards queer people was not recognized in Canada as a human rights violation until the mid 1990s (Khaki, 2016). However, with the development of Refugee Studies as an academic discipline, there has been an increasing amount of research published about members of this population who are queer identified (Berg& Millbank, 2009; Kojima, 2014; Murray, 2014; Lee& Brotman, 2011). This existing literature focuses on topics including the challenges that queer asylum seekers encounter when their claims are processed by immigration boards (Berg & Millbank, 2009; Millbank, 2002), as well as the instances when they are confronted with homophobic or racist violence post-migration (Munro, Traver, St. John, Klein, Hunter, Brennan, & Brett, 2013; Logie & Rwigema, 2014; Han, 2007). Additionally, attention has been brought to how their identity performance is questioned through complex and intersecting systems of sexuality,

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1. [1] Building off Ford's (2007) definition, the term "queer" is defined in this paper as a wilful choice to live outside of a particular norm, in this case, heteronormativity.
2. El-Farouk Khaki agreed to use his full name for this major research paper

settlement and identity (Murray, 2014; Lee & Brotman, 2011). For queer refugees, other migrants, and racialized populations there are multiple forces that shape their decision to live on the 'down low' (McCune Jr, 2014) and not reveal themselves, or their relationships, in public. The down low represents a secretive and underground form of queer expression that is compartmentalized from the rest of one's life (McCune Jr, 2014). These factors are complex and can include the intersections of race, culture, refugee status, religion, and gender (Lim-Hing, 2005; Logie & Rwigema, 2014; Munro et al., 2013). Although it may seem like these factors would have less influence post-migration in Canada, queer migrants and racialized populations most often never fully escape transnational ties with their families, and the perceived, disciplinary gaze that may come from members of their diasporic or ethnic communities. Research that focuses on the settlement of queer refugees has touched upon the public and private divide in the previous, sending country. Yet not as much attention has been paid to the private sphere of the receiving country. My interviews demonstrate that there is extreme pressure placed on queer migrants, to compartmentalize expressions of culturally defined 'socially-deviant' sexuality, both in the sending and receiving countries. This compartmentalization of queer expression is due to the coming out process, and the visibility that comes with it, as being a privilege that is granted to select, homonormative bodies (Oswin, 2008; Puar, 2007).

Overtime, the Canadian state has become more progressive in its stance on queer rights (LaViolette, 2004; Pearon, 2004), yet the general public is slow in gaining the awareness of how the processes of normalization within a heteronormative society provide obstacles to public, queer expression. When homosexuality was decriminalized through the Trudeau government of the 1960s, the Prime Minister proclaimed that "There's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation" (Pearson, 2004).

Although this was a moment of progress for white and wealthier members of the lesbian and gay communities, it also relegated socially-deviant sexualities to the private sphere of the bedroom (Pearson, 2004). This in turn strengthened the presence of heteronormative discourses outside the bedroom and in the public realm of society (Pearson, 2004). The term discourse, according to Gee (2004), is a theoretical outlook of our social world that operates on an unconscious level. Discourses are shaped by our everyday experiences and reinforced by the social groups that one belongs to (Gee, 2004). Heteronormative discourses normalize heterosexual, and procreative, ways of life. As a result of Trudeau's policy change, queer bodies faced a legitimized and heteronormative pressure to keep their intimate relationships out of the public view, in order to avoid persecution (Pearson, 2004). This is in stark contrast to heteronormative bodies that are free to express themselves in public with impunity.

While investigating the intersecting variables that serve as "push factors", that is the reasons for leaving the sending country, it is also important to observe if these larger forces continue to prevail in the lives of queer refugees post-migration. I wanted to explore whether this is the case, and if so, whether there are limited choices for queer expression and engagement for queer refugees who land in Toronto. Further, if this was the case, then Toronto's status of "sanctuary city" (Keung, 2013) for all refugees needs to be called into question. That is, can sanctuary be found in a city that is being regulated through the processes of normalization that are tied to heteronormativity, in addition to the socially constructed notions of the securitized and racialized threat? One important question that drives this study is: Are queer refugees finding the sense of safe haven, or asylum, that they have been pursing since their initial decision to escape persecution through migration? International legislation such as the 1951 United Nations' Refugee Convention, as well as the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), establish

Canada's reputation as a safe haven for the persecuted. The narratives shared by queer refugees

in this study, however, provide deeper insight into the resettlement experience for those seeking

status in Toronto.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Settlement and the White Haven

Canada signed onto the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, which ensured its place within the international, and humanitarian driven, community ("UNHCR- Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees", 2016). The UN Convention holds Canada accountable for granting refugees particular rights, such as the one to engage in paid employment ("UNHCR- Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees", 2016). Although the state follows through with this commitment, the country has its own federal legislation, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), to guide its actions towards refugees and claimants ("Immigration and Refugee Protection Act", 2015). Despite the fact that section three of the UN Convention protects refugees from any form of discrimination ("UNHCR- Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees", 2016), section 96 of the IRPA grants the Immigration and Refugee Board the power to decide who gets to be granted refugee status ("Immigration and Refugee Protection Act", 2015), and the subsequent access to rights that are protected by the UN Refugee Convention. It is at the level of the immigration boards where discrimination can often take place (Millbank, 2002; Munro et al, 2007), which provides status and rights to a select few. With the emergence of the security state after 9/11, status has been given to migrants who are seen as skilled labour and who can fill the demands of the job market (Munck, 2008). Yet as can be observed today, the most preferred migrants are coming from predominately European nations (Stewart, 2012).

Canada as a nation has been constructed through historical processes of colonization, in which European powers have systematically and strategically overtaken indigenous and racialized populations. The strategy of domination was not simply geared towards the

annihilation of Aboriginal populations, but also sought to replace their physical and ideological presence (Wolfe, 2006), by reorienting the beliefs of the original inhabitants, and the meanings that they attached to the land. Through the construction of institutions, such as the residential schools, on native land, the colonizers were able to act based on a logic of extermination, which reinforced a process known as settler governmentality (Crosby & Monaghan, 2012) Based on the Foucauldian concept of governmentality, this form of governance shapes societal understandings of deviance and normality, based on the values of the white and European colonizers (Crosby & Monaghan, 2012). For instance, the acts of resistance from indigenous people towards white, settler domination were painted by the social elite as being expressions of Aboriginal extremism (Crosby & Monaghan, 2012). According to Michel Foucault, the concept of governmentality examines how the state is able to govern through the minds of the populace: "understood in the broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing human behavior. Government of children, government of souls and consciences, government of a household, of a state, or of oneself" (Rose, O'Malley & Valverde, 2006). Governmentality works on an unconscious level such that an individual's decisions are believed to be made based on free will, away from any possible bias (Lemke, 2002). Through this method of governing the public consciousness, individuals are seen to hold onto to their own capacity to act (Li, 2007), yet their minds are being controlled through discourses related to everyday life and so called common-sense knowledge (Lemke, 2002). The state, to a certain degree, trusts that the public will transfer the values and norms of the social elite throughout society (Li, 2007). Governmentality is carried out through particular technologies, such as policies and everyday practices, so that the state does not have to operate through a top-down approach, and still allows the public to feel as though they are making the right choices (Li, 2007) and holding onto the best aspirations for themselves. This covert and

subtle transfer of ideologies, which privileges the white elite, is one of many ways in which earlier cases of British colonization manifested itself, along with the physical overtaking of Aboriginal territories as well as the suppression of indigenous visibility by relocating the original people to far off lands (Sanchez & Pita, 2014). By publically proclaiming themselves as settlers, the British colonizers were able to present themselves as saviours to indigenous populations. Hence, colonizers arrived to "save" these "foreign" and racialized Aboriginal communities, which were constructed as being uncivilized and hazardous to themselves (Razack, 2000).

The racialized threat can be either foreign or domestic, both of which are constructed as being external threats to the process of settler colonization and the so-called original inhabitants from Europe. This period in Canadian history speaks volumes about the ways in which the white upper-class is able to socially construct racialized people as "uncivilized and foreign" threats to the project of colonization and the settling of a new nation. However, I argue that the only real risk that these particular populations posed was to the power that this elite group held and still holds, which was constructed through the earlier and invasive strategies of the colonizer populations. Through the social construction of racialized people as risky populations, the white upper-class has been able to normalize their privilege through discourses of barbarianism and terrorism. There are moments throughout Canadian history in which racialized migrants from places such as Asia and Africa have been treated as unwelcomed guests through policies such as the Continuous Journey Regulations (Kelly & Trebilcock, 2010). When the feared population in question is constructed as being external to the imposed identity and values based on that colonization, such as refugees and other migrants, it is often associated with terrorism and notions of danger and risk (Morgensen, 2010). The notion of external threat is reinforced through normalizing narratives of moral panic, as we have seen in the media, where the incoming danger

7

is depicted as invasive and deviant to social norms (Cohen, 2011). When the racialized threat is domestic, such as Aboriginal groups, is it constructed as being savage (Morgensen, 2010) and in need of correcting or altering, in order to fit into a white and colonial understanding of civility and decency. This is exemplified through the development and implementation of the residential schools, which aimed to "tame the savage" by targeting their children. In these schools, Aboriginal children were subjected to many forms of violence including sexual assault, isolation, and even death (Galloway & Curry, 2015). Language barriers, as well as the foreignness of the European people and culture, made this setting more harmful to the wellbeing of the Aboriginal children, while the sponsoring institutions of the Church and federal government continued to turn a blind eye (Galloway & Curry, 2015). Foucault stressed the pervasive character of discourses, such as those reinforced in the schools, and based in white, Eurocentric values (de Leeux, 2009). As the education system is one site to carry out processes of governmentality, and the spread of discourses that privilege white elites, the residential schools aimed to stop the intergenerational flow of Aboriginal teachings and understandings by brainwashing the next generation of potential, Aboriginal leaders (de Leeux, 2009).

The national narrative, which was shaped by the actions of the British colonizers, constructs Canada as a nation of whiteness and purity, and provides the platform for communicating racist views in a way that can be argued as being non-racist in the public sphere of society (Razack, 2000). The residential schools also attacked the queerness presented through Aboriginal culture, which contradicted the colonizers' prioritized norms of heteronormativity and heteropatriarchy (Greensmith & Giwa, 2013). The schools sought to displace Aboriginal ideologies related to two-spiritedness, and other expressions of queerness, by enforcing heteropatriarchal gender roles on the girls and boys (Greensmith& Giwa, 2013). This type of

enforced suppression and marginalization has carried through to present time, where the white

upper-class is able to continue the legacy of the colonial powers, by reinforcing the notions of

Aboriginal people as barbaric, pre-modern, and hypersexual (Greensmith& Giwa, 2013). The

modern day interactions of two-spirited communities with the mainstream and white gay

community echo the earlier exploitation of the Aboriginal people, where there have been

documented cases of unwanted touching by Caucasian men during Toronto Pride week

(Greensmith & Giwa, 2013). These men feel as though they are entitled to do as they please to

these racialized and indigenous bodies, even in the absence of consent (Greensmith & Giwa,

2013). This reinforces a racial hierarchy both within the queer community and the larger,

Canadian society. When white, gay males acknowledge their whiteness and the privilege that it

comes with, they still have the option of downplaying their access to societal power by engaging

with a "yes, but" discourse (Riggs, 2010). This type of discourse allows them to acknowledge

that they are members of the white, upper-class, while granting them the ability to disassociate

with their privilege by claiming that they are victimized, sexual minorities who face

marginalization (Riggs, 2010). However, this population still is on the beneficial end of a binary

of innocence and guilt, which is analyzed by Bell Hooks with her notion of the white fantasy

(Fox, 2007). This notion is critical of the dominant discourse in society that whiteness is

approachable, safe and good (Fox, 2007). This type of discourse is used when constructing ideas

of social safety and encourages the use of colorblindness (Fox, 2007), which is problematic as

racialized people are more often perceived to be as a risk or danger to social stability, and treated

with increased suspicion and persecution.

The historical process of the development of settler governmentality, which defined the

racialized and indigenous as unruly savages, has led to a demand for truth and reconciliation

from these marginalized groups (Nagy, 2012). However, in order to bring about genuine reconciliation, there needs to be a shift in the power dynamic between the white, privileged group and the historically marginalized Aboriginals. This poses challenges for the white elite as such action would contradict their past rationale of civilizing the indigenous communities (Nagy, 2012), which would ultimately expose this common sense imagery of Europeans as the original inhabitants of Canada. This particular kind of reasoning is found within the dominant and national narrative of Canada, in which the settlers have been depicted as the originals (Razack, 2000). This narrative provides a form of simple inverse logic that was meant to go unquestioned, and has also served as grounds for tightening Canada's national borders, as a way of keeping out the racialized and foreign threat (Razack, 2000). Influenced by a history of colonialism, this national story allows the white elite to construct themselves as victims who are being taken advantage of by the external threat of immigrants and refugees, who are both greedy and bogus (Razack, 2000). Regardless of citizenship status, the national story has positioned all racialized people on a racial hierarchy in which they are assumed, and treated, as if they are guilty of either criminality, fraud, or of lacking proper identity documentation (Razack, 2000), which they are expected to be carrying in the perceived white nation. The dominant discourse enforced through this narrative has led to both the erasure of indigenous people in many urban and prominent cities in Canada, as well as the harsh regulation of racialized migrants from abroad (Fobear, 2014). Both of these phenomenon maintain the white and European influences behind Canada's cultural character, in addition to its literal and socially-constructed borders (Fobear, 2014).

2.2 Racialized Bodies and the Canadian Security State

The Canadian security state can be a site for forcing cultural homogenisation on visible minority groups, while requiring them to assimilate into the dominant culture (Fekete, 2015), which is backed up by the values presented in the national narrative. Over time, migration to Canada has become increasingly regulated and restricted. This in part has to do with the emergence of the Canadian security state, which became more prevalent after the attacks in the U.S. on 9/11 (Rygiel, 2012). It was during this time that racialized and foreign bodies were perceived by society as being one in the same and of being a threat to the nation (Rygiel, 2012). Those who were assumed to be Middle-Eastern due to their brown skin and dark features were deemed to be risky subjects and were being faced with deportations, detentions, and extraordinary rendition (Rygiel, 2012). The process of migration has been increasingly overshadowed by a security state, which has facilitated processes of discrimination and violence toward migrants, based on racist stereotypes and intolerant attitudes. As particular refugees have historically crossed national borders illegitimately, such as the arrivals of boat people via the Canadian coast line, this method or migration has become grounds for the security state to further stigmatize these subjects (Rygiel, 2012).

Though the notion of multiculturalism has been promoted throughout Canadian society, the emergence of the security state has demoted this phenomenon and it is now a lesser priority (Fekete, 2015). Racialized migrants are expected to give up their previous nationality and take on an exclusive commitment to the Canadian state because holding onto dual citizenship, for example, is perceived as not jumping into the nation with both feet (Fekete, 2015). When this does not happen, the allegiance of the racialized, and sometimes foreign, subject then comes into

11

question. Speaking a language other than English or French is one example of the racialized

subject committing a form of latent disloyalty to the country (Fekete, 2015).

Post 9/11, the processes of securitization in Canada worked to construct racialized bodies

as risks (Munster, 2009) by positioning them as being foreigners who operated externally and

separately from the nation state. From that time period until today, the designated spaces for

migrants, such as refugee camps, have been used as sites for evaluating who is worthy of

entering Canada and who is not (Munster, 2009). Those who migrated illegally or irregularly

were associated with notions of bad migration, while those who were coming through the

economic class where deemed to be suitable and worthy of a resettled life in Canada (Munster,

2009). The refugee camps function in similar ways as the residential schools, where discipline is

enforced on those who are perceived to be racialized risks to the social order. Language plays a

pivotal role in shaping the discourses around securitization, as well as the public perceptions of

racialized bodies as risky subjects. The ability to speak the dialogue of security is more

accessible to social institutions (Munster, 2009), which work to preserve the privilege of the

white, social elite. Post 9/11, the security state promoted discourses of "anti-immigrationism"

(Munck, 2008) where the construction of migrants as the enemy served as a technology in which

to subtly enforce the conformity of the public to the wishes of the social elite (Munck, 2008). A

governmentality of unease was being produced post 9/11, wherein migrants entering Canada

outside of meeting labour demands were deemed to be a threat to the country (Gilbert, 2009). At

a time when hysteria and paranoia were high, racialized migrants became the easy outlet for

Canadian society to take out their anxieties on, while this population became increasingly

discriminated against due to their association with terrorism, sickness and various forms of

criminality such as transporting drugs and weapons (Munck, 2008).

Anyone with brown skin in the post 9/11 era, regardless of citizenship status, became a target as part of managing the larger, migrant problem (Munck, 2008). The technologies being utilized as part of the governmentality of unease included the strict immigration policies that aimed to keep migrants outside of the protection offered by the state (Gilbert, 2009). In addition to this, there are the increasingly difficult citizenship tests (Munck, 2008) that contain information about the historical and contemporary existence of the dominant culture, which many Canadian-born citizens may not be able to answer. The citizenship tests that are currently being used are beneficial for the state as they pull out the educated and skilled from the larger migrant pool, to fill in labour shortages (Munck, 2008). The security state functions within a society that is also neoliberal, and enforces capitalist interests (Kotz, 2002). Rather than prioritize its humanitarian responsibilities to the international community, the Canadian state has demanded migrants who can function independently and work efficiently to strengthen the economy (Kotz, 2002). In the neoliberal world, all humans serve as commodities who are defined by how much wealth they can earn without relying on social assistance (Kotz, 2002). Therefore, migrants have easier access to obtaining a resettled life in Canada when they demonstrate that they can fulfill the role of what Foucault called the homo economicus, also known as the producer-consumer (Sparke, 2006). This particular subject is a self-contained entrepreneur in and of themselves who casts no burden upon the nation state (Sparke, 2006), and goes against the negative stereotype of the migrant, who is out to steal resources from the generous nation state. Through neoliberal ideologies, the social world has been transformed into a society based on enterprise, which encourages competitiveness in the job market and prizes the productive individual above all else (Lazzarato, 2009).

Migrants who do not demonstrate their capacity to be efficient contributors to the nation's economy face increased surveillance so that they can be denied rights (Crépeau, Nakache & Atak, 2007) by the Canadian security state. The struggle for irregular and illegal migrants to obtain legal support post-migration leaves them vulnerable as they navigate these foreign systems of legality and governance (Crépeau et al., 2007). The socially constructed notions of security tie processes of securitization to the interests of the state, as well as define nationalized identities (Varadarajan, 2004), which are outlined in the national narrative. Discourses of securitization are also greatly shaped by the notion of suspicion. After 9/11 occurred, the brown-skinned threat did not need to be proven guilty of any crime, they just needed to be deemed reasonably suspicious through the lens of expert knowledge (Friedland & Friedland, 2006). Unfortunately, for refugees and other persecuted migrants who are tying to find safety and asylum in Canada, the fact they are survivors of violence does not protect them from being faced with increased suspicion. One likely method for the resilient subject to avoid suspicion is to engage in acts of discretion.

2.3 Queer Threats in the Heteronormative Haven

For those who associate themselves with any particular form of queerness, discretion and the restriction of self-expression can be a method for surviving in a social world which normalizes heterosexuality and heteropatriarchy. According to Ford, to be queer requires the choice and commitment to live outside of a particular social norm (2007). Gender norms and racialized notions of normative behavior, for example, are standards that can be consciously resisted (Ford, 2007). To be queer is not synonymous with being gay (Ford, 2007), as there are normative ways associated with gayness, which are also tied to heteronormative presentations of whiteness. To be queer is to defy heteronormative ways of being. Heteronormativity normalizes

14

heterosexuality (Yep, 2003), and the innate forms of reproduction that can come with it, through the various technologies that are associated with governmentality. These technologies can include intimate relationships, family, as well as the media, which shape ideas of desirability and compatibility. Heteronormativity simultaneously reinforces heteropatriarchy as white, masculine men are given privilege and societal power over women and queer people (Yep, 2003). Queer people are violated by heteronormativity in a number of ways, the first one being "interior-individual" (Yep, 2003). This violence is usually self-induced as the individual has internalized the shame brought on by heteronormativity for being outside the social norm (Yep, 2003). The second form of violence is "external-individual", whereby social interactions produce hate crimes and discriminatory slurs directed to the queer subject because they threaten the normalcy of heterosexuality (Yep, 2003). The third type of violence inflicted by heteronormativity is "interior-collective" and occurs on the level of discourse and the ways in which people think and engage in dialogue about the alternative ways of queerness (Yep, 2003). Finally, the last type of violence inflicted on queer people is "exterior-collective" and takes place on the macro-level, with institutions such as the media, social policy, family, and any other source of societal power that influences collective consciousness (Yep, 2003). Heteronormativity promotes a heterosexual ideal based in the notion of the white, nuclear family, which is how it bestows the privilege of public visibility to white, gay men. Puar explored the notion of "homonationalism" and how the definitions of the "properly homo" subject exclude the same racialized bodies that are persecuted through processes of securitization (2007).

The national narrative that has constructed the white subject as the one entitled to public, Canadian space has spread throughout society, and the queer community is no exception. As a product of the prevalent forces of heteronormativity, homonormativity presents a dominant

expression of gayness, which defines the true gay people as being distinct from other queer and so-called deviant bodies (Oswin, 2008). Whether is it the gay village in Toronto (Oswin, 2008), or the positive space rooms that are created for young gay people and their allies (Fox, 2007), whiteness becomes the key determinant for who gets to express their gayness in public. The gay village located at Church and Wellesley in Toronto is considered by many to be the main hub of the queer community, yet this urban enclave is a site for reinforcing the whiteness, and the male subjectivity, of gayness (Oswin, 2008). While this gay space has historically been a place for queer rights to be fought, today, it has been argued by liberationists that it has become too commercialized and prevents any activist community from forming (Oswin, 2008). However, from an assimilationist perspective, some argue that the village is a gay ghetto that should expand into suburban locations to show how queer people can integrate into the visible and heteronormative world (Owsin, 2008; Burgess, 2011). While the differences embedded by and in queer people of colour can be delegitimized and easier to observe in rural atmospheres, their presence is more likely to be challenged in urban settings, where they may be accused of polluting public spaces or of trying to take them over from the privileged (El-Tayeb, 2012). Queer spaces, such as the village in Toronto, have reinforced the white, male character of homonormativity, while excluding queer women and their efforts to establish public visibility, either through their own entrepreneurial establishments or the politicized Dyke March (Burgess, 2011). This whiteness of gay spaces is enforced through spatial politics, where those who are facing multiple forms of marginalization are contained or excluded for their inability to act as consumer citizens in the Neoliberal city (El-Tayeb, 2012). White, gay men from the middle class have been able to fulfill their roles as consumer citizens while integrating into the mainstream society as a minority group (El-Tayeb, 2012). The white character of dominant, queer discourse

reproduces a type of hegemony that goes unquestioned (Riggs, 2010), which relegates the presence of racialized people to the hidden corners of the community. The promise of safety and security as a result of their whiteness is what can lead white, gay people to feel a heavy sense of victimization when they encounter violence due to their sexuality (Riggs, 2010). Class also intersects with race in the privileging of whiteness within the gay community, as status and access to resources can create obstacles in the coming out process (Riggs, 2010).

Historically, it was their participation in the fight for sexual freedom that allowed white, gay men to turn away from the racism happening in the queer community (Teunis, 2007). The whiteness of the AIDS crisis is what created a sense of urgency, where white gay men were able to access power in the political sphere in addition to raising funds, as a result of their privileged class and racial identities (Teunis, 2007). In the contemporary world, this privileging of whiteness in the gay community continues to play out in public, in the positive spaces meant for sexual minority youth and their straight allies (Fox, 2007). These supportive spaces reproduce a type of discourse that excludes people of colour and varying gender identities, and situates the white, gay male as the primary focus in these particular rooms (Fox, 2007). Safe space rooms are also sites for white heteronormativity to function as they strive to create a sense of safety and comfort for straight allies (Fox, 2007). Whereas these rooms tend to address homophobia as the one key issue faced by sexual minority youth, it ignores the intersecting forms of oppression that queer people face (Fox, 2007). Attention should instead be brought to the "fields of normalization" as being responsible for the control and suppression of queer expression (Fox, 2007). For example, one study of Black queer students found that, in these safe space rooms, there was a reproduction of white, female homogeneity (McCready, 2004) among the attendants. For black queer youth, the key challenges that they face in openly engaging with their queerness

include overcoming racial segregation and de-normalizing white gayness (McCready, 2004). Likewise, at one high school in the U.S., black queer students felt increased surveillance coming from their own ethnic communities, which strived to ensure that they were staying within the acceptable boundaries of black sexuality (McCready, 2004). This is a particularly important issue because to be exposed as queer to their ethnic community could result in a disconnection from this socially constructed system of kinship, which provides social and political support (McCready, 2004).

If they cannot bring their whole selves into the safe space rooms, or to their own families and ethnic communities, then it is worth asking: how do those who are racialized, queer and/or migrants engage with their sexuality? As whiteness grants a privilege to come out and be visible in public space, there is a narrow-minded assumption that that type of action will lead to a desirable end and that those who stay closeted are living in shame (Grove, Bimbi, Nanín & Parsons, 2006). This type of discourse denies the larger, social factors that may restrict one's decision to come out, if they even see the heteronormative closet as being there in the first place. Non-white cultures may create challenges in identity integration, however, all queer people are able to access the process that allows them to form these kinds of identities for themselves (Rosario, Schrimshaw & Hunter, 2004). Intersectionality plays a pivotal role in how one expresses and engages with their queer sexualities. Queer women of colour, for example, can face multiple forms of marginalization as mainstream notions of womanhood and femininity are associated with passivity and whiteness (Logie & Rwigema, 2014). Unless there is an acknowledgment of the intersectionality of oppression, the privilege of white and cis gender men will continue to be invisible and unchallenged (Logie & Rwigema, 2014). It is common in racialized communities for there to be a discourse of silence (Logie & Rwigema, 2014), where

people do not openly discuss their challenges or misfortunes, which then gives more power to the western media in shaping racialized understandings of queerness, sexuality, gender, etc.

This poses challenges for queer people of colour who wish to come out, but do not neatly fit into white notions of gayness, which carry heavy stigma in racialized communities (Logie & Rwigema, 2014). For queer people from the black community, the major influences that affected the decisions they make with respect to queer expression and engagement were hegemonic notions of masculinity and the taboos associated with gayness (McKeown et al, 2010). For example, a queer and black mother chose to remain discrete and not assert her sexual orientation because she could foresee the persecution from her ethnic community, whose support she relied on to take care of her family (Rasmussen, 2004). For queer folk in the South Asian community, they face the barriers of cultural and familial pressures related to getting married and having biological offspring (McKeown et al, 2010). In South Asian families, there is the added factor of honour and how openly demonstrating queerness can result in disgracing the family within the broader, ethnic or diasporic community (Jaspal, 2014).

Religion may often play a major role in dictating queer expression and engagement for racialized people (Jaspal, 2014). For those in the Muslim community, there are additional challenges to engaging with a queer sexuality in the current climate of securitization. Similar to the dominant faith of Christianity in Canada, Islam enforces compulsory heterosexuality and stigmatizes homosexuality through religious teachings and texts (Japal & Cinnerella, 2012). In promoting hegemonic heterosexuality and heteropatriarchy for racialized populations, both Christianity and Islam indirectly promote the notion of the white, gay other that is external to self (Jaspal & Cinnerella, 2012). This inner conflict between faith and sexuality can lead to mental health challenges as well as isolation from the support of the religious community (Jaspal &

Cinnerella, 2012). Queer people of colour may have trouble finding a sense of community or social support as other marginalized communities, such as the one made of up the disabled, lack a proper understanding of racialized experiences (Logie & Rwigema, 2014). When the path to queer visibility in public can seem so strenuous, the more convenient option is to restrict the expression and engagement of queerness to the privacy of the down low.

To live on the down low requires total discretion for the one engaging in same-sex relations as they are likely to be living a double life (McCune Jr, 2014). One life is private and secretive while the other one is visible and heteronormative (McCune Jr, 2014). This type of lifestyle requires daily practices of self-policing in every area of life, where queer expression and engagement become compartmentalized and kept hidden. Although white and gay men may subscribe to this way of life, the down low attracts many racialized folks due to culturally enforced structures of homophobia and heterosexism in their ethnic and racial communities. For black men on the down low, for example, the choice to live discreetly is due to the cultural understanding that being gay and black are irreconcilable (McKeown et al, 2010). The down low provides an avenue for queer engagement without racialized men having to take on a gay identity. Cultural narratives of the down low deny the existence of bisexuality in black men so that they are represented as liars living in sin as opposed to human beings who are sexually fluid (McCune Jr, 2014). In addition to discretion, queer and racialized men may engage in practices of passing, in which they present a masculine and heterosexual-like persona (McCune Jr, 2014), which often provides a sense of comfort for those around them, whether they chose to be visible with their queerness or not. For the queer and racialized man living discreetly, they may have internalized the disciplinary gaze, which is a concept that emerged in Foucault's analysis of the panopticon (McCune Jr, 2014). In the panoptic prison, the inmates self-regulate to standard

20

norms of conduct out of the fear that they are being watched and judged harshly by those around them (Foucault, 2008). This internalized form of surveillance is constant for queer people of colour who negotiate their presentation of queerness daily.

Foucault had also presented the notion of the heterotopia (McCune Jr, 2014). This can include any space that allows one to temporarily lose a sense of time and place and engage in particular behaviours, and in this case, same-sex relations (McCune Jr, 2014). For queer people on the down low, or for those who are passing as straight, these spaces can include gay clubs and bars, and also public spaces, as long they can express their suppressed queerness openly (McCune Jr, 2014). There is more of an experience of "coming in" (McCune Jr, 2014) within these temporary and queer spaces, that does not require someone to come out in public. Due to the white character of gay spaces, and arguably the Canadian public, queer expression for the racialized can still be self-policed and heavily restricted. To be caught walking in or out of a gay space can lead to harm and persecution for racialized, queer people (Bailey, 2004). However, even if the gay mainstream is oppressive towards queer people of colour, it is possible for them to find a sense of safety and security in counter-cultures such as the underground, ballroom community (Bailey, 2014). Historically, the ballroom community was constructed for black, queer people who were coming from a lower class position (Bailey, 2014). Yet to this day, it continues to offer separate houses for members to find protection from homophobic violence and a space for queer expression on the runways during the dance competitions known as voguing battles (Bailey, 2014).

While gay spaces in Canada celebrate the white, gay male subject and his heterosexual allies, queer migrants from abroad have a way of making their own spaces post-migration, in which they can express themselves in public and find solidarity in their diasporic communities

21

(Kojima, 2014). The spaces in which queer migrants can construct their own heterotopias can include a public bus or train, a festival at night, and almost any other location that can be easily occupied (Kojima, 2014). This is because, with the development of the smart phone app called Grindr, there is a new opportunity for racialized, queer people to be geographically mobile so that they can find new companions, as well as gay spaces, using the GPS technology (Kojima, 2014). Grindr is a technological advancement that has drastically shifted the everyday functioning of the queer, male community. Technological platforms, such as Grindr and dating websites, have become the more prevalent form of queer engagement and expression throughout the world today. It has replaced a culture of sexual liberation with one of segregation and objectification (Bielski, 2012). Through the app, anonymous men are able to openly express their racial preferences based on stereotypes, and shamelessly make requests for no fats, femmes or Asians (Bielski, 2012). Sexual objectification in the queer community not only reproduces racist views of desirability, but it also creates a white, sexual community in which the privileged group is able to hide behind notions of inclusiveness and cohesion while exploiting racialized bodies (Teunis, 2007). Through this sexual objectification of queer people, the body is engaged with as a series of separate parts, each one being used to satisfy the viewer, while causing the provider to feel inner shame (Teunis, 2007).

In a migrant's home country, public visibility of same-sex relations could be met with state-supported violence such as police brutality, while entering into Canada and filing a refugee claim can be met with the same level of suspicion and heteronormative assumptions (Berg & Millbank, 2009). For queer refugees and other migrants coming to Canada, the experiences of marginalization can be disheartening, and the first moment of queer visibility, post-migration, that much more surprising. However, in order to get to any point of open expression in Canada,

the queer refugee must first share their story with Canadian immigration officials, which can be a difficult task as past, traumatic experiences can impede memory and thus weaken a refugee claim (Berg & Millbank, 2009).

2.4 Mental Health and the Costs of Survival

One cost of being a survivor is the suspicion that comes from others, and leads to the common question: what did they do in order to survive? The resilient refugee may be seen as suspect due to their unwillingness to share things about themselves, or to reveal how they came to Canada and why. Queer people also face this suspicion from others when they are seen in public with another who is like them. Hence, the immense pressure put on queer refugees to be discrete and self-police every moment of their lives. Throughout the migration process, refugees, especially the susceptible or younger ones, can face multiple forms of stressors at three possible stages: pre-flight, flight and resettlement (Lustig, Kia-Keating, Knight, Geltman, Ellis, Kinzie, Keane & Saxe, 2004). During the pre-flight stage, the refugee subject can face warfare and multiple forms of violence (Lustig et al, 2004). While going through the process of flight, the refugee may experience the disconnection and separation from loved ones, as well as the possible arrival in a detention centre or refugee camp (Lustig et al, 2004). Then they may enter into the new society, where they must work hard to build their resettled lives, while facing the mental scars and possible disability that is left from the past trauma and process of migration (Lustig et al, 2004). It is in the resettled life that the refugee is susceptible to mental health challenges including addiction such as alcoholism, depression and delinquency, as well as post-traumatic stress disorder (Hyman, Vu & Beiser, 2000). The recollection of memories can also be impeded by the experiences of trauma (Pui-Hing Wong, Tai-Wai Li, Kwong-Lai Poon & Po-Lun Fung, 2013), which has a detrimental effect on their claims of asylum, as well as their

relationships with loved ones. Resettlement in Canada can also be difficult when the refugee subject's mind is constantly preoccupied with the anxieties and fears of being deported, having to live on the streets, and dying alone (Pui-Hing Wong et al, 2013). It is worth noting that mental illness or disability is not just caused by stressors but also by the lack of personal resources (Beiser, 2009), which will influence one's experiences of isolation, and a lack of social mobility, post-migration.

The experiences of mental health impairment, traumatization and disability for refugees can be worsened by the stressors that come from resettling into a society that disables them by expecting them to fit into western standards of education and experience, rather than acknowledging their individual strengths and capabilities. Social networks play a pivotal role in the resettlement experience as they build social capital and provide support for the refugee (Hynie, Crooks & Barragan, 2011). Yet a distrust of others and a deep-rooted fear of persecution can impede this re-socialization process. Informational, instrumental and emotional support can be offered to the refugee (Hynie et al, 2011) and can be found in personal relationships, ethnic enclaves, the settlement sector, etc. However, refugees may be hesitant to seek help for their mental health challenges for reasons that include a distrust of authority figures back home, which affects their ability to trust those who work for the system here in Canada (Ellis, Miller, Baldwin, Saida, 2011). Another possible obstacle to seeking help for mental health impairments post-migration is that the services in Canada may not conceptualize mental health in the same way as the refugee's native culture (Ellis et al, 2011). For example, some cultures believe that mental illness and disabilities can be explained through discourses related to spirits and religion (Ellis et al, 2011). Feelings of psychological distance from others can make it harder for the refugee

subject to find support and validation in making their decisions post-migration (Hynie et al, 2011), which in turn disempowers them and weakens their sense of individual agency.

A recurring discourse that exists in many cultures is that mental illness is something that should be viewed as taboo, shameful, and inappropriate to discuss in public (Ellis et al, 2011). Breaking the stigma of mental illness is a challenge that needs to be met in Canada, but for refugee and other newcomer communities, trying to find the right framework for explanation creates additional obstacles. Certain forms of mental illness, such as depression, can be perceived by refugees as foreign and western categories (Beiser, 2009). In addition, the dominant discourses around mental health in Canada can be too simplistic to explain a complex phenomenon such as disability. Oftentimes, the discourse of madness is associated with whiteness (Gorman, 2013) and if racialized people experience mental health issues, then it is viewed as being a natural part of who they are. This discourse is influenced by the perceptions of the privileged, in which racialized folks are positioned as inherently dysfunctional and underdeveloped due to their race (Gorman, 2013). The intersection of race, class and disability can oftentimes be ignored by the privileged, social elite (Gorman, 2013). Likewise, the dominant discourse around saneism paints a negative and debilitating image of the mentally disabled, by defining them as unfit for paid employment in addition to the problems they have in their broader lives (Poole & Ward, 2015). Through the advice of mental health experts, a larger therapy culture is enforced where marginalized populations learn helplessness, dependency and experience disempowerment (O'Malley, 2010). Symbolic violence is inflicted on the disabled community constantly and if expert knowledge deems a refugee or racialized person as being mad and disorderly, then the subject may internalize this identity associated with brokenness and lose their sense of autonomy (Lee, 2013).

A more empowering discourse for the racialized and disabled can be found in Puar's analysis of ontological contingency (2010). Puar argues that anyone can naturally develop, or be born with, a variety of disabilities throughout the course of their life (2010). Yet this may not be apparent to mainstream society as it attaches other labels and meanings to various debilities including dysfunction, disease, poor aging and dependency (Puar, 2010). There tends to be an othering of those who are disabled, yet anyone can experience a type of impairment, without the diagnosis being placed on them by expert knowledge (Puar, 2010). Resettlement in Canada can be a lifelong process, and factors such as working an ongoing job or having lasting, intimate relationships can boost the refugee's capacity for resiliency (Beiser, 2009). Notions of resiliency can be associated with the image of an enduring warrior, who is able to not only survive, but thrive while being immersed in an environment of chaos (O'Malley, 2010). Key components of learning resiliency include bouncing back quickly after experiencing a shock or trauma and learning how to take advantage of unpredictable circumstances for one's own gain (O'Malley, 2010). To maintain an inner sense of resiliency, refugees require a sense of adaptability, spirituality as well as a positive outlook towards the country of destination (Munt, 2012). It is literature such as this that has informed the inquiry into the resettlement of these resilient, refugee subjects.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Purpose and Reasoning for the Study

The purpose of the study conducted was to evaluate the experiences of migration and resettlement that queer refugees, and possibly other newcomers, have in Canada. The study of queer migration has become more prevalent throughout the past decade. However, for queer refugees, their lack of visibility is an issue and the existing research continues to fly under the radar of the broader discipline of immigration and settlement studies. Academic research that examines the intersectionality of race and sexuality is continuing to grow, but it is crucial that it does so while emphasizing the implications for migrants and transnational actors, who may experience racialization and queering simultaneously. Queer refugees and newcomers are a population whose struggles are kept private from the Canadian public, resulting in the population experiencing issues such as isolation, segregation and mental health issues. These intersecting forms of oppression result in processes of self-policing and discretion for this population, which can be quite exhausting and stressful. It is important to pull back the veil on this private suffering and examine issues that society may see as either taboo, or not deserving of their attention; otherwise if this is not done, vulnerable populations will be left to suffer in silence. The study conducted was pursued as a way of giving voice to the experiences of queer refugees and other newcomers, as public visibility for this double minority, due to their sexual identities and citizenship status, is a choice that is often denied.

3.2 Choosing the Method

Initially, the plan was to develop the study with a mixed method approach that was comprised of qualitative interviews with queer newcomer participants, as well as a quantitative

analysis of government or non-profit statistics that would shed light on either the settlement patterns of this group or the avenues of migration used. Finding relevant statistics for the examination of queer migration and integration proved to be difficult as the target demographic is difficult to pinpoint, and often keeps a low profile, away from the public eye. I replaced the statistical analysis with a demographic survey, which can be used alongside the qualitative interviews. When designing the demographic survey for participants to fill out, I had to be cautious with designing multiple-choice questions that could possibly other them and contribute to their marginalization. The majority of questions on the demographic survey provided room for a short answer, while only one question related to disability provided a multiple choice format, with the option of "other", as some cultures around the world do not engage in discussions of mental illness, impairment, etc. The demographic survey was more qualitative than quantitative.

The difficulty of finding members of this discrete and almost underground community dictated that quantitative methods were not the most effective strategy. The qualitative interviews were chosen as a way of examining the life narratives of queer newcomers, as the analysis of lived experiences can speak volumes about the instances of marginalization and violence for queer people existing within and outside Canadian borders. By hearing the life stories of queer refugees and giving them the space to openly express themselves, they are provided the space to define the "truth" of their experiences.

3.3 Ethical Considerations and the REB

The target demographic of this study can be classified as a vulnerable population, with some members possibly living in precarious situations and others experiencing traumatization. For this reason, I had to proceed with sensitivity and avoid traumatic triggers or insult to the participants, and in this case, create a safe and welcoming space during the interviews. The first

ethical consideration was informed consent. Participants were only allowed to provide written consent at the time of the scheduled interview so that they could ask for further clarification. The incentives included TTC tokens, refreshments, a chance to represent their community and also take part in a university-level research study. Another ethical concern that needed to be avoided was deception, as it could impede the refugee participant's future capacity for trusting people in Canada.

Transparency was provided in the consent form (see Appendix A), in addition to the presentations that were given to the refugee groups, about what the study was focused on and how it would be conducted with the potential participant. To ensure confidentiality, and the option of anonymity, the participants were told at the time of consent that they had an option to use an alias if they did not want their real name to be used in the study, and that the documented experiences that they provide would only be shared to members of the academic community. The study was approved by the Ryerson Research and Ethics Board (REB), and I then moved on to the recruitment stage.

3.4 Recruitment Strategies and Challenges

After receiving approval from the REB, I began looking into Toronto-based organizations that specifically catered to refugees who are queer, with the objective of securing five to seven participants for the study. Based on my past experiences with heteronormativity in social service settings, and my knowledge of Toronto as a major gateway city for refugees, I decided to initially recruit in Toronto. I found three initiatives; one operating out of a local church, and the other two were queer refugee groups offered by non-profit organizations. First, I reached out to the Toronto-based church, however, its queer refugee group was only comprised of one gay

couple at the time, who did not respond to a recruitment email. I was able to find participants with the other two organizations.

The first organization that I reached out to was the LGBTQ refugee group at Access Alliance. After speaking with the coordinator, Ranjith Kulatilake, we arranged for me to come in to one of the group's meetings, where I gave a brief recruitment presentation to the members that outlined the study, what it involved, and the possible benefits for taking part. After the presentation, I was able to obtain one committed participant for this study. The second group that supported my study was the "Among Friends LGBTQ Refugee Peer Support" group at the 519 Community Centre, which has served as the main hub of the queer community in Toronto for decades. I arranged with the coordinator, Karlene Williams-Clarke, to visit the group at the weekly meeting to give a recruitment presentation. After carrying out the presentation, I secured two committed participants from this group.

These three individuals made up the first round of interviews conducted. I then researched organizations that catered to all types of refugees. I contacted a queer newcomer youth group, temporary homes, a refugee medical clinic, as well as various ethnic-centred organizations that provide sexuality based support to racialized people. Despite extensive recruitment efforts, which included sending out faxes and going through an additional research board, I was unable to recruit any further participants for the qualitative interviews and surveys.

3.5 Implementing the Interviews and Surveys with Participants

After I had received emails from interested members of the Access Alliance and 519 groups, I arranged the dates and times to meet with participants. First, I conducted two of the individual interviews at the 519 Community Centre, with the participants from the "Among

Friends" group. I conducted the interviews while recording on both my smart phone as well as a recording device from Ryerson University. The third interview was conducted at the Student Learning Centre, located on the Ryerson campus, with the participant from the Access Alliance group. Following the same format as the two interviews conducted the day before, the semi-structured interview was carried out after both the written consent form and demographic survey were filled out. The interviews were semi-structured and were steered with an interview guide that was approved by the REB (see Appendix C). At times, I had to re-phrase my questions, or ask for further clarification, when questions were challenging to answer. After each of the interviews was completed, snacks and TTC tokens were provided and the participants were made aware of the time frame in which they could withdraw from the study. The lines of communication were also kept open as they had my Ryerson email address in the event that they wanted to follow up.

3.6 The Inclusion of a Key Informant

After conducting the three qualitative interviews with the queer asylum-seeker participants, I found that the study was missing a discussion of the long-term settlement patterns of queer refugees and other newcomers in Toronto. I decided to stop pursing queer newcomer participants and instead focused on the recruitment of a key informant, who works directly with the queer refugee population. I re-submitted my ethics proposal to the REB and gained approval once more. I contacted a prominent lawyer, El-Farouk, who caters specifically to queer refugees in Toronto who agreed to participate in the study. The interview was carried out in an identical fashion as the previous sessions, with the exception of the new interview guide (see Appendix D), which was designed for a key informant.

3.7 Transcribing, Coding and Data Analysis

I transcribed the interviews as close to verbatim as possible. One challenge was trying to make sense of what participants were saying due to either the quality of the recording or the clarity of the voices provided. After the key components of the four interviews were transcribed, I extracted and coded key themes from each passage of dialogue. The codes were then examined and chosen for further analysis based on the frequency in which they appeared between the four transcriptions. The key findings of the study, as well as the demographic profiles of the participants and key informant, are as follows.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic Composition of Participants

After filling out the informed consent forms, and prior to participating in the interview, participants were asked to fill out a demographic survey. The study was comprised of three refugee claimant participants and one key informant. The three refugee claimants all identified as both male and gay. Two participants migrated from the Caribbean: Marko came from the Bahamas and Floyd originated from St. Kitts-Nevis. The third participant, Maksym, migrated from Ukraine. All three participants arrived in Canada within the last four years: Marko and Maksym both came in 2015 while Floyd migrated in 2012. The three refugee claimants were all in their thirties: Marko was 37, Maksym was 30 and Floyd was 39. Marko was the only participant who affiliated himself with a particular religion, in this case Christianity. Floyd was the only participant who associated himself with a particular ethnic group, which was Caribbean. None of the participants saw themselves as having any kind of disability. In terms of employment-specific training, Marko was a certified bartender with ABC Bartending and a certified Barista with Starbucks, Maksym had experience with waiting and serving, and Floyd was trained as a teacher in both Barbados and the UK. In terms of the highest level of education, Floyd had obtained his Master of Arts in the UK and a cooking certificate with George Brown College in Toronto. While Makysm completed college and Marko finished high school in the Caribbean. Marko and Maksym had not received their work permits at the time of the study (August 2015) and did not have any Canadian work experience. Floyd has worked in education, outreach and facilitation and food preparation with organizations including BlackCAP (Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention).

The key informant, El-Farouk Khaki, operates his own legal practice in the city and often caters to Queer refugees and other migrants. He also identities as a gay, cis male and sees himself belonging to the ethnic groups of racialized brown and POC (people of colour). He migrated from Tanzania to the UK and then arrived here in Canada in 1974. He is 52 years old and affiliates himself with the religion of Islam. El-Farouk received a Bachelor of Law Degree from the University of British Columbia and is in the process of earning his M.P.S.

4.2 Emerging Themes

Based on the interviews and surveys that were collected during the study, there were multiple themes that emerged amongst the interactions with participants. The resulting themes cover both the macro and micro-level challenges that were faced by participants, both in the sending and receiving countries. They include the obstacles created by the national narrative, the increasing irrelevance of homonormative spaces for queer expression due to technological advances, the impact of religious cultures on the choice to live on the down low, creating one's own community, and the ongoing issue of mental health for refugees.

4.2.1 The Impact of Dominant Narratives

As examined by Murray (2014), refugees are expected to subscribe to a narrative that positions them as helpless victims who have migrated to the savior nation. This in turn can increase the likelihood of a successful claim (Murray 2014). All of the participants interacted with Canadian officials upon entering Canada. Marko found that immigration officials relied on gay stereotypes to determine the validity of his refugee claim. He stated that the immigration officials gave him the impression that he did not fit the dominant and stereotypical narratives of who a queer person or refugee is.

34

But I think he [the immigration official] was kind of tough. Or maybe his [thinking was like] my parents' way, he might be one of those persons who always just assumes that everyone who is gay is feminine, so because I wasn't feminine, maybe he thought I was lying.

Marko had initially received a negative decision on his claim and felt as though he was not provided with adequate reasoning for the decision. He also felt as though there was a lack of understanding and empathy from the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) official, who was not aware of why racialized men in the Caribbean may be discreet with their queer sexualities. His discretion was interpreted as deceit.

…because I lied about having a girlfriend or lied about representing myself, the way I was DL [on the down low] and I lied about my life, that maybe I am just a pathological liar and I am lying about being here.

Maksym expressed that the questions that he was expected to answer for his refugee claim were too invasive, and felt a discomfort with having to go through that process in order to fit into the dominant narrative of who a queer refugee is.

I cannot describe how many guys do I have. You know? You going to ask some deep, deep very deep things. Regarding sex, how many sex relations I have in my life?

I had wanted to have El-Farouk Khaki as a key informant for my study as he has years of experience working with queer refugees and would be able to provide insight into the long-term settlement patters for this population. As the Canadian IRB relies on homonormative narratives for determining who is a legitimate queer refugee, El-Farouk discussed the difficulties that his clients have had in speaking the truth:

...it's not that people are lying, it's just that people don't know how to tell the truth. And

that's really the case, a lot of people don't know how to tell the truth....

He believed that western society has linear ways of thinking and queer refugees may carry a

different thought process, which translates into discursive ways of communication.

With the increased securitization of migration happening in Canada, the previous federal

government promoted an anti-refugee narrative that shifted societal understandings of the

racialized and Muslim threat. El-Farouk also comments on the pervasiveness of this demonizing

narrative, which many Canadians appear to subscribe to:

But I think that narrative, even though we've had a change of government, that narrative

that was so actively encouraged by our federal government I think has sort of toxificated a

little bit of our consciousness and our narrative.

[and]

Well I mean I think that was very much a part of the narrative of the last conservative

government. Bogus refugees, queue jumpers, security risks, you know this notion that

Canada is under siege from these Muslim and coloured hoards that are lining up to take

advantage of our generosity. For me, the most alarming of that has been this, the buy-in by

lots of people of colour into that narrative as well.

Foucault's notion of governmentality is being carried out through this discourse of the national

narrative, which is promoted through politics and the media. What became increasingly

problematic through the promotion of this Eurocentric narrative by the Harper government,

according to El-Farouk, is that racialized populations are playing into the marginalization of their

own communities.

4.2.2 Technology and its Impact on Queer Expression and Engagement

Through the interviews conducted, it was found that technology has played a meaningful role in the lives of queer refugees, who were not able to go into public spaces and meet others who are like them. Although technological platforms such as smart phone apps can lead to sexual objectification for racialized bodies (Teunis, 2007), other advances, such as the internet and smart phones, have led to a stronger sense of interconnectedness between queer people from all over the world (Bielski, 2012; Kojima, 2014). This is important as not all queer folk from abroad can afford to migrate to find safe haven. According to El-Farouk, there is an increasing universality in relation to queer expression and engagement:

> 2015 globalization is a reality and not a theory. Right? So technology also engenders cultural shift, and if you will, there is in my mind, this notion of some sort of universal or globalized narrative.

In a similar manner, the internet allowed Marko to experience easier integration into Canadian society; and it was a crucial skill for navigating the Canadian refugee system:

> Well when I came to Canada, I filed for asylum at the border. And I went online and I went to the Canadian website, and I found about the refugee program. I just followed what I read online and I took those steps.

Floyd was able to exercise his agency with the help of the internet. He explained in the interview that he had migrated to Canada, but had assistance from his relatives who lived here. To file his refugee claim, while still being discrete within his family setting, he had to rely on the internet to get to the immigration centre on his own. He stated:

… I didn't want my relatives to know. So I had to actually, the first day I had to Google,

make sure you know the bus system, how much I have to pay for fare.

Whereas Marko did not know anyone in Toronto, social media websites and smart phone apps

allowed him to maintain transnational ties with his peers back in the Bahamas.

I have some classmates [from the Bahamas]. We have … a WhatsApp group. I think we

still talk that way. As well, I have two persons on Facebook who ask how I am doing and

things like that.

There can be a downside to using technological platforms for queer engagement, such as

the smart phone apps targeted to gay men. Marko used the apps both in the Bahamas and here in

Toronto, but here he could not find a sense of safety in these virtual spaces:

When I first started using these apps [in the previous country], it was just a way to meet

guys; there were friendships and relationships that came from it. But here, it is just sex,

sex, sexual based.

Floyd, also had better outcomes using the available technological platforms in his source country

of St. Kitts. This could speak to the level of disconnection that queer men may be facing with

each other here in the global North. However, living discreetly in the Caribbean was better

facilitated by the queer men who were using these apps.

It would mainly be on gay chat sites, like Adam4Adam. I used to use [the website] gaydar

as well, I came across that one when I studied in the UK…But Adam4Adam is a more

popular choice back home.

Making use of the internet, Floyd was able to enlist in an online, educational course. This course gave him an avenue for escaping his heteronormative source country without having to publically reveal his queer self:

> I registered with my old university, the University of the West Indies, to an online
>
> Bachelor of Education and I wanted to actually have that qualification so that I could
>
> actually move to another Caribbean territory and live. My preference was actually Trinidad
>
> because I went to Trinidad before and there was a sort of gay magazine coming out…

Although technology provides an outlet for everyday experiences of queer engagement for racialized men, the lack of evidence that these type of encounters offer can prove problematic when filing a refugee claim post-migration. For some queer men, all of their relationships and intimate encounters, which would be need to be proven while making a claim, may have been set up on virtual platforms. When filing a refugee claim based on membership to a persecuted group, the IRB looks for visible evidence of a queer life, which would not be found if one is having private relations on the down low. As El-Farouk explains:

> So membership, affiliation, yeah. It does require a certain degree of outness. So a woman
>
> who comes and says I'm lesbian, but who, even in Canada and she's been here for a
>
> number of years and you're living in an open society, wouldn't it be reason that there
>
> would be some markers…

Ultimately El-Farouk adds:

> … if you are making a refugee claim based on sexual orientation then somehow you need
>
> to establish your sexual orientation, right? Depending on your circumstances that might be

if you are coming out of Saudi Arabia or Iran and you are fresh off the boat so to speak, I

would say that you can't actually expect very much.

Technological advances have steered members of the queer community to a subtler and

secretive expression of queerness that mimics the underground, or "down low" community. Yet

being on the DL creates problems when filing a refugee claim.

4.2.3 Religious Cultures and the Site of the Family

The choice to live on the down low (DL) in their source country was a survival strategy

for the queer refugee participants as they come from nations where polices and everyday

practices are dictated by conservative, religious teachings (Jaspal & Cincerella 2012). For

Marko and Floyd, they both came from religious families, which were shaped by a larger

Christian culture in the Caribbean, and did not provide a supportive environment for their queer

expression.

> Well I grew up in the church, my family…I grew up in a Christian family and I, from what
>
> I knew from going to church and things, I always knew it to be wrong. And in my mind, it
>
> was a struggle I had because like I said it was something I thought was wrong because of
>
> my Christian upbringing. And I always thought if I denied it for a long time, then maybe, I
>
> don't know how to explain. (Marko)

> Well, actually when I came out to my mother I was already an adult. But I think, I think if
>
> she really had, let's say, that control over me as a child and I told her about it, I think she
>
> would have actually tried to convert me or something. (Floyd)

The everyday interactions between family members can be influenced by the larger, cultural community. For Marko, his disapproving family did not protect him from the homophobic members of the larger community. In his words:

> She [his mother] was yelling at me and she kind of outed me to the whole neighbourhood and there were some guys in the neighbourhood…everyone around there is like really anti-gay. You know they make all the gay comments like "kill the batty boys" and all these things. So they started making these threats at me and after they slit my tire.

The tire slashing that Marko experienced was a punishment for acting outside of the heteronormative discourses that were present in his hometown. This relates to Foucault's narrative in the "History of Sexuality" about the two campers who were not shamed by others until they made their relationship public (Eribon, 2001). In addition to the tire slashing, Marko also experienced verbal threats, which sparked his decision to seek asylum elsewhere:

> Well there were exchange[s] of words. They [the men in his neighbourhood] did make the remarks, make comments like "I'm not afraid to get, to spend time in jail for killing another sissy".

The hate crime and harassment that followed his public outing can be explained by Yep's notion of exterior-individual violence (2003). As discussed in chapter two, this violence is ignited by the public exposure of queer folk in a heteronormative society, which aims to scare them into going back into hiding (Yep, 2003).

Floyd had a different experience of coming out to his mother, one where she sought to protect him. At the same time, the coming out process could result in shame being brought to the

family by the larger cultural community (Jaspal, 2014). Floyd's mother was able to foresee the violence that would happen in their family setting:

> …because I actually came out to my mother but it was actually like don't tell anybody else, don't even share it with your siblings. So I think, there was um, for me, I think my mother knew but she was maybe worried that if I expressed it, that is where the danger would be.

Religious families can enforce compulsory heterosexuality on women and men by promoting them to either procreate and recreate the nuclear family (Rich, 2003) or face punishment. For the males in particular, they are seen as the future leaders of the family due to the perception of their innate masculine power (Jaspal, 2014; Rich, 2003). Maksym had a quite gendered experience in his coming out process with his family, as he was the first born son in his family:

> There is a pack of us, three elder sisters, and the first kid who is a guy is me and they put a lot of hopes on me and unfortunately they got this kind of present I would say so *laughs*.

In the same way, Floyd felt as though his membership in a racialized family prevented him from expressing his individual queerness, as he was also a representative of them. For racialized queer folk, they do not get to have a completely individualized experience of queerness, as every facet of their life can be perceived as a reflection of their family's worth (Jaspal, 2014). According to Floyd:

> So I think in a way, they kept me from even experimenting and exploring. So for me, when it comes to family, I know that people want to be individuals, but at the same time, you are a member of a smaller community and what you do, what happen to you in terms of your reputation, will reflect on the family as well

In racialized communities, in places such as St. Kitts and the Bahamas, the perceived incompatibility of sexuality and religiosity is what reinforces the discourses of queerness being immoral (Jaspal & Cincerella, 2012). This shaming led Marko and Floyd to distance themselves from the Church once they were older and able to exercise their individual agency in their religious and Caribbean families:

> … when I got older and I started acting out my gay, having gay relations and things, I have kind of been distant from the church because going to church and I knew what to expect once I got there. I don't want to be a hypocrite about things and I know where the religion stands and I know is not what my life is. (Marko).

> I silently rebelled against religion and I stopped going to church when I was actually old enough to make the decision and you know. I basically told my mother I don't believe in religion and I don't want to go back to Church. (Floyd).

Floyd had built his capacity to think critically overtime and could see religion as an institution that was spreading heteronormative discourse throughout the Caribbean The disciplinary gaze of the religious, Christian community can also influence racialized folk to engage in heteropatriarchal ways (Greensmith & Giwa, 2013), as long as procreation is attainable. He stated:

> Religion would actually dictate to them what they should accept as normal, abnormal. For example, you know the bible might tell people it's not good to fornicate, it's not good to have sex outside of marriage. But yet many people in the community would have children out of wedlock, that is acceptable because it is a heterosexual relationship.

Maksym found the religious regulation of sexuality found within the interpretation of the Bible, which serves as a key site of homophobic discourse in religious culture. In his words:

> Guiding themselves with this saint in the Bible and it's like okay, another way the Bible says as well, don't kill, don't steal, don't blame, just forgive, just accept, just some kind of things but they don't care about that. They just trying to protect, how to say, their weakness.

The religion of Christianity is deeply engrained in Caribbean culture, as observed in the experiences of Floyd and Marko. Floyd believed compulsory heterosexuality is preached for the objective of promoting procreation:

> But Caribbean people, and people I know in St. Kitts, they actually believe that children are a blessing, children are a gift from God and I think when you overlay that with the fact that homosexuals cannot procreate there is this kind of like disdain for it because they don't see any value. So then, even like talking to people back home, they would be against let's say abortion because no matter what for them, even if they're poor, the child should actually you know come to life and that's it.

However according to Floyd, heterosexual couples were able to validate the normalcy of their intimate encounters by covering their desires in the guise of procreation.

> I think many of them would actually see sex, even though most people engage, would actually engage in sex for pleasure, they would actually maybe hide their pleasure behind the fact that it is actually producing a child, it's actually procreation.

The enforcement of procreation in religious and ethnic communities in the Caribbean can be so pervasive to the point were using contraception can be stigmatized and seen as a signifier for a queer sexuality:

I don't know how true it is but I have heard stories from people in Jamaica who say if they try to use a condom with their girlfriend, the first thing the girlfriend is asking is if they are a batty man because they see the condom now as something almost that only gay people would use.

Likewise, a lack of sexual prowess presented in Caribbean and racialized men can be perceived as a sign of suspicion and distrust by the heterosexual population. This can be due to the perception of all men having only a heterosexual, and dominating sexuality (Rich, 2003). Marko experienced this suspicion in one of his intimate relationships:

She came to me one time she said "are you gay?" because I never begged her for sex, or asked her for sex. It through me back, through me off, because I thought maybe she is reading into stuff so I did go ahead and sleep with her and a couple of months later we broke up.

The heteronormative discourse that promoted procreative relationships and a denial of queer sexuality, which is reinforced in religious and Caribbean communities, also presented itself in the earlier stages of Floyd's socialization. He stated:

The thing with the home economics book [in his primary education], it didn't just deal with let's say kitchen, it looked at all aspects of the person's life. So there was a section in it about sexual development, and it even mentioned that basically it's natural, it's normal to be attracted to the same sex and some people would actually grow out of it.

Floyd stated that he wanted the prediction to be true, as he did not want to deviate from the religious culture of St. Kitts. He did not want to experience the practices of shaming and experiences of violence that plagued queer people in the Caribbean. At this point, Floyd was experiencing the interior-individual form of violence brought on by heteronormative discourses (Yep, 2003) that I discussed in chapter two. He described the pain he felt as a child:

> To be honest, growing up in St. Kits, and seeing basically how people who appear to be gay, how they are treated, I was actually hoping that the prediction would come true in the sense of let's say growing out of it.

In an equally important observation, El-Farouk felt as though queer refugees who are Christian, have an easier time integrating into Canada compared to those who are affiliated with other religions such as the Muslim Community. This could be due to the fact that the Christian faith of the British colonizer played a key role in the development of this country (Greenwich & Giwa, 2013). As a gay, Muslim man, El-Farouk described his experience of having his religious self questioned by a Catholic male who did not think that Islam was accommodating to sexual minorities. This demonstrates a hierarchy that situates Western religions above those from the East. This can be due to the fear of the Eastern world, which is reinforced through discourses of Orientalism (Said, 2003). According to El-Farouk:

> The Christians seem to have an easier time with it, to be honest with you. The Christians seem to have an easier time with integrating their queerness and their religiosity, and I am not quite sure why that is, I have a few ideas why that is. But they seem to be able to better connect and so even when they come here, they will go to the MCC [Metropolitan Community Church] and so on and so forth. The Muslims seem to have a more difficult time making that connection, or being able to integrate those aspects of themselves.

46

Corroborating this comment by El-Farouk, the Metropolitan Community Church is known to have queer folk in both the congregation and amongst its Pastors, in addition to the support program that it runs for refugees who are also sexual minorities ("Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto- Who We Are", 2016). As a church that fights for human rights, this can draw in a variety of marginalized populations that follow the Christian faith. While Christian communities have been making the most progress in the inclusion of queer folk, El-Farouk witnessed the evolution, and increasing openness, in almost every religion during the World Pride event in 2014. Despite the reproduction of homonormative privilege during Pride week in Toronto (Greensmith & Giwa, 2013), El-Farouk found a diverse number of religious groups taking part in the mass same-sex wedding:

> *"You know, I was at World Pride, I was one of thirteen clergy officiating at the mass wedding. You know that included the clergy, included people from 12-13 traditions, including Sikhism, Judaism, Islam, bunch of different Christianity's…Wicca.*

Rather than completely disassociate with his Christian and Caribbean culture, Marko engaged in a process of negotiating his queer expression and engagement with the public realm of the source country. Marko chose to hold onto his earlier, Christian upbringing but has since established boundaries for engaging with the religious community.

> I think I can still hold onto my faith but it's not something that I don't think I would want to be in church as a choir director or anything.

Fortunately for Marko, he was able to establish a new type of family post-migration, that is less conservative and religious, after leaving his previous one on a sour note.

Family means a lot. Family in my mind are people who are supporting you, people you can

trust, and people who can depend on you and that is really important and I have been

meeting new family since I have been here.

Floyd chose to distance himself from his family, so that he could then engage in his life as more

of an individual than a representative of them. Physically moving to other Caribbean islands, and

also outside countries such as the U.K., was a key strategy of his to escape the religious culture

of St. Kitts and the site of his family.

...My way of actually keeping it a secret was just to work in a different Caribbean island

where nobody knows me, and even if I find someone brave enough to be in a relationship

with me, it might not be as disastrous with me.

Floyd had also tried to engage with gay visitors from abroad in order to cope with the

religiousness of his family and country. He would seek intimate partners and friends online and

then host them in the Caribbean. However, this did not prove to be a long term solution in

dealing with the religious culture. International education, however, provided an opportunity for

escape.

Well to be honest, in terms of the visitors, I started to find it more and more difficult to

hide and that was a problem and I think even back home, I used education as a means of

hiding homosexuality.

4.2.4 Survival Through the Racialized Down Low

According to McCune Jr (2014), the down low provides an underground level of queer

expression and engagement, in which racialized men can be with other males without it being

exposed to the public sphere of society. Although the down low, or DL, is not exclusively tied to

the racialized, this population has been pushed into this private realm of discretion and suppression, especially in their source country. Marko experienced this in the religious culture of the Bahamas.

Because of the environment of the Bahamas, it was like being gay is frowned on by everybody. Bahamas is a Christian nation. So I always like, I was always DL, always DLing, always a masculine appearance. I just created this fake persona of who I really was.

However, in his resettled life here in Canada, Marko has begun to go on dates and experience more gratifying experiences with people of the same sex without having to worry about his sense of safety.

Me being out once or twice [here in Canada], it was a good experience to go out with a guy and not be worried so much if people are looking at you and trying to figure out if you are a couple or just friends.

In the Caribbean, Floyd had a friend who avoided going to the store to purchase contraception, as the close-knit Caribbean community did not see him with a girlfriend and would therefore make assumptions:

…he was worried that there is no girlfriend living with him and if people in the community see him buying condoms, they are going to make the assumption that he is actually having sex with a man.

Hosting gay visitors from abroad was one method for Floyd to live out his queer life discreetly. For him, it was a method for discretion that still required a level of cautiousness as to avoid the association with queerness.

…you're very careful, you're guilty by association…. Once I realized that I had the resources and the type of lifestyle to invite people to come by my place, I just basically used that for a number of years.

Extreme measures can be taken for queer people, and same-sex couples of colour, to avoid the public association to queerness. This however, as indicated earlier, provides complications in winning a refugee claim. El-Farouk had a client who was a queer woman living with her child and girlfriend in private. The intense precautions that they took to protect themselves from harassment actually proved to be detrimental for the client's case. As explained by El-Farouk:

They were living out in the suburbs and so nobody knew they were living as a couple…They actually had separate bedrooms and at the end of the day we lost the claim because there was nothing to demonstrate that these two women were actually a couple.

Discretion is not only tied to sexuality, but also refugee claimant status for those who have sought out asylum in Canada. For queer refugees, there is an additional coming out process with their citizenship status, which can be met with a lot of suspicion from others as the refugee identity is more stigmatized than ever in the security state. Discretion is also used by queer refugees as they have been socialized in their source country to think that they need to live in secrecy and privacy (Millbank, 2002). According to El-Farouk:

I actually feel that some of my clients don't want anybody to know and it's almost like they are ashamed or embarrassed by it…and some groups seem to suffer from it more than others…But then I have all of these Arab clients who will go out of their way…like somebody will actually be in front of them and will be telling them about you know "I am

50

afraid to go back" and they won't even say "you know you can make a refugee claim" and let alone saying "I am also a refugee claimant, or I got my papers this way".

4.2.5 Making Your Own Queer Community

As the mainstream queer community has been socially constructed as being intrinsically white, it has led many racialized members to resort to the down low, and temporary spaces of the heterotopias (McCune Jr, 2014) for engaging with their non-conforming identities. According to key informant El-Farouk, visibility for the racialized would not equate to inclusivity into a unified, queer community.

No community is a monolith. That includes queer asylum seekers and queer newcomers, and that also includes the larger LGBT community. It's not a monolith and there is certainty racism within the larger LGBT community.

When evaluating the experiences of settlement and integration for queer refugees, inclusivity into visible communities becomes a key factor. How can one integrate into a new society when they are made to feel ostracized by people who they thought were like them? El-Farouk discussed his take on what inclusivity for queer refugees should looks like:

I think true inclusivity is about shifting power relationships, not just about having more coloured faces in the room. But people who have power, whether they are white people, or whether they are men, or whether they are the rich, giving up your power is a struggle and I don't think we've arrived yet.

When the source country does not provide the space for the public expression or engagement of queerness, the solution may be for the queer person to create supportive

communities of their own. For participant Marko, he found this within the underground community.

> When I am with my gay friends [in the Bahamas], we call each other the girl and you know femme. But publically and away from them, I knew that I couldn't be that way around people who were not of that lifestyle.

Marko felt pressured by those in the Bahamas to present a heteronormative self in public and to compartmentalize his queer and deviant expression to the private sphere, with those who he felt were like him. The alternative was to come out in public and be harassed on a regular basis.

Post-migration, Marko was able to find this supportive community among those in his queer diaspora from the Bahamas, and now, public expression and engagement was a legitimate option for him.

> Since I have been here [in Canada], I came to meet one or two other, or a few other Bahamans that actually live here and was here before me and just hanging out with them, and a few of them are effeminate and when we hang out together I notice that there weren't the kind of stares and comments that we are used to getting back home.

Whereas McCune Jr (2014) examined the DL as a very restricted practice that was confined to private spaces, Floyd found that he could find expression on the DL in a variety of physical places. He too found support among those who are in the same ethnic diaspora and have revealed their queerness to him somehow. Finding a source of support required tact and caution on his part.

Especially on a community-level. If I know definitely that the black person is gay, I feel

comfortable. Even if they are DL, I feel a little comfortable because they kind of

understand, they kind of know. When it comes to the others, I try to avoid them.

A prevalent issue in the queer community is racism and racial preferences, which leave

queer men of colour in a disadvantaged positon. Han found that queer men of colour have their

choices in mate restricted due to a hierarchy of desirability in the community (2008). Queer men

of colour also face blatant forms of racism from their peers and are blamed for their own

marginalization (Han, 2008). Oftentimes men who are queer and racialized play into their own

marginalization, as noted El-Farouk:

The other issue is exotification and fetishization of dark skinned bodies and sexual

stereotyping and so on and so forth…as we as people of colour, as gay men of colour,

continue to face as well. I want to have sex with you because I like brown, I don't want to

have sex with you because I only like white guys. But that also comes from within our own

communities, from gay men of colour only wanting to have white partners, or white sex

partners.

Duggan's notion of homonormativity exposes the dominant culture of 'gayness' that

positions white, upper class, and able bodied men as the ones with privilege (Oswin, 2008). This

has consequences for queer men of colour, who may not fit into this dominant culture due to

their race, migrant status, socialization, etc. Isolation can become more prevalent in the queer

refugee's everyday life, which impedes integration and can create issues with mental health. As

in the case of Grindr (Bielski, 2012), there is an underground community forming with discreet,

queer men building connections through the app. The problem is when queer people of colour,

who do not fit into homonormative discourses, are having their choices limited with the denial of

public visibility. El-Farouk brought awareness to the importance of questioning the dominant gay culture:

> I remember this whole discourse about oh you know, our gay culture. But what is gay culture and what's fashioned that culture? What oppression fashioned this notion that gay men should have multiple, anonymous sex partners without attachment? What fashioned that? What oppression and social forces fashioned that notion and why should I buy into it? Is sexual exclusivity a heteronormative tradition?

4.2.6 Mental Health and Resiliency

Queer refugees can experience mental health challenges as a result of the isolation that comes from being perceived as a risky subject in a society that is both heteronormative and securitized. After experiencing heteronormative violence pre-flight (Yep, 2003) and traumatization throughout the migration process (Lustig et al, 2004), it can be a heavy experience to discover that the destination country may still be oppressive, but in a subtler manner (Razack, 2000; Crépeau et al., 2007; Lim-Hing, 2005). When discrimination is harder to detect, it becomes difficult to notice its impact on the individual person. El-Farouk states:

> Canada is a very polite society... nobody is going to start screaming at you and yelling at you when you go into a social service agency or into some space looking for support or service or whatever. It is not going to be that overt, the issues are subtler and systemic, so nothing sort of flies.

As a result of experiencing stigmatization from others, and an internalized sense of shame in the source country, self-deprecation may be the easiest way to cope with the devastating pain that

queer refugees have experienced. El-Farouk had a client from Jamaica who had told him that he felt horrible for sleeping with many men, yet continued to do so:

> On one hand, you're actually having multiple partners, but at the same time, you've internalized this sort of, I wouldn't say hate, but this sort of, that there is something wrong with you or bad about what you are doing…and yet you are still doing it.

The struggle to find genuine support can be a gruelling challenge for the queer and racialized. According to participant Floyd, the unstable. underground community is the easiest place to turn to for potential support in the Caribbean:

> So usually your support system [in the Caribbean] is the underground, gay community and it can also be detrimental as well because if there is ever any fallout, sometimes those people might even expose you.

As I discussed in chapter two, Foucault referred to visibility as a trap (Foucault, 2008). To access the strongest kind of support, the racialized queer person needs to be tactful as visibility can be a risk to their wellbeing. According to Floyd:

> The support might be there in terms of if you are skillful enough to actually have it but not everybody would actually know how to go around and get that support that they need,

Post-settlement, queer refugees may still need to be tactful in how they seek support, but there is a more visible presence of gay people in Toronto, which can be a source of inspiration. As Marko stated:

Being here in this environment where I've seen gay couples with their kids, things of this nature, it really gives me the inspiration to know that, or it gives me this feeling to know that, it is possible for me to do these things.

Empowerment is ultimately an individual experience, yet can be difficult to obtain without the back up of a community presence. Having a community, group or tribe to connect with can do more than simply provide validation to a queer identity. It can elevate the present and past stressors that are carried around when one is a survivor. According to Floyd:

I think it terms of empowering, to empower someone, it should even let's say come from the individual and the individual should have that sense that, even if all goes wrong, there is some sort of community, some sort of system that would support you.

Inspiration influences feelings of optimism, which can fuel a sense of resiliency (Munt, 2012). However, there is still the threatening presence of homophobia that exists in all areas of the queer refugee's life. Homophobic violence acts as a symptom of a broader, heteronormative culture (Yep, 2003). Floyd had actually felt drained, and experienced a lack of inner stability, due to the homophobia that surrounded him growing up:

You know, I think sometimes I used to feel almost burnt out from the kind of negative energy you getting from people making comments about homosexuality. You know, you have to hear it in the mass media, you know, people listening to dancehall. You know those types of things.

This was reiterated by Floyd who pointed out that the world inside the queer refugee's mind can be a source of turmoil and self-deprecation, which creates the very violence that they fear of happening, as a result to coming out. Here Yep's notion of interior-individual violence is

56

occurring (2003), as discussed in chapter two, which results in the queer refugee persecuting and punishing themselves as a result of their socialization. According to Floyd:

Members of the community, even if they don't attack you physically, they are going to ostracize you, you are going to suffer from alienation, depression and eventually you may end up harming yourself and doing exactly what they wanted to do to you

It is this internal world within the queer refugee's mind that can hold onto fear and insecurities, which were created in the source country, but still plague them post-migration. It is the internalized disciplinary gaze that stays with the queer refugee post-migration (Foucault, 2008). In the previous country, the queer refugee may have experienced state-sanctioned violence through interactions with the police (Millbank, 2002), and they hold onto the view that they must self-regulate regardless of their geographic location, otherwise there will be judgement and persecution. Floyd discussed the challenges he had post-migration in unlearning the fear associated with the disciplinary gaze:

I have been in situations where I try to be as liberal as possible and I remember one time a guy was actually trying to hold my hand in public and I pulled away because for me it was a weird thing, I am not accustomed to it and I am looking around to see who is watching me. So you still come with, you know when you actually come to Canada, you still come with those insecurities.

Maksym also faced the challenge of letting go of this internalized prejudice after he had arrived in Canada. The process of unlearning one's fear, or making peace with your own queer and deviant identity, can be a long-term process. As stated by Maksym:

I still can't. Just because you know it is a habit, this habit basically changes you completely and you have to get used to new life and you have to get used to these kind of traditions, and it is still kind of scary for me even to hold somebody's hand just because I am still watching behind is there anybody watching?

This self-segregation can be a difficult habit to break for the queer refugee who may feel isolated in the heteronormative and securitized destination. Intersecting forms of oppression can leave one feeling as thought they can only rely on themselves. After experiencing trauma for being queer, trust becomes increasingly difficult to find after resettling into Canada. In this context, Maksym discussed the need to retreat within himself:

[post-migration] I don't share anything. This is my life I get used to it. I know there is a time to change something but at the same time I cannot do anything.… all your life you are hiding yourself from everyone and each and now someone tells you can be yourself, what are you going to do?

The constant self-policing and discretion can take a toll on a queer refugee's mental health. It adds to the already existing stressors associated with migration and seeking asylum (Lustig et al, 2004). Yet this type of queer expression may seem like the only option when the support of your ethnic or diasporic community is conditional. According to Floyd:

It might take time to overcome and if someone doesn't really have a good support system, if they are still dependent on the black community here in Canada, then they know basically that black people might not think positively about homosexuality.

These forms of self-policing take a heavy toll on one's mental health, which create a challenge in obtaining the social mobility that Floyd wanted to get out of his post-secondary

education, which would have been a way for him to escape the heteronormative culture in St. Kitts.

> Eventually, depression got me and I actually had to withdraw from the second semester and I felt as if everything I was trying to work at, wasn't like paying off for me. I actually thought that doing my MA, might actually be my gateway out of St. Kitts.

Floyd had to resort to medication in order to cope with the disabling environment that he was forced to live in when he was back in the source country.

> I suffered from depression. …I knew definitely the environment would not help me and I had to use medication and eventually like in, I made a lot of attempts to try to create a life where I could do certain things, live a certain away.

Post-migration, the fear of sharing personal details for Maksym is informed by the cultural prejudice towards queer people in the Ukraine, which can ideally be overcome by migrating out the nation. In Toronto, Maksym felt his anxiety and internalized fear alleviate upon observing the cities' general mentality towards queer folk:

> Now you come here and you feel like "you're are gay oh ok", and then you're just like "what?". For example, two males or females kissing each other on the street, for us, it's very, very kind of it seems like you killed a guy, you know, you're a murder.

In his resettled life, Maksym could feel the symptoms of burnout and depression wearing off:

> I'm not exhausted anymore…mentally exhausted. I can finally fall asleep, not at four o'clock at the morning, but still you know. I don't feel this pressure. I don't need to pretend. Which relieves me completely.

The burnout that a refugee can feel after experiencing trauma in the past may inhibit their ability to fight for themselves and be resilient in the present, as they settle into Canada. According to key-informant El-Farouk Khaki,

> I wanted my client to file a complaint [against an immigration official who wanted her to remover her head scarf], but she had been dealing with so much trauma and so much, that she just didn't want to do it and I can't make someone do something that they don't want to do.

Traumatization, depression and other mental health issues continue to be a widespread challenge amongst refugees and asylum seekers as they must engage in a process of letting go of past trauma and being able to take ownership of their lived experiences. As El-Farouk states:

> I don't think the challenges have changed. People coming out, how comfortable people are with coming out, documenting their past lives so their experiences, mental health issues, trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder.

Ultimately, the pressure to engage with individual queerness in the source country can lead to mental anguish and inner turmoil. To constantly repress and restrain oneself at all-times can be a kind of reoccurring trauma in and of itself, which does damage to the mentality and worldview of the queer refugee. El-Farouk found that if his queer clients had the ability to hide their queerness, then they would choose to do it because it is too much to ask of a single person to go against the culture of the source country. Every moment of self-policing, or choosing repression over queer expression, takes a toll on the refugee who is also a survivor. Traumatization may not end once the queer refugee settles into the heteronormative destination of Toronto. According to El-Farouk:

So it becomes very difficult, like the psychological trauma. The psychological violence

that LGBT people go through to have to hide and deny who they are in order to simply be

able to survive. That does have very profound, deep and long term consequences, even

once they are out of those spaces.

4.2.7 The Impact of Stigma on Settlement

Queer refugees are perceived through discourses of "riskiness" as soon as they migrate to

Canada, from the level of the security state (Fekete, 2015; Munck, 2008), to micro-level

experiences with settlement agencies (Munro et al, 2007) and their ethnic communities

(Rasmussen, 2004; Jaspal, 2014). Although finding a sense of community can lead to a

decreased sense of stigma from society, some queer refugees opt out of public participation with

other sexual minorities. El-Farouk states:

I do find that a lot of, some of my clients stay around community, but a lot of them just

sort of go off and do their own thing, and then I never see them again, they just sort of

blend away, as opposed to sort of maintaining some kind of connection or visibility in the

larger LGBT community.

In the source country of the Bahamas, Marko was made to feel stigmatized and

unwelcomed in the public sphere through the interactions he had with the police, who reinforced

the same homophobic views as the men who slit his tire. Although a club for queer men may fit

the notion of a heterotopia (McCune Jr, 2014), the police intervention in that space made it more

public. This type of experience taught Marko to remain discrete and on the DL:

But I know the police, you would find the majority of a lot of officers, they frown on the

lifestyle because I have been in a gay club before where they came into the club and they

shut the club down.

Finding the right space and demographic is key when looking for love, support or safety. Marko

realized that he was looking for love in the wrong places including dating apps like Grindr. As a

technological queer space, Grindr is enhancing the feelings of disconnection for queer men as it

promotes sexual objectification over liberation or empowerment (Bielski, 2012). For Marko, it

helped him to understand what he needs to nurture his resettled life:

I have had two experiences since I have been to Canada. They were okay but what I am

realizing is that maybe I am just in the wrong environment, so when I look for guys, it

seems like everyone is so just sex, sex, sex driven and that is not necessarily my thing.

Societal stigma against queer people can create barriers to finding spaces of support and

safety. There were no policies, or legislation to protect queer people in the Caribbean while

Floyd was living there. He had to strategically find support with people who were also queer-

identified:

That support now [in the Caribbean], you would actually find that support just within

people who are actually gay. Friends, intimate friends you have made over the years and

you know defiantly that they are gay.

However, the down low is just as present in Canada as it is in the Caribbean or Ukraine,

as there is a heteronormative stigma against queer people in Canada as well. As Floyd migrated

here to be free and visible with his queerness, he encountered the private and public divide in his

process of mate selection. Yet he stands by his position of finding liberation in the savior nation:

Even here in Canada, I have met people who are DL and I sometimes tell them that I came

to Canada to be free, not to you know go back into the closet, like I was back home.

This anti-queer stigma can be more prevalent in certain ethnic communities in Canada

than in others. Floyd talked about the pressure to be straight in the Black community and that the

possibility of transnational gossip was a reason to avoid the ethnic enclaves.

I think within the black community, there is still that pressure and you might need to

actually look at that in the context that many of them would settle within a community that

is predominately from their own country and then there is that risk and you talk about let's

say gossip following people from back home

In this regard, race becomes a factor in how prevalent anti-queer stigma is within particular

ethnic communities in Canada. White, homonormative discourses of gayness (Oswin, 2008;

Rosario et al, 2004) make it easier for racialized folk to position themselves against this standard.

For the religious and racialized, interpretations of different types of holy scriptures position the

deviant queer as outside the parameters of the faith or culture (Jaspal & Cincerella, 2012). Floyd

found that, within white communities, there appears to be more leeway for the visible expression

and engagement of queerness. This was evident to him upon observing the gay spaces in

Toronto:

It might still be like stereotyping but I think predominately, you would find there are more

white people on Church Street, you will find there are more white couples holding hands,

you will find there are more white couples doing public affection. Those types of things.

Cultural stigma against queer folk in racialized communities can be so severe, to the

point where heterosexual men may feel the need to avoid any visible association with sexual

minorities. The disciplinary gaze (Foucault, 2008) and the threat of transnational exposure drive this homophobic behaviour. According to Floyd:

> So, I have heard a guy who told me as a driver, he would never drive on Church St. even if he has to take, and this is a Black Jamaican, and even if he has to take the longest route to get around Church St. he would do that because *laughs* he is more fearful of someone seeing him on Church St. and going back to say "this time on Church St…".

Floyd did not have an easy time integrating into Canadian society. His drive to keep moving is what helped him to resettle into Canada. Kojima (2014) emphasized the importance for racialized and queer migrants to always be on the move and never stay in one place. This can result in feelings of being stuck, and for Floyd, he experienced an initial period of despair after his arrival:

> When I actually came here [to Canada], the whole depression and everything got to me. A friend of mine actually just told me, you know, just do the asylum, seek the asylum. But my goal was to just basically move, keep moving, and you know just be able to work and survive. That was it.

For Floyd, stigma was not only attached to his sexuality, but also his identity and status as a refugee claimant. This led to more discretion and the coinciding feelings of isolation. Like Maksym, he also felt the need to self-segregate, but more so because of his stigmatized position as a refugee in Toronto:

> For me it [the word 'refugee'] had like a kind of negative connation, I didn't like it because I think deep down I still felt like, why would let's say someone claim to be a gay refugee? I

sometimes, I isolated myself from people because I didn't want to get too close to people

where I have to share anything.

Floyd felt that his status as a refugee claimant was holding him back from progressing in

Canada due to the constraints that this caused on his financial situation.

Banks want to know that you are permanent resident or that you have some sort of status

other than refugee claimant. …So then at times I am frustrated over things like that

because where I want to go ahead, that is actually keeping me back.

As he has developed a critical insight into the world around him, Floyd could understand

that the stigma against refugees exists as symptom of a receding, national economy. He believed

that fewer economic resources lead to competition and insecurity, which in turn deepens

inequity. This type of social organization can also be influenced by processes of Neoliberalism

(El-Tayeb, 2012; Munck, 2008; Kotz, 2002) where the need to conform to a capitalist economy

can affect queer engagement and social mobility for racialized folk. Floyd states that:

So if a country is actually going through an economic downturn, especially after 2008, you

still have that shifty economic situation and when people look at refugees and people

coming to Canada, they see those people as basically competing for what they consider to

be scarce, economic resources.

However, despite the anti-refugee stigma and negative stereotypes associated with this

population, Floyd continues to navigate life in Canada as he hopes to change his status.

I really do what is necessary to actually survive and also to not become like how some

people actually feel that refugee claimants are here just for welfare benefits and things like

that.

Conversely, Maksym is finding a sense of belonging in the queer community and has not encountered any sign of marginalization there.

> Its for yourself, for your own mental thing, just to let you understand that people like you are accepted and you can be yourself without any worries or any sorrys to be honest.

More or less, Maksym continued to feel a sense of marginalization from his ethnic community and had decided to avoid them as he perceives them to be prejudiced and detrimental to his wellbeing post-migration.

> I just cutting off Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, any kind of USSR countries people. I know they are sick.

There appears to be progress happening in the Toronto queer community in terms of the increase of community support groups, and overall visibility, for queer refugees in the gateway city of Toronto. According to El-Farouk:

> So for example today, you have the 519 that has the "Among Friends" program. So, that's a city of Toronto community centre in the LGBT community that has a program for LGBT refugee asylum seekers. You have Access Alliance, which is a non-queer settlement agency, but that now has programming. And then you have for example "Supporting our Youth", which is a queer led initiative for newcomer youth. Right? So you are starting to, so we have this now, so it actually makes my work easier.

And, although the initial arrival into Canada can be rough for a refugee claimant, El-Farouk has been able to bear witness to the long-term success of his clients.

...and you know she [a refugee client] told me her name and she said you were my lawyer

fifteen years ago and I'm doing my Masters in Social Work. [My partner] was talking to a

woman who we represented two maybe three years ago, she had been in Canada, a

Caribbean woman, had been in Canada illegally for a number of years, did her refugee

claim, she got accepted. Her daughter is going into law school.

In building rapport with his refugee clients, and alleviating any sense of stigma that they have by providing them with a sense of understanding, El-Farouk attempts to use the existing bridges that he has with them,

I try to build bridges with people […] most of my clients are queer. So that's the first

bridge. A lot of my clients are of colour, so that's another bridge. Many of my clients are

African, that's another bridge. Some of my clients are Muslim, so that's another bridge. I

am an immigrant myself or a displaced person or a refugee in inception, so that's another

bridge. So that's part of helping create, it's those sorts of linkages.

Despite the heavy stigma that exists against refugees in the security state, El-Farouk discovered stories of refugee resiliency and clients who own the space that they occupy in Canada without any excuses. Resiliency can be a skillset that anybody can adopt, but it may manifest itself differently depending on factors such as personality. As El-Farouk states:

It's been interesting for me when I hear of one of my clients who has actually called the

police on somebody else because they would never have thought of going to the police, or

being called, or calling the police and have often been victimized by the police in their own

countries and they were like "Yeah, I called the cops, because I know I'm in Canada!".

Although the refugee population faces a prevalent stigma within the Canadian Security State (Fekete 2015; Gilbert, 2009; Munster, 2009), select members of this demographic continue to propel themselves forward, thus demonstrating the resiliency that got them to this country in the first place. Immigration policy such as the IRPA, or the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, may offer legislative protection for refugees. Yet without the granting of status, claimants must rely on their individual capacities for survival.

> She [his client] was like "no, I am staying at this shelter, I am in the process of making a refugee claim, this is my lawyer, this is his card…" and she advocated for herself. It is the individual's capacity to advocate for themselves as well and that also creates a problem because not everybody has the capacity to advocate for themselves.

In summary, the findings of the research study bring attention to both the systematic challenges that queer refugees face in achieving a successful claim and earning the accompanying rights, as well as the intimate experiences of persecution and rejection in their personal lives. To provide deeper insight into these findings, the next chapter will apply two theoretical perspectives in order to situate the participants' experiences within the broader context of the sanctuary city that is both securitized and heteronormative.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In this section, the seven key themes brought forward through the qualitative interviews will be examined using the theoretical frameworks of Foucault and a lens that is critical of whiteness. Building off of the findings, this critical discussion contextualizes the challenges that the queer refugee participants experienced due to their stigmatized status in a highly securitized state, the racialized parameters of their sexual and gender expression, the complexities associated with stressors, as well as their inner sense of spirituality.

5.1 The Subtle Expressions of Securitization

As Razack (2000) and Munster (2009) have examined, the Canadian state has become highly securitized, and as a result, refugees and asylum seekers have become unwelcomed guests despite their needs for asylum and a safe haven. An explicit expression of securitization would be the deportation of migrants who are deemed to be risky subjects due to factors such as their race, religion or nationality. However, when looking at the findings of the interviews with the three refugee claimants, it can be seen that securitization works in subtle and covert ways as well. Marko and Maksym were both trying to obtain a positive decision from the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) and in the meantime, they were not able to obtain access to a work permit. According to Rygiel (2012), the security state aims to delegitimize the movement that asylum seekers make across borders, as a way of distancing these actors from the political protection it offers and deny them rights to necessities such as employment. This is a crucial issue as employment would allow refugee claimants to contribute to the economy. This could then grant claimants a platform to argue for human rights and state protection (Munck, 2008) as they would be contributing to the stability of the nation's economy. Access to stable and satisfying work is also one key factor in promoting mental wellbeing (Beiser, 2009) for refugees

69

who may be struggling with the aftermath of traumatic experiences. Trauma may also follow the queer refugee in their resettled life, through the experiences of discrimination.

Marko, for example, received a negative decision from the IRB in regards to his claim for refugee status. From his perspective, there was no clear reasoning offered from the immigration official as to why he could not claim persecution based on his sexual orientation. As the interview excerpt demonstrated, Marko believed that the reason he was denied was because he was perceived by the official to be a compulsive liar who was trying to sneak into Canada. This suspicion of the 'bogus refugee' has been examined by Razack (2000) as a larger symptom of the national narrative of Canada, which seeks to maintain the white character of the nation. El-Farouk also brought up the prevalent narratives that were promoted by the Harper government, whereby refugees have been depicted as liars wanting to invade Canada in order to take advantage of the 'true Canadians' (Razack, 2000). It may be challenging to re-write the national narrative as migrants in Canada believe that they are able to earn the privilege that is shaped by this story, when in reality, they are marginalized by it. The priorities of the security state are more focused towards the prevention of foreign threat (Morgensen, 2010; Rygiel, 2012). Although this is a legitimate concern, it should be balanced against the commitment that the nation has made to the international community in regards to exercising empathy and understanding towards persons who could realistically be persecuted ("UNHCR- Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees"). For example, Marko also felt as though it was his racialized and masculine presentation of self that contributed to his first negative decision with the IRB. His concern is valid as research has shed light on the perceived incapability of being both black and queer by the respective populations (McCune Jr., 2014; McCready, 2004; McKeown et al, 2010), which in turn contributes to the erasure of people of colour from public

dialogues associated with coming out, same-sex marriage, and lifestyles associated with white homonormativity.

5.2 The Struggle to be Homonormative in a Heteronormative Society

As the literature has shown, homonormativity is an acceptable expression of queer sexuality, within the confines of heteronormativity (Oswin, 2008). Homonormative discourse is white in character as it promotes coming out of a socially-imposed closet and engaging in public displays of queer sexualities (Oswin, 2008, Fox, 2007; Riggs, 2010; Teunis, 2007). The three refugee claimant participants demonstrated a form of queerness that sits outside of the normative discourses of what it means to be a gay male. Their experiences of migration as asylum seekers play a key role in the decisions that they have made in regards to the engagement and expression of their queer selves. Ford (2007) defines queerness as involving a willful decision to stand against a particular norm, in this case homonormativity, which can lead to experiences of disconnection from a larger population. Experiences of gayness are not automatically synonymous with individual expressions of queerness (Ford, 2007). As research shows, queer men of colour often chose to express their true sexuality through heterotopic spaces (McCune Jr, 2014) and the underground environment of the DL (Bailey, 2004; Jaspal & Cinnerella, 2012; Kojima, 2014). Although there is a restricted form of liberation within the private spaces offered to these men, the DL prevents them from joining the visible queer community. The down low is itself then also a product of the dominant and white homonormative culture (Fox, 2007; Oswin, 2008).

For Marko and Maksym, they have had to go through a process of unlearning the fear of homophobic persecution in their home country. The disciplinary gaze is something that has traveled with them, even as they have resettled into Toronto. The choices that they had made in

regards to their queer expression and engagement were informed by harsh forms of violence in their home countries; forms of violence which are deemed to be illegal here in Canada. This closeting can lead to a lack of connection with queer folk in Canada. Being a refugee is a form of queerness in itself as you are defined against the national narrative (Razack, 2000) and the standards of the normative immigrant. This ideal immigrant embodies Foucault's notion of the homo economicus, who is self-sufficient and bears no economic burden on the state (Sparke, 2006). Maksym refused to be open with his sexuality to anyone, including immigration officials, and did not want to be a part of the visible, gay experience. This relates to the desire that many queer migrants have, which is to live discreetly and intentionally separate from the ethnic or diasporic community (Jaspal, 2014; McKeown et al., 2010; Rasmussen, 2004). In one form or another, each of the queer refugee participants were positioned as queer in relation to the out and proud gay folk who tend to inhabit white, privilege (Oswin, 2008; El-Tayeb, 2012; Lim-Hing, 2005).

Maksym, however, could not understand why he was asked about racism and discrimination within the queer community. His access to white gay privilege (Riggs, 2010) was not something that he perceived or directly experienced. Since Floyd has been in Canada for over three years, he was able to see how his race and Caribbean ethnicity could set him apart from the visible queer folk. At the same time, he was able to find support among other queer, Black men through both his work with the organization Black-CAP (Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention) and everyday interactions. Marko was also able to find peer support with people who he found to be like him, and were also members of his queer diaspora from the Bahamas. Race can be a basis of exclusion, and also exotification, in the broader queer community (Lim-Hing, 2005; McKeown et al, 2010; Kojima, 2014). This is one way in which racialized, gay men embody a

distinct queerness of their own. Although their respective, ethnic enclaves were possible sites for discrimination and transnational gossip, the three claimant participants were able to find support from the queer members of these diasporic communities. This speaks to the work of Kojima (2014), who emphasized the need for queer migrants to find their own queer spaces and relationships for engaging with their diaspora and desires.

5.3 Migrant Masculinities

Marko, Maksym and Floyd all experienced the pressure to be heterosexual men in their source countries. For Marko and Floyd, there was intense cultural pressure in the Caribbean to avoid any open signs of femininity. Floyd witnessed the ways in which certain men were treated as suspect by others in the neighborhood for behaving femininely. Floyd also had to resort to great lengths to preserve the presentation of a heterosexual masculinity that is prized in both Caribbean and other racialized populations (McCune Jr, 2014). Marko had to create a fake, masculine persona in order to survive in the Bahamas, but deep down, he was repressing a feminine side that he felt he could only show with his queer allies in the underground community. Maksym felt pressure to be the man of the family, as he was the only son. He did not feel as though his queer self could be negotiated with the preferred form of heterosexual masculinity by his family, so he left. Migration was used as a way to hold onto the presentation of the masculine self, while compartmentalizing queer expression and engagement within foreign places. The only other option was to be discreet and engage in queerness on the down low and within heterotopic spaces (McCune Jr, 2014). This is because the open expression of queerness against heteronormative scripts, and traditional gender norms associated with hegemonic masculinity, can result in practices of shaming for the male subject, including being labelled a

faggot (Pascoe, 2005), which is the ultimate attack on his internalized sense of manhood and masculine power.

For queer men who are also racialized or migrants, there is no entitlement to patriarchal power in the same way that there is for white males (Riggs, 2010). Since men of colour may experience a barrier to patriarchal power due to their race, the need to behave in hyper masculine ways becomes prioritized, as a method of compensation. The national narrative positions migrant men as outside the power and privilege of the state (Razack, 2000), which leads to a lack of economic success, social capital, and isolation from any sense of collective brotherhood. All of which are characteristics of the white, masculine male. For queer, male migrants, their desirability and ability to be proactive in their intimate lives becomes hindered by racist notions of the desirable, gay subject (Bielski, 2012). As El-Farouk has shared, some of his queer male clients participate in the practices of mate-selection that are associated with the white, homonormative community. Queer men of colour therefore play into their own marginalization by seeking out the glorified and white masculine subject for intimacy and connection, while dismissing their racialized peers. Kojima (2014) encouraged queer and Asian migrants to find empowerment and validation within their own diasporic communities, while creating their own spaces to express their unique take on the marginalized, masculine experience. Internalizing family pressures to marry a wife and procreate have pressured queer men of colour to hide their queer selves in the spaces associated with the down low (McKeown et al., 2010); and then relate directly to the notion of honour that is highly prioritized in immigrant families (McKeown et al., 2010) Exhibiting transgressive forms of queerness, and possible femininity, by male members can appear to dishonour the family's status within the larger diaspora. Failure to comply with the

heteronormative aspirations of the ethnic enclave or diasporic community defines one as the deviant, queer subject, which can be seen as a threat to the larger, transnational family.

5.4 The Stigma of Being the Scandalous Subject

As heteronormativity normalizes heterosexuality, it simultaneously erases queer folk from the public sphere of society (Yep, 2003). The notion of scandal that becomes intertwined in public expressions of queerness can be a main influence for choosing to be discreet or on the down-low. As mentioned earlier, Foucault wrote about the story of two campers who became intimately involved while camping with their friends (Eribon, 2001). The other campers caught onto the fact that the two men were engaging in intimate acts and falling in love, but chose not to intervene (Eribon, 2001). It was only when the two men revealed their relationship publically did they then pass judgment on them (Eribon, 2001). This story can easily be translated to the pre-migration experiences of Marko, Maskym and especially Floyd. To escape the homophobic and religious environment of his hometown, Floyd had resorted to many strategies of discretion, which included moving to nearby islands and other countries, hosting international lovers from abroad, as well as using post-secondary education as a way to deflect the cultural and familial pressures for heterosexual marriage. The cost of having his queer self revealed to his community would be ridicule, and possibly violence, for him and his family. These participants came from cultures where religion was deeply engrained in everyday life, but the perception of immorality that is associated with their sexuality could not be assigned to them until they came out and created a scandal for the public to respond to. In the Bahamas, Marko had relied on the underground community, based in spaces such as the gay clubs, in which he could engage with his queer self in what Foucault would call a heterotopia (McCune Jr, 2014). Maksym had tried to be visible with a male partner in the Ukraine, in which they were trying to buy an apartment, but

faced discrimination from the landlord, who did not want to have to "clean up" after their gay conduct.

Due to securitization and heteronormativity working concomitantly in the lives of queer refugees and other migrants in Toronto, the internalization of the disciplinary gaze is likely. In their resettled lives, post-migration, the three claimant participants were either reluctant or strategic about how they came out to others. Marko engaged in volunteer work with the 519 Community Centre and he was inspired by the outward expression of queerness during Pride week events. Floyd chose to selectively come out to others, which included other queer and Black people, and also a co-worker who was flirting with him. Maksym only citied coming out to immigration officials, and like the others, to the particular men that he became intimately involved with. El-Farouk had stated that some queer newcomers choose to remove themselves from any visible association with the broader community after they had resettled in Canada. This could be because the stigma of being queer, and a refugee, still exists on a subtler level for this population and the need to self-police is still required. As previously mentioned, in his work on the panopticon, Foucault discussed how the mere perception of being watched by others was enough to make docile bodies self-regulate (Foucault, 2008) as a way of fitting in and getting by without any challenges. Living with the disciplinary gaze can serve as an additional stressor in the resettled life of the queer refugee.

5.5 Survival Amongst Stressors

Mental health is a prevalent issue amongst Canada's refugee population. Whereas much literature has cited post-traumatic stress as being caused by past violence for refugees (Lustig et al., 2004; Hyman et al., 2000; Pui-Hing Wong, 2013), El-Farouk spoke about the continual traumatization that occurs while continuing to live in isolation, while constantly self-policing.

For participant Floyd, he had to resort to using medication in order to cope with the depression that was caused by the environmental factors of his native country of St. Kitts. The intense stress of trying to constantly police himself in an environment that did not embrace him was too much to handle. There are also the additional stressors of family expectations, education or work and intimate relationships (Hyman, Vu & Beiser, 2000), which can make it harder to continually cope with everyday life for the queer refugee.

As discussed in chapter two, according to Gorman, the notion of madness is often associated with whiteness, and this discourse indirectly denies the existence of mental illness in racialized populations (2015). The strategic compartmentalization of queerness for racialized folk around the world can be overwhelming. The three claimant participants came from religious countries and they had to fight off the internalization of shame, and the label of sinner, that their cultures and loved ones were imposing on them. To be queer in a religious culture can impede one's self worth, as El-Farouk saw in one of his clients, and it can lead to unhealthy practices of self-deprecation. Floyd found that this widespread sense of insecurity among queer and black men made it difficult to find supportive people who would not out him to those in the public. Gorman found that disabled identities were ones with racist and classist connotations attached to them (2015). Refugees today are depicted as brown-skin and racialized but the discourses that link whiteness with mental disability reinforce the negative stereotype that this refugee population is lazy and looking to take advantage of the Canadian welfare system, as opposed to being resilient survivors who are mentally scarred.

Each of the participants found their own ways of accessing their capacity to be resilient and continued to prevail over individual and systematic barriers that were hindering their wellbeing. Marko found inspiration from the visible, queer community in Canada. Floyd was

able to find a sense of community empowerment with people who would support him in cases of emergency. Maksym felt as though his burnout was wearing off post-migration and he found hope in both witnessing and engaging with queer couples in Toronto. Whereas Maksym felt his burnout wear off after seeing that the situation for queer people in Canada is better than in his home country of Ukraine, El-Farouk's female and Muslim client did not have the energy to advocate for herself when facing discrimination from an immigration official. She continued to feel burnt out here in Canada, due to her intersectional marginalization continuing post-migration.

When engaging in refugee mental health, it is important for those in the field to allow their clients to define what they are feeling and what they need. As El-Farouk pointed out, not every claimant has the ability to advocate for themselves or speak their truth, and this creates complications in seeking care. However, resiliency is a trait that can be easily found in any asylum seeker fighting for sanctuary. As stated by O'Malley (2010), an individual's capacity for resiliency can be accessed if they are adaptable to sudden change, have an optimistic view of the destination nation, and hold onto their religious or spiritual views. However, as we have seen with these participants, religion can have detrimental effects on their queer engagement and expression, both before and after migration.

5.6 Spirituality vs Sexuality

Every participant of the study has had their queer life impacted by religion. El-Farouk found a sense of community and solidarity at the Toronto Unity Mosque to which he contributes. Maksym completely disowned Christianity. Marko perceived the Bahamas as a Christian nation that he could not survive in, yet he was able to separate his sense of spirituality from the institution of the Church, which he cut ties with. Floyd experienced first hand the different ways

in which religion was oppressing him. He found that Christianity in St. Kitts promoted relationships of procreation, which glorifies the couples that conform and stigmatizes those who do not comply. These experiences resonate with Foucault's idea of the Malthusian couple who understood what the social world expected them to do with their bodies and acted accordingly (Deutsher, 2012). Biopolitical power has been exercised through dominant discourses around sex (Deutsher, 2012) in the Caribbean, which promoted the dismissal of contraception for the bestowal of the blessing of children. Sexuality was regulated through the shame that Floyd was meant to feel for picking up condoms in public, and also in the home economics book that he read in school, which told him that he was going to grow out of his queerness. Also from the Caribbean, Marko faced the attempts from others to regulate his sexuality concerning procreation, which included the female partner who suspected him of being gay as well as the men in his neighborhood who slashed his car tire.

When examining the findings of the study, it can be seen that the Church is a human-created institution that promotes its own agenda. This agenda includes the promotion of heteronormative procreation between heterosexual partners. Yet from the perspective of key informant El-Farouk, his mosque has been a place of sanctuary and a source of spiritual connection. Also, for Marko, he still saw the importance of retaining his Christian faith post-migration, but he could no longer participate in the practices of the Church. Floyd was only willing to attend Church for special occasions, which he saw as being more about support for his loved ones. Christianity in the Caribbean granted more freedom to those in heterosexual unions as it is considered normal to have children out of wedlock, as children are considered a blessing from God.

The insight that was gained through the participant interviews furthers the exploration of the settlement experiences of queer refugees. The participants, however, were all gay men and their experiences do not reflect those of all queer people. This was one of a few limitations of the research study.

CHAPTER 6: LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

From the recruitment process to the implementation of the study, there were some limitations that arose, which affected the findings of the study. The following sections will outline which areas of the research process presented limitations.

6.1 Finding Organizations to Recruit Relevant and Willing Participants

During the first round of recruitment, I was able to find highly relevant organizations, including Access Alliance and the 519 Community Centre, who were supportive in helping me finding refugee claimant participants, who are also queer. After I had conducted the three interviews with the refugee claimant participants, I sought out additional organizations with the objective of carrying out another round of interviews. The original plan was to recruit 5-7 queer newcomers. I contacted the "Supporting Our Youth (SOY)" program at the Sherbourne Health Centre. The SOY program provides settlement and community support to queer, newcomer youth. The program coordinator, Aamer Esmail, was supportive and promoted my study. First I had to go through another research and ethnics review with the Sherbourne Health Centre. After obtaining approval, Aamer told me that he would post my flyer in the centre and tell his program participants about my study. Ultimately, I did not hear from any possible participants through SOY. I feel that the fact that I was unable to speak with the youth in the SOY program through an in-person presentation was a detriment to recruitment as I could not build rapport, or a sense of security, for possible participants.

I contacted the Crossroads Refugee Clinic at the Woman's College Hospital, and there seemed to be potential for recruitment. I was required to fax my documentation, which included the recruitment flyer and REB approval. I eventually heard back from Dr. Meb Rashid, who told

me that they were unable to assist due to the strictness of their recruitment policy. He referred me to other organizations.

I also contacted refugee settlement services in Toronto including Romero House, FCJ Refugee Centre, and Sojourn House, but these organizations did not bring in any visibly queer clients, so recruitment was not possible. Finally, I reached out to ethnic-specific organizations that could possibly bring in queer newcomers. This included Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS), The Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP), Black Coalitions of AIDS Prevention (Black-CAP) and the Centre for Spanish Speaking People. Ultimately, I did not secure another round of participants. As two of the participants were in Canada for only a few months at the time of the study, I sought out key informants who could provide insight into the long-term settlement patterns of queer refugees in Toronto. I soon connected with El-Farouk Khaki.

6.2 No Representation of Queer Women, Trans Folk, or Bisexuals

Although the two lists of interested individuals that I gathered from my presentations at the 519 and Access Alliance were quite lengthy and diverse, most of the possible participants did not follow through during email correspondence. Initially, I wanted the sample size to be as diverse as possible, with participants representing different subgroups of the larger, queer community. Unfortunately, there was no representation of queer women or Trans folk in the study. Although certain aspects of both the migration and resettlement experiences that were showcased in the study may hold true for queer folk who are not gay males, the data are missing details and nuance that may be specific to lesbians, Trans folk, bisexuals, etc. This is important as bisexual folks are often excluded from the narratives that immigration officials use to assess refugee claims based on sexual orientation (Lee & Brotman, 2011). The outdated notions of

82

sexuality being used by the IRB still reinforce the binary of straight and gay. In addition,

Millbank (2002) found that the country-specific information being shared by immigration

tribunals, in regards to how queer people were being treated abroad, was based on data collected

about gay men and could not be used to assess claims by queer women.

6.3 Representation of a Broader Range of Intersecting Identities and Experiences

The scholarly research on queer refugees, and racialized migrants, needs to continue

exploring the intersectionality of multiple identities and experiences of marginalization.

Otherwise the representation of all queer folk in this demographic will continue to be

unbalanced. There could have been more of a variety of religious backgrounds, ethnicities and

cultures represented in this study. Initially, the target demographic for the study was quite broad

with the goal of representing as many diverse experiences of queerness, migration and settlement

as possible. There was substantial diversity represented in the experiences of resettlement

featured in this study, but the social factors shaping the lives of these queer male refugees both

before and after migration were restricted because of the common identities that existed among

them. According to Ford (2007) the experiences of queerness can be defined in a multitude of

ways, and this being the case, the recruitment of participants could always have expanded

further. Locating the right subjects, however, would likely continue to be difficult as this study

demonstrated how prevalent discretion is amongst queer refugees in Toronto.

6.4 Possible Bias in the Unplanned Interview Questions

While listening to the recorded interviews during the transcribing process, I could hear

the possible bias that I may have presented to the participants on the first day of interviewing.

This occurred when I either sought out further clarification on certain responses, or when I would

ask unplanned questions, based on my interpretations of what the participants had said. For the first two interviews, the conversation was more regulated around the interview guide. Whereas the other two interviews were less structured around the interview guide and more driven by the responses of participants. Based on the language that I was using, it is possible that the responses of the participants could have been swayed in a particular direction.

6.5 Insufficient Attention Brought to the Concept of Safe Haven

In seeking out information about the participants' lives after resettling in Toronto, I had only asked two of them questions that were related to the notion of "safe haven", which was originally meant to be a key theme in this major research study. It was also a key concept in the original research question of assessing the kind of safe haven that Toronto provides queer refugees. Despite this concept not being featured in all of the interview transcripts, other factors such as housing, employment and settlement support were brought up and could be used as determinants for assessing the type of asylum that queer refugees are receiving in Toronto.

Despite these limitations, the research study that was conducted was able to provide fruitful results that further the scholarly understandings of the resettled lives of queer refugees, in a gateway city such as Toronto. However, as the findings were quite specific to the particular experiences of queer male refugees, there are potential areas for further investigation.

CHAPTER 7: RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Recommendations for Further Research

7.1.1 Exploring the Experiences of Discretion, or the Down Low, for Queer People of Different Cultures.

The research done by McKeown et al. (2010) shows that queer men from different cultures have unique reasons for choosing to live discreetly with their sexuality. For black males, it is about maintaining a culturally glorified presentation of hyper masculinity, while South Asian men are pressured to get married to women and procreate (McKeown et al, 2010). Research conducted to date mostly focuses on black male experiences on the down low, with only a few sources looking at South Asian men. More research needs to be conducted on how the pressures to procreate and be a family man can result in marital infidelity and deep confusion as a result of the fractured identities of South Asian, queer men. Also, it is important to examine other cultures from around the world to see if there are different pressures that men face when adhering to a strictly heterosexual way of life, which denies them any expression of queerness.

7.1.2. Technological Platforms as the New Queer Spaces

As demonstrated in the findings of the interviews, and in the review of academic literature, the emergence of particular, technological advances have diminished the relevancy of physical queer spaces (Kojima, 2014; Bielski, 2012). These advances include smart phone apps and online websites, which in there own right create a virtual heterotopia (McCune Jr, 2014) for limited, queer engagement. Whereas previous generations of queer people have been able to witness either the sexual liberation movement or the fight for same-sex marriage, the younger generation is more likely to explore their queer selves through technological platforms. This may

be unavoidable in an increasingly globalized and neoliberal world, but it would be interesting to see how second-generation, or racialized, Canadians are engaging with their own forms of queerness, regardless of whichever norms they are transgressing. In this regard an important question to ask is: Is there more or less identity integration occurring as a result of these technological and virtual spaces?

7.1.3. The Disciplinary Gaze of the Diasporic Community

The findings of the interviews demonstrate how pervasive the disciplinary gaze is in the lives of queer refugees and others migrants, as well as in racialized populations. It was difficult to find academic literature that went into detail about the rewards and punishments that come with either conformity to cultural norms, or the deviancy of being queer, within a diasporic community. There can be valuable support found in the solidarity of the diaspora, or ethnic community, but membership to the group may be contingent on conforming to a heteronormative way of life. The burden put on queer folk in this type of situation should be examined in more detail. A question surrounds this and future research: What are the cultural costs of queer deviancy for queer, racialized refugees and their loved ones?

7.1.4. The Intersectionality of Mental Disability, Race, Class and Queerness

Academic literature shows that dominant discourses around mental health leaves out racialized peoples and migrants (Gorman, 2015; O'Mallley, 2010; Ellis et al., 2011). The refugee claimant participants each spoke about their own challenges with mental health in a way that fits perfectly into western discourses. However, their powerful experiences of depression, stress and trauma require additional and thoughtful exploration. There is research that looks at refugee mental health, but not as it specifically relates to racialized and queer asylum seekers,

both in Canada and abroad. It is worth examining if the cultural attitudes against queer

sexualities in Canada, which are informed by religion, could somehow undermine the claims of

trauma from homophobic violence. For the refugee claimants of this study, resiliency was

developed on an individual basis, yet for Marko and Floyd, they found support from queer

people of the same ethnicity. Research has shown that the ethnic or diasporic communities of

queer and racialized folk have either punished or isolated them, but not much literature looks at

the importance and difficulty of finding social support and stability with queer people of the

same race. The three claimant participants struggled to gain access to stable employment, and in

this context, research could examine the impact that a lower class standing can have on queer

expression and engagement. Trauma could also be examined further as a long-term disability as

opposed to a temporary health issue that can be completely overcome.

7.1.5 The Importance of Education for Racialized Refugees

Floyd and El-Farouk became active members of the queer community by developing

their capacities for critical thinking through post-secondary education. Floyd was also able to use

education as a way of moving away from home and engaging with this queer desires elsewhere.

Also, Marko had made it one of his goals post-migration to go back to school here in Canada and

build a career in business. Education is a powerful tool for individual empowerment and for

building a bridge to finding a sense of collective belonging with people experiencing the same

types of marginalization. Education should be examined as a tool for queer engagement as it

provides a path to social mobility and ideally grants new economic resources to sexual

minorities, through stable employment, which in turn allows them to gain the agency and

financial independence to live life on their own terms.

While not the focus of this MRP, it is hard to ignore the large populations of government-assisted refugees currently coming into Canada. In particular, there is a growing concern for the children, who are not receiving any formal education as their families are trapped in a limbo-like situation in refugee camps and in hotels when they arrive in Toronto (Hunter, 2016). Research that examines the outsider status of refugees, such as this MRP has done, will need to be conducted to examine, and advocate, for these children who may well face feelings of isolation as their families are working hard to integrate and their schools do not address their individual learning needs (Lustig et al, 2004). In addition to the discrimination that these children may face, they are going to be behind in their educational development, compared to their peers who are already in school.

7.2 Recommendations for Professional Practice

7.2.1 Intervening in the Heteronormative Violence within the Settlement Services

Based on my experiences working frontline as a volunteer assistant with newcomer youth in a Brampton settlement program, I found that there are subtle ways in which heteronormativity is enforced in community support spaces. For example, youth participants can be called out by facilitators for using language that is either racist or sexist. Yet, when it comes to homophobic slurs being made by the participants, there was no intervention. Homophobic language aims to punish people for acting outside the boundaries of traditional gender scripts (Pascoe, 2005), so when it is wilfully ignored by settlement workers, they enable a form of violence that aims to keep everyone in the appropriate, heteronormative roles. Munro et al (2013) found that LGBT newcomer youth in Toronto had harmful experiences with settlement workers, who used homophobic language with them once they had come out. Some settlement services for refugees are religious-based, often in the religion of Christianity, and this can make it harder for queer

folks to find a sense of safety and security in a space that is meant to provide support. Likewise, discrimination against queer people is often treated with less urgency compared to other groups, which makes it harder for people to speak about the instances of homophobia that they experience. Within the settlement services, the adult employees need to be mindful of their own heteronormative assumptions and practices. To do so will help to promote a welcoming space for everyone, as some queer folk may choose to never reveal themselves to others if they do not see the space as safe.

7.2.2 Welcoming Queer Representation in Heteronormative Spaces

According to El-Farouk, there has been significant progress in the development of queer newcomer groups in Toronto within the past two decades. However, many refugees and other migrants are settling into areas around the GTA and beyond. These spaces may not be as welcoming. How can queer folk, who chose to transgress any particular norm or script, be made to feel safe within the heteronormative spaces of settlement service groups? Small steps can be taken by settlement workers to educate their newcomer clients on what the queer community is, how it is embraced by Canada, and why homophobia is just as harmful as racism or sexism. I previously worked with a youth group that offered this type of education during Pride month, which is the one time of the year where queer folks have a highly visible presence in society. This can be a convenient way to bring queer voices into spaces in which discrete newcomers enter, while reducing possible harm that could be done to these folks. Enough damage is already being done to sexual minority refugees, and other newcomers, as they are marginalized in their everyday lives for being either racialized risks or queer threats in a destination that is both securitized and heteronormative.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Although there exists legislation that has supported Canada's reputation as a saviour nation, both on the international scene and within national borders, adherence to policies such as the UN Refugee Convention and the IRPA only look after asylum seekers who have been granted refugee status. As this study shows, life for the refugee claimant is both insecure and precarious. Even in the absence of an official status, claimants are still legitimate refugees as a result of the persecution that they have overcome and the processes of migration that they have engaged in. This study contributes to the ever emerging research being conducted on the experiences of queer refugees in Canada. This study provides an in-depth exploration of what happens to members of this demographic when they are forced to live discreetly, or on the down low, post-migration. This discretion is a result of white discourses of heteronormativity and homonormativity, as well as the processes of securitization that target refugees and creates perceptions of foreignness that position them as risky subjects outside of state protection (Rygiel, 2012). This study found that queer refugees, who are often racialized, experience both marginalization and isolation when they migrate into a nation that is built upon a narrative that prioritizes white Europeans who bear semblance to the British colonizers that founded this country (Razack, 2000). This same narrative influences the actions of the security state, which provides a justification for not providing rights to employment and reliable healthcare for oftentimes racialized claimants who are without refugee status. The only migrants being let into the country are the ones who most closely resemble the homo economicus (Sparke, 2006), who is a skilled contributor to the economy. The three refugee claimants in this study all struggled to gain access to employment, which would have made them contributing members to the national economy, and could increase their sense of belonging post-migration. What is unique in this

90

study is that it examines settlement through the perspective of Foucault and a lens of critical whiteness. Through these perspectives, it can be seen that queer refugees are relegated to the private sphere, where they cannot openly discuss their challenges associated with their queer sexualities or the lack of status. This study contributes the findings that racialized refugees are able to form their own queer diasporas, or communities of support, if they are able to be strategic in how they reveal themselves to others. The findings also show that there are multiple underground communities forming around the world, which trade discretion for queer expression and engagement. These underground queer communities are being reinforced through the technological advances of smart phone apps and dating websites (Kojima, 2014; Han, 2007). The role that religion plays in regulating the experiences of queer engagement and expression throughout the migration process is significant as it emerges in the intimate spaces of everyday family life, as well as in the public neighbourhood spaces of both the sending and receiving countries. As El-Farouk puts it:

"Yeah the persecution ends, but that doesn't mean the discrimination or marginalization ends. […] I mean I don't think queer people in Canada are persecuted but there is violence here, there is discrimination here, there is marginalization."

In their resettled lives in Toronto, queer refugees are free from state-supported persecution, but they continue to face marginalization through the subtle expressions of heteronormativity and securitization in their everyday lives. The findings of this study will hopefully lead to stronger advocacy for queer and racialized refugees from both settlement organizations and activists, who are currently engaging with the influx of government-assisted refugees in the Grater Toronto Area (Hunter, 2016). Awareness needs to be brought to the whitening of queerness, which is being reproduced through the so-called "positive spaces" (Fox,

2007) that, in addition to the gay village in Toronto, are designated for sexual minorities and newcomers. Standards of practice need to address the larger, intersecting issues of heteronormativity, classism and racism as they inform the everyday experiences of marginalization lived by queer refugees. Beiser (2009) argued that lasting, intimate relationships and stable employment are determinants for mental wellbeing post-migration, both of which were difficult to obtain for the queer refugees in this study. Settling into a multicultural society like Toronto, racialized queer people constantly face the hierarchy of desirability within the broader homonormative community, which positions white and gender conforming bodies at the top (Han, 2008; Bielski 2012). Racism in the queer community can at times be as blatant and unapologetic as it was during the Civil Rights movement, which creates obstacles to those seeking fulfilling relationships. The Canadian state needs to re-evaluate the strict conditions required for granting a work permit, as queer refugee claimants are struggling to meet their basic needs in their precarious living situations.

The onus should not be put on individual refugee claimants to self-advocate to strangers in order to gain basic necessities, such as a winter coat, post-migration. To simply exist in a sanctuary city is not enough; refugees need improved financial assistance to survive, at least in the initial phases of their settlement. Opening up paid opportunities for this particular population would be a more effective, and long-term, solution. However, in the harsh economic climate, this is easier said than done. Alongside these personal and professional challenges, the queer refugee participants in this study have cited feelings of inspiration and motivation in their resettled lives, which can lead to promising futures as long as they are able to gain refugee status.

Ryerson University

Consent Agreement

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Please read this consent form so that you understand what your participation will involve. Before you consent to participate, please ask any questions to be sure you understand what your participation will involve.

THE RIGHT TO LIVE FREELY? A LOOK AT RESETTLED LIVES IN THE HETERONORMATIVE HAVEN

INVESTIGATORS: This research study is being conducted by Jobin Philip, a graduate student from the "Immigration and Settlement Studies" MA program at Ryerson University. Jobin is working on this research study under the direct supervision of Dr. Doreen Fumia, PhD, from the Department of Sociology at Ryerson University.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Jobin Philip at jobin.philip@ryerson.ca or Dr. Doreen Fumia at dfumia@ryerson.ca.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: This study is focused on the experiences of settlement that queer refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants have had after starting a new part of their lives in Canada. I want to explore what kind of safe haven Canada provides for queer people, who have been persecuted in their home countries. Many people in Canada believe that this country is fully accepting of queer people. I want to find out from queer refugees/asylum seekers/immigrants themselves what resettlement in Canada has been like for them. I am also conducting key informant interviews with the professionals who engage with queer newcomers through their work. I am planning to conduct 5-7 interviews with both queer refugees/asylum seekers/immigrants and the professionals who play a supportive role in their resettled lives. In order to participate in this study as a queer newcomer, you must have had refugee, asylum seeker or immigrant status either in the past or today. You must also be queer, and this can refer to your sexual orientation, gender, or way of life. You cannot be straight or exclusively attracted to the opposite sex. If you are participating in this study as a key informant from the field, your work must either involve frontline service or research with the queer newcomer community. All participants must be at least 18 years old. The results of this interview will be used in my major research

paper, which is a part of my university program. If you chose to participate your name will not be used unless your chose to provide it. You can instead choose an alias or a fake name for this study.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO OR WHAT PARTICIPATION MEANS:

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

After reviewing this consent form and having all questions answered you will be asked to sign confirming your understanding and consent to participate. If you have any questions, please ask me at any time during this process. After you sign this form, you are confirming that you know what the study is about, what you will be contributing, your right to pass a question and to stop the interview, and what the results of this interview will be used for. If you do not understand the language that I am using, just let me know that I will explain in a different way.

After you hand back the signed forms, I will ask you to complete a very brief demographic survey that will give me background information on who you are. I will be recording the entire interview so that I can have a record to use when I am writing my paper throughout the next year. The interview will last less than one hour. I will be asking you questions about your life experiences both in the previous country and in Toronto. The questions that I ask you can get personal as I will be asking about your experiences of being queer and of facing persecution or discrimination by the people in your life. This interview may cause you to feel uncomfortable and if you need to, you can stop the interview at any time, you simply just need to say "pass on this question" "stop" or "I am finished". The recording continues until the interview is done. You can help yourself to snacks and a drink during and after the interview. When you leave I can provide you with a TTC token if you need one.

        If you need to contact me in the days after this interview, you can email me at jobin.philip@ryerson.ca. I will be writing my major research paper throughout the next year and will require the recording of this interview during this time. After I have submitted my final paper, I will dispose of all recordings. My major research paper will eventually be posted online after I have finished the program. Possible questions that I ask you may include: What is your sexual orientation? Can you describe the life story that you shared with the Immigration and Refugee Board? Have you experienced discrimination in Canada?

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are possible benefits to participating in this study. First, you will learn what it feels like to participate in a university study. Second, this research will bring awareness to the experiences and issues that are faced by members of the queer community, which are usually hidden from the rest of society. Third, you will also be able to talk about your experiences without anyone telling you to make changes to your story. The experiences of queer refugees have only started to be researched in the past decade or so, so you are contributing to somewhat new information.

You may not gain any direct benefit from participating in this study.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS TO YOU AS A PARTICIPANT: During this interview process, you will be asked to describe your past experiences of homo-bi-transphobia, discrimination, persecution and possible trauma. These may be difficult memories to revisit. If at any time during the interview you begin to feel uncomfortable, you have the option to either skip the question or stop the interview. It is your choice as to how much you want to share during this interview. No matter what happens, I will have information available for counselling and social support services in case you would like to talk to someone.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your identity will not be revealed during this study, or in the research paper that I will be writing, unless you chose to use your real name. For the sake of keeping your identity a secret, you can chose an alias, or a fake name, so that nobody will find out that you participated in this study. My supervisor, Dr. Doreen Fumia, and I are the only people who will know that you took part in this study. Whether you want to use your real name or an alias, please check the appropriate box on the page of this document where you have to sign your name.

The information that is gathered from this interview will be stored for up to a year, until I finally submit my research paper. As a graduate student and researcher, I have a professional duty to report any cases of abuse that is happening to either yourself or a child, but only if there are signs that someone is being mistreated or hurt by someone else.

The interview will be recorded. I can show you the recording device if you would like. As the participant, you have a right to review the recordings if you want. After we finish the interview, I will take the recording and translate the words into a written document called a transcript. All recordings will be deleted within the next year, once I hand in the final copy of my research paper.

INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION: Since I do not have any funding for my research, you will not be paid for participating in this study. Your participation is strictly voluntary. However, snacks and beverages will be provided for you during and after the interview. I can also provide you with two TTC tokens in case you need to take public transit after the interview

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If any question makes you uncomfortable, you can skip that question. If you choose to stop participating, you may also choose to not have your data included in the study. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with Ryerson University, Dr. Dorren Fumia, or the investigator, Jobin Philip, who is involved in the research.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY: If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact Jobin Philip by email at jobin.philip@ryerson.ca. You can also contact Dr. Doreen Fumia by email at dfumia@ryerson.ca. As a participant of this study, you can request a copy of the study findings at a later date if you wish to.

This study has been reviewed by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study please contact:

Research Ethics Board

c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation

Ryerson University

350 Victoria Street

Toronto, ON M5B 2K3

416-979-5042

rebchair@ryerson.ca

THE RIGHT TO LIVE FREELY? A LOOK AT RESETTLED LIVES IN THE HETERONORMATIVE HAVEN

CONFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT:

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to participate in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate by November 30th, 2015. You have been given a copy of this agreement.

You have been told that by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

_____   _____

Name of Participant (please print)   Email Address

*I may need to contact you later on for clarification on something that you have said today. Although this is not guaranteed, if you are willing to provide your cell-phone number, please write it below:

_____

_____ _____

Signature of Participant   Date

I agree to be audio recorded for the purposes of this study. I understand how these recordings will be stored and destroyed.

Would you prefer to use your real name or an alias for the sake of this study and in the eventual research paper?

□ I prefer to use a different name, or an alias, which will be _____

□ I prefer to use my own, first name

_____ _____

Signature of Participant   Date

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

Ryerson University

THE RIGHT TO LIVE FREELY? A LOOK AT RESETTLED LIVES IN THE HETERONORMATIVE HAVEN

DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

1. What is your country of birth?
   _____
   _____

2. What country have you emigrated from?
   _____
   _____

3. Year of Birth? _____

4. What year did you arrive in Canada?
   _____

5. What is your sexual identity/orientation?
   _____
   _____
   _____

6. What is your gender identity (example Intersex, female, male, etc)

   _____
   _____

7. Do you have a religious affiliation? If so, what religion do you belong to?
   _____
   _____
   _____

8. Do you see yourself as belonging to any certain ethnic group(s) (example Chinese, Jamaican, Indian)?

_____

9. Do you have any of the following disabilities?

□ Physical   □ Mental
□ Learning   □ Emotional
□ Other: _____
□ None

10. What is your employment training? Where did you obtain this?

_____
_____
_____

11. What is your level of education? Where did you obtain this?

_____
_____
_____

12. Have you ever been employed in Canada?

_____
_____
_____

13. If currently employed, where do you work and what are your responsibilities?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Ryerson University

THE RIGHT TO LIVE FREELY? A LOOK AT RESETTLED LIVES IN THE HETERONORMATIVE HAVEN

Interview Guide

Life in the previous country

1. Talk about your sexual orientation and/or gender expression and the process you went through in realizing this identity?
2. When did you come to understand this/these identity/ies?
3. Was there ever a time in the previous country when you felt like you were different than the other people in your life? How so?
4. Did you engage in relationships with the same sex in your previous country? Or, did you change the way in which you expressed your gender identity when you realized you were different from others?
5. Were you able to find people in your previous country who were supportive of your sexual orientation/differences? If so, who were they? How did they show you support?
6. Did you encounter any kind of discrimination in your previous country because of your sexual orientation or your expression of gender? If so, what were these encounters like?
7. Did you experience any forms of violence in the previous country because of your sexual orientation or gender expression? For example, the violence could be verbal, physical or emotional.
8. (Based on question 7) If you feel comfortable, can you say more about this?
9. If you experienced any kind of persecution, discrimination, or judgement in your previous country, how did you cope or handle yourself in those situations?
10. Did you choose to express your sexual orientation/gender identity in public or was this something that you kept private? What were your reasons?
11. When did you decide to leave your previous country and what were your reasons for leaving?

The Migration to Canada

12. When you decided that you wanted to leave your previous country, was Canada your first choice for the next country that you would live in? Why was this?

13. Did you tell anyone in the previous country that you were leaving? If so, how did they handle the news?
14. Were there any challenges that you faced in leaving the past country? If so, what were they?
15. What was it like coming to Canada for the first time?
16. What type of government organizations did you come into contact with in the first months of living in Canada? For example, the Immigration and Refugee Board, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, etc.
17. Was there anyone who supported you in your migration to Canada such as a lawyer or settlement worker? If so, how did they help you?
18. (Based on question 17) Did they give you any advice for going through the Refugee/Immigration systems?
19. How did you describe your life story to the Immigration and Refugee Board or Citizenship and Immigration Canada? What kind of details did you share?
20. (Based on question 19) Do you feel as though you were able to tell them everything that you wanted to? Was there anything that you wanted to tell them but you did not get a chance to?
21. What decision were you given by the Immigration and Refugee Board or Citizenship and Immigration Canada? Why do you think you received this decision?
22. How did you feel when you found out that you were going to be allowed to live in Canada?

The Resettled Life in Canada

23. When you were first settling into Canada, what kind of goals did you have for yourself?
24. Did you have any ideas about what kind of job that you wanted to have in Canada? If so, did you end up getting the job that you wanted? Why or why not?
25. Describe the journey that you have gone through so far to find employment in Canada?
26. Have you been able to find supportive people here in Canada? Is there anybody helping or supporting you here? If so, can you tell me more about these people?
27. Do you still keep in contact with anybody from your previous country? If so, what kind of relationship do you have with them?
28. Have you been able to find stable housing? Do you have a safe place to live? Describe the kind of place that you now live in.
29. Have you reached out to anybody in the LGBTQ community here in Canada? If not, why is this?
30. Did coming to Canada change the way that you see your own sexual orientation or gender identity?
31. What do you think about LGBTQ people here in Canada? Are they different from LGBTQ people in your previous country?

32. Do you feel as though you have been discriminated by the LGBTQ community here in Canada? Have other people in the community been violent or disrespectful towards you? If so, please describe these experiences.
33. Did you encounter any problems with people who work for the government or social services in Canada because of your status or sexual orientation/gender identity?
34. Have you engaged in any same-sex relationships since coming to Canada? Or has your expression of your gender changed? If so, can you describe these experiences?
35. Do you feel more or less isolated/lonely since coming to Canada? Why do you think you feel this way?
36. Have you experienced any homophobia, bi-phobia or transphobia since coming to Canada? If so, what kind of experiences have you had?
37. What kind of emotions have you felt since you began living in Canada? Why do you think you have felt this way?
38. Do you think that it is safer to live openly with your sexual orientation/gender identity in Canada? Why or why not?
39. Are you more or less discrete about your sexual orientation/gender identity in Canada compared to your previous country? Why do you think that this is?
40. Do you feel like you have found safety and security here in Canada as a sexual minority or refugee/ newcomer?
41. Are there any details about your life that you wish you could have shared with either your loved ones or the Immigration/Refugee systems that you haven't been able to share before?
42. Looking back on your life story, how do you feel about the decision that you made to come to Canada?
43. How do you stay strong despite any challenges that you face? How do you stay resilient?
44. Are you happy with the amount of support that you now get from other people in Canada?
45. Where do you currently find support in your life?
46. How do you feel about the direction that your life has taken ever since you realized that you were different in the previous country?
47. Is there anything that you would want to change in your life here in Canada?

Ryerson University

THE RIGHT TO LIVE FREELY? A LOOK AT RESETTLED LIVES IN THE HETERONORMATIVE HAVEN

Key Informant Interview Guide

Getting to know the key informant and their work

1. Please state your job title and the organization that you work for.
2. What kind of responsibilities come with your position?
3. What were the reasons that influenced your decision to work with either Queer newcomers or refugees?
4. When you first began working with Queer newcomers, did you encounter any challenges or surprises?
5. Do you feel that, on average, building trust with Queer newcomers is an easy task? Why or why not?
6. In terms of the settlement of Queer newcomers in Canada, do you or your organization target specific areas of the client's resettled life?
7. What has been your approach in recruiting clients or participants for your specific initiative?
8. What factors are important when creating a safe and inclusive space for people who are Queer but also asylum seekers?
9. Have you observed any cases of discrimination where the perpetuator is someone who works directly with Queer newcomers as they try to settle into Canada?
10. Do you feel as though your respective field or sector provides adequate support for Queer newcomers as they settle into Canada?

Their insight into the Haven that Canada provides

48. Based on your current knowledge and professional experience, do you feel as though Queer newcomers are safe from persecution here in Canada?
49. Have any of your clients or participants encountered discrimination from the Queer community here in Canada? What kind of experiences have they had?
50. Do you feel as though Queer newcomers are protected by the Canadian state? Or do they have to rely more on their own methods for protection and survival?

51. In terms of applying for status with the Immigration and Refugee Board, do you feel as though Queer asylum seekers have had much success when presenting their true, authentic life stories?

52. Have you observed any possible settlement patterns among Queer newcomers in Canada?

53. How do feel about the factor of discretion in the settlement of Queer newcomers in Toronto? Is there pressure for them to live in secret?

54. How safe are Queer newcomers then if they have to remain discrete in a city like Toronto?

55. In terms of refugees, do you find that they must go through a coming out process in terms of their status and not simply their sexual orientation?

56. How disconnected are Queer refugees from public life in Canada? If there is a disconnection, why might this be?

57. Is any city in Canada really gay friendly? Or does successful integration in a particular place come down to other factors?

58. Are there any factors specific to Queer newcomers that prevent them from coming out?

59. Do you feel coming out is crucial when settling into Canada and finding a sense of security of safety?

60. Do you notice any patterns in terms of the relationships that your clients or participants are having with loved one or intimate partners post-migration?

61. Do you feel as though your clients or participants are observing self-care and are looking after themselves physically, mentally, sexually or spiritually?

62. Do you find any Queer newcomers affiliate with, or practice, a particular faith or religion?

63. Do you feel your Queer newcomer clients are making full use of the supportive services available to them? Are they aware of the services available to them?

64. Do you feel as though there is a national fear of the Queer refugee or newcomer? Why or why not?

65. What are some everyday experiences that can enhance feelings of isolation or belonging for Queer refugees and other newcomers in Canada?

66. How might the Canadian state situate Queer newcomers in a position of dependence?

67. Do you feel as though there are any historical cases of persecution in Canada that may have residual effects in today's social world, which makes life harder for particular groups?

68. How do you feel about the manifestation of different forms of discrimination that Queer newcomers may face in Canada? Has there really been progress in terms of the inclusion of these individuals in Canadian society?

Gaps and Areas of Improvement

69. Do you feel as though there are gaps in the supportive services that are available to Queer newcomers? If so, what are they?

70. What can the Canadian state do in order to better assist in the settlement of Queer newcomers?
71. Do you think it is important that frontline workers reflect the populations that they work with? Either in terms of life experience, appearance, etc.?
72. What possible changes need to happen, either on a local or more national level, in order for Queer newcomers to feel a sense of belonging in the Canadian LGBT community? Is this sense of community belonging even crucial?
73. Does Canada provide a safe haven for Queer newcomers? If not, what needs to happen in order for Canada to provide a safe haven for Queer newcomers?

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