

Racial Terror in Toronto's Gay Village: A Critical Race analysis of the Bruce
McArthur case and police inclusion in Toronto Pride

By

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Abstract

This thesis undertakes a parallel reading of the Bruce McArthur serial killings of predominantly racialized, queer men in the Toronto gay village and debates about police participation in Toronto Pride. This reading illuminates a homonationalist, state-making project that reasserts white dominance in LGBT social movements. My comparative analysis demonstrates how these cases, when read together, echo racial divisions and political whitewashing of queer and homophile social movements in earlier as well as contemporary mobilizations. I then conduct a parallel analysis of the 2016 conflict between Pride Toronto and Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLM-TO), that has permanently shaped debates on the intersections of race and queer identity in Canada. Analysing this case alongside that of McArthur's engages with the politics of racial exclusion that has normalized Pride's agenda of institutional inclusion as representative of queer identity formation in Canada. Reading these cases together provides critical insight into processes of whiteness and homonationalist politics that dominate the LGBTQ2IA+ political stage. The thesis engages with the history of Canadian multiculturalism that displaces critical inquiries into questions of race, and the persistent importance of colour blindness in shaping national identity through queer tolerance. A critical race analysis of the Bruce McArthur case articulates an alternative narrative of racial violence that moves beyond a single narrative of disturbed pathology to investigate details of police misconduct that fostered inaction. The intent of this analysis is to draw out the historical relevance of McArthur's murders as part of a longer history of racially motivated predatory violence toward queer people of colour.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis undertakes a parallel reading of the Bruce McArthur serial killings of predominantly racialized, queer men in Toronto's gay village and debates about police participation in Toronto Pride. This reading illuminates a homonationalist, state-making project that reasserts white dominance in LGBT social movements. My comparative analysis demonstrates how these cases, when read together, echo racial divisions and political whitewashing of queer and homophile social movements in earlier as well as contemporary mobilizations. Reading these cases together provides critical insight into processes of whiteness and homonationalist politics that dominate the LGBTQ2IA+ political stage. The thesis engages with the history of Canadian multiculturalism that displaces critical inquiries into questions of race, and the persistent importance of colour blindness in shaping national identity through queer tolerance. A critical race analysis of the Bruce McArthur case articulates an alternative narrative of racial violence that moves beyond a single narrative of disturbed pathology, and investigates details of police misconduct that fostered inaction. The intent of this analysis is to draw out the historical relevance of McArthur's murders as not an individual anomaly, but part of a longer history of racially motivated predatory violence toward queer people of colour.

I then conduct a parallel analysis of the 2016 conflict between Pride Toronto and Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLM-TO), that has permanently shaped debates on the intersections of race and queer identity in Canada. Analysing this case alongside that of McArthur's, engages with the politics of racial exclusion that has normalized Pride's agenda of institutional inclusion as representative of queer identity formation in Canada. Demands for inclusion into institutions of property and marriage I argue, only privileges a primarily white cohort of the gay and lesbian middle class to access the goods of citizenship and neglects the ongoing racial violence police commit against queer people of colour. The case also demonstrates that anti-black racism, in particular, continues as an operating agent for gay culture formation, and gay white masculinity. The confrontation between the former Pride Executive Board and BLM-TO exemplifies the belief in dominant gay culture that Black identity, and issues relevant to race, class and gender, remain outside the scope of queer identity, and thus Pride's equation of queerness with whiteness.

Finally, I theorize gay identity formation through property to demonstrate the relevance of whiteness as a mediator between citizenship and queerness and the homonormative drive behind politics of queer inclusion. Inclusion into the rights of citizenship and the multicultural state

necessarily prioritize demands for recognition of white middle class interests for the right to hold, and transfer property above those of LGBTQ2IA+ migrants, refugees and non-citizens. My argument engages with the nation making role of queer social movements and their participation in upholding the assumption of undisputed Canadian sovereignty over Indigenous lands. A critical discussion is needed about homonationalism's inherent colonial objective and the possibility of replicating these assumptions in critiques of homonationalism that assume settler dominance over Indigenous land and sovereignty. Thus, I argue for a rearticulation of queer demands from state inclusion into regimes of property, toward a queer praxis for racial equity for citizens and non-citizens.

Beginning with the case:

Bruce McArthur has pleaded guilty to the murder of eight men from Toronto's Gay Village (also known as the Church-Wellesley village), six of whom were racialized men, and two of whom were refugees from Sri Lanka.¹ McArthur has been known to police since 2001, when his first recorded assault against a "male hustler" with a metal pipe had taken place. He had turned himself into police claiming he did not know why he had done it.² In 2010, McArthur was apprehended and questioned in relation to the disappearances of Majeed Kayhan, Skandaraj Navaratnam and Abdulbasir Faizi (Project Huston).³ The investigation ended after 18 months, however it was only officially closed in 2014. It proved inconclusive and the disappearances were never solved.

Between 2014 and January 18, 2018, the time of Huston's end and McArthur's arrest, the Church-Wellesley community repeatedly alerted police regarding their concerns that a violent, serial perpetrator was in their midst, many questioning whether the police were taking these cases seriously and if they were possibly connected to Project Huston victims. During the second investigation, Project Prism, four men, who had previously encountered McArthur or called the police after an assault, had reached out to police during the investigation.⁴ These men described,

¹ Wendy Gillis, "A timeline of the Toronto Police investigation into the Bruce McArthur and the gay village killings" *Star news*, 8 February 2019. Most of the case's information is collected from accounts collected by Wendy Gillis in her reporting for the Toronto Star. *Make sure to format the dates consistently (and remove this comment)*

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Wendy Gillis, "It took a village: Inside the final days of the largest forensic investigation in Toronto Police history", 6 May 2019.

in detail, their interactions with McArthur - choking without consent, being photographed without consent and violent assault. One of these men was the man assaulted in the 2001 attack. Another, interviewed by the Toronto Star, described an encounter on 20 June 2016, during which a sexual encounter turned violent and McArthur attempted to choke him to unconsciousness. Echoing other encounters, he described McArthur asking him to wear a fur coat and pose for photographs, and then being strangled against his will using a rope and metal pipe. The man narrowly escaped, and a review of the dispatch records shows that he contacted police immediately after the incident. McArthur had later turned himself in, claiming, again, he had misread the man's intentions since, as McArthur claimed, they had agreed to rough sex. Affidavits reveal that the investigating officer, Detective Paul Gauthier, believed McArthur and released him unconditionally. Det. Gauthier is set to face an internal investigation for a non-criminal trial on charges of professional misconduct in October 2019. Two other men, Peter Sgromo who met McArthur in the spring of 2017, and Sean Cribbin later that summer, describe similar interactions of consensual encounters that turned violent without consent. Sgromo had managed to push McArthur off after McArthur attempted to force Sgromo to perform oral sex. Sean Cribbin recounts meeting in McArthur's apartment, where he agreed to take GHB, a drug often used to heighten a sexual experience, but that can also cause unconsciousness in high doses. Cribbin recalls waking up with McArthur pinning him down, and violently choking him. Cribbin is experienced in the kink community, and reaffirmed that this encounter clearly crossed the boundaries of consent. The encounter ended without further harm, as McArthur's roommate had come home early. Neither man reported their encounters to the police. Sgromo and Cribbin later appeared for McArthur's court proceedings and sentencing.

On 5 December 2017 Toronto police acquired a temporary warrant to secretly search McArthur's apartment. The police had "cloned" McArthur's hard drive, and identified McArthur's last victim, Andrew Kinsman, through blood in McArthur's van. This qualified McArthur as a suspect, but, according to police, the evidence still did not warrant an arrest.⁵ On 8 December, three days after the police had obtained the warrant, Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders, released a statement asserting that there was absolutely "no evidence - let me repeat, no evidence" to claim these murders had any connection to one another.⁶

⁵ Wendy Gillis, "It took a Village: How the careful plan to arrest Bruce McArthur came undone in minutes", Toronto Star special issue, May 6, 2019.

⁷Ibid.

In the following days, police returned to McArthur's apartment, investigating him as a potential suspect and copying information from McArthur's electronic devices. Some pictures, such as those of Andrew Kinsman, go back several years and point to the likelihood that they had a relationship over this time. As the days went on, police, applied for a wiretap warrant in the hopes of hearing McArthur discuss the disappearances. After retrieving troves of media and information from McArthur's files, police spent the following month unearthing documents laden with pictures of his victims. This was the watershed moment in the investigation. Police found what they could later identify as pictures of Selim Esen. This was a drastic shift in the investigation, because they had now identified victims about whom they had not previously been aware.⁷ As the investigation continued, they had retrieved pictures that McArthur had kept of his victims' post-mortem, in staged, dehumanizing scenarios. The search continued and they found more post-mortem pictures of men they could not initially identify. There was finally enough evidence to arrest him, but the arrest warrant was delayed, and they could not enter McArthur's apartment without it. While they awaited a warrant for a coordinated arrest, all the police could do was ensure that no one came home with him alone. In a scene worthy of a television crime series, the waiting game ended when McArthur did just that – returning to his home with a man who goes by “John” in court affidavits. Police stormed Bruce McArthur's apartment and found John tied to his bed in panic, likely to become the ninth victim. More than a month after the initial search warrant was issued, Bruce McArthur was finally arrested on 18 January 2018.

While these disappearances had been occurring over a number of years, and most of them involved men of colour, the question of how race plays out in this case, or what it might signify for the queer community, remains to be seriously explored. Mainstream coverage has now taken up race as a distinctive factor of this case as well as the fact that most of McArthur's victims were on the margins of society, yet there remains much work to be done in unpacking the nature of these crimes and the circumstances that made these men targets for McArthur.

Between 2010 and 2012 three men's disappearances were under investigation. The disappearances of Skandaraj Navaratnam, Abdulbasir Faizi and Majeed Kayhan, precipitated the launching of Project Huston, where McArthur was briefly a suspect and then quickly dismissed, even though he had a prior conviction for the 2001 assault. Two other victims, Kirushnakumar Kanagaratnam and Soroush Mahmoudi, were reported missing between 2015 and 2016. Dean

⁷Ibid.

Lisowick's case, as I discuss in the following chapters, is the only case never reported. Selim Esen's disappearance in April of 2017 and Andrew Kinsman's disappearances in September of that year, triggered Project Prism, although Esen's connection to the case was not properly established until police retrieved his pictures on McArthur's hard drive.⁸ Bruce McArthur had, in total, been a suspect of two investigations related to these murders. Individual community efforts and reports, as well as those from family members, compel the news media and the village community to consider whether police had done enough to prevent some of the subsequent murders, or if systemic bias was part of the neglect that allowed McArthur to evade attention for so many years.⁹

Haran Vijayanathan, Executive Director of Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, pointed out the persistent differential standards of justice in the disappearances of men of colour in the queer community.¹⁰ Media sources and the wider village community often refer to brown gay men as leading double lives due to family stigma, cultural connections to, and countries of origin where homosexuality is illegal.¹¹ This understanding not only further stigmatizes brown queerness, but also mystifies their sexuality as experimental and decontextualized from potential risks they face for coming out. Majeed Kayhan, Abdulbasir Faizi and Soroush Mahmudi all were married and had children, and while they were not 'out' for these reasons, it had heightened their risk of harm for participating in the underground community without the safety to openly seek help.¹²

Vijayanathan issued an open letter to Toronto Police demanding an external review by Toronto Police Service Board on whether race or sexual orientation had influenced the allocation of resources the investigation of their disappearances.¹³ Toronto's police board, along with the support of Police Chief Mark Saunders, have launched an inquiry into the 'Missing Persons

⁸ Gillis, "It took a village: Inside the final days of the largest forensic investigation in Toronto Police history", 2019.

⁹ Gillis, "It took a Village: How the careful plan to arrest Bruce McArthur came undone in minutes", Toronto Star special issue, 2019. Make sure that repeated citations are correct – this can just be Ibid.

¹⁰ Shanifa Nasser, "'A different standard': Disappearances of men of colour not taken seriously enough, LGBT leader says", CBC news, Jan. 28th, 2018.

¹¹ Vjosa Isai and Fatima Syed, "Missing men from Toronto's gay village led 'double lives' friends say", The Star news, Jan. 26th, 2018

¹² Manisha Krishnan "For gay brown men, Bruce McArthur brings up tough questions", Vice news, May 3rd, 2018

¹³ Nasser, "'A different standard': Disappearances of men of colour not taken seriously enough, LGBT leader says", 2018

Report' process, to investigate the police's handling of McArthur's case.¹⁴ The retired judge tasked with the review of the process will be examining any possibility of systemic bias in police activity in the Project Huston investigation of McArthur's first three victims.¹⁵ McArthur's brutal murders have been covered by news media as marking the most traumatic event fostering mistrust in police within the Toronto gay community, since the 1981 bathhouse raids.¹⁶

McArthur's case points to a problematic reality in Canadian queer communities. The controversy entailing police inclusion in Pride is intensified as a result of this case. The legal proceedings may be over, yet the trauma inflicted on the community endures. Thus, debates about police inclusion in Pride are rife with controversy, as they seem to absolve or at least, dismiss the concerns of a racialized pattern of injustice and the police's claim that it has finished its work of mending its relationship with the queer community. An intersectional moment is lost here, when police make the claim that their relationship to the LGBTQ2IA+ community has strengthened, while the queer community remains ignorant to the systemic violence against people of colour (POC) committed by police, with queer people of colour disappearing in that interaction. The Church-Wellesley village, particularly LGBTQ2IA+ people of colour, find themselves reeling from these murders. How could this have occurred for so many years without detection? What could have been done to prevent these murders? And, perhaps the most poignant question that constantly preoccupies me, how does a community, already fractured for so many years, find a way to heal?

The controversial topic of police participation in Pride becomes even more complicated by Pride's antagonistic relationship with Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLM-TO). I now turn to the 2016 Pride confrontation with BLM-TO to set the stage, and explore the intersection between the McArthur investigation and Toronto Pride when we interrogate the racial question in each case.

2016 Toronto Pride and Black Lives Matter Toronto:

In 2016, Toronto Pride found itself in the midst of a controversial debate regarding police inclusion in the parade and the political consequences of those actions for the queer community's

¹⁴ Ian Austen, "Landscape pleads guilty in murders that shook Toronto's gay community", New York times, Jan. 29, 2019.

¹⁵ Gillis, "It took a village: Inside the final days of the largest forensic investigation in Toronto Police history", 2019

¹⁶ Ibid.

most marginalized, particularly Black, Brown¹⁷, Indigenous queers and other queer people of colour. BLM-TO had been named honored guest, a title given to an organization charged with leading the parade. Despite this honor, Pride leadership had largely ignored BLM-TO, and so, in an effort to insist on the necessity of dialogue, BLM-TO halted the Pride procession for about half an hour, providing a list of demands. The most notable of these demands were: centralizing Black, trans, disabled and racialized decision making power in Pride planning; providing more funds for events celebrating Black Pride, and lastly, banning police from future parades.¹⁸ The Executive Director at the time, Mathieu Chantelois, agreed to the demands, but later recanted, reigniting conflict within the community. Black Lives Matter activists were subject to threats, violent language and harassment by white attendees. As I will elaborate more thoroughly in chapter 3, these actions, and the behavior of many white queer people at the parade, are indicative of a longer historical pattern of white supremacy in Canadian queer communities.

BLM-TO brought attention to the ongoing violence committed by police against BIPOC, and particularly toward queer people of colour, as well as the dominance of white folks and inattention to issues of race in Toronto Pride itself.¹⁹ These two factors are interrelated, since the predominantly white leadership and Executive of Toronto Pride excluded the voices of Black queer people, and thus would not notice or seriously consider police exclusion from the Parade on the grounds of their racist practices. In short, BLM-TO was seeking to address institutionalized white supremacy in both official queer organizations, such as Toronto Pride, as well as the Toronto Police Service.²⁰

Black Lives Matter sought to address the view that Black identity is unrelated to gender and sexual identity, and therefore outside the concerns of the queer and Pride community.²¹ They

¹⁷ At times I use the term 'Brown' as a broad term that encompasses various forms of racialization that can include Black identity but are not exclusive to it. Brown has been used as a coalitional term to build common languages of experience, however different experiences of racialization in the settler state are not synonymous, thus the distinctions made between Indigenous, Black, Brown and Asian identities are important. At times they find a common denominator in the term 'Brown' to describe their coalitional resistance and experiences, but not consistently.

¹⁸ Furman, Ellis; Singh, Amandeep Kaur; Darko, Natasha A.; Wilson, Ciann Larose "Activism, intersectionality, and community psychology: The way in which Black Lives Matter Toronto helps us the examine white supremacy in Canada's LGBTQ community", *Community Psychology in Global Perspective, Vol 4, Issue 2*, 35

¹⁹ Ibid. 36

²⁰ Ibid. 41

²¹ Ibid. 49

troubled the perspective that gay inclusion, or inclusion on a single, colour-blind (read white) axis of identity is sufficient to ensure that justice would eventually trickle down to its trans and other non-gender-conforming and racialized members. That is why Toronto Pride's current Executive Director, Olivia Nuamah, directly cited McArthur's case in the board's decision to ban police from Pride indefinitely, stating that the community's trust in police had been eroded.²² In her interview with *Xtra News* Nuahma, along with other vocal board members, expressed concerns that the police could not claim to have mended their relationship with the queer community in the face of this investigative failure. She further asserted that the police fail to see their relationship with the queer community and the LGBTQ2IA+ community in an intersectional way, that limits their ability to understand the gaps in justice that continues to affect queers of colour.²³

Race, Rage, and Pride during the Bruce McArthur investigation:

The thesis identifies the racial tensions in the queer community that were more explicitly exposed in the midst of the Bruce McArthur investigation. The entanglement of the police response to community pleas with Pride's contentious stance on police presence in the celebrations and its confrontation with BLM-TO, reveal a queer community that is fractured along racial as well as gendered lines. The thesis's central contribution is to demonstrate how state recognition and inclusion dismisses racial tensions in the interest of shoring up a national identity unconcerned with race, a colour blind strategy with the effect of reintroducing white dominance in queer identity formation in Canada. This is done, in part, to claim a national identity grounded in queer tolerance²⁴ and its recognition of difference as part of its national identity. Consequently, Pride is increasingly implicated in the state's racialized processes of nation making founded in liberal queer tolerance. I undertake a critical race analysis of Bruce McArthur's case to unpack its implications for Canada's valuation of queer bodies. Exploring this case exposes the disregard that Toronto Police Services continues to have toward queer bodies and queer people of color, as well as the Service's strategic use of Toronto Pride to conceal regular violences against those communities. Further, I adapt Jasbir Puar's theory of homonationalism to demonstrate how my cases expose the work involved in preserving Canada's white identity and the culturalization of race, largely

²² Rachel Giese, "Q&A with Olivia Nuamah", *Xtra News*, Dec 10, 2018.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ This is related to other types of tolerance of diverse identities Canada's multiculturalism policy recognizes that I seek to explore.

through the workings of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism's definition of ethno-pluralism materializes a narrative of a tolerant society, free of homophobic violence, in an effort to reassert an undisputed Canadian sovereignty domestically and abroad.²⁵

Heteronormativity is conjoined with a form of exceptional homonormativity to signal imaginary and physical boundaries of exclusion against the threatening, often Muslim or racialized, "other".²⁶ Homosexuality has been incorporated into the heteronormative institutional matrix that proclaims a sexual exceptionalism of liberal tolerance to produce what Puar terms as the Homonation. This necessarily positions western modernity as a haven for queer identity, expressed through practices of pinkwashing. Its antithesis is the 'other,' eastern subject that is deemed inherently homophobic. Western nations capitalize on queer subjectivity to uphold western secularism as exceptionally tolerant societies perpetuating what I later discuss as Puar's concept of white ascendancy.

An important consequence of police presence in Pride is the erasure of the violence committed against queer people of color.²⁷ Conjoining the stories McArthur and Pride/BLM exposes the committed efforts of police to preserve whiteness as distinctly segregated, as a racially and sexually contingent form of property.²⁸ Members of the Church-Wellesley village called on police to alert them to a potential serial killer, yet simultaneously sought increased securitization of their neighborhoods. This behavior elicits some questions about how whiteness as property enables the perpetration of police violence against racialized communities in order to preserve white rights of recognition, property and citizenship.²⁹ A side-by-side reading of McArthur's case and the case of police in Toronto Pride reveals the racially charged politics of Pride itself, but also the junction point where structural, state-sanctioned policies of racial violence translate into intimate violence that protects white supremacy and the image of queer whiteness.

The aim is to demonstrate how contemporary practices of policing in queer communities and the legal state apparatus are fundamentally rooted in a racialized history of protecting whiteness and (white) property. In this thesis, I conceive of property both in Cheryl Harris' terms,

²⁵ Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: homonationalism in queer times*, Durham : Duke University Press, 2007.

²⁶ Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 2

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Cheryl Harris "Whiteness as property", *Harvard Law Review Vol. 106(8)*, 1993 ,1725

²⁹ Natsu Taylor Saito, "Race and Decolonization: Whiteness as Property in the American Settler Colonial Project", *Harvard Journal on Racial & Ethnic Justice*, Vol. 3, 2015, 34.

as whiteness itself, but also the material benefit and wealth accumulation that whiteness has guaranteed the white citizen class, particularly in the 20th century.³⁰ I establish this premise to demonstrate the function that police and other state agencies have as an apparatus in protecting white property interests, in its embodied form and material outcomes. Property is then understood as whiteness *and* the material benefits of whiteness.

By introducing a discussion of race into Pride, queer folks often feel the institution of Pride is threatened through a sense of queer loss, or loss of progress.³¹ As Sarah Ahmed explains, in feminist circles and Women's Studies departments, discussions of race are seen as an unwelcome complication of what would have been otherwise comfortable and undisrupted solidarity.³² Simply the presence of a racialized body often introduces a tension, a sense of dread into otherwise ubiquitously white spaces and those racialized bodies then carry a joy-killing aura; they embody the problem. In other words, to identify a problem identifies *you*, the 'other', *as* the problem.³³

Pride parades play an important cultural role, and, although rooted in civil society, they perform important cultural work for the state. Over the decades, Toronto Pride has become a large scale cultural event in Canada. In 2016, Toronto Pride had a budget of approximately \$4.3 million and \$2.4 million in 2017, and the decrease reversed in 2018 with an operating budget of almost \$4.3 million. Attendance even exceeds that of Caribana, an Afro-Caribbean celebration that also takes place in Toronto. The magnitude of Pride, at least superficially, demonstrates Toronto Pride's growth in significance as not just a cultural event, but an institution that has come to represent Canadian queer tolerance. Indeed, Pride is a kind of ideological apparatus.

Evidence for the centrality of Pride, and related expressions of support for LGBTQ2IA+ rights in Canada's contemporary national identity, abound. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Toronto Mayor John Tory have formally endorsed the celebration by participating in the parade. Indeed, after many years of avoiding such events, politicians throughout Canada and across the political spectrum have recognized the value of such events for transmitting messages of inclusion and support for diversity. For example, Ontario Liberal Party leader Kathleen Wynn and Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath and Federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh all attended Pride parades in 2018. Trudeau's rhetoric of tolerance and acceptance of the Pride community was expressed, most

³⁰ Harris, "Whiteness as Property", 1731

³¹ Jennifer Nash, *Black Feminisms Reimagined after intersectionality*, Duke University Press, 2019, 14

³² Sara Ahmed, *Living a feminist life*, Duke University Press, 2017, 127

³³ Ibid. 159

notably, in his recent apology to LGBTQ2IA+ federal employees for the practice of firing people based on their sexual orientation – a practice that only officially ended in the early 1990’s, a fact the Prime Minister acknowledged in his speech to the House of Commons.³⁴ A state apology provided an opportunity to reassert Canada's identity as a safe haven for queer people; a country that has acknowledged the harms of a bygone era marked by violence toward queer Canadians.³⁵

Nastu Taylor Saito rightfully points out that racially charged killings make up a regular part of our psychological diet, to a point where racial and homophobic violence are normalized in the public imagination, but remedial measures that provide security for queer POC lives remain absent.³⁶ Yet the McArthur case, as just one example, points to the persistence of ‘the problem’ in our midst. While some forms of white queer identity may enjoy increasing acceptability within mainstream Canadian society, the intersection of other races and sexualities continues to mark the bounds of exclusion. Pride, in Toronto, and in many cities in Canada, is ensconced in controversy regarding its mandate to queer identity, its relationship with the state and concerns for its future. For example, Toronto Pride continues to have an antagonistic relationship with Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLM-TO) after BLM-TO critiqued Pride’s work to limit Black centered events in scheduling, financing and advertising. BLM-TO is probably the most outspoken organization to push back on Pride’s uncritical stance on police inclusion, and has leveled strong arguments to prevent police participation in Pride.³⁷

Black Lives Matter has called attention to the absence of Black voices in Toronto Pride generally, but also in an open letter addressed to Toronto police calling for a ban of uniformed police in Pride.³⁸ Until December 2018, it seemed decided that police were going to join the 2019 Pride parade, but the ensuing controversy, and the McArthur murders, reversed Pride’s position. The Executive Director Olivia Nuamah had publicly expressed concern over the financial state of

³⁴ Page of the Prime Minister of Canada. “Remarks by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to apologize to LGBTQ2 Canadians.” Official Apology in Parliament. It is worth noting that news coverage identifies it as an “Apology to LGBT Canadians” while the coverage only made reference to sexual orientation, even though Gender Identity appears 7 times in the Prime Minister’s speech. Nov. 28, 2017. <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2017/11/28/remarks-prime-minister-justin-trudeau-apologize-lgbtq2-canadians>

³⁵ “Remarks by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to apologize to LGBTQ2 Canadians.”

³⁶ Ibid. p.38

³⁷ Desmond Cole, “Pride has divorced Blackness from Queerness”, *Star News*, July 7th, 2016.

³⁸ As of 2019, Toronto Police will not be allowed to take part in pride as an organization in uniform.

Pride, as it faced a 700 000 dollar deficit in 2017, after major sponsors had pulled out nearly 1.3 million dollars amid the controversy.³⁹

Pride, the Toronto village and wider queer Canadian culture, has become an object of exceptional queer tolerance for a secular state mobilized to erase daily violence committed against people of colour by police. This thesis draws a parallel between the racialized consequences of intimate violence committed by Bruce McArthur and the systemic violence against queer people of colour manifested by Toronto Police. I argue that the ongoing debate to readmit Toronto Police to the Pride parade, manifests the performance and reassertion of white (masculine) dominance in the Pride movement. These two cases demonstrate the explicit work of racialized nation-making through whitewashing and pinkwashing homonationalist queer identity, and the simultaneous erasure of state violence against queer racialized bodies. Pride movements, in effect, participate in the production of homonationalist state making of (supposed) queer tolerance through racialized formations of queer bodies in the national imaginary. Pride movements reappropriate queerness as occupying and belonging to white bodies. Reproductions of racist discourses that frame Black and Brown bodies as disrupting queer solidarities are opportunistically deployed at a time when queer people of colour are subject to intimate and state violence. Bruce McArthur is both the embodiment and mediator of violence against queer racialized bodies, answering to the state sanctioned protections of proper white citizenship and queer tolerance. Formalized rights of Gay, Lesbian and more recently Trans folks does not so much guarantee individual rights to personhood as much as it functions as an alibi to evade remedies for accrued institutionalized inequalities that remain classed, gendered and racially defined. The Bruce McArthur case is an explicit example of widespread police neglect towards not only queer bodies but especially, queer people of color. The conjoined reading of these two cases adds a layer of depth to my analysis of Pride, opening it up to the intersectional possibilities of coalition building that emerge when (re)examining the historical and contemporary relationship between police and Pride.

My thesis thus proceeds in three parts. Chapter 2 primarily analyzes news coverage and legal transcripts to get a sense of the dominant interpretations of the murders, but also to tell a more nuanced narrative of the racial divisions at play within queer communities. This is done through a close reading of the McArthur case to reveal more complicated details of motive or pattern that go beyond conventional narratives of criminal pathology. Drawing on Critical

³⁹May Warren, "Toronto Pride Faces Cash Crunch in Wake of Ban on Uniformed Police", *The Star*, Jan 23, 2019

Whiteness theories I attempt to elaborate on whiteness as a mediating factor between citizenship and queerness. Whiteness and citizenship define the contours of gay masculine identity that I believe render Bruce McArthur's violence distinctly political. Expanding on Cynthia Levine-Rasky's theorizing on the state's social investment in whiteness, I seek to articulate the historic role of police in protecting the interests of the white citizen class.⁴¹ The chapter establishes a detailed genealogy of the case and of the victims. Rather than dissecting McArthur's motives, I focus on the victims' stories to engage in a more complex discussion of their positionalities and their vulnerabilities. I establish a clear connection between Canada's legacy of white supremacist sexual politics and its treatment of queer people of colour. Bruce McArthur is not only an anomaly of individual pathology, but is part of a long history of structural and intimate violence facilitated by policies of racial and sexual discipline. The chapter's goal is not to discredit the progress made in Canada around LGBTQ2+ rights, or the material improvements in queer livability, but to underline the flourishing of queer life despite racial policies of exclusion.

The latter part of the chapter deals with homonationalism's relationship with Canada's policy of multiculturalism that work to flatten racial power differences into mere ethnic differences, with the intent of preserving the racially constituted hierarchy of Canadian sovereignty on Indigenous land. This section is primarily informed by Sunera Thobani's⁴² and Himani Bannerji's⁴³ work on multiculturalism, which I use to think through accommodated sexual difference as a form of national consolidation of Canadian identity. For my purposes, I use Bannerji's definition of multiculturalism as a paradigm that acknowledges difference in the Canadian state through an ideology that culturalizes race and racial markers, yet determines them as essential qualities of ethnic identity in order to preserve notions of immutable racial difference.⁴⁴ The culturalization of race at once acknowledges difference while naturalizing an essential nature to racial meaning and mutes the constitutive aspect of power that racial definitions maintain in dominant institutions. Thus, the Canadian state justifies inequalities of racial power through an

⁴¹ Cynthia Levine-Rasky, *Whiteness Fractured*, London: Routledge, 2013.

⁴² Sunera Thobani, *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the making of Race and Nation in Canada*, (University of Toronto Press, (2007).

⁴³ Himani Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation: essays on multiculturalism, nationalism and gender*, Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2000. 9-10

⁴⁴ Ibid

apparatus of inclusion that displaces critiques of power and provides the required alibi to claim its commitment to liberal democratic principles of universal equality.⁴⁵

Chapter 3 embarks on a closer critical analysis of Pride and its respective relationships to Toronto Police Services and Black Lives Matter Toronto. Through Ali Greey's chronicling of the 2016 confrontation, I analyze the political distancing that Pride emphasized in order to locate BLM-TO as outside of the community's interests.⁴⁶ The chapter delves into the origins of Pride, and the trans founders who have shaped the movement. More specific to the Canadian context, I explore the parallel movements ignited by the 1981 Bathhouse raids in Toronto. The purpose of this chapter is to look at processes of citizenship building and, conversely, criminalization, on the basis of race and racial state policies. The chapter engages with Pride's participation in asserting a version of inclusion that is, at its core, homonationalist. Pride and white queerness position western progressivism as at odds with Black and Brown people who are framed as antithetical to queer tolerance.

Expanding on whiteness and policing, I rely on Robyn Maynard's *Policing Black Lives*⁴⁷ and Elizabeth Comack's *Racialized Policing in Canada*⁴⁸, which trace historic racialized police practices in Canada, as I apply the concepts to queer people of colour. Toronto Pride's historical and contemporary practices of racial exclusion have normalized Pride as the representative depiction of queerness. State inclusion has driven a wedge within the LGBTQ2IA+ community that either welcomes police presence or stands against it. This division is a strategic move that I seek to explain, as the division has consequences for Pride and in queer community formation. The outcomes of how the community deals with the question of police in Pride will determine how whiteness, non-white racialization, and their relationship is understood in queer communities. In other words, the division over the role of police in pride illuminates how white dominance is perceived in queer culture, or indeed, if it is perceived at all. And while Toronto Pride has taken

⁴⁵ Ibid. 96

⁴⁶ Ali Greey, "Queer Inclusion precludes (Black) queer disruption: media analysis of Black Lives Matter Toronto sit-in during Toronto Pride", *Leisure Studies*, 37:6, p.662-676, 2016.

⁴⁷ Robyn Maynard *Policing Black Lives: state of violence in Canada from slavery to the present*, Fernwood Publishing, (2017), xii, ppp.280

⁴⁸ Elizabeth, Comack *Racialized Policing: Aboriginal People's Encounter with the Police*, (Fernwood Publishing, 2012)

initiatives to address systemic racism in the organization by hiring a diverse executive team, including a new executive director, Olivia Nuamah, racist outcomes continue as a consequence of institutionalized practices that prioritize state recognition and financial support for Toronto Pride.

I also draw on works by Roderick Ferguson that trace the history of Gay Liberation movements' hostility to intersectional or decolonial movements.⁴⁹ This history provides background to understand Pride's hostility to BLM-TO as not a unique example, but part of a longer history of Gay/Lesbian liberation movements' hostility to antiracist movements. Ferguson's work theorizes gay white masculinity through its historic claims to inclusion into private property, and lays out the connection between capital accumulation and the valuable function police have in protecting those material benefits of whiteness. This, in turn, frames processes of criminalization deployed by both Pride as well as police onto racialized bodies. Gay formation constituted by inclusion into dominant norms conveniently repositions BLM-TO as a threat to that inclusion, and thus outside of queer identity and Canadian tolerance.

The latter part of the chapter engages with Robert Nichols' work on the possible limits of applying Jasbir Puar's concept of homonationalism in the Canadian context. He suggests that the concept of multicultural tolerance might be better suited to discuss how the idea of an "imperial mission" is less resonant in Canadian nationalism than in its American counterpart.⁵⁰ A careful study of Suzanne Lenon's research provides the framework to understand LGBT legal claims to equality grounded in claims of right to property and consuming citizenship.⁵¹ Some of McArthur's victims were not citizens or defined as middle class, and thus do not fit into legal arguments premised on liberal principles of citizenship equality. The final section of this chapter examines the colour-blind rhetorical moves that white gay communities deploy to deflect accusations of racism in queer community formation. It explores the neoliberal inflections of contemporary claims making offered up in the domestication of homosexuality that provides freedom as the

⁴⁹ Roderick Ferguson, *One-Dimensional Queer*: Polity Press, (2019)

⁵⁰ Robert Nichols, "Empire and the Dispositif of Queerness", *Foucault Studies*, No. 14, 2012.

⁵¹ Suzanne Lenon, "Why is our Love an issue?: same-sex marriage and the racial politics of the ordinary", *Social Identities*, 17:3, 2001

freedom in the right of property and consumption.⁵² The chapter sets out the terms of whiteness as an organizing principle of nationhood, citizenship and queerness.

Chapter 4 focuses on the contemporary expressions of homonationalism through gentrification of ‘Gay villages’ in Canada. This chapter demonstrates how homophile social movements that galvanize around a single axis of identity or issue, prioritize middle class white interests most emblematically in market-based consumer citizenship. Charles Nero’s work on state policies that incentivized white gay culture formation as anti-blackness informs this section.⁵³ I then engage with colonial assumptions of settler presence found in some critiques of homonationalism that premise citizenship as a condition of queer recognition and right. The value in this nuance is to problematize neoliberal tendencies of domesticating freedom and queer rights as something to be resolved in the private domain. I also aim to challenge readers and scholars alike in considering assumed Canadian sovereign supremacy in our critiques of homonationalist politics and move beyond colonial state borders of solidarity. Thus, I draw on Scott Morgensen to explore the ways in which Pride, as well as critiques of the movement, can and do assume inevitable settler presence on Indigenous land.⁵⁴ His concept of settler homonationalism critically reflects on the position of LGBTQ2IA+ coalitions on Indigenous lands, and the decolonial possibilities when challenging a multicultural inclusion of queerness.⁵⁵

Drawing on Michael Connors and Nishant Upadhyay, I consider the decolonial possibilities of transnational coalitions that move beyond state recognition as the only avenue of queer expression.⁵⁶ Placing their work in conversation with Lisa Cacho identifies the sites of exclusion in queer mobilization when taking citizenship and state recognition as a precondition for queer claims making.⁵⁷ My critique troubles the privileging of demands of citizens first by

⁵² Jodi Melamed, “The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism”, *Social Text* Vol.24No.4(89) (2006).

⁵³ Charles Nero, “Why are the Gay Ghettos White?”, in *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*. Durham, NC; Duke University Press 2005 ed. Johnson, E. Patrick (ed. and introd.); Henderson, Mae G. (ed. and introd.); Holland, Sharon P. (foreword)

⁵⁴ Scott Morgensen, “Settler Homonationalism: theorizing settler colonialism within queer modernities”, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies.*, Vol. 16, (2010)

⁵⁵ Ibid. 122

⁵⁶ Jackman, Michael Connors and Upadhyay, Nishant. "Pinkwashing Israel, Whitewashing Canada: Queer (Settler) Politics and Indigenous Colonization in Canada." *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (2014).

⁵⁷ Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*, NYU Press, 2012.

hierarchizing queer rights and livability. Homonationalist critique, in order to be truly anti-homonationalist, must consider the rights of displaced persons, migrants and refugees, and look beyond the civic rights that are not afforded to them. A close reading of the McArthur case punctuates the importance of this theoretical discussion as many of his victims had precarious citizenship status.

The final section of the chapter focuses on the constraints of the closet narrative to adequately describe experiences of racialized queers. It expands on the metaphor to rethink dominant narratives of coming out or coming into one's queerness.⁵⁸ This is done partially to dispel dominant mythologization of Pride (Stonewall) as the grand coming out, and the defacto exclusion performed in the assumption of Pride as representative of all queerness. Interrogating the closet narrative locates the assumed whiteness in the notion of 'coming out' and the dangers of forcing a binary choice for racialized queers between their cultural identity and their queerness. This choice is often framed in homonationalist terms as choosing between coming out into liberal society or remaining closeted in their 'barbaric' or backwards cultures.

The chapter focuses on processes of racial segregation in an era of neoliberalism. It examines the processes of displacement, gentrification and racial inequality that neoliberal policies condition, while the state and market forces remain officially committed to anti-racism. Jodi Melamed's critique of neoliberal multiculturalism examines the departure from 20th century racial liberalism to a colour-blind commitment of merit as advanced by neoliberal policies. She demonstrates the new racial management that neoliberal policies of multiculturalism arrange in the colour-blind schema of market based value. Thus, the chapter identifies nuances in the critique of settler colonial queerness, drawing on what Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang observe as the overlapping existence of imperialism, settlement and nationalism on the same land.⁵⁹

Chapter 5 provides a summary analysis of my conclusions on the comparative reading between Toronto Pride/BLM-TO and the McArthur case. Building off these cases, the conclusion intends to express alternative directions for queer social movements to move beyond and agenda

⁵⁸ Marlon Ross, "Beyond the Closet as Raceless Paradigm", in *Black Queer Studies: a critical anthology* ed. Johnson, Patrick and Henderson, Mae, Duke University Press (2005).

⁵⁹ Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a metaphor", *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012*, 7

of multicultural inclusion. Building on Susan Stryker's historiography of queer resistance, I offer some thoughts on the influence of Canada's official multiculturalism in the politics of inclusion that have left many trans and queer people of color behind.⁶⁰ In conversation with Jodi Melamed's critique of neoliberalism, there is opportunity to reflect on ways of queer living that go beyond state recognition and that do not require the financialization of queer social movements.⁶¹ Just as importantly, Yasmeen Abu-Laban's and Nisha Nath's work on the changes multiculturalism has undergone over the decades provides important insight into considerations of structural violence and racism in Canada. Their discussion engages Canada's move away from official racial regimes into ethnic pluralist regimes that displace invocations of race as having a causal relationship with structural violence in settler colonial contexts.⁶² Finally, the chapter provides concluding thoughts on the need for further research, particularly on the rise of anti-LGBT social movements in Canada. The conclusion seeks to provide a vision of future research that entails and strives for the antiracist praxis found in Black Lives Matter, anti-poverty work and decentring citizenship in queer demands.⁶³

⁶⁰ Susan Stryker, "Transgender History, Homonormativity and Disciplinarity" In: *Radical History Review*, December 2008.

⁶¹ Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism, 14

⁶² Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Nisha Nath, "From deportation to apology: the case of Maher Arar and the Canadian state" *Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal*. Fall, 2007, Vol. 39 Issue 3, 79

⁶³ Janet Conway and Jakeet Singh, "Radical Democracy in global Perspective: notes from the pluriverse", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.32/4, 2011, 691

Chapter2: Bruce McArthur and embodied whiteness, the (un)common problem of race

In this chapter I present an in-depth discussion of the Bruce McArthur case. Drawing on news media, police statements, and legal transcripts, I answer the following questions: Who were the men that died? To what extent were they targeted for their markers of difference? What do the various investigations of the Toronto Police's shortcomings in this case tell us? How does the failure to identify a serial killer, and take the deaths of racialized queer men seriously, get expressed in the media and official communications from the police, and court documents? I point to a narrative of racialized violence, framed by a fetishization of Brown men, to complicate the motivations as something driven by more than pathology, but as one framed by historical state violence against racialized queer people. Here, I draw on the work of Cynthia Levine-Rasky, to discuss the social and state “investment” into whiteness that has historically promoted violence against queer people of colour through policing.⁶⁴ I also engage with the various circumstances that informed the victims’ lives and rendered them attractive targets for Bruce McArthur. The court documents outline McArthur’s brutality and sexual fetishization of these men, which fits a larger, unnuanced narrative of ‘queer as deviant’ that has diminished the humanity of queer life in Canada.

McArthur’s victims were Abdulbasir Faizi, Skandaraj Navaratnam, Majeed Kayhan, Soroush Mahmudi, Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam, Dean Lisowick, Selim Esen, and Andrew Kinsman. I list their names here because stating these names partially restores the humanity they have been denied. Names carry the sediment of their history, culture, heritage, and identity. Yet Toronto Police investigators seemingly disregarded these names and the identities they carry. As outlined in the statement of facts presented in court for McArthur’s trial, it has been acknowledged by both the Defence and the Crown that the LGBTQ2IA+ community of Toronto was aware of a serial killer in their midst, and brought their concerns to TPS, only to have those concerns steadfastly rejected.⁶⁵ The statement comprises only 36 pages, but outlines in detail the evolution of the case being built against Bruce McArthur. It acknowledges that it was not until 2016, six years after the disappearance of McArthur’s first victim, Skandaraj Navaratnam, that the police launched an investigation naming Bruce McArthur as a prime suspect.⁶⁶ Bruce McArthur had

⁶⁴ Levine-Rasky, *Whiteness Fractured*, 79

⁶⁵ R v. McArthur, Admitted Facts prepared by the prosecution team, p.2

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.3

known some of his victims as early as 1999, and had developed relationships with them. An investigation into his last victim, Andrew Kinsman, revealed they had known each other since 2007. Kinsman was different than the other victims in so far as he did not fit the profile of someone on the margins of the community. He was a well-liked and well-known figure, and his disappearance drew red flags immediately.

The premeditated nature of these crimes is startling. So too is the post-mortem activity, as McArthur would stage his victims, with props, in various humiliating poses, and stockpile photographs in his computer. He also kept personal items from his victims, perhaps as trophies. He would then dismember his victims and bury them in yards of homes where he provided landscaping services.⁶⁷ Most of McArthur's victims were Arab or South Asian. Notably, the homeowners he worked for observed that, "he was seen to work with young males of Middle Eastern descent."⁶⁸ While his last victim, Andrew Kinsman, had been well known to Toronto's gay village community, many of McArthur's other victims were not, and their varying precarious circumstances made them targets for McArthur's violence.

Skandaraj Navaratnam was McArthur's first victim, in 2010, and had met McArthur in 1999.⁶⁹ Navaratnam was a refugee who fled his country as a victim of persecution for being a vocal activist against deforestation in Sri Lanka.⁷⁰ He frequented Church-Wellesley village bars often, and it was there that he and McArthur met. He worked as a casual laborer for McArthur and developed a relationship with him, but eventually broke it off stating that he found McArthur too controlling.⁷¹ According to the court's analysis, the violence that eventually led to his death was not consensual, and thus not kink play, as he was tied and strangled against his will.

Abdulbasir Faizi and Majeed Kayhan were murdered contemporaneously and in similar fashion. McArthur staged them in fur coats and fur hats with cigars in their mouths, keeping photographs of each victim. Both victims had families who did not know of their involvement with McArthur, their sexual orientation, or their frequenting of bathhouses and bars in the village. Both men were reported missing within a day of their disappearances.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.8-11

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.11

⁶⁹ Gillis, "A timeline of the Toronto Police investigation into the Bruce McArthur and the gay village killings" *Star news*, 2019.

⁷⁰ R v. McArthur, Admitted Facts prepared by the prosecution team ., p.15

⁷¹ Tu Thanh Ha, Bruce McArthur's Victims: a look at the 8 lives lost", *The Globe and Mail*, Jan. 29th, 2019

In 2003, Bruce McArthur had pled guilty to charges of assault with a weapon for an assault he had committed two years prior.⁷² The man he attacked was self-advertised as a “male hustler” and soon after the attack, McArthur had turned himself in. No clear motive was ever determined by the Crown, and McArthur himself could not provide an account of his actions. He simply apologized to the victim citing his regret. His sentence was two years less a day, half of it committed to house arrest, followed by a six month curfew and three years probation. During that probation period, he was barred from the village area and from any contact with sex workers, and was required to undertake counselling for anger management. Justice William Bassell’s statement read: “From my perspective, it’s in the best interest to keep him out of the area where he’s more likely than not to come into . . . (to) likely be enticed by male prostitutes.”⁷³ Crown Attorney Michael Leshner was satisfied with the sentence. A psychiatric assessment of McArthur after the sentencing had deemed him a low risk offender, and that he fit within the “normal range” of behavior.⁷⁴ Dr. Marie-France Dionne did note, however, in the course of her interviews with McArthur, that he had anger issues. Regardless, his crime was not deemed sufficiently egregious to merit a prison sentence, nor was one sought by the prosecution. In a 2018 press conference regarding the murders, Det-Sgt. Hank Idsinga refused to speak about McArthur’s 2003 conviction. He only stated that McArthur did not “technically” have a criminal record prior to the murders. The Toronto Star had, in fact, confirmed, that McArthur had received a pardon after the incident and hence why his record came up clean in 2010, during Project Huston.⁷⁵

After his parole records suspension, McArthur killed Soroush Mahmudi in 2015 in a similar fashion, and staged him in almost identical ways to his previous victims. Mahmudi, like Faizi and Kayhan, had met McArthur in the local gay bars that McArthur frequented, and he had not told his family about his involvement in the Toronto queer community. McArthur’s *modus operandi* was thus to seek his prey in the gay village, identifying victims who did not disclose their activities to their families.

⁷² Jacques Gallant, “Bruce McArthur in 2003 assault case: ‘I’m sorry for all the pain and anger I’ve caused’”, Feb. 23, 2018

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Liam Casey, “McArthur was deemed a low risk for violence in 2003 after assault with pipe”, CTV News, 28 June 2018.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Kirushna Kanagaratnam, like McArthur's first victim, was also a refugee from Sri Lanka. Kanagaratnam, however, was a more recent refugee, and when his claim was refused, he cut contact with his family for over two years, for fear of being discovered and deported. He had fled Sri Lanka after the murder of his brother, fearing his own persecution. While working at a restaurant in Scarborough as a cleaner, he struggled to maintain sufficient employment and had difficulty finding permanent housing. Witnesses identified as coworkers and friends had told police they did not know any details about Kanagaratnam's intimate life. And, like previous victims, he had few ties to the queer community and few if any friends or family who knew of his involvement in the community. Kanagaratnam was invisible, not only to family and the Canadian state, due to his precarious legal status, but to his friends as well, from whom he concealed his sexuality for fear of losing the few ties he had in Canada.⁷⁶

The McArthur investigation emerged just as Toronto Police were readmitted into Toronto Pride after a two year moratorium catalyzed primarily by Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLM-TO). Bruce McArthur's victims were overwhelmingly men of colour - South Asian and Arab men - who were all part of the gay community in Toronto. Early news coverage however, remains stubbornly obsessed with the men's relationship to McArthur and their activities on dating apps, while simultaneously erasing the racialized nature of these attacks and straight washing this story.⁷⁷ The coverage interviews many members of the larger residential community where Bruce McArthur lived, in order to portray the dismay, shock and fear people feel, implicitly identifying *any* person as a potential victim for the murderer. However, it is abundantly clear that these murders were targeted at queer men in the gay community, most of whom were men of colour, and one of whom was a recent refugee from Sri Lanka.

The director of the Church-Wellesley community identified a "systemic problem" in the community and demanded "more officers on the street." In this case, the head of the community association saw a simple answer to a profoundly complex and intersectional problem, greater securitization and police presence to reduce violence against queer people in the community. This logic is flawed for a few reasons; most notably that the threatened citizens in this case are assumed to be white, perhaps even property owning queers, who could be potential victims of this violence.

⁷⁶Nicole Brockbank, "Family of Bruce McArthur's latest alleged victim thought he was in hiding, after refugee claim rejected", CBC news , April 17th 2018.

⁷⁷City TV News, "Matt MacKinnon describes interactions with Bruce McArthur" Feb. 3rd, 2018

It was clear that McArthur's murders were primarily targeted at precarious, often racialized men. If the director had understood the historical relationship between racialized queer people and police, she would have thought through the dual threat that state securitization of spaces poses to many members of their community. This flawed assumption demonstrates not only the current conditions of LGBT safety and security, but also the conditioning influence that police presence has on queer communities. The need for police has been normalized to a point of ubiquity, where queer safety cannot be imagined outside of the need for police presence, and contestation over police violence is erased. The queer community here, is again imagined as white, and in need of protection for safety and property.

The conflicts after tragedy:

Gay white masculinity does have considerable influence and stakes in the state's investment in white citizenship and homonormativity,⁷⁸ most ragefully expressed through the intimate violence committed by Bruce McArthur.⁷⁹ The history of racialized sex is foundational in North American state making, and for my purposes, so is that of racialized state discipline of its subjects. Ann Stoler meticulously documents the use of racialized sexual discipline as not only a facet of making citizen subjects, but its central role in manufacturing state sovereignty as embodied by white bourgeois colonial sexual discipline.⁸⁰ Bourgeois settler sexuality and racialized sexuality are not separate structures subject to separate discipline, but are co-constitutive in a process of identity making.⁸¹ Sex, race and gender are part of a complex, contextually specific and shifting lexicon that co-produces the colonizer and the colonized. A logic of racialized sexual surveillance permeates public institutions, influencing, for example, contemporary policies of reproductive

⁷⁸ I borrow Lisa Duggan's definition of homonormativity throughout this thesis. Homonormativity can be defined as a politics that upholds dominant heteronormative institutions by seeking inclusion, often through equal rights to the privileges that they afford. Homonormativity does not undermine nor question dominant institutions, but seeks incorporation into market participation, domestication, state recognition of family and property and most crucially, the privileges of white supremacist capitalism. Homonormativity thus facilitates white supremacist ascension and upholds those market and state institutions that pacify radical queer liberation.

Lisa Duggan, "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism" p.179, Chapter in *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*, ed. Russ Castronovo, and Dana Nelson, Duke University Press 2002.

⁷⁹ Levine-Rasky, *Whiteness Fractured*, p.79.

⁸⁰ Ann Laura Stoler *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of sexuality and the colonial order of things*, Durham : Duke University Press, 1995, 97

⁸¹ Ibid.

control of Black and Indigenous bodies. Toronto Pride, I argue, has become a constitutive institution in that logic. As I will argue in chapter 4, at its inception, Pride was rooted in anti-police resistance, and was inherently antagonistic to the officially homophobic government of the day. Over time however, Pride gradually became defined by gay white masculinity, most aggressively pursued by its middle class constituents, who sought collaboration with police, public authorities and eventually state sponsorship. This process inevitably required an agenda that made queer identity more palatable and therefore more respectable to state agents. This respectability was pursued within the movement by aligning queer values, as values of inclusion, into normative institutions, with some of their argument substantiated by racial inflections of white respectability and “normal citizenship”.⁸² In this process, Pride has become an agent of the racial state, reinforcing racialized sexual discipline. Positioning Pride as an institution informs the argument I return to later to understand the racialized narratives and policies Pride enacts and their consequences for non-normative bodies. Non-normativity here is expanded to include non-gender conforming bodies, those that defy gender fixity, are ambiguous in their sexual practice or unidentifiable to the state, and those that are importantly, not white.⁸³ My work undertakes a critical race intervention into gay identity, positing that white assimilationism has monopolized queer identity formation, and that Toronto Pride sustains a racialized, white settler, nationalist logic that defines which bodies are celebrated with pride, and by extension, which bodies are grievable.⁸⁴

My analysis is at once intimate and systemic, interpersonal and structural, about both dominance and power. State narratives have been central to the project of constructing deviant citizens, those that are morally disciplined and then subjected to bodily discipline and control.⁸⁵ Since 9/11, western states have intensified their scrutiny, surveillance and sense of threat derived from brown, specifically Middle Eastern bodies; a racist logic that, in turn, facilitated the types of intimate violence committed by McArthur. This shift has, of course, been transmitted to Canadian queer culture and in the Church-Wellesley Village. Some years after this paradigm shift, racisms have been massaged into general sensibilities of white imagination with the presence of brown

⁸² Lenon, “Why is our Love an issue?”, 355

⁸³ OmiSoore H. Dryden and Suzanne Lenon, “Introduction”, *Disrupting queer inclusion: Canadian homonationalisms and the politics of belonging* / edited by OmiSoore H. Dryden and Suzanne Lenon. p.23

⁸⁴ Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Harvard University Press, (2015), 96.

⁸⁵ Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 149

bodies normalized as an inherent threat. This normalization, however, has extended from formalized spaces of discipline that control, for example, the flow of people across borders, to an ideological ordering of social preferences and accommodations according to discursive state formations.⁸⁶ This has taken on various forms in the queer community, from sexual preferences to the management of Black and Brown assemblages in *Pride*, for example. Bodies can either be fetishized as objects of desire or as threatening to a space, both ends of a spectrum that position brown bodies as not full subjects and both racially inflected by state narratives.⁸⁷

Bruce McArthur and some of his victims were also involved in the kink community. Although ropes and binding were part of their regular sexual practices, the court affirmed that consent was a central part of these practices and it was clear that McArthur's victims were not willing participants.⁸⁸ In the McArthur case, the sexual transgression of kink was understood as requiring ongoing consent, enabling the judge to see where genuine violence is located and when real harm is being done. McArthur was convicted on eight counts of first degree murder, convictions to be served consecutively, without parole. Considering his age, the consecutive terms were a symbolic measure, taking seriously the targeted, homophobic nature of the crimes.⁸⁹ The judgment focused at least once on the sexual and racial nature of the violence, reflecting a more nuanced understanding of why and how McArthur targeted his victims. The sentence seems, on the surface, at least, to deflect homonationalist inclinations that are typical in critiques of threats to sexual freedom, critiques that often take on a racist tone.

The fact that whiteness was a mediating factor that allowed such violence to occur, almost uninterrupted, for years, was not addressed in court, and remains to be explored by the internal police investigation. It cannot, and should not, be denied that the motive for these crimes was racial and sexual, yet the judgement did not address the chronic failure of TPS to take these crimes seriously and prevent McArthur from taking as many lives as he did, nor the logic of the TPS that distanced McArthur from suspicion. Whiteness acts as an insulator in the face of the law.⁹⁰ Whiteness often protects violent actors from the worst consequences of the law or even visibility

⁸⁶ David T. Goldberg, *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*, (Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 75

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 78

⁸⁸ *R v. McArthur, Reasons for Sentencing*, Justice John McMahon [59]

⁸⁹ *R v. McArthur, Reasons for Sentencing*, Justice John McMahon [77]

⁹⁰ Robin DiAngelo, "White Fragility", check the font *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, Vol 3 (3) (2011),

60

to the law. Moreover, while McArthur has been convicted on eight counts of first degree murder, his actions have led to increased surveillance in the gay village, creating a serious problem for queer activists. Queer people of colour in the village are now exposed to further deployment of state surveillance on the streets, as Toronto Police continue to practice racial profiling and carding.⁹¹ In other words, racialized men receive even less police protection in the face of intimate racial violence, and greater surveillance through state violence.

It leaves us in a dilemma, then, to appeal to an authority for protection from violence against those, like Bruce McArthur, who commit horrific crimes. The most significant perpetrator of violence against queer racialized people is the police themselves, who carry authority to arrest, incarcerate and brutalize bodies and spaces of colour.⁹² Bruce McArthur is carrying the legacy of state enforcement of white domination through what Michel Foucault identifies as the devolution of power through intimate and interpersonal surveillance. In this dynamic, supervisors, those members of society who police social conventions, norms and identify ‘deviancy,’ are also supervised.⁹³ The police also answer to the legacy of colonial white assertions of protecting the white race through segregation of bodies, neighborhoods, cities and specifically sexual interactions.⁹⁴ McArthur is implicated in the micropolitics of surveillance precisely because he is white. His whiteness gives him special access to being part of the cadre of social enforcers – making his own deviance less likely to be detected and tacitly enforcing white domination. There lies, in these entities, a deeper motivation of power, one that is not only rooted in indoctrination of inherited racist narratives, but answers the imperial call of domination, precisely through racialized forms of sexual predation.⁹⁵

Canada, akin to the United States, has a well-established history of predatory sex as a form of social discipline, notably that committed by the RCMP against Indigenous and Black women. Under the auspices of civilizing projects and scientific progress,⁹⁶ bodies have been racialized, and, in turn, exploited. Emerging in the 17th century, Blackness as a racial category of subjugation,

⁹¹ Robyn Maynard, *Policing Black Lives: state of violence in Canada from slavery to the present*, Fernwood Publishing, (2017), 84

⁹² Ibid. 40

⁹³ Ladelle McWhorter, *Racism and Sexual Oppression in Anglo-America: a genealogy*, Indiana University Press, (2009), 102

⁹⁴ Ibid. 140

⁹⁵ Ibid. 152

⁹⁶ Maynard, *Policing Black Lives*, 36

for example, was necessitated for preserving exploitative labour, whilst land seizure required alternative categorizations of Indigenous peoples as assimilable.⁹⁷ This violence continues in the present context against Black and Brown bodies in Canada, and in Toronto more specifically, as a colonial tool of discipline. Thus, Bruce McArthur's violence is not one of arbitrary psychopathy nor one of simple prejudice against South Asian and Middle Eastern men, although police descriptions of his motives are evasive. McArthur's actions were setting in motion a form of biopolitical racial terrorism.⁹⁸ Discipline facilitates the various means of managing racialized bodies to protect the racial purity of Canadian citizenship and Canadian sovereign authority from a perceived threat of non-white bodies. McArthur provided police with the alibi needed to justify inaction, fending off further scrutiny, surveillance and criminality.

Racialized assemblages and the discipline of whiteness:

Flesh embodies a sedimentation of history that yields purposeful actions - racialized actions mediated by and for the state.⁹⁹ Two central questions emerge: What did Bruce McArthur embody, and what did his victims embody according to Bruce McArthur? It would be inaccurate to tell a narrative of sexual violence without one of racialization. It would be equally wrong to tell a story of racialization without discussing whiteness, and two of his victims who presented and thus, *embodied*, whiteness.¹⁰⁰ More precisely, the mention of whiteness here draws out the contours of *racialized assemblages*¹⁰¹, and the biopolitical ramifications of violence and discipline it entails. In making sense of this violent saga, two white victims, Andrew Kinsman and Dean Lisowick, present to us the racialized nature of violence, or to be precise, the legibility of whiteness as

⁹⁷ McWhorter, *Racism and Sexual Oppression in Anglo-America: a genealogy*, 91

⁹⁸ Ibid. 160

⁹⁹ Sara Ahmed, "Orientations: Toward a queer phenomenology", *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, Vol.12(4), 2006, 552-553

¹⁰⁰ Eileen Morton Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power and Indigenous Sovereignty*, University of Minnesota Press, 2015, 178

¹⁰¹ I use Alexander Weheliye's adaptation of assemblages in describing racialized phenomena of kin. Borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari, assemblages signify relationalities of bodies, actions and expressions that constitute the shifting field of human phenomena. A racialized adaptation then considers historically determined sociogenic institutions that use skin, flesh and pigmentation as a determinant of humanity and human relations. Thus, socio-cultural politics use extra-physiological markers of difference such as skin and flesh to define socio-cultural and extra physical relations of governance, power and humanity. Historically specific institutions produce relations of kinship, or racial collectivities based on a historiography of science that determines biological difference as essential determinates of race and race valuation. Alexander Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: racializing assemblages, biopolitics and Black Feminist theories of the human*, Duke University Press (2014), pages 48-51

grievable and relatable.¹⁰² Kinsman and Lisowick are the flashpoint of queer humanity in this case, as their lives in the media framing most closely resembled those of respectable men.¹⁰³ Race was not the determining factor in Lisowick's death. Instead, it was his status as a sex worker and his addiction that made him vulnerable to violent perpetrators on the streets. Lisowick's close friends have spoken several times to media, and have been at the forefront in their grief, and this is commendable. Their grief has also been selected to represent the trauma that the "gay community" has sustained, while still highlighting their masculine and, at times, "regular" lives outside the village. For example, one *Globe and Mail* article begins "Dean Lisowick's daughter, Emily Bourgeois, never met her father. But she held on to the possibility that one day, things could change."¹⁰⁴ The grief over a family bond broken before the story of a happy family and caring father could ever be fulfilled speaks the language that is legible to Canadian society, that of a (if only) heterosexual and regular family bond that is eternal. In contrast to the six other racialized victims, in Lisowick and Kinsman's cases, their racial identity –whiteness - is never mentioned,. It is as if whiteness, if not named, does not exist; as if these spaces, virtual and concrete, occupied by whiteness, are not lived through race. Thus, the village is void of race, and only occupied by gay men.¹⁰⁵ Homosexuality and race here are seen as separate, and whiteness as not racial, but universal, representative, unmarked and unremarkable, the cohesive bond that binds "us," the grieving, together.¹⁰⁶ Lisowick and Kinsman represent the point where social outcry and police concern finally converged on queer flesh; queer flesh was finally grievable. *These* lives mattered to broader society.¹⁰⁷ Different categories of racialization produce different experiences of victimhood, and subsequent assemblages of grief.

¹⁰² Ibid. 24

¹⁰³ In chapter 4 I further explore whiteness as a process of racialization, and its perceived neutrality or non-racial characteristic as identity.

¹⁰⁴ Victoria Gibson "Family, friends of Bruce McArthur's victims speak of lost loved ones", *Globe and Mail*, Feb 4th, 2019.

¹⁰⁵ Allan Berube, "How Gay Stays White and What kind of White is Stays" in *The making and unmaking of whiteness*, (ed. By Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, IreneJ. Nexica, and Matt Wray, Duke University Press, 2001), 237

¹⁰⁶ Berube, "How gay Stays White and What Kind of White it Stays",237

¹⁰⁷ Judith Butler, *Toward a Theory of Performative Assembly*, Harvard University Press (2015), 196. I discuss below the political purpose and origins of the need to assert that Black Lives Matter and potentials for establishing a Toronto Black Pride Parade.

National grief comes to the fore as Kinsman's body materializes in the public eye. The ramifications of embodied racialization have biopolitical consequences, not just for the disciplinary effect it enacts when police involvement is accounted for, but also for discourses that are born of these events for victimization. The victims' whiteness and status in the community plays a dual role of both erasing racialization as a fundamental aspect of this violence, but also defusing the queer nature of these murders. The victims' masculinities, and their subsequent framing by police and media, dilute the origin of this violence as profoundly homophobic, *even if*, McArthur himself identified with or frequented gay communities. Whiteness, specifically the Canadian community of whiteness, gather around these bodies to grieve over a perceived assault on an otherwise quiescent state of affairs in the Canadian community. Whiteness reorients itself to familiarity, those familiar bodies who they regard as kin, as sharing an identity of nationhood, not to mention proper masculine citizens, whom they have lost to the hands of what is perceived as a queer threat.¹⁰⁸ A problem formerly over there, a problem amongst queers, migrates to the out here, that is the broader Canadian community. "We," that ambiguous pronoun, are now under threat.

City News in Toronto interviewed Matt MacKinnon, a fellow landscaper and colleague of McArthur's who worked on the same properties.¹⁰⁹ MacKinnon expressed understandable shock, but always emphasized the implausibility of McArthur's actions. The interview highlighted the 'ordinariness' of McArthur, his strong work ethic and his "immaculate work" were emphasized several times throughout the interview. MacKinnon did note that most of McArthur's laborers were Brown and that he seemed to have a new worker each time he and McArthur interacted. Interviews with Andrew Kinsman's friend and neighbor reported on her shock and sadness at the discovery of his body. These grim realizations are sad for all those who were close to the victims, however, news coverage did not initially reach out to members of the queer community. Earlier investigations in Project Huston had interviewed Bruce McArthur as a suspect in the disappearance of Majeed Kayhan, Skandaraj Navaratnam and Abdulbasir Faizi, but had not found any ties to the murders. The project remained inconclusive after 18 months and was closed. The disappearance of these three men, even though McArthur had previous convictions, could not convince police that there was systemic violence at work in the village.

¹⁰⁸ Ahmed, "Orientations", 555

¹⁰⁹ City News Toronto, "Matt MacKinnon interview on his interactions with Bruce McArthur", Feb. 3rd, 2018

These murders were not solely an assault on queerness, even if by a queer man (Bruce McArthur was formerly married to a woman with two children and later left for Toronto where he became well known in the gay and kink community), but also entailed the deployment of white supremacy in defining Canadian citizenship. These murders delineated bodies along racial lines of grief, or communities of grief delineated by race. To borrow Alexander Weheliye's terms, embodied flesh that carries with it the markers of historical difference gather in peculiar and involuntary ways to produce racialized assemblages.¹¹⁰ In other words, their bodies, the bodies of Arab and South Asian men, acted as mediators for colonial state policies of citizenship, white purity, racialization and political violence to preserve white queerness. This work was not, of course, committed alone. It was enabled by 10 years of police refusal to consider the possibility of a serial killer in the village. Racialized subjectivity operates as the "master code" for the larger genre of the human, those that are considered full subjects and therefore grievable, that produces such starkly segregated communities and consequences for queer alliances and celebration.¹¹¹

One victim, in particular, brings together the dual nature of state discipline and its, often fatal, consequences for those with precarious citizenship. Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam was a refugee claimant from Sri Lanka whose family believed he was in hiding, avoiding deportation, after his claim was denied.¹¹² Canada's racialized immigration system, a system which prioritizes economic migrants and dissuades often Arab, South Asian and African migrants, paired with a highly restrictive refugee program, leaves many racialized claimants fearful of authorities and excluded from rights protections.¹¹³ As Robyn Maynard argues, the brutish detention practice of Canadian Immigration Services plays a crucial role in defining Canadian citizenship since carceral institutions police racialized bodies and often arbitrarily detain migrants for an indefinite period.¹¹⁴ Refused claimants who are in detention cannot appeal their cases before a judge, as they do not have charges laid against them. At the same time, they are not eligible for any protections under our rights guarantees that would ensure that they are understood as claimants to a plight of distress, rather than incarcerated criminals, adding to their "illegal" status in Canada. This state of precarity

¹¹⁰ Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 24

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 27

¹¹² Brockbank, "Family of Bruce McArthur's latest alleged victim thought he was in hiding, after refugee claim rejected", CBC News, 2018

¹¹³ Robyn Maynard, *Policing Black Lives*, 170

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* 165

leaves people like Kirushna in legal limbo where one is fearful of seeking police intervention when one's safety is compromised. He was relegated to invisibility and subjected to violence without consequences for the perpetrator. His disappearance was undetectable by police as no one had reported him missing, while his potential deportation, his family speculated, had forced him to cut ties with his family who did not know his whereabouts.

Kanagaratnam had been struggling to maintain steady employment and housing. He had few friends, ostensibly none in the village, and did not discuss his sexuality or dating life with work partners. He had kept contact with one man of 491 others who travelled on a rickety boat from Sri Lanka to Canada. Piranavan Thangavel appeared in court to provide testimony for Kanagaratnam, and described their precarious lives as refugees.¹¹⁵ Instability, loneliness and insecurity were commonplace. Their three month journey was a premonition of the ongoing struggle of life as a refugee. Thangavel emphasized that "this could have been any of us, or other refugees who live in fear."¹¹⁶ The Crown prosecutor emphasized this precarity, making it a central feature of the case by demonstrating that McArthur had specifically picked men on the margins of society,¹¹⁷ men who had little or no network of support, whether intimate or legal. For Kanagaratnam, the threat remained omnipresent. As a refugee with a refused claim, he was a target of the state and therefore went into hiding to stay in Canada, but also to avoid incarceration.

According to a 2002 Canadian Supreme Court ruling, rejected refugee claimants who have been, or are likely to be, subjected to torture, can be deported if they are labeled a serious threat to Canada.¹¹⁸ The responsible authority does not have to justify why or how they deem such a claimant to be a threat to Canadian sovereignty, therefore giving the particular state agency total discretionary power over the treatment of a person's dignity and life for the sake of national security.¹¹⁹ The ideological grip of 9/11, and the ever-present threat of "othered" subjects, particularly migrants of color and especially subversive individuals as was Kanagaratnam in Sri Lanka, have given renewed energy to white nationalism in order to justify the brutal treatment of

¹¹⁵ Zeba Khan, "'I don't want to live in this world which became so terribly cruel,' Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam's sister tells court" Toronto Observer, Feb. 5th,

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ R v. McArthur, Reasons for sentencing, [91]

¹¹⁸ Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, S.C 2001, c. 27.

¹¹⁹ Nandita Sharma, "White Nationalism, Illegality and Imperialism: Border Controls as Ideology" in *(En)Gendering the War on Terror: War stories and camouflaged politics* ed. By Krista Hunt and Kim Ryzgiel, Ashgate Publishing (2006), 135

people of colour. Refugees smuggled in by human traffickers, in particular, are often as criminalized as the smugglers, and detained for indefinite terms. The racialized nature of immigration and refugee laws owes a great deal to the undefined nature of the term “terrorist” in Canadian legislation, casting a long shadow over a large swath of people who may be criminalized and deemed threatening.¹²⁰ As products of 9/11 and the ensuing war on terror, these definitions of threatening bodies undeniably took on the explicit definition of Brown, Middle Eastern and South Asian men.

Kanagatnaram had legitimate concerns for his safety if he was to be held in captivity by Immigration Services, and therefore had to cut ties with his family and remained relatively unseen by the state. His life likely entailed working “under the table,” avoiding registration with any institutions, and, of course, avoiding police. He was likely to be deported if he contacted authorities, and so McArthur, who himself had benefited from white citizenship, committed this murder under the cover of the racially demarcated difference between perpetrator and victim: their citizenship status.

Grief is also mediated by bodies and their associated markers. The violent and cruel dismembering of the victims’ bodies is an act of making them indistinct from one another, but distinct from the Canadian “us”, a reducible and inextinguishable difference that makes flesh usable, disposable and not worth the grief.¹²¹ The flesh here is the mediator, the transit point between Bruce McArthur and state sanctioned white supremacy. Now almost two decades of heightened propagandist depictions have marked Arab and South Asian bodies, particularly the Muslim body, as a de facto threat to Canadian nationhood. The flesh of these men is the modality of relation between the intimate violence Bruce McArthur committed and the state sanctioned policing and brutalizing of racialized bodies.¹²² The purpose of theorizing flesh as a fundamental figure in this case, is to point to the place and time where political violence coalesces around these markers of bodily difference; that is, racialization, sexualization and contemporary technologies¹²³ of governing bodies more broadly.¹²⁴ To paraphrase Alexander Weheliye, the flesh is inscribed

¹²⁰ Ibid. 135

¹²¹ Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 38

¹²² Ibid. 44

¹²³ Michel Foucault *History of Sexuality Vol.1: An Introduction*, Translated by Robert Hurley, Random House Inc., 1978. 118-120

¹²⁴ Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 52

with historic political markers, that have been normalized to mean biological truth.¹²⁵ These “truths” disfigure (sometimes literally) those assemblages of bodies that have been joined together by historic state policies of scientific racism that now *inscribe* in the body that difference, that thing we call race.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 51

Chapter 3: Assembly, Police, and Pride

The previous chapter centered Bruce McArthur's whiteness to tell an alternative narrative of the killings, in opposition to the mainstream media's pathologized narrative of murder. This chapter centers the Toronto Police Services' treatment and relationship with Blackness to concentrate our attention on racist practices of policing and Pride's sustained silence on the matter. Furthermore, it tells the story of multiple and sustained efforts by Toronto Pride to reduce Black visibility in Pride, as well as punish dissenters who draw attention to practices that continue to expose queer people of colour to violence, and exclusion from the queer culture and decision making. Thereafter, I point to sites of possible coalition building and resistance, as well as the fractures and fissures that occur in these fragile coalitions.

This chapter embarks on a critical historical analysis of Toronto Pride to map the complex and racially charged relationships between Toronto Pride, queer people of colour (POC) and police. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how contemporary practices of policing in queer communities are fundamentally rooted in a racialized history of protecting whiteness and (white) property. Here, I rely on Robyn Maynard's *Policing Black Lives* and Elizabeth Comack's *Racialized Policing in Canada*, which chronicle practices of racialized police practices in Canada, particularly with respect to queer people of colour. Toronto Pride's historical and contemporary practices of racial exclusion have normalized Pride as the representative depiction of queerness. And while Toronto Pride has taken initiatives to address systemic racism in the organization by hiring a diverse body of executives, including Olivia Nuamah, racist outcomes continue as a consequence of institutionalized practices that prioritize state recognition and financial support for Toronto Pride.

A focus on the antagonism that exists between Pride and Black Lives Matter Toronto enables a discussion of the particular problems that queer people of colour face in queer communities. More broadly, it underscores the persistent relevance of white supremacist logic in Canadian state making through institutionalized queer tolerance, such that the *racialized* "other" is cast outside of tolerant citizenship.¹²⁷ Thus homonationalism involves the shaping and making

¹²⁷ Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: homonationalism in queer times*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 50-51.

of sexual citizenship, being included in the tolerant Canadian polity, and the paradoxical delineation and policing of rigid taxonomies of race while maintaining an invisible sameness, or colour-blind multiculturalism.

Himani Bannerji defines multicultural colorblindness as the administrative practices of racial management, but also an ideological deployment that re-categorizes race as culture.¹²⁸ The culturalization of race recognizes diversity while neutralizing difference, with the intent of obscuring unequal relations of power that are based in fundamentally colonial understandings of racial difference. Thus, all non-white subjects are recategorized as “visible minorities,” thereby stabilizing whiteness as essential to Canadian sovereignty, most often found in the Anglo/Franco narrative of the two founding nations.¹²⁹ Official multiculturalism has allowed the Canadian state to forge a national identity on the recognition of difference that enshrines static ontological ethnic and racial taxonomies, while erasing the power-laden relationships among those differences.¹³⁰ Multicultural colorblindness translates interdependent power relations into a language of equality in diversity. “Visible minorities” are thus created and equalized under Canadian citizenship, but not imagined as core subjects of a tolerant Canadian identity.¹³¹ Or rather, they are not included in the subject category understood as the imagined tolerant Canadian, because tolerance and progressive politics are assumed to be claimed by western nations.

Normativizing whiteness and western ontologies through queer tolerance is best captured by the concept of homonormativity. Lisa Duggan defines homonormativity as the process by which queerness is incorporated into the civil rights framework through tolerance based on a single axis of homosexuality, and same sex relationships.¹³² This specific narrowing of queer identity homogenizes previously transgressive identities into broader, dominant institutions through a cohesive narrative of inclusion to which civil rights extend. Thus, deviance can be normalised by including sexuality into normative institutions, such as marriage, and subsuming homosexuality into market participation, private property, individual responsibility and whiteness, consequently flattening racial difference. In this sense, including sexuality with intersecting identities of race,

¹²⁸ Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation*, 50

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* 96.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* 32-33.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Duggan, “The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism”.

gender and class, depoliticizes sexual equality through coherence with liberal capitalism.¹³³ Roderick Ferguson elaborates this idea, expounding on the normalization of homosexuality through gentrification, displacing racial and ethnic communities with the effect of reclaiming urban spaces as safe havens of white middle class wealth. Further below, I discuss state instruments of racial segregation as they pertain to ‘gay ghettos’ in particular. With regard to the distinction between homonormativity and homonationalism, I apply the latter to Toronto Pride as a description of the work that Pride does for the Canadian national identity, notably when dominant institutions such as police or other state agencies lay claim to it. At the same time, Pride, in its current form, can be defined as homonormative when it normalizes gay white masculinity as representative of queer identity.

It is also worth noting the significance of national specificity in considering the applicability of the concept of homonationalism. In the Canadian context, Robert Nichols rightfully points out that ‘liberal tolerance’ might be a more accurate description of the state’s mobilization of queerness and its uses in occluding a history of colonial violence.¹³⁴ Queerness, as an instantiation of liberal tolerance, enables the state to make its story of settlement commensurate with one of enlightened civilizational prosperity, guardianship and national purity *through* its stated policy of tolerated difference in multiculturalism.¹³⁵ The statist project weaves together a national identity that supports Canadian sovereignty as the state extends its project of land settlement, while multiculturalism, the policy of national unity through accommodated difference, subsumes heterogeneity to the project of Canadian sovereignty.¹³⁶

Toronto Pride’s complicity with police to prioritize white queer lives is illustrated in their support for the inclusion of the Toronto Police Service in the Pride Parade while TPS participates in relationships of violence with queer people of colour (POC), crystalized by its inaction in the McArthur case. Foregrounding Pride’s current antagonism with Black Lives Matter demonstrates Toronto Pride’s shift from a formerly subversive movement mobilized against police brutality, to an institutionalized project that protects and projects homonationalist definitions of queerness. This chapter stresses the significance of police involvement in Pride as an assertion of white

¹³³ Ferguson, *One-Dimensional Queer*, 48

¹³⁴ Nichols, “Empire and the Dispositif of Queerness”, 43

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* 51

¹³⁶ Thobani, *Exalted Subjects*, 143

dominance in queer politics. State co-optation of Pride celebrations instrumentalizes queerness as a modern nation making tool, reinforcing Canadian citizenship as white dominance, and asserting moral superiority over “less-modern” or “less-progressive” nations and peoples.¹³⁷ The mishandling of the Bruce McArthur case by police is a powerful example of how racialized queer men are positioned outside the nation. Police did not perceive the disappearance of numerous racialized gay men as a systemic threat to the gay village because their absence was not perceived as a fundamental disruption of the Canadian social order.

Origins of Pride:

Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, both trans women of colour, convened the first Pride March in New York in 1969 as a fundamentally anti-police and prison abolitionist riot. Johnson and Rivera organized Pride as a solidarity march against the Stonewall Inn raid in 1969, and as a response to police violence against members of the queer community.¹³⁸ I want to underscore here, that the historical origins of Pride were demonstrations against police violence. Furthermore, they were primarily mobilized by queer people of colour and involved an intersectional coalition with Black Power movements, Radical Feminists and Third World decolonial movements. And yet, the various retellings of this mobilization as a uniquely Gay and Lesbian movement often recentre the gay white subject as the central protagonist of queer struggle.¹³⁹ The recollecting of the Stonewall Riots in mainstream narratives continues to represent it as the *start* of queer mobilization and remains generally whitewashed.¹⁴⁰ The march against the raids is etched in white society’s imagination as the *first* struggle of gay and lesbian liberation, and conventional stories of these events continue to center whiteness, most idealistically deployed in Roland Emmerich’s movie *Stonewall*.¹⁴¹ In truth, various gay liberation actions were concerned with anti-racist, decolonial and queer struggles.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Puar, *Terrorist assemblages*, 50

¹³⁸ Ali Greey, “Queer Inclusion precludes (Black) queer disruption”, 2016.

¹³⁹ Christina B. Hanhardt, *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence*, (Duke University Press, (2013), 88.

¹⁴⁰ Elena Kiesling, “The missing Colours of the Rainbow: Black Queer Resistance”, *European Journal of American Studies*, 11:3, p.1-20, 2017, 5.

¹⁴¹ Kiesling, “The missing Colours of the Rainbow: Black Queer Resistance”, 5

¹⁴² Hanhardt, *Safe Space*, 88.

However, as Pride assumed permanency, gay activists intensified their demands for safety and queer visibility; demands that codified queerness into white identity. Simultaneous adaptations of Black civil rights history and language, retooled for the purposes of gay activism, along with the persistent criminalization of Black youth, solidified the cognitive rift between blackness and queerness.¹⁴³ The historical erasure of racialized queer mobilization has played well in the colour-blind, post-racial state that defines neoliberal citizenship today.¹⁴⁴ As the Gay and Lesbian liberation movement has framed itself as the last frontier of civil rights, adopting the language of Black liberation and Civil Rights movements that preceded them, it has foreclosed the “race issue.” Effectively race, in this strategic rendering of gay and lesbian rights as the last bastion, is already resolved.¹⁴⁵ But, of course, it has not been resolved, a fact that is repeatedly demonstrated in the policing of racialized communities, even as gay activists demand a stop to the policing of sexual orientation.¹⁴⁶ The distinguishing factor between queerness and race¹⁴⁷ then, is criminality. Thus, decriminalization of homosexuality requires a transcendental quality that binds queerness to citizenship; that finds a commonality in whiteness. The historical amnesia of POC mobilization produced in queer memories of resistance, divorces race from queerness to produce colour blind claims-making, while rearticulating criminality onto the racial other.¹⁴⁸ Thus, claims are put forward because “we” are just like “you”. The “we” becomes encapsulated by whiteness through entry into citizenship, becoming like “you” and disassociating from the criminal “other”. Shared queerness through citizenship in a race-blind framework becomes contingent on shared whiteness.¹⁴⁹

1981 Bathhouses and Canadian Pride:

¹⁴³ Kiesling, “The missing Colours of the Rainbow: Black Queer Resistance”, 9. Many movements had adopted the expression, “gay is the new Black” while repeatedly chanting civil rights hymns such as “We Shall Overcome”, defining gay liberation as the final frontier of citizenship rights.

¹⁴⁴ David T. Goldberg, *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*, (Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 91.

¹⁴⁵ Allan Berube, “How Gay Stays White and What kind of White is Stays”, 244.

¹⁴⁶ Greey, “Queer Inclusion precludes (Black) queer disruption”, 669.

¹⁴⁷ Race imagined as ‘non-white’, and as standing apart from whiteness that is imagined outside of racial categories.

¹⁴⁸ Kiesling, “The missing Colours of the Rainbow: Black Queer Resistance”, 7.

¹⁴⁹ Greey, “Queer Inclusion precludes (Black) queer disruption”, 667.

These insights are also helpful in making sense of Pride Toronto's particular relationship with the Canadian state and the specific contours of mobilization around citizenship, policing and queer claims-making. Similar to the Stonewall riots in 1969, Pride Toronto emerged as a form of resistance responding to state-sanctioned homophobia and police violence. The 1981 Bathhouse Raids in Toronto marked a turning point in Canadian queer mobilization. Ali Greey points out that, just like the Stonewall riots, the historical amnesia erasing the role of trans women-of-colour recentres whiteness in the struggle for rights and protection from violence.¹⁵⁰

Roderick Ferguson compellingly argues, by drawing on Merle Woo's essay "Stonewall was a Riot – Now We Need a Revolution," that the ideological struggle over the meaning of the Stonewall riots emerged from the queer community itself, very shortly after the riots.¹⁵¹ He notes that the coalitional nature of the riots were immediately contested by white gays in particular, framing the presence of radical groups such as the Black Panthers at the march, as an infiltration of their own agenda into the movement, and thus positioning gay liberation as better suited for normative respectability.¹⁵² As he notes, Gay Liberationists often positioned other progressive communities, those working toward class or racial equality, as homophobic and an inherent threat to gay liberation. This interpretation enabled a renarrativizing of the multifaceted nature of the riots as evidence of political weakness and lack of viability.

In 1973, Sylvia Rivera addressed a crowd at a Gay Liberation march from which she had been barred. From early on, gay and lesbian sectors of the movement saw trans women as men in drag, and therefore infiltrators of the movement. Women like Sylvia, who often lived on the streets, and fought for rights of the homeless and working poor, were seen as outside the homophile movement for gay inclusion. Sylvia addressed a heckling crowd saying:

I've been trying to get up here all day, for your gay brothers and your gay sisters in jail right now. They write me every muthafuckin' week asking me for your help.... Many of them have to spend their own money in jail for their sex changes... they have been beaten they have been raped in jail... and you all don't do a god damn thing for them. If you

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ferguson, *One-Dimensional Queerness*, 48.

¹⁵² Ibid. 51

wanna do something for them come see those who work for them at STAR,¹⁵³ who work for all of us and not men and women who belong in a white middle class club.” She finished her speech with a punctuating “REVOLUTION NOW!”¹⁵⁴

This confrontation profoundly exemplifies the conflicts within Gay Liberation movements from early on, ostensibly as early as the day after the Stonewall Riots. This particular history of early Gay Liberation reflects why the notion of assemblages is particularly useful in describing diverging identities and coalitions. Assemblages do not gather around one single axis of identity, but rather, are constantly shifting according to positionalities with relation to others as well as normative state institutions. Rivera has more in common with queer people of colour, particularly, poor or working class trans women, than she does with white gay or lesbian or even trans women. Piecemeal accommodations of the state for certain identities, primarily cis gendered and white members, create these locales of commonalties that can shape uneasy or very close bonds of resistance. Assemblages gather around experience, and these experiences are shaped by their relationship to normative institutions, including the market, marriage recognition, and police, to name a few. Thus, the shifting field of Gay Liberation was as much conditioned by state narratives of inclusion and respectability as it was from within the movement by gay and lesbian activists who sought to access their privileged birthright.

In Canada, Gay Liberation organizations expressed intensifying homonormative agendas as they adopted the political strategies of their U.S counterparts. In the University of Toronto Homophile Association’s open letter to the Gay Liberation Front’s newsletter *Come out!* they wrote: “We are writing to protest against COME OUT!’s attempt to link the homophile movement to communist revolution and support of totalitarian, anti-homosexual political systems.”¹⁵⁵ The association was distinguishing itself from what it saw as subversive groups that thwarted their cause and their ability to appeal to normative institutions for inclusion. They asserted derisive claims that the Black Panthers were a terrorist organization that was vehemently homophobic, and that the promotion of socialism inevitably led to homophobic intolerance. They concluded by

¹⁵³ STAR was a self-funded ad hoc shelter for LGBTQ+ people on 12th street run by Sylvia Rivera and Marsha Johnson in New York and remained open for about 3 years.

¹⁵⁴ LoveTapesCollective, “Y’all Better Quiet Down”, Sylvia Rivera at the 1973 Gay Pride March. Filmed June 24 1973, 5:28 minutes, Posted Sept. 18 2017. <https://vimeo.com/234353103>

¹⁵⁵ U of T Homophile Association as cited in Ferguson, *One Dimensional Queer*, 52.

saying: “there is an economic incentive in a free market to separate economic efficiency from other characteristics of the individual.”¹⁵⁶ Thus, homophile societies in Toronto, as well as in US cities, clearly argued that only free market participation would facilitate gay liberation, and that other social movements inclined toward multi-faceted or intersectional approaches were not beneficial to the movement, but rather necessarily homophobic. The rhetoric that positions Black Liberation and Decolonial movements in opposition, or threatening, to Gay Liberation (read: as necessarily white), is not a new one. Rhetorical moves such as these are revived in current debates concerning BLM-TO’s demands of Toronto Pride.

This dynamic was sharply illustrated by the response to the actions of Black Lives Matter-Toronto (BLM-TO) at the 2016 Pride March. In 2016, Black Lives Matter Toronto was named honored organization by the Toronto Pride Board. The formal title is meant to recognize organizations or groups for their contributions to queer organizing, community and queer life, and are designated the leading float in the parade. Keeping in tradition with its organizing tactics, BLM-TO seized the opportunity to bring unaddressed practices of police violence to the forefront of Pride, practices that continue to target queers of colour. However, as with Stonewall, the historical erasure of Pride’s history as resistance allowed critics and mainstream media to position BLM-TO’s actions as a violent disruption.¹⁵⁷ In fact, the colour blind rhetoric of a tolerant society that had overcome race resurfaced, and the Black community’s issues were described as not directly related to the queer community. The colour-blind reframing of Pride was a story of struggle as white resistance, positioning BLM-TO’s intervention of the 2016 Parade as an unhappy interruption, “hijacking” the parade for their “special interest agenda”.¹⁵⁸

An insightful media analysis by Ali Greey reports that over 40 stories by several major mainstream and queer media outlets used the specific language of “hijacking” to describe the events, and accused BLM-TO of not being “grateful” for the title bequeathed to them for the parade.¹⁵⁹ This rhetorical strategy mirrors the state citizenship discourse that Canada deploys to portray its image as a multicultural, tolerant society.¹⁶⁰ In this discourse, citizenship is ‘given’ as a gift, a privilege one should feel lucky to receive, rather than challenge, critique or resist. When

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 53

¹⁵⁷ Greey, “Queer Inclusion precludes (Black) queer disruption”, 671.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 669.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 667.

¹⁶⁰ Thobani, *Exalted Subjects*, 160.

racialized communities, and especially racialized immigrant communities, express their displeasure, they are regarded as ungrateful welfare recipients at best and national threats at worst. Columnist Ray Lam from the *Georgia Straight*, for example, accused BLM-TO of holding the community hostage, further reifying the conceptual rift between blackness and queerness, and repositioning BLM-TO as a criminal threat to queer citizenship.¹⁶¹ Media accounts reported that the confrontation escalated as some parade attendees were heard yelling “*All Lives Matter!*” from the sidelines, while others heckled the protesters.¹⁶² Here again is a clear reassertion of white dominance through the colour blind assertion that we are a post racial society.

At the centre of BLM-TO’s action was the issue of police participation in Pride – an issue generally dismissed by white attendees. Then executive director of Pride, Mathieu Chantelois, conceded to BLM-TO’s demands to ban police from Pride, enabling the parade to continue. Yet very shortly after the conclusion of Pride week, Chantelois recanted his commitment. When confronted about his reversal, he stated “what I did was getting the parade to move again.”¹⁶³ BLM-TO’s demands, according to Chantelois and many of the spectators, were ruining the party. They were an unruly and selfish group whose presence represented an inconvenience. This is a potent example of how exactly white Canadian society interprets POC queer mobilization: as a nuisance to an otherwise cohesive state of affairs, an unhappy wedging of “their” issues into “our” celebration. BLM-TO’s co-founder Alexandria Williams said it best, “We did not bully our way into Pride...we made space for ourselves in a place where we have been erased.”¹⁶⁴

Chantelois’s duplicitous behavior on this issue eventually led to his resignation, and police were banned from the 2017 and 2018 parades. However, the debate opened up again for 2018

¹⁶¹ Ray Lam, “Black Lives Matter and Pride: No one wins when you rain on our parade”, *Georgia Straight*, March 8th 2017. Ray Lam is interestingly positioned in his critique, since it is worth mentioning that hierarchies of racial belonging are at play when discussing white dominance in queer communities. Some identities such as those of Asian men are often articulated not as threats to queerness, but inherently occupied by feminine queerness. Feminization of Asian masculinity is a process of racialization based in equally violent racial tropes, yet stands apart from anti-black racism that positions Black identity as threatening to queerness. There is also a pressing need of analysis of white supremacist or conventional white fetishism that position Asian women as ideal suitors to the master race, and thus quasi assimilable into whiteness, a product of historical racialization in the post war era that feminized Asian identity. This is often expressed in racial tropes of Asian citizens reflecting model immigrants or emasculate men and submissive women.

¹⁶² Greey, “Queer Inclusion precludes (Black) queer disruption”, 669.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Alexandria Williams as cited in CBC News, “Black Lives Matter Stalls Pride Parade”, Jul. 3rd 2016.

when the Pride Toronto board held talks behind closed doors with TPS representatives. Talks briefly came to a halt, due, interestingly enough, to what one CBC article termed, “the McArthur factor.”¹⁶⁵ In light of the emerging information regarding the Bruce McArthur case, Executive Director Olivia Nuamah has asked Toronto police to withdraw their bid, bluntly stating: “What changed was Bruce McArthur, to be honest with you. What changed was the re-emergence of that feeling, of that feeling of a lack of safety.”¹⁶⁶ Later that year, however, the conversation concerning the 2019 parade was initiated on the basis of a perception that TPS was handling the investigation well and that they wanted to mend their relationship with the community.

It has become clear that Pride Toronto, as long-time Black Lives Matter activist Desmond Cole attests, no longer represents queer values and identity as it expresses itself in queer people’s daily lives. Some bodies, in fact, might be *too transgressive*, as racialized bodies are too disruptive to celebrate a one-dimensional queerness.¹⁶⁷ Race is often seen as a complication to queer solidarity, and is hastened, either figuratively or literally, out of spaces and conversations of queerness. Toronto Pride has systematically left behind racialized queer people and in particular, Black community members.¹⁶⁸ The conceptual rift between blackness and queerness has been firmly established in the Pride community. The struggles that Black, South Asian, Arab, Latinx, Asian and POC writ large have endured to create Pride as a political movement, and the simultaneous policing they undergo from both the state and the queer community itself, has been erased from Canadian memory. With its reliance on federal and provincial grants, Toronto Pride has redefined its mandate as reflecting the state’s interests of promoting a tolerant Canadian society rather than a force of resistance to heterosexism. As I demonstrate below, Pride Toronto has galvanized statist, homonationalist projects and legitimized white queerness as representative of Canadian queer identity, establishing a clear divide between queerness and racialization.¹⁶⁹

Pride parades and celebrations often incorporate local police forces and elicit divisive debates about the presence of police, military, and corporate sponsors. In many cities in Canada,

¹⁶⁵ CBC News, “Toronto Police withdraw bid to march in uniform in 2018 Pride Parade”, April 3rd, 2018

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ OmiSoore Dryden, “A Queer too Far: Blackness, “Gay Blood”, and Transgressive Possibilities” in *Disrupting Queer Inclusion: Canadian Homonationalisms and the Politics of Belonging*, ed. By OmiSoore H. Dryden and Suzanne Lenon, (UBC Press, 2015), 128.

¹⁶⁸ Desmond Cole, “Pride has divorced blackness from queerness, The Star, July 7th, 2016.

¹⁶⁹ Rinaldo Walcott, “Freedom Now Suite: Black Feminist Turns of Voice”,

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Pride committees are dependent on corporate sponsorships and donations to host Pride events. A comparison between 2017 and 2018 financial reports for Toronto Pride shows a sudden withdrawal of sponsorship funds. Pride's largest sponsors include TD Bank as their platinum sponsor, and Bud light, The Ontario Lottery & Gaming and LiveNation Canada as their gold sponsors. While the exact value in contributions are not stated by the individual sponsors, the majority of the deficit is attributable to the withdrawal of private sponsorship contributions as opposed to government grants, for example. Olivia Nuamah had testified in front of a city council committee presenting her case for maintaining municipal funds for Pride that had been threatened amid the controversy.¹⁷⁰ The union representing Toronto Police had called for a halt to municipal funding, citing a petition of over nine thousand people demanding that police be able to march in uniform. However, city council concluded in favor of Toronto Pride to provide 260 000 dollars in funding, expressing concerns that a withdrawal would not facilitate a resolution to this controversial topic.

The close relationships between Pride organizing and police and/or corporate sponsorship has profoundly impacted the original ethos of Pride as a deeply political and politicized statement against state violence and intervention. Today, queer people are spectators to their own events; we are spectators to the very streets we sought to reclaim. What was once a radical demonstration of solidarity and political action is now a parade flooded by corporate floats gleefully declaring their solidarity with the LGBTQ2IA+ communities, while we stand idly by, waving back.¹⁷¹ Bodies are again displaced. Queer people have been ushered to the sidelines (and sidewalks) to clamor at the sight of corporate money floating by. Whiteness, property and whiteness as property have been deployed to swallow whole the projects of resistance undertaken by queer people of colour, to usurp radical potential and displace queer POC from mainstream sight. Whiteness is tightly bound to property and its social investment in queer recognition is a display of its powerful hold over who may lay claim to public space.¹⁷² The same investment in whiteness I discussed above is at work here, attributed to the state seizing an opportunity to recapitulate the ever growing heterogeneity of its cities into solidifying the grip of whiteness over definitions of queerness, queer

¹⁷⁰ Lorenda Reddekopp, "Pride Toronto funding should continue amid police debate, city hall committee recommends", *CBC News*, May 8th, 2017.

¹⁷¹ At times I make the distinction between LGBT and LGBTQ2IA+ to properly distinguish between the former which I see to represent organizations that lobby for queer rights, and the latter which covers a more descriptive quality of the diversity and fluidity of queer identity that is often not captured in representational lobby politics.

¹⁷² Levine-Rasky, *Whiteness Fractured*, 80

neighborhoods and property. The notable additive here, however, is private corporate interests who seize the moment to define queer celebration. Corporate relationship is not independent of the neoliberal state's devolution of governance, but represents private interests governing the majority of Pride's finances, and thus Pride's interests in securing corporate support.

Xtra news reported on Toronto Pride's Annual General meeting in late 2018.¹⁷³ At the December 4th AGM, the question of police presence was on everybody's mind. The board of directors issued a warning before the meeting, asserting that if the conversation became too heated, they reserved the right to adjourn at any time. Their first item on the agenda was police participation in the parade, and, as predicted, the room did not hold up under the weight of contention.¹⁷⁴ The AGM was swiftly adjourned, forcing conversation to a close precisely at a time when the very existence of Pride Toronto was under threat due to its precarious financial circumstances.

Since this controversial AGM the executive board decided once again to ban police from the 2019 parade, however not without much pressure internally from fellow executive members and the wider queer community. Pride Toronto's executive director, Olivia Nuamah, was approached by *Xtra*, a queer news site, for some details on the decision in early 2018, to allow police to march in Toronto's 2019 parade, before reinstating the ban later in November 2018.¹⁷⁵ Nuamah acknowledged that police continue to have a narrow view of TPS's relationships with the community. She cites that the police see their relationship with the queer community as constructive and having evolved over the years, while still treating the issue of carding and racial profiling as a separate concern for racialized communities.¹⁷⁶ Therefore, Nuamah acknowledges that there is a lack of an intersectional understanding in the TPS of how they police queer people of colour. However, this did not inhibit Toronto Pride's consideration of TPS's application to join the parade amid its financial turmoil.¹⁷⁷ Several Board members, including Pride's co-chair Erin

¹⁷³ Dorianne Emmerton, "The future may be bleak for Pride Toronto, but queer and trans communities are vibrant", *Xtra News*, Dec. 5th, 2018

¹⁷⁴ Giese, "Q&A with Olivia Nuamah", 2018.

¹⁷⁵ This interview was held before a turnaround decision to ban police once more in January 2019.

¹⁷⁶ Giese, "Q&A with Olivia Nuamah", *Xtra*, 2018

¹⁷⁷ Pride Toronto's funding associated with TD Bank is contingent on its grant with the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Its finances have received a second wind this year, and are stabilizing debt, however speculations remains about a correlation between government funding the organization's relationship with police, Pride Toronto Financial Statement, July 31, 2018.

Edghill, have recently resigned after a non-confidence motion was passed 42-28 following the fallout concerning the police ban.¹⁷⁸ In an open letter posted on twitter, Edghill recognizes the neoliberal and homonormative patterns that are deeply engrained in Pride's infrastructure. These institutionalized pressures, Edghill claims, conditioned Toronto Pride to prioritize the organization, despite the consequences, that inevitably influenced Pride's decision to consider TPS's application, as it was tied to their imperiled funding situation.¹⁷⁹

Pride and Black Lives Matter in the Contemporary Context:

Various Black Lives Matter chapters have been policed and surveilled for several years in cities across Canada. Repeated efforts to monitor and interfere with Black Lives Matter activists have raised questions about TPS's uneven law enforcement practices. Desmond Cole, a prominent BLM-TO activist and journalist, has had numerous hostile interactions with police, particularly when BLM-TO held a demonstration outside Police Headquarters after the Special Investigations Unit cleared an officer of any wrongdoing in the murder of Andrew Loku.¹⁸⁰ Loku was a 45-year-old refugee from South Sudan with diagnosed mental health issues. He had been living in a residence leased out to vulnerable residents by the Canadian Mental Health Association. Although he wielded a hammer at the time of his crisis, police failed to properly deescalate the situation and fatally shot Loku twice, a flashpoint for BLM-TO mobilization around police violence led by Cole. Police cited BLM demonstrations as a safety issue, and have consistently monitored Cole's social media, citing worries about his rhetoric.

Black Lives Matter has always been an ardent critic of police involvement in Pride. In 2016 BLM-TO halted the parade to draw attention to the ongoing issues of police brutality toward Black, Indigenous and queer people of colour, and the conspicuous silence of the Pride community on this issue. BLM-TO also wanted to call attention to Pride's systemic exclusion of, or disregard for, many community members and groups including the Dyke March, the Trans march that was organized without proper consultation, and the decision to move Blockorama, an event that celebrates Black queerness, to a smaller venue.¹⁸¹ While white queer contestations of police

¹⁷⁸ CBC News, "Pride Toronto co-chair resigns amid fallout from police ban", Jan 30th, 2019.

¹⁷⁹ Erin Edghill, Twitter page Statement of Resignation, Jan. 30th, 2019

¹⁸⁰ Stephen Davies, "Police Monitored Black Lives Matter Toronto protesters in 2016", CBC News, May 3rd, 2018.

¹⁸¹ Sarah-Joyce Battersby, "Parade Stalled, Leaders agree to honour groups' demands, such as exclusion of police floats", Toronto Star, 2016

presence have also occurred over the years, an observation made by long-time Toronto queer activist Tim McCaskell, the tone of community response quickly shifted when Black community members made these demands central to their calls to action. Queer critique and community clearly fall along racial lines. As previously mentioned, it was McArthur's case that informed Pride's decision to ban police for 2019, not BLM-TO's persistent demands to maintain the ban. As 2018 witnessed the arrest of Bruce McArthur, race, queerness, and citizenship converged in this particular moment to reveal racialized assemblages that form within and across queer communities. The mishandling of McArthur's case had eroded trust in police.

Pride has institutionally failed to recognize anti-black racism in law enforcement as an ongoing issue for Black queers. Strict state policies of multicultural colour-blindness have translated well into Pride's rhetoric of working for queer recognition and not racial recognition. State and corporate sponsorship have diluted Pride's role as a fundamentally anti-state, anti-police *movement*, into what Greey has termed, a well-recognized leisure event.¹⁸² The previous cases I have outlined are meant to demonstrate how the homonation, as previously defined by Jasbir Puar, is formed through multicultural colour-blindness to deny anti-black or anti-POC racism in Toronto Pride and TPS. Thus, the relationship between the two organizations is defined through their mutual whiteness that separates queer identity from racialization. The separation enables an erasure of racialized violence, and repositions complaints by racialized groups, such as BLM-TO, as a threat to queer identity and multicultural tolerance of queerness. As I have previously established, the politics of gay respectability through inclusion, most notably through same-sex marriage litigation, is a symptom of gay white masculinity's usurpation of LGBT social movements. Gay liberation is reduced to a single axis of identity through its convergence around a single-issue politics that guarantees them access to citizenship rights. By consequence, mobilization galvanizes around free market participation that prioritizes white middle class interests, and criminalizes intersectional social movements concerned with class, race, or gender.

Police and the Homonation:

Just like the bathhouse raids, the McArthur murders mark a turning point in queer Canadian politics and a turn in queer consciousness regarding racial violence. This thesis's project is not directly concerned with same sex marriage's history as a movement, or its implications for Pride

¹⁸² Ali Greey, "Queer Inclusion precludes (Black) queer disruption", 663.

and queer identity. Instead, it demonstrates the highly racialized nature of claims making for LGBTQ2IA+ people in the contemporary moment. There is ample evidence to demonstrate that battles for marriage equality were motivated more by access to, and rights over, property for those excluded from regimes of marriage, than by a broader project of queer equity in society.¹⁸³ These debates took on an explicitly racially defined narrative of rights to property access and inheritance.

Suzanne Lenon conducted an analysis of 18 affidavits presented to Ontario and B.C supreme courts in the early 2000s, whose arguments for equality were framed in the language of ‘ordinariness,’ through racial codification, to establish Gay/Lesbian respectability. The affidavits analogized the right to equal citizenship with racial segregation in order to frame their case on a single axis of discrimination based on sexual orientation. The legal arguments of marriage equality advocates presupposed whiteness as the class of the respectable citizen, holding race as a precedent for recognition, and therefore positioned a Gay/Lesbian right to marriage as the final frontier of freedom, disconnected from race discrimination except by way of example.¹⁸⁴ The linguistic slippage between freedom and choice allowed for a legibility of claims-making that

conjoined equal citizenship to more salient features of nationhood, constituted through re/productive family, privacy, autonomy, and private property.¹⁸⁵ The affidavits thus positioned exclusion from the state institution of marriage as an affront to the respectable, autonomous, and privatized citizen’s access to property. Respectability is premised on privatized domesticity, something the racialized poor are not afforded due to the constant policing of neighborhoods, but also of income surveillance to justify ‘deservedness’ of income assistance. The racialized nature of property accumulation stands in contrast to racialized assumptions around welfare, creating a subtext of citizen legibility in which property ownership is both whitened and presumed as a feature of the ‘ordinary Canadian.’¹⁸⁶ Thus, the ‘ordinary Canadian’ is white.

In the United States, California’s Proposition 8 was challenged in court by a woman seeking to maintain rights of inheritance from her partner.¹⁸⁷ These legal arguments adopted a neoliberal logic of the right to property that is duly afforded to rights bearing citizens in a liberal

¹⁸³ Miriam Smith, *Political Institutions and Lesbian and Gay Rights in the United States and Canada*, (Routledge, 2008), 126-127.

¹⁸⁴ Lenon, “Why is our Love an issue?”, 360.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. 358.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. 364.

¹⁸⁷ Alexa Degagne, “Queer Bedfellows of Proposition 8: Adopting Social Conservative and Neoliberal Political Rationalities in California’s Same-Sex Marriage Fight”, *Studies in Social Justice*, 7:1, 2013, 110.

democracy.¹⁸⁸ The right to property as a fundamental principle of liberal citizenship framed the argument of freedom in this case, whereby a free individual is defined by the freedom to inherit, transfer and hold property.

Whiteness thus emerges from property, and property acts as a mediating force between citizenship and queerness, positioning those who do not hold property, particularly racialized persons, as a perceived threat and inherently criminal.¹⁸⁹ Whiteness is a particular type of assemblage, merging around the need to govern property from the criminalized, imminent threat of those who are forbidden from its access. Police are one state institution of property governance that ensures the security of those accumulated assets and the derived rights from property that have been historically associated with white privilege. Police, then, can be said to be protecting rights to whiteness.¹⁹⁰ Whiteness is an evolving project, and while constantly undergoing redefinition, it is nonetheless premised on a history of racial differentiation. In white society, the police undertake a type of racial management:¹⁹¹ they are a biopolitical force.¹⁹²

Criminalization in the settler colonial context constitutes a central aspect of subject/citizen life.¹⁹³ His whiteness undoubtedly influenced Bruce McArthur's perceived innocence and the associated dismissal of his victims' disappearances. In fact, it is well established that policing of gender and sexuality, particularly those of queer people of colour, are the weapons of criminalizing racialized spaces in Canada; Toronto, of course, being no exception.¹⁹⁴ Toronto police continue their racially targeted practices of carding, 'stop and frisk' as well as arbitrary arrest without warrant.¹⁹⁵ Racist state practices are not extinct in Canadian society, but more interestingly, state enforcement of these policies intimately reproduce themselves. State institutions facilitate violence against people of color, as there are few mechanisms of accountability for police actions. For

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. 110.

¹⁸⁹ Nikhil Pal Singh, "The Whiteness of Police", *American Quarterly*, 66:4, 2014, 1093.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. 1092.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. 1093.

¹⁹² I deploy the term biopolitical here in the Foucauldian sense as the state's technologies of discipline in social and bodily management, that are racially, and sexually determined. These tools involve state policies, but also devolve interdependent discipline to individual and intimate policing. Foucault, *History of Sexuality: Volume One*, 78

¹⁹³ Treva C. Ellis, "Towards a politics of perfect disorder: carceral geographies, queer criminality, and other ways to be", dissertation USC open Access, 2015, 18.

¹⁹⁴ Arian Cruz, "Playing with the politics of perversion: Policing BDSM, pornography, and black female sexuality", *Souls*, 1 October 2016, 18(2-4):379-407, 396.

¹⁹⁵ Walcott, *Freedom Now Suite*, 155

example, TPS does not keep racial statistics of its profiling and arrests. There is also little accountability for their mishandling of violent crimes involving people of color, the most notable examples in Canada are violence against Indigenous women and particularly trans or two-spirit women. While white Canadian society, particularly gay white masculinity, does not, for the most part, see itself as racist, it continues to reproduce racial hierarchy.

Canada's racial hierarchy is evident in the fact that most Canadians live segregated lives. Social homogeneity occurs for many different reasons, with motives varying depending on whether you are part of a minority or majority group. Most white people only grow up around other white children in white neighborhoods, go to white schools and work in predominantly white workplaces.¹⁹⁶ These are the most predominant domains of racial segregation, and are in large part, the result of historical policies and practices of segregation, as true in Canada as in the United States. Racialized communities often gather as a way of *creating* community, in a society that can otherwise be hostile to them. White communities, however, are a product of an educated desire to seek out whiteness and remain relatively segregated. This segregation is often what justifies racial innocence in white imagination, and as I later explore explains the duplication of wealthied insulated communities in gay villages. If one did not grow up around Black or Indigenous or Arab neighbors, they simply do not know anything about them, and thus innocuous racism assumes one could not have complicity in racial inequality.¹⁹⁷ And while Canada's tolerance of diversity is often touted as a distinctly Canadian value, much of the material reality in Canadian society remains intimately and structurally, racially segregated. Segregation and racial innocence has extended into whitewashing Pride Toronto, and has relegated Black Pride celebrations to geographically distanced and financially compromised celebrations. Thus, the racialized outcomes of Pride celebrations today, and police treatment of Black and Brown Torontonians, is not removed from

¹⁹⁶ Eric Fong and Rima Wilkes, "Racial and Ethnic Residential Patterns in Canada", *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 18, No. 4, December 2003, 583-584. This is not a sentence. Although there is research demonstrating that this site is the most charged and therefore important for challenging racial prejudice. However, it remains that intra-workplace occupations remain mostly racially segregated. Inter-Ethno/Religious distinctions occur differently in interesting ways, but are outside the scope of this thesis.

¹⁹⁷ Robin DiAngelo & Özlem Sensoy "Getting slammed: White depictions of race discussions as arenas of violence", *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 17:1, (2014), 109. Racial depictions of beauty, beauty propaganda, sexual desirability and exoticism all play into informal narratives of intimate education in North America, as well as 20th century marriage laws between settler and Indigenous peoples. This harkens back to the conversation around preferential kin described by David Theo Goldberg, the stated desire by many white people to only desire or befriend other whites as a preference for sameness and not internalized racism.

the violent history that associates whiteness with access to property and blackness as inherently threatening to that property. This is the primary consequence of the political space-taking that same-sex marriage has wrought in queer identity formation. The “universal” queer subject who is imagined to have gained access to the regime of property, is highly racialized, and thus who “we” are as queer people becomes indiscernible from whiteness.¹⁹⁸

Homophobia and the multicultural state:

Thus far, this chapter has laid out the operation of whiteness at the nexus of property, citizenship and nationhood. This is done, in part, to identify the origin and legacy of settler colonial whiteness as rooted in property and operationalized through the police, but also through Canada’s policy of multiculturalism. Monogamous conjugality and strong social opprobrium associated with interracial marriage were key technologies for the management of family life, facilitating the intergenerational transmission of property for the white citizen class.¹⁹⁹ These practices persist in contemporary marriage practices and in stubbornly segregated family alliances.²⁰⁰ Police are not just a reflection of wider social attitudes, as some would contend, but have worked as state making apparatuses to both enforce and discipline racial segregation within wider state institutions, practices, and white communities.²⁰¹

The TPS does not collect racial statistics, however numerous independent academic²⁰² and community research initiatives and investigative journalists have attempted to measure the extent of racial profiling in policing practices in Toronto, most notably the Toronto Star’s investigation in 2002.²⁰³ It became clear, not without controversy, that racially targeted practices were structural

¹⁹⁸ Jose Esteban Munoz, *Cruising utopia: the then and there of queer futurity*, (New York University Press, 2009), 20

Homonormativity and homonationalism as discussed thus far are related to but not synonymous with liberal property rights. I want to make the distinction here to point out that the latter is product under the regime of homonationalism that facilitates access to property and in service of it. Inclusion as envisioned by homonationalism is achieved by inclusion into the current legal framework preventing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, characterized by freedom as the freedom to purchase, transfer or hold property.

¹⁹⁹ Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 41.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. 44.

²⁰¹ Elizabeth Comack, *Racialized Policing: Aboriginal People’s Encounter with the Police*, (Fernwood Publishing, 2012), 234.

²⁰² Scot Wortley and Julian Tanner, “Data, Denials, and Confusion: The Racial Profiling Debate in Toronto”, *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, Vol. 45(3), 2003.

²⁰³ Comack, *Racialized Policing*, 34.

and pervasive throughout the police force. For example, the Black community was disproportionately represented among those charged with simple possession. While they make up 8 percent of Toronto's population, 37 percent of those charged with simple possession were Black.²⁰⁴ Policing Black, Indigenous and POC bodies is foundational to the historical mandate of policing and criminalization in Canada.²⁰⁵ Settler colonialism, as a project of labour exploitation and land dispossession, has always involved anti-black racism and Indigenous incarceration, shaping livability for these racialized groups wherever they are geographically located.²⁰⁶ This is to highlight that skin, flesh and marked difference constitute historically specific differences with political motivations of settlement, accumulation and exploitation that yield different outcomes of livability in the settler colonial context, and this extends, more specifically, to queer people of colour.²⁰⁷

The six south Asian and Arab men, Abdulbasir Faizit, Skandaraj Navaratnam, Majeed Kayhan, Soroush Mahmudi, Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam and Selim Esen, murdered by Bruce McArthur, inhabited social positions defined by their flesh, citizenship status, occupation and sexual habits. They were marked targets of white abuse and institutional neglect. Their murders were not accidental or spontaneous, but were methodically planned by McArthur.²⁰⁸

Neoliberal multiculturalism and the racial state:

Neoliberal multiculturalism defines contemporary racial politics in Canada through its colorblind emphasis on equality within the limits of a meritocratic free market. Equality, in this sense, is equality to participate in the market, concealing privatization of racial violence, from securitization and surveillance to income inequality. The increasingly covert nature of multicultural racism in Canada presents a contemporary challenge to both identifying racism, as well as the sites and strategies used to deflate charges of racism.²⁰⁹ Contemporary race rhetoric deployed by the state and white folks who are inured to anti-racist work, is less openly hostile and supremacist than racist discourse in the 20th century. The current mode of racist expression is a

²⁰⁴ Ibid. 36.

²⁰⁵ Walcott, Freedom Suite, 152.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. 152.

²⁰⁷ Cruz, "Playing with the Politics of Perversion", 382

²⁰⁸ Austen, "Landscape pleads guilty in murders that shook Toronto's gay community", New York Times, 2019

²⁰⁹ Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "'New Racism'", Colorblind Racism and the Future of Whiteness in America", in *White Out: The Continuing Significance of Racism*, ed. Ashley Doane and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, (Routledge, 2003), 277.

form of colour blind erasure of racial violence that protects what W.E.B Dubois once termed as “the wages of whiteness”, or what I describe as the social investment in whiteness.²¹⁰ The contemporary deployments of invisible racist mechanisms have been termed by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, as “new racism” or what is most easily defined as colour blind racist practices.²¹¹ Colour blind racism expresses itself in 4 key ways according to Bonilla-Silva: (1) abstract liberalism, (2) naturalization, (3) cultural racism and (4) minimization of racism.²¹² For the purposes of discussing Toronto Pride and its relationship with TPS, I am most concerned with points 1 and 4.

Despite growing acceptance of interracial relationships, the repeal of sodomy laws, and increasingly diverse neighborhoods, interracial relationships and friendships remain uncommon. This is as true in the workplace as it is in the home, and particularly so for Toronto Pride. As discussed above, during the 2016 parade halt, the charge that “All Lives Matter” was deployed by queer white people to deflate any charges of systemic racism, and to frame Black and Brown demands as unhappy complications to queer solidarity. The language of multiculturalism is valuable for LGBT social movements. Couched in universal sameness via liberal equality, difference is flattened as part of the package of Canadian citizenship that requires inclusion into the rights framework to maintain access to the privileges of citizenship.²¹³ Not coincidentally, universal liberal abstraction is one strategy deployed by both mainstream LGBT organizations, as well as anti-LGBT rights proponents.²¹⁴ That is to say, that inclusion into the institution of marriage provides the state with the ability to wedge LGBT social movements into a divisive fight for either universal recognition of sameness or assertion of fundamental difference that requires “special rights,” which run against the grain of meritocratic liberalism. On the one hand, same-sex marriage entices activists as an easier political target of inclusion for those subjects who claim to represent queer activism; namely, gay white men. On the other hand, same-sex marriage provides an easy target for evangelical and other anti-LGBT lobby groups to position themselves as victims,

²¹⁰ W.E.B Dubois, *Darkwater*, Shoncken, New York, [1920], (1969) as cited in Bonilla-Silva, “New Racism, Colour Blind racism and Future of Whiteness in America”, 275.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Banerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation*, 130.

²¹⁴ Universal in so far as citizenship transcends difference to a universal sameness, under the auspices of Canadian sovereignty. This can also include the sameness established through multicultural recognition of difference as constitutive of our tolerant and transcendental selfhood that is individual, autonomous self-maximizing and always subsumed under Canadian sovereignty. The occlusion of power-laden relationships and thus reaffirm white supremacy as the rule. Thobani, *Exalted Subjects*, 146.

claiming that a sacred Christian institution is threatened. More precisely, when anti-LGBT critics target LGBT groups that claim harm based on difference, their critique is often couched in an evasion of racialization (including white racialization) as a fundamental threat to middle class Christian values of family and universal equality.²¹⁵ State recognition then incentivizes LGBT organizations, such as Toronto Pride, to adopt a colour blind, liberal frame of sameness, as it allows for a level of universalist abstraction that protects against critique, while maintaining access to the wages of whiteness found in marriage, and property ownership. The racialized nature of universal sameness is elided when laying claim to state recognition of difference. Difference, in this context, is one dimensional, and does not intersect with an axis of race that yields a particular lived experience, particularly a lived experience with police.

Miriam Smith's analysis of anti-LGBT groups points to some limitations in my analysis of homonationalism in state recognition.²¹⁶ For example, Smith argues that there has been little theorizing about the racialization of *anti-LGBT* groups that code white domination in its articulations of defending "traditional" family values.²¹⁷ She makes the case that groups opposed to LGBT rights also deploy race, ethnicity and religion to make their case and, in the process, replicate homogenized views of identity. Neoconservatives may advocate for preserving traditions on the basis of religious freedom as a form of dog-whistle for white anxiety threatened by diversity. Similarly, Robert Nichols makes the case that the language of liberal tolerance, as used by the state, can be a form of radical pacification, and thus, might be a more apt description of nationalism in Canada – a nationalism that is not as explicitly articulated through global imperialism as it is in the United States.²¹⁸ Those limits can also help identify the cohesiveness of whiteness that accompanies criticisms from both pro and anti-LGBT groups of more radical groups, or groups who are primarily defined in their anti-racist work, such as Black Lives Matter. Statements like "All lives matter" are revealed as not so innocuous. A critical look at "All lives matter" tells us that it is fuelled by a post-racial dog whistle. The "all" who "we" are is white. "All lives matter" signals a rebuttal of the significance of Black difference in its lived experiences; experiences that include continual violence by police. 'All lives matter' becomes a rhetorical

²¹⁵ Miriam Smith, *Homonationalism and the comparative politics of LGBTQ Rights*, in *LGBTQ Politics*, ed. Marla Brettschneider, Susan Burgess, Christine Keating, (NYU Press, 2017), 466.

²¹⁶ Ibid. 467-468.

²¹⁷ Ibid. 466.

²¹⁸ Nichols, "Empire and the Dispositif of Queerness", 58.

strategy to assert the post racial state.²¹⁹ Put differently, within this statement lies a litany of subtexts, of ascribed assumptions to certain identities that we can read *straight* forwardly.²²⁰ These subtexts drive the wedge between particular group demands for queer inclusion, assumed as white, and those who demand racial justice, and are thus homophobic or at least, not queer. The common thread that continues through these statements is the constant displacement of race through an assertion that all lives are the same and equally recognized, therefore negating the reality of ongoing institutionalized racial violence.²²¹

Critically interrogating Pride's claims-making in the wake of state recognition reveals the colour blind racist logic that underpins their inclusive view of police as queer community members. Police involvement in Pride is evidence of a reassertion of white dominance in queer politics. BLM-TO's demands are framed as unfounded in a post-racial state. Whiteness insulates itself from critique as it adopts a political ethic of queerness that imagines inclusion through historical amnesia of racial queer mobilization and ongoing racial violence. Pride is thus complicit in the criminalization of Black life, and Black Lives Matter, as it recognizes the racial violence of police brutality, but has often refused to consider it as a justification for police exclusion. As expressed by Mark Orbe, "However, in post-racial U.S. society, #AllLivesMatter exists as a preferred replacement to #BlackLivesMatter because the specificity of race is overpowered by the saliency of perceived human universality."²²² Transcending difference is seen as the only politically sound option, otherwise we are guilty of reviving the spectres of race.

This chapter has attempted to work through the various ways in which whiteness is a binding factor between citizenship and queerness in contemporary LGBT politics. The institutionalization of diversity in its various forms, and the culturalization of race, allowed for a national Canadian identity narrative of multicultural tolerance and color blind universal individual citizenship. The privatization of identity and domestication of same-sex relationships relegate sexism, racism and homophobia to the private sphere, where these harms can allegedly be

²¹⁹ Mark Orbe, "#AllLivesMatter as Post-Racial Rhetorical Strategy", *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*, 5:3/4, 2015, 94.

²²⁰ Sherene H. Razack, *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in the Courtrooms and Classrooms*, (University of Toronto Press, 1998), 152.

²²¹ Orbe, "#AllLivesMatter as Post-Racial Rhetorical Strategy", 96.

²²² *Ibid.* 97

overcome or transcended through capital accumulation and market participation.²²³ This is the solution provided by neoliberal multicultural citizenship.²²⁴ I have drawn a connection between the Toronto Pride Board, Bruce McArthur's violent murders in the village, and the organization's relationship with police. It took extensive loss of life to reanimate the very real and persistent violence suffered at the hands of police and to recognize unequal access to justice for racialized queers. Nevertheless, attempts by Black Lives Matter Toronto to foreground these issues in the public eye attracted accusations by the queer and Canadian community writ large, of reviving a racial past long left behind, thereby erasing the ongoing violence that has, in fact, never left our midst.

The following chapter examines the relationship between Bruce McArthur and his victims, focusing on the aftermath of the case and the political reckoning the community has had to engage with in the wake of racial terror. This analysis is animated by a critique of the state's investment in policing its (racial) identity and its borders. I explore the potentialities of decolonizing queerness in Canada, and the possible coalitions that can emerge to build solidarities across difference that provide a livable life for all queer people.

²²³ Thobani, *Exalted Subjects*, 78.

²²⁴ Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* as cited in Robert Nichols, "Empire and the Dispositif of Queerness", 58.

Chapter 4: Coalitions in Queer Times

“...we don't only have one kind of people, namely white males, in this world. They are not the only ones who are here; not the only ones who count. It's very easy for a person who lives in a segregated neighbourhood, either black or white, who works at a job with only one kind of people, who goes to movies and watches TV (which is pretty white) to forget this fact. It's easy for a person, if it's a white person, to get the idea that they are really the only ones who matter. They may not think of it quite that way, but this is the impression they internalize because of all that's around them.”- Octavia Butler ²²⁵

The previous chapter argued that contemporary Pride movements prioritize sexual recognition at the expense of race and racialization in understanding queer experiences. Applying that insight to the McArthur murders, I argued that the killings and the investigatory responses to those deaths reflect historical state structures conditioned by sexual and racial discipline.²²⁶ It is, of course, impossible to speculate as to whether the victims' deaths were preventable. It is clear however, that the police discounted the lives of queer racialized men and Bruce McArthur's strategic exploitation of their vulnerability. This discounting is problematic for queer mobilization because it fails to call to attention police violence against queer people of color, and collides with racializing processes of whiteness. The Toronto Police Service's request to join and be represented by Toronto Pride runs into a direct confrontation with its racialized practices, exemplified in the police neglect that characterized the McArthur investigation. Thus, the police force runs up against its possessive investment in whiteness and heteronormativity, concealing the perpetual violence that continues to afflict racialized queer people, precisely at the point when Pride is caught up in the politics of representation under Bruce McArthur's haunting shadow.

Nonetheless, as Michael Connors and Nishant Upadhyay point out, it is not entirely clear where queer activism fits in the critique of the homonationalist tendencies of LGBT mobilization, as those critiques can, in fact, elide their own complicity or rootedness in the nation-

²²⁵ Octavia Butler, Taken from an interview with Rosalie G. Harrison in 1980 in *Conversations with Octavia Butler*, (University Press of Mississippi, 2010), 6.

²²⁶ Kevin Duong, “What does queer theory teach us about intersectionality?”, *Politics and Gender Vol.8(3)*, 2012. p.373.

making/colonial project.²²⁷ My critique, so far, is grounded in a case of intimate violence against queer men, and queer men of colour, some of whom had precarious legal status in Canada. This argument can still implicitly assume citizenship as a criterion of queer resistance.²²⁸ For example, neglecting migrant rights in my critique would privilege rights based claims for Gay and Lesbian recognition based on equal access to citizenship. Below, I demonstrate the racially charged implications of rights-based claims that deploy whiteness as a basis of common citizenship and that assumes the right to occupy Indigenous lands. These anti-discrimination efforts, as I will demonstrate, do not address the particular barriers faced by LGBTQ2IA+ non-citizens and emphasize a hostile position toward non-citizens as a threat to acquired Gay and Lesbian rights. As noted earlier, homophile movements can take on the *duties* associated with proper citizenship, including protecting the nation from outside threats.

The critique I have deployed here is not uniquely concerned with citizenship, but it does attempt to provide a vocabulary for the diverse ways the state mobilizes queerness in shaping a national identity while delivering detrimental consequences to queers of colour. These consequences can include various barriers to mobility administered by a legal framework that determines the *legality*, and therefore respectable subjecthood, or conversely the criminality, of any queer individual in Canada. It can determine their legality on the basis of their citizenship, country of origin, means of border crossing, and sexual practices to name a few.²²⁹ From another angle, queerness, in a homonationalist iteration, distinguishes proper subject/citizen from the threatening migrant 'other'. This dynamic invariably takes on a racial articulation through policing practices of inter and intranational mobility and legal legitimacy.

The central puzzle of this chapter is summed up in this way: How do we think about queer critique and mobilization against the homonationalist tendencies of the state's cooptation of Pride, without reproducing settler colonial and liberal regimes of inclusion that normalize claims-making and emancipation conditioned by citizenship and nationhood? Or, adopting Connors and Upadhyay's formulation in their analysis of Israeli pinkwashing: "How can queer praxis be transnational, and transnational praxis be queer, while being anti-colonial and decolonial both

²²⁷ Jackman, Michael Connors and Upadhyay, Nishant. "Pinkwashing Israel, Whitewashing Canada: Queer (Settler) Politics and Indigenous Colonization in Canada." *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (2014).

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 199

²²⁹ Cacho, *Social Death*, 111

“here” and “there”?”²³⁰ In the same vein, this thesis is seeking alternatives to structures, mobilization tactics or institutions of queer praxis that reproduce the white settler state.²³¹

Categorizations are regularly mobilized by socio-legal apparatuses that reinscribe assumptions or ‘subtexts’ about what “Canadian identity” should be, and by inference, what ways of being are antithetical to that identity. According to Jodi Melamed, neoliberal multiculturalism conjoins official anti-racist policy, expressed as colour blind merit, with cultural forms of race. The result of this conjoining is to displace racial reference or any critique of racially valued life in global market capitalism.²³² This departure from more explicit post-war racial liberalism mobilizes new hierarchies of human value in settler colonial states that determine lives worth preserving. Neoliberal ideological deployments redistribute economic and cultural distinctions across conventional racial lines, fracturing them into new status groups while maintaining race as a criterion of life value and naturalizing (racial, economic and citizenship) inequality.²³³ These ascriptions also provide rubrics of identity reinforced in legal framings.²³⁴ When testimonies and legal framings of Bruce McArthur’s case are juxtaposed to TPS’ hostility toward BLM-TO, whiteness is inscribed into legality and queerness, logically positioning blackness as criminal. Racialized lives only become valued in pain or death because the death of racialized bodies reifies the naturalness and authenticity of whiteness, and upholds settler legal systems.²³⁵ Lisa Cacho summarizes: “when we distinguish ourselves from the unlawful or outlawed status categories, we implicitly insist that these socio-legal categories are not only necessary but should be reserved and preserved... When we reject these criminalized others of colour, we leave less room for questioning why such status categories are automatically and categorically devalued.”²³⁶ McArthur’s victims are seen by police as victims of homophobia, not racism (definitely not at the same time). While there have been media stories calling attention to the racial pattern of his violence, police, in

²³⁰ Jackman and Upahdyay, “Pinkwashing Israel, Whitewashing Canada”, p.205.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Melamed, “The Spirit of Neoliberalism”, 14

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Cacho, *Social Death*, 132.

²³⁵ I want to emphasize here that racialized does not stand in for Black experiences of life in Canada, nor does it serve to lump together a large swath of experiences of racialized people under one common denominator. Instead I use it to pay attention to the differing experiences, power relations, and consequences between racialized classes in settler states, that stand apart from the unique relationship Indigenous peoples have with the state that are fluid products of settler colonial formations of race.

²³⁶ Cacho, *Social Death*, 18.

communicating the findings of their preliminary investigations (Project Houston and later Project Prism), lacked any intersectional understanding of the racial motivation for these murders. In chapter 3, I discussed the homophile movements' framings of violence against Gays and Lesbians as primarily motivated by homophobia, eliminating race or gender non-conformity as part of queer life. Victims of homophobia, in that framing, are not victims of racism, and Gay/Lesbian social movements often positioned trans or racial issues as separate and niche from homosexual liberation. An inability to be victims of both forms of oppression draws an artificial distinction between criminality read as racialized and (homonormative) queerness read as white.

Theorists such as Cacho explore the social conditions of religion, nation, race, sexuality and particularly *citizenship* that make some ineligible for protection and personhood, and therefore dead on arrival.²³⁷ Taking up criminality as my site of analysis underlines predetermined assumptions about a person's legal status, rights to protection, and recognition that queer mobilization all too often takes for granted. Six of McArthur's victims were racialized immigrants or refugees, some fleeing persecution, some with precarious legal and financial standing. Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam was a relatively recent refugee with a failed claim and Selim Esen was also a relatively new immigrant who struggled with addiction. Skandaraj Navaratnam, Majeed Kayhan, Soroush Mahmudi, and Abdulbasir Faizi had been established in Canada for many years, although Navaratnam was a refugee who arrived in 1999. As the previous chapter demonstrated, both the state and Toronto Pride mobilized queerness as a vehicle to reassert white dominance into Canadian citizenship. (Queer) citizenship, legal recognition, and protections afforded by civic rights condition the valuation of different lives, and therefore the deservedness of their living. Some lives, particularly those of racialized non-citizens, whose very existence in the Canadian state is illegal, are more quickly ushered toward death.²³⁸

The state has an investment in queer liberation discourses and recognition that affirms its sovereignty. Consequently, it has a material, biopolitical and territorial investment in the preservation of settler identity rooted in the recognition of queer bodies considered indispensable to whiteness.²³⁹ Citizenship and territorial borders are some of those crucial institutions that naturalize both the right to occupy Indigenous lands as well as mechanisms of membership. Queer

²³⁷ Ibid. 98.

²³⁸ Butler, *Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 144

²³⁹ Jackman and Upahdyay, "Pinkwashing Israel, Whitewashing Canada", 203.

social movements can reproduce the assumption of settler colonialism's inevitability when they lay claim to normative sexual institutions that guarantee access to the privileges that come with social membership. As Jackman and Upahdyay explain:

“Within the Canadian context, what comes to be obscured in popular representation of (queer) Canadian history are the complex and subtle ways the Canadian state lays claim to its territory. The force with which Canadian borders are defended and the process through which settler colonialism is naturalized and invisibilized. This program of violence operates simultaneously through state sanctioned normativization and through activist resistance to state repression, wherein each outlines its history through sets of genealogical relations that are rooted in the same national territory and are limited to those who are members.”²⁴⁰

Recall the telling of *Stonewall* that centered white protagonists in order to represent a shared history of sexual liberation rooted in white gays fighting the last frontier of discrimination. Sexual rights protections are thus conditional on membership in the polity, and conversely, the right to recognize those protections found in membership are preserved in discourses of liberal equality and tolerance that justify the supremacy of settler sovereignty.

Settler sovereignty is made up of diverse populations that come to this land, however the character or embodiment of settler sovereignty remains white. Over time, non-Indigenous queers of colour have been partially assimilated into settler structures through the state's claim of tolerant sexual citizenship and economic access to capital. Nonetheless, recognition only reinforces the erasure of racial difference. Sexual tolerance is only one form of diversity recognition in the Canadian polity, but all work toward rendering consistent settler occupation on Indigenous lands with a state that espouses a commitment to reconciliation.

Promises of access to capital, citizenship, and rights are all state endorsements to proliferate land settlement while erasing the different power dynamics between settlers, including racialized settlers, and Indigenous peoples.²⁴¹ As Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang explain, our vision of decolonization is necessarily complicated because “empire, settlement and internal colony have

²⁴⁰ Ibid. 200.

²⁴¹ Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization is not a metaphor, 7.

no spatial separation” in the settler colonial context.²⁴² Economic criteria consist a large part of the immigrant selection process that prioritizes economically viable subjects for entry into Canadian society and leaves its migrant and refugee detention policies intact. Homonationalist tolerance of sexual diversity must be understood as racially constituted, since institutions of violence, like police, immigration policies, and extractive capital industries, carefully manage whiteness’s boundaries as normative to Canadian identity. Settler sovereignty may be constituted by non-white diasporic peoples, and still maintain white institutional dominance. Here again, whiteness and queerness are sutured through state redefinition of racial difference as cultural diversity, reaffirming the white character of (queer) settler identity. This not only invisibilizes Indigenous queer and Two-Spirit peoples, it does so by universal recognition of belonging into a sexually diverse society, that concretizes Canada’s inevitable colonial presence.²⁴³

Gay Liberation movements, so far, have deployed sexuality and law enforcement as regulatory mechanisms that obscure race in the name of universal egalitarianism and reinforced regimes of homonationalism.²⁴⁴ Queer social movements and organizations readily adopt the state’s technologies of settlement to secure racial segregation, best exemplified by Jeffery Escoffier’s terminology of the “gay territorial economy,” and embraced by so-called gay ghettos.²⁴⁵ Toronto’s Church-Wellesley village is a case in point of gay community formation that is primarily white and male. Neoliberalization of housing markets in major Canadian cities, especially Toronto, have accelerated gentrification in the village, transforming it into a location for mostly upper-middle class, gay white men to invest in property.²⁴⁶ “Gaytrification” has attracted a myriad of retail businesses, a Business Improvement Board and drastically increased housing rents, prioritizing what Alison Bain et. al term as the ‘consuming sexual citizen’, ushered in by mostly well-off, gay white men.²⁴⁷ This starkly contrasts with the Parkdale neighbourhood, just west of West Queen street, inhabited by mostly racialized residents, almost half of whom (49%) live below poverty line and 91% of whom are renters.²⁴⁸

²⁴² Ibid. 7.

²⁴³ Jackman and Upahdyay, “Pinkwashing Israel/Whitewashing Canada”, 206

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 200

²⁴⁵ Nero, “Why are the Gay Ghettoes White?”, 228

²⁴⁶ Alison L. Bain *, William Payneal and Jaclyn Isen, “Rendering a neighborhood queer” *Social & Cultural Geography*. 2015, Vol. 16 Issue 4, 430

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. 431

Charles Nero proposes that racialization, and particularly racial hostility toward the Black community, does, in fact, operate as an organizing principle of gay culture formation in gay ghettos.²⁴⁹ The often conscious processes of racial segregation, deployed mostly through financialization, facilitate the migration of mostly gay white citizens into gay villages and abet the state's interests in preserving a racial characteristic of queer identity in Canada. Redlining practices²⁵⁰, higher mortgage rates for racialized buyers, and higher insurance premiums all played a role in racially defining the physical boundaries of gay identity and community. Practices like these occur on multiple levels of gay culture across gay ghettos in North America. For example, bars and clubs keep tally of black patrons admitted, a consequence of a widespread belief that too many black admissions would reduce the desirability of the bar for white patrons.²⁵¹ This practice is not a coincidental reflection of the housing market, but reveals a pattern across sectors of gay community formation that collaborate with heteronormative institutions to preserve insulated white communities. These practices protect white society's accumulated intergenerational wealth while also disrupting wealth accumulation in racialized communities. Four decades of race-based housing policies enabled the development of white suburbs that allowed a generational accumulation of unprecedented wealth, while containing and warehousing people of colour in central city ghettos.²⁵² Contemporary gentrification policies redraw city boundaries that push racialized people to the urban margins, into dilapidated and isolated residential areas while speculative development in urban centres is rebranded as "urban improvement programs". This neoliberal articulation of displacement distinguishes gentrification in Canadian gay villages and compounds material and social inequalities that reproduce and solidify segregated borders through market reregulation. Restricted access to finance, coupled with cumulative intergenerational wealth, allows for primarily white, middle-class consumers to displace racialized people outside of now desirable neighbourhoods such as the Church-Wellesley village. Concurrent financialization of Toronto Pride by large corporate sponsors contributes to gentrification in the

²⁴⁹ Nero, "Why are the Gay Ghettos White?", 230

²⁵⁰ Redlining practices have been confirmed to continue well into the 2000s in Toronto. Redlining involves methods by banks, mortgage and insurance brokers of severely limiting or cancelling services to neighborhoods with a certain percentage threshold of racialized residents moving in. It thus incentivized buyers and sellers to keep racialized residents out of desirable neighborhoods as it would come at a cost of the white residents' equity.

²⁵¹ Nero, "Why are the Gay Ghettos White?", 240

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 242. Although Nero discusses the American case, similar laws and practices existed in Canada.

village, resulting in the wealthy white male character that has come to define both the parade and the village.

Borders:

Borders are recurring themes in homonationalist politics. National borders are rigorously defended in the name of preserving sexual tolerance considered integral to Canadian identity. Racial borders emerge organically because of homonationalist policies - through gentrification, law enforcement and policing as well as informal racialization of intimacy. Queer liberalism in a multicultural state assumes that it is natural to desire one's "own kind" rather than interrogate the state policies and market 'preferences' that erect racial walls. Colour blind racism, as I had previously defined, does more than simply produce racial subjects 'over there,' but delineates the contours of Canadian citizenship located in racial ideals of kinship, family relations, and (queer) community "over here". Multiculturalism²⁵³ defines whiteness as the standard of what ideal Canadian kinship looks like, and the preferred bodies in which the state will invest. David Eng explains that 'race,' in an age of colour blind racism, is reduced to an individual biological fact, diminishing our ability to discuss it in its historical location as collective injury and reducing it to the experience of individual harm.²⁵⁴ Racism, in its intimate incarnations of conjugal relationships or neighbourhood demographics, is articulated as a simple biological preference of kin.

In or Out:

The closet paradigm is the predominant narrative of 'genuine' queerness that occludes race as a conditioning factor of sexual experiences. Racial deviancy, on its own, is understood as sexual deviancy, whether founded in myths of promiscuous sexual appetite or larger genitalia, the simple fact of being non-white carries assumptions of sexual deviancy in white imagination. In a colour-blind narrative, whiteness, the invisible race, cannot explain away sexual deviance, it requires an isolated factor premised on a gender binary that defines deviant desire as "same-sex" and therefore, articulates a static understanding of sexuality that is either 'in' or 'out'. Same-sex desire, strictly

²⁵³ Recall that multiculturalism as a Canadian state policy facilitates the claim of a post racial state by recognizing difference as cultural and therefore flattening racial power inequalities under (queer or queer tolerant) Canadian sovereignty, while justifying segregated lives as a natural product of a diverse polity.

²⁵⁴ David Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship: queer liberalism and the racialization of intimacy*, Duke University Press (2010), 5

understood as ‘in or out,’ in a sense naturalizes the binary sexed body and collapses gender and sexual expression into one image. The closet operates as the functional analogy to explain deviant desire, since race carries its own sexual deviances and is too complicated to narrativize intra-gender desire. The closet paradigm thus offers a biological explanation isolated from intersectional considerations, but finding the white body as its neutral site of objective analysis and expression. Strategic deployments adjust to institutional conditions that only accommodate binary understandings of gender and sex informed by scientific biology, leaving some critical nuances aside.

Marlon Ross’ analysis of Foucault’s medicalized discourses of sexology, notes that race is conspicuously missing in the definition of deviance in Foucault’s narrative.²⁵⁵ Similarly, the historic retelling of Gay and Lesbian Liberation in North America focuses on a collective “coming out” narrative of gay migration to urban centres establishing gay villages. It does so through an assumption of shared whiteness in the queer subject that explains sexual deviancy from heterosexual norms untinged by race. Race complicates desire in all its forms, even though Foucault is preoccupied with the technologies of medical discipline and their legitimating capacity for state power, sexual deviancy can only function in an isolated analysis (one with a presumed whiteness and therefore racelessness) to identify desire. The closet must be white precisely because it is the common denominator necessary to articulate the biologically convicted explanation of intragender desire, but also makes possible sexual deviancy, as it removes processes of racialization from normative societies’ prescriptions of intragender sexual deviancy.²⁵⁶ The closet narrative assumes a fully formed white subject behind the closet door, waiting, in their fixed²⁵⁷ and biological homosexuality, to be released. In another sense, the Anglo-Saxon homosexual subject is considered to be already racially stunted, as he is failing his prescribed racial duty of propagating the white race.²⁵⁸ Reproductive futurity is extensively discussed by Lee Edelman in his book *No Future*. He dissects the normative fantasies of children as a promise of future that

²⁵⁵ Ross, “Beyond the Closet as Raceless Paradigm”, 168

²⁵⁶ Sexual desire’s relationship to gender fluidity is even more contentions in early articulations of Gay Liberation and was often cast aside as a niche concern outside of homosexual rights. Gender fluidity did not accommodate a simplistic narrative of gay/straight binary that articulated in “born this way” narratives in gay rights claims, even less so sexual fluidity. See Susan Stryker 146

²⁵⁷ Conventional understanding of homosexuality depend on a fixed gender binary and therefore also assume a sex and sexual orientation as fixed often found in the ‘born this way’ narrative.

²⁵⁸ Ross, “Beyond the Closet as Raceless Paradigm”, 168

heteronormative institutions have an investment in guaranteeing. Gay men defy this promise, at least in so far as they are excluded from normative institutions. The sinthomosexual (sexual orientations not concerned with reproduction) presence presents a threat to a reproductive future in its affirmation of a sex without meaning, a loss of a place marker for the future of heterosexual sex.²⁵⁹ However, Edelman takes note that whether it be an investment in an Aryan program of reproduction, or a multicultural investment in expansive democratic inclusion, heteronormative society nonetheless has an investment in reproductive technologies for the sake of guaranteeing its place in the world.²⁶⁰ Reproductive sexuality then always puts off its promise of a good life through its fantasmic obsession with narrativizing sacrifices of the present for “the children”. This is the social investment in the future *jouissance* that is offered as promise in this fantasy, one that can also work in the interest of the promised investment of whiteness I discussed above.²⁶¹ As he states, sinthomosexuality, provides a meaning for family fantasy through its potential threat to the promise of completion found in children. The always deferred future threatened by non-reproductive sex, provides family ideology with a “paradoxical life support” in an obsessive drive to save the children and thus heteronormative society’s guarantee to exist. The added nuance is that gay inclusion into reproductive life solidifies this promise of a future for queerness that can eventually become normative, concretizing the presence of heteronormative reproductive life. A further critique, provided by Jose Esteban Munoz, is that of Edelman’s displacement of queerness as a future endeavor rather than a developing one in the present always “not yet here”.²⁶² A contemporary example of this reproductive debate would be the rights of queer couples to have children, often contested by conservative groups. However, as Edelman points out, either the exclusion or inclusion of gays in reproductive life can still work in the interest of heteronormative preservation, just as multicultural inclusion or exclusion still preserves whiteness.

Nonetheless, the homosexual’s inclusion into normative institutions of kinship, nuclear family life, and market participation can be congruent with dominant institutions of citizenship. This type of limited inclusion through recognition of normalcy is an expression of the homonation,

²⁵⁹ Lee Edelman, *No Future: queer theory and the death drive*, Duke University Press, 2004, 115

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 151

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² Munoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 25. This goes beyond the scope of this chapter, however it is important to underline the contested terrain of queerness in its various expressions to emphasize the diverse understanding of spatial queerness that do exist in the present. Queer theory, including Edelman’s, has been criticized of whitewashing in its assumption that there is no subversive present available for queers today.

particularly since market participation and productivity have such an intimate relationship with nuclear family life as a site of life value. This does not diminish, however, the important value of whiteness in the process of inclusion to fulfill the promises of white reproduction, since many family arrangements in non-white families go beyond the nuclear model and thus lose value in the social arrangements of market and family. These relationships are complicated since, of course, most of Bruce McArthur's victims did have or leave behind a nuclear family life, and often lived their queerness outside of it.

The relationship between racial difference and sexual deviance is determined by a sort of hyper heterosexuality, as Black and Brown men, in particular, are read as homophobic, conservative, and thus biologically, or in multiculturalist terms, culturally lagging behind queer tolerance.²⁶³ The closet narrative operates as though it does not fall along a colour line or a class line. The answer to the problem is not to expand the closet to include people of colour into claustrophobic spaces. Instead, as Ross points out, we should question the overdetermined nature of the coming out narrative as liberatory for all sexual and gender deviancy. 'Coming out' denotes its universality by claiming colour blindness, and thus erases a multiplicity of queer experiences and their relationship with, at times, violent, white institutions. We should be critical of the closet narrative as a common universal experience. Both before and after the "grand coming out" of Stonewall, that event has discursively and politically marginalized racially and culturally diverse expressions of intragender desire.²⁶⁴ To sum up, the closet can function as a tool for managing sexual difference by recognizing and regulating it. Much in the way that as cultural difference is mobilized, Gay and Lesbian (specifically homonormative) subjects can make claim to universal citizenship. Queer concessions to mainstream society, demanding equal access to institutions of family and market, is the homonormative subjects' claim to racial privilege in the homonation.²⁶⁵ Challenging racial walls proves difficult when reducing subjectivity to a common experience of sexual or gender deviance found trapped in the closet. Theorizing queer identity has to account for the multiple ways racialized queer people may operate with different social cues, languages protocols and community building that might or might not involve being "out" to your

²⁶³ Ross, "Beyond the Closet as Raceless Paradigm", 175

²⁶⁴ Ibid. 183

²⁶⁵ Roderick Ferguson, "Racing Homonormativity", in *Black Queer Studies: a critical anthology* ed. Johnson, Patrick and Henderson, Mae, Duke University Press (2005), 61

family, friends or workplace.²⁶⁶ Robert McRuer identifies compulsory heterosexuality's consolidated hegemonic dominance through compulsory ability, or rather a body that is not 'compromised' by disability.²⁶⁷ He draws on Judith Butler's famous formulation of performativity, where the dominant subject always approximates and attempts to replicate a fantasmic ideal of heterosexuality, yet always fails, compulsively reiterating a naturalizing formula of heterosexual subjectivity.²⁶⁸ Disability, in this sense, is metaphorized as queerness, queered from the normative subject, establishing the ideal heterosexual subject as a fully able bodied one. A similar relationship can be identified with race. Race can also be metaphorized as deviant from whiteness, framing the ideal homosexual subject as the white subject. If homosexuality is juxtaposed as deviant from the proper heterosexual reproductive subject, conversely the racialized Black or Brown body is queered in its deviance from whiteness in producing an ideal consuming gay subject. In the normative view, people of colour are already compromised in their ability to be full subjects, discursively conflating racialization with queerness, and thus the homosexual subject is a white subject falling just short, but capable of fulfilling the colonial ideal of settlement, capital accumulation, consumerism and reproduction of the nation. As McRuer points out, because hegemonic systems depend on queer/disabled and racialized lives in ways that can never be quite contained, they are always in danger of being dismantled, and thus redeploy diffuse, yet protracted, violence to keep the threat of their own contradictions at bay.

In the beginning of this chapter, I argued that hegemonic systems of whiteness, heterosexuality, and the gender binary require the constant surveillance of racialized bodies through strategic placement of borders to control the flow of bodies across spaces. This is partially achieved with national enforcement of international borders. Jodi Melamed's important theorizing of neoliberal multicultural citizenship provides a framework of rethinking gay subjectivity in a neoliberal era. Market driven displacement through fiscal policies benefits intergenerational accumulation of white wealth, maintaining racial borders of living, work, and sex that remain within the state's multicultural commitment to anti-racism or anti-racialization, while concealing exploitative market capitalism.²⁶⁹ Culturalization of race, and cultural tolerance in this form,

²⁶⁶ Ross, "Beyond the Closet as Raceless Paradigm", 183

²⁶⁷ Robert McRuer, "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence" in *The Disability Studies Reader (Fourth Edition)* ed. By Davis, Lennard J. (2010), 373

²⁶⁸ Judith Butler as cited in McRuer, "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence", 372

²⁶⁹ Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism", 2

deflect any ability to critique capitalist nationalism as racially determined, particularly when it comes to income inequality. Melamed argues that this departure from post war racial liberalism recognizes racial inequality, offering up racial inclusion as market integration, and providing the illusion of a receding racism in America.²⁷⁰ The scientific racism of the pre-war era is substituted by cultural difference, but still epistemically invokes race through the rhetoric of national integration while suffusing freedom with capitalism, to assert the gradual disappearance of race as a significant determinant of American (and Canadian) life.²⁷¹ Neoliberal multiculturalism can be summed up as a process that conceals race through cultural integration, achieved through the operation of capital accumulation that conceals international imperial economic policies that displace millions across the Global South.²⁷²

Melamed points out that earlier anti-racist movements of the 20th century often drew clear connections between economic and social justice, while engaging in heterogenous, and at times conflicting, coalitions with decolonial movements.²⁷³ However, racial liberalism motivated by national hegemony mobilized race reform as a means of bringing to bear anti-racism defined by transnational capitalism, thus accommodating difference but not transforming racial relation of power or the colonial extractive industries of racialized bodies and land.²⁷⁴ Parallel arguments can be made for Gay Liberation movements that were comprised of broad coalitions, as the state eventually acceded to certain kinds of demands, such as same-sex marriage recognition, to accommodate white middle class segments of the movement.. This is not to dismiss some of the important struggles and losses Gay liberation movements experienced. The push for medical assistance, support, and social education campaigns for HIV positive patients were important victories in saving lives as well as part of related campaigns in ending homophobic violence. Efforts to shed light on regular police raids on gay bars and the struggle of public servants to keep their jobs all were critical achievements of Gay mobilization and these should not be discounted or taken for granted. These complex relationships and tensions yielded material outcomes for queer people across the spectrum. Pride is part of that story. However, as a queer community, we have overinvested our hopes in Pride for incremental inclusion and that requires self-reflection on the

²⁷⁰ Ibid. 6

²⁷¹ Ibid. 7

²⁷² Ibid. 13

²⁷³ Ibid. 5

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

events of 2016. Pride more explicitly today, collaborates with hegemonic whiteness on incremental reforms of gay recognition, while distancing itself from movements it deems too radical, notably Black Lives Matter. Pride again takes on the work of the state as establishing itself as the only legitimate alternative to queer inclusion, reifying inevitable settler colonial presence as the only guarantee for gay rights.

As I noted above, the nation state's consolidation of Indigenous land naturalizes its nationhood and sovereignty, in part, through narratives of liberal tolerance, or "coming out" narratives of queer freedom. For example, the nation state must constantly be involved in Pride to reassert its hold on the boundaries of queer identity, but also reassert the white heteronormative state as the dominant framework of state recognition, and, by extension, nationhood. Scott Morgensen traces the history of settler colonial sexual formation through deadly policies aimed at the extinction of Indigenous peoples in North America.²⁷⁵ Colonial policies became the governing force of modern sexuality in settler society. Ann Stoler's genealogy similarly traces modern colonial sexuality in the metropole that arose through the definition and extinguishment of various sexual and gender cosmologies of Indigenous peoples in the external colonies.²⁷⁶ Practices of normativization through state discipline can be seen in settler colonial contexts as well, shaping the nation for heteronormative subjects but also queer modernities of sexual "liberation".²⁷⁷ Critiques of homonationalism, such as Jasbir Puar's, provide an analysis of the imperial regimes' investment in disciplining racialized subjects through state terror, but must also account for settler colonial productions of sexualities in the homonationalist state. This is what Morgensen argues requires more than just adding the prefix 'settler' to the concept, but focusing our attention on the necessity of state discipline and erasure of Indigenous sexual and gender norms in aggressive land settlement policies, as well as our supposed modern critiques of this history. Such a view, according to Morgensen, can expand our historical grasp of the state's terrorizing violence, disciplining Black, Indigenous and POC bodies as necessary and constitutive of its national consolidation. Focusing our attention on the colonizing project in our critique of homonationalist

²⁷⁵ Scott Morgensen, "Settler Homonationalism: theorizing settler colonialism within queer modernities", *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies.*, Vol. 16, (2010)

²⁷⁶ Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 1995.

²⁷⁷ Morgensen, "Settler Homonationalism", 117

social movements should call attention to the movement's required disappearance of Indigenous peoples as a precondition of queer identity formation in Canada.²⁷⁸

Dean Lisowick and Andrew Kinsman:

No single factor can account for the murders that took place in Toronto's gay village. There is no doubt, however, that each person had particular circumstance that rendered them precarious, and Bruce McArthur targeted them for it. This compels me to raise a difficult question. Namely, what circumstances would have been necessary to prevent these homophobic and racist murders? What made these men invisible to the police? Could different circumstances have prevented this violence from occurring? The curious entanglements that led to these murders were not coincidental. Bruce McArthur targeted his victims for their vulnerabilities. However, it is worth asking what state institutions' actions or lack thereof, enabled McArthur's violence. This revives the dichotomy with which I began this thesis, that is, that structural violences enable and condition intimate violence; that they are mutually constituted.

The cases of Dean Lisowick and Andrew Kinsman complicate the racial narrative I have presented thus far, since they were both white victims. They nonetheless were targets of homophobic violence, and this analysis demonstrates that their intersecting identities and circumstances made them precarious citizens whom the TPS failed to protect. Dean Lisowick was a 47 year old sex worker in the village, and he often struggled with substance use and homelessness. Lisowick's case was the only one of McArthur's victims never reported to police, his was a total disappearance that went sorrowfully unnoticed.²⁷⁹ Lisowick was estranged from his family. He lived in the common area of his friend Jeff Tunney's apartment, where he paid \$400 a month in rent and would hustle at local bars in the village, usually with men around McArthur's age. Tunney and Lisowick got into an argument about Dean's sex work, as Jeff frequently tried to convince him to exit the sex trade. Lisowick eventually became frustrated and left, the argument marking the last point of contact between Tunney and Lisowick. Lisowick often stayed at the Scott Mission shelter and was last noticed there in the summer of 2016. Police also found a file with Lisowick's pictures on McArthur's hard drive, however, how McArthur met him, where they met, and how long they had known each other remains unclear. Lisowick's remains were found in one

²⁷⁸ Ibid. 119

²⁷⁹ Victor Ferreira, "The only alleged victim that was never reported missing", National Post, Feb 14, 2018.

of the planters where McArthur worked as a landscaper. Police believe he disappeared between the summer of 2016 and 2017. Monica Forrester, the program co-ordinator for Maggie's Toronto Sex Workers Action Project, had met Lisowick in 1997. She also bore witness to his financial struggles over two decades and often saw him at 'Sneakers', a popular cruising bar in the village. She last saw him in the summer of 2016, and neither Forrester nor Tunney were ever aware of his disappearance.

Dean Lisowick's story is an unfortunate, yet all too common, story for sex workers in Canada. The state has only recently decriminalized sex workers, with the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA) in 2014. Still, sex workers remain in a precarious underground industry rife with violence and with no recognized protections, while the criminalization of purchasers, and police dismissal of complaints, have only exacerbated risks for sex workers.²⁸⁰ This case teaches us of the multidimensional and intersecting systems that place queer men at higher risk of violence, and the ongoing neglect of the queer community by Toronto police. The determining factor of Lisowick's life was not his race in this case, but his status as a sex worker and substance addict, factors that continue to affect Gay men in Canada disproportionately, yet different levels of government only provide a patchwork of services to them. The common thread across these cases is the targeted nature of McArthur's violence toward precarious men in the village, almost all of whom lacked reliable ties to family or friends; all except Andrew Kinsman.

Andrew Kinsman was a well-known figure in the village. His disappearance, and that of Selim Esen, are the ones attributed to launching the investigation 'Project Prism' that identified McArthur as the primary suspect. McArthur had previously been interviewed as a suspect in Project Huston, an investigation into the disappearance of Skandaraj Navaratnam, Abdulbasir Faizi and Majeed (Hamid) Kayhan, between 2010 and 2012. The investigation remained inconclusive after 18 months, and, as mentioned in the first chapter, McArthur had already been convicted of assault in 2001 and released from his parole conditions after he had already killed three men.²⁸¹ Up until McArthur's arrest in 2017, police chief Mark Saunders continually denied any connection

²⁸⁰Cecilia Benoit, Mikael Jansson, Michaela Smith and Jackson Flagg "'Well, It Should Be Changed for One, Because It's Our Bodies': Sex Workers' Views on Canada's Punitive Approach towards Sex Work", *Social Sciences*, 6, 2, 1, 52, 2017, 4

²⁸¹Gillis, "It took a Village: How the careful plan to arrest Bruce McArthur came undone in minutes", Toronto Star special issue, 2019.

between the victims of project Huston and the latest victims, Selim Esen, Andrew Kinsman, Dean Lisowick, Soroush Mahmudi, Kirushnakumar Kanagaratnam in Project Prism. Kinsman was a target for McArthur because, like all seven other victims, he frequented the Black Eagle, a local ‘bears club’ in the village and was also into kink, which is most likely where he met McArthur. Kinsman fit the pattern of men McArthur targeted insofar as he identified as a ‘bear daddy’ and was a well-known and common patron of local bars for older men. Kinsman differs the most, in that he was widely known in the community, such that his disappearance was immediately noticed and alerted the community to a violent perpetrator in their midst.

The details of the investigation have revealed the repeated opportunities police had to interrupt McArthur’s violence, but that they failed to seriously consider him as a dangerous man. The scope of time and number of victims this case contains stands as testimony to the police’s chronic failure to protect the queer community, and should confound any belief that relations between the community and police have been mended. Furthermore, critiques of police handling of the McArthur case must question the self-stated inevitability of police presence as a tool of Canadian sovereignty.

Complicating homonationalism for the Canadian context:

Our location on Indigenous land should compel critiques of homonationalist politics in LGBTQ2IA+ communities and it should require us to interrogate assumptions of inevitable presence of supreme settler sovereignty and queer complicity in colonialism when seeking reparations for harm from the state. More consequentially, we must avoid conflating the struggles of queer people with the work of ‘decolonization’ as if the latter simply means another form of social justice work.²⁸² Tuck and Yang rightfully point out that coalitions between queer people, queer people of colour and queer Indigenous people are necessary in the struggle against imperialism. Nonetheless, a critical discussion on the different status categories that each group occupies in relation to colonial institutions is needed to preserve the transformative potential found in the word ‘decolonization’. We must not conflate experiences or gloss over clear classes of privilege afforded to some queer people through state inclusion as representative of all queer people, nor assume that decolonization is a trickle down product of LGBTQ social justice. We

²⁸² Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization is not a metaphor”, 17

must come to terms with the fact that capital accumulation is bound to racial imperialism.²⁸³ The legacy of rights to capital are largely attributed to racial processes that produce unequal outcomes, some of which have been noted above: segregated cities, fractured queer movements along racial lines, and police's dual presence as a perpetrator of violence and friend to the community.

Queer mobilization that ignores non-citizens or precarious citizens, both assumes the nation state as the gatekeeper to freedom as well as affirms undisputed settler presence on Indigenous land. Fighting for the rights of migrants, refugees and non-citizens is necessary for queer mobilization to untie its commitment to the racial capitalism that has developed in gay villages, for example, and rethink freedom in a relational and reciprocal way that is not possible in the inclusion/exclusion discussion that plagues debates in Pride or the in/out binary. The violence that found these eight men is a result of misguided commitments on the part of queer communities in Canada as too exclusively focused on rights to access the privileges of citizenship, primarily defined as rights to property.

I want to insist that decolonization and queering are not synonymous. Decolonization is not simply improving the conditions of Indigenous peoples in settler colonial states or even expanding the closet that queer people are supposedly waiting to escape. Decolonization is meant to queer our assumptions about the inevitability of the settler state in demands for recognition and the associated access to the goods of racial capitalism. Part of this process is undertaken by opening up democratic potential through disarticulating the state from queer demands and focusing instead on *already* existing queer communities that do the work of nurture and care through reciprocity and respect.²⁸⁴ Pride is not one of them. This thesis has articulated the different ways Pride has been co-opted by the state for the sake of nation making; an instantiation of homonationalism. In turn, Pride is confirmed as a settler presence rooted in a colonial project of Indigenous erasure, as well as an affirmation of progressive white tolerance, and that colonial assumption can also reappear in possible critiques of homonationalism. A conflict for queer politics in Canada arises between focusing energy on preserving the roots of Pride as being fundamentally anti-police, and the nature of Pride as a settler colonial presence on Indigenous land. So the question becomes: Can Pride ever be decolonial? I seek to explore these concerns in the concluding chapter.

²⁸³ Jodi Byrd, Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed and Chandan Reddy, "Predatory Value: economies of dispossession and disturbed relationalities", *Social Text* 135 Vol.35, No.2, 2018, 7

²⁸⁴ Conway and Singh, "Radical Democracy in global Perspective: notes from the pluriverse", 699

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Summary of Findings:

My reading of Bruce McArthur's case alongside that of Toronto Pride reveals a homonationalist state-making project at the centre of LGBT social movements that reinforces white dominance in Canadian queer subjectivity and recognition. This, in turn, has had the consequence of naturalizing homonormative subjects as representative of queerness affirming the settler presence of the homonation as a place of exceptional queer tolerance. I have done this by laying out three major components to my argument. First, that Bruce McArthur's murders are part of a longer pattern of white supremacist violence against queer people of colour and that his victims, as vulnerable men in the village, were targets. Second, providing a close reading of McArthur's case alongside BLM-TO's direct action at Toronto Pride 2016 reveals a flashpoint of racial exclusion in Canadian queer identity. This analysis critically engages with anti-black racism's role as a gathering point for gay white culture formation. Third, theorizing gay identity through property positions whiteness as the mediator between gay identity and citizenship that works in the interest of white sexual citizens. I conclude that state recognition thus far, paired with policing of racialized bodies protects the property rights of the white citizen class, while narrativizing gay identity as a white asset. As the McArthur case so explicitly foregrounded, there remain critical deficits in LGBTQ2IA+ justice by investing in Pride as representative of queer presence in normative society. This chapter brings us back to my opening premise: articulating the relationship between homonationalism and neoliberal multiculturalism.

Stonewall's 50th:

Toronto Pride is embracing 2019 as marking the Stonewall riots' 50th anniversary. Three years after BLM-TO's intervention, Pride continues to be internally fractured, and so it is worth reflecting on the issues queer communities across the world define as their primary fight. Bruce McArthur's eight victims are not just a tragic story of Canada's failure to protect its vulnerable citizens, but stand as testimony to the work ahead of us as a self-anointed tolerant society. Queers in Canada, and across borders, continue to face brutality and violence from the state (or state agencies) as much as they do at the hands of murderers. Racialized communities continue to face a litany of challenges - increased surveillance, stop and frisk, carding practices, mass incarceration, predictive policing measures, and detainment of refugees in Canadian cities - many of whom are

queer. A number of international jurisdictions are reversing rights and protections afforded to LGBTQ2IA+ people, while others fight for recognition of their gender or sexual diversity. Many organizations are fighting in various US states for gender variance recognition on government forms and access to transition. Here in Canada, activist groups are pushing to accelerate the incremental changes on blood donation restrictions that target racialized and gay populations, as well as putting an end to so called ‘gay conversion therapy’. Activist groups are faced with a multiplicity of issues to address with diverging priorities while conservative critics claim that Canadian identity is threatened.

On the other hand, there is a perversion in mythologizing a single event as the original site (and perhaps golden era) of queer resistance that we seek to return to. Garth Greenwall’s article in *Harper’s* magazine commemorating Stonewall discusses the risks in historicizing an account that celebrates Stonewall as the icon of queer resistance, as it erases a myriad of other resistances put up with as much vigor and soul as the Stonewall riots. In his words, the mythology of Stonewall

occludes conflict, diversity, and competing interpretations; they tame the chaotic, polysemous events of June 1969 by reducing them to a chapter in the flattening story America tells about itself as moving, as if by some inevitable force of progress or inedible trait of character, toward greater equity.²⁸⁶

Whilst reflecting on Pride, it is important to remember the work of trans women of color, but also that of bulldykes, drag queens, femme fags, and self-described freaks who were fed up with police brutality and reclaimed their bodies with direct action. It is equally important to remember that Stonewall is one of a series of queer resistances in North America. The Compton Cafeteria riots in 1966 were sparked by trans women who fought back against managers who refused service or charged an extra fee. They were hauled out by police for complaining of their treatment.²⁸⁷ The creativity of revolutionary queers weaponized coffee, doughnuts, and garbage, whatever was at their disposal, to rid themselves of a brutalizing force that humiliated them publicly. And it is particularly important to underline that the motivation for their humiliation by management and

²⁸⁶ Garth Greenwall, “Bringing it Home”, *Harpers Magazine*, June 2019, p. 50

²⁸⁷ Stryker, “Transgender History, Homonormativity and Disciplinarity”, 152

police, and the common identity that incited the riot was organized around their gender non-conformity, and not their sexuality.²⁸⁸

The mythologization of Stonewall is, like many great social myths, a means of telling a simplified story with a set of protagonists that make a clean transition from one point to another. Stonewall, as conventionally remembered, tells a linear story from an era systemic homophobia to one of inclusion and acceptance. However, as I have tried to demonstrate, such narratives are deceptively simple. The lived reality is much more complex and contradictory. Looking at the political motive behind certain adaptations of the narrative explains the purpose of simplistic stories, and Stonewall is no exception. We have seen from early on the dangers in a dominant generic story of Stonewall etched in a social imagination that is deceptively white. At first, the state actively attempted to erase Gay Liberation movements. However, dominant social actors, namely white middle class university students, saw an opportunity to capitalize on resources and privileges they already retained in their appeals to legal recognition.²⁸⁹

As Elizabeth Armstrong and Suzanna Cragge explain, there are material reasons why homophile movements commemorated Stonewall as opposed to previous queer actions. They point out that homophile movements were very aware of the complexity of Compton's Cafeteria riots and were wary of associating themselves with their struggle.²⁹⁰ According to Armstrong and Cragge, homophile leaders in New York were mostly ambivalent toward the Compton rioters' motives because they understood that struggle to be defined by gender and poverty rather than state inclusion and respectability in the eyes of police.²⁹¹ New York chapters immediately sought to sever any political ties with the Comptoners, as they saw little in common between their mostly middle class gay white activists and trans activists of colour. Armstrong and Cragge also highlight the San Francisco homophile movements' reluctance to commemorate the first Stonewall anniversary in 1970, as they saw it as a disreputable and pointless riot that antagonized authorities and therefore did not gain the legitimacy of being a proper act of resistance.²⁹² Armstrong and Cragge's analysis contextualizes gay white masculinity's efforts, from the early days, to portray a

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ferguson, *One Dimensional Queer*, 22-23

²⁹⁰ Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Suzanna Cragge, "Movements and Memory: the Making of the Stonewall Myth", *American Sociological Review*, 2006, VOL. 71 (October:724–751), 733

²⁹¹ Armstrong and Cragge, "Movements and Memory", 733

²⁹² Ibid. 733

culture of Pride that is moderate and liberal by centering middle class respectability with police and authorities.²⁹³ Stonewall's cooptation by white homophile groups was an effort to configure collective queer memory in order to gain access to the rights and privileges of their racial class, rather than achieving some sort of equity, or transforming dominant institutions for the most marginalized. Many homophile movements in Canada, and specifically in Toronto as outlined by Roderick Ferguson, strategically borrowed from Pride organizations in the American context to exclude other groups from Gay Liberation. Patterns of exclusion were exercised to redefine Gay liberation priorities aligned with its most prominent and wealthy activists. Thus, it is no surprise that Toronto Pride would be so hostile toward Black Lives Matter. The movement is not departing from its original mandate, instead it continues a pattern of racist and exclusionary politics that has defined so many of its previous actions. Stonewall's commemoration as the original moment of queer resistance, the grand coming out, is no accident, but a clear strategic move of centering a renarrativized story of white heroism to conceal queer, antiracist and pro-sex work movements elsewhere.²⁹⁴

If queer social movements do not work to address internal concerns over racism as well as spearhead community activism that affects its most marginalized members, then it only serves to protect white middle class interests. As explained in Chapter 3, Stonewall's principal organizers such as Sylvia Rivera, saw the internal abduction of Gay Liberation by gay white middle class activists as early as 1973 in her speech addressed to a crowd of jeering and booing (mostly) white protesters. Moreover, whitening Pride and its retelling leads to political stagnation and exclusion of marginalized members. Still, there remain many historical and contemporary examples to turn to in our interventions.

Theorizing queerness as both identity and as something deviant from normativity is a charged site of analysis. It calls our assumptions about normative institutions into question. Theorizing gay identity through property identifies the homonormative drive behind many Gay/Lesbian demands for inclusion and offers potential for rethinking dominant institutions that include: parentage and recognition of family, blood donation, property inheritance, refugee and

²⁹³ Ibid. 744

²⁹⁴ I want to emphasize again that I do not seek to discredit the very important work done by homophile moments in achieving state recognition and support, as their efforts directly saved lives for example during the AIDS Crisis. I am however, highlighting the persistent tension within the community that sought to make public appeals to address their collective needs.

immigration policy and, of course, policing. Thus, the work of theorizing queerness is not simply an analysis of particular LGBTQ2IA+ identities, but rather an analysis of the distinction between deviance and normativity that questions taken for granted assumptions over race, gender, sex and class that govern our institutions. Homonormativity facilitates white supremacist ascension and defends statist interests of racial management in order to protect settler colonial and imperial nationhood.²⁹⁵

Bruce McArthur and theorizing gay identity:

Bruce McArthur's murders are a critical turning point in Toronto's gay village, as they surfaced anxieties about racial and homophobic violence in the village at a time when debates of police inclusion in Pride are at their height. When Olivia Nuamah cites the McArthur case as the defining event that eroded Pride's trust in police, we are witnessing a significant shift in the organization's logic, at least for the moment. An opportunity for difficult and uncomfortable conversations has emerged regarding an inclusionary event that, itself, was catalyzed by the Toronto Police Bathhouse raids in 1981. In other words, a critical opportunity has opened up to discuss crucial issues concerning the queer community's most marginalized.

In the broader context of the murder of eight gay men in Toronto's Church-Wellesley village, police have demonstrated a disregard for queer and racialized life while staking a claim in Pride as a sign of their mended relationship with the community. Pride's complicity with police can only conclusively work in the interests of gay white men, and their property interests in the village, as the police have not adequately responded to the disappearance of gay racialized men. And yet, openly homophobic social actors are resurfacing, as has been witnessed in Hamilton Ontario, to erase Pride. Such homophobic groups use violence to shut down queer gatherings and accuse queer communities of being a threat to Canadian decency, children's innocence, or any number of vulgar associations anti-LGBT groups attach to gender and sexual diversity. The limits of state inclusion along with police involvement in Pride have forced a Hobson's choice onto queer communities between supporting a Pride that facilitates and celebrates the rise of gay, white, masculine privilege, or Pride erasure to the satisfaction of homophobic groups.

Concluding thoughts on McArthur's investigation

²⁹⁵ Nichols, "Empire and the Dispositif of Queerness", 60

Criminality conditions one's ability to access the goods of citizenship including property, and the association of criminality with Black and Brown bodies continues to create racial hierarchies in Canada. Most of McArthur's victims were not criminals by strict definition, but their precarious status, particularly Kirushna Kanagaratnam's status as an underground refugee, but also that of Dean Lisowick who worked in the sex trade, pushed them into positions of illegality, and therefore outside the scope of police protection. In the police's eyes and that of the nation state, they were de facto criminals, whereas it took little effort to convince police of McArthur's innocence during the Project Huston investigation. The McArthur murders have been cited by news sources as the most significant shift in LGBTQ/police relations in Toronto's village since the Bathhouse raids, and yet the police insist that they have made amends with the community. Meanwhile, the latest polls suggest that an overwhelming majority (79%) of LGBTQ2IA+ people, including people of colour, support police participation in Pride.²⁹⁶

It seems that Black Lives Matter's activism has had little impact on stirring the conscience of most queer people to critically reflect on the police's violent behavior. Alternatively, perhaps even if most queers are well aware of the pervasive violence committed by police against queer people, especially queers of color, they do not see a connection between Pride's post-Bathhouse Raids anti-police impetus and contemporary Pride marches. Pride month is coming to a close this year, and there have been a litany of violent incidents directed at Pride marches in North America, the most notable Canadian example found in Hamilton, Ontario. White supremacists, yellow vesters, white nationalists and anti-LGBT groups violently attacked a number of queer people during Hamilton's Pride parade, while police response was unacceptably delayed. In the following days, Hamilton police arrested and charged two queer people as a result of the incident.²⁹⁷ In a public statement, Hamilton Police Chief Eric Girt stated that they would have responded differently to the incident had they been invited to the parade.²⁹⁸ Even though this event occurred outside of Toronto, it is a telling example of some police departments' understandings of their relationship (and responsibility) to the queer community. These developments are disappointing if

²⁹⁶ Stephanie Ip, "Daily Poll' Do you support Vancouver Pride's decision to ban police", Vancouver Sun, December 5th, 2017.

²⁹⁷ Cedar Hopperton claims they were not present at the Parade site where the assaults took place, however is being arrested for parole violations for previous charges of vandalism related to their activism with anarchist groups. Samantha Craggs, "Police make second arrest in relation to violent Pride event", CBC news, June 25, 2019.

²⁹⁸ CBC News, "Police Chief say they would have deployed differently if they were welcome at Pride", June 20, 2019.

also unsurprising, and they reanimate debates surrounding the purpose of Pride, as well as what and who queer mobilization is for. Still the multitude of interpretations of and contestations over Pride are as old as the movement. This thesis has attempted to draw on evidence on multiple levels of queer cultural formation to identify such attitudes as fundamentally homonationalist; that is queer identity formations that prioritize state inclusion to facilitate access to markets, property, and citizenship, and by consequence, reaffirm the state's investment in white queerness. I will now turn to some concluding thought on divisions within Pride that are influenced, as I argue, by the Canadian multicultural state, and possible directions of further research.

Divisions:

This thesis' focus on homonationalist processes aims to highlight the acutely colorblind character of queer culture in our neoliberal era. A critical race interpretation of Pride, as well as "gay ghettos" in North America, allows for a nuanced discussion of gay identity's complicity with white supremacy from its earliest mobilizations for Gay Liberation. Contemporary colour blind rhetoric that dominates claims for equality in Gay Liberation and other movements, creates conditions for the erasure of race as a force of injustice for queers of colour. By extension, Gay Liberation is reinterpreted as inclusion into multicultural citizenship, staking claims to social goods based on individual equality. Multiculturalism has come to mean the transformation of race, racial difference and associated power differentials, into cultural and ethnic differences assimilated into the racial state with a flattening narrative of individual equality in a tolerant Canadian sovereignty.²⁹⁹ The goal of Canadian multicultural policy is to *transcend* and not bridge difference.³⁰⁰

Susan Stryker's analysis of the Compton Cafeteria Riots proposes alternative academic practices of critique that go amiss in critiques of neoliberal homonormativity.³⁰¹ Trans activism, for example, opened up the doors to work toward legal recognition of gender that is not ascribed with sex, and has built coalitions with migrant workers and displaced persons whose fight is also centered on legal recognition of mobility and bodily autonomy, and not sexual anti-discrimination.³⁰² Building from Stryker's argument, there are modes of decolonial praxis that do

²⁹⁹ Thobani, *Exalted Subjects*, 160

³⁰⁰ Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism", 14

³⁰¹ Stryker, "Transgender History, Homonormativity and Disciplinarity", 155

³⁰² *Ibid.* 149

not hinge on only one axis of sexual identity - that can be both queer and anti-homonormative. Stryker's work emphasizes trans communities' contestations of conventional historiographies of Pride and Gay liberation. Dominant narratives, which have become de facto common knowledge, retell and remember Pride as the beginning of queer resistance with a gay white middle class claiming to be vanguards of the movement.³⁰³ A closer look at the events tell a much more complex and nuanced story, one even rife with contradictions. In fact, trans activists often formed various alliances with Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual factions of the movement. Yet they still had to reckon with the fact that homosexuality, a sexual orientation based on dominant society's binary concept of gender, had a lot to gain and therefore much more in common at times with heteronormative society than with their trans allies.³⁰⁴ Even in trans retellings of the Stonewall Riots, there are, at times, inconsistencies. These gaps in memory do not discredit any disputes of dominant narratives that centre gay white actors. In fact they further accentuate the multifaceted and coalitional nature of the riots that are too diverse to contain with one narrative.

Stryker's analysis of San Francisco's first Gay Pride Parade newsletter program describing the Compton Cafeteria Riots of 1966, reveals the anti-drag and anti-trans discrimination that incited the riots.³⁰⁵ Similarly to the Stonewall Riots, this particular narrative proved to be somewhat historically inaccurate with regard to the exact details of how and when the riot escalated. Nonetheless, the underlying basis of the resistance was the centrality of a transgender led fight that was able to make direct ties between this particular resistance, and the broader fight to address income inequality, and criminalization of sex workers, many of whom started the riots. In the contemporary moment, the Pride movement's erasure of trans of colour activism condemns racism and transphobia with the pretense that inclusion of Pride into mainstream institutions is evidence of a receding racism in Canada.³⁰⁶ This insidious version of inclusion enforces a double jeopardy for queer people of colour particularly our trans members. It both conceals the ongoing violence committed by police and others against queers of colour, while at the same time propagating a narrative of an increasingly tolerant society with racism, homophobia and transphobia's gradual disappearance.

³⁰³ Ibid.152

³⁰⁴ Ibid. 146

³⁰⁵ Ibid. 152

³⁰⁶ Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism", 20

At the crossroads of Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Homonationalism: What now?

The Canadian polity is confronted with a new era of intolerance, however this time with conflicts that cut across the traditional right-left divide. Progressive critics of multiculturalism point to its debilitating force in discussing and addressing racial power differentials. Critics from the right mobilize critiques that frame multiculturalism, understood as an asymmetrical accommodation of difference eroding Canadian identity, as a threat to the Canadian social fabric. This argument often includes racial inflections that seek to reinforce white dominance. Many of these critiques, from both the left and the right, can be attributed to the political and economic stagnation brought about by neoliberal policies of austerity and reregulation of the free market that give unprecedented decision-making power to private and corporate interests.³⁰⁷

Neoliberal multiculturalism, according to Bonnie McElhinny, manages ‘legitimate’ versus ‘illegitimate’ claims to equality and inclusion by calculating diversity’s market value and thus return on investment.³⁰⁸ Multiculturalism applied to Toronto Pride, can be understood as a form of racial management that deflates anti-racist work, yet legitimates claims to inclusion that define Canadian identity. Yasmeeen Abu-Laban and Nisha Nath’s research lays out the evolution of multiculturalism over the decades, and its strategic articulation that prevents nuanced conversations about structural violence.³⁰⁹ Multiculturalism operates as the “grid of intelligibility”, that governs social valuations of diversity and the legal apparatus’ willingness to address social inequalities, including the miscarriage of justice seen in McArthur’s case. Diversity is redefined as ethno-plural model that fits neatly in the ‘mosaic’ model rather than substantively addressing racial power and material inequality.³¹⁰

This is not to suggest that homonationalism is a product of multiculturalism. In its initial coining by Jasbir Puar, homonationalism primarily applied to the American context which has a notorious assimilationist policy with regard to diversity. However, homonationalism, homonormativity and ‘Canadian tolerance’ is effectively legitimated by multiculturalism and thus finds a home in a legible state policy that guarantees a dependence on the nation state for queer

³⁰⁷ Bonnie McElhinny, “Reparations and racism, discourse and diversity: Neoliberal multiculturalism and the Canadian age of apologies” *Language & Communication*. Nov2016, Vol. 51, 59

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Abu-Laban and Nath, “From deportation to apology”, 79

³¹⁰ Ibid. 76

social inclusion. Further, an insertion of the multicultural state in Pride reproduces the model of racial hierarchy that is writ large in the Canadian state, including expressions of Canadian tolerance towards queerness. To articulate queerness outside of a homonationalist framing requires seeking completely alternative ways of doing and being; that contradicts, agrees with or lives in tension with normative institutions in order to rethink dominant institutions. It requires that we rethink not only class, gender, race, and ability, but interrogate why and how such norms delineate precarious distinctions in the first place.

Further areas of research:

Further research on Canadian queer culture and identity could examine the corporatization of Pride. Although I have selectively hinted at different sites of corporate involvement in this thesis, it remains a separate but extremely trenchant point of racial tension in queer communities across Canada. Questions of corporate financing are inextricably tied to neoliberalization of many social movements in Canada, queer activism being no exception. This is not to say that homophobia or racism did not exist before neoliberalism, however it is important to identify the unique challenges of austerity and market actors in shaping public views of the LGBTQ2IA+ community.

Further attention also needs to be paid to the relationship between white social (particularly male) anxiety, and the correlative rise of homophobic violence. There is no doubt that the rise of far-right groups is closely tied to homophobic sentiments and violence.³¹¹ Many of these groups mobilize white supremacist rhetoric by positioning gay, but particularly trans, people as a social perversion to the white race. These types of arguments are now well known to weaponize free speech as a means to defend hate speech and hate crimes. Research on this phenomenon in Canada is only recently gaining traction, and much more work is needed to provide solutions for attacks such as those witnessed in Hamilton this year. Masculinity studies provides a rich history of analysis of white masculinity's affinity to right wing ideology, but necessarily needs to engage with the rise of organizations that pride themselves on homophobic and misogynist attitudes in the

³¹¹ Julie Moreau, "Trump in Transnational Perspective: Insights from Global LGBT Politics", *Politics & Gender*, 14 (2018), 621

Canadian context. Such research should consider anti-racist policy initiatives to address some of the gaps identified in multiculturalism in this thesis.

Racism and racial tension continue to be a persistent issue in queer communities. Nonetheless there is some hope on the horizon, as the need for these important conversations is finally being acknowledged. In light of many of the events I described throughout this thesis, critical conversations have emerged in a new age of instant communication on social media, but also in grassroots communities and activist groups that are taking steps to tackle what is now a glaring tension. Queer communities face challenges from groups and organizations that seek to erase their presence. Anti-LGBTQ2IA+ hatred, as I have noted, is on the rise and so are violent clandestine organizations, such as those in Hamilton, Ontario. We are reaching a point of critical consciousness that compels us to expand or redefine what norms and institutions we seek to queer, beyond settling the fact that some of us are gay. In some sense, Canada is experiencing a queer moment. Researchers and activists now need to transform this moment into a movement.

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