“Fuck Latino Illegal Aliens”: The Settlement Experiences of LGBTQI+ Asylum Seekers in Canada

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Abstract

Upon their first year of arrival, do LGBTQI+ asylum seekers feel properly supported within British Columbia? This paper reveals the stories of community members who hold intersecting identities, and have taken unique journeys to migrate to Canada. This study utilizes Critical Race Theory, Transnational Feminism, and Thobani’s concept of the exalted subject to show how fleeing from persecution results in new forms of systemic violence and discrimination not experienced by other migrants. I interviewed three LGBTQI+ refugees who arrived in British Columbia, Canada over the last 10 years who described the multiple sites settlement violence experienced by them in the health care, housing, legal services, dating apps, the labour market and social support agencies designed to assist in their very settlement. Using a narrative analysis, I argue that this community needs a specialized focus to support their unique needs while at the same time acknowledging and challenging how border imperialism and settler colonialism shapes their experience. This study suggests that LGBTQI+ asylum seekers are not properly supported when they first arrive in British Columbia, and must navigate issues around settlement needs, geographical locations, violence and discrimination, migration timelines and waiting periods, code-switching, gratitude, and COVID-19. This paper recommends future research to be conducted around the settlement needs for LGBTQI+ asylum seekers.

Dedication

I would like to thank the LGBTQI+ immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who I have had the privilege of working alongside, and who are tirelessly and endlessly working to better the lives of those in the community. I would like to say a big thank you to Wayne, Jorge, and Logan who have taken the time to share their stories with me, and to share their friendship as well.

To my family – you know who you are – thank you for loving and supporting me unconditionally through every step of my journey. You are the driving force that keeps me going through hard times, and you are truly the reason for why I am the person I am today.

To Nastassja Dorge, Christie Gabriel, Alannah James, and David Semaan, I am forever grateful for how you have held space for me to cry tears of sadness and laughter when I have been at my highest and my lowest. This means the world to me.

And finally, to Anne O'Connell, I am not exaggerating when I say that this research paper could not have been possible without you. In this short amount of time, you have encouraged and inspired me to continue to be passionate about the work that I do. It has been an absolute pleasure.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Introduction

From 2009 to 2011, 561 refugee claims were presented to the Refugee Protection Division (RPD) of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) based on sexual orientation (Laviolette, 2014, p. 69). There is a significant increase from 2013 to 2015, where numbers jumped to 2,234 applicants based on sexual orientation – which represents 12.3 percent of total refugee claims (Rehaag, 2017, p. 275). Although there is an increase in individuals making a claim in Canada based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), when conducting a literature review, it is evident there is still more work to be completed interrogating barriers LGBTQI+ asylum seekers experience.

Situating the Researcher

My journey as a social worker in the field of working with LGBTQI+ immigrants and refugees started in my fourth-year practicum at the I Belong program at M.O.S.A.I.C., an immigrant and refugee serving population. Upon completion, I was hired as a program facilitator and case worker to provide one-on-one and group support to LGBTQI+ newcomers, develop and facilitate workshops, participate in multi-agency partnership groups, and more. I worked with the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) as a contractor to develop a course for service providers when working with SOGIESC newcomers. Currently, I am working towards completing my Master's of Social Work, while working with Rainbow Railroad, an organization which supports LGBTQI+ individuals escape violence and persecution in their home countries, as well as distributing half my time at my practicum at OCASI in their gender-based violence programming. As a researcher who is a gender non-conforming queer woman of colour, this research is particularly relevant to my passion in advancing the rights for LGBTQI+

refugees and asylum seekers. Although I was raised by immigrant grandparents, I must acknowledge and recognize that I do not have the experiences of an immigrant, refugee, or asylum seeker. However, my experience within the sector has allowed me opportunity to create long-standing relationships with the community, which was one of the main reasons for initiating this research.

Research Question

My personal motivations and relationships, as well as the lack of literature in the field, is what led to the emergence of my research question: Upon their first year of arrival, do LGBTQI+ asylum seekers feel properly supported in British Columbia? The first stage of data collection was completed through a focus group, that was held on Zoom with two participants who both identified as part of the LGBTQIA+ refugee claimant community. The data was then coded through the software Dedoose using thematic narrative methodology to guide the process. As the data became available, two theoretical frameworks and one concept was introduced as integral to analysis. This included: Critical race theory, transnational feminism, and the concept of Thobani’s exalted subjects. The following practice-based research paper (PRP) will demonstrate the experiences of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and the emergence of themes around the lack of support received in their first year of arrival in British Columbia. Chapter Two contains a literature review and I outline the theoretical frameworks used. From there, Chapter Three will discuss the research design, while Chapter Four shares the findings and discussion. The last chapter will explain implications for future social work praxis, and provide a conclusion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks

Introduction

Although there has been an expansion in the number of refugee claims in Canada, current research suggests that lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, intersex, asexual and more (LGBTQI+) refugees and asylum seekers likelihood of “integrating” into Canadian society is dependent on multiple factors, including race, socioeconomic status, support, and immigration status, or lack thereof. The multiple identities which LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers hold, as well as the unique journeys taken to migrate to Canada, creates a particular set of challenges which may not be experienced by other migrants. As this community holds stigmatized identities exclusive to their migration experiences, it is important to use an intersectional perspective and to be cognizant of these multiple identities (Giwa et. al., 2020; Kahn et. al., 2018). There is limited research around the experiences of LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers, and much of the existing literature recommends future research around this topic (Kahn & Alessi, 2017; Nakamura et. al., 2017).

This literature review will situate the current research around LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers within Canadian context, describe how critical race, transnational feminist, and exaltation theories, and critical race methodology, harmonize to guide the research project. I situate the current research about LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers within the Canadian context. The review outlines the unique experiences of the community pre-arrival, their migration and post-migration experiences and the issues that arise due to poor socioeconomic status and health. I explore possible solutions to mitigate the gap between research, policies, and supports for LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers.

Status is Canada

Immigration status can determine the types of health care and support services a person may receive, being contingent on eligibility requirements set by the Canadian government. Those who fall under precarious or no legal immigration status, which include “visitors, international students, temporary foreign workers, refugee claimants and protected persons, along with those detained and undocumented” (Lee, 2015, p. 19) are at a higher risk of being deported, detained, and/or of being surveilled (Wright, 2016). They do not receive the same access to legal and health services as their protected counterparts. Adam and Rangel (2015) note that Canadian migration policy is skewed in favour of those with educational credentials and language proficiency, which leads to the devaluation of cultural capital based on ethnicity and country of origin. Non-racialized individuals with higher education and English proficiency who have chosen to immigrate to Canada have higher social and capital status, giving more access to support services, which lead to a better integration and sense of support.

Although there has been an increase in refugee claims to Canada, the process to apply for a visa to reach Canada is an arduous process, and it is increasingly becoming more difficult to have your application accepted (Wright, 2016). Hébert (2011) notes the nuances of sexual identity which creates a lack of consistency through the refugee claim process within the Canadian immigration system. This inconsistency can create adverse effects, especially for those who are actively engaged in the refugee process, where wait periods for a refugee hearing can last up to one year. During this year, asylum seekers remain in limbo, where they are both unable to plan for their future and face barriers when accessing important health care services, such as dental and psychological services, due to long wait times, and/or status ineligibility. Settlement

services are often funded by the Canadian government, which may require a certain level of immigration status to be eligible for support services such as support groups, and language classes. It is only until they have received confirmation of positive status for their refugee hearing are they then eligible for services.

It is important to note that present research is limited to data collection from those who have status in Canada, and can speak on their experiences without having perceived threat of deportation, as those with precarious status. None of the articles examined the experiences of those who had a received negative decision, which some scholars highlight as a problem area. Jordan (2019) posits that a study which incorporates both positive and negative application decisions would allow for more in-depth exploration.

Resettlement Journey

The resettlement journey is just as an important aspect to observe as the settlement process. Many LGBTQI+ individuals who come to Canada with refugee status or are seeking asylum may be migrating with trauma from their home countries, and the journey itself may be triggering. Jordan (2019) proposes that levels of safety and belonging during the settlement process is contingent on experiences of pre-settlement experiences. Some individuals may have been sponsored through the government, sponsorship groups, blended visas, or have come on their own. Regardless of the entry into Canada, it is important to note the trajectories of LGBTQI+ migrants resettlement journey is distinctive to everyone and should not be conflated as a homogenized experience.

Many asylum seekers in Canada articulated that they had only learned about the option to seek refugee protection on the basis of SOGIESC after living abroad, often through informal queer networks (Jordan, 2019). The resettlement journey for some migrants may only start at this

point of decision to apply for refugee protection, and adds intricate layers of challenges. Others may have pre-conceived notions of what Canada may offer, which may not align with what they experience in the host country. Research suggests that newcomers may not always feel welcomed because of homophobic, transphobic, and racist social climates, with some questioning their decision (Nakamura et al., 2017). Karimi (2020) suggests that power relations around sexuality not only impact racialized minorities in their home countries, but also intersect with race, ethnicity, gender, and religion during the settlement process in their host countries.

Socioeconomic Status and Health in Resettlement

LGBTQI+ migrants hold complex journeys and identities which create unique challenges when accessing services. As such, these communities should not be treated as one monolith, and rather, as people with diverse experiences. Perceptions of being more disadvantaged to heterosexual newcomers or Canadian born LGB counterparts are not only identified by academics, but has been expressed through the subjective experiences of participants in a study of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) newcomers in British Columbia (O'Neill & Kia, 2012). Many LGBTQI+ immigrants and refugees describe having to walk in separate worlds, concealing one or more of their identities because of their perceptions of safety (Giwa, 2016). Some individuals describe experiences of racism within the LGBTQI+ community, while others experienced homophobia, biphobia, and/or transphobia within their own cultural communities (Nakamura et., al, 2013; Giwa & Chaze, 2018).

Holding a multitude of identities can lead to complexities when accessing settlement needs, such as finding housing, accessing language support, financial need, and food security, especially as someone with precarious status who may not be eligible to access services. Organizations which offer general services tailoring to LGBTQI+ or newcomer identities

respectively may be beneficial to LGBTQI+ newcomers, however, programs which only recognize one identity marker fail to reflect the unique lived experiences which present various needs and challenges (Flett, 2021).

Immediately after arrival, the post-migration phase has been described as a period of social instability (Kindermann et. al., 2020) in which racism and xenophobia leads to the devaluing of social and economic capital, leaving migrants open to vulnerabilities such as poverty and unemployment (Adam & Rangel, 2015; 2017). LGBTQI+ newcomers have articulated experiences of marginalization, shame, stigmatization, difficulties accessing competent mental health providers, depression, anxiety, traumatic stress, securing employment, and navigating the asylum process. (Alessi, 2016; Khan et., al, 2018, Logie et., al, 2016). Those who are seeking asylum on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) experience unique challenges, such as early disclosure of sexual violence, refugee claim processes which have compressed timelines, and being forced to come out, which may have detrimental effects on mental health and identity confusion (Kahn & Alessi, 2017). However, many LGBTQI+ migrants have tolerated these conditions in Canada to avoid the persecution that they would experience in their source countries (Alessi, 2016; Kia et., al, 2020; Kojima, 2014). Although there is research on this community, settlement needs and challenges are underrepresented in the literature (Giwa & Chaze, 2018). It is for these reasons that there must be further research to examine what challenges LGBTQI+ migrants face, and in particular, the experiences of those who have navigated their refugee claim process in Canada.

Service Providers

Service providers, such as lawyers, mental health providers, social workers and settlement workers are often the first point of contact for LGBTQI+ migrants. The current literature demonstrates that organizations, especially settlement organizations, are unwelcoming, and notinclusive of LGBTQI+ immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers (Flett, 2021; Giwa et., al, 2018; 2020). Studies observed settlement organizations through program and service delivery and found LGBTQI+ training to be lacking in Newfoundland and Labrador (Giwa et., al, 2020), and only a small number of organizations in Ontario identified as LGBTQ-positive spaces, with limited programming offered (Giwa & Chaze, 2018). Many have pointed to the need for professionals to have an awareness around the unique challenges these individuals experience during pre-arrival, migration, and post-arrival phases, and the resiliency in which they hold (Nakamura et., al, 2017; Kulatilake, 2020). Although there has been some research around service providers and their capability to provide competent services and care for LGBTQI+ newcomers and refugees, it is lacking. Furthermore, there is little known about the specifics around how effective settlement organizations in Canada are inclusive towards this community (Giwa & Chaze, 2018).

Transnational and National Solidarity

Although most of the literature focuses on the needs of LGBTQI+ immigrants and refugees through the resettlement journey, there were several critiques around transnational and national solidarity efforts, or lack thereof. It is important to not only focus on individual needs on a micro level, but to examine the macro lens through systemic structures which are currently in place to uphold systems of power that recreate oppressive environments. Many countries worldwide still have enacted oppressive laws and policies which pose direct threat to the safety of their citizens, including the barring of same-sex binational sponsorship (Nakamura et., al,

2017) which has led to an influx in migrants to Canada. Étienne Balibar calls this phenomenon a "'global apartheid,' a world in which borders, documents, surveillance, immigration statuses, and citizenship regimes are increasingly fundamental to the spatial/ racial regulation of labouring bodies, access to social services, controls over movement, and widening social class divides" (Wright, 2016, p. 252). Some have offered awareness and international solidarity for LGBTQI+ individuals in the human rights cases to create social transformation, however, scholars have warned about the prioritization of international gay subjectivity which is driven by Western politics (Lee & Brotman, 2011). That is, we must be critically cautious around discourse which centers Western conceptualizations of sexual orientation and gender identity, especially through asylum seeking processes in Canada.

Nationally, few scholars have advised for the advancement of solidarity amongst LGBTQI+ immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, and Indigenous communities. Kulatilake (2020) argues colonization is the contributing factor to the proliferation of homophobia and transphobia on a global scale, and therefore, intentionally working towards the decolonization of LGBTQI+ spaces, as well as the adoption of Indigenous worldviews, would be beneficial to deconstructing gender binaries and homosexuality. The intertwined histories of colonization and indigeneity must be known before advancing queer migrant human rights agendas (Lee & Brotman, 2011). Walia (2010) offers examples of where strong alliances have been built between migrant and Indigenous communities which prioritize Indigenous struggles, such as migrant groups No One Is Illegal.

Canadian Immigration System

The Canadian government upholds its' image of a safe haven for migrants where multiculturalism celebrates diversity, especially for those in the LGBTQI+ community. As Gomá

(2020) critiques, multiculturalism should not be used simply as a celebration of diversity, but as a tool which is articulated with anti-racist policies to engage with Canadian society's contradictions and systemic inequalities. Through the various state-sanctioned systems, such as settlement and/or immigration services, health care systems, housing, and education, the well-being of individuals are differentiated by race, social class, gender, ethnicity, and place of origin (Adam & Rangel, 2015).

The Canadian government is fraught with systems designed to keep oppressors in power. Evidence of this can be seen through the gatekeeping of citizenship, through the asylum-seeking process. Sexual minority refugee claimants encounter specific challenges that make it more difficult that their non-SOGIESC refugee claimant counterparts (Laviolette, 2014). Sexual minority asylum seekers experience re-telling possible traumatic stories and are having to prove their SOGIESC. Multiple studies indicated that through the refugee claim process and in their hearings, these communities struggled against Western narratives of sexual orientation and gender identities, and had their identities disbelieved (Hebert, 2011; Jordan, 2017; Rehaag, 2017). These credibility assessments of refugee claimants SOGIESC reflect homonationalist values, a term coined by Jasbir Puar to represent a nationally recognized version of homosexuality (Rinaldi & Fernando, 2019). The Canadian government immigration system upholds homonationalist values which questions the authenticity of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers identity based on superficial grounds such as personal appearance, engagement in community, and LGBTQI+ laws and policies in home countries (Rinaldi & Fernando, 2019). These assumptions are driven by Western concepts of SOGIESC, which can be summed up by the argument that "participants recognized that the system is made and maintained by those who view the world through a heteronormative lens" (Holder, 2017, p. 63).

Possible Solutions

Many scholars in the current literature have outlined the challenges that LGBTQI+ immigrants and refugees experience, as well as discussing critiques to global immigration systems, as well as the Canadian context. While it is important to share the critiques, it is imperative to share possible solutions which exists in the literature.

Storytelling

Using the stories and voices of marginalized groups can be a useful tool for change in research to understand firsthand experiences. Narrative accounts can revalidate truths while bringing marginalized voices to the forefront when confronting state and public violence, while also making visible the multiple and often conflicting sources and practices from which migrants change of self are drawn (Fobear, 2016; Sinding & Zhou, 2017). Through participatory photography, Fobear (2015) shows how asylum seekers in Vancouver create a sense of belonging in the face of forced migration. Research which declines to centre the voices of LGBTQI+ immigrants and refugees continues to perpetuate the silencing of marginalized communities, and enforces the current power hierarchies.

Support Networks

Support networks have been used by many organizations to assist both LGBTQI+ and immigrants and refugees communities to increase sense of belonging. LGBTQI+ migrants have purported that social support networks and communities to be especially helpful when surviving in Canada (Lee & Brotman, 2011). Social support may contribute to better mental health and integration through reducing social isolation, managing acculturation-related stress, demonstration of greater resiliency to challenges, and building senses of empowerment to navigate the asylum-seeking process with others (Logie et., al, 2016; Nakamura et., al, 2017);

Reading & Rubin, 2011). It is important to note that this social support must come from specific groups where the intersection of LGBTQI+ and immigrant and refugee identities come together, as otherwise individuals may not feel comfortable and experience hostility from either ethnic communities or LGBTQI+ spaces (Nakamura et., al, 2017).

Policy Change

A critical pull factor for individuals to seek asylum in Canada is due to the country’s policies around LGBTQI+ issues (Nakamura et., al, 2017). LGBTQI+ people abroad have perceived Canada to be a safe haven for those in the community, and have sought to move for a better life. Indeed, Canada was one of the first Western nations to grant refugee claims on the basis of sexuality. With the help of social justice advocates, Ontario and BC have been able to provide refugee claimants with resource lists of local LGBTQI+ refugee support groups provided at their eligibility interview, as well as creating SOGIESC guidelines for Immigration Refugee Board (IRB) members, which recognizes the unfair treatment of refugees in the past and seeks to create a more fair hearing process which challenges homophobic and transphobic rhetoric (Holder, 2017; Jordan, 2009). These are small advancements and should only be the beginning of future reforms. Flett (2021) and Nakamura et., al (2017) highlight the importance of policy change at a government level to interrogate unfair systemic issues, as well as the process of tracking laws and policies around newcomers and their decisions to stay in Canada or return to their countries of origin. Lee & Brotman (2011) and Wright (2016) offer examples of the mobilization against Bill C-31, as well as refugee health care cuts, through identification of negative consequences of these policy changes by advocates such as Rainbow Refugee and AGIR, as effective ways to contribute to social change.

Research

There are gaps in the literature where certain groups are missing from the literature, which include precarious and non-status individuals, those whose refugee claims have been rejected, and of those who have returned to their home countries. Scholars within the literature highlight the importance of further research, especially around settlement support for those who hold LGBTQI+ newcomer and refugee identities.

Literature Review: A Summary

Existing literature focuses on the settlement needs of LGBTQI+ immigrants and refugees as a general population, with some research outlining the challenges which refugee claimants experience. The unique migration journey taken to Canada creates a set of challenges which are particular to this community, which requires service providers to have an understanding and training of the population to provide safer and competent programming. Policy analysis and advocacy efforts are recommended by scholars to enact social change, as well as the opportunities for future research to expand the current literature.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study aims to look at the unique intersection of identities where race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and immigration status all collide into one melting pot. As such, I will be implementing a collection of theoretical frameworks. Firstly, my research will be guided by critical race theory (CRT), as defined by Solórzano and Yosso (2002) as advancing "a strategy to foreground and account for the role of race and racism… and works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of opposing or eliminating other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language, and national origin" (p. 25). Einbinder (2020) reviewed an extensive number of studies and synthesized nine CRT tenets for

social work, including: (1) Racism is endemic; (5) differential racialization; (8) voices of the marginalized; narrative; counter-storytelling; and (9) praxis.

Secondly, although I considered feminist theory as a guiding framework, it is neither intersectional nor does is its' scope enough to be an adequate framework to guide this project. Therefore, I will be referring to transnational feminism. This form of feminism desires to unsettle the binary of "West versus the rest", while understanding gender roles (Falcón and Nash, 2015). Transnational feminism will be used to examine issues from a global perspective while considering how they intersect with our lived experiences in Canada. Falcón & Nash (2015) offers transnational feminism to interrogate by embracing "transnational feminism as feminism across borders, but not borderless" (p. 3).

Lastly, to supplement the two theories, it would be remiss to not include a concept which considers the state and immigration status. Thobani (2007) illuminates the power of the state to create national subjects which are deemed as superior, through the process of exaltation, which ascribes valorized characteristics, and elevates the subjects as superior beings who should be natural inheritors of rights and entitlements. According to Leroux (2008), these national subjects, often close in proximity to whiteness, are given the power to control and manage racial others, which then contributes to upholding the negative discourse of immigrants and refugees, and legitimizes and enforces unequal citizenship rights.

As there is incredible diversity which exists in the participants of the study, it would remiss to focus only on one theory. I used these three paradigms to guide my approach, and analyze the data produced, as they addressed concepts of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and status, in relation to nation state power, nationally and globally.

As I was coding and analyzing the data, there were multiple themes which emerged and will be discussed in detail in a later section. Some of the major themes include the lack of settlement supports available for LGBTQI+ asylum seekers, including issues related to housing, employment, and financial stability. Additional themes included supports received depending on geographical locations, violence and discrimination, migration timelines and the waiting periods, code switching, gratitude, and issues related to COVID-19.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Methods and Methodology

Thematic analysis is a method utilized to identify, analyze, and report themes or patterns, within the data, which includes focus group and interview data (McAllum et., al, 2019). This methodology is guided through deductive reasoning, in that the researcher may have an idea for a hypothesis or understanding of what themes might emerge, however, analysis of the data is formed through coding as a key strategy. McAllum et., al (2019) also state that this strategy offers the opportunity to categorize, summarize and reconstruct qualitative data in a way that captures the most important concepts, while allowing for data saturation with much smaller sample sizes.

The two methods employed in this research project included the use of a focus group, as well as a one-on-one interview. Although the original method included policy analysis, which would examine primary and secondary sources, such as newspaper articles, legal materials, reports, and tool kits, because of the short timeline of this project, I decided to pivot and center focus groups and interviews as main sources of data collection. As outlined by Barbour (2014), focus groups offer unique advantages which can produced extremely rich data for comparison, and highlights the importance that if used appropriately, can generate conversation through group dynamics that may not otherwise be produced by other methods. Although LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers may have different migration journeys to Canada, similar experiences navigating the Canadian system might arise through conversation. As a result of discussion, I was able to pull themes from the experiences of the participants, which facilitated the production of answers to my proposed research question. Originally, I only prepared to host focus groups, however, because of the schedule of some of the participants, I decided to hold an

individual interview as well. It serendipitously worked in my favour as Barbour (2007) states that narratives may be easier to elicit and clarify within one-to-one interviews, and that some participants may be reluctant to participate in group discussions. One method cannot be used in silo, as both contribute to understanding the holistic understanding of the unique challenges which these identities hold. The lived experiences of LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers through qualitative stories gave anecdotal evidence around the experiences used to give critique to Canadian systems and structures.

Recruitment and data collection

With our framework and methodologies in mind, we can start to identify, describe, and justify how the data will be gathered for this study. This project focused on collecting data from former LGBTQI+ asylum seekers, and their experiences through the process of migration. Participants were chosen through the lens that was concerned with race, gender, sexual orientation, and immigration status. The stories of this demographic were monumental in challenging the present discourse, and to add to the lack of scholarly literature that exists. Before arriving in Tkaranto, I was working with the *I Belong Program* at *M.O.S.A.I.C.* as a program facilitator to support LGBTQI+ immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. This allowed for insider access to individuals from the community who have experiences and journeys which pertained to my research question. With my foot in the door, I recruited 5 participants for 1-2 focus group(s) that were previous members of the *I Belong Program*, and had attended sessions I facilitated. I considered multiple ethical concerns when reaching out to participants, which included coercion and the blurring of boundaries. I discuss these concerns in further detail below.

I created a flyer (Appendix D) with the intention of disseminating the material amongst organizations in British Columbia which provided direct or indirect services to LGBTQI+

immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. I reached out to my former employer at M.O.S.A.I.C., however, the program facilitator had left the position. Therefore, I had no access to the participants who attended the group at that time. With the time constraints, I was unable to reach out to other organizations. I discuss this as a limitation in Chapter 5.

Through the recruitment process, I identified and invited participants to join a focus group in which they would be answering questions through conversational interviewing. I reached out to five possible participants who I already had contact information for, with four responding to my call out. From these three participants, I was able to recruit two more people from the community. Once I made contact and confirmed their participation, I sent an e-mail to everyone separately which included general information about the study, the study flyer, a consent form, as well as a Calendy invite to indicate their days of availability. Individuals were not required to print or sign the form in advance, however, they were to give their verbal consent at the beginning of the focus group to the consent form, as well as audio recording. As suspected, it was difficult to organize a time and date that worked for everyone, as they all had various schedules. Since I did not want to miss out on the opportunity of gathering data during the recruitment process, I changed my approach to accommodate a one-on-one interview with a participant. One day prior to the focus groups, I sent an e-mail reminder to each participant of the time and date of their focus group. I was notified of one cancellation by a potential participant due to other life commitments. As I commenced the focus group on Zoom, no participants had shown up at the correct time. One participant showed up late as they were trying to find a room in their school to hold the call, and another participant showed up 20 minutes late, while one participant did not show up. However, I was able to hold the full session and ask the questions with the two participants, and the following week, I was able to hold an interview with one of the

participants. From the information provided by three participants in the focus group and interview, I was satisfied with the amount of data I had collected and decided to end the period of data collection.

In Chapter 5, I recommend for future research to include policy analysis to situate the Canadian government and immigration system with the direct experiences of LGBTQI+ newcomers. I followed up with the participants who did not show up to the focus group to ensure they were properly supported. In addition to the focus group and interview, I asked all of the participants to provide biographies of themselves to give context to the readers, as well as limit the barrier between reader and participant.

Data management, coding, and analysis

Any data produced through the research was managed through an application called Dedoose, which was used to analyze the text in my qualitative data. The video recording, transcriptions, and any notes recorded from the focus group was stored on a password protected laptop and USB drive. This qualitative data analysis software assisted in coding the data, as well as produce themes and patterns through narrative thematic analysis, while analysis of the data was led by aforementioned theoretical frameworks and concepts.

At the beginning of the coding process, themes started to emerge, however, the information seemed disjointed and did not seem to relate to one another. As I persisted, the data came together as if pieces to a puzzle. The themes identified allowed for the creation of linkages and patterns wherein I could use the theoretical frameworks selected to analyze the data. However, this project intends to illustrate how thematic analysis may be used in conjunction with the theoretical frameworks mentioned to evaluate in the context of social work. The data was then coded through the software Dedoose using thematic narrative methodology to guide the

coding process. It was then analyzed through two theoretical frameworks and one integral concept which included: CRT, transnational feminism, and Thobalt’s exalted subjects theory.

Completion of project

The data was kept to produce results and findings through my practice research paper. Upon successful completion of the practice research paper, I will be considering if I will be publishing the findings. The data will be kept on a password protected laptop, as well as a password protected USB drive until December 31st, 2024, where all virtual data will be deleted, and physical data will be shredded.

Ethics

Since this project involved human participants, and particularly, those from identified marginalized populations, I had to go through the ethics process. After completing a research proposal, I submitted an ethics protocol form, which included my proposal, an informed consent form, and interview questions outline, as well as my recruitment flyer. While completing these forms, I was given the opportunity to look at possible ethical concerns, risks, and benefits. I have identified the risks and benefits as outlined in 6 and 7 of the MRP Protocol Form, as well as including this within the consent form.

There were no anticipated physical risks to participants. Focus group members were asked to keep the information provided in the groups confidential; however, a minimal potential risk of using the focus group method was information being discussed outside of the group by participants. To mitigate the risks, I ensured that I reiterated safety measures for the group, including the importance of confidentiality and privacy. I checked in with the group members, and offered to provide supports if needed. I ensured that these risks were addressed ahead of time by offering the option of anonymity and pseudonyms.

I anticipated that there might have been a sense of community that would be formed with group members, and this prediction was true as Jorge and Wayne both knew each other from the community. To my pleasant surprise, the focus group had the unexpected effect of re-connecting the two participants. The outcomes of the research may also lead to policy reform in directly favour of LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers. As there is minimal scholarly research on this group, the academic community would greatly benefit from the study. Policy reform to protect this community may create a more equitable and just society. Although there are risks involved, I can assert in good faith that the benefits far outweigh the risks, and the risks may be reasonably mitigated.

There were a couple ethical concerns in which I was particularly attentive to. The first was the issue around the size of the pool of participants in which I recruited from. The LGBTQI+ immigrant and refugee community is often small and tight knit, and the study recruited from existing support groups and settlement agencies where individuals often had access to the same services. This is where the second issue around confidentiality and privacy arose. While the participants knew one another, I was able to mitigate this concern through a couple of ways. Firstly, I created the informed consent form, which states confidentiality agreements where individuals will not share the identities or content of what is shared outside of the group session. At the beginning of the focus group, participants gave verbal consent to the informed consent form, and I asked all participants to maintain confidentiality during and after the session. Because I could not guarantee that they would keep confidentiality, I spoke to this in the ethics protocol form, section 6, as well as the risks and confidentiality sections in the consent form. Participants were also be given the option to join the Zoom call under a different alias, and to have their videos turned off. Additionally, they also had the option to both skip questions, and

follow up with a question afterwards if they feel more comfortable doing so. Participants were able to withdraw at any point within the study, up until the analysis is complete – as stated in the informed consent form and research protocol form. As I have formed a rapport with both participants who attended the focus group, after reiterating the importance of confidentiality and privacy and putting the measures in place, I was satisfied that they would uphold the integrity of confidentiality.

Limitations

One consideration was ensuring that participants had a certain level of English proficiency to fully consent. The consent form clearly outlined that to participate in the study, potential candidates were required to be able to speak and understand conversational English. As asylum seekers going through the process are still in Canada with precarious status, participation in the project could have jeopardized their refugee hearing. Participation could also have had the adverse effect of creating perceived risk to deportation. For this reason, individuals could only engage in the research if they had already been granted status.

The study did not encapsulate the endless amount of knowledge and material of this population. My original research question also included a policy analysis, however, the scope of my study would have been considerable, and for that reason, I decided to focus on qualitative research from participants' experiences. However, this suggests that future research could include a policy analysis of municipal, provincial, and federal governments within Canada. This may include, but is not limited to, identifying and analyzing documents such as policies and laws which have been enacted by various bodies of government, as well as toolkits, documents, and any materials which have been created by community members and service providers. This study was also limited to the first year of arrival for LGBTQI+ asylum seekers, however, this gives

opportunity for longitudinal studies, which may follow asylum seekers on their migration and settlement journey at intervals of 5 years, from their first year of arrival. This study may be expanded to include a similar research question, but include more participants, as well as covering other immigration statuses and migration pathways. For example, there could be research around privately sponsored refugees or government assisted refugees, as well as those who are non-status, are waiting to be deported, or have been previously deported. There are incredible differences in access to support even within these subpopulations. If this research had funding, I would have been able to expand my research to include those who do not speak English by offering the option of having an interpreter present. Many asylum seekers who come to Canada often do not have English language capacity, and therefore, need an interpreter. I recommend future research to take this into consideration for two reasons. The first is that those who do not speak English are often forgotten, or seen as challenging to reach, as they require an interpreter, and this may mean hiring one who is LGBTQI+ competent, or can add to longer interview times. The second is because even if an individual is proficient in English, sometimes it is easier to convey words and emotions in their first language. An addition of an interpreter may afford researchers the ability to collect richer data. Additionally, this group of participants did not include an enormous variety of sexual and gender identities, and it is recommended that if this study were to be replicated, that there are more experiences by self-identified women and non-binary individuals, who usually experience the most marginalization. One intersection which was largely missing in the literature was research around the Indigenous and LGBTQI+ immigrant and refugee populations. In border imperialism, the dual processed of displacement and migration are manufactured through tactics of colonialism and capitalism (Walia, 2014).

Since both populations have histories of being forcibly displaced, there is opportunity to examine how these communities may form solidarity and sovereignty amongst one another.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings and analysis derived from the research question: Upon their first year of arrival, do LGBTQI+ asylum seekers feel properly supported in British Columbia? As predicted, this population spoke of enormous challenges and barriers that hindered them from properly settling into Canadian society. Three participants shared their migration stories, and the journey they took to reach Canada, as well as their experiences upon arrival. Before I dive into discussion, I would like to introduce each of them:

Jorge

Hi, my name is Jorge Andrade (he/him). I am a gay refugee from Ecuador and have been in Canada for 4 years. I claimed refugee status because of the persecution I faced in Ecuador for being openly gay and a queer activist who appeared on TV, radio and other media platforms speaking out against conversion therapy. I am currently in my 4th year of my Sociology B.A. and working part-time at Rainbow Refugee as the Community Engagement and Belonging Facilitator. My dream is to become a social worker who helps LGBTQI refugee claimants settle and feel welcomed in Canada!

Wayne

Wayne is a 28-year-old community-based social equity strategist with over 7 years of diverse knowledge and leadership experience in a plethora of development processes. He is an LGBTQI+ refugee, who goes by he/him/his pronouns. Wayne entered Canada through a visitor’s visa, and claimed asylum immediately after arrival from Jamaica.

Logan

Logan is a 29-year-old non-binary, transmasculine person from East Asia, who goes by the pronouns he/him/his and they/them. They entered Canada as a visitor, and made an asylum claim at around 3 months.

Throughout the focus group and interview, all three participants presented stories which were rich in information and helped formulate answers to my research question. I recognize it may not always be easy to retell stories, especially if they may be particularly triggering. I was humbled that they invited me in to share the space with them, and listen to their stories of migration.

As it currently stands, the landscape of literature can only be described as a vast desert with few watering holes in sight. The population holds a multitude of intersecting identities which can affect not only affect the level of support received, but also on the focus for research. Current studies often either cast their net too far and too broad, identifying general challenges for LGBTQI+ immigrant and refugee communities, or fixate on niche identities and intersections.

One purpose of this study is to help to fill the significant gaps in research and to provide more evidence for how and why there should be further research around this population. There is limited research around the experiences of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers, and much of the existing literature recommends future research around this topic (Kahn & Alessi, 2017; Nakamura et. al., 2017). The intention behind this study is to encourage the reader to become more aware of the intersecting identities which exists in this community, and the numerous barriers they must endure especially because of their race, status, and SOGIESC. The three participants in this study all shared a mutual experiences having gone through the process of seeking protection in Canada based on their SOGIESC, however, as the findings present themselves, the differences in

accessing services is just as palpable. For both the focus group and interview, the respondents continuously spoke of barriers to accessing the services. The more privileges they had, the more likely they were to be able to adjust better to Canadian society. This study aims to broaden the readers mind to grasp the uniqueness of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers journey and offer insight into the obstacles experienced.

This section intends to explore multiple themes that have affected the LGBTQI+ refugees interviewed in this study, and can be seen as either a contributor or inhibitor to feeling supported in British Columbia. These themes include: Settlement needs, geographical location and land borders, violence and discrimination, waiting periods, code switching, gratitude, and COVID-19.

Settlement Needs

Participants may choose to make a refugee claim in Canada for multiple reasons. Thobani (2007) postulates the Canadian national identity discourse has expanded to incorporate the inclusion of “LGBT” identity, which now valorizes LGBT refugees in Canadian nationalist discourses. She suggests this valorization occurs because they have arrived in a nation where sexual diversity is a feature of “civilized” society, as opposed to the “uncivilized” societies they are originally from, which is characterized by rampant homophobia. Canada became one of the first Western countries which offered LGBTQI+ migrants to make a claim based on their SOGIESC. For these reasons, we can start to get a glimpse into why people might decide to flee their home country, and undergo the process of making a claim in Canada. However, this path to settlement can be proven to be incredibly difficult. This section illustrates stories of accessing settlement services upon arrival as an LGBTQI+ asylum seeker, and is organized in the following sub-categories: Employment, health-care, housing, community and family relationships, financial and food sources, legal aid, and organizations.

Employment

Jorge on working three jobs:

> After that, when I got my work permit, I applied to a lot of places but didn’t get in. I think it was mostly because I didn't have Canadian experience, I have work experience from back home. But I don’t think that was enough. And I had only studied two years back home without finishing my degree. So yeah, when I got my work permit I worked at McDonald's for a year or so. It was very stressful. Many people don't realize how stressful it is to work at McDonald's but it is. That was hard because I was earning minimum wage, and it was still not enough for the rent that I was paying. So I actually worked three jobs, one full time, and two part time jobs. (p. 10-11).

Employment was one of the most significant barriers participants’ encountered upon their first year of arrival. Jorge, Wayne, and Logan shared distinct migration stories before arriving to Canada, and all made their claims at varying times. However, one common thread that was evident throughout all their stories was the urgent need for financial support. Each participant applied for their work permit as soon as they claimed asylum. While many believe this process would be quick and easy, obtaining a work permit was the opposite. The participants were waiting anywhere from 3 to 12 months for their work permit to arrive, and most of the participants had to rely on income assistance. The amount proved to be inadequate for living expenses, especially for those who lived near and around Vancouver. To earn money, one participant had to take a job which involved teaching a virtual class online from a school abroad, while others had to resort to working under the table to make ends meet, which left them open to certain vulnerabilities, including exploitation of free labour:

> I had to wait [x] months, and having income assistance wasn't really enough. I had to work under the table part-time to help me with some things, but I didn't have the best experience. I was a dishwasher in a restaurant. And because I was working under the table, they could do whatever they wanted to do. For example, one day they were like, oh you know we haven't sold much today so we can't pay you today. So, I worked two days, you know, without pay. The treatment wasn't the best. (p. 4).

Logan shared their experience of coming to Canada with the expectations that they would be able to easily find a job in a reasonable time frame. Similarly, Wayne experienced difficulties when looking for positions, noting that he most likely experienced this discrimination due to the lack of Canadian experience. Bhuyan et. al (2017) describes the mobilization of the 'Canadian experience' as the state's means to identify immigrants who carry the promise of economic and social integration. However, these are racist policies which serve those in power by creating incredible barriers to employment for LGBTQI+ asylum seekers. During this period of waiting, and upon receiving their work permit, participants spoke to their struggles finding employment, and having to find ways to gain this experience. Many were unable to locate paying positions and were compelled to volunteering for agencies.

When participants were able to find employment, many juggled multiple positions at once. As mentioned by one of the participants, it is not uncommon for LGBTQI+ asylum seekers to hold multiple jobs at a time to ensure they are able to financially support themselves. Issues around exploitation of racialized bodies are central to running the economy, and are able to function under the guise of the Canadian experience. Those in power profit off of racialized labourers who are pushed to the margins, and are made vulnerable. After waiting for three months to receive his work permit, he received the document and was able to apply to workplaces. Jorge shares, "I was working at McDonald's. I was also a part-time health worker, and a part-time construction worker". (p. 8). Without prompt from myself, Jorge pointed to Canadian experience as a possible issue when applying, stating: "I think it was mostly because I didn't have Canadian experience, I have work experience from back home. But I don't think that was enough." (p. 11). Thobani's (2007) concept of exalted subjects suggests that the state creates specific types of nationals, deems them as superior to others, and thus, affords them certain

privileges. The Canadian government has created an immigration system which affords certain privileges to those who arrive to Canada, depending on their status, and in this case, asylum seekers are not afforded easy access to a work permit, and are often discriminated against by employers based on their lack of Canadian experience. Additionally, even when they have Canadian experience, there are indicators which may attract unwanted attention when applying for positions, including an irregular social insurance number (SIN) which has an expiration date, and starts with the number nine (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2022). The addition of the number nine at the beginning of one's SIN can leave asylum seekers open to employment discriminatory practices, where they are deemed as temporary residents who are not worth investing time into. Alternatively, this could be seen as an opportunity to exploit these individuals as they are only temporary, and their precarious status leaves them vulnerable. Although the Canadian government implicitly states that they protect all people in Canada, regardless of status (Immigration and Citizenship, 2020), this research suggests LGBTQI+ asylum seekers experience unequal access to employment opportunities. When considering CRT, these narratives are valuable examples of counter-storytelling which is antithesis to the dominant discourse around the rights of all in Canada.

These experiences support Adam and Rangel (2015; 2017), who state that migrants may experience xenophobia and racism during the post-migration phase, which can leave individuals vulnerable to poverty and unemployment. This study suggests these forms of discrimination are particularly prevalent with LGBTQI+ asylum seekers, especially when requiring Canadian experience from qualified persons. This is dangerous rhetoric which points to the lack of proper settlement supports for LGBTQI+ asylum seekers.

Health-care

> I met a very disrespectful doctor at a clinic in Vancouver, which is an organization for refugees in general, not specifically for LGBTQI+ individuals. I had such a bad experience and I've heard some other friends going through the same. So unkind. You know, sometimes you have questions about sexual health. Right? And if you disclose that you're gay or from what I've heard, like if you’re trans or whatever they're very rude and they don't… They're not really LGBTQ friendly. (p. 5).

Another issue that arose for some of the participants was accessing health care services, particularly around physical, mental health care, and the usage of the interim federal healthcare program (IFHP). Prior to the interviews, I was curious in further understanding experiences around accessing health-care systems in British Columbia, especially for those who have the precarious status of asylum seekers.

Accessing health-care for LGBTQI+ asylum seekers can be triggering and traumatic for some, and may be especially true for those identifying as trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse. Logan and Jorge retold of homophobic and transphobic experiences when accessing health-care services at a clinic which specialized in serving newcomers. When he had questions regarding sexual health, Jorge had to disclose his identity to the health care professionals. However, when he did so, he found that they were unhelpful and were not LGBTQI+ friendly. He also noted stories of others he had known who accessed health services, particularly those who were trans, and they had been discriminated based on their SOGIESC. As a non-binary, transmasculine asylum seeker, Logan shares their struggle when accessing health care services in Vancouver from the same clinic mentioned by Jorge. Their appointment was for a routine high blood pressure check-up, and during the session, was asked inappropriate questions about their body parts. Logan shared this was not the first time they experienced this, yet, it did not make him feel any less discrimination. They told their doctor this information was on the internet, and their

response was unapologetic and defensive. After the appointment, Logan decided to file a complaint about the doctor by speaking to the clinic's manager. However, this proved to be unsuccessful as the manager defended the doctor:

> I have a recording on my phone, I explained every detail. I couldn't believe what I was hearing so I recorded it and everything so I have them. But, it was just really ridiculous the stuff I was hearing, just so supportive of doctors. I was just like okay… I am… I am not going to talk to you about… I'm non-binary too. (p. 10).

After receiving no support from the clinic, Logan took their complaint to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia. The College came back to Logan asking what they wanted to happen, and they, once again, engaged in self-advocacy. They gave the College a list of things that were inappropriate and appropriate to do and say during a meeting with someone who might identify as LGBTQI+. Logan realized early on that they were not going to get any compensation or apologies but hoped that following through with this process would make physicians better, and would hopefully add this report on the physician's file for future reference. Although it is clear that Logan is the person who is harmed in this situation, the burden is still placed on them to correct, and offer suggestions for the wrongdoing. They face multiple forms of oppression to educate these individuals who are in highly regarded positions of power within the medical establishment, yet, are required to provide solutions. It is important to place emphasis on the perceived courage of Logan to have continued through the process with no promise of change. However, we must also be critical of framing an individual as courageous, as Logan's intention may not be out of courage, but rather, necessity for survival.

Enns et al. (2021) suggest that transnational feminism features intersectionality, and places emphasis on the differences and inequalities between women and gender minorities. This theory highlights the inequalities experienced by the participants in the study, especially by Logan as non-binary transmasculine person. If the clinic used a transnational feminism lens, they

would understand how to work with gender minorities in ways that challenge cis heteronormative racist standards in health care and elsewhere.

When referring to insurance, especially in relation to IFHP, Wayne emphasized, “It’s just crazy how when it comes to insurance and health, I just hate it totally. It’s a long process and it’s very complex. Luckily, at the start when I just arrived, I really didn’t have any issues in terms of mental health”. (p. 5). As we got further into the conversation, he shared that he had physical issues when he moved to Kelowna, British Columbia from Toronto, Ontario. This required setting up visits to a urologist. In Toronto, he was given a date within 5 days, but because he had to move, he wasn’t given a date until 3 months later in Kelowna. The health-care system was inaccessible, and posed many barriers for Wayne:

> I'm not sure if it's because of COVID, but we can't just blame COVID, for everything and these are like urologist specialists, and they keep referring you and referring you and referring you to other people. And until… To what – to what end? It's just never ending, and I don't know, honestly, I don't know, what is it, or what's the issue? It’s quite friggin difficult to get a family doctor in BC because everybody's full at this time. So that is another issue as well but anyway, it’s continuous. It’s never ending and I hate, hate hospitals and doctors. So I just feel like sometimes I don't want to go, I just deal with my shit myself. That’s it. (p. 6).

A study conducted by Antonipillai et al. (2017) found that the reforms to IFHP in 2014 contributed to confusion, which resulted in providers refusing to provide care to refugees, or asked refugees to cover financial costs of health care. As the author points out that because the province and health care organizations would cover the costs of emergency funds, refugee populations would delay seeking medical attention until it was an emergency. The IFHP continues to be a source of confusion and challenge for asylum seekers in Canada, as reflected through the stories’ of the participants. Although IFHP has its’ critiques, Jorge shared some positive experiences which legitimizes the existence of the type of insurance. IFHP allowed him

to undergo vital dental procedures, which would cover one out of two tooth extractions which were necessary for maintaining good health

Not only did participants relay experiences around accessing health services concerned with physical health, but also illustrated the lack of professional mental health support they received. Jorge was told twice that his hearing would be postponed, which led to waiting thirteen months for his refugee hearing. This delay caused him immense anxiety and depression, which was especially difficult at the time because he couldn’t find counselling services:

> Yeah, mental health wise, it was very difficult for me and I was on a waiting list for counseling for very, very long time. And even when I got it, you know, free counseling I mean right? Because I didn't have the resources to pay for counseling. But once I did there was only like two options to choose from, and I couldn’t go to one of those options because I was volunteering in the organization. So, I saw one counselor many times, outside of the counseling sessions, and it was uncomfortable for me to disclose too many personal things. (p. 3).

Despite not having too many issues around his own mental health, Wayne spoke to attending a couple of free counselling sessions that were being offered by Rainbow Refugee. Having the option for LGBTQI+ asylum seekers to access mental health services is hugely important, not just for those who fundamentally required it, but also for those who did not necessarily need it.

This lack of available professional mental health services prompted the research participants to search for them in other spaces. One main resource they looked to were support and counselling groups being offered for free, at organizations such as M.O.S.A.I.C. and rainbow Refugee. When looking for community around LGBTQI+ identities, Logan shared that having a support group was helpful:

> I really enjoyed meeting my friends there, and being able to know that these people are in your community, and they’re not just people, you can talk to them. And they will share their experience and you will share your experience and you can actually connect with

> them and make friends. And I think that was really really important because as a refugee you just feel so isolated. (p. 11).

In addition to Logan’s sentiments, Jorge and Wayne emphasized the importance of peer support groups to help with not only elevating their mental health, but also to create community connections. This finding supports the current literature which suggests that social support may lead to the contribution of better mental health and integration of LGBQI+ asylum seekers (Logie et al., 2016; Nakamura et al., 2017; Reading & Rubin, 2011).

The amalgamation of experiences from participants also support the research which suggests that LGBTQI+ newcomers are especially vulnerable to experiencing marginalization, shame, stigmatization, and difficulties when accessing competent mental health providers (Alessi, 2016; Khan et al., 2018, Logie et al., 2016). Many LGBTQI+ migrants, including the participants in this study, have tolerated the conditions they experience in Canada to avoid persecution in source countries.

Safer and affordable housing

As an LGBTQI+ asylum seeker, there are multiple barriers one must take into consideration when finding safer and affordable housing. All three participants shared their experiences of precarious, unstable, and unsafe housing. During the interview, Logan shares that:

> There were times that - since I looked for housing on my own – and as part of the LGBTQ community, there’s so many risks in terms of finding a house that are affordable, because affordable means that you will be sharing that house with someone else. And also, not just affordable but you’re a refugee trying to find an affordable place. When you’re a refugee, you don't have credit card, you don't have a co-signer that you may know in the country. You don’t have work, references, income, whatever. So finding a place was really difficult. (p. 8).

In one instance, Logan signed a lease with a person who was renting, and was not actually the landlord. This started to create tension since if there was an issue, he couldn’t contact the landlord directly. They shared that their roommate at the time was making unwanted sexual

advances towards them, which forced Logan to move out of their house. This would now have been the third or fourth time they were involuntarily removed from their home in a period of around one to two years.

> It was really difficult for me to find housing that was stable and a place that I could feel safe. As a person who is a refugee, you also have to think about how "if I need to leave this house, would they give me my damage deposit back?" Would they see little tiny things and tell me those were done by me when its not. It's really stressful, and yeah, I think I went without eating properly a lot of times. (p. 9).

This was not the first mention of sexual abuse from the participants, as Jorge shared his experience:

> So you know, at first glance, this guy that I was moving with, you know, he actually seemed okay. When I posted on Craigslist, I posted about my sexual orientation, because I wanted to feel, you know, safe, and that people would accept my identity and have no problem with it. He was like, "yeah I'm all for LGBTQ people. I'm straight, but I totally support it". But after the first two weeks of me being there with this guy, he started to sexually harass me. So that was very, very uncomfortable. He did some very bad things and he even threatened me. So, you know, at that time, I didn't know I could say… I really believed that he could do the things that he was threatening me with. I didn't know that I could say no to whatever so I felt kind of – I don't know if you can call it… Sexual abuse? But I did feel abused by him. And that was very uncomfortable. So, yeah. Luckily, those were just three months. And this guy turned out to be a whole mess like a very problematic person it seems. Anyways, I moved out from there. (p. 7).

The nightmare did not stop for him there, and was just the "beginning of [his] nightmares". When reaching out to an apartment, a landlord asked what his status was, and when he replied that he was a refugee from Ecuador, he was then questioned as to why he was claiming for asylum. It was then that Jorge was forced to out himself as gay once again, while the landlord proceeded to tell him that they would have to tell the people living at the house to ensure that everyone was comfortable. As indicated by Kahn and Alessi (2017), those who are seeking asylum based on their SOGIESC identity may be forced to come out, which can thus have effects on mental health and identity confusion.

The participant’s stories all support the current research which propose that refugees are reported to have fewer housing choices, especially because of affordability issues (Francis, 2009; Netto, 2011) with added barriers around race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, and sexual orientation (Bhattacharrya et. al, 2019). Although the Canadian justice system suggests that everyone within Canada is protected under law, in practice, many LGBTQI+ asylum seekers tend to stray away from pursuing legal battles because of their precarious status, and the lack of perceived recourse. Logan and Jorge were both discriminated against based on their racialized identities, statuses, and LGBTQI+ identities, which created increased challenges in the settlement process. Researchers have also provided evidence for landlords’ denying refugees housing opportunities based on discriminatory biases (Mensah & William, 2013; Murdie, Preston, & Ghosh, 2006; Netto, 2011; Teixeira, 2014; Wayland, 2007). Finding housing for refugees, especially those who identify as LGBTQI+, can have significant negative effects on received support in Canada, including but not limited to, decline in mental health and feelings of safety. Through the participant’s story-telling, CRT proposes that those who are racialized, as well as either gender or sexual minorities, are vulnerable to differential treatment (Einbinder, 2020).

Community and family relationships

Family relationships can be a fraught topic when brought up with LGBTQI+ asylum seekers. As mentioned previously, Logan hid their identity from their family due to the lack of understanding and knowledge around queer identities. Some may assume that because of a person’s cultural background, and their LGBTQI+ identity, their biological relatives may automatically dismiss them automatically, as coming from an “uncivilized” society, as opposed to a “civilized” society such as Canada (Murray, 2014). However, during the focus group, Jorge

spoke about his closeness with his family, and his need to see his family as soon as possible. As a refugee claimant, individuals often leave behind their family, and seek refugee status in a country. He relayed that part of the reasons why he chose to work three jobs was to save money to see his family, so when the day came that he would get protection and a travel document, he would be able to see them.

In situations where family support was either limited or not present, participants spoke to the benefits of social supports. The literature indicates that social supports may be indicators for better mental health and integration, by reducing social isolation, managing stress, and building a sense of empowerment to navigate the asylum-seeking process (Logie et., al, 2016; Nakamura et., al, 2017); Reading & Rubin, 2011). Wayne spoke about his best friend from Jamaica who offered him a space in their place in Kelowna upon arrival, as she has owed him some money prior to. This allowed him to use his income assistance for food, and eliminated the issue of finding safer and affordable housing. Jorge and Wayne talked about the difficulty of creating and fostering these relationships, especially with friendships in the lower mainland. Jorge shared that his friendships often do not go beyond a superficial level and shared, "People sometimes can be unkind, and it's not really easy to connect". (p. 2). He spoke to how although he felt he had more support with his LGBTQI+ identity and other community supports in Vancouver, he felt more lonely, and found it easier to make connections in Ecuador. Nakamura et al. (2017) offer that social supports must come from the intersection of LGBTQI+ and refugee identities, as someone may then not feel comfortable and experience possible hostility from these groups.

Although there was critique of Vancouver as a city that was unwelcoming, all participants spoke to the benefits of peer support and community groups specifically for LGBTQI+ immigrants and refugees. Peer support groups, and group counselling sessions were

all ways to help build a sense of community with other queer migrants. Through programs offered by M.O.S.A.I.C. and Rainbow Refugee in Vancouver, Wayne felt that he was properly supported with his mental health. When thinking about the I Belong group at M.O.S.A.I.C., Jorge had this to say:

> I felt so lively with you and a sense of community at I Belong and, you know, even when it was my hearing, I remember I Belong applauding after. And before the hearing, doing a circle to give me good vibes. Yeah, it was just so amazing. (p. 16).

While Logan recalled:

> I found that having a support group was really really helpful. I really enjoyed meeting my friends there, and being able to know that these people are in your community, and they’re not just people, you can talk to them. And they will share their experience and you will share your experience and you can actually connect with them and make friends. And I think that was really really important because as a refugee you just feel so isolated. You have no place to go for work, school you're not really going to any schools, if unless you are going to school and you’re claiming refugee but like if you're just coming here and you don't know anything - nothing. Right. No one to trust no one to do whatever and you know these people who want to sound like they are all saying the same place, you start opening up and you're still connecting and that was really helpful. I think I would have, had really bad mental health. It wasn’t that great, but it was better. It was better to have that. It was really helpful I would say. And I think that's one of the moments that I felt really connected to the place that I was in. Because when I was growing up I moved so many places on my own. So it just didn't really feel like I had a place to call home and felt really like I didn't belong somewhere but then, like the name I Belong -- I started belonging in it. I actually told many other people that I knew before I came out I actually felt like I knew more people like me than anywhere else I've been, which was really incredible. (p. 11).

For LGBTQI+ asylum seekers who have access to family, this can be a primary source of support. However, for those who have unreliable access, community can play an important role in providing the care that is missing in lieu of family. This often looks like creating peer support groups, as aforementioned, or through building relationships through informal channels. Many LGBTQI+ asylum seekers who have been persecuted or refused by their families and community

often create "chosen families", which is described by Knauer (2016) as a group of people whom you are emotionally close to and consider family, regardless of biological or legal relations.

Financial and food insecurity

Obtaining financial and food security was identified by all the participants, often through survival channels, which may include, but are not limited to, apply for income assistance or disability assistance, tapping into savings, or working under the table. Logan's expectations before coming to Canada did not completely align with what his reality was. Canadian policies and laws around immigration and LGBTQI+ identities seem considerably progressive on paper and through forms of media. The nation excels at promoting this notion of freedom; the freedom to be who you authentically are in a safe space. However, as we look deeper, we come to understand this to be false rhetoric, as delineated through Logan's experience. At the time, he was making an asylum claim from one of the countries that was on the Designated Countries of Origin (DCO) policy which was created to deter abuse of the refugee system of people who come from countries that are generally considered safe (Immigration and Citizenship, 2019). Prior to arriving in Vancouver, Logan had created a financial budget that was based on the DCO policy, and soon realized that this city was much more expensive than he realized. He started to become nervous, as he was running out of money, and could not afford his living situation for much longer, indicating that he was fearful of having to resort to working under the table again, coupled with the fear of having precarious status, and being deported. It is important to note that all the countries listed have been removed from the list, and the policy does not exist anymore. Thobani's (2007) concept of exalted subjects illustrates how in Canada, all non-Aboriginal populations have become nationals, or Others, through processes of migration – however, the unequal conditions through race and racism - organizing migrations allot different rights to

different populations. Although not in practice, the DCO policy is amongst many immigration policies which seek to uphold the state power by deciding who is worthy of entering the country through certain streams.

One participant had to wait three months until they received his work permit, and while they were getting income assistance, it was not enough. They recount their story:

> So I did have to work under the table part time to help me with some things, but I didn't have the best experience. I was a dishwasher in a restaurant. And because I was working under the table like they did whatever they wanted to do. So for example, one day they were like, oh you know, we haven't sold much today, so we can't pay you. So I worked two days without pay. But you know, the treatment wasn't the best. (p. 10).

One source of worry as mentioned by two participants was the food insecurity they experienced, often having to prioritize other basic needs, such as housing, over eating. When talking about finding safer and affordable housing, Logan shared “it’s really stressful, and yeah. I think I went without eating properly a lot of times”. (p. 9). One positive observation made by Wayne indicated his appreciation for the food bank, which was critically important support.

Legal aid

As mentioned by Lee (2015), those with precarious or no legal immigration status, such as those applying for asylum, often do not receive the same access to legal services as others. This notion held true for both Wayne and Logan through their asylum seeking processes, while seeking legal aid. From the participants’ perspectives, because their lawyer was being offered to them through legal aid, their contact with their lawyer was limited. This could be attributed to the high number of clients given to their lawyer, or the low pay to the lawyer. This meant that the precious time they had with their lawyer, they would try to ensure that they obtained all the information they needed. As an answer to legal aid support questions, Wayne replied “My lawyer was a gem actually, didn’t have much contact with him. I tried to ensure that I maximize

my contact during the preparation process”. He also spoke to accessing other resources, such as an LGBTQI+ refugee serving organization Rainbow Refugee, which helped to go through different stages of the process, and organize the evidence. Logan reported about the difficulties in their journey in obtaining legal aid, as it took around three months for the application to be processed and accepted. As asylum claims continued to increase from 16,592 in 2015 to 58,378 in 2019, the Government of Ontario cut all legal funding for refugee claimants in the province which only places more pressure on the demand of legal aid, where an estimate of 70% of refugee claimants rely on legal aid nationally (Smith et al., 2021). Only when they had they had the right resources were they able to meet with their lawyer for the asylum-seeking process. They found their lawyer to be helpful at the beginning and at the end of the process, but during the process, he was harder to get in contact with.

Organizations

While social and family support can be important to receiving support when making an asylum claim, all three participants spoke to the importance of organizations that offered services that could help with providing various resources. All three participants found having the support from more than one organization was necessary to address their needs. For example, Rainbow Refugee and Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (V.A.S.T) were helpful for their refugee claim process, while M.O.S.A.I.C.’s I Belong program was beneficial for making community connections, and attending to mental health needs. Logan spoke to how Trans Care BC, a provincial program for gender-affirming care, was advantageous when trying to find resources and support specifically around trans, non-binary and gender-diverse identities. One counselor at the Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo was particularly helpful, as they listened to Jorge’s story and connected him with services at Rainbow Refugee. One participant

reported that after volunteering for the organization which provided support with their refugee claim, they were hired as an employee.

While participants spoke mostly to the positive outcomes from organizations, there were stories of discrimination when accessing some. Organizations were only described as positive when they had a trauma-informed, and intersectional lens. Two participants spoke about experiences they had with organizations they thought they could trust, with help around housing and medical support. Logan shared their experience when accessing housing support at an immigrant and refugee serving organization.

> So one example that I remember was when I went to a housing support person at this organization. I asked them if I could get a Compass card to go back home and come back here, because they give those out at the end of the session if people need it. And, you know, they write it in a log and stuff like that, but I really needed it. I live quite far, and I wanted to come back and talk to people, and go back, and they were like "Do you really need it?". I was like, "Yeah, I need it". And then they were like, "Wait a second". And they stood up and went to the other cubicle where another worker was working, took me there, and asked that person, "Do you think he needs this? Do you think he needs the transit card?" I was like, what's going on? The other worker was also like… What's happening? Why are you asking that? Yeah, it was so odd and I know they're still the main houses core person there and I was just like, I am definitely not asking for help and support here, and this is the only place I know that does housing support everywhere. (p. 6).

Logan is from a country which would not be considered a country to flee from, however, because of their LGBTQI+ identity, they had to leave. The housing support worker hastily dismissed their need for resources, based on the assumption that their home country was safe. This study supports Flett's (2021) claims which states that organizations which offer programming and services to LGBTQI+ newcomer youth which only address one identity marker, will fail to address lived realities of this community, and offer only a blanket solution. Organizations who decide to be static in their service delivery may do an incredible disservice to all who are involved. This study may suggest that when organizations provide services and resources that

acknowledges full identities of an individual, in this case, with LGBTQI+ asylum seekers, this leads to a better sense of support, and therefore, overall wellness.

Geographical location

One theme that emerged when talking to participants was the concept of geographical locations as affected levels of perceived support. This could include anywhere from the individual’s country of origin, the country they were in before moving to Canada, or the city they landed in upon arrival and afterwards. Logan recalls advice from his lawyer to refrain from making a claim at any of the borders in Canada:

> One thing I would tell someone who's coming to Canada would be, don't go through the borders. Don’t come through the airport and claim status at the airport. Come into Canada first if you can. And I see why my lawyer had said that, after I came here. I did not really understand, the idea, because they kind of explained it but it makes a lot of sense to come to Canada, and then claim status, just because of how CBSA may treat you on the border and, you know. Yeah, very ignorant towards LGBT things. (p. 15).

Again, we can refer to Thobani’s (2017) exalted subjects, to highlight how the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) may take part in this idea of determining whether one might be worthy of making a claim in the country. When we consider that “the aliens who present themselves at the Canadian borders today come from countries that are among the most coveted sites for the operations of Canadian corporations” (Thobani, 2017, p. 71), we can deem this process to be intentional. A process created by global capitalism which relies on extracting and exploiting non-western countries through modes of trade, commerce, business, and surplus labour through migration practices; all operating under the guise of a liberal, progressive country. Logan continued to share about his worry about his Asian heritage. The assumptions made about someone’s country of origin demonstrates a lack of intersectional and critical

understanding of race, gender and sexual identities leads create barriers to receiving necessary supports.

Jorge and Logan both communicated that the reason for moving to Vancouver, versus other cities in Canada, was the access to resources, specifically LGBTQI+ services, which could be found in the metropolitan city. At the time of moving, Logan discussed how they had heard that Toronto was taking a lot of refugees at that time, and wait times might be longer. It was difficult for Jorge, as when he first arrived to Canada, he landed in Nanaimo, British Columbia.

He described a process of prioritizing one identity over the other, which meant choosing to move to Vancouver so that he would be feel more supported with his LGBTQI+ identity – after all, this was the main reason for moving.

> Nanaimo just felt very quiet, very not lively (laughs). When I visited on Vancouver I was like oh my god the city so lively, so beautiful, so many things and so many people. Diversity and all this stuff. And all these support from organizations to, you know like, I only went to Rainbow Refugee but they told me about other organizations, I was like, oh, there's so many places that I can receive support. So I was like, wow, that's amazing because you know I'm an extrovert so I like really connected with people and all that stuff. (p. 2).

However, even after feeling largely supported with his LGBTQI+ identity, moving to a larger city had its’ drawbacks. The urban city left him feeling less connected and lonelier, in comparison to his time in Nanaimo, sharing, “But then the longer I spent here in Vancouver, I realize is not really much of a friendly city.” Larger cities adopt a superficial notion of being welcoming, especially to those with diverse identities. Yet, we can see through examples such as those in this study, this may not be the reality. After residing in Kelowna, Wayne eventually made the move to Vancouver. However, he shared the difficulties in accessing services related to his refugee claim when he was living in Kelowna, as he would have to travel to Vancouver at times to move his process forward.

The notion of borders was brought up several times in conversation, whether that be between cities, provinces, or countries. As Walia (2014) suggests, borders are the intersection of systems of oppression, and that undoing border imperialism would mean a freer society for everyone. She argues that immigration laws criminalize migrants for going beyond state borders, and while the participants of this study have not been criminalized, they have been victims of criminal and oppressive interactions, policies and programs that arise from oppressive structures which reifies the divide between those with status and those without. In relation to pre- and post-arrival experiences, Jorge talked about his experiences of living in Ecuador and Canada, and how that affected the support he received when he moved. When living in Ecuador, he never experienced racism, and felt a sense of community with others. He spoke to how when he was living in Ecuador, he did not experience forms of racism, and felt a sense of community, but that he also experienced intense homophobia. In 1997, Ecuador decriminalized homosexuality and included sexual orientation in the anti-discrimination clause in the 1998 Constitution, which gave way to the recognition of same-sex civil unions and providing legal protection on the basis of gender identity in the 2008 Constitution (Lind & Keating, 2013). The authors note that in the same Constitution, Ecuador banned same-sex marriages and adoption. There has been a recent push for countries to legalize same-sex marriage, and as of 2019, Ecuador followed the trend and legalized same-sex unions. Similarly, Taiwan legalized same sex-marriages in 2019, making it the first country in Asia to change their laws. However, this legalization does not automatically make conditions safer for LGBTQI+ individuals, as seen in a study conducted in Taiwan where only one in five respondents changed their views on same-sex marriages after legalization (Rich et al., 2020). When he moved to Canada, discrimination on the basis of his sexual orientation was much less of an issue, however, racism and the feeling of a lack of community became the

focus of his concerns. As participants move across borders, we can see the ways in which countries organize marginalization in different and shared ways around homophobia and racism in service to global capitalism. It is through this examination of borders we can start to make the connection to globalized relations and inequalities between the North and South.

Garfield spoke to the experiences of issues around access to health care when moving from Toronto to Vancouver, and even across provincial borders, there were variations in accessing safe and competent health care as a LGBTQIA+ refugee claimant. Through transnational feminism, as presented by Falcón and Nash (2015), we can start to interrogate these issues from a global perspective, and how they intersect with our lives in Canada. Furthermore, we can look at these issues in Vancouver with a critical eye, recognizing that violence and discrimination operate as the result of the creation of borders, but are also not confined to the border limits. Borders function as a way to manage, surveil, and politicize populations, especially those with intersectional identities. Jorge experienced prejudice in Ecuador, but he also faced different forms of injustice within Canadian borders. Furthermore, we can look at these violent forms of discrimination through Thobani's (2007) exalted subjects' lens, which illuminates the power of the state to create national subjects which are deemed as superior, through the process of exaltation. White subjects are ascribed valorized characteristics which elevates these subjects as superior beings who should be natural inheritors of rights and entitlements. The Canadian government upholds power by enforcing rules for not only entering the country, but also upon arrival. Immigration laws and policies create a divide in the population, which deems some citizens as more worthy than others, which Leroux (2008) argues allows for the perpetuation of negative discourses of immigrants, and refugees, and legitimizes

unequal citizenship rights. What is the result of this? Violence in the form of racism, homophobia, and transphobia, as seen through Jorge and Wayne’s narratives.

Borders have historically been used as tools to manage, surveil and politicize populations, and the anecdotes from participants support these claims. According to Walia (2014), border imperialism is characterized by the entrenchment of controls against migrants who are displaced as a result of the violence of capitalism, and forced into precarious labour as a result. Precarious labour paired with inadequate, unsafe housing, limited legal protection, and transphobic health care work together to build extreme precarity for LGBTQI+ asylum seekers.

Violence and Discrimination

Bill C-16 was passed to amend the Canadian Humans Rights Act to include transgender Canadians from discrimination and hate crimes when the Liberal government came into power in 2016. Since then, the Canadian government has presented itself to other countries as a progressive liberal democracy when it comes to both immigration and LGBTQI+ rights and protections. This tactic known as “pinkwashing”, which originated to describe Israel’s attempt to conceal the violence against Palestinian’s by promoting their LGBTQI+ human rights. This has now since been used outside of Israel for other countries, particularly in the West (Blackmer, 2019). This concept of pinkwashing can be seen as being born out of homonationalism, a term recoined by Puar (2013) to describe the process of how some homosexual bodies are identified of being worthy of protection by nation-states, and is a critique of lesbian and gay rights discourses. Superficially, increases in safety may be constructed through change in laws, policies, and services. While this may be true, advocates have struggled with this avenue for progression as it may fuel a nationalism that services the interests of global capitalism. This is to

say that as countries in the global North begin to pass these supposedly forward-looking laws and policies, they are then viewed as more progressive than the global South.

Refugee claimants often come to Canada because of the liberal policies and protections that are in place for LGBTQI+ individuals. When asked why they chose Vancouver, Logan replied, “So I either found that Vancouver is one of the most trans friendly cities or that Canada is the most trans friendly country, I can't remember which one.” (p.4). This portrayal of a safe country for all races, genders, and sexual minorities is prevalent in the stories told by the participants. However, upon arrival in Canada, they started to question whether this was true. All three described experiences of homophobia, transphobia, racism and xenophobic, which ranged from microaggressions to acts of violence through racial slurs. Wayne shares two experiences where he was racially profiled as a Black man in two stores in Vancouver. He described being followed by a security guard at each store, and decided to confront both at the time to tell them to stop following him. Although Jorge acknowledges the privilege he’s afforded with his light skin, he has still experienced discrimination based on his nationality:

> Very recently on a dating app, probably less than two months ago, I received this message out of nowhere from someone I don't know. “Go back to South America invader. You come to Canada pretending you’re a student and never leave. Fuck Latino illegal aliens.” Out of nowhere I received that message on Grindr, which is dating app, gay dating app. And yeah, that was really that that really made me feel unsafe.
>
> And also, you know, at the at the airport I also had a bad experience. I was wearing my Ecuadorian mask and someone didn't like that I passed through them. When they were getting off the plane I accidentally went over someone, and he called me an asshole. And I said “What's wrong with you?” and we started to have an argument, but nothing too heavy, but then he started saying, “Oh, you know what, you're Latino but you know when you come to Canada, you need to abide by the way things are here” and, “You cannot behave like this”. Saying you need to learn how to be in Canada or you’ll be in trouble all that stuff. I have also been called a spick, which is a very racist slur for Latinos again in the gay community. When I was seeing someone and he didn’t really like something that I said and that’s the way they lash out at you. Calling you racist things. So maybe there aren't really racist but they really don't mind lashing out with racial slurs and things like

> that. But other than that, I feel lucky that only those three times which honestly just one of those was kind of serious. (p. 19).

Racism within the LGBTQI+ population is an ongoing critical issue that demands an analysis of the nuances of race, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Jorge also shared an instance of homophobia:

> Long story short, basically, I was, I was in an arcade place at Metropolis in Vancouver, and I was showing some you know PDA with this guy at the time. And not really kissing you know it was just you know holding hands, hugging each other and stuff like that. Somebody approached us and said, “You know what, this is a family oriented place and you cannot be doing this right here so if you're gonna do that, we'll ask you to leave.” That’s something that I, you know, that is not the right thing to do. So we complained. And, you know, it just got worse. I made a formal complaint to Metropolis mall and I followed through, but nothing happened really in terms of justice, but it was just pretty bad because in the argument we were having, they were like “Oh why do you need to show off. It's okay if you’re gay, but don't show it off like that you know and what about the kids you need to think about them” and I was like, “Am I in Ecuador or what? This is something that you hear in Ecuador, not in Canada”. (p. 18-19).

Other instances related to homophobia, transphobia, and status discrimination when accessing services such as health-care and finding housing are prevalent within the stories shared by the LGBTQI+ former asylum seekers in this study. Enns et al. (2021) state that transnational feminism seeks to destabilize notions that women and gender minorities around the world share the same experiences, oppressions, forms of exploitation and privileges by exploring the differences and inequalities between women and gender minorities. By highlighting the various forms of violence and discrimination LGBTQI+ asylum seekers experience, we can better understand the structural systems which exist that either privilege or further marginalize based on the unique identities individuals embody. Exacerbating power differences can help to critique these systems we identify, and in turn, will allow for us to resist colonial, capitalist, and imperialist forces.

Every conversation through the session either alluded to violence and discrimination, or was obvious through participant’s experiences. These forms of harassment all revolved around

either LGBTQIA+ identities, or immigration status. Canada is known as a country that is multicultural and accepting of all racial backgrounds, yet Jorge speaks to many post-arrival scenarios where he experienced racism, and *especially within the LGBTQIA+ community*. Several times he was told to "go back to his home country" through dating apps, such as Grindr, and places such as the airport, which are supposedly multicultural due to its' transit nature. Wayne retells the experiences of racism which are particular to being a Black man in Vancouver, where being followed in stores upon suspicion of stealing is a normal, albeit irritating, experience. These markers of violence and discrimination were prevalent in all experiences and conversation. Using CRT, we can postulate that although Canada may seem like a multicultural society, racism is still socially constructed within our systems. This is evident through the "us" vs "them" narrative which is in the form of racial slurs, which were experienced by the participants. Everyday racism upholds settler colonialism, with whiteness as the dominant norm which creates and organizes distinctions between groups.

Migration Timeline and Waiting Period

The participants all talked about their own migration timeline, and from that, arose the theme of the "waiting period". The asylum seeking process was described as an accumulation of multiple waiting periods – whether that be waiting for their eligibility interview, work permits, medical or legal aid appointments, or a refugee hearing date, there was this sense of eternal waiting. Logan outlined the experience:

> And when you're not working, and you're not doing anything, you really have to pay attention because you're only focused on your claim process and the waiting time is super long, even before COVID. Now it's even longer, which is even more stressful for people. (p. 13).

Prior to arriving to Canada, Jorge did not know that he had the option to make a refugee claim based on his LGBTQI+ identity, and was only given the information by a counsellor at his college. After starting the claim process, he had to wait 13 months before he got his refugee claim hearing, after several postponements, which caused him to feel depressed and anxious. Wayne shares his confusion for what the refugee claim process constituted:

> You know, for me, I think one of the biggest challenges was getting or knowing the process when you came and even though you saw what was there online. Maybe because I came at a precarious time during COVID, where everything was changing as well… But I tend to find similar experiences from others as well when just talking to others. (p. 29).

Wayne described several experiences of waiting for medical appointments, as he was originally living in Kelowna, as well as lengthy waiting times for a work permit, which was around a year.

These findings suggest that the waiting period is something that is common amongst LGBTQI+ asylum seekers, and can be a source of anxiety which may inhibit their ability to feel supported during the process. This waiting process can be added to the repertoire of examples from Thobani (2017), and Leroux (2008) which shines light on the unequal citizenship rights of racialized bodies. This research suggests that asylum seekers must continuously sit in waiting periods to form distinctions between their status and others who have entered through other streams.

Code Switching

As noted in the literature, LGBTQI+ newcomers must often navigate between several worlds at once, concealing one or more of their identities depending on the environment they're in and their perceptions of safety, as many experience violence and discrimination between their own cultural communities. Even within their own cultural community, issues move beyond

borders and can be examined through a global perspective as suggested through transnational feminism (Falcón & Nash, 2015).

This was especially highlighted by the experiences of Wayne, who noted:

> When you’re facing the Black community, which is not the Black LGBT community, just the Black community, I don't use say I'm gay or share that I'm an LGBTQ person, I just don't do it. Persons might come to Canada, and Canada is in, they say Canada is an inclusive society because, you know, yeah, they're all laws and policies are there for inclusion and that sort of thing and acceptance, but people might come into Canada, and they are – where their oppressors back home. Because many people are coming to Canada in different immigration streams, and they come into Canada doesn't make them inclusive, or accepting. So they are still the oppressors and they are still the ones who are homophobic. And you have to be careful in navigating these spaces what unique identifier or whatever you use. Right? (p. 21).

Logan shared that other than their ex-partner, many other people did not know they were going to Canada to claim for refugee status, and they had to conceal their identity from their family members. This was because of the taboo around queer identities in their cultural communities.

CRT can be used to examine the intersection of race and society, and how we produce discourse around cultural identities. For example, British histories of colonial rule show us that gender, race and sexuality were highly policed and regulated, creating deeply homophobic communities, societies and nations. Migrants are fleeing to the west from countries where homophobia was instilled by the west, only to face racism and homophobic slurs and violence once again (Wong, 2021). Colonial laws in many countries have created anti-LGBTQI+ discourse in white settler countries like Canada and elsewhere.

Higdon (2013) defines code-switching in their study as the strategy employed by individuals to adjust their behaviour or language within a specific context to accommodate to contextual norms, which may include changing their perceived gender, and sexual orientation. Code-switching can be seen as necessary for the safety of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers, and can be

the difference between survival and violence. However, because it may be a mechanism that is employed for survival purposes, it can have negative repercussions which may hinder individuals from being their authentic selves. As suggested in this study, it may inhibit LGBTQI+ asylum seekers from accessing services based on their SOGIESC.

Gratitude

The Canadian government has created a specific discourse around what an immigrant and refugee should be when they arrive. Thobani (2007) gives the example of how nation states, such as Canada, create narratives around racialized women; painting them as victims to oppressive cultures, and scrutinize them based on their willingness to adopt Canadian cultures, and their levels of solicitous gratitude towards nationals for allowing them in their country. This concept of gratitude legitimizes the state’s superiority above all other nations. A study by Iqbal et al. (2017) studied the emotional lives of Syrian refugee mothers in the first year of their resettlement in Canada, and found that despite being uprooted and separated from their homeland and families, these women expressed gratitude for refuge in Canada without solicitation from the researchers. Although Jorge, Wayne, and Logan did not explicitly express their gratitude for Canada as a country, they all spoke to their gratitude, or luck, for being ascribed characteristics that allowed them to better settle into Canada. As Logan was talking about the hardships they had gone through, on two separate accounts, they still expressed how *lucky* and privileged they felt for being able to speak English in a country where that is one of the national languages. Wayne described his *luck* for having resources in the form of social support when arriving to Canada which gave him access to safer and affordable housing. After sharing his experiences of racism in Canada, Jorge also compared himself to others, sharing, “Other than that I haven't experienced any racism luckily so I feel privileged because I know others who have experienced

way more than that, especially because they are people of color. So I definitely feel privileged, you know. Yeah." (p. 5). He also spoke to his luck after being outed to his roommates, and them accepting his identity.

To legitimize their control over the public, Canada has certain requirements for accessing resources and settling in. This can have the effect of ostracizing and shaming those who do not hold these qualities, or it may put pressure on those who possess these qualities to feel a sense of gratitude, and humility. These findings suggest that those who have increased sense of gratitude or luck, may decline to access services for additional support because of their privileged position.

COVID-19

In the pre-pandemic world, those seeking asylum based on their SOGIESC, similarly to Jorge and Logan, were presented with unique barriers to accessing appropriate supports to helping with the transition of life in Canada. However, after the pandemic, COVID-19 has created economic and social disparities across different communities, and more so, research suggests there is a link between COVID-19 and insecurities experienced by LGBTQI+ populations (Camminga, 2021; Newman et al., 2021). Logan and Jorge both work in positions which support other LGBTQI+ immigrants and refugees like themselves, and spoke to the difficulties that COVID-19 created, including longer wait times for everything. Logan shared, "Because things are virtual, I noticed that, you know, some members can't go online from home because their roommates don't know about them. Or they're homophobic or transphobic." (p. 15).

The longer wait times was confirmed by Wayne's experience of making a refugee claim during the pandemic. He mentioned that challenges included a lack of accessible information, and longer wait times when accessing crucial resources, such as work permits and medical professionals. When asked about the refugee determination process, Wayne replied:

Long, and drawn out because of I don’t think IRCC was prepared. Like most organizations weren’t prepared for COVID, or emergencies. That sort of thing. And I think other systems of immigration, they were a bit more technologically advanced, for example: Express entry. The asylum claimant system seems like a paper base. You know, so there was not even an online system to apply to. You had to send an email and that sort of thing which seems very traditional, so to speak. And that really created a backlog and people had to wait so long to even apply. Because I came in February, I could have applied if I had wanted to then. But it took me until April to sort it out and understand what the different processes were, because it has changed. And it took me like going to M.O.S.A.I.C., and Rainbow Refugee, to really understand, what the change in the process was like. So that was a bit confusing. There was a wait as well during COVID, driving down from Kelowna to Vancouver, because there's no online system well. So for example, I had to come down to do medical because the number of doctors in Kelowna was very little bit so I was waiting three or four months for an appointment to see a doctor. (p. 16).

Not all was perceived to be negative for the participants during COVID-19. One of the main supports that proved to be positive for Wayne was the financial assistance the Government of Canada offered to newcomers, temporary residents, and refugees.

COVID-19’s exacerbation of lack of resources available for LGBTQI+ refugees is a result of racially motivated policies and laws which gatekeep resources, and keep the power in the hands of the state. It is from the praxis of communities who hold CRT central to their activism to advocate for and with LGBTQ+ immigrants and refugees, which pushed the government to provide support for LGBTQI+ newcomers.

Chapter 5: Implications for Future Social Work Praxis, and Conclusion

Where do we go from here?

LGBTQI+ immigrants and refugees are communities with endless multifaceted identities. The unique identities which individuals of this group hold expose the interlocking ways oppression and marginalization operate in white settler nations. As the current literature stands, research has been conducted generally on the LGBTQI+ immigrant and refugee population, or with hyper specific subpopulations of LGBTQI+ newcomer populations. While general LGBTQI+ immigrant and refugee studies may help to add cohesiveness to the literature, and allow for comparison, it may miss the mark on sharing nuances of ethnic sexual and gender minorities by being too homogenous. On the other hand, focusing on specific identities may offer the benefit of sharing the diversity within this population, it may also be too hyper focused, where findings may only be applied to specific groups. The population’s unique identities which lead to incredible difference may be one of the contributing factors to the immense gaps in literature. Additionally, because experiences of LGBTQI+ newcomers have been historically negative and discriminatory, this may lead to the lack of funding and interest of research in this field. However, as activists continue to create change for LGBTQI+ migrants, we are starting to see a push for increased measures of legal protection and care, as well as shifts in attitudes.

Each participant shared their own pre- and post-migration stories, which powerfully highlighted the general theme of violence and discrimination. All participants reported having experienced homophobia, transphobia, racism, and xenophobia when accessing supports for their settlement needs, especially around employment, health-care, housing, community and family relationships, financial and food sources, legal aid, and organizations. Additional factors which

challenged their ability to settle included geographical location and land borders, varied levels of violence and discrimination, waiting periods, code switching, gratitude, and COVID-19. Despite these incredible barriers and challenges, each participant expressed the importance of community and organization support. The more support they received from peers and organizations, the better their mental and physical health was, and the more connected they felt to community.

The past, the present, the future: Implications for moving forward

What does this all mean moving forward? It means that regardless of if the research is concerned with the overarching LGBTQI+ population, or hones into specific identities, all this research is valuable, seeing as the current landscape holds very little. Although there was valuable information shared in my findings, there are also limitations to research and its’ ability to offer evidence. My original research question included comparing the Greater Toronto Areas to Greater Vancouver areas. As the time was limited for preparing, recruiting participants, holding focus groups and interviews, analyzing the data, and presenting the information in an academic paper, I was advised to limit the scope of my topic to only include British Columbia as a population. Additionally, I was only able to recruit a small population which was represented by the modest sample size. As I recognize the limitations to this study, this study is not meant to offer definitive proof of my findings. This research is meant to offer further insight into this community and suggest further questions and possible places of future research on this topic. My hope is that it will be a contribution to the field of work with LGBTQI+ immigrant and refugees, and can be used to make policy change.

Although there are large gaps in scholarship in this research, my hope is that this research has contributed to illuminating the voices of LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers, which will

allow for future academics to create a more comprehensive understanding of the community and their unique challenges. Through the project, I was able to connect with community members, and engage in valuable knowledge production through experiences and story-telling. As I continue to work within the field, I am continuously inspired by all those around me who are passionate about this field of work. As this project draws to a conclusion, I do not see it as an ending, and rather, just the beginning of community and academia coming together in solidarity to advance the rights of LGBTQI+ immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Work Plan

PROJECT NAME	Am I in Ecuador or what? This is something that you hear in Ecuador, not in Canada: First-hand Experiences of LGBQTI+ Asylum Seekers in British Columbia	END DATE	December 31st, 2024

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	START DATE	END DATE
Preparation	• Preparation of materials • Recruitment of participants • Forms sent to participants (e.g. informed consent form)	January 1st, 2022	February 1st, 2022
Data Collection	• Conducting focus groups • Collecting materials for policy analysis	February 1st, 2022	February 14th, 2022
Data Coding	• Transcription of data • Coding of the data collected from focus group through QDA Miner Lite	February 14th, 2022	March 7th, 2022
Data Analysis	• Analysis of data collected from focus group • Analysis of materials for policy analysis	March 7th, 2022	March 21st, 2022
Writing and Review	• Synthesizing, writing and review of research practice paper	March 21st, 2022	April 30th, 2022
Submission	• Submit practice research paper for approval	April 30th, 2022	----
Publication?	• Possible opportunity for publication of findings	----	December 31st, 2024

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Appendices

MRP PROTOCOL:
RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

INSTRUCTIONS:

A. Who should complete this Protocol Form?

This form should be completed by Graduate Students conducting research involving human participants for the purposes of a Major Research Paper (MRP).Research activities generally include-– but are not limited to - experiments, interviews, surveys, focus groups and participant observation**.** Copies of approved protocols should be kept on file by the student researcher for a period of 2 years.

B. Who Should NOT complete this form?

1. **Graduate or Undergraduate Students conducting research for a course in which everyone in the class is conducting the same research should NOT complete this form**:

   For courses in which all students are conducting the same/similar studies, Course Instructors only should complete the:
   Generic Protocol: Course Related Research Involving Human Participants

   Please consult your Course Instructor for further information.

2. **Graduate or Undergraduate students conducting individual projects as part of a course assignment should NOT complete this form:**

   For courses in which graduate or undergraduate students are completing individualized research studies as part of a course assignment; or for the purposes of an undergraduate theses or individual projects, students should complete the:
   Individualized Protocol – Course Related Research Involving Human Participants

3. **Students conducting research that must be reviewed by the HPRC should NOT complete this form.** To determine whether **your research must be reviewed by the HPRC,** please answer the following questions:

   a. **Is your research funded?** ☒ N ☐ Y
   (Funded research refers to stand alone research funding and excludes student awards such as bursaries and scholarships.)

   b. **Is your research more than minimal risk?** ☒ N ☐ Y
   (What is minimal risk research? If potential participants can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the participant in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research then the research can be regarded as within the range of minimal risk)

   c. **Does your research involve Aboriginal/Indigenous/Indigenous Peoples?**
   ☒ N ☐ Y

The following questions may assist in determining whether your research involves Aboriginal/Indigenous/Indigenous peoples:

(i) Will the research be conducted on Aboriginal/Indigenous land (Canada; international) for which permission and/or approval from an authority (such as a band council, First Nations Research Ethics Board etc.) may be required?	☒ N	☐ Y
(ii) Will recruitment criteria include Aboriginal/Indigenous identity as either a factor for the entire study or for a subgroup of the study?	☒ N	☐ Y
(iii) Will the research seek input from participants regarding an Aboriginal/Indigenous peoples' cultural heritage, artefacts, or traditional knowledge?	☒ N	☐ Y
(iv) Will research in which Aboriginal/Indigenous identity or membership in an Aboriginal/Indigenous community be used as a variable for the purpose of analysis of the research data?	☒ N	☐ Y
(v) Will interpretation of research** results refer to Aboriginal/Indigenous communities, peoples, language, history or culture?	☒ N	☐ Y

*(**NOTE:** "Research" does not include literary criticism and/or history (excluding oral history) and/or primarily textual activities). If you have answered **'Yes' to any of the above noted questions**, then your research involves Aboriginal/Indigenous/indigenous peoples and must be reviewed and approved by the HPRC.*

d.	**Does your research involve Clinical Trial(s)?**	☒ N	☐ Y
e.	**Does your research involve Animals?**	☒ N	☐ Y
f.	**Does your research involve Biological Agents?**	☒ N	☐ Y
g.	**Does your research involve Invasive procedures?**	☒ N	☐ Y
h.	**Does your research involve collection of human bodily fluids?**	☒ N	☐ Y
i.	**Does your research involved radioactive material?**	☒ N	☐ Y

NOTE: If you have answered "**yes"** to any of the questions noted above, **then this is NOT the correct form.** You are required to complete the HPRC protocol form and submit to the HPRC for review. Please contact the Office of Research Ethics (ore@yorku.ca) or 416-736-2100 ext 55201 for further assistance.

C. Does this research require any other approvals?

Research involving another institution (such as a school, university, business, government agency) may require additional ethics review and approval or permissions if using institutional resources (such as internal listservs, or conducting interviews on the premises of the institution).

a) Does the research involve another institution or site? ***If Yes:*** Specify the institution(s)/site(s):	☒ N	☐ Y
b) Do any of the institution(s)/site(s) require administrative permission?	☒ N	☐ Y
c) Has any other REB cleared this project? ***If Yes**, please submit the original application and provide a copy of the clearance letter.*	☒ N	☐ Y

NOTE: If the research is to be conducted at a site requiring ethics approval or administrative permission, please include all draft informed consent forms/administrative permission requests. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine what other means of clearance are required, and to obtain clearance prior to starting the project.

D. Who do I contact and where do I submit the MRP Protocol - Research Involving Human Participants?

To find the appropriate contact within your Department, Graduate Program and/or

Faculty/School/College to submit the protocol, Researchers (Course Instructors or Students) must consult the "Chart of Contacts – Delegated Ethics Review Committees".

Faculty and students conducting course-related research requiring ethics review in any of the units not listed in the chart should contact the Office of Research Ethics (ore@yorku.ca) or 55201 for further information.

E. How long will the review process take?

The average time to process minimal risk protocols is approximately twenty working days from the date of receipt by the Delegated Research Ethics Review Committee.

NOTE: INCOMPLETE OR ILLEGIBLE PROTOCOLS WILL BE RETURNED TO THE RESEARCHER, WHICH WILL DELAY THE ETHICS REVIEW PROCESS.

F. Research Ethics Guidelines:

Researchers are encouraged to review the various Research Ethics Guidelines to address any research specific questions they may have. Please visit the Research Ethics website to review **Research Ethics Guidelines** that may be relevant to your research.

MRP PROTOCOL FORM:

PART A – COURSE INFORMATION

Student Name:	Kiana Reyes		
Student Number:	218532747		
Program:	Masters of Social Work (Advanced Standing)		
Email:	kianareyes@gmail.com		
Phone Number:	778-558-5802		
Faculty Advisor	Anne O'Connell		
Email:	aoconnell@yorku.ca		
Office:	Ross Building, S832		
Phone Number:	416-736-2100 Ext. 66673		
Title of Research Project*:	An Uphill Migration Battle: First-hand Experiences of LGBTQIA+ Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the Greater Vancouver and Toronto Areas		
Start date:	January 1, 2022	**End Date:**	December 31, 2022
PRIVACY: *Personal information in connection with this form is collected under the authority of The York University Act, 1965 and will be used for educational, administrative and statistical purposes. If you have any questions about the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by York University, please contact: Office of Research Ethics, Kaneff Tower, Fifth Floor, 416 736 5201*			

PART B – EDUCATIONAL ELEMENT

In order to conduct research involving human participants, you are required to:

- Familiarize yourself with York University's "Senate Policy Research Involving Human Participants" as well as the basic principles by which ethical research involving human participants is conducted. (E.g. lecture, case study, test etc.).
- Review the "Student Researcher Responsibility Document"
- Complete the TCPS 2 Tutorial – Course on Research Ethics (CORE)

Please confirm the following:

☒ I have reviewed and am familiar with the "Senate Policy Research Involving Human Participants"
☒ I have reviewed and am familiar with the "Student Researchers Responsibility" Document"
☒ I have completed the TCPS tutorial. TCPS Tutorial Certificate is attached

PART C - PROTOCOL DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

Please attach the following items, if applicable, to the ***MRP Protocol: Research Involving Human Participants*** application.
NOTE: Please ensure ALL fields in this application are filled out. For sections that apply please mark with an "x"; for sections that do **not** apply, please mark as "n/a".

Incomplete forms will not be accepted for review.

1. ALL protocol forms must have the following documents attached:

a) An informed consent form (or multiple consent forms and/or assent forms if relevant)
b) Certificate of completion of the CORE (TCPS) ethics tutorial

2. Consent documents (check all that are applicable):

x	Written Informed Consent form
	Substitute Consent form (Parental/Guardian consent) — required if your research participants are under 16 years of age or without capacity to consent.
	Assent Form — required if your research involves substitute consent
	Verbal Consent Script — required if you plan to seek verbal consent for any of the research participants
	On–line Consent Script — required if participants are asked to consent online
	Consent for Audio/Visual/ Taping Form — required if you plan to use audio recording or photographs of participants. This may be included in the regular consent form as an additional check box.

3. External permissions and approvals (if applicable):

	Decisions Needed From Other REB Boards — required if your research requires ethics approval from an institution other than York University
	External REB approval required – certificate attached
	External institutional permission required – documentation provided
	Internal institutional permission/approval required (e.g., OIPA) – documentation provided
	Medical Directive
	Research Agreement(s) – append all copies
	Data Use Agreements (for use in secondary data analysis)

4. Test Instruments (if applicable):

	Questionnaires and Test Instruments
x	Draft interview questions, focus group questions

5. Recruitment (if applicable):

x	Recruitment Materials: Posters, Letters, Participant Pool Advertisement, etc.

6. Debriefing (if applicable):

	Debriefing Letter – required if your research involves deception (see section 10, Informed Consent form for details)
	Debriefing Consent Document – required following administration of debriefing statement (if your research involves deception)

7. OTHER (if applicable):

	Reviewed: Clinical Trial Research Guidelines
	Provenance of Anonymous data
	Research Team Member Confidentiality Agreement
	Participant Images Informed Consent Addendum

PART D – RESEARCH INFORMATION

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In layperson's terms, please provide a general and brief description of the research (e.g., hypotheses, goals and objectives, etc.).

The goal of my research is to understand the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, intersex, asexual/aromantic (LGBTQIA+) refugees and asylum seekers upon their first year of arrival in Canada. This will give valuable conext to whether or not these communities feel properly supported through the health care system, housing, mental health, by service providers, and in overall perceived support.

2. PARTICIPANTS

a.) **State who the participant(s) will be:** *Describe the participants that will be recruited and about whom personal information will be collected (i.e., numbers, age, special characteristics, etc.). Describe the size of the group from which participants will be recruited and the estimated number needed for the research (minimum/maximum). Where active recruitment is required, please describe inclusion and exclusion criteria. Where the research involves extraction or collection of personal information, please describe from whom the information will be obtained and what it will include (include permission letters).*

The participants I will be recruiting must satisfy the criteria of LGBTQIA+ refugees and former asylum seekers who have been in Canada for at least one year. I will be recruiting approximately 8-10 individuals who will be above 18 years of age.

In the context of the Greater Vancouver area, the researcher has access to potential participants through previous research, and work connections (MOSAIC). However, the researcher's relationship is loose, peripheral, and has no influence over the individual's daily lives or access to current settlement and LGBTQIA+ services.

In the context of the Greater Toronto area, the researcher does not have a relationship with potential participants, and will be accessing these individuals through previous work connections with existing settlement organizations (e.g. OCASI).

b.) Please indicate if this study will be using a participant pool ☒ N ☐ Y

If 'Yes', please indicate which pool(s):

- ☐ URPP
- ☐ Schulich Marketing pool
- ☐ School of Administrative Studies participant pool
- ☐ KURE
- ☐ Glendon Participant Pool
- ☐ Other:

3. RECRUITMENT

a) How will participants be recruited (e.g., snowball technique, random sampling, previously known to interviewer, telephone solicitation, etc.)? Previously known to the interviewer, as well as reaching out to LGBTQIA+ settlement organizations in Vancouver and Toronto.

b) Will you be using any advertisements, flyers, posters, email scripts, social media postings, etc. for recruitment purpose?

☒ N

☐ Y - ***If 'Yes,'*** *please attach a copy of each with your application.*

4. INDUCEMENTS:

a) Will you be offering inducements to participate (e.g., money, gift certificates, academic credit, etc.)?

☒ N
☐ Y - ***If 'Yes,'*** *please check all that apply:*

- ☐ Financial
- ☐ In-kind
- ☐ Draw
- ☐ Participant Pool Bonus Points
- ☐ Other:

b) If compensation is provided, please provide the source of funding for the compensation/incentive:

x

5. METHODS:

a) Please indicate all the research methods that apply:

☐ Action Research	☐ Ethnography
☐ Observation	☐ Survey
☐ Documentary/Filmmaking	☒ Focus Group
☐ Experimental Lab Study	☐ Interview
☐ Oral/Life History	☐ Human Tissues
☐ Experimental Behavioural Study	☐ Online Research
☐ Other:	

b) Do any of the methods involve:

Audio Recording	☒ N	☐ Y
Still Recording	☒ N	☐ Y
Video Recording	☐ N	☒ Y

NOTE: *Explicit consent is required to use these methods of recording. Please see Section 10, "Informed Consent" for details.*

i) If you are using recordings, please account for how they will be safely stored, eventually destroyed or archived, and how, if used in research dissemination, confidentiality will be maintained: This study will use Zoom to collect data, which is an externally hosted cloud-based service. Upon completion of focus groups, recordings (video) will be saved in a folder titled "PRP" on the researchers password protected personal laptop. The recordings will be saved on my personal laptop, which will be password protected. Once I have collected the initial recordings, I will be transfering this information to a USB flash drive, which will be password protected. I will be the only person who has access to this information. The transcripts and recordings will be kept until December 31st, 2024.

c) What will be required of the participant(s). *Clearly specify in a step-by-step outline exactly what the participant(s) will be asked to do in each methodology. A separate outline is required for each methodology. Include the settings, types of information to be involved, and how data will be analyzed. Include details about identifying participants, recruitment, procedures participants will undertake, etc. Include copies of study instruments. Please also include the estimated time commitment required of participants for each method.*

-The researcher will recruit participants through existing settlement organizations who have access to LGBTQIA+ participants
-The researcher will ensure that participants are able to speak conversationally in English to participate in the project, to ensure full consent is possible

-The consent form will be provided in advance through e-mail for informational purposes. They will not be required to print or sign the form. At the beginning of the focus group, all participants will be required to provide their verbal consent. This will be done by each participant reading a statement noting they will be providing informed consent, not waiving any legal rights, and that they consent to audio-recording. This will ensure there are no paper or signed electronic email records linked to the participant.
-The focus groups will be held online through Zoom. The Zoom link to the focus group, as well as general information regarding the study, will be sent ahead of time
-Group will be held online through a password protected Zoom room
-Prior to attending the focus group, the researcher will ask if the participants would like to be named and remain on camera for the duration of the session. If the participant would like to remain anonymous, the researcher will ask how the would like to be addressed in the session
-At the beginning of the focus group, the researcher will review general information about the study, the consent form, and open conversation about group confidentiality to set guidelines. The participants will have the option to change their name in advance and may turn off their cameras off at any point during the focus group for confidentiality. In addition to the consent form, the researcher will state that all questions are optional, and participants may skip any questions they are not comfortable answering
-All focus group participants will be informed that while the researcher can guarantee anonymity, all focus group participants must protect the identities of one another and not share the identities of other participants
-All participants will be informed and agree that they are not permitted to record the focus group on their own devices as this may be a potential risk of Zoom focus groups.
-The researcher will collect data through conversational interviewing, which will be recorded through the Zoom recording function via the closed captioning tool. Zoom will extract the transcription and video recording of participants
-The researcher will review each Zoom transcript for accuracy and de-identify each transcript. All participants name mentioned, any specific names of service organizations/service providers, and any other potentially identifying information will be removed from the transcript.
-The focus group will not be more than 2 hours in length
-The researcher will manually correct transcriptions, and code the conversation from Zoom transcripts and video recording, and code the data from the transcript
-The findings will be included in the practice research paper
-The video recordings and transcripts will be kept on a password protected USB until December 31st, 2024 to give the researcher time to complete the practice research paper and have opportunity for publishing findings

d) What is the experience of the researcher/research team with this kind of research?
Please provide a description of the individual team members' experience with the proposed methods, participant population, etc.
The main and sole resercher was employed as a research assistant in their undergraduate degree at the University of Victoria. They have both participated and facilitated focus groups with the participant population in the Greater Vancouver area for previous studies conducted by UBC. The researcher is familiar with the LGBTQIA+ immigrant and refugee population in the Greater Vancouver area, due to their work directly with participants, and has access to this population through professional connections in the Greater Toronto area.

6. RISK:

Please indicate potential risks that the participants as individuals or as part of an identifiable group or community might experience by being part of this research project *(***NOTE:** *Checking 'Minimal' indicates that the risk associated with the method meets the definition of minimal risk as set out in the TCPS-2)*:
☐ **No known/anticipated risks**
☒ **Y – *If 'Yes,'* please complete the following:**

a) Physical risks (including any bodily contact; administration of any	☒ N	☐ Y

	substance)?		
b)	Psychological/emotional risks (feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, anxious, upset)?	☐ N	☒ Y
c)	Social risks (including possible loss of status, privacy and/or reputation)?	☐ N	☒ Y
d)	Data security (i.e., risk to participant from data exposure)?	☐ N	☒ Y
e)	Tied to deception involved in the study? (See DEBRIEFING section below)	☒ N	☐ Y
f)	OTHER:		

Please describe how each of the potential risks described above will be managed and/or minimized: There are no anticipated physical risks to participants. Focus group members will be asked to keep the information provided in the groups confidential; however, a potential risk that might exist for some would be that information about you might be discussed outside the group by other participants and be traced back to you. The researcher will be reiterating the agreements to safety in the group, including the importance of confidentiality and privacy. The researcher will repeatedly check in with the group, as well as provide a list of resources and free supports for individuals that are available prior to, and upon completion of study. Data collection through the Zoom platform poses data security risks. The researcher will ensure that all data collected will be stored on a password protected laptop, and password protected USB as steps to mitigate a breach in data collection security. Data will be kept until December 31st, 2024 to ensure there is time for findings to be published, and after will be destroyed.

7. BENEFITS

What, if any, are the benefits to the participants? **Or, ☐ No benefits**

a) Discuss any potential direct benefits to the participants from their involvement in the project; these might include education about research methods, useful knowledge gained about self, etc. There may be a sense of community formed with group members, as well as creating a safer space where participants may feel their identities wholly represented, and to share their stories and experiences. This project gives the opportunity for participants to reflect on their stories and experiences, as well as participate in knowledge production. The outcomes of the research may also lead to policy reform in directly favour of LGBTQIA+ refugees and asylum seekers.

b) Comment on the (potential) benefits to the scientific/scholarly community or society that would justify involvement of participants in this study.
As there is minimal scholarly research on this group, the scholarly community and society would greatly benefit from the study. Policy reform to protect this community may create a more equitable and just society.

8. SECONDARY ANALYSIS OF DATA:

NOTE: Secondary Data Analysis is described as the analysis of data collected for a purpose other than that for which it was originally collected in order to pursue a research interest which is distinct from that of the original work. Researchers are advised to review the "**Secondary Data Analysis Guidelines**" for further information on requirements related to use of secondary data for research purposes.

a.) Are you conducting secondary data analysis?
☒ N – *If 'No,'* please go to Question 9
☐ Y

If 'Yes,' please answer the following questions:

i) Are you using **Anonymous Data**? (data which never included personal identifiers)

☐ N
☐ Y - ***If 'Yes,'*** please provide a description of the provenance of the data set:

NOTE: *Research that relies **solely** on secondary analysis of anonymous data is exempt from ethics review.*

ii) Are you using **Anonymized data**? (Data which has been stripped of personal identifiers; no potential for data linkage.)
☐ N
☐ Y - ***If 'Yes,'*** please provide a description of the provenance of the data set:

iii) Are you using **Identifiable data**?
☐ N
☐ Y - ***If 'Yes,'*** please provide a description of the provenance of the data set:

b.) If you are conducting secondary analysis using IDENTIFIABLE DATA, please address the following:

i) Do you plan to link this identifiable data to other data sets?
☐ N
☐ Y - ***If 'Yes,'*** please describe:

ii) What type of identifiable data from this data set are you planning to access and use?
☐ Student records (please specify in the space below)
☐ Health records/clinic/office files (please specify in the space below):

☐ Other personal records. Please specify:

iii) What personally identifiable data (e.g., name, student number, telephone number, date of birth, etc.) from this data set do you plan on using in your research? Also, please explain why you need to collect this identifiable data and justify why each item is required to conduct your research.

iv) Describe the details of any agreement you have, or will have, in place with the owner of this data to allow you to use these data for your research. ***(You must submit a copy of any data use/access agreements.)***

v) When participants first contributed their data to this data set, were there any known preferences expressed by participants at that time about how their information would be used in the future?
☐ N
☐ Y - ***If 'Yes,'*** please explain:

vi) How will you obtain consent from the participants whose identifiable data you will be accessing? Please explain:

NOTE: *Consent of participants is required for research involving secondary analysis of data that includes personal identifiers. Waiver of consent may only be considered if researchers meet the additional criteria. Please consult the **Secondary Data Analysis guidelines** for further information.*

vii) If you do ***not*** intend to seek consent of participants for use of identifiable data for secondary analysis, please provide a rationale as to why:

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

a) Is there a possibility of an apparent, actual or potential conflict of interest on the part of researchers, the University or sponsors? (e.g. commercialization of research findings; self-funded research)

☒ N
☐ Y - ***If 'Yes,'*** *please elaborate and outline how the potential or real conflict of interest will be addressed*:

b) Do any members of the research team have multiple roles with potential participants (such as researcher and therapist, researcher and teacher, student/supervisor, etc.)

☒ N
☐ Y **- *If 'Yes,'*** please review **Research Involving Investigators' Students**

i) Describe the nature of the multiple roles between researcher(s) and any participants:

ii) Describe how the potential conflict of interest that will emerge as a result of the dual roles will be minimized or managed:

c) Are there any restrictions regarding access to or disclosure of information/results/data at any point during the study including completion that the funder/sponsor has placed on the researchers? (These include controls placed by sponsors, funding sources, advisory or steering committees.) ***If 'Yes,'*** please describe:

10. INFORMED CONSENT

a) Is there a relationship between participants and either of the following:

Person obtaining consent:	☐ N	☒ Y
Investigator(s):	☐ N	☒ Y

If 'Yes,' *what steps will be taken to avoid the perception of undue influence in obtaining free and informed consent:*
In the context of the Greater Vancouver area, the researcher has access to potential participants through previous research, and work connections. However, the researcher's relationship is loose, peripheral, and has no influence over the individual's daily lives or access to current settlement and LGBTQIA+ services.

In the context of the Greater Toronto area, the researcher does not have a relationship with potential participants, and will be accessing these individuals through previous work connections with existing settlement organizations.

The researcher will be require participants to review and sign a consent form for the study. The consent form will be discussed at the beginning of the focus group. The researcher is in a role, such as a supervisory or service provider position, to influence a participants' decision to consent to study.

The consent form states clearly that participation in the study is completely voluntary and an individual may choose to stop participating at any time. Their decision to not volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship they may have with the researchers, or the nature of their relationship with York University either now, or in the future. The consent form states that participation in the study will also not impact the individual's access to current or future services.

b) Ongoing consent is required if the research occurs over multiple occasions or over an extended period of time. Does the research occur over multiple occasions and/or over an extended period of time?

☒ N
☐ Y

***If 'Yes,'** please describe the process of how you intend to obtain ongoing consent:*

c) Is substitute consent involved (e.g., children, youths under 16, those without capacity to consent)?

☒ N
☐ Y

***If 'Yes,'** please elaborate on how consent and assent will be obtained (an assent form/ script must also be provided):*

d) Is Deception involved? Specifically, do you intend to withhold any information from and/or intentionally mislead the research participants?

☒ N – Please go to Question E
☐ Y

If 'Yes:'

i) Please provide a description of the nature of the deception and whether it is full or partial:

Please provide a rationale as to why deception (in whole or part) is required:

ii) Please append a copy of the debriefing statement.

The debriefing statement needs to explain three elements:

(i) Why the experiment was developed and why the deception was necessary.

(ii) What the current research says about the topic, which includes providing two references (text, article, on-line reference) that the participants can reasonably access and understand (if you have an academic and non-academic population, you may need to provide more than one version of the debriefing statement or make sure that the references can be accessed by the least educated of the population).

(iii) Any additional resources that would be useful for the participant. Resources need to be appropriate and accessible for the participants. For example, if you are conducting a study on parenting, you could include community resources for parenting classes or recommendations for parenting guides. (Source: Univ. Virginia, IRB).

Researchers must re-obtain consent from the participants once the debriefing statement has been provided. Participants shall be provided with and sign the **"Debriefing Consent Form."**

iii) If a debriefing statement will not be provided to the participants, please provide a rationale as to why a statement will not be provided:

iv) For studies that are not deceptive, briefly describe the process and nature of any immediate post-study information that will be provided to participants and the rationale for providing this information (e.g., counseling or trauma resources, information links, etc.):

e) How will informed consent be obtained? (Please check all that are applicable):

☒ Informed Consent Form (please attach draft version) (and assent form if relevant)

☐ Verbally* (please attach draft approximation of what participants will be verbally told)

☐ Online Consent Form** (please attach draft version)

If informed consent is being obtained verbally, please provide a rationale regarding why a written informed consent form is not being used:

If online consent is being obtained, please indicate the website where the questionnaire/ survey will be hosted:

11. DATA SECURITY:

Privacy refers to an individual's right to be free from intrusion or interference by others. It is a fundamental right in a free and democratic society. The ethical duty of confidentiality refers to the obligation of an individual or organization to safeguard entrusted information. Security refers to measures used to protect information. It includes physical, administrative and technical safeguards.

For a fuller description of researcher obligations surrounding confidentiality, privacy and data security issues, please consult the **Data Security Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants.**

In light of the above, please address the following questions:

a) **Will the data be treated as confidential?** ☐ N ☒ Y
If 'No,' please provide a rationale as to why not:

b) **Will the participant(s) be anonymous?** ☒ N ☐ Y
If 'No,' please provide a rationale: Participants will have the right to declare if they would like to remain anonymous for the research project or be named in accordance with their desired name or pseudonym. In accordance with Chapter 5, section B, participants may waive anonymity with consent.

c) **Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity/confidentiality of participants or informants (where applicable) -or- the confidentiality of data during the conduct of research and dissemination of results.**
There is a risk that the anonymity of participants will be inadvertently revealed by one or more participants during the focus group. Since the focus groups will be held through Zoom, the researcher will give the option to group participants to join the virtual group with a different name, as well as the opportunity to hide their video. The researcher will discuss confidentiality of group members at the beginning of the focus group, and at the end of the focus group. The consent form will require that participants honor the confidentiality of other participants by not discussing what is said by anyone else in the focus group. The researcher will be the only person with access to the data of the participants. This information will be kept on a password protected computer, as well as on a password protected USB flash drive, which will be locked in the researchers home.

d) **Explain how written records, video/audio recordings, artefacts, and questionnaires will be secured, how long they will be retained, and provide details of their final disposal or storage. Describe the standard data security procedures for your discipline and provide a justification if you intend to store your data for a longer period of time. If the data may have archival value, discuss this and whether participants will be informed of this**

possibility during the consent process.
Written records (transcripts), video recordings, and any data collected will be retained on a password protected laptop, as well as a password protected USB, until the date of December 31st, 2024. This will give the researcher time to complete the practice research paper, and decide if the findings will be published. After this date, all data will be destroyed.

e) **Please describe how you plan to store hard copy data, i.e., consent forms and other written records.**

- ☒ Locked filing cabinet
- ☐ Other:

f) **Please describe how you plan to store electronic data (such as video/audio recordings and document files)**

- ☒ Encrypted and/or password-protected USB keys, laptops and/or other portable electronic data devices
- ☐ Secure Server
- ☐ Other:

g) **Please describe how you plan to store other formats of data (if applicable):**

h) **If you plan to destroy research data:**

a. Please provide a firm date by which the data will be destroyed:
December 31, 2024.
b. Provide details of their final disposal:
   i. for hard copy data (e.g., cross-cut shredder, etc.):
   Cross-cut shredder
   ii. for electronic data (e.g., deletion and overwriting of drives; destruction of drives; etc.):
   Deletion of USB drives, and files on laptop.

i) **If you plan to retain data indefinitely, please provide a justification (e.g., data use for future research):**
N/A

j) **Describe any limitations to protecting the confidentiality of participants whether due to the law, the methods used, the nature of the sample population, or other reasons (e.g., duty to report).**
Limitations to confidentiality through focus groups, as they will be interacting with other people. However, I will be giving the participants the option to turn their cameras off, and change their names on Zoom.

k) **Identify all parties who will have access to the data.**

- ☒ Primary Investigator/student
- ☐ Supervisor
- ☐ Other (please specify):

l) **Uses of the data: Please describe all forms of output that are anticipated to result from this research (e.g., presentations, written papers, placing data in an archive, creative works, documentary films, etc.). Describe how any potentially identifying information will be handled in each form of output.**
Written practice research paper. Participants will be kept anonymous and confidential in the written paper, unless they decide they want to be named in the study.

m) **Subsequent use of data: Will the data potentially be used for other purposes in the future (e.g., teaching, future analysis, publishing of dataset, archiving in an institutional**

repository, etc.)?
☒ N ☐ Y

***If 'No,**' the data will be solely used for the purposes describe in this application and will not be used for other purposes in the future.*

***If 'Yes,**' participants must be informed of this possibility during the consent process. Subsequent use of the data for new purposes may require additional review by the REB.*

n) **Please describe how the data will be prepared to make it suitable for future use (e.g., anonymization, storage, archiving, etc.). Please describe what future uses might occur (e.g., use within the PIs research group, transmission to other researchers, publication of the dataset, etc.). Please identify any known repositories to which data may be submitted. (The REB recognizes that all potential future uses cannot be anticipated; but does expect that data will be prepared in a manner for future uses that respects the conditions under which the data were originally collected).**
The data will be anonymized within the practice research paper and the raw data will be destroyed after use.

STUDENT RESEARCHER DECLARATION

I have reviewed and am familiar with the guidelines and principles detailed by the HPRC, the Delegated Ethics Review – Student Researcher Responsibilities Information Sheet and with the ***Senate Policy on Research Involving Human Participants***, and affirm that, to the best of my knowledge this research conforms thereto.

I hereby certify that the course-based research involving human participants is unfunded and minimal risk research, does not involve Aboriginal/Indigenous/Indigenous Peoples or Clinical Trials and that all information on this form and all statements in the attached documentation are correct and complete. I affirm that I am aware of my responsibilities as a researcher as it speaks to the conduct of research involving human participants and as outlined in ***Senate Policy on Research Involving Human Participants***. I am aware that all human participants in the research must have signed a written consent form or have provided oral consent for their participation in the research. I am aware that the approved protocol and signed consent forms have to be retained for two years following the completion of the research.

I hereby undertake to notify the Delegated Ethics Review Committee to which I am submitting this protocol in the event that I make any changes to the **approved *MRP Protocol – Research Involving Human Participants.*** I am aware that a further ethics review may be required as a result of such changes and that research shall be suspended pending clarification and/or resolution. I will also notify the Delegated Ethics Review Committee if any unforeseen risks not specified in the research proposal appear. In such a case, the study will be suspended pending clarification.

_____ _____
Signature, Student Researcher **Date**

Informed Consent Form

Date: _____

Study Name: An Uphill Migration Battle: First-hand Experiences of LGBTQIA+ Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the Greater Vancouver and Toronto Areas

Researcher name:

Kiana Reyes, Master's of Social Work, York University.
kianareyes@yorku.ca

Purpose of the Research:

You are invited to participate in a research study about the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, intersex, asexual/aromantic, plus other gender and sexual identities (LGBTQIA+) refugees and asylum seekers in the Greater Vancouver and Toronto areas. The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of LGBTQIA+ refugees and asylum seekers upon their first year of arrival, and how properly supported they feel. The study will be recruiting participants for focus group, combined with the review of Canadian immigration policies, and findings will be reported through a practice-based research paper.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:

Individuals will be asked to participate in a focus group that is expected to last approximately 2 hours in length, where they will share their experiences of being an LGBTQIA+ refugee and asylum seeker. To participate in the study, you must be at least 18 years of age or older, have been in Canada for at least one year, be able to understand and speak in conversational English, and have immigration status in Canada and have previously held the status of a refugee or asylum seeker.

Risks and Discomforts:

There are no anticipated physical risks to participants. Focus group members will be asked to keep the information provided in the groups confidential; however, a potential risk that might exist for some would be that information about you might be discussed outside the group by other participants. All participants can choose to use pseudonyms and keep their zoom camera off during the focus group. The researcher will be reiterating the agreements to safety in the group, including the importance of confidentiality and privacy. As this study will be held in a group environment, it is required that all those who sign this form is agreeing to not share the identities or content of the group session, other than your own personal experiences, comments, and feelings, to anyone, and is bound by the rules of confidentiality. The researcher will repeatedly check in with the group, as well as provide a list of resources and supports for individuals to access prior to, and upon completion of study. While the researcher can guarantee anonymity, all focus group participants must protect the identities of one another and not share the identities of other participants. All participants will be informed and agree that they are not permitted to record the focus group on their own devices.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:

Participation in this study will connect you with other individuals who hold similar identities and experiences which may create a sense of community. A safer space will be created where participants are able to share their stories and experiences. This project will give the opportunity for participants to reflect on their stories and experiences, as well as participate in knowledge production. Information

gained from this study may help other LGBTQIA+ refugees and asylum seekers in the process of settling into the Greater Vancouver and Toronto areas.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer questions will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with the researchers, or the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future. All questions are optional, and you have the option to skip any questions you do not feel comfortable answering. Participation in this study will not impact the individual's access to current or future services.

In the event you withdraw from the study, all data collected from you will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality:

I will be do everything possible to keep the information you share completely confidential. Your name and any identifying information will be removed from the transcripts unless you would like to be named. The transcript and other electronic data will be retained until successful completion of the research paper, and afterwards will be destroyed no later than **December 31st, 2024.**

Unless you choose otherwise, all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research.

As this study will be held in a group environment, it is required that all those who sign this form is agreeing to not share the identities or content of the group session to anyone, and is bound by the rules of confidentiality.

The data will be collected through handwritten notes, and video/audio recordings. Your data will be stored in an encrypted folder on my password protected laptop, as well as a password protected USB flash drive. Only the researcher will have access to study data. If the results of this study are presented in a meeting, or published, you will not be identified as part of the study, unless otherwise indicated. Although we will ask all participants in the focus group to maintain confidentiality, we cannot guarantee that they will do so. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

This study will use Zoom to collect data, which is an externally hosted cloud-based service. Upon completion of focus groups, recordings (video) will be saved in a folder titled “PRP” on the researchers password protected personal laptop. When information is transmitted over the internet privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party (e.g., government agencies, hackers). Further, while York University researchers will not collect or use IP addresses or other information which could link your participation to your computer or electronic devices without informing you, there is a small risk with any platform such as this of data that is collected on external servers falling outside the control of the researcher. Please contact the researcher for further information.

Recordings (video) will be saved in a password protected file to research team members’ local computer, not the cloud based service

Please note that it is the expectation that participants agree not to make any unauthorized recordings of the content of a meeting / data collection session.

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role

in the study, please feel free to contact me at kianarey@yorku.ca or my supervisor, Anne O'Connell at aoconnell@yorku.ca. You may also contact the Graduate Program in Social Work at lapssowk@yorku.ca and/or 416-736-5226.

This research has received ethics review and approval by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee, which is delegated authority to review research ethics protocols by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I_____, consent to participate in First-Hand Experiences of LGBTQIA+ Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the Greater Vancouver and Toronto Areas conducted by Kiana Reyes. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature_____ **Date**_____
Participant

Signature_____ **Date**_____
Principal Investigator

Additional consent (where applicable)

1. **Audio recording**

☐ I consent to the audio-recording of my interview(s).

2. **Video recording or use of photographs**

I _____ consent to the use of images of me (including photographs, video and other moving images), my environment and property in the following ways (please check all that apply):

In academic articles	☐ N	☐ Y
In print, digital and slide form	☐ N	☐ Y
In academic presentations	☐ N	☐ Y
In media	☐ N	☐ Y
In thesis materials	☐ N	☐ Y

Signature: Date:

_____ _____

Participant Name: _____

3. Consent to waive anonymity

I, _____ consent to the use of my name in the publications arising from this research.

Signature: Date:

_____ _____

Participant Name: _____

General Questions

- What is your country of origin? What is your current immigration status?
- What was your immigration status upon arrival?
- When did you first arrive to Canada?
- How do you identify on the LGBTQIA+ spectrum?

Pre-Arrival

- Did you feel supported before pre-arrival to Canada?
- How familiar are were you with LGBTQIA+ organizations in Canada? With settlement organizations?
- Did you choose the city you settled in?

Post-Arrival

- Upon arrival to Canada, did you feel properly supported as an LGBTQIA+ refugee or asylum seeker?

- Where did you find support when you arrived in Canada?

- Did you feel supported by these resources? Were there any barriers to accessing these supports?
    - Health care
    - Housing
    - Settlement
    - LGBTQIA+ identities
    - Legal
    - Economic/employment
    - Socially – community and support groups
    - Refugee determination process?

- When did you access these resources?

- How did you find adjustment to living in Canada?

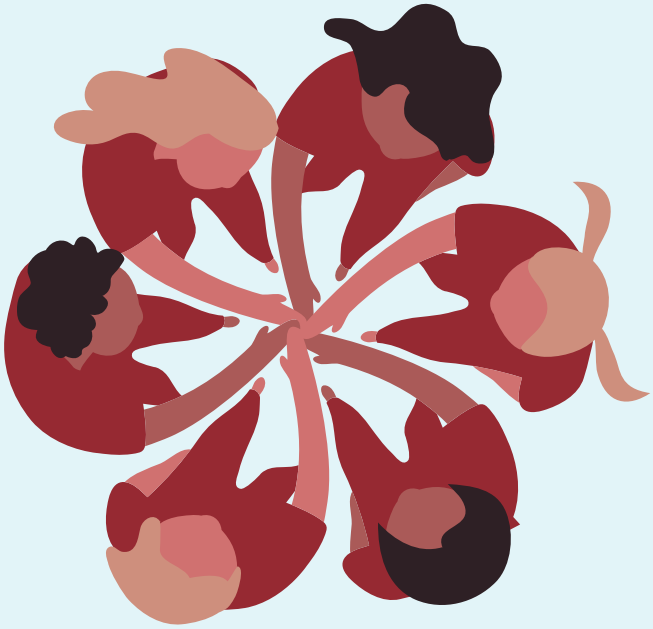
- Do you have any concerns in Canada based on your gender, sexual orientation, racial background, ethnicity, and/or status?

- Did your experience as an LGBTQIA+ refugee in Canada align with the expectations you had prior to arriving?

- Do you feel a sense of belonging in Canadian society? Do you feel accepted here?

- What is something you would share with LGBTQIA+ refugees and asylum seekers who have just arrived in Canada?

- Is there anything else you would like to add?



LGBTQIA+ Refugee participants needed for study

Do you, or have you ever identified, as an LGBTQIA+ refugee or asylum seeker?
Do you live in the Greater Vancouver or Toronto area?
If yes, this research study is for you!

We are hoping to conduct focus groups with LGBTQIA+ refugees and asylum seekers to gain insight into the experiences of this community within the Greater Vancouver and Toronto areas.

TO PARTICIPATE, PLEASE EMAIL RESEARCHER KIANA REYES AT KIANAREY@YORKU.CA

This project is being supported by research ethics at the School of Social Work, York University

PANEL ON
RESEARCH ETHICS

Navigating the ethics of human research

TCPS 2: CORE

Certificate of Completion

This document certifies that

Kiana Reyes

has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement:
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)

218532747

Date of Issue: **18 November, 2021**