THE POLITICS OF (NOT) GIVING A SH*T: UNDERSTANDING THE INVISIBILITY OF QUEER SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN IN PRIDE TORONTO™

SONALI PATEL

Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in Sociology

School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Ottawa

ABSTRACT

This thesis builds on the findings of my previous study, which established that queer South Asian women (QSAW) feel invisibilized in Toronto's LGBTQ+ community (see Patel, 2019). The present study critically investigates the operation and cultural reproduction of power in organizational practices that invisibilize QSAW within Pride Toronto™, as a means of diagnosing the problem in mainstream LGBTQ+ organizations more broadly. The following research question is explored: *How do the cultural underpinnings of Pride Toronto™ contribute to the invisibilization of queer South Asian women in the broader LGBTQ+ community?* This critical ethnography substantiates the invisibilization of QSAW in the LGBTQ+ community as an institutionalized form of identity-based violence. This study rejects the argument that invisibility is exclusively felt by QSAW. Instead, this thesis demonstrates that QSAW are invisibilized by the willful negligence of dominant actors in knowledge practices, as well as assimilationist politics that mandate outness, which invalidate and exclude QSAW. This study further finds that QSAW remain invisibilized in the broader LGBTQ+ community as a result of Pride organizations branding as diverse and inclusive, while simultaneously advancing colonial knowledge about queer identities and ideologies that re-write the narratives of QSAW in mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse.

Keywords: Invisibilization, Identity-Based Violence, Queer South Asian Women, LGBTQ, Critical Ethnography

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my Supervisor, Dr. Kathleen Rodgers, for having faith in me from day one. Thank you for allowing me to pour my heart into this thesis, supporting my professional development, and always guiding me in the right direction. I am so grateful for the opportunity to be supervised and mentored by such an all-rounded, wonderful academic.

To my Committee, Dr. Kelly Bronson and Dr. Willow Scobie, who constantly supported me throughout my Master's degree. Thank you for always providing guidance and encouragement.

To my life-long mentor, Beckham Ronaghan, who hired me at my first LGBTQ+ non-profit organization—the Halton Positive Space Network. Thank you for seeing my transformative potential before I did. I would not have pursued my passion for LGBTQ+ activism without you.

To my dear friend and counterpart in LGBTQ+ campus activism, Emma Leckey, who was tragically killed just before the end of our undergraduate studies. Thank you for encouraging me to unapologetically embrace my queer and South Asian identities as one unified whole.

To my Mama, who suddenly passed away during this thesis. Thank you for teaching me how to walk without being pushed over by our colonizers on the land we have settled on.

To my first *long-term* ex-girlfriend, who imposed oppressively white-normative queerness on me while very overtly expressing disgust and contempt for my South Asian cultural heritage. I would not be a published author and founder of a national organization to mobilize queer South Asian women in Canada had the trauma you inflicted not left me perpetually enraged.

And finally, to everyone who helped me flee queerphobic violence after I was viciously outed during this study. Thank you for providing shelter, donations, PTSD recovery tools, and other supports to keep me alive and safe. This thesis could not have been completed without the immense love and kindness extended to me by the queer community and allies.

Dedicated to all the queer South Asian women who are yet to feel a sense of belongingness and visibility in Western LGBTQ+ communities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> I've been in spaces where my South Asian identity has been celebrated and spaces where my womanhood has been celebrated but … I haven't had space to celebrate my queerness. As an advocate, I felt like there was something lacking. QSAW Network [Queer South Asian Women's Network] wanted to … provide support to a community that is just erased in so many spaces, whether that's queer spaces or South Asian spaces or women's spaces. We really do not see Queer South Asian, let alone women, in these spaces (*Devi,* Personal Interview, August 16, 2019).

The gay liberation movement has successfully transformed the lives of sexual minorities by working to dismantle homophobia from Canadian public policy and society, as well as drastically enhancing the level of social support and belongingness by catalyzing the formation of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) community (Smith, 1998; Staggenborg & Ramos, 2018). However, evidence indicates that the concerns of queer women of colour have been neglected within this movement (Whittier, 2017). Despite contemporary efforts to increase the representation of racialized women in LGBTQ+ discourse, queer South Asian women (QSAW) remain invisibilized (Patel, 2019). The introductory quotation by *Devi*, a representative of the *Queer South Asian Women's Network*, elucidates the problem of invisibilization—that is, an institutional failure to construct discourse that explicitly acknowledges the multiple intersecting identities of QSAW as a comprehensive whole. This contributes to a problematic notion that *queer, South Asian,* and *women* identities cannot coexist (Patel, 2019), which resultantly, establishes the ideological erasure of QSAW in dominant queer discourses. Invisibilization reinforces an unspoken and implicit requirement for QSAW to assimilate to white-normative queer culture in order to achieve belongingness within the LGBTQ+ community, which furthers feelings of

expulsion and ostracism (Islam, 1998; Patel, 2019). Therefore, invisibilization is a form of institutionalized identity-based violence[1] by which QSAW become sexual exiles.

Invisibilization has dire consequences for QSAW, including alienation in LGBTQ+ spaces (Alimahomed, 2010; Badruddoja, 2008; Islam, 1998; Patel, 2019), which in turn has significant mental health implications (Beharry & Crozier, 2008; Choudhary et al., 2009). It increases suicide ideation and makes necessary resources inaccessible (Choudhary et al., 2009; Mangton et al., 2002). These barriers are especially problematic for QSAW that immigrate to Western nations seeking a safe space to be openly queer, as they become deprived of such refuge upon experiencing discrimination therein (Adur, 2018b; Islam, 1998). Therefore, the invisibility of QSAW is an urgent public health issue that must be addressed immediately by mainstream LGBTQ+ organizations, such as Pride Toronto™ (PrideTO). Pride organizations function as a critical site for staging queer visibility, and thus, behold great power to shape the knowledge that the LGBTQ+ community acquires about the collective queer identity and social norms (Formby, 2017; Grundy, 2004; Logie & Rwigema, 2014; Whittier, 2017). As such, it is imperative for PrideTO to construct a visibility politic that is inclusive of QSAW. A failure to do so precipitates an inability to conceptualize the intersection of queer, South Asian, and woman identities; thereby, denying the possibility that Brown women can be queer, which consequently, promotes ignorance towards the culturally unique existence of QSAW (Patel, 2019).

Whereas visibility signifies a source of power (Whittier, 2017), invisibility is a catalyst for subjugation and exile of non-white queer bodies. Visibility has been integral to the achievement of social and political enfranchisement in the LGBTQ+ movement (Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016;

[1] This thesis defines identity-based violence as the knowing or unknowing perpetration of intersectional discrimination, micro-aggressions, and culturally unique racism towards QSAW, which resultantly invalidates, discredits, invisibilizes, and/or subjugates the multifaceted identities and experiences of QSAW (Patel, 2019).

Whittier, 2017). Social movement scholars have illuminated the influential ability of visibility politics for larger cultural transformation (Whittier, 2017). For this reason, visibility has consistently been deployed as a conscious strategy to achieve recognition of LGBTQ+ identities (Smith, 1998; Whittier, 2017). However, South Asian scholarship has evoked further discussion of queer visibility vis-à-vis identity politics. In particular, the privileging of White and Eurocentric experiences produce an oversight of queer South Asian identities (Craven, 2017; Gopinath, 2005). A limited theorization has reinforced the view of queer and South Asian as mutually exclusive identities, thus rendering QSAW invisible (Badruddoja, 2008; Patel, 2019). Furthermore, anti-racist queer discourse that generalizes the experiences of all women of colour is insufficient, as it fails to distinguish the culturally unique factors that produce differential challenges for QSAW (Patel, 2019). This over-generalization further contributes to a false narrative that anti-South Asian discrimination is irrelevant in the LGBTQ+ community, and consequently, maintains the invisibilized status of QSAW (Patel, 2019). As a result of this invisibility, the culturally specific concerns of QSAW cannot be expressed, addressed, or mobilized (Alimahomed, 2010). Thus, invisibilization is conceptually understood as a form of identity-based violence against QSAW.

Within the context of this study, *invisibilization* refers to the erasure of QSAW from cultural and ideological existence, and superimposition of colonial queer knowledge, which inform the construction of queer social norms that constitute identity-based violence against QSAW. The term invisibilization conceptually differs from 'marginalization', in that invisibilized subjects are entirely absent within dominant discourse, whereas marginalized subjects are acknowledged as discriminated-against minorities therein. Hence, the term 'invisibilization' cannot be used to describe all multiply marginalized queer individuals. Moreover, the term (in)visibilization pertains to ideological (in)existence in discourse and thought. Invisibilization is measured by explicit

acknowledgements of identity (sexuality and ethnicity) in dominant discourses. Notably, this measurement considers representation that is both genuine (i.e. depiction of cultural narratives, contexts, etc.) and performative (i.e. tokenistic acts of inclusion), as both types construct the subject into existence.

Invisibilization of QSAW is an especially prominent issue within mainstream LGBTQ+ organizations, particularly those which claim an ambiguous commitment to 'diversity and inclusion'. One may argue that the institutional invisibility of an ethno-racial group is a result of their demographic minority within the wider LGBTQ+ community of a respective region. However, this argument must be rejected, as regions with large queer South Asian populations still fail to visibilize QSAW (Formby, 2017; Patel, 2019). The City of Toronto especially illuminates this problem, as it comprises the largest South Asian population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017a; Statistics Canada, 2017b) and supports one of the most established LGBTQ+ communities across the globe (Church-Wellesley Village, n.d.). Nevertheless, QSAW report feeling disengaged and disconnected from organized spaces in Toronto's LGBTQ+ community as a result of pervasive invisibility (Patel, 2019). Thus, the problem informing my study is the construction of queer spaces which perpetuate a culture of hegemonic whiteness, and by extension, invisibilization of QSAW.

While it has been established that QSAW feel invisibilized in LGBTQ+ spaces, the ways in which invisibilization is institutionally reinforced remain less clear. This thesis examines the invisibilization of QSAW within PrideTO, as a means of diagnosing the problem in mainstream LGBTQ+ organizations more broadly: *How do the cultural underpinnings of Pride Toronto™ contribute to the invisibilization of queer South Asian women in the broader LGBTQ+ community?*

Building on the findings of my previous study, which established the prevalence and impact of invisibilization on QSAW in Toronto's LGBTQ+ community (see Patel, 2019), I now

critically investigate the operation and cultural reproduction of power in organizational practices that invisibilize QSAW within PrideTO. Albeit scholars have identified this as an area in vital need of further inquiry (Alimahomed, 2010; Patel, 2019), previous research has not yielded such analysis. Thus, this study is the first of its kind to substantiate the problem of invisibilization through the perspectives of dominant members who reinforce it, as opposed to the narratives of those subordinated. This perspective is crucial for discerning the institutional gaps in knowledge, which reflect the epistemological lens of the structural architects of PrideTO's politics, and consequently, maintains the relegated position of QSAW within LGBTQ+ discourse.

The purpose of this critical ethnography is to understand the organizational practices of PrideTO that facilitate the alienation and exclusion, instead of inclusion, of QSAW in dominant LGBTQ+ discourses, and how such conduct persists and becomes justified. Through a critical analysis of the production of Toronto's 2019 Pride Festival, I substantiate the invisibilization of QSAW in the LGBTQ+ community as an institutionalized form of identity-based violence, in which dominant actors culturally reproduce Western-supremacy, xenophobia, homonationalism, homopatriarchy, and commercialization in organizational practices, which consequently erase and re-write the identities and experiences of QSAW in dominant LGBTQ+ discourse. As the epistemic nucleus of the LGBTQ+ movement, PrideTO architect the cultural and ideological erasure of QSAW in mainstream queer discourse by deploying an assimilationist visibility politic that is not conducive to QSAW; thereby, disqualifying queer South Asian diasporic bodies from notions of respectable queer citizenship. Therefore, I reject the argument that invisibility is exclusively felt by QSAW. Instead, I argue that QSAW are invisibilized by the willful negligence of dominant actors in knowledge practices, as well as assimilationist politics that mandate outness and thereby, gatekeep QSAW. I further contend that the racialized immigrant identity of QSAW

at the axis of their gender identity situates QSAW in a particularly precarious position, in which their invisibility becomes an inescapable gridlock. The focus on South Asians within this study should not suggest that other racial groups are not discriminated against within the LGBTQ+ community, because that is fundamentally untrue. Instead, this study is predicated on a belief that grouping all racialized bodies into broad categories such as 'people of colour' (POC) for the purpose of combating racial inequity is, in itself, an act of racism that maintains white supremacy (Patel, 2019; Ward, 2008).

The central objective of this thesis is two-fold: first, to increase the collective visibility of QSAW, which will be achieved by establishing the erasure of QSAW in LGBTQ+ discourses as a product of institutionalized discrimination. Second, to improve the quality of organizational support for QSAW, which will be achieved by explicating the institutional practices that perpetuate identity-based violence against LGBTQ+ South Asians. The findings of this thesis will serve as empirical evidence to inform the design of a culturally competent queer policy framework. This policy frame will be broad enough for application across any organization that works for, or with, LGBTQ+ populations, yet specific enough to identify key practices and attitudes that must be eliminated in order to prevent further endangering LGBTQ+ South Asians. Furthermore, this study is sociologically significant as it will contribute to filling a substantial gap in literature about QSAW. A dearth of empirical research examining QSAW in Western nations reinforces a false narrative that South Asian discrimination in the LGBTQ+ community is irrelevant (Patel, 2019), and thus, does not need to need to be addressed by stakeholders. This is highly problematic, as it maintains the erasure of QSAW in LGBTQ+ discourse. Thus, it is crucial to substantiate the discrimination against QSAW in LGBTQ+ communities in high volumes, in order to illuminate the invisibilization of QSAW as a dire social issue in need of urgent resolution. Moreover, this

thesis produces empirical evidence that may be used to justify a need for funding social programs specifically for QSAW, in order to alleviate the negative implications of invisibility. This will effectively mobilize QSAW in Western LGBTQ+ communities.

Herein contains a multi-chapter thesis explicating the institutionalized invisibility of QSAW within PrideTO. This introductory chapter (Chapter 1) articulates a foundational overview of the thesis and defines key terminology. Chapter 2 presents a literature review to contextualize the topic of this thesis, by detailing the evolution of Pride in Toronto, Canada and establishing the invisibilization of QSAW in Western LGBTQ+ communities. Chapter 3 situates the topic of this thesis within a theoretical framework. Chapter 4 provides a methodological overview of this study, which outlines the research approach, sample and setting, data collection strategies, data analysis process, reflexivity, and limitations. Chapter 5 contains the findings of this ethnography. Chapter 6 concludes with an overview of this study, identification of areas for future research, and recommendations to combat the invisibility of QSAW in Western LGBTQ+ communities.

1.1. Key Terminology and Conceptual Boundaries

This paper will use the terms South Asian, Brown, and *Desi* interchangeably. The term "Desi" is derived from Sanskrit and translates to "country;" it is used in reference to people, products, and cultures belonging to South Asia (Arora, 2010). As well, *Desi* is vastly utilized within diasporic contexts—particularly in reference to South Asians residing in North America and the United Kingdom (Arora, 2010). Thus, the terms *Desi* and *South Asian* will be used interchangeably and in accordance with the aforementioned description; the diaspora in Canada will be a focus herein, unless explicitly stated otherwise. As such, it is important to conceptualize '*South Asian diaspora'*, as a failure to do so may lead to subjective interpretations, which runs the risk of glossing over relegated South Asian identities (i.e. those not from India, Pakistan, or

Bangladesh). In this study, *South Asian* refers to those who trace their ancestral roots to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Tibet, as well as those of South Asian descent from African (e.g. Kenya, Tanzania, etc.), Pacific Island (e.g. Fiji), and Caribbean countries (e.g. Guyana, Trinidad, etc.). However, this study also relies heavily on self-identification within these communities. Moreover, the term 'Indian subcontinent' may be used within appropriate temporal and geographic contexts of pre-partitioned South Asia, as the individual countries were not yet divided.

Additionally, the terms lesbian and queer will be used interchangeably. The term "lesbian" has historically been deployed to mobilize women in sexual diversity politics (i.e. lesbian feminist movement). As such, it is integral to utilize similar terminology interchangeably in order to contest the intrinsic whiteness of exclusionary lesbian politics. However, this study seeks to destabilize the categorical rigidity presumed within lesbian identity, as rigid identity categories and labels are a colonial construct and not a preference for QSAW (Rajgopal, 2018; Patel, 2019). Thus, lesbian and queer alike will be used in reference to any non-heterosexual orientation along a broad and fluid spectrum of sexuality.

Moreover, it is difficult to ascertain an operational definition of 'women' in this study, as rigid gender categories are also a colonial construct (Rajgopal, 2018). However, this study was bound to the limitations of women's spaces as theorized in LGBTQ+ social movements and represented in PrideTO—both of which conceptualized women within lesbian politics. As such, the conceptualization of 'women' in this study encompasses anyone who identifies within women-loving-women spaces and contexts[2]

[2] This includes queers who identify as gender fluid, gender queer, gender non-binary, and gender non-conforming, as many occupied women-loving-women spaces in PrideTO.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a dearth of literature examining the intersection of queer and South Asian diasporic identities, and even less pertaining to their experiences in Western nations (Bacchus, 2017; Islam, 1998; Patel, 2019). The existing scholarship is methodologically weighted toward ethnographic accounts of queer women of colour or queer South Asian men's experiences, which is insufficient as it fails to distinguish the unique cultural and patriarchal factors that produce dissimilar experiences for QSAW (Patel, 2019). As well, previous studies pertaining to queer women of colour have infrequently included QSAW in the sample group, and thus, are not representative of South Asian realities. Several scholars have identified this limited body of literature as problematic. In her study on premarital sexuality amongst South Asian-Americans (SAA), Bacchus (2017) asserts that a lack of literature exploring SAA lesbianism is a "grave disservice" to women who engage in similar-sex sexual encounters and relationships (780). A lack of research in itself reinforces the groundwork of this thesis—that is, the invisibilization of QSAW.

Of the few studies that have examined the erasure of QSAW in LGBTQ+ spaces, a considerable focus has been on the perspectives of subordinate women, as opposed to those in positions of power within organizations. Scholars have further identified a need for research investigating organizational views on invisibility, as it will yield information about the way in which dominant politics[3] and normative practices are collectively produced (Alimahomed, 2010). This thesis fills a substantial literary gap by examining the cultural reproduction of power, and consequent invisibilization of QSAW, through the perspectives of dominant members who reinforce it.

[3] The term *politics* is used here in the sense of political agendas or activities, which are intended to improve one's status/position and have typically been considered divisive.

In order to construct a meaningful argument about the institutionalized invisibility of queer Desi diasporic women in this thesis, the political salience of Pride events and the experiences of QSAW must first be contextualized. As such, this chapter presents a literature review that will trace the evolution of PrideTO[4], and then, substantiate the nature of invisibilization of QSAW within Western LGBTQ+ communities.

2.1. Political Origins of Pride Events in North America

Social movement scholars locate Pride events at the core of gay and lesbian political mobilization and community formation (McLeod, 1996; Smith, 1998; Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016; Whittier, 2017). In particular, Pride events serve a dual purpose of visibility and community by disrupting the heterosexual hegemony of urban spaces and enhancing a sense of belongingness amongst LGBTQ+ identified people (Formby, 2017; Grundy, 2004; Whittier, 2017).

LGBTQ+ Pride events emerged as a political strategy during the 1960s gay liberation movement (Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016; Whittier, 2017). This movement employed new collective action frames that emphasized a liberation politic and collective identity (Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016; Whittier, 2017), which centred 'coming out' and self-identification with rigid identity categories within Western LGBTQ+ culture and tradition (Smith, 1998; Whittier, 2017). These deeply ingrained liberationist goals functioned to visibilize the collective gay and lesbian identity, as a means of claiming rights and normalizing non-heterosexuality in broader society (Smith, 1998; Whittier, 2017). Pride events are especially salient for achieving these goals.

In theorizing identity and visibility politics within women's social movements, Whittier (2017) elucidates the transformative potential of LGBTQ+ Pride Festivals. That is, the deployment of a visibility politic to shift cultural perceptions of gay and lesbian identities for LGBTQ+

[4] There are few instances in which this literature review (section 2.1) draws on queer archival research, particularly to illuminate historical Pride events that are *forgotten* in mainstream queer historic literature.

individuals and others. This is achieved by constructing, politicizing, and visibilizing a collective gay identity for political mobilization purposes (Smith, 1998; Whittier, 2017; van Stekelenburg, 2013). Whittier (2017) identifies three visibility strategies that have been utilized to construct knowledge about collective identities: collective coming out, social movement art, and media campaigns. Pride events provide a critical platform to visibilize this collective identity, as event onlookers acquire knowledge about gays and lesbians—particularly their identities and world views (Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016; Whittier, 2017). In this sense, Pride events are the epistemic nucleus of the gay and lesbian movement.

Collective identity is defined by a shared sense of belonging, consciousness, goals, daily actions that align with the group's political beliefs; as well as the group's commonalities, which may shift over time (Taylor & Whittier, 1992; Whittier, 2017). During the 1960s gay liberation movement, queer women constructed a highly politicized collective lesbian identity with fixed identity categories, rigid boundaries defining inclusion and exclusion criteria, as well as cultural expressions, aesthetics, materials, symbols, and rituals (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016; Whitter, 2017). Gamson (1995) sums up scholarly debates regarding collective gay and lesbian identity in his theorization of the queer dilemma: "fixed identity categories are both the basis for oppression and the basis for political power" (391). Further, the construction of lesbianism as a political opposition to heterosexuality results in a requirement to align oneself with the collective identity in everyday life in order to achieve recognition as a gay woman (Whittier, 2017). Thus, women must assimilate to the white-normative lesbian identity in order to be recognized and credible for their sexual and/or romantic preference as a woman-loving-woman.

2.2. Evolution of Pride Toronto™

The earliest Pride event in Toronto may be traced back to 1971, wherein a 'Gay Day Picnic' was organized at Hanlan's Point by Toronto Gay Action Now, the Community Homophile Association of Toronto, and the University of Toronto Homophile Association (McLeod, 1996; Rau, 2014). The purpose of this picnic was to raise enough funds to send local activists to Ottawa for a political demonstration alongside several other gay liberation groups across Canada (McLeod, 1996; Rau, 2014; Smith, 1998). This demonstration involved a protest on Parliament Hill with demands to the Federal government for civil rights and greater inclusion of gays and lesbians in Canadian society (McLeod, 1996; Rau, 2014; Smith, 1998). In examining the deployment of right-claim frames in the 1970s gay movement, Smith (1998) reveals that gay liberation ideology and strategy were vastly shaped by groups led by white men, who were the front face of gay rights discourse and litigation for reasons of sexism and racism. Consequently, the gay liberation became constructed as a fundamentally white movement (Smith, 1998). The cultural underpinning of white hegemony remains intact within LGBTQ+ communities and organizations, including Pride events, to the present day (Alimahomed, 2010; Greey, 2018; Patel, 2019; Ward, 2008).

In the following year, 1972, the Gay Day Picnic expanded into a week of programming that became recognized as the first Gay Pride Week (McLeod, 1996; Rau, 2014). A schedule of events found in newspaper archives from 1972[5] indicates that, in addition to a Picnic, this week included a "Festival of Gay Culture," which showcased the work of local gay artists, photographers, poets, and musicians, a "Film Showing," "Gay Pride Dance," a "Gay Pride Rally and Demonstration," wherein policy briefs regarding gay rights within provincial administration

[5] See Appendix A for the 1972 newspaper article containing a full schedule of events.

and the Canadian Immigration Act[6] were presented to the Ontario government before marching to Federal government buildings in Toronto (McLeod, 1996; Rau, 2014), and concluded with an inter-faith church worship service hosted by The Unitarian Gay Fellowship of Toronto. While many of these events have persisted into the contemporary Pride Festival, a noteworthy difference exists in the programming goals. In particular, Gay Pride Week from the 1970s into the early 2000s placed a greater emphasis on political activism (Smith, 1998; Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016), while Pride Festivals recently have been criticized for shifting towards celebratory, capitalist, and commercial goals (see Formby, 2017). However, central to both the early and recent goals are visibility politics, which remain prevalent in contemporary Pride (Whittier, 2017).

Furthermore, Gay Pride Week 1972 is especially salient within the context of queer organizing in Toronto, as it denotes the onset of decades-long contentions with the City (McLeod, 1996). Specifically, the City of Toronto's then-Mayor David Crombie denied the request of Pride Week organizers for municipal recognition of the event, along with permission to march on Yonge Street (McLeod, 1996). Pride organizers struggled to achieve municipal recognition for twenty years, as a result of the stigma associated with LGBTQ+ identities (Grundy, 2003). Amidst this struggle, members of the Pride committee filed a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) on the grounds of discrimination; however, this left Organization indebted with legal fees amounting to ten thousand dollars, as OHRC ruled against Pride (Pride Toronto, 2002 in Grundy, 2003)[7]. Pride Week eventually achieved municipal recognition; however, contentions with the City of Toronto have persisted in less overt ways (i.e. use of urban spaces) (Grundy, 2003).

[6] There is insufficient literature to contextualize or detail the involvement of the Canadian Immigration Act in 1972. As well, there are limited other sources (apart from archives of plans to do so) that record immigration as part of Pride.
[7] The originally cited source is a financial document that is no longer publicly available on Pride's website.

In 1974, Pride Week garnered mainstream media attention for the first time (Pride Toronto, n.d.). According to Pride Toronto's (n.d.) historic timeline published on their current website, the Globe and Mail misreported the number of participants in the Pride March and characterized marchers as "beating a hasty retreat" from the police that awaited the marchers at the provincial legislature. Although the media misrepresented the goals of the March and cast a negative stereotype about its participants, the publicity was highly significant for generating national discourse about sexual minorities claiming human rights. Following this, a homophobic political climate in the United States influenced a period of silence in Canadian Pride event organizing between 1975-1981, with the exception of a few 'Gay Days' in 1978 that were organized by members of various lesbian activist groups (i.e. the Lesbian Organization of Toronto, Liberated Energy, and the Gay and Lesbian Liberation Organization) (Ross, 1995). The dedication of lesbian activists to continue organizing amidst a period of national silence (Ross, 1995), coupled with the vast erasure of these efforts in literature and queer history, demonstrates the devaluation of women and their labour in maintaining the LGBTQ+ movement.

A major turning point in the evolution of Gay Pride occurred in 1981, when Toronto Police arrested over three-hundred men in a military-style raid of four Toronto bathhouses (McLeod, 1996; Nash, 2014). This event, which Police referred to as "Operation Soap," intended to cleanse homosexuality from the social fabrics of the Nation and remains one of the largest mass arrests in Canadian history (Greey, 2018; Nash, 2014). Operation Soap was a catalyst for the formation of a strong gay and lesbian community with ally support from organizations, such as CUPE (Grundy, 2003). As an immediate response to Operation Soap, a spontaneous (i.e. unorganized) protest emerged on the streets of Toronto, with over three-thousand people in attendance. LGBTQ+ identified individuals—with no prior political interest—had become engaged in militant activism,

which resulted in the coalescence of a queer community (Grube, 1997). Several civil libertarians, unions, progressive City Councillors, few religious groups, and other politically left-wing organizations became active allies of the LGBTQ+ community by openly condemning the Operation, which supported activist organizations in mobilizing gay—and to a lesser extent lesbian—rights issues to the center of governmental affairs (Grundy, 2003). During this time, more LGBTQ+ activist organizations were formed—notably, *Gays and Lesbians Against the Right Everywhere* (GLARE), a politically left-wing anti-racist feminist group organized to challenge social conservatives, and *Lesbians Against the Right* (LAR), which shared a similar leftist politic in their goal to define a strong lesbian presence in Toronto (Ross, 1995). While both GLARE and LAR engaged in a gay liberation politic that was more inclusive of women and racialized groups, neither organization attained the credibility that was granted to the *Right to Privacy Committee*, which was predominantly led by white gay men that organized around a reductive sexual liberation politic (Ross, 1995). Notably, GLARE and LAR were harassed for advancing communist principles by several owners of gay businesses and members of the LGBTQ+ community (Kinsman in Grundy, 2003). The delegitimization of sexism and racism as issues worthy of belonging in the early gay liberation movement elucidates the deeply entrenched dynamics of white supremacy and patriarchy in LGBTQ+ organizing. Nonetheless, both GLARE and LAR primarily led organizing efforts to reinstate Gay and Lesbian Pride Day (previously referred to as Gay Pride Day) (Ross, 1995), following a communal desire to do so as a means of celebration after Operation Soap. Kyle Rae, an early organizer of Pride, explains the rationale behind introducing a celebratory aspect:

> At one point we stood back and said, 'we're out every weekend opposing the police, city hall, and the province…constantly protesting' It is time to stand back and celebrate rather than keep reacting to the state (Rae in Grundy, 2003).

It is important to highlight that GLARE and LAR, which were primarily led by marginalized groups, did the hard labour of organizing Pride events that were disproportionately enjoyed by white gay men, who simultaneously devalued and criticized the inclusionary goals of these groups. This further demonstrates uneven racial and gender power dynamics in the production of labour since the early emergence of Pride.

Pride Day in 1981 resumed as a picnic and parade (formerly referred to as a 'march'); however, two major changes distinguished it as a celebratory event with political underpinnings instead of an exclusively political activism event. First, the calendar month for Toronto Pride events was moved from August to June in order to align with Pride celebrations across North America. This shifted the focus away from commemorating LGBTQ+ history within a national context (i.e. Canada's first gay demonstration on Parliament Hill), which was the explicit purpose of Toronto Pride Weeks in the 1970s (McLeod, 1996), and instead, celebrates broader North American achievements (i.e. Stonewall Riots of 1969 in New York City, which was a catalyst for Gay Rights Movements across the content). Second, the Pride event was relocated from a historical site of gay and lesbian activism to Grange Park in downtown Toronto, which bordered *Chinatown,* an East Asian ethnic enclave (McLeod, 1996). This relocation prompted the Pride committee to choose the organization, *Gay Asians of Toronto* (GAT), to lead the Parade (Borras & Maalouf, 2016). Albeit the selection of an Asian-Canadian organization appears to be a tokenistic gesture given its geographic location, it was beneficial for visibilizing the differential experiences of queers of colour amongst a vastly White crowd. Importantly, it allowed Alan Li, a prominent member of GAT, the opportunity to make a speech as the host speaker of the 1982 Pride Parade, wherein he contrasted the monolithic narrative of gay identity by articulating the struggles of multilayered queer marginality:

> As an Asian, I have an additional battle in the fight for my own liberation and for the liberation of the Asian community. As gays, we have to fight for our rights in the straight society, but Asian gays, like Black gays, Jewish gays, sexual minorities, and the handicapped among us and every other minority within the minority have other battles to face as well (Borras & Maalouf, 2016).

While the role of GAT is highly significant for pioneering diversity in Toronto's Pride events, it is vastly forgotten in LGBTQ+ literature and activism discourse. This demonstrates both a whitewashing of queer existence in Canada and a denial of sexual citizenship to queer Asian immigrant bodies. Likewise, it demonstrates a desire to frame queerness as a Western concept. Additionally, the fact that East Asian diaspora was only meaningfully involved in Toronto Pride in the year that the event was located next to Chinatown suggests it was a tokenistic gesture by organizers.

The political salience of Pride events began to decline when it was forced out of Grange Park by the City of Toronto due to legal technicalities in 1982. Gay and Lesbian Pride Day relocated to the University of Toronto campus in 1983, before settling in Cawthra Park on Church Street (located in Toronto's Gay Village) in 1984, as it offered newly constructed green space to host a Picnic, amongst other events (Grundy, 2003; McLeod, 1996). A consequence of geographically relocating Pride events into a hub of white gay male-oriented consumer spaces is that it promoted a shift away from protest-based politics and towards celebratory partying with vague political underpinnings. Moreover, the relocation of Pride into Toronto's Gay Village facilitated the emergence of a commercialized gay identity, wherein Pride predominantly represented "an image of being gay that was defined by the commercial establishments we hung out in and the things that we consumed" (Kinsman in Grundy, 2003). In other words, popular gay culture—in which whiteness is deeply entrenched—began defining the collective gay identity. A dire consequence of commercialization is the exclusion of queer people of colour. In her study of the LGBT community and Pride spaces in the United Kingdom, Formby (2017) argues that

commercialization has resulted in Pride becoming a site of oppression, as it centers alcohol consumption, whiteness, and the socioeconomic middle class. Notably, Formby (2017) finds that queer people of colour felt unsafe and hesitant in spaces wherein alcohol was present, as alcohol consumption facilitated reckless behaviours of attendees, which heightened instances of racism. Thus, the prevalence of alcohol in commercialized Pride spaces promotes racial exclusion.

Since adapting commercial goals, Pride's political engagement has been limited to utilizing their influential abilities as an organization to make political claims, in order to achieve recognition at the level of government. For instance, Pride's theme of "By Any Means Necessary" in 1990 reflected a desire for municipal recognition of Pride Week and ensuring successful implementation of Federal legislation prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation (Grundy, 2003).

By the early 1990s, Toronto's Gay and Lesbian Pride Day became one of the largest Pride festivals in North America, and it was attended by over 100,000 people (Pride Toronto, n.d.). However, there were growing concerns about a lack of diverse representation in Pride events (Grundy, 2003). In 1994, the *Organization to Hold the Pride Committee Accountable* formed to achieve the purpose encompassed within its title. This accountability-driven Organization held several public consultations to mobilize various grievances from marginalized queer groups that did not feel represented in Pride. Notably, women's groups sought to counter the male dominance of Pride Day in their demand for a separate lesbian event on the day before the Pride Parade. This event was implemented in 1996 as the Dyke March (Grundy, 2003). Additionally, ethno-racial queer groups sought to counter their erasure by demanding a quota system to increase the representation of differential cultural and racial groups on the Pride Committee, as well as a subcommittee to formally investigate community concerns regarding racism and sexism at Pride

events. However, there was no follow-up on these grievances, as the Lesbian and Gay Pride Day organizing committee dissolved due to allegations of incompetence in 1995 (Grundy, 2003). The organization, Pride Toronto™, was instantaneously established as a replacement and remains responsible for planning annual Pride events.

2.3. Parallel Trajectories: South Asian Immigration and the Gay Liberation Movement

The intersection of social movement scholarship and immigration literature is critical to the understanding of queer South Asian invisibility in North America, as the temporal trajectories of Desi immigration and gay liberation in Canada run parallel. This suggests the presence of systemic and integration barriers related to national immigration regimes, which have obstructed the participation of queer South Asians in LGBTQ+ communities and politics since their early arrival to Canada. However, there is a dearth of literature examining this intersection, and virtually none tracing queer South Asian organizing since their early arrival to Canada. Thus, the participatory abilities of queer South Asians in the early LGBTQ+ movement will be understood through positioning the early arrival of South Asian immigrants within the LGBTQ+ social movement literature reviewed above.

Prior to the formation of a distinct LGBTQ+ community in Canada in the 1960s, gay and lesbian networks informally and sporadically existed as a result of connections made during World War II (Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016). During this time, ongoing efforts were made by the Canadian government to restrict South Asian immigration. For instance, Herbert and Moodley (2015) highlight that "the most effective exclusionary tool designed by Canada" were "regulation[s] aimed specifically at South Asians," which effectively preserved a 'Whites-only' immigration policy until 1967 (123). This perpetuated a xenophobic view of South Asians as 'unlike us,' and thereby non-belonging to Canadian notions of citizenhood (Bains & Sandhra,

2019; Buchignani, 1977; Buchignani, 2010; Heribert & Moodley, 2015). This dehumanizing treatment of Brown bodies (e.g. Komagata Maru incident of 1914)[8], as well as political authorities framing Desi immigrants as a polluting invasion in dominant discourse, reinforced xenophobic views towards South Asians in Canadian society (Bains & Sandhra, 2019; Heribert & Moodley, 2015). For instance, in March 1944, Labor Minister George Sherratt Pearson, justified denying citizenship to South Asians during his address to the British Columbia legislature, claiming:

> The Hindu is not helping us to maintain the standard of living we have set up in the Province. There is nobody in this Province as unreliable, dishonest, and deceitful as the Hindus [South Asians] … we are justified in excluding them from the full rights of citizenship" (Bains & Sandhra, 2019, p.22).

Minister Sherratt's racist rant publicly and politically reaffirmed the schism between migrants and non-migrants; particularly, framing immigrants as a foreign threat to society. As well, this rant reflected the predominant societal view of South Asian immigrants as "culturally and racially inferior to Whites" (Buchignani, 1977, p.90), which further subjugated Desi bodies. Since white LGBTQ+ Canadians are a subset of broader Canadian society, it may be deduced that the negative views of South Asians were similar in both queer and heterosexual society. Moreover, the fight for South Asian citizenship rights amidst an era of overt hostility towards South Asians in Canada occurred in parallel to the gay and lesbian liberation claiming sexual minority rights. However, a deprival of citizenship imposed social, political, economic, and geographic barriers for South Asians to integrate into mainstream Canadian society (Buchignani, 1977); thereby, hindering Desi participation in a movement seeking LGBTQ+ rights for Canadian citizens.

The 1970s were significant for both LGBTQ+ and South Asian communities in Canada; an influx of highly skilled South Asian immigrants arrived following the removal of racist

[8] In 1914, South Asians were denied entry and forced to live on an unanchored ship without food or water for three months while fighting for the right to settle in Canada as British subjects (Heribert & Moodley, 2015).

immigration quotas (Buchignani, 1977; Heribert & Moodley, 2015; Rajiva, 2013), while the gay liberation movement, as well as Pride organizing, propelled (Staggenborg & Ramos, 2016). However, the delayed and limited integration of South Asians into the North American LGBTQ+ movement amplified barriers to inclusion for QSAW (Adur, 2018b). Adur (2018a) contextualizes the distinct factors facilitating the exclusion of queer South Asians in the American LGBTQ+ movement:

> Queer South Asian lives mirrored all the barriers their heterosexual counterparts encountered, except unlike the latter they could not turn to the unconditional support of their family and seek refuge in their co-ethnic communities. On the other hand, unlike white Americans, their integration into the broader LGBT movement was limited. At the interpersonal level, they experienced racism and at the structural level, laws that impacted them were not central to the white LGBT movement (307).

Adur draws attention to immigration laws, which presented a unique barrier for queer South Asians. The immigrant identity of queer South Asians imposed structural barriers to integration in broader society upon arrival, which consequently, limited their ability to provide a distinct presence as both queer and Desi in the LGBTQ+ movement. South Asians were amongst the last ethnic group to be legally recognized and enfranchised as North American citizens (Buchignani, 1977); thereby, amplifying the effects of racism and xenophobia as newer, unwanted bodies in society. Additionally, these integration barriers impose greater challenges for South Asian women to be recognized as a lesbian, as recognition entails visibly expressing a highly politicized identity (see section 2.1), which requires a considerable amount of cultural capital (e.g. South Asian accents do not fit the white lesbian aesthetic). This suggests that the invisibilization of South Asians is a joint effort of the Nation-State and LGBTQ+ community imposing barriers to integration in the gay and lesbian liberation movement.

2.4. Invisibilization of Queer South Asian Women

The invisibilized position of QSAW in the Western LGBTQ+ community is deeply rooted in colonial power, which has structured both Desi and Western LGBTQ+ cultures in a way that erases the possibility of a queer South Asian identity. The roots, mechanisms, and structures of invisibility affecting QSAW are consistent across American and Canadian LGBTQ+ landscapes, as a result of parallel trajectories of queer organizing and South Asian immigration in both nations. Thus, the following section draws on both Canadian and American literature to establish the invisibilization of QSAW.

2.4.1. Roots of Invisibility

2.4.1.1. Colonial Erasure of Queerness

The problematic erasure of South Asian bodies in Western LGBTQ+ discourse cannot be understood outside the context of colonialism in the Indian subcontinent, which produced the conditions by which diasporic QSAW are invisibilized. Several scholars advance queer sexuality as an acceptable, and often celebrated, practice in pre-colonial South Asia (Rajgopal, 2018). However, with the exception of few sculptures and paintings, there remains limited evidence of pre-colonial queerness, as the British Empire rewrote ancient Hindu scriptures and other historical texts in order to erase positive references to queerness during their two centuries in power (Rajgopal, 2018). The British Empire viewed the queer, sexual and gender traditions in the Indian subcontinent as barbaric and uncivilized, and thus, embarked upon their *sexual civilizing mission*, which sought to repress queerness by imposing rigid gender and sexuality categories, sexual shame, and homophobia (Rajgopal, 2018). Societal attitudes towards queerness drastically shifted during the colonial era. Rajgopal (2018) emphasizes that queerphobic attitudes in South Asian culture have not been influenced by religious views, but rather, were violently imposed by British colonizers. A damaging implication of Britain's sexual civilizing mission is a perpetual view of

queer as a "Western disease" in local and diasporic South Asian societies (Rajgopal, 2018; Siraj, 2011). Moreover, the *forcefully* forgotten subjugation of South Asian sexuality enables an ongoing colonial control of Brown bodies.

The transition towards "progressive politics" in the West simultaneously involved a racialized construction of QSAW as the foreign "Other" (Alimahomed, 2010) and a threat to the Western LGBTQ+ movement (Jones, 2016). This, along with colonial perceptions of South Asian culture as "backwards," "conservative," and "traditional," has facilitated the collective invisibility of QSAW in Western LGBTQ+ discourse (Alimahomed, 2010; Jones, 2016). In other words, queer and South Asian have been constructed as opposing identities, which renders QSAW invisible.

2.4.1.2. Conflicting Cultural Ideologies

The multifaceted identity of QSAW is shaped by their lived experiences of ostracism and cultural conflict coalesced by their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, immigrant status, and/or linguistic capabilities (Alimahomed, 2010; Choudhury et al., 2009; Clark, 2005; Sandil et al., 2014). As South Asians residing in North American diasporic communities, they must negotiate internal conflict of preserving one's ethnic identity and assimilating to Western norms and values (Choudhury et al. 2009; Patel, 2019). This conflict becomes doubly difficult when located within queer discourse, as prominent values of individualism in Western LGBTQ+ culture directly challenge those of familialism in South Asian culture, which produces divergent demands and expectations of performing queerness (Alimahomed, 2010; Dasgupta, 2005; Patel, 2019).

Within South Asian culture, individuals are responsible for maintaining the family's honour, which may be understood within a dichotomy of honour/shame (Dasgupta, 2005; Gilbert, Gilbert, & Sanghera, 2004; Thaker, 2006). South Asian women are disproportionately expected to reproduce traditions and act in the best interest of their family's honour, as a deviation from

acceptable societal values and norms taints their family's reputation (Badruddoja, 2010; Dasgupta, 2015; Thaker, 2006). The salience of heterosexual marriage in South Asian culture places an additional burden on women, as unmarried daughters[9] may be perceived as 'defective' by broader society, and thereby threaten the family's honour (Bacchus, 2017; Thaker, 2006). For this reason, there is a lack of discourse surrounding pre-marital female sexuality and dating in South Asian culture (Bacchus, 2017). As such, sexuality is often a site of conformity or contestation to expectations of femininity (Bacchus, 2017; Badruddoja, 2010). In this sense, it is understood that the prominent norm of 'coming out' in Western LGBTQ+ culture is incongruent with collectivist values and threatens familial honour (Patel, 2019).

'Coming out' has been a key tactic of LGBTQ+ visibility politics, as identity disclosure is understood to be a powerful tool for publicly shifting perceptions of a destigmatized identity (Whittier, 2017). 'Coming out' by openly informing others is an integral aspect of Western LGBTQ+ identity formation (Greene, 1996); however, it may compromise familial ties within diasporic communities, bestow shame upon one's family, and facilitate ostracization for QSAW (Bacchus, 2017; Patel, 2019). QSAW are significantly less likely to be "out" than their White counterparts due to the heightened risks associated with coming out (Bacchus, 2017; Greene, 1996; Patel, 2019). Several participants in Adur's (2018b) study of queer South Asian migrants describe experiences of familial violence as an implication of being 'outed' or doubted as potentially queer. One QSAW-identified participant shared that a private investigator was hired to confirm her parents' doubts of queerness before the violence began, albeit a vast majority of others were subject to familial violence based on accusations alone (Adur, 2018b). Thus, QSAW often make significant efforts to express their queerness in clandestine (i.e. "live a double life"). Nonetheless,

[9] Unmarried daughters refer to those who are legally above the age of adulthood (eighteen).

Western LGBTQ+ culture has promoted ‘coming out’ as necessary in order to be validly queer. The notion that ‘coming out’ legitimizes one’s sexuality has produced a counter-narrative that ‘closeted’ queer sexual identities are fake (Alimahomed, 2010; Clark, 2005), which paves the way for invisibilization of QSAW. It is important to recognize that queer South Asian diaspora are now forced to ‘come out of the closet’ by the descendants of their colonizers, who initially closeted them (Patel, 2019; Rajgopal, 2018). This demonstrates an ongoing colonial control of queer South Asian bodies in the diaspora.

2.4.2. Mechanisms of Invisibility

2.4.2.1. Cultural Erasure

QSAW highly value their multilayered identity and do not wish to be reduced to a monolithic subject (Alimahomed, 2010; Clark, 2005; Patel, 2019). Instead, QSAW seek broader acceptance and understanding of their multiple identities from others within a holistic framework (Alimahomed, 2010; Beharry & Crozier, 2008; Clark, 2005; Patel, 2019). However, hegemonic Western normativity grounded in LGBTQ+ communities deny cultural differences (Patel, 2019); thereby, rendering lesbians of colour as generic and static within LGBTQ+ discourse (Greene, 1996). The generalization of racialized queer women’s experiences furthers the invisibility of QSAW, as it fails to recognize distinct cultural features that produce dissimilar challenges (Patel, 2019). Moreover, cultural erasure preserves white privilege in the LGBTQ+ community, which facilitates a (de)racialization of queer spaces and policing of queerness to maintain (de)racialized boundaries therein (Logie & Rwigema, 2014).

In denying cultural differences, the bodies of QSAW become reinterpreted through Western-normative understandings of queerness, which validates queer identity based on one’s ability to assimilate (Alimahomed, 2010; Islam, 1998; Patel, 2019). Resultantly, QSAW must

express their sexualities in accordance with the 'mainstream lesbian identity,' which involves embracing white queer physical aesthetics, identity labels, and rigid boundaries around identity categories that may not be transgressed (Islam, 1998; Patel, 2019). The sexualities of QSAW are hyper-policed by their White counterparts in the LGBTQ+ community, which facilitates their invisibilization (Patel, 2019). In her study on Hispanic, Pacific Islander, East and South Asians, Alimahomed (2010) argues that invisibilization is a source of alienation from the queer community, as well as a site of empowerment to resist and challenge dominant notions of queer identity. However, Patel's (2019) study on a subset of this sample—QSAW—argues that invisibilization is a form of colonial control that denies culturally-conducive expressions of queerness, while also subjecting them to heterosexist discrimination based on ethnic features.

2.4.2.2. Sexualized Racism

Lesbians of colour frequently experience sexualized racism in the LGBTQ+ community (Greene, 2000; Logie & Rwigema, 2014). For Asian lesbians, sexualized racism often manifests as feminization, exoticism, objectification, heterosexualization, and/or characterization as sexually undesirable by white queers (Islam, 1998; Kawale, 2003; Lee, 1996; Logie & Rwigema, 2014; Patel, 2019). Patel (2019) argues that presumptions of heterosexuality vastly contribute to the invisibilization of QSAW. Specifically, physical traits such as breasts, hips, and long hair—which are integral symbols of womanhood in South Asian culture—become reinterpreted through a colonial lens as manifestations of femininity (Bannerji, 1993; Islam, 1998; Patel, 2019), as they do not align with the dominant image of a 'white butch lesbian' (Patel, 2019). For instance, a participant in Patel's (2019) study describes an experience at a prominent gay bar in Toronto, *Crews and Tangos,* wherein white women physically left the space upon her and a group of South and East Asian women entering the dance floor. East Asians experience similar forms of

discrimination, which Lee (1996) explains is the result of a lack of white privilege that gives Asians less room to maneuver between butch-femme categories. Such reinterpretations are experienced as acts of oppression when they presume heterosexuality, as it invalidates queerness based on ethnic features that do not conform to white lesbianism and enforces ascription to Western identity categories.

Moreover, authentic queerness is determined using colonial measuring tools. Specifically, the validity of queerness for South Asian women is contingent on one's ability to perform Western-normative queer scripts (Alimahomed, 2010; Patel, 2019). Islam's (1998) study on queer South Asian immigrant women in the U.S. and Patel's (2019) study on QSAW in Toronto reveal a forceful ascription of sexual identity labels—more often against their will—by their White counterparts. Participants of both studies noted that sexual identity categories are not common in South Asia, nor are they conducive to expressing their queer desires in safe ways. For instance, Patel's (2019) study indicates that many QSAW prefer fluid identities over rigid identities. Narvaez et al. (2009) elaborate that a fluid identity allows QSAW to easily shift between identities to fit their environmental, situational, and relational contexts. Accordingly, Bacchus' (2017) reveals that QSAW are unwilling to compromise their lesbian relationships or parents' social ties within South Asian diasporic communities. As such, many QSAW prefer expressing queerness in culturally conducive ways, such as rejecting identity labels, presenting femininity on South Asian terms, engaging in clandestine lesbian encounters, and/or conforming to familial expectations of heterosexuality (Bacchus, 2017; Patel, 2019).

Therefore, the ethnic identity of QSAW is stripped by their White counterparts, who reinterpret queer Brown women's bodies through a colonial lens that deems them heterosexual.

By revoking the agency of QSAW to construct a culturally conducive identity, they are collectively positioned outside of queer belongingness.

2.4.3. Structural Reinforcement of Invisibilization

2.4.3.1. Assimilationist Pressures

The view of South Asians as perpetual foreigners in Western society renders them invisible as queer subjects in LGBTQ+ communities (Alimahomed, 2010). QSAW are regarded as "outsiders" or "foreign Others" in the lesbian community due to racial differences (Islam, 1998), which is especially prominent in instances of active resistance against assimilation (Badruddoja, 2008). In other words, QSAW that choose to visibly express their South Asian identity are erased from queer discourse. A QSAW-identified participant in Badruddoja's (2008) study expressed an inability to integrate Desi culture in the LGBTQ+ community due to a fear of receiving judgment from broader queer movements for partaking in Hindu cultural practices. The participant laments over her preference to wear South Asian clothing, as she feels deeply uncomfortable attending white queer spaces dressed in a sari or shalwar kameez[10], and feels pressured to demonstrate assimilation by wearing Western attire (Badruddoja, 2008). White privilege underscoring LGBTQ+ culture triggers feelings of pressure for QSAW to compromise integral aspects of one's South Asian identity as means of belonging in the "majority culture" (i.e. mainstream LGBTQ+ community) (Beharry & Crozier, 2008; Patel, 2019). Patel's (2019) study finds that the pressure to assimilate by conforming to Western queer scripts, at the expense of their South Asianness, is a common experience for QSAW in Toronto's LGBTQ+ community (Patel, 2019). An environment in which QSAW feel forced to assimilate to whiteness in order to be included therein signifies an institutional fault to cultivate sufficient representation, support, and safe spaces.

[10] A sari and shalwar kameez are two types of dresses that are worn by women in South Asian cultures.

2.4.3.2. Lack of Representation

QSAW are vulnerable to environmental microaggressions, which Vaccaro and Koob (2018) describe as "demeaning and threatening social, educational, political or economic cues that are communicated individually, institutionally or societally" (1319). Vaccaro and Koob (2018) explain that a stereotypical portrayal of the queer subject is an environmental microaggression, as it invisibilizes those who do not conform to such stereotypes. Accordingly, several studies find that conformity to the Western lesbian stereotype is not preferred by QSAW, as dislocates them from South Asian contexts (Bacchus, 2017; Islam, 1998; Patel, 2019). However, QSAW who do not conform to Western-normative lesbian scripts become subjected to microaggressions in the form of microinvalidations within LGBTQ+ contexts (Patel, 2019). Vaccaro and Koob (2018) explain microinvalidations as "communications or cues that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of certain groups" (1319). As Patel (2019) finds, QSAW feel alienated and invisible as a result of experiencing microinvalidations, which leads them to disengage from queer spaces.

The oversaturation of white lesbians in LGBTQ+ media consequently promotes the exclusion of queer women of colour in the LGBTQ+ community and broader society (Logie & Rwigema, 2014). A dearth of representation of QSAW in LGBTQ+ media and literature erase their culturally unique challenges, which consequently, renders South Asian lesbians generic within queer discourse (Patel, 2019). Participants in Patel's (2019) study indicate that increasing representation of queer women of colour is a great collective achievement, however, the erasure of QSAW within those discourses enhances the invisibility of South Asians. As such, a failure to portray QSAW within racialized queer discourses further invalidates the possibility of a QSAW subject in the LGBTQ+ community (Patel, 2019).

Furthermore, studies conducted by Alimahomed (2010), Formby (2017), and Patel (2019) found that a demographically large population of a particular ethnic group in a given region was not reflected in local LGBTQ+ organizing. For instance, Alimahomed's (2010) California-based study found that white queers were prioritized in services offered by an LGBTQ+ organization, which was located in a region wherein women of colour comprised the collective majority. While this organization catered to gendered differences, support groups for queer women were exclusively led by white queer women. As well, the organization's Director refused to implement a support group for queer women of colour, arguing that "it would be exclusionary to white queer students" (165). As such, Alimahomed (2010) argues that the invisibility of queer women of colour in LGBTQ+ organizations is due to an ideological framing of the queer demographic as White. More specific to queer Desi diaspora, Formby (2017) finds that South Asians were the least represented racial group in World Pride[11] when hosted in London, albeit South Asians comprise the largest ethnic minority group in London, and England, more broadly. Formby (2017) and Patel (2019) posit that a dearth of South Asian representation is driven by, and perpetuates, anti-South Asian racism in the LGBTQ+ community and Pride spaces.

2.4.4. Implications of Invisibilization

2.4.4.1. Social Implications

QSAW report disengaging from the LGBTQ+ community due to feelings of disconnect and a lack of belongingness therein (Islam, 1998; Patel, 2019). This disengagement response by QSAW is a result of repeated experiences of discrimination at bars, dances, clubs, meetings, collectives, and other queer spaces, as well as, frequently being treated like a strange and exotic creature (Greene, 1996; Islam, 1998; Kawale, 2003; Patel, 2019). QSAW-identified participants

[11] The World Pride referenced here occurred in London, England in 2012.

in Islam's (1998) study initially sought organizations and communities for queer women upon coming to terms with their queer identities; however, feelings of isolation and invisibility resulted in a lack of desire to attend future queer events, even when the opportunity was available. The fact that QSAW try to engage within queer spaces, before choosing to leave due to poor treatment therein, clearly demonstrates that the limited attendance of QSAW in queer spaces is the fault of LGBTQ+ organizers failing to foster a safe and inclusive space. Additionally, it was found that a White majority dominated and characterized lesbian spaces, wherein South Asians were exoticized and Othered due to their prominent racial and cultural differences (Islam, 1998; Patel, 2019). Participants in Islam's (1998) study attributed their invisibility to the racism of white lesbians. As an implication, QSAW cannot access social support from alike others, which is the support they must rely on due to the lack of culturally sensitive resources available (Bacchus, 2017; Patel, 2019).

Several scholars posit that mainstream LGBTQ+ organizations promote Western-normative ideologies of queer identity, which are not conducive to QSAW. As such, mainstream queer spaces reinforce feelings of exclusion for queer Desi women (Alimahomed, 2010; McKeown et al., 2010; Patel, 2019). However, spaces for queer POC disproportionately underrepresent South Asians, in comparison to other racialized identities (Formby, 2017; Patel, 2019). This further reinforces feelings of alienation and results in unchanged locations for QSAW outside of racialized and lesbian discourses. Likewise, QSAW that sought out South Asian-specific queer organizations remained unsettled due to the male-dominated nature of those spaces (Alimahomed, 2010). Thus, QSAW are invisibilized within every space demarcated for each of their identities as queer, queer women, racialized, and South Asian. In their study on South Asian and Black gay men's experiences of discrimination in Britain, McKeown et al. (2010) posit that experiences of

marginalization perpetrated by other marginalized individuals and organizations that advocate for anti-oppression can have deeply damaging effects on an individual. Their finding may be used to understand that a perpetual exclusion and invisibilization of QSAW, especially within spaces curated by other queer and queer people of colour, can have dire implications.

2.4.4.2. Mental Health Implications

Invisibilization is communicated through subtle and overt microaggressions in interpersonal, institutional, and/or environmental contexts. As such, there are significant implications of invisibility; in particular, it is a major factor that induces psychological stress (Ching et al., 2018; Vaccaro & Koob, 2018). Ching et al. (2018) present a model detailing the impacts of structural oppression, cultural norms and stigma, discrimination, minority stress, and poor social support on LGBTQ+ Asian Americans. The authors find that racial microaggressions that invisibilize, exclude (e.g. giving white people preferential treatment), and dismiss cultural values or communication styles are a common experience for queer Asian diaspora, and contribute to negative mental health outcomes. In a survey assessment of the needs of queer South Asians in Southern California, Choudhury et al. (2010) found:

> 1 in 4 [queer South Asian] respondents reported feeling alienated in the broader South Asian community, while almost 1 in 5 felt alienated in the broader LGBTIQ community. 77% of respondents experienced homo/trans/biphobia in mainstream American society while 69% reported experiencing racism in mainstream American society (14).

Studies conducted by Bannerji (1993), Islam (1998), and Patel (2019) find that QSAW disengage from queer spaces in response to feeling alienated and experiencing discrimination therein. Vaccaro and Koob (2018) detail engagement and disengagement responses to microaggressions within their model of LGBTQ+ microaggressions. According to Vaccaro and Koob (2018), a disengagement response may manifest as:

> Avoidance, walking away from an incident or delaying outward reaction … [disengaging] from a perpetrator, issue, or setting for a variety of reasons … such as discomfort, anger, betrayal, distress, exhaustion, frustration, embarrassment, or shame (1336).

Furthermore, Ching et al. (2018) find that LGBTQ+ Asian Americans more often receive poor social support due to an inability to seek support from their family network as a result of their queerness. This finding highlights the need for culturally competent programs from which queer Asian diaspora can seek social support.

2.5. Literature Discussion

The literature reviewed contextualizes the gay liberationist ideologies that became reflected in Toronto's Pride organizing, as well as the culture-specific discrimination experienced by QSAW in the LGBTQ+ community, which will allow for a better understanding of the institutional reproduction of invisibilization by Pride organizations. It is evident that racism, sexism, xenophobia, Western-normativity, and homonationalism have underpinned the organizational culture of PrideTO since its early emergence. As a result, queer women and queers of colour have existed on the margins of Pride organizing. However, white queer women have been more successful in achieving representation in Pride in comparison to queers of colour. Further, the similar temporal trajectories of Desi immigration to Canada and the LGBTQ+ liberation movement imposed additional barriers of settlement, citizenship, and xenophobic racism in broader society upon arrival, which prevented queer South Asians from claiming recognition, even as a queer of colour, in the early movement. This lends an explanation to the erasure of QSAW in Pride organizations.

Moreover, the literature illuminates a disproportionate underrepresentation of South Asians in queer spaces that are geographically located in areas with large Desi populations (e.g. Toronto, London). This indicates that South Asian erasure in LGBTQ+ communities is driven by culturally

specific forms of discrimination; thus, reaffirming that QSAW invisibility cannot be understood through essentializing analyses that generalize the experiences of all queer women of colour.

Finally, this literature review sets a foundation for identifying oppressive practices within Pride organizations. In particular, the literature presented indicates that the invisibilization of QSAW is rooted in culturally conflicting values and demands of sexual identity disclosure. Notably, a colonial imposition of queerphobia in South Asian culture produced extensive shame and stigma surrounding queerness. These attitudes have followed into diasporic communities and disproportionately hinder the ability of Desi daughters to "come out," due to additional expectations to maintain familial honour; hence, QSAW often express sexuality in clandestine. In contrast, coming out by openly disclosing one's sexuality is a central aspect of identity formation in Western LGBTQ+ culture. The highly politicized nature of queer women's identities is especially burdening for QSAW, as it requires embracing the white-normative collective lesbian identity in daily life in order to be acknowledged as queer. Therefore, it is reasonable to understand the invisibility of queer South Asian diaspora as a product of fundamentally colonial ideals defining the mainstream queer identity. As such, an additive approach of tokenistic inclusion will not remedy the erasure of QSAW. Instead, an integrative approach involving decolonization of mainstream queer visibility will be required to effectively transform the invisibilized status of QSAW.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Using a critical social scientific framework, I adopt the concept of invisibilization to offer insight on the social and systemic relations (Madison, 2004), as well as deeply rooted issues, of power and domination (Creswell & Poth, 2018) in LGBTQ+ organizations. This chapter will situate the topic of my study within the work of five critical theorists in order to illuminate the invisibilization of QSAW. In doing so, it will demonstrate that invisibilization is constructed by dominant members of hierarchical power relationships and sustained through discourse.

3.1. Invisibilization through Organized Power Dynamics

Critical race theorists argue that racial invisibility is a result of epistemologies of ignorance within hierarchical social and structural power dynamics (Mueller, 2017; Ward, 2008). I draw on Jennifer Mueller's (2017) theorization of white ignorance in order to explain how the invisibility of QSAW within LGBTQ+ organizations persist and becomes justified. Mueller (2017) describes white ignorance as a "process of knowing that is designed to produce not knowing surrounding white privilege, culpability, and structural White supremacy" (220). Mueller (2017) notes that the term 'white' in white ignorance refers to white-normative ideologies; in other words, the perpetuation of white ignorance is not limited to white people. Mueller (2017) further argues that those who claim awareness of racism, while simultaneously employing defence strategies and mechanisms to interpret racist instances (i.e., deflection, blame-shifting, presumed white virtue), contribute to the reproduction of racial ignorance and justification of ongoing domination within hierarchal relations. As such, Mueller (2017) focuses on four epistemic maneuvers to elucidate white ignorance—three of which are particularly relevant to this thesis.

First, *willful colorblindness* (*willfully reasoned ignorance*, hereafter)[12], wherein individuals claim the ability to "see" racism, albeit introduce alternative factors to "neutralize evidence of white privilege" and/or rejects the presence of racialized dynamics in practice (Mueller, 2017, p. 225). Willfully reasoned ignorance processes errors as successes (i.e., uneven racial dynamics are processes as racial inclusion). In this sense, white ignorance hinders one's ability to understand issues of power that affecting racialized dynamics; thereby, allowing the invisibilization of QSAW to persist within LGBTQ+ organizations. Second, *tautological ignorance*, wherein individuals understand the mechanisms of racism, albeit establish one's own and others' racial obliviousness and innocence to justify their ignorance (Mueller, 2017). Tautologically reasoned ignorance aligns with white saviorism, and deduces passivity and sincerity from clearly patterned logic, which proposes:

> "Whites need to know about racism, or we won't know. When we don't know about racism, we accidentally participate in it through no fault of our own. If we can just know about racism, we won't do it anymore because we are good people" (Mueller, 2017, p. 231).

The proposed logic elucidates a lack of initiative to learn about issues of racism, as well as how to address them adequately; instead, Whites wait to be informed by marginalized communities. Further, Mueller's (2017) conceptualization of tautological ignorance reveals preservation of white virtue by minimizing individual agency and motive, and instead, shifts the sole responsibility of reproducing white hegemony onto organizational structures. This maintains the ideological apparatus that preserves white domination within an organizational context. Third, *evasion*, wherein individuals evade meaningful identification of race and/or avoid explicit terminology related to race, which precludes the production of racial understanding. Evasion is not produced

[12] The term 'colorblind' is inherently ableist and Othering of people with disabilities (Medina, 2018). Given the intersectional nature of this thesis, the term willful colorblindness will be replaced by willfully reasoned ignorance (descriptive of the original term).

passively nor unintentionally, rather, it is the most deliberate epistemic manoeuvre sustaining racial ignorance.

Mueller's (2017) theorization of white ignorance reveals that invisibility is reproduced and justified by the epistemological ignorance of dominant actors in hierarchal power relations. In this sense, it is be understood that negligent knowledge acquisition practices, as well as dominant white-normative ideologies in the organizational culture, obstruct the ability of dominant actors to understand the absence of QSAW. Therefore, invisibilization becomes institutionalized in the process of dominant actors culturally reproducing white ignorance within an organization. Using this perspective, I argue that the invisibilization of QSAW becomes reproduced and justified by dominant actors deflecting individual accountability and employing defence mechanisms to interpret racist instances, while simultaneously proclaiming an awareness of racism. I further argue that dominant actors evade explicit acknowledgement of QSAW in racialized queer discourses, which precludes meaningful understanding of their culturally unique existence, and thus, sustains racial ignorance towards QSAW.

Additionally, I draw on Jane Ward's (2008) critical examination of white normativity in a *racially diverse* LGBTQ+ organization, in order to further explain the deeply rooted power dynamics that reproduce invisibilizing practices. Ward (2008) notes that, although the Los Angeles (L.A.) Gay and Lesbian Centre prides itself for transforming from a White organization into one that is racially diverse, the organizational culture remains white-normative. Ward (2008) attributes the persistent white-normative culture to the organization's corporate approach to diversity, which privileges the knowledge and experiences of whites. As well, the Centre's diversity strategies focus on celebrating a multicultural collective identity, instead of meaningfully engaging in the issues of

power and privilege within the organization that affect queers of colour. A lack of ethno-specificity in diversity practices is the product of disingenuous efforts to cultivate racial inclusion.

From Ward's (2008) analysis of the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Centre, it is understood that "diversity culture" within an LGBTQ+ organization functions as a façade to conceal white normativity therein. This provides a critical perspective for analyzing the cultural reproduction of power in PrideTO. Moreover, Ward (2008) highlights that whiteness in organizations extends beyond the ethnicity of those in positions of power; rather, it exists in the organizational culture and determines the norms surrounding communication. In this sense, it is understood that descriptive representation (i.e., numeric) of racialized employees will not absolve an organization of its deeply ingrained power dynamics that maintain a culture of white hegemony. Using this perspective, I argue that PrideTO deploys a generic diversity politic that functions as a façade of racial inclusion, while concealing issues of power that privilege Western knowledge; thereby, preserving white domination in the structural apparatus and organizational culture.

Furthermore, I draw on the work of Patricia Hill Collins' (1986) to explain another cause of invisibilization in relation to structural power dynamics. Collins' (1986) provides a unique perspective of 'the outsider within' to explain the position of Black women; they are "insiders" of the families they cook, clean, and nurture for, and are often "loved" by affluent whites, however, they are perpetual "outsiders" of their families due to the racism of white people. It is noted that white men will likely prioritize white women over Black women (Collins, 1996). Moreover, the denial of agency for Black women and treatment as "others" maintains systems of domination in favour of white people.

Collins' (1986) examination of 'the outsider within' reveals that power relationships are embedded in social systems. Individuals have various identity statuses that are attributed to

differential privileges. Individuals are pushed further outside of a group for each of their identity statuses that deviate from the norm. In this sense, the inner-most societal group has the most privilege. In the context of LGBTQ+ spaces, white cisgender men with citizenship status are considered the 'norm'. Therefore, the subjugation and invisibilization of QSAW is facilitated by systems of domination that are embedded in the social structures of LGBTQ+ organizations, and resultantly, prioritize the knowledges and experiences of queer subjects with a greater number of normative identities (i.e. social privileges). Using this perspective, I argue that QSAW are considered insiders within the LGBTQ+ community due to their queer identity, however, their marginalized gender, ethnic, citizenship, and religious identities, amongst other subordinated statuses, push them further beyond an intelligible capacity. In other words, invisibilization persists because dominant actors are unable to conceptualize QSAW as a queer subject, as their multifaceted identities deviate from too many queer norms.

3.2. Invisibilization through Discursive Erasure

In order to explain how knowledge about South Asian invisibility is constructed, I draw on Gayathri Spivak's (1988) postcolonial critique of Eurocentric knowledge of the "third world." Spivak's (1988) fundamental premise is that South Asians are subject to ongoing colonial subjugation in the form of epistemic violence in Western discourse. Spivak (1988) defines epistemic violence as a colonial destruction of non-Western ways of perceiving, understanding, and knowing the world (i.e. South Asian views), and a consequent privileging of Western perspectives in epistemic practices. Specifically, epistemic violence involves effacing and superimposing knowledge with imperialist narratives, thereby subjugating and disqualifying "a whole set of knowledges" as inadequate (Spivak, 1988, p.25). As Spivak (1988) contends, the subaltern of imperialism becomes subjected to general violence resulting from episteme and the

subaltern of the feminine becomes silenced; therefore, epistemic violence renders QSAW unable to truly express themselves. Further, Spivak (1988) conceptualizes the subaltern as voiceless and unable to be heard, as a result of colonial power relegating her subjugated culture and non-Western worldviews to outside the social margins of discourse. By Spivak's definition, not all who are oppressed and Othered are considered subalterns. Spivak differentiates between subaltern people and being a discriminated-against minority, arguing that the latter "can speak" as "they're within the hegemonic discourse wanting a piece of the pie and not being allowed," whereas the former cannot speak for herself due to a lack of access to cultural imperialism (Spivak in De Kock, 1992, p.46). As such, Spivak (1988) explains that the identity and truth of South Asians are constructed on their behalf, and at the expense of their voice and agency; hence, the subaltern cannot speak. Moreover, Spivak (1988) problematizes essentialist ideologies, as it considers all "third world people" to have the same identity and issues. The utilization of such ideologies by Eurocentric theorists creates an assumption of unity amongst a group of people with similar identification; as a result, subalterns become dependent on Western intellectuals to speak on their behalf, which paves a way for colonialism.

Spivak's (1988) postcolonial critique reveals that identity and truth (i.e. lived experiences, needs, etc.) are invisibilized as a result of hegemonic Western normativity in dominant discourse, and ongoing colonialism of South Asian bodies which maintains their subordination. From Spivak's (1988) analysis, it may be understood that the identities and truth (e.g. experiences) are constructed by LGBTQ+ organizations through Westernized knowledge, and thereby essentialize queer identities, rendering QSAW static and generic in queer discourse. Therefore, the failure of LGBTQ+ organizations to distinguish the culturally unique experiences of QSAW furthers their invisibilization within broader queer discourse. Using this perspective, I argue that PrideTO

inflicts epistemic violence upon QSAW by silencing and rewriting queer Desi identities and truths with colonial narratives, which continue to deny South Asian sexuality; thereby, effacing the cultural identity of QSAW. Moreover, I limit my conceptual definition of invisibilization to Spivak's definition of the subaltern as one who is silenced in hegemonic discourse. Thus, within the scope of my study, 'invisibilized subject' refers to those whose marginality cannot be voiced or heard within mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse. In this sense, the subalternity of QSAW maintain their invisibility within PrideTO's dichotomous construction of queer woman versus POC.

Lastly, I draw on Foucault's (1978) analysis of power in relationships, in order to explain how invisibility is sustained. Foucault proposes a *repressive hypothesis*, in which he contends that sexuality in the 17th century was not repressed, as it was spoken about—whether by those studying, regulating, or participating in sexuality. Thus, sexuality remained an empowered concept due to its existence in discourse. Foucault (1978) explicates knowledge—and the way in which it is acquired—is controlled by power. He asserts that knowledge and power are bridged together through discourse, which exists in every relation as opposed to unilaterally. Hence, power relationships may exist independent of a direct ruling power (i.e. there is no 'mastermind' conducting these power-based relationships). Foucault (1978) explains that power cannot be applied externally to relationships of knowledge, sex, or economics; instead, power exists inside of these relationships and determines their internal structure. Foucault (1978) further contends that power demands docility through subjugation, submission, and domination; power often presents a façade to appear beneficial, while effectively disguising its ill intentions. He argues the State no longer seeks power over death, but rather, seeks to control how people live—Foucault refers to the latter as *biopower*. Foucault (1978) argues that biopower facilitated the rise of capitalism, as States

became interested in regulating and normalizing power over one's life. Finally, Foucault (1978) proposes that power operates in everyday practices, which sustain and reproduce power relations.

Foucault's (1978) analysis of power reveals that power is constructed through discourse; thus, a lack of discourse about a particular subject will resultantly produce invisibility, and thereby, a dearth of power for the concept—no matter its normative quality. Dominant actors within PrideTO construct knowledge about queerness in mainstream discourse, which is learned by others; hence, a failure to explicitly acknowledge QSAW will reproduce discursive invisibility. As well, Foucault's framework is used to understand differential levels of visibility amongst queer POC, who are otherwise underrepresented. Additionally, Foucault's concept of biopower can be used to explain the way in which PrideTO regulates the boundaries of queer in-group/out-group. In this sense, PrideTO constructs queerness in accordance with how they want queer bodies to live (i.e., conforming to Western-normative queer scripts). This knowledge is learned by the broader LGBTQ+ community, who continue to perpetuate invisibilizing queer ideologies. Furthermore, mainstream LGBTQ+ organizations—especially Pride organizations—have the power to construct knowledge about queerness that is distributed to a national audience. In this sense, it is understood that the wider community acquires knowledge about queerness through discourse that is constructed by mainstream LGBTQ+ organizations. Therefore, White-normative constructions of queerness by PrideTO produce and sustain narratives that invisibilize QSAW in the broader LGBTQ+ community.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This study explores the way in which the cultural underpinnings of PrideTO contribute to the invisibilization of QSAW in the broader LGBTQ+ community. This chapter will begin by outlining the research approach, sample and setting selection, data collection strategies, and data analysis techniques, which were utilized to best answer my research inquiry. Then, it will engage in a reflexive discussion with intent to identify potential conflicts of interest in my position as a researcher. This chapter will conclude by highlighting the methodological limitations of this study.

4.1. Critical Ethnographic Research Approach

A critical ethnographic approach is best fit to investigate my research question, as it permits a higher-level understanding of why the organizational practices of PrideTO facilitate the alienation and exclusion of QSAW in dominant queer discourses, as well as how such conduct persists and becomes justified. Further, a critical ethnographic approach was conducive to the exposure of broader social processes of control (e.g. invisibilization), power imbalances, and symbolic mechanisms that impose one 'acceptable' way to perform queerness (Thomas, 2004), which achieves my research objective of producing findings that will mobilize QSAW.

The culture within PrideTO is complex and requires a diverse set of data collection strategies in order to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the shared and learned patterns of values, beliefs, and behaviours therein (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As such, I deployed a multipronged data collection approach to elicit a range of perspectives in order to discern the deeply embedded social inequalities and power relationships that invisibilize QSAW. This proved beneficial for discerning the contentious ties between PrideTO and queer South Asian organizers, as both parties offered differential accounts of instances and the relationship itself. Further, utilizing a multitude of strategies enhanced my findings as it allowed me to follow-up on salient

information upon discovery, and thus, uncover critical issues that PrideTO attempted to conceal (i.e. *institutionalized forgetting*). Notably, a critical ethnographic approach proved beneficial for exposing power imbalances, symbolic mechanisms that impose one 'acceptable' queer script, and broader processes of social control (e.g. normalizing violence against QSAW) (Thomas, 2004), which achieves my research objective of yielding empirical evidence that will mobilize QSAW.

Following the logic that people are unlikely to self-identify as racist, it was deemed improbable that representatives would admit organizational negligence towards QSAW. As such, methods that exclusively rely on information explicitly articulated by organizational actors would not provide sufficient data to answer my research question. However, a critical ethnography allowed me to explicate implicit values and unacknowledged biases, by delving beneath the surface to uncover the intent motivating the actions of dominant actors within the organization (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This enabled me to reveal the cultural underpinnings of PrideTO and obtain sufficient data to answer my research inquiry. Additionally, the ability to critically analyze my findings was crucial for uncovering hidden agendas, assumptions, and power relations (Madison, 2005). Thus, critical ethnography was a highly effective and practical method for examining systemic racism and anti-South Asian sentiments within PrideTO. Moreover, a critical ethnography produced evaluative data, which is useful for the development and amendment of policies and practices (Madison, 2004); thereby, achieving my research objective of improving organization-level support for QSAW.

4.2. Sample and Setting

4.2.1. Sample: 2019 Pride Festival

The sample for my study is PrideTO, which is a not-for-profit organization that coordinates the City's annual LGBTQ+ Pride Festival (Pride Toronto, n.d.). Given the

organization's mandate to plan and execute a large-scale annual festival, as well as the vast amount of programming encompassed therein, my sample is limited to Pride 2019. See section 4.3 for the specific data that was collected within this sample.

PrideTO is an optimal site to investigate the invisibilization of QSAW, as Pride events have consistently offered a crucial platform for demonstrating queer visibility (Grundy, 2003) and Toronto's Festival is one of the largest in North America. Thus, it is understood that PrideTO has the capacity to influence dominant ideologies pertaining to sexuality on a national stage. Additionally, this site offers unique complexities for an investigation of structural racism in mainstream queer organizations, as PrideTO has undergone significant pressure to incorporate an anti-racist framework since *Black Lives Matter-Toronto* (BLM-TO) halted the 2016 Pride Parade in their capacity as the Honorary Group (Greey, 2018). In challenging Pride Toronto™ for its performative act of inclusion, BLM-TO presented a list of demands to make the Festival more inclusive of queer people of colour (Greey, 2018). One of these demands was to reinstate the South Asian stage, which now provides a critical site of belonging for the South Asian community during Pride. However, the findings of my recent study (see Patel, 2019) indicate that QSAW continue to feel alienated in White-centric Pride spaces, which contrasts the anti-racist goals PrideTO intended to work towards. Thus, the persistent invisibility of QSAW in light of the organization's awareness of racial inequity makes PrideTO a particularly interesting site of investigation.

Furthermore, PrideTO offered a substantial amount of *public* data (events, documents, social media pages, etc.). This made PrideTO an ideal site of investigation, as access to the organization, or lack thereof, would not be detrimental to the outcome of my study.

4.2.2. Setting: Toronto Region

The Toronto region was selected as the setting for this study due to its significance to both South Asian and LGBTQ+ communities in Canada. Toronto supports one of the most established LGBTQ+ neighbourhoods across the globe (Church-Wellesley Village, n.d.), and is a historically and contemporarily significant site for mobilizing LGBTQ+ rights in Canada. Additionally, South Asians comprise the largest visible minority group and 13.7% of the City of Toronto's total population (Statistics Canada, 2017a; Statistics Canada, 2017b). This demographic statistic is much higher with consideration of the suburban areas surrounding the City, as a sizable proportion of South Asians are concentrated in the Greater Toronto Area. Given the convenient transportation between suburban and metropolitan Toronto, this study extends 'Toronto' to encompass any region within a commutable distance (e.g. York Region, Peel Region, Halton Region, Durham Region, Hamilton Region, Waterloo Region). Importantly, the Desi diaspora in Toronto region is amongst the most diverse in Canada due to immigrant settlement patterns (e.g. large Tamil diaspora in York Region, large Punjabi diaspora in Peel Region, etc.), which made this region especially ideal.

4.2.3. Field Access

Although the vast majority of data utilized was public content (e.g. Festival spaces, social media, and documents), organizational access was required for interview participant recruitment and assistance with survey distribution. Access into PrideTO was sought through direct email (i.e. without a gatekeeper). However, the email method only garnered one response from a Board member, who opted for anonymity, and thus, did not provide further connections. Messages sent to PrideTO's social media channels also did not garner a response. Alas, *Rangeela* provided a connection to a Staff member at PrideTO, which permitted *greater* organizational access. Further, I encountered an affiliate of PrideTO during the Festival weekend and informed them of this study; however, email correspondence was delayed by eight months. Specifically, a response was

garnered shortly after full access was obtained through other avenues; however, it is unclear whether correspondence was delayed due to a lack of trust or the heavy work period of PrideTO.

4.3. Data Collection Strategies

The data for this study was collected between June, which was congruent with Pride month in Toronto, and October 2019. The data collection period was intended to end in August 2019; however, due to the frequent occurrence of Pride events between June-August, I extended my data collection period to October 2019[13]. Five data collection strategies were triangulated to elicit insightful information to answer my research question. See Table 1 for a summary of data collection strategies. An explanation of each strategy follows.

Table 1: Summary of Data Collection Strategies

Data Collection Strategy	Specific Unit(s) of Analysis
Social Media Content Analysis	❖ Instagram: @PrideToronto ❖ Twitter: @PrideToronto (to and by this handle); #PrideTO ❖ Facebook: @PrideToronto, Dyke March event page ❖ Website: www.pridetoronto.com
Document Analysis	❖ Policies: By-laws, Membership Policies, Partnership Policies, Community Event Policies, Parade Policies ❖ Marketing Materials: Pride Guide, posters, promotional materials, etc. ❖ Audited Financial Statements: 2018, 2019 ❖ News articles about Pride Toronto
In-depth Interviews	❖ Queer South Asian Organizations: ➢ Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP) ➢ Rangeela ➢ Queer South Asian Women's Network ❖ Performers/Artists ❖ Pride Toronto™
Spatial Observation	❖ Public events of the Pride Festival, with a particular focus on: ➢ AIDS Candlelight Vigil ➢ Cabana Pool Party

[13] Should this study be replicated, it would be recommended to collect data over a longer period of time—specifically one that includes a less busy period (i.e. winter) for Pride programming.

	➢ Dyke March, Dyke Rally ➢ BrOWN//out (South Asian Stage) ➢ Pride Parade ➢ Street Festival
Surveys	❖ 31 responses ❖ Sites of distribution: ➢ AIDS Committee of York Region's (social media) ➢ Personal social media and shared by friends ➢ A Colour Deep: queer & trans of GTA (Facebook group) ➢ Spice Arts co. (Facebook page and physical event) ➢ Engaging QSAW Workshop (QSAW Network's event)

4.3.1. Social Media Content Analysis

The purpose of conducting a social media analysis was to identify the implicit messaging conveyed by the organization's outward discourse. I examined the captions, visuals, re-shared posts, language, and engagement with the comments, to determine the way in which PrideTO constructs queer visibility. Data was collected from all media platforms ran by PrideTO (i.e. social media, website, blogs) between December 1, 2018 – October 31, 2019. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the organization's knowledge about critical queer issues, as well as their implicit values conveyed through the content shared by PrideTO. Further, regularly checking the organization's Instagram was particularly important, as the organization occasionally and subtly updated captions on posts and deleted content upon criticism. For this reason, discourse analysis strategies were essential to my research, as all outgoing publications tangentially conveyed the information about the general politics of the organization.

4.3.2. Document Analysis

The purpose of analyzing documents was to determine the implicit and explicit mandate and priorities of the organization. This study permitted the inclusion of any documents deemed

relevant, which offered significant flexibility and was especially beneficial for fact-checking data collected from other data sources.

Policy and Finances. Examining policy documents allowed me to compare the scripted priorities of the organization with the extent to which it is upheld in praxis. The policy documents and financial statements were difficult to locate and meeting minutes from Annual General Meetings are not publicly available. This, in itself, demonstrates a lack of transparency.

News Articles. I obtained news articles to follow-up on information that emerged throughout my data collection process. For instance, a Board member suggested that I conduct a Google search of the mass membership resignation; various news outlets allowed me to discern the cause. I made a conscious effort to seek out direct quotes from the membership, in order to ensure that bias of media outlets would not interfere with my data. As well, direct statements from members offered considerable insight into the internal dynamics of the organization.

Marketing Materials. I collected marketing materials both online and throughout the event. The marketing materials incorporated images of people, and thus, were highly significant for examining visibility in the most explicit sense.

4.3.3. In-depth Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured, qualitative interviews were conducted with 19 individuals that work with and/or challenge the work of PrideTO through activism or social movement art. The interviews spanned 30-50 minutes each. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain insight from those who behold specialized knowledge on matters pertaining to my research project. For instance, informants from PrideTO provided a deeper understanding of decision-making processes and implicit values within the organization, whereas interviews with queer Desi organizations, activists, and artists that perform in the Festival, provided insight into the way in which PrideTO

treats the queer Brown community. Additionally, 4 of 7 informants from PrideTO were interviewed as a group[14] in February, when an unforeseen opportunity arose. I accepted the opportunity as presented, given the previous difficulty in securing interviews; the timing of this group interview proved beneficial for filling gaps in my dataset.

Further, interviews were conducted over the phone, in coffee shops, and office spaces for ASAAP and Pride Toronto™, in order to best accommodate the needs, comfort, and schedules of informants. Consent was obtained from participants to record and later transcribe the interviews, and all raw data was safely secured on a password encrypted device to ensure the confidentiality of all participants. As well, participants were given the option of identity disclosure, as well as the level to which they wish to remain anonymous, in this thesis (see section 4.5.1 for more information on the status of anonymity and an overview of interview participants).

4.3.4. Spatial Observation

The purpose of conducting a spatial observation was to obtain data that would illustrate a comprehensive blueprint of the Festival, from which critical analyses of South Asian representation can be drawn. This proved beneficial for disentangling visible representation from tokenism and cultural appropriation, which revealed the underpinning values, norms, and priorities of PrideTO. Observations were made at the weekend-long Street Festival, as well as major events that were particularly salient to this study. I was especially observant of the spatial and temporal arrangements, demographic representation (i.e. guests of honour), corporate sponsorship, organizational booths, floats in the Parade, music, food, cost of participation in any events (for attendees and registered community organizations), and areas with greater and lesser attendance. This provided deeper insight to decipher whether or not the efforts of PrideTO were performative

[14] This group included: Masala, Vellai, Thepla, and Karela (see section 4.5.1. for participant profiles).

or genuine. Additionally, I observed major events that were particularly salient to this study; particularly, I observed BrOWN//out (South Asian Stage), Cabana Pool Party, and the AIDS Candlelight Vigil in the capacity of an attendee. However, I observed the Dyke March, Dyke Rally, and Pride Parade in the capacity of a participant in order to obtain greater insight (e.g. observe attendees and Parade contingents by walking the staging area in prior).

4.3.5. Surveys

I conducted a brief, anonymous survey to illuminate the level of representation felt by QSAW in PrideTO, for the purpose of obtaining insight within a temporally relevant context. The survey responses complemented my data centring institutional perspectives, which will be beneficial in the research mobilization stage of this project. The survey, which was shared on the social media platforms of the AIDS Committee of York Region (ACYR), *A Colour Deep: Queer and Trans of GTA*, *Spice Arts Co*, and the *QSAW Network*, garnered a total of 31 responses. Despite a lower response rate than desired, the survey proved useful in providing relevant insight pertaining to QSAW visibility in PrideTO. See Appendix B for the survey questionnaire.

4.4. Data Analysis: Thematic Coding Process

The data for this study was coded using *NVIVO Qualitative Coding Software.* My approach to coding slightly differed from the approach by Creswell and Poth (2018), which recommends using only 20-25 codes for the entirety of a dataset. Due to the amount of collected data I had found that narrowing down so drastically upheld the risk of miscategorising or disregarding more abstract themes. As such, I utilized 141 'initial' codes—most of which only differed slightly from one another. This allowed me to categorize information about a similar subject matter based on various divergent subcultural perspective, which was beneficial for triangulation. For instance, information about South Asian programming slightly differed based on the source—PrideTO

offered objective accounts based on their perspectives, while community activists and artists offered subjective, interaction-based insight into how they have been treated by the organization and the resultant impact on Toronto's queer Desi community. These two perspectives revealed divergent themes in my complex dataset, while maintaining the ability to analyze a particular issue from differential standpoints in order to uncover causality at a deeper level. In this sense, the utilization of a multiplicity of detailed initial codes facilitated a higher-level analysis while reducing the chances of human error when interpreting data.

The process of categorizing initial codes involved determining analytical patterns and thematic similarities within my dataset, as well as in relation to my analytic framework (see chapter 3), and then gradually condensing these categories until themes emerge (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Contrary to their assertion that "researchers who end up with 100 or 200 codes … in a complex database—struggle to reduce the picture to five or six themes that they must end with" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.190), I easily reduced the 141 initial codes from my complex database into fewer thematic groups. To do so, I first sorted these codes into 22 groups (known as *expanded codes*). Next, I thematically grouped these expanded codes to produce four distinct categories, which reflect specific cultural underpinnings of PrideTO: (1) Western supremacy, (2) xenophobia, (3) homonationalism, and (4) commercialism. The cultural underpinning of homopatriarchy overlapped with each of these due to the intersectional nature of this study; thus, it was not separately categorized. These four categories were further reduced into two key sub-themes of *wilful negligence* and *assimilationist politics*, which work in harmony to produce invisibilization. In particular, the theme of *wilful negligence* better encapsulates the knowledge formation practices informing the erasure of QSAW in dominant queer discourse, while the theme of *assimilationist*

politics illuminates the practices that normalize identity-based violence against QSAW. Finally, *politics of care* emerged as the overarching theme of my findings.

4.5. Ethics and Privacy Considerations

This research study was designed in consideration of potential risks that may arise to participants, in order to ensure that the vulnerable communities involved are not harmed (Cameron, 2015). This study examined data that was collected from public spaces (i.e. open-access community spaces, online spaces), which is considered ethical. However, I acknowledge that many queer South Asians attend Pride spaces with a desire to not be recognized due to the potential risk of being 'outed'. Therefore, additional ethical mechanisms were put in place to mitigate this risk. Specifically, my spatial observations were focused on the layout of spaces, rather than on people occupying those spaces. My observations of attendees were generalized descriptions (i.e. South Asian woman) that do not identify an individual. Only those who occupied public roles related to Pride (i.e. curators, artists) were identified in my observations. With regards to online content, the handles of individuals commenting were not redacted during data collection. Although this constitutes ethical practice, I did redact social media handles of non-corporations on any screenshots included in my findings, in efforts to protect the privacy of individuals.

Furthermore, all of the data collected throughout this research was stored on a password-encrypted device. The physical artifacts and signed consent forms are safely locked away in my home until the completion of this thesis; it will be destroyed thereafter. Both public and confidential data were treated similarly in terms of secure storage to reduce the risk of damage or disorganization, which was a risk given the copious amount of data that was collected in this study.

4.5.1. Status of Anonymity for Interview Participants

All interviewees provided informed consent to participate. This study sought to mitigate potential social harm that may be caused by associating one's name with their organization. As such, participants could choose the extent of disclosure. Of the 19 participants, 9 consented to full disclosure (inclusion of their name, organizational affiliation, and role therein), 9 consented to partial disclosure (use of pseudonym but the inclusion of their role within an organization), and 1 consented to minimal disclosure (redaction of all identifying details except their organization). An overview of the interview participant profiles can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Participant Profile Overview

Name or Pseudonym	Role/Position	Organizational Affiliation	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
Thepla	Staff: Programming Co-Director (New)[15]	Pride Toronto™	Cisgender Man	Black
Masala	Staff: Programming	Pride Toronto™	Cisgender Woman	Biracial (Black/White)
Karela	Staff: Programs Intern	Pride Toronto™	Cisgender Woman	White
Vellai	Staff: Marketing & Branding	Pride Toronto™	Cisgender Man	White
Dhokla	*Dominant Actor*[16]	Pride Toronto™	--[17]	Person of Colour
Phil Villeneuve	Staff: Programming (Co-)Director	Pride Toronto™	Cisgender Man	White
Gora	Board Member	Pride Toronto™	Cisgender Man	White
Waseem Shaikh	Co-Founder	Rangeela	Cisgender Man	South Asian
Haldi	Co-Founder	Rangeela	Cisgender Man	South Asian
Hasheel Lodhia	Artist: Musician	Independent	Cisgender Man	South Asian

[15]Thepla was not the co-programming director for Pride 2019; however, he was interviewed as a key informant of the organization.
[16] Dominant actor refers to those occupying positions of power, including: Board of Directors, Executive Director, and Staff Members. The specific position of this individual is concealed for confidentiality reasons.
[17] This information is concealed in order to maintain confidentiality.

Rose Kazi	Artist: Musician	LAL	Nonbinary	South Asian
Humza Mian (Mango Lassi)	Artist: Drag Queen	Independent	Cisgender Man	South Asian
Ryan Persadie (Tifa Wine)	Artist: Drag Queen	Independent	Cisgender Man	Indo-Caribbean
Mithai	Artist	Independent	Woman	South Asian
Haran Vijayanathan	Executive Director	ASAAP[18]	Cisgender Man	South Asian Tamil
Abhirami Balachandran	Women's Sexual Health Coordinator	ASAAP	Nonbinary	South Asian Tamil
Rabbia Ashraf	Placement Student	ASAAP	Cisgender Woman	South Asian
Devi	Executive Member	QSAW Network[19]	Woman	South Asian
Praanee Chandrasegaram	Executive Member	QSAW Network	Gender Fluid	South Asian Tamil

There are a handful of instances wherein informants shared particularly insightful information with an explicit request to not associate their name with it. In these cases, confidentiality of informants is upheld by sharing the data (in chapter 5) without attributing a source to the information. Furthermore, I mitigated the risk of privacy violations in the survey I conducted by making it anonymous (as discussed in chapter 4.3.5). As well, survey respondents were required to fill out a digital informed consent form with details about this study in prior.

4.6. Reflexivity

As per ethnographic research tradition, it is crucial to discuss my reflexivity as a researcher. The concept of reflexivity recognizes that "the orientations of researchers are shaped by their

[18] The acronym ASAAP refers to Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention.
[19] The acronym QSAW Network refers to Queer South Asian Women's Network.

socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.15). My lived experience as a gay gender-fluid Gujarati-Canadian (assigned female at birth) has constructed my social reality. In acknowledgment of my proximity to the study, I made conscious efforts to remain objective throughout the data collection process. However, I acknowledge that the potential for unconscious bias remains due to the knowledge I have acquired through my membership within LGBTQ+ and QSAW communities (Creswell & Poth, 2018; May & Perry, 2012). To ensure the validity of my findings, I utilized triangulation as my strategy of trustworthiness. This involved the use of various data collection strategies, which are outlined in section 4.3 of this chapter.

Furthermore, to ensure transparency as a researcher, it is important to disclose my affiliation with the *QSAW Network*,[20] an organization of my creation. I interviewed two representatives from the organization for this study; however, both interviews were conducted on equal footing in efforts to minimize any potential conflicts of interest in this regard.

4.7. Methodological Limitations and Challenges

There are a few methodological challenges and limitations of this study. First, regarding the spatial observations, the vast amount of overlapping programming made it impossible to observe every minute of Programming during Pride weekend. However, I minimized potential limitations by making observations of the overall Street Festival in between the major events that were most salient to this study. As well, my multipronged data collection approach allowed me to fill any gaps in my observations, using images and videos posted on the official Pride Toronto™ social media platforms, and knowledge acquired from interviews and surveys. Given my ability to fill these gaps, I set the boundaries for inclusion to all communications and operations of the

[20] The QSAW Network was launched *after* the 2019 Pride Festival; however, representatives of the organization were interviewed as they provided considerable insight into the changing landscape of QSAW in Toronto before/after Pride.

organization as it pertains to the 2019 Pride Festival. Any information pertaining to previous Pride Festivals will be contextual, rather than a piece of independent data, to ensure investigation of organizational culture under present management.

Second, it was previously believed that my identity as a South Asian lesbian would help me earn the trust of participants by positioning me as an insider, and thus, increase comfort for potential informants (Lewis, 2003). However, my status as a researcher superseded my identifications as an LGBTQ+ South Asian, as well as my advocacy work within the community. Specifically, few activists rejected interview requests, indicating a lack of desire to participate in colonial academic structures. However, this challenge did not pose a detriment to the overall study, nor did it impact the minimum number of participants sought.

Finally, acquiring initial access to informants from PrideTO was difficult and delayed, as the timing of my study overlapped with the organization's busiest period. However, upon gaining access as a trusted individual, Staff members continually followed-up about my findings to improve the visibility of QSAW in programming. The timing of my data collection period also presented a limitation for reaching survey participants. Extending the survey period into a less busy time of year (i.e. winter) may have increased the level of support from community organizations in circulating this survey, thereby garnering more respondents.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

As the epistemic nucleus of the LGBTQ+ movement, Pride Festivals function as a critical site for staging queer visibility (Formby, 2017; Grundy, 2003; Whittier, 2017). That is, the way in which Pride organizations construct and portray queerness determines the knowledge that the LGBTQ+ community acquires about the collective queer identity and social norms (i.e., acceptable queer aesthetics, behaviors, etc.). This consequently impacts the way in which QSAW are perceived and treated within Western LGBTQ+ communities (Patel, 2019). Notably, QSAW disengage from mainstream LGBTQ+ spaces due to pervasive invisibility and repeated experiences of culturally unique discrimination therein (Patel, 2019). Thus, it is imperative to critically examine the organizational practices that facilitate, maintain, and justify the alienation and exclusion of QSAW in dominant LGBTQ+ discourses. This chapter presents the findings of my critical ethnographic research study. In doing so, it will address my central research inquiry of how the cultural underpinnings of PrideTO contribute to the invisibilization of QSAW in the broader LGBTQ+ community.

Politics of care emerged as the overarching theme of my findings. The political dimensions of care are revealed by the cultural underpinnings of PrideTO, namely: Western supremacy, xenophobia, homonationalism, commercialization, and homopatriarchy. These cultural underpinnings are determined by prevalent attitudes, values, and beliefs of dominant actors. A politics of care elucidates the connection and power relations between individual actors, cultural underpinnings, and institutional policies—all of which reproduce and sustain invisibilizing practices. The subthemes of willful negligence and assimilationist politics interwoven throughout this chapter will elucidate an ongoing colonial subjugation of queer South Asian diasporic bodies through erasing and re-writing the narratives and experiences of QSAW in dominant LGBTQ+

discourses. This resultantly normalizes the perpetration of identity-based violence against QSAW in the broader LGBTQ+ community.

The central premise of my findings is two-fold: first, Pride organizations govern the invisibilization of QSAW through their construction of queer visibility (i.e. collective identity and social norms). Second, Pride's organizational practices teach the broader LGBTQ+ community to perpetrate identity-based violence against QSAW who do not assimilate to Western-normative queerness. The arguments articulated herein presuppose that all organizational practices are inevitably epistemic in nature—that is, Festival onlookers acquire knowledge about queer identities and social norms through observation of the Pride Festival. There are three particularly salient epistemic modes by which Pride organizations disseminate knowledge about queerness: operations, marketing, and programming. See Appendix C for a summary of the specific organizational practices of PrideTO that are encompassed within each mode.

This chapter will begin by painting an ethnographic portrait of queer South Asian representation in the 2019 Pride Festival. Then, it will explicate the knowledge formation practices that erase QSAW from dominant LGBTQ+ discourse. Next, it will critically examine the assimilationist politics that rewrite the narratives of QSAW and revoke their ability to resist invisibilization in the LGBTQ+ community. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the social location of QSAW in Toronto.

5.1. Ethnographic Portrait of Queer South Asian Representation in Pride Toronto™ 2019

This section will paint an ethnographic portrait of queer South Asian representation in the 2019 Toronto Pride Festival, in order to substantiate the erasure of QSAW. Since their early emergence during the LGBTQ+ movement, Pride organizations have deployed a visibility politic by constructing, politicizing, and visibilizing a collective gay and lesbian identity for the purpose

of transforming broader societal and cultural perceptions and beliefs about queer people (Smith, 1998; Whittier, 2017; van Stekelenburg, 2013). This epistemological function of shaping dominant knowledge about queerness remains an inevitable outcome of PrideTO's organizational practices. As such, it is crucial to explicate the knowledge that is constructed about QSAW.

Despite the fact that South Asians comprise the largest visible minority population in Toronto, and wider Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017b), this study finds that South Asians are the least represented ethnic group in PrideTO. More broadly, the level of pan-Asian[21] diasporic visibility in the Pride Festival is virtually nonexistent and comparatively lesser than that of non-immigrant racialized groups. This is especially concerning in consideration of the fact that the Asian diaspora comprises the largest proportional population in Toronto and Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017a). The dearth of queer Asian visibility was fairly consistent across the Festival; however, an absolute erasure of South Asians in salient modes of queer visibility (e.g. marketing posters, Pride Guide, etc.) positions queer Desi diaspora as the least represented. As per Spivak's (1988) theorization of subalternity and Foucault's (1978) repressive hypothesis, which contend that invisibilization is predicated upon an absence of discourse about a subject, the level of representation herein is measured by explicit acknowledgements of identity (sexuality and ethnicity) in dominant discourses. Importantly, this measurement considers representation that is both genuine (i.e. depiction of cultural narratives, graphics, contexts) and performative (i.e. tokenistic acts and/or poorly executed attempts of inclusion).

Throughout the month-long Pride Festival in 2019, queer South Asian representation was exclusively limited to spatial visibility—particularly, three instances of programming. First,

[21] The term pan-Asian and Asian will be used interchangeably in reference to diasporas from East, South, and Southeast Asia.

PrideTO provided three hours of programming on the South Asian stage. This is the only LGBTQ+ Desi representation officially provided by PrideTO. Second, *Rangeela*—a queer Bollywood dance party that occurred during the Pride Festival. Waseem and Haldi, two of the event's co-founders, confirm that Rangeela was not officially affiliated with—nor funded by—PrideTO in 2019. However, my interview and spatial observation data found several instances of LGBTQ+ South Asians speaking about Rangeela's June event as part of Pride Festivities, which indicates an implicit understanding that Rangeela is one of the queer parties during PrideTO. This is significant because many QSAW reported feelings of discomfort at Rangeela parties, due to the heavily male-centric atmosphere. This validates Patel's (2019) finding that many QSAW feel excluded in broader LGBTQ+ South Asian spaces. Thus, it is crucial for QSAW to have gender-specific spaces and visibility in order to feel a sense of belongingness, and by virtue, social support. Finally, the AIDS Candlelight Vigil, which did not center South Asians, albeit was co-hosted by ASAAP and widely attended by South Asian men. AIDS activism has historically provided queer men of colour greater access to LGBTQ+ spaces than their women counterparts (Alimahomed, 2010). Accordingly, my study finds that AIDS activism provides an avenue for the limited inclusion of queer South Asian men in Pride programming. Haran and Abhirami, employees of ASAAP, stress that it is nearly impossible for AIDS organizations to obtain funding for QSAW's initiatives due to a false—and lesbophobic—belief that queer women are not at-risk of HIV/STIs. This maintains the exclusion of QSAW from sexual discourses in the Pride Festival.

Throughout Pride month, there were only three instances of QSAW representation. Specifically, these instances were individual artists on the South Asian stage (BrOWN//out) with a few minutes of set time each, amounting to an approximate total of thirty minutes. Interviews with dominant actors made it clear that PrideTO understands racialized representation simply as a

quantifiable number of events within the broader Festival. Using this formulaic logic, it is found that the statistical representation of QSAW is 0.086% of the total Pride Festival programming time[22]. However, this concerningly low statistic of representation is further reduced in consideration of several qualitative factors, which resultantly eliminate QSAW from the queer landscape entirely. For instance, the exclusive visibility of South Asians in programming, concurrent and impermanent quality of performances, and failure to incorporate QSAW in archivable and wide-spanning capacities (i.e. marketing) effectively limits queer Desi representation to physical spaces, which is inaccessible to those who cannot attend the Festival in-person. Additionally, the South Asian stage was poorly advertised and geographically situated in an area with low foot traffic on the outskirts of the Pride Festival, which further limits viewership to those who learned of the event through word-of-mouth or actively sought out South Asian programming. The relegated location of this stage is especially problematic, as the performers engaged in social media art by portraying anti-assimilationist values and authentic cultural narratives. Implicitly coded within this combination of factors is the deliberate intent to construct queer South Asians beyond White viewership; thus, outside mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse.

The dearth of representation for QSAW is confined to the marginal South Asian bracket. This is problematic, as broader queer South Asian spaces are heavily dominated by cisgender men and drag queens[23]. Privileging gay men's experience in spaces without gender-specific goals reflects the homopatriarchal values underpinning PrideTO. QSAW-identified interview informants and survey respondents simultaneously relayed appreciation for cultural representation

[22]This statistic is calculated based on the duration of QSAW representation divided by the total duration of Festival programming time, which spanned across 24 days (34,560 minutes).

[23] This trend transcends the boundaries of South Asian spaces, as it is prevalent across the broader LGBTQ+ Festival (i.e. PrideTO also prioritized spaces for cisgender men and drag queens in White queer spaces), as well as a wider problem of Toronto's LGBTQ+ Village (Patel, 2019).

in South Asian spaces, albeit criticized the dearth of inclusion of women therein. A lack of representation for QSAW in Desi spaces is especially concerning in consideration of the absolute erasure of QSAW in lesbian spaces and discourses; these include, but are not limited to: the Dyke March, Dyke Rally, images of women in marketing materials and social media, blogs about lesbian narratives, and *Cherry Bomb*. *Cherry Bomb* is a nightclub event that occurs during, and is well-advertised as part of, the Festival; however, it is not officially affiliated with PrideTO programming. Complementary to my observations, the survey data finds that QSAW do not feel represented in dominant portrayals of queer women in PrideTO (see Figure 1). Therefore, the subjective reality of QSAW feeling alienated is congruent with the objective fact that QSAW are excluded from dominant LGBTQ+ discourses. The mutually exclusive construction of South Asian and lesbian representation in Pride reinforces a narrative that South Asian and lesbian identities cannot co-exist. This problematic narrative is further reproduced in overlapping Pride programming, which forces QSAW to choose between sites of liberation. For instance, Rangeela and Cherry Bomb—the biggest parties for queer South Asian and lesbian communities, respectively—both occurred concurrently. While conducting spatial observations, I casually conversed with several QSAW during the South Asian stage's programming, all of whom (unprompted) asked me whether I was attending Rangeela or Cherry Bomb in order to inform their own decision-making.[24] This demonstrates that QSAW are adversely impacted by the overlapping South Asian and lesbian programming. I raised this concern to Staff at PrideTO; however, they deflected responsibility by indicating that logistical planning for external events is beyond their control. Here, PrideTO

Figure 1: Survey Responses

[24] The QSAW that I conversed with during the BrOWN//out programming were unaware of my research when posing their inquiry.

effectively justifies upholding an invisibilizing practice, instead of utilizing their position of power to relay this community concern affecting QSAW to the organizers of Cherry Bomb and Rangeela.

Additionally, the construction of South Asian representation in PrideTO is reduced to North Indian culture packaged as Bollywood. Adur (2018a) similarly finds that queer South Asian organizing in the United States (U.S.) distills South Asian culture through a narrow funnel, which ultimately portrays a version of North Indian culture that is "commercially packaged and immortalized [as] Bollywood" and is "not representative of [South Asia's] heterogenous traditions" (309). A dire implication of the Bollywoodization of Desi representation is that it reproduces a cultural hierarchy that privileges those who grew up consuming Bollywood cinema (Hindi speakers). This resultantly erases LGBTQ+ Indo-Caribbeans and Dravidians (Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Telegu people). There is an increasing awareness of the lack of Indo-Caribbean inclusion in queer South Asian programming; however, this is not the case for Dravidian representation. For instance, while the performances and music in-between sets on the South Asian stage was largely Bollywood, Ryan Persadie (*Tifa Wine)*—an Indo-Caribbean drag queen and annual performer at PrideTO—shares that Indo-Caribbean music was included before he was asked to perform: "previous years at BrOWN//out, when I haven't been performing, they've played Soca and Chutney in-between sets but that's messy and problematic because it says that Caribbean lives aren't valued but our culture is." Ryan's insight is paralleled with Dravidian representation on the South Asian stage, which remains non-existent. A failure to represent Kollywood and/or Tollywood[25] music—and broader Dravidian arts—throughout queer South Asian programming reproduces problematic inter-cultural hierarchies that erase and devalue Dravidian subcultures and lives. A lack of Tamil representation in South Asian spaces is especially concerning, as Tamils

[25] Kollywood cinema is the Tamil language, Tollywood cinema is the Telegu language, and Bollywood cinema is the Hindi language. These are the three largest South Asian cinemas.

and Tamil women comprise nearly 25% of the total South Asian and South Asian women's population, respectively, in Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2017). Thus, portraying a Bollywoodized version of South Asian culture is not representative of its heterogeneity, which consequently, further alienates Dravidians and Indo-Caribbeans from the dearth of LGBTQ+ South Asian spaces.

Mithai, an independent queer Desi artist, explains that an implication of conveying a Bollywoodized version of South Asian culture is an erasure of QSAW's narratives:

> [W]hat South Asian women have to say is not really the same as what the Bollywood version is. […] be[ing] able to understand or really celebrate [identity] … is not necessarily happening because the Bollywood version is much more conceivable. […] expressing different experiences … is what makes us interesting, but I don't think that is understandable by a White male-dominated space … it's not understood as a conceivable product by Whites.

Mithai highlights that the authentic cultural contexts and contentions that define the lived experiences of many QSAW become lost within priorities to construct a White-friendly version of South Asianness. In this sense, the limited inclusion of queer South Asians is only possible insofar as it is considered entertaining for White audiences.

Moreover, there was a complete erasure of queer South Asian immigrants in the Pride Festival. This was evidenced by a dearth of discourse and programming, as well as a lack of booths and resources, for queer Asian immigrants during the Street Festival. Interestingly, there was one instance of LGBTQ+ migrant inclusion—that is, PrideTO's partnership with *Rainbow Railroad* for their launch event (The Freedom Party), which raised funds for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and migrants. However, there were no queer Brown asylum seekers and refugees represented in the programming or marketing for this event. This suggests that the limited South Asian inclusion is predicated upon assimilation to Western-normative queer culture.

This section substantiates the invisibilization of QSAW. There is a dearth of queer South Asian representation, and complete erasure of QSAW, in the Pride Festival. This study finds that

Pride organizations facilitate the invisibilization of QSAW in through exclusion at the level of knowledge construction. Notably, the limited South Asian representation exists beyond White viewership, and thus, cannot serve an epistemological function of constructing knowledge about QSAW into mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse. Accordingly, it is found that PrideTO constructs lesbian and South Asian identities as mutually exclusive categories through a practice of *identity bracketing*; thereby, perpetuating a narrative that one can either be LGBTQ+ or South Asian. This practice signifies a failure to implement intersectionality in praxis. As Devi explains, the notion that one's queer and ethno-racial identities cannot coexist maintains "white [as] the queer default." This reinforces a requirement for QSAW to assimilate to Western-normative queerness to be valid and credible vis-à-vis queer identity. Identity bracketing situates QSAW in a particularly precarious position, as they are dually exiled from lesbian spaces due to their ethnicity, as well as from the limited queer South Asian spaces due their gender. This unique erasure produces an absence of QSAW in LGBTQ+ discourse, which makes QSAW vulnerable to being re-written by Western-normative (colonial) knowledge.

5.2. Willful Negligence

This section examines the knowledge formation practices of PrideTO, in order to understand the way in which the epistemological ignorance of dominant actors shapes the construction of queer visibility in mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse. Epistemological ignorance is not simply a gap in knowledge nor an accidental oversight; rather, it is an intentional disregard of information that is beyond one's narrow set of knowledge and an unwillingness to expand one's awareness. In this sense, invisibilization is a deliberate choice of dominant actors to dismiss the issues and needs of QSAW as irrelevant, and thus, unworthy of resolving.

5.2.1. Western-Supremacy

Western supremacist ideologies privileging colonial queerness are reproduced in knowledge formation practices by the epistemological ignorance of dominant actors; this inhibits the construction of a visibility politic that is inclusive of South Asians. This is evidenced by the negligent process by which knowledge about the needs of the LGBTQ+ community are acquired. When asked how PrideTO learns about diverse community needs, Vellai, Thepla, Masala, Phil, Karela, and Gora consistently and confidently assert passively *listening to the community* as the primary method of knowledge acquisition. Vellai describes this knowledge acquisition strategy as "[Staff] are always listening," to which Thepla elaborates:

> We are all part of the community. In our own personal experiences, and when we are out on the street, all the experiences come out, everyone knows what's happening and that helps us figure out what works and what doesn't, and then having people like you come in and see what more we can do […] Everyone is … feeling the community, which will make [Pride] feel different.

Thepla elucidates the Staff's passive role in receiving information from those willing to share. Congruently, Phil affirms that his "programming has always been reactive" to feedback: "For me as a programmer, my priorities are decided by what I've heard all year round and what I keep hearing in the community […] If not, I hear it from friends." Vellai, Masala, and Thepla elaborately detail the process by which Staff triangulate their knowledge to make informed decisions. However, this strategy of 'Staff listening' is highly problematic, as it fails to consider the risk of interpretation bias. That is, the possibility of one's epistemic lens of privilege hindering their ability to cognitively process and prioritize various intersectional issues and needs. It is noteworthy that PrideTO has the resources to conduct effective inquiry of community needs (i.e. employment of a researcher), yet the dominant actors prioritize negligent methods that offer more room for error. A lack of initiative to actively learn about the differential needs of the LGBTQ+ community reveals an underlying desire to remain ignorant of information that is beyond their existent set of knowledges. Thus, invisibilization is not an issue of dominant actors not knowing—rather, it is an

issue of not wanting to know. This consequently maintains the inaccessible conditions of knowledge contribution by which QSAW are unable to resist their invisibility.

Notably, the strategy of 'Staff listening' is predicated upon a false belief that all LGBTQ+ people have equal access to Toronto's LGBTQ+ in-group, which offers the connections required to vocalize the needs of one's community to Staff.[26] However, obtaining in-group access requires a level of outness that is difficult and often unsafe for QSAW. Hence, several QSAW-identified informants express that a fear of being outed causes reluctance to engage in Pride spaces. The presumption of equal access is further implicated in Dhokla's assertion that "communities that care about these issues will make themselves visible to us." This conveys an implicit belief that those who wish to participate in LGBTQ+ spaces can be *out* without fear. Thus, PrideTO's knowledge sources are limited to those who have the privilege to be *out*—this gap in knowledge acquisition practices facilitates the systemic exclusion of QSAW. This is evidenced by Phil's explanation of how knowledge informs programming decisions: "We need to hear that this is an issue otherwise we plow ahead and program as best as we can." The expectation of community groups to inform PrideTO of their exclusion and oppression puts the onus for reproducing institutional violence on the subjugated group, while removing the organization of accountability. In the case of QSAW, PrideTO neglects to provide safe and accessible conditions for QSAW to contribute knowledge about their issues and needs—that is, without a need to be *out* or fear being *outed*. The combination of PrideTO's lack of initiative to learn, ultimatum-like expectation of subjugated groups to inform Staff of their issues, and inaccessible conditions for QSAW to do so situates QSAW in a gridlock, wherein their invisibility becomes inescapable. Interestingly,

[26] Due to the spatial limitations of this thesis, the specific power dynamics impeding the communication of information from the Membership and other critical knowledge sources could not be included. However, the oligarchic structure of PrideTO limits the sources of knowledge for decision-making to the Staff and Board.

racialized and white informants of PrideTO alike share the belief that those who wish to be included in LGBTQ+ spaces can be *out* without fear therein. This indicates that the architects of queer visibility have an epistemic lens of *out* privilege,[27] which hinders their ability to conceptualize a visibility politic that is inclusive of QSAW.

5.2.1.1. Deliberate Intent to Exclude LGBTQ+ South Asians

This study finds that the failure to construct QSAW in LGBTQ+ discourse is a conscious choice made by the architects of queer visibility. Simply put, dominant actors do not want to meet the needs of QSAW. The deliberate intent to exclude LGBTQ+ South Asian diaspora is evidenced by the institutional forgetting of the BrOWN//out stage in 2019, which had historically been curated by a QSAW[28]. Instead, the organizers of Rangeela—four queer South Asian men—were asked to curate the stage. While PrideTO upheld their commitment to including a South Asian stage, they did so in a way that caused inter-community conflicts. Waseem, Ryan, and Humza, who were involved in this conflict similarly expressed frustration about PrideTO's role in severing ties with, and within, Toronto's queer South Asian community during a critical time for solidarity-building. This negligence cannot be justified by a lack of institutional memory nor lack of knowledge transfer during Staff transition, as both are preventable causes; hence, it is willful. Additionally, this negligence was further reproduced in the process of resolving the stage dispute, wherein PrideTO did not attempt to repair the damaged inter-community relationships nor acknowledge Rangeela for their (unused) labour in planning through an apology or compensation.

[27] The term *out privilege* here does not assume an informant's level of outness nor level of familial acceptance for one's queer identity. Instead, *out privilege* refers to a way of thinking and cognitively processing information that privileges the experiences of those who are *out* in all contexts and can openly disclose their queerness without a fear of family violence.

[28] The name of this QSAW community organizer is concealed for confidentiality reasons.

Furthermore, PrideTO Staff indicate that community consultations are held to amend any programming-related issues that arise. Phil elaborates upon the purpose of these consultations:

> The [Executive Director] really stepped up to the plate last year and had a few consultations […] with community organizers and people who helped program the stages. The whole point is to meet with people, hear where we may have fucked up […] and try to fix it.

However, when Staff were asked if PrideTO arranged a consultation with the South Asian community after the stage issue, Masala said "no" with a guilty vocal undertone, followed by a moment of fraught silence. A lack of care to learn about non-Western queer identities, as well as low prioritization of queer South Asians, substantiates PrideTO's deliberate intent to exclude QSAW in Pride Festival programming. This deliberate intent is further evidenced by Phil, in his reflection of the challenges that he endured when programming for the South Asian community:

> I think my challenge last year was sort of coming to the greatest understanding of the vastness of the South Asian community and how many different people are represented when you say South Asian. It would be amazing to have everyone represented on as many stages as possible, and that's what we really tried to push last summer. Hopefully it really grows and more people are seeing people like themselves in front of them. And our community is still learning how complex they are.

Phil relays awareness of the institutional gaps in knowledge that hinder the construction of a visibility politic that is inclusive of South Asians. However, a failure to follow-up with the South Asian community to fill these gaps indicates that PrideTO does not care about including queer South Asians in the Pride Festival. Further, Phil refers to the LGBTQ+ community as "our community" and discursively positions queer South Asians outside of it using the words "they" and "complex." This conveys an implicit belief that South Asians seeking unassimilated visibility in Pride are not queer. As well, Phil insinuates that the LGBTQ+ community is doing a favour to South Asians by "learning" about Desi subcultures. This dismisses the existence of queerness in pre-colonial South Asian culture while discursively positioning Western queerness as superior.

5.2.2.2. Wilful Ignorance

An underlying belief that South Asians are unworthy of sexual citizenship maintains the invisibilization of QSAW. When asked how PrideTO supports the South Asian community, Gora states "We have plenty of South Asian members and volunteers." Gora's response reveals the epistemological process by which he conceptualizes queer South Asian identity. Notably, Gora processes the exploitation of South Asian labour as successful inclusion in the Pride Festival. His wilful ignorance to such uneven racial dynamics—wherein South Asians occupy the lowest position in PrideTO's hierarchal power structure—demonstrates an implicit belief that queer Brown diasporic bodies are unworthy of sexual citizenship, unless they cater the needs of white people. This establishes an ongoing colonial subjugation of South Asian sexuality.

This Western-supremacist belief that South Asians are unworthy of inclusion is further exemplified by placement of the South Asian stage in the Festival blueprint. Despite a lack of a prompt to do so, a majority of South Asian interview informants and survey respondents problematized the hidden placement, small size, and limited duration of the South Asian stage. In contrast, PrideTO's Staff, who are responsible for designing the Pride Festival blueprint, believe the South Asian stage is well-situated. Phil, the Staff member responsible for the South Asian stage, describes the placement: "we got that [South Asian] stage up and running and it was beautiful, and we had a solid, intimate 3.5 hours on a really main and central stage." Likewise, Gora explained "the great thing about our Festival is that there are no unpopular spots. When you have two million people in a six-block radius, everything is popular." The discrepancy between PrideTO's understanding of the South Asian stage and that of the queer South Asian community. The discrepancy between PrideTO's understanding of South Asian issues and the lived experiences relayed by the queer South Asian community demonstrates the organization's

ignorance to racialized dynamics, which maintains the invisibilization of QSAW. Additionally, evidence indicates that PrideTO intentionally placed the South Asian stage on the outskirts. Notably, Gora contradicts his statement above when explaining sponsor placement:

> …when we look at our gold or silver or platinum sponsors, we offer them 'oh so we know that this location gets a ton of traffic so we'll put you here' but I don't think we have different pricing based on where a tent or area is.

Here, Gora indicates that PrideTO is aware of which areas get more foot traffic. Given that PrideTO has previously defunded and removed a small South Asian stage from Pride programming (before BLM-TO demanded its reinstatement in 2016), it is reasonable to deduce that the South Asian stage was intentionally placed on the outskirts of the Festival. Further, Thepla confirms the relegated location of the South Asian stage in the Pride Festival:

> In Pride Toronto, for instance, we have Blockorama. When it started, it was because there was not Black representation in Pride […] now Blocko[rama] is huge and […] we need to now have Black representation all through Pride Toronto […] Because now it's come to a point where if you're Black then 'oh yes you'll be on the Blocko[rama] stage but you're not going to be anywhere else.' Which is almost the same as – you're being pushed into a corner. That's where you guys go, and this is where BrOWN//out goes [*hand motions pointing to corners*]. And no. I want to see everyone experiencing BrOWN//out on a mainstage together and to experience the amazing DJs and performers that would be on a BrOWN//out stage… on a major like… on a central stage type thing. And saying that, there is a lot of pushback for that too.

Interestingly, PrideTO's white informants maintain the invisibilization of QSAW by rejecting the presence of racialized dynamics, and instead, counter-arguing the central placement of the South Asian stage. In contrast, Thepla—a Black Staff member—confirms the practice of identity bracketing and validates its consequent impact of impeding racial integration in mainstream queer discourse, which obstructs the construction of a visibility politic that is inclusive of South Asians. Notably, Thepla highlights the aversion of decision-makers to put South Asians on a central stage. The contradictory remarks regarding the centrality of the South Asian stage from Phil and Thepla, who are Programming Co-Directors, suggests that decision-makers have deliberated upon queer

Desi inclusion—and integration—in the Pride Festival, albeit wilfully neglected to do so. Therefore, invisibilization is maintained by the dominant actors' wilful ignorance towards queer South Asian diaspora, which deems this subjugated group unworthy of inclusion.

The wilful ignorance towards queer South Asian diaspora is further exemplified by Haran's experience of partnering with PrideTO for the inclusion of queer South Asian men therein:

> [Pride Toronto™] are always receptive to talk about diversity. It's just what that ends up looking like is a big issue and concern […] it's hard getting on the table and having conversations with folks working there […] I don't understand their structure either … I don't know who makes decisions […] for the last little while there's been contract Staff that have engaged individuals and community […] it's been hard to sort of pinpoint the conversation that we have with one person [because] it doesn't necessarily translate to leadership […] For example, last year [ASAAP] sat down to meet with this person who was a contract Staff to help us put together this community sort of health hub area […] the person that we met with was lovely and was receptive to everything that we gave back to them […] But then that was the end of the conversation. Nothing really happened and so we don't know what the [internal] conversation was. […] [W]hen we called Pride Toronto™, the contact there that I know […] turned around and said, well there is a hub but it's over here. And so, nothing that we talked about at that meeting with [Staff member] was reflected in the hub. […] So, the transparency of who to talk to is there but I don't know what the internal decision-making process is and that makes it really hard if we're looking at true inclusive community building.

Staff play an integral role as gatekeepers of knowledge, in the sense that Staff must translate raw knowledge from the community into tangible Festival components for the Board to approve. However, Haran's experience illuminates that bringing knowledge to the Staff is unlikely to transform the invisibilized position of queer South Asians, due to the impermeable oligarchic structure that concentrates all decision-making power at the top. Notably, the fact that Haran's detailed proposition of a South Asian community health hub was deracialized in its implementation reveals that higher-level decision-makers within PrideTO do not deem the issues affecting queer South Asian diaspora worthy of resolve. As such, the problem of invisibilization cannot simply be reduced to an issue of not being heard, as the Staff are receptive when approached. Instead, the

problem is that higher level decision-makers do not want to integrate queer South Asian diaspora in central or mainstream queer spaces. Therefore, PrideTO willfully neglects queer South Asians.

5.2.2. Xenophobia

Activists argue that the inclusion of POC in PrideTO is performative. Concerningly, this study finds that PrideTO's performative racial politics are not inclusive of queer South Asian diasporic bodies. An investigation of invisibilization from dominant perspectives reveals that the mechanisms of discrimination maintaining the subjugation of QSAW are unique to their identity as racialized immigrants—specifically, xenophobic and anti-immigrant views of queer Asians as foreign outsiders. An anonymous source inside PrideTO shares that discussions about racial inclusion within the organization regularly exclude pan-Asian diaspora. Thus, the invisibilization of QSAW in PrideTO is attributed to a broader inability to represent South Asians within the broader identity category of QTBIPOC or WOC (women of colour). In this sense, South Asians are erased in both LGBTQ+ and racialized queer discourses. When asked if PrideTO has the capacity to meet the needs of QSAW, Abhirami explains:

> No because it's not marketable enough [to represent QSAW]. They [PrideTO] don't care. [QSAW] aren't on their list of priorities. If anything, South Asian women get pooled in the POC community or queer women of colour. I don't even think we're [QSAW] on their radar. We're [QSAW] just POC and that's it. It wouldn't make a difference if South Asians are the biggest population. We only get representation if we're QTPOC (queer trans people of colour), then we're marginalized. Like looking at all POC together.

Abhirami illuminates that the marginality of QSAW cannot be conceptually understood outside of essentialistic categories, such as POC and WOC. The inability to conceptualize QSAW as an independent subject in queer discourse precludes the culturally specific issues, experiences, and needs of QSAW from being expressed, addressed, and mobilized.

This study finds that Pride organizations deploy broad identity categories, such as QTBIPOC and WOC, in LGBTQ+ discourse as all-encompassing racial representation; in reality,

race is constructed as a Black/White binary that excludes South Asians. A survey respondent exposes one way this racial binary materializes in PrideTO: "All the lesbian images are of white women and when we get POC [representation] it's only Black folks. That's probably tokenistic too." PrideTO's epistemological understanding of "POC" is elucidated during the group interview, wherein Vellai counters my concerns about a dearth of QSAW inclusion in marketing materials by affirming that "there's POC representation in the Pride Guide." However, a critical analysis of racial representation in the Pride Guide finds an absolute absence of queer South Asian bodies. The Pride Guide contains all the images of people who are cross-represented in the 2019 Pride Festival's official marketing materials (e.g. event posters, blogs, etc.); thus, it is a significant document to analyze racial visibility in the broader Festival. Table 3 provides a numerical breakdown of ethno-racial queer representation in the 2019 Pride Guide. Evidently, Black queers comprise the vast majority of POC representation, albeit queer representation overall remains predominantly white. This elucidates the danger of grouping South Asians into essentialistic identity categories, such as POC and QTBIPOC[30], as it excuses a failure to explicitly acknowledge QSAW's culturally unique existence, which furthers their invisibility in both queer and racialized

Table 3: Ethnic Representation in the 2019 Pride Guide

Ethnicity	PrideTO	Sponsored[29]	
	Total (Queer)	Total (Queer)	Total (Corporate)
White	96	16	7
Black	42	3	0
East Asian	8	1	1
South Asian	0	0	0
Middle Eastern	1	0	0
Latinx	2	0	0
Indigenous	7	0	0
Ambiguous	1	0	0

[29] Sponsored refers to advertisements submitted by sponsors. Under the sponsored column, total (queer) refers to images that depict queer people or themes and total (corporate) refers to images of service professionals (e.g. news anchors, pharmacist) signifying allyship.
[30] Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, People of Colour

queer discourses. As well, reducing QSAW to generic racialized subjects further perpetuates a global forgetting of the colonial legacy of sexual subjugation of queer South Asian bodies.

PrideTO further invisibilizes QSAW in their efforts to demonstrate racial allyship through a practice of epistemological distancing. Epistemological distancing involves deliberately sidestepping and/or excluding details deemed 'irrelevant', such as race or sexuality. During my data collection period, PrideTO shared a total of five posts across their Instagram and Facebook pages that depicted a QSAW—all of whom are very well-known. However, three of these posts failed to acknowledge their sexuality or South Asian identity in the caption. For instance, PrideTO shared a video on Facebook of Jameela Jamil, who is an openly queer South Asian woman and well-known British actress, with the caption "Jameela Jamil is one of the most critical thinkers of our time. She is phenomenal. #prideto". The video shared is unrelated to LGBTQ+ topics and the caption fails to identify Jameela's queer South Asian identity. Similarly, PrideTO shared an Instagram post about Lily Singh, an openly bisexual South Asian woman from Toronto, celebrating her victory as the first woman of colour to get a talk-show; however, the caption fails to acknowledge her queerness. A recurrent pattern in PrideTO's handful of posts involving a QSAW is a failure to acknowledge the sexuality of QSAW, which maintains an ongoing colonial subjugation of queer Brown bodies. Further, a failure to explicitly acknowledge QSAW in dominant discourse ensues an inability to intellectualize the intersection of queer, South Asian, and women identities, which maintains the invisibilization of QSAW. Thus, invisibilization must be understood as a deeply damaging form of epistemic violence.

Additionally, Haran, Ryan, Humza, Hasheel, Waseem, and Haldi—all of whom are queer Brown men that perform at PrideTO or organize LGBTQ+ South Asian community spaces—conveyed a patterned response during their interviews: *your study is so important because there is*

nothing out there for queer South Asian women, this is my story but [insert names of several queer South Asian women] would have great insight, this is how Pride has mistreated the South Asian community, there is no South Asian visibility in Pride so our work challenges that but X, Y, Z are the gaps for queer South Asian women. These queer Brown men consistently reiterated the invisibilized position of women without prompts nor questions specific to QSAW. This indicates that queer Brown men are cognizant of their male privilege and not ignorant of gendered power imbalances within queer South Asian spaces. Contrastingly, Phil, Gora, and the PrideTO Staff (group) followed the pattern of: *I didn't realize this was a problem for queer South Asian women, we hear about issues when people tell us, South Asians are well-represented in Pride, [inability to identify examples of QSAW-specific visibility], the organization is limited by X, Y, Z barriers, we have good intentions for inclusion*. PrideTO informants conveyed an oversight of marginality at the intersection of gender and racial identity and negligent presumption of QSAW inclusion. The contrasting pattern in responses between queer Brown men and PrideTO informants (White/Black, men/women), as well as PrideTO's discursive exclusion of South Asians in the term 'POC', establishes xenophobic ignorance as the primary mechanism of invisibility for QSAW.

5.2.2.1. The Intersection of Xenophobia and Homopatriarchy

Thus far, it has been established that QSAW are invisibilized as a result of xenophobic discrimination specifically targeting their status as racialized migrants. Hence, South Asians are erased in broader racialized queer discourse (i.e. QTBIPOC and WOC). The practice of identity bracketing (see section 5.1) reveals that QSAW are confined to the South Asian identity bracket and excluded from the lesbian bracket. This furthers the invisibilization of QSAW, as the homopatriarchal underpinnings privilege the experience of gay men in general queer spaces (i.e. spaces that do not have gender-specific visibility goals).

PrideTO's hidden agenda to restrict the inclusion of QSAW to the marginal South Asian bracket on the outskirts of the Pride Festival became evident during my interviews with Staff. For instance, Phil shares the way in which he plans to utilize my research findings:

> Pride is really interested in hearing about and hopefully help folks take action on [work] that's reflected in summer programming. So someone like you, if someone's bringing a thesis to us saying that South Asian women aren't getting enough stage time and feeling represented then for sure we need to talk to the folks on the BrOWN//out stage and see if they feel the same and how we can fix things.

Although it is true that QSAW do not receive enough stage time on the BrOWN//out stage, it is important to note that I had not communicated 'stage time' as an issue nor need of QSAW to Phil (nor anyone) prior to his statement. As such, the quotation above reflects Phil's interpretation of my research problematic, wherein Phil brackets QSAW-related issues into the South Asian sub-category of racialized identities. Following the interview, Phil continually engaged me in conversations to understand how to improve the representation of QSAW, which demonstrates initiative to include QSAW when the knowledge is presented. However, in follow-up conversations with Phil and Masala, the issue of QSAW invisibility was continually relegated to the South Asian identity bracket. This was evidenced by Phil and Masala's repeated suggestion to connect me with the curators of the BrOWN//out stage to discuss my findings, as well as several attempts to divert the conversation back to programming upon my recommendations to include QSAW in other hubs (i.e. lesbian spaces, marketing) that would better construct QSAW visibility in mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse. While it may be argued that Phil and Masala focused the conversation on programming due to its relevance to their own portfolios, it does not absolve them of utilizing evasion strategies to disregard the needs of QSAW. Additionally, this pattern of evading QSAW's need for visibility in marketing was replicated in the group interview, wherein Staff from more pertinent portfolios were present. Near the end of my interview, PrideTO Staff

asked me how the visibility of QSAW could be improved; in response, I emphasized that QSAW want to be represented in marketing and lesbian spaces. Interestingly, the Marketing Director, who was the most active speaker throughout the group interview, remained silent. The deployment of evasion strategies to avoid the topic of inclusion in marketing suggests that Staff are willing to include QSAW in the Festival, albeit exclusively within the marginal South Asian identity bracket and outside dominant discourse. A refusal to represent QSAW in the realm of marketing—which is the most salient epistemic mode for disseminating queer visibility—suggests that PrideTO seeks to maintain a sanitized white collective queer identity in dominant discourse.

Moreover, PrideTO's refusal to include QSAW in marketing practices signifies a broader refusal to meet the culturally unique needs of this invisibilized population. All QSAW-identified survey respondents and interview informants identified unassimilated representation in marketing as their most important need to be met—specifically, the depiction of QSAW adorned in South Asian cultural clothing. A survey respondent, who identifies as an Indian lesbian cis-gender woman from Toronto region, elaborates on the gaps in QSAW representation: "What's lacking is representation of South Asian women as we are. Show us in saris loving each other." It is important to note that QSAW conceptualize visibility as a merging of South Asian culture with lesbian identity—not simply Brown bodies in Western clothing.

Representation in marketing may be considered *performative*; however, it is essential for influencing the epistemologies of Festival onlookers, and ultimately, combatting collective ignorance towards the possibility of co-existing as queer and visibly South Asian. Increased representation of QSAW in marketing offers a cost-free solution to combat the problem of invisibilization affecting QSAW. QSAW-identified participants offered detailed suggestions for inclusion in marketing, such as promoting the Pride Festival with images of QSAW in

advertisements on the TTC (Toronto Transit), social media, event posters, Pride Guide, website, Dyke March materials, billboards. This would allow QSAW to feel seen and valid as multifaceted queer subjects—including those who cannot attend the Pride Festival for safety reasons, as the content would be widely distributed in accessible locations (i.e. online, non-queer spaces, etc.). As well, increased visibility of QSAW in marketing would facilitate feelings of inclusion that would entice QSAW to attend Pride event(s).

Thus far, this thesis has established that PrideTO subjects QSAW to epistemic violence by disregarding the identities and issues of queer Desi diaspora in dominant constructions of queer visibility; thereby, erasing the ideological existence of QSAW in mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse.

5.2.3. Justifying the Invisibilization of QSAW

Dominant actors utilize three deflection strategies to justify organizational practices that invisibilize QSAW: blame-shifting, preservation of virtue, and future forecasting.

5.2.3.1. Blame Structure

Dominant actors deflect accountability by shifting the blame onto structures. For instance, when asked about the process for deciding upon the Festival Blueprint—particularly the South Asian stage placement—all PrideTO informants relayed a similarly patterned response of blaming the City of Toronto for a shrinking footprint of the Gay Village due to incoming condominiums, followed by describing the decision-making process as a puzzle for Staff. Interestingly, dominant actors emphasized the challenges imposed by the City of Toronto and only explained the internal decision-making process upon further prompting during the interview. Phil blames the geographic constraints to deflect accountability for a lack of South Asian inclusion in programming:

> Last year we lost quite a few stages because the village—we lost two major parking lots form church street. So we had two stages over three days to try and squeeze in a quarter of the stages we [previously] had.

Although losing space for programming is a valid challenge for PrideTO Staff, it cannot be used to justify the exclusion of queer South Asians. Doing so insinuates that PrideTO does not want to construct queer South Asians beyond their identity bracket. In this sense, South Asian inclusion is merely a checkbox item. Further, blaming a lack of geographic space for the invisibilization of queer South Asians does not explain why PrideTO is complicit in constructing a lack of discursive space for QSAW. This is particularly significant given that QSAW want unassimilated representation in marketing materials.

In another instance, PrideTO informants shift the responsibility for all marketing-related decisions onto the marketing firm that was hired for the 2019 Pride Festival. PrideTO's marketing practices are a salient mode for widely disseminating knowledge about queerness; as such, the white-centric lesbian representation in social media, posters, blogs, and other marketing content is a critical contributing factor to the invisibilization of QSAW. PrideTO inquired about my pertinent findings during the group interview; upon sharing my finding regarding the organization's deracialized lesbian representation in social media and marketing, Vellai deflects accountability by shifting the blame for negligent decision-making onto the marketing firm:

> We agree with everything you have said, which is why we've chosen to bring it in internally. We are looking at what works and looking from a digital media strategy, focusing that into policies and procedures to make sure that we address the concerns that we have heard and are aware of and have a more positive future.

Vellai frames PrideTO as the heroic saviors of racialized queer groups from the white-centric marketing practices. Interestingly, PrideTO evades responsibility for the white-centric marketing decisions, albeit their own decision-making for programming aligns. For instance, during the Dyke March, it was observed that a group of predominantly white butch women on motorcycles called 'Dykes on Bikes' were positioned at the front to lead the March. As well, the speaker hired for the

Dyke Rally, which followed the March, was a white woman who shared her lived experiences. This demonstrates PrideTO's prioritization of white women as the face of lesbian visibility.

Further, Gora justifies hiring a marketing firm to manage social media and promotions as "capacity constraints;" however, this fails to explain why PrideTO was complicit in the construction of deracialized lesbian representation. For instance, Gora indicates that the marketing firm hired was not queer-specific. However, it is PrideTO's responsibility to ensure that the marketing firm is knowledgeable of queer issues and possesses the cultural competence to construct non-stereotypical visibility before transferring the power to construct queer visibility into the firm's hands.

5.3.3.2. Preservation of Virtue

Additionally, this study finds that organizational practices invisibilizing QSAW persist and become justified by the preservation of virtue. Dominant actors establish their innocence through the juxtaposition of good intent and structural challenge. For instance, Phil expresses "We [Staff] are well intentioned every year, [Pride Festival] is such a massive beast to program each year," and later, "It's just such a wild Festival to organize. It's an honor to do it and to be doing it again. I just really love the idea and the intent of everyone involved." Phil's emphasis on the good intent of dominant actors produces the effect of nullifying their actions that invisibilize QSAW. Likewise, Masala shares "sometimes we have Staff meetings that go on for four or five hours just to work through things that haven't been done before." Masala's emphasis on hard work produces a similar nullifying effect. Similarly, Phil concluded his interview by sharing "Everyone's hearts are in the right place and I think that's why it'll survive, because everyone there loves what they are doing." Here, Phil establishes the innocence of dominant actors to negate any harm caused by negligent action. Positioning virtuous intent ahead of the unfavourable outcome of an action allows

PrideTO's dominant actor to deflect accountability for the wrongdoing, while maintaining the discriminatory practices.

5.3.3.3. Future Forecasting

Moreover, dominant actors utilize the discursive strategy of future forecasting to justify organizational practices that invisibilize QSAW. Future forecasting allows dominant actors to evade an inquiry regarding their present work by sharing future plans or gaps the organization intends to fill. This strategy was highly prevalent during the group interview, wherein Staff frequently shared "we are working towards policy change" and "we are looking to develop an internal policy for this" in response to organizational faults that could not be blame-shifted. Future forecasting allows dominant actors to reframe a fault, albeit without guarantee of change.

Invisibilizing practices cannot be changed unless dominant actors accept responsibility for the harm it causes to QSAW. As such, deflecting accountability by shifting the blame onto structures, preserving white virtue, and future forecasting maintains the structural apparatus of invisibilization and will allow the practices that exclude QSAW to persist.

5.3. Assimilationist Politics

PrideTO re-writes the narratives of QSAW by deploying an assimilationist visibility politic that is not culturally conducive; thereby, disqualifying queer Desi diasporic bodies from notions of respectable queer citizenship. The visibility politic is the epistemic tool for mass-dissemination of knowledge about queer identities and norms that are collectively shared by LGBTQ+ people.

5.3.1. Homonationalism

Homonationalism underpins PrideTO's construction of a visibility politic. Homonationalism ties LGBTQ+ activism to nationalist ideology, which produces an in-group of respectable queer citizens and out-group of *foreign bodies* who have failed to assimilate to

Western-normative queerness. Foucault's (1978) concept of biopower allows for an understanding of how Pride organizations demarcate the boundaries of queer in-group/out-group, as well as regulate the way in which queer bodies live (i.e. enforced assimilation to Western-normative queerness). Pride organizations do not exert direct ruling power to exile QSAW from the LGBTQ+ community; rather, power operates through the construction and governance of knowledge dictating social norms and standards for acceptable queer expression in LGBTQ+ discourse. This knowledge is learned by the broader LGBTQ+ community, whose white-normative members exert social control through policing identities and imposing social sanctions upon those who do not conform to Western-normative queerness. These social sanctions constitute identity-based violence against QSAW. This regulation of *valid* sexual and gender expression effectively upholds in-group/out-group boundaries in the LGBTQ+ community, which consequently, disqualifies QSAW from respectable notions of queer citizenship; thereby, maintaining the colonial subjugation of South Asian sexuality in the diaspora. This section will reveal the assimilationist queer norms that are propagated by PrideTO, and consequently, enforced upon QSAW.

5.3.1.1. Mandatory Coming Out

The most prevalent social norm propagated by Pride organizations is mandatory *coming out*. The act of coming out entails disclosing one's sexuality to everyone (friends, family, society, etc.). Coming out originated during the early gay liberation movement as a political strategy to claim rights, gain visibility, and normalize non-heterosexuality in broader society (Smith, 1998; Whittier, 2017). While collective coming out has historically proven effective for transforming Canadian public policy and societal attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people (Smith, 1998; Whittier, 2017), it is contemporarily weaponized as a tool of exclusion that is used to systematically

disempower, shame, invalidate, and punish those who do not conform to the collective gay identity by openly disclosing one's LGBTQ+ identity.

Pride organizations normalize mandatory coming out by championing the mantra of "live your truth" and "out and proud" through wide-reaching promotional materials, such as the official website, blogs, social media, and event spaces. This study finds a consistent discursive pattern in the language describing outness across all PrideTO's public-facing content—that is, a narrative of 'coming out' as being truthful and 'being in the closet' as lying to oneself and others. This narrative is constructed using the discursive strategy of referential nomination, wherein coming out is portrayed as positive and being in the closet as negative, which effectively categorizes people into a queer in-group or out-group depending on the status of their outness. For instance, *coming out* and *being out* are consistently described using action phrases such as "express yourself honestly," "tell the truth," "living your truth," and "being open and honest about who you are," as well as emotive language such as "courage," "happiness," "boost in confidence and positivity," and "major source of light." In contrast, *being in the closet* is described using action phrases such as "hiding who you are," "lying," "pretending," and being "inauthentic," as well as emotive language such as "exhausting," "draining you of any positivity," and "dimming your light from within." Here, the association of liberating action phrases with positive emotional outcomes conveys a notion that being 'out' is the correct and valid way to be queer; thereby, categorizing those who are 'out' into the queer in-group. Contrastingly, associating shame-inducing action phrases with negative emotional outcomes discursively discredits *closeted* queer identities as inherently wrong, as well as stigmatizes those who cannot 'be out' as intrinsically bad, dishonest, and miserable people; thus, relegating 'closeted' queers to the out-group. Shaming and stigmatizing closeted

queer identities in such way promotes a legacy of violence against LGBTQ+ South Asians, as it undermines the colonial contexts by which queer South Asian diaspora are unable to be 'out'.

Furthermore, PrideTO encourages outness by advancing culturally incompetent claims on their website, such as "When you live your truth, your relationships with other people will get stronger," and "…by being open and honest about who you are, you will build trust with anyone you meet." Associating coming out with optimal outcomes of strengthened relationships disregards the realities of LGBTQ+ South Asians, who are likely to experience family violence for openly disclosing their queer identities. The propagation—and normalization—of mandatory *coming out* cannot be viewed as independent of the epistemic power that Pride organizations behold in dominant LGBTQ+ discourses. As evidenced in this section, PrideTO constructs knowledge that *being in the closet* is wrong; this is learned by the LGBTQ+ community and broader society, who then pressure LGBTQ+ South Asians to come out without consideration of the safety risks. Ryan provides insight about the way in which mandatory outness manifests as toxic homonationalism within the internal culture of PrideTO: "People [of colour] have gotten shit because they are not out." Ryan illuminates an unfortunate consequence of one's refusal to assimilate to *coming out* norms—that is, being shamed by white queers. Ryan, Haran, Humza, and Gora similarly insinuate that the homonationalist cultural underpinnings of PrideTO contributed to the mass resignation of LGBTQ+ people of colour—including queer South Asians—from the membership in early 2019. This demonstrates that the conditions by which individuals may participate within the internal structure of Pride are highly inaccessible to queer South Asians.

5.3.1.1.1. Gatekeeping Queer Voices

The assimilationist ideology of mandatory outness is further normalized through institutional policies that gatekeep queer voices. Specifically, 'closeted' queer individuals are revoked of their voice, as outness is an implicit requisite for voicing one's concerns and needs.

In order to submit a complaint about a group's participation in—or exclusion from—the Pride Parade, individuals are required to be 'out.' The governing policies, as indicated in the Parade Participation and Dispute Resolution, state that "Pride Toronto will only consider complaints from current members of the organization in good standing" (Pride Toronto, 2019). This gatekeeping tactic is exhibited again later in the document—albeit with stricter guidelines, which purposefully enforce *outness* in order to launch a valid concern:

> Anonymous complaints or use of pseudonyms are not permitted. Complaints that do not contain all of the required information, are longer than 500 words, or are not submitted by email or by the deadline will not be considered. … Pride Toronto cannot guarantee that names of complainants, or their contact information or complaints, or the results of the [Dispute Resolution Policy], will not become matters for the public record (Pride Toronto, 2019).

This policy insinuates that PrideTO does not value the opinions of queer community members who are not 'out'. However, this presents a safety threat for many QSAW, as name disclosures in LGBTQ+ contexts are closely intertwined with (unwanted) identity disclosures in familial contexts. The requirement to openly disclose one's queer identity in order to have a 'valid' voice to raise concerns consequently silence QSAW. This especially impacts queer South Asian daughters who often reside in their family homes, which is a common cultural practice for many unmarried South Asian daughters and prevalent in the Greater Toronto Area.[31]

Nonetheless, Gora shares that the Membership has recently considered implementing a requirement that enforces outness:

[31] This finding is determined by the demographic information provided by survey participants.

> Right now [joining the membership] is open to everybody. You don't have to be a member of the queer community; you can be an ally. There have been discussions for a while now on whether we want to keep it that way.

There is no unobstructed way to distinguish one's queerness without colonial tools to measure validity, which include: outness, expressing Western-normative sexuality, and not transgressing rigid identity categories (Islam, 1998; Patel, 2019). However, these colonial measurements pose a safety threat, as it requires assimilation; hence, it is not preferred by QSAW (Islam, 1998; Patel, 2019). Thus, the implementation of a mandatory self-identification policy would further impede the ability of QSAW to express, address, and mobilize their culturally specific issues, experiences, and needs. As well, the colonial imposition of policies requiring outness would amplify institutional violence against queer South Asians by further perpetuating a toxic culture of closet-shaming that presently exists in PrideTO.

Evidently, Pride organizations observe and enforce a rigid definition of valid queer participation, wherein open identity disclosure (i.e. coming out) is required regardless of the safety risks. This conceptualization of outness excludes those who embrace fluid outness and/or prefer to navigate queer spaces without coming out. As Patel (2019) finds, many QSAW prefer to embrace fluid queer identities (i.e. engage in queer spaces without coming out to family), in order to preserve familial ties. Thus, the practice of enforced outness directly impacts and thwarts safe participation of QSAW in queer spaces. As such, it is argued that organizational practices enforcing outness hinders the ability of QSAW to resist their invisibilization.

Moreover, the inability of QSAW to 'be out' is a direct result of colonialism. The British Empire viewed South Asia's acceptance of queer sexuality as disgusting and barbaric, and thus, embarked upon their sexual civilizing mission in the nineteenth century to deliberately erase queer sexuality and gender fluidity from South Asian society and religious scriptures. In this sense, it is understood that South Asians were forcefully closeted by colonizers, and now in diaspora, the

descendants of those colonizers are gatekeeping access and denying safe participation to queer South Asians who do not wish to be fully *out*. Therefore, it is argued that enforcing mandatory outness as a social norm constitutes identity-based violence against QSAW, as well as functions to recolonize South Asian sexuality in the diaspora.

5.3.1.2. Diversity and Inclusion

This study finds that PrideTO propagates 'diversity and inclusion' rhetoric as a façade to mask the organization's assimilationist visibility politics. Diversity and inclusion discourse in the Pride Festival propagates a false narrative of racial integration in the LGBTQ+ community (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han, 2008). In reality, QSAW who deviate from homonationalist expressions of queerness are shamed and exiled. As such, I argue that the invisibilization of QSAW persists in the broader LGBTQ+ community due to PrideTO branding as diverse and inclusive, while simultaneously advancing colonial knowledge about queer identities and ideologies in mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse.

Figure 2: Skip the Dishes Post

The homonationalist ideologies implicitly coded within diversity and inclusion discourses impede the ability of QSAW to resist their invisibilization. A content analysis of PrideTO's social media finds that the word "diversity" is frequently paired with rainbow symbolism. This is particularly evident in PrideTO's corporate partnership posts, wherein captions ambiguously use the terms "diversity" and/or "inclusion" while depicting rainbow imagery (e.g. Skip the Dishes, Ontario Lottery and Gaming (OLG), Trojan, Toronto-Dominion (TD) Bank, and several others). Figure 2 exemplifies this association—PrideTO's Instagram post

depicts a rainbow fruit salad with a vague caption of "we're supporting diversity with SkipTheDishes." The association between diversity and rainbows[32] strengthens in-group boundaries denoting respectable queer citizenship. As Ryan describes it, "you are seen as a fake queer if you're not on the road waving a rainbow flag, but for some people, that's dangerous." Consequently, rainbow (and related)[33] insignia become weaponized as a shaming device to exclude *closeted* queer people from LGBTQ+ spaces. However, QSAW often prefer expressing queerness in culturally conducive ways, and thus, reject overt queer signifiers (e.g. identity flags) in order to safely and harmoniously navigate both LGBTQ+ and South Asian cultures (Patel, 2019).

Reducing diversity discourse to rainbows as a homonationalist symbol of queer inclusion is especially problematic, as it allows PrideTO to appear racially integrative without implementing culturally competent practices. Equating racial integration with diversity and inclusion rhetoric maintains racial exclusion in queer contexts (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han, 2008). Abhirami elucidates the impact of empty diversity and inclusion efforts on LGBTQ+ South Asian youth: "…it's not enough to just throw the rainbow banner around […] rainbow capitalism isn't serving queer and trans people when they're still thinking about suicide, which are the kids that I work with in Scarborough [suburban Toronto]." As such, Pride organizations that choose to embrace disingenuous diversity efforts, instead of working towards meaningful inclusion and supports, actively choose to contribute to negative mental health outcomes of LGBTQ+ South Asian youth.

5.3.1.3. Collective Lesbian Identity

As evidenced throughout this thesis, QSAW are confined to the South Asian identity bracket and excluded from the lesbian bracket. As a result, QSAW become subjected to the rigid

[32] A tangential finding of this thesis is that the rainbow Pride flag is appropriated from the Hindu chakra system, albeit never credited by the designer, Gilbert Baker. PrideTO shared the meanings associated with each colour in blog articles leading up to the Pride Festival; however, the historic roots in cultural appropriation were not identified.
[33] Related insignia includes, but is not limited to, LGBTQ+ identity flags, identity labels, and other identity signifiers.

and culturally inconducive standards of the collective lesbian identity, in order to be considered validly queer. The way in which Pride organizations construct and deploy the collective lesbian identity is the root of the invisibilizing belief that Brown women cannot be not queer.

The representation of lesbian identity in the Pride Festival centers whiteness and Western-normativity. When survey participants were asked how PrideTO could improve the visibility of QSAW in the Pride Festival, an Indian lesbian cis-gender woman from Toronto region expressed:

> Honestly, even more than spaces, it would be nice to see a South Asian woman in advertisements. Why does the Dyke March promo only have white women? What about an Indian woman wearing her bindi, bangles, and a kurta? That's gay too.

QSAW-identified participants of this study identified clothing/fashion as a significant contributor to their invisibility. Praanee shares that she would "stick out like a sore thumb" and be perceived as heterosexual if she wore a saree to the Pride Festival. This is congruent with Patel's (2019) finding that South Asian ethnic identifiers are re-interpreted as manifestations heterosexuality for QSAW in LGBTQ+ spaces. Thus, the collective lesbian identity enforces assimilation by refusing to acknowledge non-Western fashion as a valid expression of queerness.

Furthermore, PrideTO constructs lesbian visibility in political or domestic contexts—both of which establish implicit rules for valid lesbian expression that are predicated upon outness. In a political context, lesbians are constructed as a political opposition to heterosexuality (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Whitter, 2017). This manifests as a glorification of white masculinity as the forefront of valid lesbian expression. For instance, marketing materials and social media posts referring to lesbian history depicted white women with short hair and masculine or androgynous clothing. The association of butch aesthetics with lesbian history perpetuates a narrative that white masculine expression of lesbian identity is "real", whereas feminine expression is "fake." This narrative is further perpetuated by the limited representation of feminine lesbians in domestic contexts. Notably, it is found that feminine-presenting queer women are exclusively depicted in romantic

dyads in marketing materials and social media, whereas masculine-presenting queer women are depicted singularly. PrideTO's construction of lesbian visibility establishes an implicit requirement for one to make their queerness visible by assimilating to white lesbian aesthetics or engaging in a lesbian relationship, in order to be credible for their queer identity. However, this is unsafe for QSAW who cannot risk being outed, as well as inconducive to QSAW who prefer to express both queer and South Asian identities (Patel, 2019).

Moreover, this study finds that PrideTO's programming is informed by a belief that lesbians share a universal experience. When asked how South Asian programming in PrideTO seeks to empower South Asian women, Phil explains:

> There's for sure, from my programming, always an eye on gender, because I came out in the early days of Pride, which were parties that are very white male-centric […] there's definitely no gender limits or gender ignorance happening at all.

Phil evades the topic of QSAW inclusion in South Asian spaces by discussing the general representation of all women in Pride programming, which is deracialized. While it is true that women—predominantly white women—have been increasingly represented in Pride, South Asian women remain absent in lesbian discourses and spaces. Thus, dominant actors constructing lesbian visibility lack a critical lens that hinders the construction of an intersectional visibility politic.

Section 5.3.1 demonstrates that social movement strategies, which were once effective for political mobilization, are now weaponized as a tool of exclusion to shame, disempower, invalidate, and punish those who do not conform to the collective lesbian identity. Due to the queerphobia imposed in South Asian culture by the British Empire during the colonial era, assimilating to the Western-normative collective lesbian identity remains unsafe and inconducive for many QSAW, as it is predicated upon outness. Policing the identity and expression of QSAW is particularly problematic, as many QSAW strategically navigate their outness in queer spaces to avoid disclosing their sexuality to family (Bacchus, 2017; Patel, 2019). The implications of

identity policing are amplified for QSAW, as recognition within the lesbian identity entails presenting as visibly queer in everyday life (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Whitter, 2017). As such, it is argued that the pressure to 'come out' in such way is a detrimental stressor for QSAW. Thus, identity policing and enforced assimilation to the collective lesbian identity in order receive queer in-group status (Patel, 2019) constitutes identity-based violence against QSAW.

5.3.2. Commercialization

The cultural underpinning of commercialization contributes to the design of Toronto's Pride Festival as a site of exclusion for QSAW. News media plays a critical role in shaping queer visibility on a national platform. News channels broadcast commercialized aspects, such as alcohol, partying, and excess displays of sex and nudity, as central to the Pride Festival. This consequently associates the Pride Festival with partying and hyper-sexuality, which contributes to the stigmatization of LGBTQ+ people as promiscuous and irresponsible. This negatively impacts the queer South Asian community, as the emphasized aspects conflict with the colonially imposed conservativism in South Asian cultural values. Thus, South Asian parents consuming news media portrayals of the Pride Festival become averse to their kids attending an event of this nature. For this reason, all LGBTQ+ South Asian participants identified flash photography as the greatest access barrier to Pride Festival attendance. Flash photography (e.g. filmed by news outlets, photographed without consent, etc.) poses a safety risk, as it threatens to 'out' those who do not wish to disclose their queerness to family or others. Ryan shares:

> I don't go near the cameras in the Parade because my parents watch [the news] and I worry about them seeing me on National TV. Even though I don't live at home, my dad is incredibly violent toward me for my queerness. I always get so mad when white [drag] queens are like 'just leave your family'. But like even if you move across the country, they [Brown families] will still find you. Even Ru Paul perpetuated the narrative of creating a new family—like, that's not how it works. You can't just remove yourself from your family and live a good life. […] It's always Eurocentric engagement when it comes to the topic of losing families.

Evidently, flash photography hinders the ability of queer South Asians to safely participate in Pride spaces. Although Masala identifies "harm reduction and public safety" as one of PrideTO's five strategic values, this study finds that PrideTO does not prioritize nor care to protect the safety of closeted queers in Festival spaces. This is evidenced by a brief interaction between Thepla and Vellai during the group interview, which confirm PrideTO's negligent photography practices:

> Vellai: the strategic values—
>
> Thepla: The one we handed out the other day? I was supposed to talk to you about that today—the photo in the strategic values with the guy—that's one of the things I had to tell you. I know the guy in the picture and he alerted me that he wants to be removed.

Thepla's tangential anecdote demonstrates that PrideTO's practice of non-consensual photo release of Festival attendees is harmful. In this case, the individual photographed had a connection inside PrideTO to request immediate removal; however, this practice can cause significant harm to those who lack any such connection. Following this interaction, I asked about the photo selection process for all media content, to which Vellai responds:

> All of our photos are captured through volunteer photographers, they upload them onto a drive and we […] have been picking photos from the drive. We've been working to adjust this year, we run into [...] release issues kind of. Where people's photos are captured in wide crowds where we can take pictures, but they haven't necessarily released the right to use their photos. We're looking to develop an internal policy for this.

A failure to obtain consent before releasing photos of Festival attendees is negligent, as it risks outing the photographed individual. A lack of existent policies governing photography and release practices denotes an operating assumption that all Festival attendees are *out*. As well, Vellai's use future forecasting (i.e. "looking to develop an internal policy") as a deflection strategy to offset the harm caused by PrideTO's present negligent photography practices insinuates the persistence of such practice for the foreseeable future.

A queer gender fluid Gujarati survey participant elucidates the culturally unique impact of flash photography in the Pride Festival on queer South Asian diaspora:

> For South Asians, many of just can't [attend Pride spaces]. It's not that we don't exist, it's that it can risk our lives and our family's social status in the South Asian community. Pride is racist as fuck if they don't account for that. It feels like they [PrideTO] just think South Asians don't come to Pride *[sic]* so they don't cater to them, but they [PrideTO] don't consider how they are actively creating an unsafe space for queer South Asians. All this flash photography and cameras everywhere...South Asians that are trying to attend Pride without being caught on camera and seen by a relative can't go to that shit! Pride needs to change their current practices that are harmful in […] exclusionary ways.

Thus, spatial practices that risk outness facilitate the exclusion of QSAW from LGBTQ+ spaces.

5.4. Locating QSAW in Toronto

Given that South Asians comprise the largest visible minority population in the City of Toronto, which is well-known for its multicultural demographic, it is surprising to find that South Asians are the least represented in PrideTO, such that performative visibility is not even provided. Yet several participants, particularly all queer South Asian community organizers, share unprompted remarks about the noticeably large, and increasing, LGBTQ+ South Asian population in Toronto. Devi, a representative of the QSAW Network, shares frequent sightings of QSAW on the streets of Toronto, albeit caveats that she utilizes signifiers such as 'being coupled' to ascertain queerness. Praanee expresses that QSAW are a thriving population demographic, which she measures by the instant success of QSAW Network:

> We were enthusiastically shocked at how quickly and well-received the QSAW Network was by queer South Asian women, as soon as we put up the social media pages. We kept increasing in followers each day without even doing paid promotions or anything like that. It was amazing … messages of gratitude and programming requests immediately flooded our [inbox]…

Both Praanee and Devi similarly relayed that the overwhelming response to QSAW Network's launch made it clear that queer Desi women had been yearning to feel seen for too long. Likewise, Waseem, who has been in the Toronto queer South Asian organizing scene since the early 2000s,

similarly expresses his shock at the increasingly large the queer South Asian community, which has especially grown in the recent few years.

While the queer Desi population has been increasing, there remain a small handful of queer South Asian organizations "still standing" in the context of working with PrideTO. Queer South Asian organizers who have worked with PrideTO feel averse to continuing a partnership, given the damaging treatment they are *still* subjected to (i.e. South Asian stage issue). Waseem reflects on his experience of working with PrideTO through Rangeela:

> We hit a brick wall with Pride Toronto. Like we thought adding value to Pride Toronto would have meant taking our expertise and helping to create that stage. That's what we thought. We don't think that anymore. And so I think we're kind of a gridlock with Pride Toronto in terms of ... I think Pride ought to have more of a South Asian presence.

Similarly, Rabbia shares ASAAP's recent unwillingness to participate in PrideTO, despite the organization being among the first South Asian organizations to participate in Toronto's Pride programming: "…there's a pull away from Pride. For example, ASAAP didn't table at Pride and that was because of how bullshit Pride Toronto treats the South Asian community." Rabbia draws attention to PrideTO's ill treatment of the South Asian community as a contributing factor to the persistent invisibilization of QSAW.

The profound grief conveyed by queer South Asian organizers who have attempted to work with PrideTO is particularly significant, given the incongruence in the least visibility of QSAW in PrideTO and largest racialized population of South Asians in Toronto. Queer South Asian organizers that have worked with PrideTO report feeling distressed and burnt out to a point of feeling that it is impossible to make a relationship work with PrideTO. Therefore, PrideTO's lack of care for the queer South Asian community maintains the invisibilization of QSAW. This chapter concludes with the words of a survey participant: "if there's one thing Pride Toronto could do to improve the visibility of queer South Asian women, it would be genuinely giving a shit about us."

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This thesis substantiates the invisibilization of QSAW in dominant LGBTQ+ discourse as an institutionalized form of identity-based violence. The findings demonstrate two core causes of invisibilization: first, the willful neglect of dominant actors erases QSAW from dominant LGBTQ+ discourse, and second, assimilationist social norms that mandate *outness* invalidate, silence, and exclude QSAW.

This critical ethnography of PrideTO proves that the alienation and exclusion felt by QSAW in LGBTQ+ communities (Patel, 2019) is a product of systemic discrimination that is culturally reproduced by the willful negligence of dominant actors. An especially jarring finding of this study is that PrideTO deliberately chooses to erase South Asians in dominant queer discourse. The limited inclusion of Queer South Asians is intentionally pushed to the periphery of the Pride Festival, as dominant actors do not want to integrate South Asian culture into sites of mainstream queer visibility. The representation of QSAW is confined to the South Asian bracket; however, QSAW become erased therein due to homopatriarchal underpinnings, which privilege the experiences of gay cisgender men. Therefore, the erasure of QSAW is unique to their gender and South Asian identity.

Congruent with Patel's (2019) novel finding that QSAW experience culturally unique forms of racism, the current study finds that Pride organizations deploy identity-specific systems of oppression that produce a differential experience of discrimination for QSAW. The intersection of xenophobia, which targets the racialized immigrant identity of queer South Asians, and homopatriarchy, which subordinates their gender identity, produces the unique absence of QSAW in mainstream and racialized queer discourse. Therefore, QSAW do not experience discrimination akin to "all WOC," and it is colonial violence to group QSAW into any such essentialistic identity

category. The inability to conceptualize QSAW as an independent subject in mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse precludes the culturally specific issues, experiences, and needs of QSAW from being expressed, addressed, and mobilized. Thus, maintaining the structural apparatus of invisibilization.

This study discerns the cause of the concerning incongruence between population size and visibility, wherein South Asians comprise the largest racialized population in Toronto—and wider Canada—yet queer South Asians receive the least visibility in Toronto's Pride Festival, and even less for QSAW. It is found that the vast majority of QSAW presently cannot attend the Pride Festival due to a risk of being outed, which is heightened by a lack of safety precautions for closeted queers provided by Pride organizations. Social norms mandating outness present the greatest barrier to the inclusion of QSAW in LGBTQ+ spaces. The findings demonstrate that social movement strategies such as coming out, rainbow symbolism, and rigid identity boundaries, which were once effective for political mobilization, are now weaponized as a tool of exclusion to shame, disempower, invalidate, and punish QSAW for their inability to assimilate to the collective lesbian identity. Notably, PrideTO's propagation of coming out norms in dominant queer discourse categorizes people into a queer in-group and out-group depending on the status of one's outness. Those who are *out* are considered insiders and receive access to safe participation and knowledge contribution, whereas those who fail to assimilate are deemed outsiders.

QSAW remain invisibilized in the broader LGBTQ+ community as a result of Pride organizations branding as diverse and inclusive, while simultaneously advancing colonial knowledge about queer identities and ideologies that re-write the narratives of QSAW in mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse. Power operates and becomes culturally reproduced in the construction and deployment of an assimilationist queer visibility politic, which normalizes acts of identity-based violence against QSAW. This knowledge about queerness is learned by the

broader LGBTQ+ community, who engage in identity policing to ensure exile of unassimilated queer bodies. Such pressures to assimilate functions to recolonize queer South Asians in the diaspora, in an analogous manner to the British Empire that colonized South Asia for the purpose of imposing a 'white way' of performing sexuality.

The implications of identity-based violence are amplified due to the covert nature of its perpetration. Invisibilization does not follow the explicit logic of discrimination; hence, it is often dismissed as an insignificant oversight. However, invisibilization is a deeply damaging act of epistemic violence, as it erases the existence of QSAW at the level of knowledge. This, coupled with a toxic culture of closet-shaming and enforced outness, hinders the ability of QSAW to resist their invisibility. Therefore, invisibilization functions as an inescapable gridlock that maintains the ongoing colonial subjugation of queer South Asian bodies. The only way to escape this subjugation is for institutions with significant epistemic power, such as Pride organizations, to explicitly acknowledge the QSAW identity and depict South Asian lesbians in cultural clothing in mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse, as this would transform societal attitudes and epistemologies towards QSAW in a manner akin to gay and lesbian visibility in the early gay liberation movement.

Given that QSAW are confined to the South Asian identity bracket, many of the findings presented in this thesis conceptualize the broader invisibilization of LGTBQ+ South Asians in the Pride Festival. Further, the results of this study are generalizable to the broader queer pan-Asian diaspora, as Pride organizations similarly discriminate against the Asian immigrant identity.

6.1. Recommendations for Policy, Practice, and Research

This thesis seeks to explicate oppressive organizational practices that maintain the invisibilization of QSAW. However, in order for these findings to be effectively translated into solutions, the areas for improvement must be made clear.

First, a failure to explicitly acknowledge the intersection of queer, South Asian, and women's identities in LGBTQ+ maintains the invisibilization of QSAW. As such, it is crucial to explicitly acknowledge the intersectional QSAW identity in policy, practice, and research. Scholars, activists, community members, and especially dominant actors of LGBTQ+ organizations must immediately refrain from generalizing the experiences of QSAW into the broader QTBIPOC/WOC categories, as doing so will continue to erase the culturally unique needs and concerns of QSAW and further the structural apparatus of invisibilization. Accordingly, it is strongly advised to replace the acronym QTBIPOC with QTBIBA (Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, Brown, Asian). The latter acronym encompasses greater accountability for dominant actors to construct ethno-specific representation of racialized immigrant groups.

Second, it is crucial to refrain from mandating outness in organizational practices and institutional policies. Instead, policies and practices should enforce protections and safety for closeted queers to attend LGBTQ+ spaces. Notably, a removal of flash photography or implementation of consent-based photography in LGBTQ+ spaces—public or otherwise—would allow more LGBTQ+ individuals to attend. Spaces without flash photography should be well advertised in marketing, in order to widely convey this safety feature. Likewise, it is wise for LGBTQ+ organizations to exclude news media from broadcasting the event, as this risks outing attendees. Additionally, organizations should implement avenues for safe participation without the need to out oneself (i.e. eliminate the requirement to use one's legal name).

Third, organizational practices and policies must prioritize and validate closeted queer voices. Closet-shaming constitutes identity-based violence, and thus, it is crucial to ensure that the organizational culture does not encourage any such behaviours. It is recommended for

organizations internally, and externally, advocate against closet-shaming to shift the narrative towards validating partial outness or not needing to come out in order to be validly queer.

Fourth, a recommended practice for LGBTQ+ organizations is to implement creative solutions to ensuring that Pride Festivals meet funding goals (i.e. sponsorship to fund the event) while simultaneously taking advantage of their epistemic power to deliver effective inclusion messages. For instance, sponsors could be assigned a niche issue affecting the LGBTQ+ community to advocate for when participating.

Fifth, it is highly advisable that Pride organizations stop intentionally excluding queer South Asians from mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse and refrain from identity bracketing practices. This study finds that dominant actors willfully neglect queer South Asian diaspora and construct the limited representation on the periphery. However, it is crucial to construct QSAW in mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse—through programming and marketing practices—as a failure to do so maintains the invisibilization of QSAW, which produces negative mental health outcomes.

Finally, it is vital for the queer South Asian community work together—as opposed to against one another—in order to collectively challenge the invisibilization of queer South Asian diaspora in the LGBTQ+ community.

6.2. Limitations

Due to the spatial limitations of this thesis, all the pertinent findings could not be included. While the most relevant are presented herein, it is important to note that there is more evidence to substantiate various facets of each finding. The remainder of my findings will be included in subsequent publications.

Furthermore, a limitation of this thesis is the lack of explicit focus on transgender spaces in the Pride Festival. The vast size of this study warranted niche investigation of lesbian spaces, in

order to understand the invisibility of QSAW in the Pride Festival. Although it was beyond the scope of this thesis, I examined the level of South Asian trans and non-binary representation in the broader Pride Festival and South Asian spaces. It was found that the level of representation for queer South Asian women, non-binary, and trans individuals is equally non-existent; hence, there is no analysis of differential representation amongst gender marginalized South Asians in PrideTO.

6.3. Areas for Future Research

This thesis identifies the intersection of South Asian immigration and the LGBTQ+ social movement as the centre point of queer South Asian invisibilization in the LGBTQ+ community. However, this body of Canadian literature does not presently exist. As such, it is highly recommended that further research be conducted on the experiences of early queer South Asian community organizers that sought inclusion in the LGBTQ+ movement upon arrival to Canada. It is crucial to elucidate the socio-historic trajectory of queer South Asian advocacy efforts, as well barriers to integration in the Canadian LGBTQ+ movement, in order to better understand the conditions enabling queer South Asian exclusion in present day. As well, such research would provide clear units of measurement to track social progress in the context of queer South Asian visibility. This is a time sensitive study, as the data must be collected before potential informants become deceased.

Further, this thesis discerns conflicting pressures from the LGBTQ+ and South Asian cultures regarding outness. In LGBTQ+ contexts, QSAW are pressured to visibly be *out* and become subjected to identity-based violence for a failure to conform. In South Asian contexts, QSAW are pressured to remain closeted in order to preserve familial honour and risk the potential of—often inescapable—family violence for a failure to do so. This divergent expectation and lack of flexibility to safely navigate partial outness in the LGBTQ+ community is likely a chronic

stressor for QSAW in the diaspora. As such, it is recommended that future research examine the correlation between navigating outness in the diaspora and chronic stress as it impacts QSAW.

6.4. Concluding Remarks

To conclude, I argue that Pride organizations intentionally invisibilize QSAW in the broader LGBTQ+ community. A lack of desire to integrate South Asian culture in mainstream LGBTQ+ discourse, homopatriarchal subordination of women, as well as enforced assimilation to homonationalist expressions of queerness that culturally conflict with post-colonial South Asian ideologies, paired with a prioritization of outness over protecting the safety of closeted queers in LGBTQ+ spaces, maintains the invisibilization of QSAW.

The parallel trajectories of the LGBTQ+ movement and South Asian immigration to Canada are significant for understanding the invisibilization of QSAW. Namely, national immigration restrictions facilitated the early exclusion of queer South Asians from the LGBTQ+ movement in Canada. Subsequent immigrant integration barriers, as well as xenophobic attitudes caused by the arrival of South Asians to Canada, significantly delayed the involvement of QSAW in queer spaces. In this sense, it is understood that QSAW have never been given the opportunity to vocalize their needs and concerns in the LGBTQ+ movement—even as an oppressed subject. Although South Asians immigrants have collectively integrated into Canadian society, their invisibility in LGBTQ+ spaces remain, as a result of the generational impacts of colonialism in pre-colonial South Asia. South Asians were forced into the closet by colonizers, and now in the diaspora, the descendants of those colonizers have enforced a requirement to be *out* to have a valid queer voice—this consequently silences QSAW. This ongoing colonial subjugation of South Asian sexuality, which requires South Asians to constantly be queer in the ‘white way’, maintains the invisibilization of QSAW.

The severity of the issue of invisibilization affecting QSAW has not yet been vocalized in the LGBTQ+ discourse, which has caused false presumptions that South Asians do not experience culturally unique discrimination. However, this thesis proves that the invisibilization of QSAW is institutionally reinforced by the willful intent of the architects of queer visibility, who believe South Asians are unworthy of inclusion in the Pride Festival. As such, Pride organizations intentionally construct the knowledge that invisibilizes QSAW on a structural level, which teaches the broader LGBTQ+ community to inflict identity-based violence upon QSAW who do not assimilate through interpersonal interactions, which ultimately sustains the invisibilization of QSAW in LGBTQ+ culture and discourse. Therefore, Pride organizations govern the invisibilization of QSAW and abuse their epistemic power to maintain it.

REFERENCES

Adur, S. M. (2018a). Memories and Apprehensions: Temporalities of queer South Asian belonging and activism in the diaspora. In S. Adur, R. Hedge, & A. Sahoo (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of the Indian Diaspora* (1st ed., pp. 304–314).

Adur, S. M. (2018b). In pursuit of love: 'Safe passages', migration and queer South Asians in the US. *Current Sociology Monograph,* 66(2), 320-334.

Alimahomed, S. (2010). Thinking Outside the Rainbow: Women of Color Redefining Queer Politics and Identity. *Social Identities,* 16(2), 151-168.

Arora, R. P. (2010). South Asian Boys: Desi Boys. In S. R. Steinberg, M. Kehler, & L. Cornish (Eds.), *Boy Culture: An Encyclopedia* (Vol. 1, pp. 86–88). Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Bacchus, N. (2017). Shifting Sexual Boundaries: Ethnicity and Pre-Marital Sex in the Lives of South Asian American Women. *Sexuality and Culture,* 21, 776-794.

Badruddoja, R. (2008). Queer Spaces, Places, and Gender: The Tripologies of Rupa and Ronica. *NQSA Journal,* 20(2).

Bains, S. K., & Sandhra, S. K. (2019). The Battle for the South Asian Right to Vote. *British Columbia Historical Federation Magazine*. Retrieved December 1, 2019 from https://ufv.ca/media/assets/sasi/BCHF-Story-on-the-Vote-(final).pdf

Bannerji, K. (1993). No Apologies. In R. Ratti (Ed.), *A Lotus of Another Color* (pp. 55-69). Boston: Alyson.

Beharry, P., & Crozier, S. (2008). Using Phenomenology to Understand Experiences of Racism for Second-generation South Asian Women. *Canadian Journal of Counselling,* 42(4), 262-277.

Borras, J., & Maalouf, S. (2016, February 26). *Home Gay Asians Toronto.* The ArQuives: Canada's LGBTQ2 Archives. Retrieved August 7, 2019, from https://arquives.ca/newsfeed/news/home-gay-asians-toronto/.

Buchignani, N. (1977). A Review of the Historical and Sociological Literature on East Indians in Canada. *Canadian Ethnic Studies/Etudes ethniques du Canada,* 9(1): 86-108.

Buchignani, N. (2010). South Asian Canadians. In *The Canadian Encyclopedia.* Retrieved from https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/south-asians

Cameron, A. (2015). How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the IRB. Contexts, 14(3), 72-74. Canada Not-For-Profit Corporations Act. S.C. 2009, C-23.

Ching, T., Lee, S., Chen, J., So, R., & Williams, M. (2018). A Model of Intersectional Stress and Trauma in Asian American Sexual and Gender Minorities. *Psychology of Violence,* 8(6): 657-668.

Choudhury, P. P., Badhan, N. S., Chand, J., Chhugani, S., Shoksey, R., Husainy, S., Lui, C., & Wat, E. (2009). Community Alienation and its Impact on Help-Seeking Behavior Among LGBTIQ South Asians in Southern California. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services,* 21(2), 247-266.

Church-Wellesley Village. (n.d.). The Village: About Us. Retrieved from https://www.churchwellesleyvillage.ca/

Clark, C. (2005). Deconstructing "The Down Low" – People of Color "Coming Out" and "Being Out" on Campus. *Higher Education*, 45-59.

Craven, S. (2017). Challenging Queer as "Neoliberal": The Radical Politics of South Asian Diasporic Lesbian Representational Culture. Journal of International Women's Studies, 18(2), 45-58.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Dasgupta, S. D. (2005). Women's Realities: Defining Violence Against Women by Immigration, Race, and Class. In N.J. Sokologg & C. Pratt (Eds.), *Domestic Violence at the Margins: Readings on Race, Class, Gender, and Culture* (pp.56-70). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

De Kock, L. (1992). Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: New Nation Writers Conference in South Africa. *A Review of International English Literature,* 23(3), 29-47.

Formby, E. (2017). Pride Spaces, Rituals and Symbols. In *Exploring LGBT Spaces and Communities: Contrasting Identities, Belongings and Wellbeing* (1st ed., pp. 136–154).

Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Gamson, J. (1995). Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma. *Social Problems,* 42, 390-407.

Gilbert, P., Gilbert, J., & Sanghera, J. (2004). A Focus Group Exploration of the Impact of Izzat, Shame, Subordination and Entrapment on Mental Health and Service Use in South Asian Women Living in Derby. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 7*(2), 109-130.

Giwa, S., & Greensmith, C. (2012). Race Relations and Racism in the LGBTQ Community of Toronto: Perceptions of Gay and Queer Social Service Providers of Color. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *59*(2), 149-185.

Gopinath, G. (2005). In *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures.* (pp. 1-267). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Greene, B. (1996). Lesbian Women of Colour: Triple Jeopardy. *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 1(1), 109-147.

Greene, B. (2000). African American lesbian and bisexual women. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56 (2), 239–249.

Greey, A. (2018). Queer inclusion precludes (Black) queer disruption: media analysis of the Black lives matter Toronto sit-in during Toronto Pride 2016. *Leisure Studies*, 37(6), 662-676.

Grube, J. (1997). No More Shit: The Struggle for Democratic Gay Space. In G. Ingram, A. Bouthilette, & Y. Retter (Eds.), *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance* (pp. 227-249). Seattle, WA: Bay Press.

Grundy, J. (2003). *Staging Queer Differences in the Entrepreneurial City: The Politics of Pride Toronto* (Doctoral dissertation, Carleton University, 2003). National Library of Canada / Bibliothèque nationale du Canada.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: principles in practice* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Han, C. (2008). No fats, femmes, or Asians: the utility of critical race theory in examining the role of gay stock stories in the marginalization of gay Asian men. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 11(1), 11-22.

Herbert, A., & Moodley, K. (2015). Multicultural Canada as an Alternative? In *Imagined Liberation: Xenophobia, Citizenship, and Identity in South Africa, Germany, and Canada.* (pp. 122-142). Temple University Press.

Islam, N. (1998). Naming Desire, Shaping Identity: Tracing the Experiences of Indian Lesbians in the United States. In S. Dasgupta (Ed), *A Patchwork Shawl: Chronicles of South Asian Women in America* (72-94). Newark: Rutgers University Press.

Jones, L. (2016). “If a Muslim says ‘homo’, nothing gets done”: Racist Discourse and In-Group Identity Construction in an LGBT Youth Group. *Language in Society,* 45, 113-133.

Kawale, R. (2003). A Kiss is Just a Kiss...Or is it? South Asian Lesbian and Bisexual Women and the Construction of Space. In N. Puwar & P. Raghuram (Eds.), *South Asian Women in the Diaspora* (pp. 179-198). New York: Berg.

Lee, J. (1996). Why Suzie Wong is Not a Lesbian: Asian and Asian American Lesbian and Bisexual Women and Femme/Butch/Gender Identities. In B. Breemyn & M. Eliason (Eds.), *Queer Studies* (pp. 115-132). New York: New York University Press.

Lewis, J. (2003). Design Issues. In J. Lewis & J. Ritchie (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* (pp. 47-76). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Logie, C. H., & Rwigema, M. (2014). “The Normative Idea of Queer is a White Person”. Understanding Perceptions of White Privilege Among Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Women of Color in Toronto, Canada. *Journal of Lesbian Studies,* 18(2), 174-191.

Madison, D. S. (2005). *Introduction to Critical Ethnography: Theory and Method.* In Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance, (pp.1-16). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Mangton, P., Carvalho, M., & Pandya, S. (2002). *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Health.* A Brown Paper: The Health of South Asians in the United States,1(1), 2-12.

May, T., & Perry, B. (2012). Positioning and Belonging. In *Social Research & Reflexivity: Content, Consequences and Context*, (pp. 101-122). London: SAGE Publications.

McKeown, E., Nelson, S., Anderson, J., Low, N., & Elford, J. (2010). Disclosure, Discrimination, and Desire: Experiences of Black and South Asian Gay Men in Britain. *Culture, Health, & Sexuality,* 12(7), 843-856.

McLeod, D. W. (1996). *Lesbian and gay liberation in Canada a selected annotated chronology, 1976-1981*. Toronto, ON: Homewood Books.

Medina, J. (2018). Epistemic Injustice and Epistemologies of Ignorance. In P. C. Taylor, L. M. Alcoff & L. Anderson (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Race.* (pp. 247-260). New York, NY: Routledge.

Mueller, J. (2017). Producing Colorblindness: Everyday Mechanisms of White Ignorance. *Social Problems*, 64(2), 219–238.

Narvaez, R. F., Meyer, I. H., Kertzner, R. M., Ouellette, S. C., & Gordon, A. R. (2009). A Qualitative Approach to the Intersection of Sexual, Ethnic and Gender Identities. *Identity*, 9, 63–86.

Nash, C. J. (2014). Consuming Sexual Liberation: Gay Business, Politics, and Toronto's Barracks Bathhouse Raids. *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 48(8), 82–105.

Patel, S. (2019). "Brown Girls Can't Be Gay": Racism Experienced by Queer South Asian Women in Toronto's LGBTQ Community. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 23(3), 410-423.

Polletta, F. & Jasper, J. M. (2001). Collective Identity and Social Movements. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27(283).

Pride Toronto. (2013, October 24). Pride Toronto By-law No. 1, Version 3.0.

Pride Toronto. (2019). Pride Parade and Dispute Resolution. Retrieved from http://www.pridetoronto.com

Pride Toronto. (n.d.). Pride Toronto. Retrieved from http://www.pridetoronto.com

Rajgopal, S. (2018). Queering South Asia? Deviant Sexualities and the Role of the Indian Media in Shaping Perceptions. In S. Jha & A. Kurian (Eds.), *New feminisms in South Asia: disrupting the discourse through social media, film, and literature* (pp. 197–218). New York, NY: Routledge.

Rajiva, M. (2013). "Better lives": The Transgenerational Positioning of Social Mobility in the South Asian Canadian diaspora. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 36, 16-26.

Rau, K. (2014). Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights in Canada. In *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-rights-in-canada

Ross, B. (1995). The House that Jill Built: A Lesbian Nation in Formation. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Sandil, R., Robinson, M., Brewster, M. E., Wong, S., & Geiger, E. (2015). Negotiating Multiple Marginalizations: Experiences of South Asian LGBQ Individuals. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 21(1), 76-88.

Siraj, A. (2011). Isolated, Invisible, and in the Closet: The Life Story of a Scottish Muslim Lesbian. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 15(1), 99-121.

Smith, M. (1998). Social Movements and Equality Seeking: The Case of Gay Liberation in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 31(2), 285-309.

Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the Subaltern Speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. (pp. 24-28). London: Macmillan.

Staggenborg, S., & Ramos, H. (2016). The LGBT Movement. In *Social Movements* (3rd ed., pp. 132–154). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Statistics Canada. (2017a). *Toronto [Census metropolitan area], Ontario and Canada [Country] (table). Census Profile, Ethnic Origin.* (table). 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

Statistics Canada. (2017b). *Toronto [Census metropolitan area], Ontario and Canada [Country] (table). Census Profile, Visible Minority Population.* 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

Taylor, V., & Whittier, N. (1992). Collective Identity in Social Movement Communities: Lesbian Feminist Mobilization. In A. D. Morris & C. M. Mueller (Eds.), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (pp. 104-129). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Thaker, S. (2006). South Asian Women, Social Capital and Multicultural (mis)Understandings. *Community, Work and Family, 9*(3), 291-307.

Thomas, J. (2004). Critical Ethnography. In M. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman, & T. Liao (Eds.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Toronto City News. (2019, January 23). Pride Toronto votes against police participation in 2019 Pride parade. Retrieved from https://toronto.citynews.ca/2019/01/22/pride-toronto-votes-against-police-participation-in-2019-pride-parade/

Uphouse Inc. (n.d.). UpHouse: Make In-House Marketing Better. Retrieved August 2019, from https://www.uphouseinc.com/

Vaccaro, A., & Koob, R. (2019). A Critical and Intersectional Model of LGBTQ Microaggressions: Toward a More Comprehensive Understanding. Journal of Homosexuality, 66(10), 1317–1344.

Van Stekelenburg, J. (2013). Collective Identity. In D. Snow, D. Della Porta, B. Klandermans, & D. McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements.* Malden (pp. 219-225). MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Ward, J. (2008). White Normativity: The Cultural Dimensions of Whiteness in a Racially Diverse LGBT Organization. *Sociological Perspectives*, 51(3), 563-586.

Whittier, N. (2017). Identity Politics, Consciousness-Raising, and Visibility Politics. In H. J. McCammon, T. Verta, J. Reger, & R. L. Einwohner (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women's Social Movement Activism*. Oxford University Press: New York, NY.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Schedule of Events for Gay Pride Week 1972

GAY PRIDE WEEK

IN CANADA

AUGUST 19—27 1972

The week of August 19-27 is Gay Pride Week in Canada. Its purpose is to reaffirm the ideals which found expression in Canada's first gay demonstration held last year, in Ottawa at this time. The week also commemorates the third anniversary of the passage into law of the 1968-69 Criminal Code Amendments, which began the process of removing the state from "the bedrooms of the nation."

Toronto's gay community will celebrate Gay Pride Week 1972 with a series of political, cultural, and social events in which the Toronto public is invited to share.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19

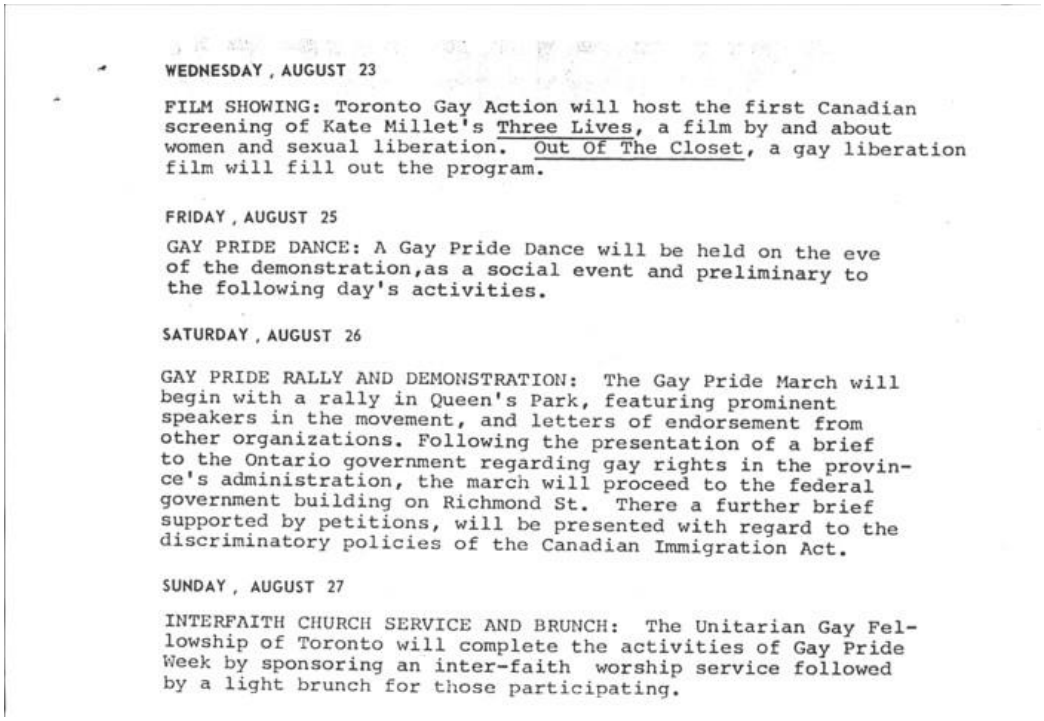
A FESTIVAL OF GAY CULTURE: The CHAT Centre at 58 Cecil St.(one block south of College,off Spadina) will be given over to exhibits by gay painters,photographers and artisans. Poetry readings and musical presentations will take place within a coffee-house format. Carnival events and other activities will fill out the festive atmosphere.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 20

GAY PICNIC: At two p.m. a Gay Picnic will be held on Ward's Island, consisting of an afternoon of games and relaxation followed by a bonfire and cookout. To attend take the ferry from the foot of Bay St. to Wards Island and follow the signs to Site No. 20.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 22

SPECIAL CHAT PROGRAM: The Community Homophile Association will devote its regular meeting time to a special program evening at the CHAT centre,58 Cecil St.



WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23

FILM SHOWING: Toronto Gay Action will host the first Canadian screening of Kate Millet's Three Lives, a film by and about women and sexual liberation. Out Of The Closet, a gay liberation film will fill out the program.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 25

GAY PRIDE DANCE: A Gay Pride Dance will be held on the eve of the demonstration, as a social event and preliminary to the following day's activities.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26

GAY PRIDE RALLY AND DEMONSTRATION: The Gay Pride March will begin with a rally in Queen's Park, featuring prominent speakers in the movement, and letters of endorsement from other organizations. Following the presentation of a brief to the Ontario government regarding gay rights in the province's administration, the march will proceed to the federal government building on Richmond St. There a further brief supported by petitions, will be presented with regard to the discriminatory policies of the Canadian Immigration Act.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 27

INTERFAITH CHURCH SERVICE AND BRUNCH: The Unitarian Gay Fellowship of Toronto will complete the activities of Gay Pride Week by sponsoring an inter-faith worship service followed by a light brunch for those participating.

Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire

Demographic Overview

1. What is your age?

2. What region are you located in?

- ☐ Toronto
- ☐ York Region
- ☐ Peel Region
- ☐ Halton Region
- ☐ Durham Region
- ☐ Hamilton or Greater Hamilton Area
- ☐ Waterloo Region
- ☐ Simcoe County
- ☐ Niagara Region
- ☐ Kingston
- ☐ Ottawa Region
- ☐ London
- ☐ Muskoka Region
- ☐ Oxford County
- ☐ Windsor
- ☐ Other: _____

3. Do you identify as South Asian?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Half
- ☐ Other: _____

4. Which South Asian sub-group do you identify (most) with?

5. Which sexual orientation do you identify (closest) with?

   ☐ Gay/Lesbian
   ☐ Bisexual
   ☐ Queer
   ☐ Pansexual
   ☐ Asexual; homo-romantic
   ☐ Heterosexual/Straight
   ☐ I don't subscribe to labels, but I am a woman that is attracted to women
   ☐ Other: _____

6. Which gender identity do you identify (closest) with?

   ☐ Cis-gender woman
   ☐ Transgender; Hijra
   ☐ Gender non-binary
   ☐ Gender fluid
   ☐ Genderqueer
   ☐ Prefer not to say
   ☐ Other: _____

Pride Attendance

7. Have you ever attended Toronto's LGBTQ+ Pride Festival?

8. If you answered yes to the question above, how frequently do you attend?

9. Why do you choose to, or not choose to attend Toronto's LGBTQ+ Pride Festival?

Visibility in Toronto's LGBTQ+ Pride Festival

10. Do you personally feel represented in the dominant portrayals of lesbian and queer women that are advanced in Toronto's LGBTQ+ Pride? Why or why not?

11. Do you feel that South Asian transwomen and the hijra community are adequately and appropriately represented in Toronto's LGBTQ+ Pride Festival?

12. Rank the level of representation of South Asian hijra and transwomen in Toronto's LGBTQ+ Pride Festival (0 = no representation; 5 = moderate; 10 = well-represented).

13. Do you feel that South Asian cis-women are adequately and appropriately represented in Toronto's LGBTQ+ Pride Festival?

14. Rank the level of representation of queer South Asian cis-women in Toronto's LGBTQ+ Pride Festival (0 = no representation; 5 = moderate; 10 = well-represented).

15. What do you think of the level of representation of queer South Asian women in Toronto's LGBTQ+ Pride Festival? Specifically, what is lacking and what can be improved?

16. Do you feel visible as a queer South Asian women in Toronto's LGBTQ+ Pride? Why or why not?

17. What could Pride Toronto do to improve the visibility of queer South Asian women in Toronto's LGBTQ+ Pride Festival, if anything?

18. Describe the position of queer South Asian women in Toronto's LGBTQ+ Pride (in one or more words).

19. Is there anything else you wish to add?

Appendix C: Organizational Practices that Construct Queer Visibility

Table 4: Epistemic Modes of Queer Visibility in Pride Toronto™

Operations (Operational Practices)	**Marketing/Media** (Visual Practices[34])	**Programming** (Spatial Practices)
● Policies; Bylaws; Contracts ● Hiring; Labor Hierarchy ● Labor Hierarchy ● Volunteer Management ● Decision-Making ● Finance and Budgeting ● Consultations ● Festival Permits ● Research ● Community Townhalls ● Membership Meetings ● Guest and Group of Honor Selection	● Digital Marketing ● Traditional Marketing ● Social Media Platforms/Posts ● Website; Blogs ● Event or Campaign Posters ● Program Guide ● Promotional Materials (e.g. branded water bottle) ● Advertisements (Television, Billboards, Radio, Transit, Facebook Event Page, etc.) ● Branding; Logo ● Design; Images of People ● Sponsor Posts; Branding	● Festival Blueprint ● Festival Schedule ● Events; Event Spaces; Event Time and Duration ● Stages ● Speakers ● Performer/Artist Lineup ● Rallies; Marches ● Bars; Beer Gardens ● Sponsor Lineup (for Pride March) ● Food vendors ● Sponsor booths

[34] Visual practices encompass graphic and textual modes (i.e. images, videos, words).