

Exploring Generation 1.5 Afghan Experiences of Homemaking and (Be)longing

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ABSTRACT

The literature on migration has typically described those who have migrated out of necessity as being in some form of exile, longing to return to their homeland. Traditionally, it has been applied to first-generation immigrants who strongly identify with their homeland and feel like an “outsider” in their country of settlement. However, there has been little attention paid to generation 1.5 immigrants, those who migrated during childhood or early adolescence. This thesis seeks to explore the settlement experiences of 10 generation 1.5 Afghans. I argue these individuals engage in homemaking strategies as a way to negotiate their identity and belonging in Canada, while also challenging the boundaries of belonging in order to gain full citizenship.

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INTRODUCTION TO THESIS

The mass movement of involuntary migrants across borders in search of a new “home” present unique opportunities to examine how displaced populations navigate the socio-political realities of their new environment. Canada has routinely been hailed as a welcoming nation, tolerant and kind to its minority populations (Bauder, 2014; Mackey, 1999) making it an ideal destination for those fleeing their home. At the same time, historical and modern national practices show that the tolerance of cultural and racial diversity as well as discussions of legitimate belonging are embedded in power relations and perceptions of desirability (Mackey, 1999; Hedetoft, 2002; Arat-Koc, 2005; Sharma, 2006). National imaginations of “us” deploy discourses of otherness wherein racialized migrants’ differences serve to deny them acceptance (Thobani, 2007; Sharma, 2006; Fekete, 2004).

While the socio-political realities of the “destination” nation are relevant to the quality of belonging experienced by migrant populations, experiences of displacement are also essential in shaping migrants’ sense of belonging in their new (potential) “home”. Therefore, there is a need to examine how displaced populations make sense of their belonging against past experiences, current realities, and future aspirations. For this reason, the examination of Afghan immigrants’ experiences is useful in shedding light on how the coalescence of displacement from Afghanistan and construction as “others” in Canada shape this population’s reflections on home, identity and belonging. In fact, Afghan immigrants represent a particularly marginalized group around the world. More specifically, their experiences of war and persecution in their homeland, alongside their construction as potential terrorists in western countries place them in a precarious position. Yet, their experiences of migration and belonging have not been adequately explored nor examined. Afghan immigrants represent a newer wave of migrants to Canada because their mass

migration began in the 80s after the Soviet Invasion. For this reason, Afghans make up a small percentage of the Canadian population (Nader & Rastgar, 2018). As opposed to first or second-generation immigrants, generation 1.5 presents a unique opportunity to examine the complex relationship between migration, home, and developing a sense of belonging in spaces constructed by rigid national imaginations. Therefore, this research is interested in exploring how generation 1.5 Afghans make sense of their experiences of belonging in Canada.

The first chapter provides a brief socio-political history of Afghanistan to help readers understand the conditions in which the interviewees' migration took place. Then, I discuss the limitations of Canada's multiculturalism which continue to fuel discourses of Muslim "backwardness" and danger, especially since the advent of the "war on terror". Finally, I present the current research on the lived experiences of Muslim and Middle Eastern migrants in western countries, and how that shapes their identity and belonging.

In the second chapter, I outline the conceptual framework used to analyze my data. I introduce the concepts of exile, liminality, home, citizenship, national belonging and third space to analyze data. In the third chapter, I discuss how I used in-depth, semi-structured interviews to gather data on the lived realities of generation 1.5 Afghans. I demonstrate how the use of in-depth, semi-structured interviews allowed interviewees to provide narratives in their own words, and at their own pace. I also discuss how the use of inductive thematic coding allowed me to examine what belonging and home means for the interviewees.

Chapter four covers how the interviewees' and/or their family's displacement from Afghanistan due to war, and their need for a safe home makes Canada an ideal "home". Chapter four contextualizes the interviewees' desire to belong in Canada as it discusses their past experiences of persecution, displacement, discrimination and for some, lack of legal status against

the “perks” of having a Canadian citizenship and residence. In chapter five, I argue that the interviewees have an unsecured sense of belonging to Canada given their vulnerability and marginalization due to personal experiences of war and loss of home, but also given their new home continues to construct them as inferior and dangerous outsiders through discourses of otherness. I demonstrate how the interviewees attempt to reconstruct their “differences” in order to be perceived as more “white” while simultaneously attempting to educate white-Canadians on Afghan culture so as to overcome negative encounters with them. Finally, I demonstrate how the interviewees’ unsecured sense of belonging provides opportunities for them to creatively reconstruct the boundaries of belonging in Canada. In the conclusion, I outline potential directions for future research.

CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with providing a brief historical background on Afghanistan in order to contextualize the rise of Afghan migration. Then, I present the critiques of multiculturalism and the discourse of Muslim “danger” prevalent in Canada, and western countries in general. Next, I present the findings of research thus far on the lived experiences of Muslim and Middle Eastern persons in western countries, and the ways in which their experiences have shaped their identity formations and sense of belonging. Finally, I highlight some differences in terms of belonging found across generations of immigrants.

A Contextual Background on Afghanistan

Afghanistan, located in the heart of Asia, has numerous ethnic groups and nationalities such as the Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, and Uzbek. Afghanistan does not have a united national identity, rather Afghanistan is a “fragmental” society (Mousavi, 1998) where conflict between various ethnic groups have persisted throughout its history (Qeyum, 2012; Mousavi, 1998).¹ Of interest to this research is the more recent history covering the major events of the late 20th century. Afghanistan’s political instability began with the overthrowing of the last king, Zaher Shah, in 1973. Zaher Shah has been credited with the rapid development of country during the 60s as he brought about freedom of religion, press, and political assembly (Braakman, 2005). Zaher Shah consolidated a constitutional monarchy in 1964 and attempted to push the country gradually toward democracy. However, with the ban on political parties lifted, many radical Islamic and communist-oriented parties, such as the Soviet-oriented Democratic Party of the People of

¹ In fact, the name “Afghanistan” and the people “Afghans” actually highlights the oppression of other ethnic groups by the Pashtuns (i.e. Afghans); wherein formalizing the name of the country as Afghanistan legitimizes Pashtun domination and right to rule (Mousavi, 1998). Hence, the “Afghan” national identity has never been united as other ethnic groups have historically been constructed as less “Afghan”, and as lesser citizens lacking equal rights.

Afghanistan (DVPA) formed in the 60s. As tensions rose between the different parties, Daoud Khan, Zaher Shah's cousin, overthrew the king and proclaimed himself as the president of Afghanistan in 1973.

Both Daoud Khan and Zaher Shah had received foreign aid from the U.S.S.R. and the United States during their rule. While Zaher Shah was successful in keeping the country neutral, Daoud Khan appeared to be Soviet-oriented. However, after taking office, Daoud Khan's foreign and internal policies did not favor the U.S.S.R. and the DVPA's communist goals as he began removing pro-soviet public officials from office. Consequently, he was assassinated jointly by the two factions of the DVPA, known as the Khalq (the people) and Parcham (the flag). The assassination of Daoud Khan in 1978 pushed Afghanistan into a series of civil wars as different groups attempted to seize control.² The Soviet Invasion,³ rise of the Mujahedeen⁴ and Taliban,⁵ as well as the "war on terror"⁶ has led to the displacement of millions of Afghans (Braakman, 2005;

² After the death of Daoud Khan, the radical Marxist reforms of Afghanistan proved to be highly unpopular, especially as thousands of political prisoners were executed for opposing the communist regime backed by the U.S.S.R. (Braakman, 2005)

³ The Soviet Invasion took place in 1979 as the U.S.S.R. grew fearful of the rising anti-communist sentiment in Afghanistan. Between 1979-1989, the U.S.S.R. installed Soviet-loyal leaders in Afghanistan in order to keep the country communist (Braakman, 2005; Qeyum, 2012).

⁴ As a response to the Soviet Invasion, several Islamic guerrilla groups lead by different ethnic leaders formed the Mujahedeen. They successfully drove out the Soviets in 1989, and took control of the government in 1992 after they were able to capture the capital, Kabul (Braakman, 2005).

⁵ The Taliban formed in 1994 in Qandahar with the goal of enforcing the Sharia law in Afghanistan. With the capture of Kabul in 1996, the Taliban's reign intensified (Braakman, 2005).

⁶ The "war on terror" refers to the military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq as a result of the 9/11 attacks by the Taliban. Afghanistan was invaded in October 2001 by the United States and Taliban quickly retreated from the various regions. However, American military continues to be present in Afghanistan. By October 2018, over 38, 000 civilians have reportedly been killed in major war zones due to the "war on terror" in Afghanistan between American forces and terrorist groups (Crawford, 2018).

Nader & Rastgar, 2018). While the Taliban is not in power anymore, Afghanistan continues to experience numerous terrorist attacks from a variety of organizations including the Taliban.⁷

As power shifted between the various interest groups, those who were suspected of having supported the “enemy” were persecuted. For instance, during the years of the Soviet Invasion 1979-1989, thousands of Islamic leaders were subject to enforced disappearances and execution by the pro-Soviet Afghan government. When the Mujahedeen came to power between 1992-1996, those suspected of communist loyalties were persecuted (Braakman, 2005). Finally, when the Taliban seized control of the various regions of Afghanistan, anyone not abiding by the Sharia law was subject to brutal punishment including amputations, death by stoning and other forms of executions. Beyond targeting political enemies, each one of these interest groups have also targeted different ethnic groups. For instance, once the Soviet troops retreated in 1989, the various groups who banded together to defeat the U.S.S.R., turned against each other as each leader was representative of a different ethnic group (Braakman, 2005).

Decades of conflict and war has displaced millions of Afghans. While some have returned to Afghanistan, many have not as the end of conflict in Afghanistan does not appear to be near.⁸ Nader and Rastgar (2018) note that approximately six million Afghans have migrated from Afghanistan due to these events. Moreover, by 2017, Afghans were listed as the third largest refugee population in the world, with 2.5 million Afghans registered as refugees in a dozen countries (Amnesty International, 2017). There has also been a rising Afghan migration trend to Canada since the 80s. For instance, prior to the Soviet Invasion, there were only about 1,000

⁷ For instance, in 2017, there were 1,168 terrorist attacks that took the lives of 4,653 Afghans (Jamieson, 2017). In 2018, 1,776 terrorist attacks took place and 9,812 Afghans were killed as result of these attacks (Miller, 2019)

⁸ For instance, after the end of the Soviet Invasion, 1.6 million Afghans returned to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan (Braakman, 2005).

Afghans in Canada (Nader & Rastgar, 2018). Between the years 1981 and 1995, 10,000 Afghans sought asylum in Canada, and another 11,000 from 1996 to 2001 according to Nader and Rastgar (2018). According to the 2016 Canadian census, about 32,000 Afghans migrated to Canada between 2000 and 2016. As of 2016, there were about 86,000 Afghans living in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016). For these reasons, Afghans are a relatively new immigrant population in Canada.

The Socio-Political Landscape of Canada

Critiques of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism, at its core, has been argued to be about diversity and the protection of minority groups' rights (Ali, 2008). Canada's multiculturalism was seemingly strengthened when it became protected under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom* in 1982 and became an official policy in 1988 (Karim, 2002; Reitz, 2009; Winter, 2015). As noted by Berry (2013), the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1988) made commitments to cultural freedom and the promotion of diversity official while also recognizing that such values are central characteristics of Canadian identity. Multiculturalism, while a policy, is also meant to be a "normative framework for society-building and national identity" (Tastsoglou & Petrinioti, 2011, p. 176). Multiculturalism, then, should transcend beyond values and into actions fortified in policies as a means to better serve the needs and goals of minority communities (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013). This means that minorities should have equal opportunity and access to services and opportunities (Dion, Dion, & Banerjee, 2009) and the ability to participate in the development of future Canadian policies (Berry, 2013).

The history of multiculturalism in Canada tells a different story. Multiculturalism did not spontaneously occur out of a desire to be more inclusive; rather, it emerged in a time of tension between different ethnic groups and increased immigration. More specifically, the desire for political accommodation by the Québécois in the 60s alongside demands from first and second-

generation European immigrants for cultural rights, pushed Canada to employ multiculturalism as a way to appease these different groups (Winter, 2015). Moreover, multiculturalism does not actually reconfigure national imaginations of “us” (Thobani, 2007; Winter, 2015). This is the case because multiculturalism depends on the construction of an “authentic” national identity against the addition of racialized minorities (Harder & Zhyznomirska, 2012). For instance, Mackey (1999) argues that Indigenous, French-Canadian and immigrant cultures are presented as “colourful additions” to the dominant white culture. She further argues that minority “...cultures simply become ‘multicultural’ in relation to [the] unmarked, yet dominant, Anglo-Canadian core culture” (Mackey, 1999, p. 15). In this sense, boundaries of inclusion and the accompanying racialization of visible minorities occur as a way of solidifying a national identity that revolves around the idea of a white nation (Anderson, 1991; Mackey, 1999).

However, Canada continues to be constructed as an inclusive nation with ample minority-protecting policies (Harder & Zhyznomirska, 2012). Scholars argue that multiculturalism has given white-Canadians the ability to take pride in a Canadian identity that is “tolerant” of its minorities and treats them justly in comparison to the less tolerant Americans (Mackey, 1999; Thobani, 2007; Winter, 2015). Not only does multicultural tolerance mask power relations between the dominant group who chooses to tolerate, and minority groups who must seek acceptance (Hage, 1998), but it can also be retracted if there is “too much” difference (Mackey, 1999). For instance, Thobani (2007) notes how Canadian citizenship laws were used to keep Canada European well into the 20th century by managing racialized populations’ ability to enter Canada and seek a Canadian citizenship; thereby avoiding a sense of “too much” difference. In the same way, contemporary multiculturalism is about the management of differences, not about serving their needs or interests (Mackey, 1999; Winter, 2005). Thobani (2007) argues the

construction of Canada as tolerant minimizes and erases Canada's historically racist approach in managing minority populations, including the colonial violence committed against Indigenous populations. In the end, nationalism and white supremacy are maintained under the guise of multiculturalism and tolerance (Mackey, 1999; Winter, 2015; Wood & Gilbert, 2005; Thobani, 2007).

Whiteness then becomes a crucial marker of belonging in Canadian society. As Mackey (1999) states, "...whiteness refers to a 'set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed and invisible. The power of whiteness is embodied precisely in the way it becomes normative, in how it 'colonises the definition of normal'" (p. 34). Ajrouch and Jamal (2007) also argue that whiteness serves as the norm by which all other populations are judged and ranked. In fact, being white gives one the power to position oneself relationally to others; hence, affirming one's self-ascribed superiority while racializing others (Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007; Mackey, 1999). Hedetoft (2002) makes a similar argument by drawing on the inherent divisive nature of nationalism. National identities ultimately legitimize ideas of "us" and "them" while transforming concrete places such as states into imagined spaces (Hedetoft, 2002; Thobani, 2007). Additionally, while belonging is not inherently an issue of nationalism, a sense of belonging has mainly been organized through nationalism because national communities are built along ethnic/racialized lines (Hedetoft, 2002).

The racial hierarchy that exists even within multicultural Canada can be further noted through the construction of the evacuated Lebanese-Canadians as "citizens of convenience" in the summer of 2006 when conflict between Hezbollah and Israel escalated. Lebanese-Canadians who needed to be evacuated were argued to be lacking genuine attachment and belonging to Canada (Harder & Zhyznomirska, 2012). They were instead presented as "pseudo" Canadians who may

pose a risk to Canada's security instead of being seen as authentic Canadians. In fact, only those with sole Canadian citizenship in Lebanon were rescued. Those who had dual citizenship were not afforded protection by the Canadian government (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Hence, the value and potential of multiculturalism is significantly undermined in events where dual-citizens of undesirable nations are not equally protected as other Canadians. In the contemporary post-9/11 era, "national security" serves as a convincing justification for the denial of equal protection of Muslim Canadians (Nagra & Maurutto, 2016; Poynting & Perry, 2007; Razack, 2008).

Without equal status (regardless of Canadian citizenship) and protection in multicultural Canada, racialized minorities lack the power to dissent. Perry (2015) notes that the loyalty of Muslims to Canada is often put under inspection thereby sending a symbolic message that assimilation and support for the West and all its activities is in the best interest of Muslims who are seeking acceptance. Arat-Koc (2005) also argues that individuals who are able to claim membership with the "western" civilization via their ability to claim whiteness have the power of dissent even when their views are not aligned with mainstream standards. This is the case because they are conceptualized as truly belonging in white national spaces and are thereby recognized as legitimate political actors. By contrast, those who are defined as outsiders must show gratitude to their host-country and refrain from criticizing their host-country, particularly regarding its foreign policy or national identity (Arat-Koc, 2005; Ismael & Measor, 2003). Ahmed (2000) also notes that a lack of assimilation by minority populations is reconstructed as a "betrayal" of multiculturalism wherein minority populations are criticized for escaping responsibility from trying to become "us". In fact, national expectations of assimilation show that non-whiteness is never truly imagined as part of "us".

Contrary to official discourse and popular belief, multiculturalism does not actually allow racialized immigrants equal protection and recognition as Canadians. Rather, as Mackey (1999) argues, multiculturalism as a policy exists to manage the ethnic and cultural differences that exist in Canadian society. In fact, focusing on, and taking pride in “multiculturalism” and Canada as a “tolerant”, welcoming nation averts a social justice agenda (Bannerji, 2000) wherein minorities have a right to their culture but no meaningful access to power and resources (Razack, 1998).

Racialized Discourses of Muslim Danger and Inferiority

The shortcomings of multiculturalism are in part due to the persistence of divisive discourses. Scholars have highlighted the ways in which non-European immigrants are portrayed as inherently different by describing them as “extremists”, “hateful of the west”, “violent”, lacking tolerance and being “monoculture” (Thobani, 2007; Winter, 2015). Such representation of non-European immigrants legitimizes concerns relating to immigration and integration. Most relevant to this research is the “war on terror” discourse which gained traction after 9/11. Chen (2010) argues that the “war on terror” not only racializes Arabs and Muslims, but it also effectively alienates them from society. More specifically, no matter their legal status in western countries, the construction of Arabs and Muslims as “dangerous outsiders” legitimizes the revocation of their rights in the name of security. The cases of Maher Arar, Omar Khadr and the “Syrian Three” serve as extreme reminders of the extent to which Muslim Canadians’ rights may be undermined due to suspicions of terrorism (Roach, 2015; Whitaker, 2012).

Moreover, counter-terrorism initiatives are not only focused on identifying and remedying external threats, but there are significant initiatives directed at identifying and managing Canada’s “home-grown terrorists” (Nagra & Maurutto, 2016). Arat-Koc (2005) notes that the “war on terror” discourse has reconstructed individuals who do not “civilizationally” belong in the nation into

“potential suspects” at the very least, or “outright enemies” at the extreme. Similarly, Jackson (2005) argues that discourses of danger are utilized to determine who belongs in a nation and who does not; its divisive nature fuels ideas regarding insiders and outsiders. In this regard, while all Muslim Canadians may be Canadian citizens, they are not perceived to be part of the dominant culture.

The racial profiling of Muslims and those from Middle Eastern or Muslim South-Asian countries have become rampant in all matters of national security (Bahdi, 2003; Boccabella, 2003; Chen 2010; Fiala, 2003). For instance, many scholars have noted the phenomenon “flying while Brown” or “flying while Muslim” and draw parallels between the racial profiling of African-Americans in the United States and the racial profiling of “Middle-Eastern-looking-people” when they cross borders (Chen, 2010; Barkdull et al., 2011). Muslim persons are subjected to a series of invasive questions pertaining to their nationality and religion at land crossings and airports (Nagra & Maurutto, 2016; Marvasti, 2006), because they are viewed as a greater security risk (Bahdi, 2003; Bocabella, 2003). Experiences such as these has led individuals to recognize themselves as second-class citizens who have lesser rights in terms of mobility, safety, and security (Nagra & Maurutto, 2016). Indeed, Boccabella (2003) argues that the profiling of Arab and Muslim persons not only threatens their civil liberties but also stigmatizes the entire community, thereby denying them full membership in society. Kazemipur (2014) concurs by arguing that the unequal treatment of Muslims has become the “exception” as opposed to the rule, thereby assigning blame to Muslim communities for being inherently “different” and “dangerous”. These phenomena are understood as consequences of the racialized ideologies embedded in the “war on terror” (Barkdull et al., 2011; Chen, 2010).

Scholars like Jamil (2016) note how the securitization of Muslims through official discourse goes beyond state practices and seeps into everyday actions by lay citizens. Nationals feel empowered to act on their prejudice through violence (Chen, 2010) or through surveillance of Muslim communities (Thobani, 2004; Mythen & Walklate, 2006). In fact, Thobani (2004) argues that “vigilance against those who ‘look’ Muslim has become the most urgent civic duty” (p. 599) as the state “inscribes suspicion” on the bodies of Muslims and those who “look” Muslim (p. 598). Likewise, Bahdi (2003) argues that discriminatory practices, such as racial profiling, allow nationals to express their own prejudices against the community and validate their belief that such communities do not belong in national spaces. Similarly, Abu El-Haj (2010) argues that divisive acts of “everyday nationalism” serve as “nation building”, and as mechanisms through which people can affirm their belonging and deny others’ belonging.

It is important to note that the construction of Muslim people as inferior and dangerous did not begin with the “war on terror”, instead these ideas existed in the West prior to 9/11 (Jamil, 2016). Much of the racialization of Muslim, and specifically Arab communities, were due to the West’s, particularly the United States’ foreign policy regarding the Middle East (Jackson, 2007; Razack, 2008; Wingfield, 2006). The pace at which Muslims, Arabs, and South-Asians became targets of hate crime and discrimination immediately after 9/11 shows their historical construction as dangerous outsiders and as legitimate targets of violence (Abu El-Haj, 2010). In fact, many scholars point to the immediate increase of Anti-Muslim and Anti-Arab sentiment in western countries following 9/11 and many have also noted an increase in hate crime directed at these populations (Amer & Hovey, 2012; Barkdull et al., 2011; Helly, 2004; Poynting & Perry, 2007; Schildkraut, 2009). For instance, 66% of Americans reported support for racial profiling of Middle Eastern individuals in combating terrorism (Schildkraut, 2009). Indeed, scholars note that racial

profiling has become an accepted effective counter-terrorism approach (Fiala, 2003; Mythen & Walklate, 2006). Likewise, the Canadian Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) in 2008 found that 36% of Canada's residents view Muslim communities negatively (Barkdull et al., 2011). Similarly, Poynting and Perry (2007) refer to data collected by CAIR-CAN which found that within 12 months of 9/11, 56% of the respondents were subjected to some sort of "Anti-Muslim incident". In terms of discrimination in the work field, Helly (2004) notes that after 9/11, several employers refused to hire those with Arab nationality.

At its core, the construction of the Middle Eastern and the Muslim world as "backward" occurs within a "clash of civilizations" ideology. Many scholars have used this term to describe the ways in which the West is presented as modern and superior in comparison to the violent and inferior Middle East (Abu El-Haj, 2010; Arat-Koc, 2005; Ismael & Measor, 2003; Jackson, 2005, Razack, 2007; Winter, 2011). The prevalence of beliefs surrounding Middle Eastern and Muslim immigrants as being suspicious outsiders can be noted from several statements and initiatives made by the Harper government. One such initiative was the attempt to make the unveiling of Muslim women mandatory during the citizenship oath ceremony (Winter, 2014). Another scholar draws attention to the official discourse by the Harper government which named "Islamic extremism" as the "leading threat" to Canada's national security (Jamil, 2016).

Scholars argue that Muslims are presented as the group who is most in need of "cultural compliance" given the frequent associations of Muslim immigrants to female genital mutilation, honour killings and forced arranged marriages (Joppke, 2004; Khosravi, 2012; Winter, 2014).⁹ In

⁹ For instance, the Canadian website on the expectations of newcomers and rights entitled as Canadian citizens notes the following: "Canada's openness and generosity do not extend to barbaric cultural practices that tolerate spousal abuse, 'honour killings,' female genital mutilation, forced marriage or other gender-based violence" (Government of Canada, 2016). The focus on these issues – which are typically associated to Muslim communities – and the use of the word "barbaric" reinforces the idea Muslim communities are oppressive of women and will have difficult "complying" with Canadian values.

simpler words, the “war on terror” and previous orientalist discourses builds on the belief that civilization (the West) is at war with barbarism (Muslim world) (Altwaiji, 2014; Ismael & Measor, 2003; Jackson, 2005; Razack, 2005). These ideas help maintain western cultural superiority and national identity while simultaneously “othering” those of Middle Eastern background (Jackson, 2005; Sharma, 2006). It is precisely here that the Middle East becomes constructed as a threat to the prosperity of the West (Thobani, 2007; Jamil, 2016; Arat-Koc, 2005); thereby fueling the securitization of Muslims in the West (Jamil, 2016; Bahdi, 2003; Razack, 2008).

Scholars have also noted how media and politicians have associated terrorism with Islam through the use words such as “Islamic terrorism” (Abu El-Haj, 2010; Fekete, 2004; Jackson, 2007). Perry (2015) argues that the political discourse legitimizes negative misconceptions held about Muslim and Middle Eastern communities. This occurs because the danger of “Islamic terrorism” has been constructed as one that threatens “Canadian society” (Sharma, 2006). Thus, rising anti-Muslim and anti-Arab sentiment has refueled the debate against multiculturalism (Razack, 2008; Wong, 2008). For instance, Fekete (2004) argues that 9/11 and the subsequent terrorist events in western countries have been used by right-wing multiculturalism critics to argue that multicultural tolerance and celebration of diversity encourages fragmentation and excuses minorities from assimilating. In fact, scholars have noted how right-wing critics of multiculturalism argue that it provides a platform for Muslim extremists to act contrary to “Canadian” values (McCoy, Kirova & Knight, 2016; Kazemipur, 2014; Wong & Simon, 2009).

Muslim and Middle Eastern Experiences

Experiences of Forced Assimilation

While research has stated that religion does not play a major role in the level of success achieved in the integration process (Reitz, Banerjee, Phan & Thompson, 2009), various scholars

have noted the difficulties experienced by Muslim citizens and immigrants living in western countries in a post-9/11 world (Khosravi, 2012; Marvasti, 2006; Nagra, 2017; Razack, 2008). In fact, the literature demonstrates that Muslim immigrants do not feel as accepted as European immigrants in their host-countries. Not surprisingly, studies have shown that Muslim and Middle Eastern immigrants may downplay their Muslim or Arab identity in order to blend in with the dominant culture with more ease. Scholars argue that to the western world, being “Arab” and being “Muslim” have become synonymous (Razack, 2008; Bahdi, 2003; Gerhauser, 2013); consequently, both are recognized as members of the “barbaric” “other”. Yet we know that Muslims are found across the globe, and not all Arabs are Muslims. Due to the conflation of both identities, anyone believed to be Muslim or Arab may feel pressures to display a more western identity in order to feel accepted.

Immigrants, in general, are differentiated from mainstream society and categorized as “not belonging” through their different ways of speaking, dressing, physical appearance, recreational activities and ethnically-marked names (Pennesi, 2016). Simonsen (2018) identifies the Islamic faith, having a non-white appearance, speaking with an accent as well as speaking foreign languages as criterion for exclusion in western societies. A darker-skin tone, typically brown skin tone, has been one of the most heavily used signifiers of followers of the Islamic faith (Mythen & Walklate, 2006; Nagra & Maurutto, 2016). Other times, extra features such as facial hair (Finn, 2011; Marvasti, 2006), certain cultural outfits (Finn, 2011; Perry, 2015), attending a Mosque (Perry, 2015), having a Muslim name or a “Muslim-sounding” name (Khosravi, 2012; Nagra & Maurutto, 2016) and although a misrecognition, the usage of a turban (Perry, 2015; Poynting & Perry, 2007) may be used to identify and recognize individuals as Muslims. For women, the most visible sign of their Muslim identity tends to be their hijab or niqab (Fikete, 2004; Hoodfar, 1993;

Perry, 2013; Marvasti, 2006). Also, irrespective of gender, people from certain countries – those with typically high Muslim populations – are also (mis)recognized as Muslims (Mythen & Walklate, 2006; Perry, 2015). Such visibility has increased their rates of victimization (Perry, 2015).

These markers of difference are important because nationals can use it to identify the “outsiders”. In fact, scholars note that identity and belonging (or lack thereof) not only emerge through the state apparatus but also emerge within power relations between “Canadian-Canadians” and racialized immigrants through their interactions (Kazemipur, 2014; Thobani, 2007). Experiences of discrimination have been noted to inhibit a sense of belonging (McCooy et al., 2016). Thus, the national gaze can provide incentive for Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim to engage in identity negotiations. In fact, various scholars including Marvasti (2006) and have described how different strategies are used by Muslim individuals to minimize challenges to their belonging, and to feel more comfortable in public spaces.

Participants of various studies have spoken about family members or friends who began dressing more “western” to avoid victimization or negative attention (Marvasti, 2006; Nagra & Maurutto). Some women have taken off their hijab to circumvent negative encounters (Perry, 2013); while some men have begun wearing jeans more often and shaving their facial hair (Marvasti, 2006). A difference in expressing identity through customary dressing and facial hair is especially prevalent at airports where Muslim individuals downplay their Muslimness in order to avoid “random” screening checks (Nagra & Maurutto, 2016). Moreover, while some women continued to wear their hijab, they selectively choose not to wear it while in airports in order to avoid delays occurring from “random” screening checks. Likewise, while some men continued to sport their facial hair, they chose to shave when travelling via airplane (Nagra & Maurutto, 2016).

Some women also changed the style of their hijab to make it appear more for style and less for religion. This can be understood as a way of dissociating oneself from Islam. One woman in particular speaks of using colourful hijabs in order to lessen the fear that comes with hijabs and its association with the “violent” Islamic religion (Nagra & Maurutto, 2016). Hence, Muslim communities may feel greater pressures to assimilate due to issues of comfort and security. This goes to show that while every citizen may be “equal” under the law, not all can exercise their rights or occupy national spaces with ease (Chen, 2010).

In Khosravi’s (2012) study, many immigrants from dominant Muslim countries changed their names into white names to avoid discrimination in the labour market, to protect their children and to avoid distress. Evidently, experiences of discrimination based on their religious and racial/ethnic membership forced many of them to attempt assimilation. Khosravi (2012) argues that changing one’s name is used as a way of “passing” – a strategy of coping with stigma. Likewise, Pennesi (2016) notes that immigrants change their names for reasons related to finding employment, avoiding having to explain where they are from or how their name is pronounced, desire to fit in at school and for institutional and administrative requirements.¹⁰ Pennesi (2016) notes that “unusual” names can be interpreted as not belonging. These experiences of pressured assimilation are fueled by the desire to avoid labels such as “outsider” which make individuals vulnerable to exclusion and discrimination (Pennesi, 2016). Marvasti (2006) concurs by arguing that people change their Muslim names into American ones with the hopes of achieving the status and label of a national agent.

¹⁰ Pennesi (2016) argues that migrants’ names are changed to fit within their host-country’s language and norms. For instance, people with single names have to adopt a surname, long names are truncated to fit on documents, and names become written in a different alphabet changing the pronunciation. These changes distance migrants’ names from their ethnic origins (p. 51).

Muslim individuals distance themselves from a Muslim identity accordingly depending on the situation (Barkdull et al., 2011). As such, identity negotiation takes place in all social spaces including at work with colleagues and (potential) employers (Khosravi, 2012; Marvasti, 2006), outside in the public with strangers (Nagra & Maurutto, 2016; Perry, 2013; Perry, 2015), in congregation with other fellow Muslims (O'Brien, 2011), and during border crossings (Nagra & Maurutto, 2016; Sharma, 2006). One such way is avoiding conversations regarding one's nationality (Marvasti, 2006; Tabibi, 2012). Evidently, Muslim identities are sometimes softened to avoid rejection in western societies. Khosravi (2012) and Tabibi (2012) note how some individuals distanced themselves from the "problematic" Muslims or immigrants by either assimilating or differentiating between themselves and the "problematic" communities. In this way, some immigrants distance themselves from the negative stereotypes attached to their racial/ethnic or religious community by demonstrating they are part of mainstream society. These distancing practices are also noted in Berry and Hou's (2017) research on the acculturation routes of immigrants. They note that the desire to distance oneself or remain attached to one's cultural heritage is shaped by experiences of discrimination.

Identity negotiations and expressions are informed by discourses of "good" and "bad" Muslimhood. Multiculturalism has given labels to individuals capable and willing to integrate into the dominant white, Christian culture as "good" multicultural subjects and those who lack the social and cultural capital for integration as "bad" multicultural subject (Winter, 2015). However, even "good" multicultural subjects cannot escape the suspicion that they *may* one day betray "Canadian" values (Winter, 2015). For instance, Simonsen (2018) notes that participants of her study avoided the label of "bad" immigrant by not speaking Arabic in public since Arab communities are constructed as potential security threats. Macklin and Crepeau (2010) argue that

Muslims are likely to be viewed as “bad citizens” because of their “...real or imputed religious and political beliefs and practices” since 9/11 (p. 19-20). By extension, the terms “good Muslim” and “bad Muslim” have been used to describe how accepting Muslim individuals are of western foreign policy (Kassimeris & Jackson, 2011) and how integrated they are within western norms and standards (Winter, 2015). Hence, Muslim immigrants are pressured to assimilate and dissociate from their faith and culture in order to not appear as a “bad” immigrant, Muslim or multicultural subject.

Berry and Hou (2017) identify four different routes of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Acculturation refers “to the ways in which immigrants, and subsequent generations, change culturally and psychologically in order to adapt to living with the multiple cultural groups that are present in the larger society” (Berry & Hou, 2017, p. 29-30). Integration refers to mixing with mainstream society whilst keeping one’s heritage culture and identity. Assimilation, on the other hand, refers to the abandonment of one’s heritage culture and identity for that of the dominant culture. Separation refers to the distancing of oneself from the dominant culture and keeping only with one’s own heritage culture. Finally, marginalization occurs when an individual has no desire to be part of neither their heritage culture and identity nor the dominant culture. Berry and Hou (2017) found that discrimination was reported to be higher amongst those who adopted a separation strategy. However, contrary to the findings of other scholars who note that immigrants assimilate in order to avoid future racist encounters (Khosravi, 2012; Wong & Simon; 2009; Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007), Berry and Hou (2019) note that immigrants are more likely to want to integrate or assimilate if they experience lower levels of discrimination.

The term “reactive identity” or “reactive bonding” has been used to explain the choice of individuals to stick with members of their own ethnic background after experiencing a series of discriminatory practices at the hands of the state or the majority (Berry & Hou, 2017; Dion et al., 2009). Reitz, Banerjee, Phan, and Thompson (2009) also argue that successful integration is weakened by the “visible minority” label since being a “visible minority” is interpreted as being different than “Canadian”. Hence, they are less likely to report a Canadian identity than white immigrants. Likewise, Thobani (2007) argues that labels such as “newcomer”, “immigrant”, or “visible minority” demonstrate a difference between “Canadians” and others. Importantly, acculturation strategies heavily influence one’s psychological wellbeing as it shapes their ability to claim genuine belonging to their country of settlement (Berry & Hou, 2017).

Implications on a Sense of Belonging Across Generations

Migration studies have noted that immigrants have a complex understanding of home because they find themselves connected to multiple spaces through social ties, memories, daily life and desire for future (Liu, 2014; Graham & Khosravi, 1997; Taylor, 2013; Constable, 1999). These studies include the experiences of Chinese migrants in New Zealand, Mexicans in the United States, Persians in Sweden, and Pakistani and Indians in the United Kingdom. All these studies highlight the ambiguous sense of home experienced by these populations, wherein “home” is not clear-cut for them given their experiences of different environments and cultures. By extension of an ambiguous sense of home, migrants may have a fractured sense of belonging, or belonging grounded in multiple countries (Braakman, 2005; Liu, 2014; Taylor, 2013). This is made even more complicated when we take into consideration discriminatory or racist experiences, making migrants feel unaccepted by the dominant population. In fact, scholars agree that a sense of belonging decreases as a result of experiencing discrimination (Berry & Hou, 2017; Berry,

Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Wong & Simon, 2009). Banting and Soroka (2012) note that a sense of belonging captures two interconnected feelings: a sense of attachment to the country and feelings of acceptance by the majority.

Racist encounters and pressures to assimilate impede Muslim and Middle Eastern immigrants from feeling a deep sense of belonging in their host-country. Studies have shown how their experiences of discrimination or rejection in their host-country has made them feel like outsiders. For instance, Nagra (2017) notes that many Muslims growing up in Canada felt like outsiders as a result of their interactions with “Canadian-Canadians”. Likewise, McCoy et al (2016) note how some participants in their study could not feel a sense of belonging in Canada because they did not feel accepted by the general population despite being “good” citizens. One implication of this racialization is the greater occurrence of anxiety and depression among Arab-Americans than other Americans in the United States (Amer & Hovey, 2012).

Tiflati’s (2017) research shows that while facing some difficulty in reconciling their Muslim and Canadian identity, the second-generation Arab immigrants participating in their study generally felt a sense of belonging to Canada. Tiflati (2017) argues that the participants felt a greater sense of belonging to Canada than their home-country because they envision Canada as superior to their home-country where there is a perception of “moral decay”. Additionally, the participants attributed their ability to claim belonging to Canada’s multicultural reputation and official policy. Thus, not only did the participants want to distance themselves from the alleged inferior nation, but they also saw themselves as belonging because of multiculturalism. Tiflati’s (2017) findings are contrary to what the literature has thus far suggested; nonetheless, it is relevant given that immigrants from the Middle East – whether first or second-generation – are not homogenous groups.

Simonsen (2018) notes that participants in their study felt a general stronger connection to their country of settlement but did not feel belonging with the nationals. While, the second-generation Muslim participants in this study were able to feel safe and see their future in Denmark, they did not feel accepted by the majority (Simonsen, 2018). Evidently, they felt like they belonged *in* Denmark without feeling like they belong *with* Danish people. The inability to feel a sense of belonging *with* and be part of the “us” had much to do with their awareness of Middle Eastern communities being perceived as outsiders and as possible terrorists. Simonsen (2018) demonstrates that belonging *in* Denmark meant that the participants also felt at-home.

As Ali (2008) notes, research has indicated that many children of immigrant parents from non-European countries do not feel as part of mainstream society. It has been hypothesized that second-generation immigrants see their differential life chances from the dominant groups as forms of discrimination and racism precisely because they have comparable language skills and educational attainments (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). Indeed, various scholars argue that first and second-generation immigrants view discrimination differently. Whereas first-generation immigrants are grateful to merely live in Canada, second-generation immigrants desire and expect the same rights as any other Canadian (Ali, 2008). The difference in their expectations is due to their differing frame of reference; while first-generation immigrants compare their life in Canada with their life in their home-country, second-generation immigrants compare their life with other native-born Canadians (Reitz & Banerjee, 2009).

Reitz and Banerjee’s (2009) research also indicates that a sense of belonging to Canada is strongest amongst first-generation immigrants (even more so than white nationals). Second-generation racialized immigrants report less sense of belonging than first-generation *and* white individuals. This is an interesting finding given that first-generation white immigrants feel almost

as much belonging as the majority with the small gap disappearing in the next generation (Banting & Soroka, 2012). The decline in sense of belonging between first-generation and second-generation immigrants is greatest for Muslims (Wong & Simon, 2009). Studies have found that Muslim immigrant youth are less likely to report a sense of belonging than their non-Muslim counterparts (Berry et al., 2006; Wong & Simon, 2009). In fact, being Christian was noted to make claims of legitimate belonging easier (Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007; Hage, 1998; Winter, 2015). Kazemipur (2014) suggests that a lack of sense of belonging has to do with the rising Islamophobia in the post-9/11 era. Indeed, the focus on the “Muslim problem” has gained much traction after several terrorist incidents have taken place in the Western world (Reitz et al., 2009; Wong & Simon, 2009).

Ali (2008) argues that second-generation youth become skeptical of multiculturalism once they leave their ethnically diverse neighbourhoods and find themselves discriminated against in wider society. Ali (2008) notes that ethnic identification serves “...as a tool for othering groups of people and denying them fair access to societal resources ...” (p. 94). Such exclusion has been argued to impede the emergence of a sense of belonging. Berry et al. (2006) have also found that those who reside and grow up in homogenous neighbourhoods are less likely to claim “national” identities and more likely to be found in the separation strategy. Hence, one’s neighbourhood and its demographics plays a role in one’s acculturation strategy and one’s ability to claim national belonging. On the other hand, a study on second-generation Christian Lebanese immigrants in Canada found that they generally felt a sense of belonging in Canada as adults but felt like outsiders in school where their differences impeded a sense of belonging (Tastsoglou & Petrinioti, 2011).

Interestingly, Reitz and Banerjee (2009) as well as Aptekar (2016) have found that people who migrated to Canada as children are less likely to feel Canadian after acquiring their

citizenship. Hence, a Canadian citizenship does not necessarily evoke feelings of belonging and attachment to Canada as one would imagine. Some scholars have suggested that a European ancestry serves as determining factor of being able to claim belonging (Dion & Phan, 2009). As such, Reitz and Banerjee (2009) have found that visible minorities are less likely than European immigrants to identify as Canadian. Ajrouch and Jamal's study (2007) also found whiteness to be a predictor of claiming national identity.

The literature on migration has attempted to identify the factors which strengthen a sense of belonging, as well as factors which limit or fuel integration. These factors have included age, gender, level of education acquired in Canada and the socio-economic status of one's family. For instance, women and younger individuals are less likely to report a sense of belonging (Banting & Soroka, 2012; Wong, 2007), as well as those who have acquired higher education (Wong, 2007). On the other hand, a higher socio-economic is correlated with a stronger sense of belonging (Berry et al., 2006). Relationship to one's homeland has also been examined in studies of belonging and identity. For instance, a study on Afghan immigrants in Germany examined their experiences of settlement, displacement, and desire for belonging. Braakman's (2005) study notes that Afghan immigrants did not fully belong with Afghan or German culture, but they had a stronger desire to build their lives in Germany for practical reasons. Braakman (2005) also notes that many Afghan immigrants no longer saw Afghanistan as home because of their experiences of persecution and inability to see themselves as politically aligned with the state. Finally, the literature has focused on the experiences of first-generation and second-generation immigrations, both separately and together.

As the literature has shown, first-generation immigrants tend to express greater level of belonging than second-generation immigrants; however, little is known on the experiences of

generation 1.5. Generation 1.5 refers to individuals who migrated during childhood or adolescence. While there is no consensus on the specific age range, Rumbaut and Rumbaut (1976) created the term to refer to children who migrated between the ages of six and twelve. Other researchers have stretched the age range anywhere from four to fourteen. Generation 1.5 is argued to have different adaptation processes given their physical and psychological development, socialization processes and feelings toward homeland than individuals who immigrated during their teenage years (Robles-Llana, 2018). Generation 1.5 is characterized by their position of liminality which is described as the feeling of “in-betweenness” where they are part of two realities but do not fully belong to either (Robles-Llana, 2018; Wang & Collins, 2016). These particularities may shed light on potentially different experiences of the migrant population, and their understandings of belonging and identity. Therefore, Middle Eastern generation 1.5 immigrants, and more specifically, Afghan generation 1.5 immigrants, represent a population whose experiences have not been given any particular attention as they have typically been included within the umbrella of first-generation immigrants.

Conclusion

This research is interested in exploring the gap in the literature on generation 1.5's experiences of belonging. Even though Afghans are one of the largest refugee populations in the world, there has been little research done on their experiences of displacement, belonging and identity formation in their host-countries. Generation 1.5 Afghans are particularly interesting to study given the fact that they are generally a newer population of immigrants in Canada and have migrated increasingly during an era of heightened anxieties of not only the “other” but the “dangerous, Muslim other”. Generation 1.5 Afghans represent a vulnerable population who have not only been displaced from their homeland due to war, but are also targets of discourses that

constitute them as dangerous and potential terrorists rendering their citizenship second-class wherein their rights/citizenship may be undermined/revoked in the name of national security. Thus, an examination of Afghan experiences is likely to shed further insight on the complexities of belonging and understanding of Canadian national identity for displaced and racialized populations.

Questions of belonging and identity are also perhaps even more complex for individuals who migrated to Canada as children since they carry an in-betweenness status, facing unique challenges related to living in Canada and feeling Canadian. As stated earlier, research has indicated that generation 1.5 is likely to experience less belonging in their country of settlement (Ali, 2008). As such, this research is interested in exploring how generation 1.5 Afghans make sense of their belonging in Canada. Thus, this research is interested in understanding the meanings of “home” and identity for this population, and what shapes their sense of belonging. Through examining the experiences of generation 1.5 Afghans in the “multicultural” post-9/11 Canada, I am hoping to uncover how belonging is experienced by those likely facing contradictory pressures (from mainstream society and one’s family) pertaining to integration and identity. Evidently, the experiences of this population are likely to provide further insight on how belonging is negotiated by racialized communities in Canada.

CHAPTER II: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The concepts of home, liminality, citizenship, national belonging and third space are useful in examining generation 1.5 Afghans' sense of belonging, identity, social relations and how their relationship to Canada may be contested and/or strengthened. Firstly, the concept of home posits that connections to spaces and people are instrumental in feeling comfortable within a specific physical space and may produce experiences of grounding, liminality or exile following migration. The concept of legal citizenship provides us with the tools to analyze belonging in terms of formal recognition by the state as opposed to psychological citizenship, which refers to a sense of belonging dependent upon feeling claimed by the dominant population. Finally, the concept of third space introduces the notion of hybrid and political identities and their role in resisting hegemonic practices and redefines understandings of what it means to be "Canadian".

Leaving Home: Exile, Liminality and Homemaking

Exile refers to the relationship one has to their host-country as well as their homeland following displacement (Allatson & McCormack, 2008). Those in exile desire to go back to their homeland where they feel they truly belong but their inability to go back creates a rupture in their sense of being and a misalignment in their new environment. In fact, Said (2000) describes exile as the "unhealable rift between a human being and a native place" (p. 173). Being in exile means these individuals are unable to reconcile their cultural identity with their physical displacement in a new environment. Part of this inability has to do with their perception of being seen as the "other" who is not afforded acceptance "culturally, economically, politically and socially" (Colona & Grenier, 2010, p. 47). Thus, those who feel exiled identify with their homeland and remain attached to their past as they struggle to reclaim it. Importantly, memory and exile are deeply interconnected as memory shapes how exiled individuals see their future (Said, 2000, p. xxxv).

Said (2000) argues that exiled individuals always feel “out of place” no matter how successful they may be in their new environment. Feeling “out of place” arises from feeling different and having memories of their homeland; thereby producing a sense of in-betweenness. Eglaja-Kristone (2015) notes that individuals experiencing a sense of in-betweenness are unable to “...align him/herself with a definitive state of belonging” (p. 150). According to Said, this inability creates a distraught psychic relationship to home (Allatson & McCormack, 2008, p. 9) wherein individuals are neither detached from their homeland nor fully at-home in their new environment (Colona & Grenier, 2010; Eglaja-Kristone, 2015). Feelings of disconnect arise from being situated within two, sometimes multiple, societies characterized by different geography, culture, language or politics (Colona & Grenier, 2010). Therefore, these individuals remain in a state of shifting identities as they attempt to make sense of the different cultural identities presented to them and experienced by them (Kalau, 2009). This ambiguous in-betweenness is known as liminality, a state of transition without end in sight that shapes the identities developed and refined by those situated within it (Kalau, 2009; Colona & Grenier, 2010). Thus, “exile is never the state of being satisfied, placid, or secure” (Said, 2000, p. 186).

The exilic experience speaks mostly to individuals who have memories of their history in their homeland or has maintained the quality of their bond with the country through stories passed on from their older family members. Taylor (2013) and others have noted how the “myth of return” does not apply to all migrant populations given the difference in their perception of “home”. Generation 1.5 immigrants are not likely to remember much from their homeland given their predominant socialization in their host-country, especially as the duration of their residence in their host-country increases. Therefore, this population is likely to find themselves in a more ambiguous placement given their lack of history in their homeland and their perception of being unaccepted

in their host-country. Without a home to go back to, or to long for, generation 1.5 immigrants find themselves homeless.

While liminality has thus far been described as a sense of in-betweenness when migrants are in a state of transition due to their experiences of multiple geographies, language and culture, liminality in the context of migration has also focused on the ways in which migrants occupy a structural liminal position within nation-states. Liminality, first used by Van Gennep, was further developed by Victor Turner (1967) as a state of transition wherein the subject has no structural reality, and is therefore “...withdrawn ... from the values, norms, sentiments and techniques associated with those positions” (p. 240). Given the fact that subjects in liminality are “transitional beings” who are neither “there” nor “here”, they have been constructed as “polluters” who pose a danger not only to themselves but to those around them as well, especially because of the lack of certainty of the future in liminality (Douglas, 1966; Turner, 1997).

In the case of refugees and migration, the transgression of borders and failure to abide by the “correct mode of belonging” produces refugees as subjects in liminality because they do not fall within the “national order of things” (Haddad, 2003; Malkki, 1995). The lack of a “fixed” or “stationary” existence is perceived as polluting because refugees not only challenge the sovereignty of nation-states through their mobility, but are also perceived to be dangerous because they can potentially change the national make-up of the nation-state they are seeking refuge in (Haddad 2003; Haddad 2007). Thus, migration may produce an internal sense of in-betweenness which can be exacerbated by the structural liminality created by nation-states through their insistence on territorially “fixed” existence as the legitimate mode of belonging. Internal feelings of in-betweenness, and external categorization as “others” shape the ways in which migrants experience spaces and attach meanings to spaces.

Scholars including Gallegos (2019) and Yuval-Davis (2011) note that home is intricately connected to a sense of security, belonging and familiarity; whereas Liu (2014) notes how it is central to identity construction. Within this context, home has increasingly been constructed as a symbolic space rather than merely a physical space (Simonsen, 2018). For instance, Liu (2014) draws on the literature wherein previous scholars have begun using home to refer to an entity that goes beyond the physical location of one's dwelling. Numerous scholars have argued that factors such as familiarity, social ties, family relations, comfort, and safety are deeply connected to a "sense of at-home" (Taylor, 2013; Lam & Yeo, 2004; Tucker, 1994; Gallegos, 2019). Home as a symbolic space serves as an "...affective metaphor for place as a site of belonging" (Ho & Kisson, 2012, p. 298). As Kisson (2006) argues, when affective indicators relating to identity, belonging and social links become attached to a specific space, it becomes known and felt as one's *home*.

More specifically, a sense of at-home arises from "... the ability – on a consistent basis – to let down one's guard and simply be who one is" (Gallegos, 2019, p. 227). This entails the ability to feel safe when using the space around them without hesitation (Gallegos, 2019). Likewise, Tucker (1994) argues that "home is where we could or can be ourselves, feel at ease, secure, able to express ourselves freely and fully..." (p. 184). According to Simonsen (2018), "national belonging" is particularly important precisely because it is what gives individuals *the* sense of security and familiarity as well as ability to see themselves as part of the "us" (Simonsen, 2018). This comfort and sense of at-home is arguably more difficult for migrant populations, especially when they are constructed as "others" through dominant discourses. In fact, Simonsen (2018) differentiates between belonging *in* and belonging *with* for immigrants who "...find themselves between attachment and othering" (p. 120). In this sense, individuals may call their host-country home but not feel accepted by the dominant population. Therefore, while connected to identity,

feeling at-home “... involves ideas of connection and embeddedness related to the experience of being part of a bigger community” (Simonson, 2018, p. 120).

For these reasons, scholars writing on migrants have increasingly drawn attention to the fluidity of home by focusing on it as a process, rather than a fixed space. For instance, Taylor (2013) argues that feeling at-home is a process that takes place over time and can diminish as various attachments are weakened. Likewise, for Boccagni (2017), home is “... a matter of search, hence as an open-ended and possibly unaccomplished process, rather than as a fixed and predetermined state of things” (p. xxiv). Therefore, home is subject to reconstruction and relocation for migrant populations (Feng and Breitung, 2017) through homemaking initiatives (Kellet & Moore, 2003; Boccagni, 2017). For instance, homemaking can entail strengthening one’s personal security and emotional commitment in their new environment (Liu, 2014). Likewise, Brun and Fabos (2015) notes how refugees engage in homemaking by attempting to “...recreate familiarity, improve their material conditions and imagine a better future” (p. 10) thereby achieving some level of control and security in their lives (p. 14). In fact, Taylor (2013) describes homemaking as an on-going project that requires “human labour”. Similarly, Jacobson (2010) argues that “feeling-at-home” is never a completed “project” as we continuously work to feel more at-ease with being ourselves in our surroundings.

Homemaking, then, can entail some level of conscious integration as individuals attempt to strengthen their social ties to their host-country. For instance, Gallegos (2019) notes how immigrant populations may “make-do” with their new environment by attempting to familiarize themselves with “...the norms so as to better navigate them, survive them, and adopt, integrate, and modify some of them...” (p. 233). In fact, he argues that homemaking in many instances is simply “matters of daily living” (p. 228). Importantly, the ability to strengthen a sense of at-home

depends on the opportunities available to migrants as they engage in homemaking (Boccagni, 2017). However, “functional integration” alone cannot alone fuel a stronger sense of at-home. More specifically, contrary to popular belief that integration within the job market and acquisition of language skills will mean that the project of homemaking has concluded, social integration provides greater nuance as it captures deeper issues of belonging and identity (Kissoon, 2006). Thus, whereas functional integration measures factors such as language proficiency and political participation, social integration refers to the “quality” and “strength” of these social links as it shapes belonging and identity (Kissoon, 2006, p. 75).

This suggests that integration is more complex given its connection to homemaking. In other words, functional integration does not automatically create a sense of at-home, but rather plays a role in the homemaking journey as individuals become more familiar and absorbed within the fabric of the host society. In fact, Gallegos (2019) argues that “where a robust sense of belonging is not possible, they find ways to subsist, to build connections, to meet needs, and to occupy liminal spaces” (p. 233). Thus, the *ideal* home may never be achieved, but individuals continue in their attempts of making themselves more comfortable within national spaces.

Legal Citizenship and National Identity

Citizenship is commonly associated with various rights such as civil, social, political, cultural and the right to occupy space (Yuval-Davis, 2011). This citizenship is often referred to as legal citizenship. Having the status of citizen is meant to legitimize one’s place and role in the society one lives in. Thus, citizenship is meant to provide individuals with membership to the nation, in other words, being legally Canadian. However, other scholars including Aptekar (2016) argue that citizenship is not only related to one’s legal status, rights, political participation but also their sense of belonging to that nation. Therefore, there has been increasing attention paid to the

to the different levels of citizenship existing in modern nation-states. More specifically, differentiations are made between legal citizenship (also known as formal), which provides legal rights and protections, and full citizenship (also known as psychological citizenship), which refers to ability to have the same sense of entitlement, responsibility, collective identity and solidarity as other co-nationals (Ali, 2008, p. 103). Full citizenship implies that the individual *feels like* a citizen of that specific nation (Sindic, 2011). To be a citizen means having the ability to shape the country's future, and the ability to claim the nation as your own. In other words, being a legal citizen does not necessarily mean the individual has full citizenship (Ahmed, 2016).

Andreouli and Howart (2013) argue that citizenship represents the institutionalized equivalent of nations as imagined communities. To be a citizen one must adopt and develop the “natural essence of the national group” by “thinking like a national” and “acting like a national” (Andreouli & Howart, 2013, p. 366-367). By acquiring the national identity, individuals can be granted full citizenship and accepted as a legitimate member of the national community. Yet, the national identity of western states typically does not extend to Muslim and Middle Eastern individuals who have been constructed as inherently different than westerners (Razack, 2008) thereby justifying their unequal treatment and protection of their rights (Ahmed, 2016). In fact, Said (2000), like many other scholars, problematize the extent to which modern nation-states depend on constructed national identities which assume cultural superiority over others. Ultimately, these populations are excluded from attaining full citizenship through their construction as “others” despite having legal citizenship (Razack, 2008).

In other words, while legal citizenship aims to equalize all the citizens in a given country by guaranteeing them all the same rights and freedoms (Sindic, 2011), it fails at evoking acceptance from the dominant group and actually ensuring equal protection under the law (Razack, 2008;

Bahdi, 2003). For instance, dual citizens of Canada who have legal status in non-western countries may be seen as “pseudo” citizens.¹¹ Consequently, when legal citizenship is not accompanied with the correct national identity, it fails at securing acceptance from the national community. In fact, Arab and Muslim citizens of western countries have frequently reported feeling like second-class citizens limiting the extent to which they identify with and feel a sense of belonging in their host-country (Ahmed, 2016). Hence, while racialized citizens have legal citizenship, the extent to which they can claim and *feel* full citizenship needs greater examination.

National Belonging in a Multicultural Nation

Hage (1998) argues that one’s belonging in Australia is dependent on how the national space is imagined, who is believed to be a part of it and what it means to be an Australian as defined by the dominant culture. The national field¹² hosts an array of issues pertaining to belonging given that it is organized through exclusionary practices and understandings of who the “others” are. Consequently, Hage (1998) is interested in examining how various social actors compete to acquire and maintain the correct cultural capitals in order to strengthen their national belonging or to dominate the national field and “...assume a governmental position within it” (p. 57).

¹¹ In this regard, Harder and Zhyznomirska (2012) argue that Lebanese-Canadian dual citizens were presented as “pseudo” citizens when the government had to rescue them from Lebanon in the summer of 2006 when Israel and Hezbollah declared war on one another.

¹² For Bourdieu (1989), fields are “sites of struggle” wherein various social actors compete to acquire the correct capitals in order to position themselves higher in the field. Therefore, fields are inherently characterized by conflict and competition. Capitals are properties used to enhance one’s position within a field (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 30). Capitals include social, economic, cultural and symbolic. Of particular interest to Hage (1998) is the concept of cultural capital and symbolic capital. Bourdieu use the concept of cultural capital to refer to the “know how”, or correct way to present oneself. Symbolic capital refers to any capital that is recognized as valuable, or legitimate by the actors in that given field (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 22). Symbolic capital gives individuals “world-making” powers which allow them to create classifications of people (Weininger, 2005). Therefore, ideas of legitimacy and desirability are field-dependent given the fact that their value changes depending on the field. In Bourdieu’s (1989) analysis, fields are reproduced through social practices as sites of struggle and divisions wherein some are naturally viewed as more legitimate than others.

National belonging can occur on two levels: passive and governmental. Hage (1998) uses the term governmental belonging to describe people who have been accepted at a “communal, everyday level” by those from the dominant culture (p. 51). Hence, legal citizenship alone cannot achieve governmental belonging since citizenship is granted by the state while governmental belonging is granted by members of the dominant culture through everyday interactions. To have governmental belonging would mean that an individual’s belonging is not questioned in the national field. Put in simpler words, the individual is envisioned as part of the “us” by the dominant culture. Therefore, governmental belonging also gives individuals the power to “position” others within the national field, while also allowing them to express cultural entitlement (Hage, 1998).

On the other hand, Hage (1998) maintains that passive belonging refers to those cases where the individual is not part of the dominant culture but aims to accumulate the appropriate cultural capital in order to strengthen their national belonging in that specific nation-state. Importantly, Hage (1998) argues that the aim of accumulating the appropriate cultural capital is to be able to convert it into national belonging. As such, national belonging serves as symbolic capital that allows one to feel they are a *real* Australian while also being recognized as such by others (Hage, 1998).

Hage (1998) uses Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital to demonstrate how a specific accent, hair colour, having a white skin-tone, and having certain European background are all useful in claiming national belonging in Australia. The issue of visibility is an important one as the colour of one’s skin is the primary signifier of not belonging, or “looking out of place”. While, many migrants do not have white skin, they use other cultural capitals to negotiate their national belonging in western countries. Similarly, other scholars including Erel (2010) have taken a Bourdieusian approach in explaining how resources such as the correct accent can legitimize one’s

belonging. In fact, many scholars including Hall (1996) have argued that the creation of “us” depends on the construction of the “other”, and how we are different from *them*. Hence, the issue of cultural capital and symbolic capital are core to how “others” attempt to become “us”.

Hage (1998) argues that those with governmental belonging feel “nationally empowered” to enforce the will of the nation (i.e. engage in exclusionary practices to maintain the national order) by acting as spatial managers (p. 55). Here, the issue of space becomes relevant again as individuals with governmental belonging are able to enforce their perception of how national spaces should appear and who is *allowed* to occupy it. In this regard, issues of tolerance raise important questions on *who tolerates* and who is *subject to toleration*.

Hage (1998) problematizes the notion of tolerance by drawing attention to its implicit nationalist assumptions. In particular, toleration as a choice implies that those who are tolerating may choose to not tolerate because those who are not part of the dominant culture do not exist independently of the will and “tolerance” of those from the dominant culture; rather, “... they are allowed to exist” (Hage, 1998, p. 87). More specifically, he theorizes tolerance as a form of symbolic violence¹³ wherein the dominance of white Australians is reproduced and disguised as a form of equality (Hage, 1998, p. 87). At its core, Hage (1998) argues that tolerance is a national practice of inclusion in the same manner that racist violence is a nationalist practice of exclusion. Either way, a clear distinction exists in terms of individuals who *really* belong in Australia and those who simply *reside* in Australia. Without governmental belonging, individuals become vulnerable to racist violence inflicted by those who do have governmental belonging. Therefore,

¹³ Bourdieu (1996) uses the term symbolic violence to refer to instances where domination becomes misrecognized as natural. For instance, Hage (1998) argues that symbolic violence in the context of national belonging occurs when national actors are able to “...naturalize its aspirations and ideals into national aspirations and ideals” (p. 65). Likewise, Schubert (2002) notes that it is concerned with “categorization and dominance”. In this way, symbolic violence can encompass both racist encounters and racist practices of inclusion through “toleration” (Hage, 1998). Samuel (2013) notes that “symbolic violence is the experience of feeling out of place, anxious, awkward, shamed, stupid ...” (p. 402).

governmental belonging through cultural capital acquisition can serve as a protective factor against racist encounters.

Canada, like Australia, is a former British colony; both are settler societies that have adopted official multiculturalism (Mann, 2012). Yet as has been established by many scholars, multiculturalism is only promoted to the extent that non-white communities reduce their differences and “fit-in”. Hence, differences relevant to the national field are still upheld and used to mark the “others”. As such, the national identity of “being Canadian” relies heavily on one’s ability to claim whiteness (Sharma, 2006; Arat-Koc, 2005, Thobani, 2007). It is in this context that white nationalism as articulated by Hage (1998) becomes relevant to my research on Afghan immigrants. National belonging, either as governmental or passive, is dependent on the ability to gain acceptance from members of the dominant Canadian culture.

For the purpose of this thesis, Canada acts as a national field wherein people are either imagined as belonging or not belonging. Hence, national belonging, tolerance and reactions to “spatial-management” become relevant in the quest for belonging in Canada by those not historically imagined as “Canadian-Canadians”. These obstacles are emblematic of the shortcomings of legal citizenship and are likely to weaken individuals’ psychological citizenship as Canadians. Hage’s (1998) concepts are useful in understanding how individuals may choose to engage in homemaking initiatives. However, not all homemaking strategies might seek and/or result in inclusion to the current national identity. On the contrary, some homemaking strategies might willingly or unwillingly contest the national identity. The next section explores this through the concept of third space.

The Disruption of Hegemony in the Third Space

Homi Bhabha, a post-colonial scholar, developed the concept third space to understand how

cultural identities are formed. Scholars have used his work to analyze the emergence of new possibilities through liminal positions; these new “possibilities” refer to new identities and new ways of understanding national identity and belonging. Bhabha’s concept of third space can help illuminate the process by which individuals within liminal spaces may redefine hegemonic understandings of culture and reconfigure the boundaries of belonging. Third space is an important concept to utilize because it provides the context in which resistance of hegemonic practices occurs and focuses on the processes and consequences of resistance, regardless of whether resistance was intended or not by the actors in that space. Bhabha notes that “...hybridity is the ‘third space’ which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives...” (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211).

The third space is characterized by liminality, or by an “in-betweenness” (Fay & Haydon, 2017; Bolatagici, 2004; Tastsoglou & Petrinioti, 2011), but contrary to the first section where it sees it as a position migrants find themselves in, here liminality and in-betweenness is a social space which is interactive (Bhabha, 1996; Mythen, 2012) and political (English, 2004; Mythen, 2012). More specifically, Fay and Haydon (2017) note that the third space “...is the imaginary frontier at which two cultures meet...” (p. 43). Likewise, Tastsoglou and Petrinoiti (2011) describe it as the space “...where cultures overlap and new creative syntheses emerge” (p. 182). The third space is characterized by contradictions in discourses and practices (Fay & Haydon, 2017). These contradictions exist because of the overlapping of different cultures where actors do not “fully belong to an ‘either/or’ oppressive dichotomy” (Tastsoglou & Petrinioti, 2011, p. 182). More specifically, the third space is an “interstice” because it encourages differences without “imposed hierarchy” (Easthope, 1998, p. 341). Likewise, Mythen (2012) describes the third space as a interstitial space where oppressive structures and practices are challenged (p. 394-395). Thus, “the

third space becomes a space of contradiction, repetition, ambiguity ...” (Khan, 1998, p. 464). For this reason, the third space is argued to be productive of “hybridic identities” (Mythen, 2012). In fact, the third space is where identity is not fixed, but rather where it is constructed and re-constructed (English, 2004).

The in-betweenness experienced by migrants produces hybrid and fluid identities which “...give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy” (Bhabha, 1996, p. 56). These narrative forms are alternative ways of identifying and expressing oneself. Bhabha (1996) notes that these actors are not necessarily seeking “cultural supremacy or sovereignty” but are rather simply engaging in “strategies of hybridization”. These strategies occur through the rejection of binary cultures, and through the negotiation of constructed cultural differences. Hence, actors within the third space are able to use their in-between position to disrupt hegemonic practices and categorization of ideal and true cultures (Bhabha, 1996). This occurs through the formation of hybrid identities which have political implications (Mythen 2012; Tastsoglou & Petrinoiti, 2011; English, 2004).

In fact, Bhabha argues that “hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them” (Rutherford, 1990, p. 216). Therefore, through negotiations of the differences encountered, one’s identity is always subject to change and refinement. It is important to note that the new identities created are not simply the combination of the multiple cultural identities experienced but are new unique identities. For instance, Johnson (2008) notes how third space goes beyond the amalgamation of binary elements as it presents an option that is “... radically open to all possible relations” (p. 44). Likewise, English (2004) explicates that the “third space is where we negotiate identity and become neither this nor that but our own” (p. 100). This occurs

because actors within the third space do not neatly fit into pre-constructed identities. Finding themselves not fully grounded in either category allows actors to form fresh perspectives that are not already found within traditional cultural identities. Bhabha argues that “the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211). Thus, the third space is a political space of resistance where actors may challenge oppressive discourses and practices through identity formations and negotiations (English, 2004).

Mythen’s (2012) own study of British-Pakistani Muslims notes that this group makes sense of their liminal identities in numerous ways, such as through “...negotiating cultural ‘place’ between the traditions of Britain and Pakistan” as well as upholding their faith in Britain even though Britain is primarily a secular state (p. 395). Their positioning between cultures allows them to question and reflect where they truly stand. Hence, Mythen (2012) notes that British-Pakistani individuals are faced with numerous “identity choices” pertaining to their stance on religion, politics and tradition (p. 395). In other words, the participants of Mythen’s (2012) have to, on a regular basis, evaluate and reflect on their identity taking into consideration the pressures experienced in expressing a “British” identity while also being cognizant of familial pressures to express an “Islamic” identity. Third space and its shaping of hybrid identities explains how individuals can form “politically resistant identities” as noted by Mythen (2012).

Identity decisions are made through identity negotiation and engagement with hegemonic discourses on which cultural identity(ies) is desirable. Bhabha argues that we are always engaged in negotiations in any political opposition, whether we are aware of it or not (Rutherford, 1990). Thus, the concept of third space captures the shifting and refinement of identities through negotiations as individuals are presented with opportunities to “creatively participate” within the

new – third space. Through this interaction, individuals can re-define what it means to hold any cultural identity. Through new cultural expressions, these actors create new identities that chip at the binary “us” and “them”.

Importantly, “original” culture does not exist for Bhabha, rather he argues that culture is always subject to construction and reformation in the present moment (Khan, 1998). Likewise, English (2004) elucidates that “in the hybridized third space past and future are continuously intermingling; culture is being re/negotiated in the here and now” (p. 124). In fact, Bhabha has argued that cultures only constitute new identities in the sense that these cultures are “anterior”, not the “original” (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211). Likewise, Fay and Haydon (2017) note that Bhabha’s concept of hybridity posits that all identities are “unstable fractured, and hybrid” because there is no “pure” identity (p. 35). This is precisely the case given that cultural identity, whether on individual or community level, are all constructed through the experiences of and exposure to different cultures.

Third space and hybridity can help me understand how generation 1.5 Afghans form and express their identities. More specifically, it provides tools to understand the context, process and consequences of expressing alternative identities and how that may disrupt hegemonic practices related to belonging in Canada and what being it means to be “Canadian”. In fact, by examining how hybrid identities are formed and refined, we can better understand how actors engage with dominant discourses of belonging and foreignness. Thus, new identities and the quest for cultural capitals can illuminate how actors are able to challenge the dominant discourses on their ethnic and cultural background. Also, by living one’s life outside the pre-constructed boundaries, actors can express resistance against hegemonic discourses on what constitutes the national identity, thereby reconfiguring the boundaries of belonging.

Conclusion

Belonging is a complex process and a political project. It is deeply related to issues of home, identity, and acceptance. Therefore, liminality sheds light on the unfixed and changing nature of home for actors who have experienced multiple cultures across different borders. This brings into question the importance of legal citizenship, and its limitations in securing acceptance from the dominant population when actors are not imagined within the constructed boundaries of national identity. Thus, national belonging and the ways in which actors attempt to acquire cultural capital is needed to appreciate the complexity of migrants' liminal position. More specifically, national belonging can be used to understand not only how migrants experience public spaces, but also how they interpret their experiences in local social settings as indicators of national belonging or lack thereof. In this sense, national belonging provides tools to examine how migrants connect local practices and experiences to broader claims about Canada as a nation. Hence, while they may feel they belong locally in different social settings through homemaking, they do not necessarily experience a secured sense of belonging without first feeling accepted by the national community. Finally, third space and hybridity provide tools to explore how liminality fuels the disruption of oppressive practices and the production of new perspectives and understandings of "us" through hybrid identities. Hence, belonging will be conceptualized as having three components: feeling at-home, being claimed by the dominant population, and feeling the right to participate in the constitution of the national identity. These aforementioned concepts allow me to holistically examine the sense of belonging experienced by generation 1.5 Afghans.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Research Question & Goals

Since research on the experiences of generation 1.5 Afghans is scarce, and the aim of this thesis is to understand the subjectivities of this population in regards to how they make sense of their belonging, a qualitative approach was used to allow for a detailed analysis of this population's migratory and homemaking experiences. Exploring how meaning is attached to home, identity and belonging for migrant populations requires careful examination of their lived realities through their stories and narratives (Myers & Nelson, 2019; Boccagni, 2012). Moreover, generation 1.5's liminal position characterized by their state of in-betweenness (Wang & Collins, 2016; Robles-Llana, 2018) further justifies the need for a qualitative approach allowing for an in-depth exploration of *how* belonging is experienced. Thus, in order to have a more nuanced understanding of how belonging may emerge for displaced racialized persons, it was necessary to examine their lived experiences (Hammersley, 2013) across borders and, of migration and homemaking through interviews.

Population and Sample

In order to gather data on the lived experiences of generation 1.5 Afghans,¹⁴ I used the following criteria for participation: (1) having been born in the Middle East, (2) arrived in Canada between the ages of 5-12, (3) currently be 18 years of age or older, and (4) must be residing in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Montreal or Ottawa/Gatineau. The ages 5-12 represents ages where individuals are likely to have some memory of migration but are not deeply socialized in their country of origin. Firstly, migrating before the age of five might mean that interviewees would not

¹⁴ Originally, my research was set out to explore the experiences of Middle Eastern immigrants. After recruitment and completion of interviews, I focused my research on Afghans specifically due to a lack of sufficient non-Afghan participants. This is explained in more detail later in this section. Given that the original focus was on Middle Eastern experiences, the first criteria for participation was that the participant must have been born in the Middle East.

have much memory of their life prior to moving to Canada. Given that I was interested in understanding how this population makes sense of their belonging, I wanted to also understand how their experiences outside of Canada shapes their identity and belonging in Canada. In other words, I chose the ages of 5-12 to meet my research goals which required data on not only experiences after migration, but also experiences before migration and how they were able to navigate and form their identities in a new home given these experiences. Secondly, I did not want a large range between the ages of migration because the experiences and psychological development of a five-year-old is likely to be vastly different from that of a teenager's. While I recognize that 5-12 is still vast, I did not reduce the age range to ensure that I would have an adequate number of participants. Therefore, I applied the term "generation 1.5" closely to what the original creators intended; those who migrated between ages of six to 12 (Rumbaut & Rumbaut, 1976). I expanded it to include the age five because humans can typically retain/recall memories from that age thereby allowing me to examine their experiences prior to migration. Therefore, ages 5-12 represents a population who have some memories of their homeland, and who have been socialized in more than two countries given their young age during migration (Robles-Llana, 2018). The fourth criterion was put into place because I could not travel further than that to complete the interviews.

I began recruitment in July 2018 and ended the process in December 2018. I posted recruitment posters on Facebook, community centres, and asked school clubs to forward my poster to their mailing list. I emailed clubs of post-secondary education institutions within Ottawa and the GTA that were likely to have Middle Eastern members such as the Arab Students' Association, Persian Students' Association and Afghan Students' Association. I selected interviewees based on whoever contacted me first. Despite distributing my poster to numerous clubs and locations, I was

not able to recruit many individuals. In fact, my first three interviewees contacted me after seeing my poster on Facebook (shared by myself, siblings, and friends). Hence, they were personal contacts. After a few leads, I used snowball sampling¹⁵ to recruit more interviewees. Snowball sampling allows researchers access to marginalized groups or people who may not trust researchers otherwise. Therefore, being recruited by their peers made this research possible as I would not have otherwise been able to complete additional interviews. In fact, without snowball sampling I would have been able to complete only four interviews.

Due to snowball sampling, most of my interviewees ended up being Afghan, with the exception of one. Given that I am Afghan, and that most of my interviewees were Afghan, only more Afghans reached out to participate in the research. Snowball sampling evidently led to a mainly Afghan sample because of previous interviewees recruiting other Afghans. Hence, I completed 11 interviews, of which 10 were with Afghan interviewees.¹⁶ After the 11th interview, I got a sense of saturation and stopped the recruitment process. My sample was homogenous because these 10 interviewees were all of Afghan background who migrated to Canada at similar ages, to mainly Ottawa and the GTA. By my 10th interview, no new significant experience was being shared. Considering this, I determined that I had reached saturation.

Of the ten Afghan individuals I interviewed, three were from Ottawa, and seven were from the GTA, four were women and six were men. All the interviewees had either completed post-

¹⁵ Snowball sampling was useful because interviewees were able to recruit other individuals who were eligible (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). While snowball sampling made this research possible because it gave me access to my population of interest, it further limited the representativeness of my research. This is the case because previous interviewees and the interviewees they recruited are likely to share similar traits, thereby excluding potentially different perspectives and experiences of other Afghans. In other words, the interviewees belonging to similar social circles could mean that my research does not include non-dominant Afghan experiences thereby producing sample bias (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

¹⁶ I decided to exclude an interviewee who had a different nationality in order to keep my group homogenous. I reached out to the interviewee and explained my decision, and she was understanding and supportive of my decision.

secondary education or were in the process of completing it. At the time of the interview, their ages ranged from 21 to 28, except for one interviewee who was 34. All of them grew up in working-class families in Canada. Most of their parents worked in elite or professional fields such as engineering, teaching, and medical field in Afghanistan prior to being displaced to neighboring countries, and finally migrating to Canada. While all were born in a Muslim household, six of them did not describe themselves as a religious Muslim. Four of them (two women and two men) self-identified as a Muslim. Many had not started their “careers” or reached their professional goal because they were recent graduates or in the process of completing post-secondary education. Three of them (all women) had a secure employment status: one in public service, one as a law clerk and one as a medical professional. One described himself as an entrepreneur and was in the process of opening a business. Two of them (both men) had completed post-secondary education and were working in the service industry. Four (one woman and three men) were in the process of completing post-secondary education.

My goal was to complete 10-12 interviews in order to allow for richer data. Scholars have noted that in-depth interviews of 7-12 individuals can be enough to reach data saturation, especially if it is a homogenous group (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Given that all the interviewees were Afghan and migrated to Canada during relatively similar ages, I believe my population was a relatively homogenous group allowing for the saturation of data. In fact, throughout the interviews I had noticed that similar themes and topics were discussed, at varying degrees.

Data Production

The data for this research was collected by conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted between July and December 2018, and transcribed in that time

period. The interviews were conducted in booked private rooms of public libraries. I asked the interviewees to choose a geographical location that would be convenient for them, and then located the library in that neighbourhood. I explained to the interviewees the goals of my research, and the interview process. I asked interviewees if they were comfortable with being audio-recorded. After achieving informed consent, I started the interviews. The interviews typically lasted 1 to 2 hours.

Hammersley (2013) notes that one of the focus of qualitative research is to investigate the experiences of marginalized people in order to “overcome” common stereotypes and the current ideology (p. 52). As the literature notes, Afghans are not only the third largest refugee population in the world, but they are also constituted as potential threats by the “war on terror” discourse. In this sense, Afghans immigrants in Canada represent a vulnerable population who have not only been displaced due to war but must also learn to navigate the socio-political realities of Canada which are shaped by notions of whiteness and a distrust of “others”. Hence, qualitative research was chosen to examine these complex relationships and experiences in order to gain understanding of the nature of their sense of belonging.

I chose to do in-depth, semi-structured interviews to get an understanding of the interviewees’ experiences and thought processes (Hammersley, 2013). In-depth interviews is a form of qualitative research method that utilizes open-ended questions from a few interviewees to explore their perspective on a given phenomenon (Polkingshone, 2005). In-depth interviews were necessary because I was attempting to gather data on the experiences of a group otherwise not accounted for in the literature on belonging and integration within western countries. Sanchez-Ayala (2012) asserts that in-depth interviews provide a “window” into the interviewees’ consciousness as they are able to “construct their own accounts of their experiences” (p. 123).

Therefore, open-ended questions were useful in extracting greater detail on the interviewees' migratory stories, in their own words (Sanchez-Ayala, 2012).

Hammersley (2013) notes that in-depth and relatively unstructured interviews are the preferable method of obtaining data on the experiences of marginalized populations because it allows the interviewees to speak "...at length in their own terms" while the researcher takes on a more responsive role (p. 54). Likewise, Barriball and While (1994) argue that in-depth, semi-structured interviews are useful in accessing the interviewees' memory while allowing both the researcher and the interviewee to jointly participate and lead the interview. More specifically, semi-structured interviews allow the interviewees to bring up information they deem important as well as allow the researcher to ask questions of interest (Sanchez-Ayala, 2012). Thus, a typical semi-structured interview resembles a conversation where the interviewee's answer determines the follow-up questions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Given that the purpose of my research was to understand the subjectivities of the interviewees, it was important to choose an interview method that allowed flexibility in the topics discussed. In-depth, semi-structured interviews allow interviewees to share their narratives in their own words thereby giving insight on how they attach meaning (Ahmed, 2016). Belonging is a deeply internal and individualistic process that cannot be understood by asking a fixed number of specific questions, in a precise order. On the contrary, the complexity of the issue at hand requires that the interviewee play a greater role in guiding the discussion by sharing their perspectives, thought processes and feelings that accompany(ied) their experiences as children and adults. Hence, the semi-structured interview method was chosen to allow for the interviewees to freely discuss their experiences and perspectives while also allowing for some structure in order to ensure my topics of interest were covered (Barriball & While, 1994). My role was to probe and request

for more detail on examples and stories brought up by interviewees rather than introducing new topics (Hammersley, 2013). Given that the interviewees played a significant role in the direction of the interview, different aspects of migration and integration were emphasized in each interview. For some interviewees there was a heavier focus on life before migrating to Canada, whereas for others, much of their discussions pertained to life in Canada.

To utilize an in-depth, semi-structured interview, my questions broadly explored three areas of interest (a) how the interviewees ended up coming to Canada; (b) the interviewees' experiences growing up in Canada; and (c) their sense of national/ethnic/religious belonging in Canada. The follow-up questions for each of the interviewee depended on the interviewee's response. Prior to conducting interviews, I created a list of general areas to be explored such as: the context of their migration, experiences of integration, experiences as a child in the school system, and issues relating to identity and belonging. Upon doing the first two interviews, I realized that some of my questions were not well understood by the interviewees and that the questions were not constructed accurately to ask the interviewees about their migratory experiences. Therefore, some minor modifications were made to the interview schedule to ensure that the interviewees discuss their migratory experiences including their life in Canada. These modifications allowed for deeper discussions on belonging, home and identity. The modified interview schedule can be found in *Appendix C: Interview Schedule*. It is important to note that while the interview schedule was there to remind me of areas of interest, the topics discussed and the order in which they were discussed were determined by the natural flow of the conversation between each interviewee and myself.

Doing in-depth semi-structured interviews was difficult as I am not an experienced interviewer. Therefore, in the beginning I found it difficult to be fully present and engage in active listening while also deciphering which parts of the story should be probed. To minimize this

difficulty, I had practiced interviewing some friends and family members. I also asked for feedback from them to ensure I was as engaged as possible. This allowed to get a sense of potential issues I may have during the real interviewing process, such as taking notes while staying present, formulating useful probes and engaging in active listening to ensure the interviewee feels comfortable. While I struggled with this throughout the process, it became less of an issue as I gained more experience with each interview.

The limitations regarding the interview process include missed opportunities to formulate better probes and the fact it is difficult to gain access to interviewees' entire migratory journey because the interviews occurred in retrospect. Upon transcribing and attempting to code the data, I realized there were instances during the interview where I should have asked for different probes and perhaps requested clarity. While during the interview it seemed clear to me what the interviewees were saying due to the natural conversation-like discussion, during coding and analyzing I realized that some statements needed clarification as I was assuming meaning instead of asking them to expand to make sure I was getting their meaning. This made coding and analysis more difficult. Additionally, upon coding, I realized that I should have probed other areas I had originally not considered as relevant to my research. As my research progressed through the various stages, it became clearer that I should have probed other points in order to get a more holistic understanding of the interviewees' experiences. For instance, while I recognized experiences of the homeland were relevant before I conducted interviews, I did not realize experiences of other countries between leaving Afghanistan and moving to Canada were also relevant in shaping belonging in Canada until I attempted to make sense of my data. For this reason, these experiences were not adequately probed for some interviewees. Unfortunately, much

time had passed since these interviews had been conducted, and it was not feasible to go back for additional questions.

Moreover, due to the sensitive nature of the research, the interviewees may not have felt fully comfortable to divulge the entirety of their experiences and their reflection of these experiences. Indeed, some scholars note that gender may play a role in the level of comfort felt when disclosing experiences of vulnerability (Williams & Heikes, 1993). In the case of my research, some male interviewees may have hesitated or refrained from expressing difficult childhood experiences so as to avoid appearing helpless or vulnerable in front of a female interviewer. Afghan masculinity is especially critical of displays of vulnerability as it is typically shamed by the (traditional) Afghan community. Therefore, some interviewees may have felt additional hesitance in expressing any vulnerability because I am also an Afghan. While hesitance in showing vulnerability may have been more pronounced for male interviewees, a reluctance to share sensitive information is a common human tendency. Where sensitive information may have been withheld, I think my own immigrant background and Afghan nationality helped other interviewees discuss their experiences more freely. This is the case because interviewees could expect some level of cultural understanding for their experiences and rationalities. In fact, some of the interviewees switched between English and Dari phrases to better communicate their thoughts, showing the level of comfort they felt with an Afghan interviewer. More specifically, my Afghan immigrant background minimized some discomforts for the interviewees because they expected me to understand the pressures exerted by traditional Afghan parents on their children.

Analysis of Material

To analyze the data, I used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is concerned with identifying themes or concepts that are in the data (Ezzy, 2002). Through three rounds of coding,

I was able to identify meaningful themes and engage with the data in a more meaningful manner. The thematic coding was inductive in nature, meaning the coding was data-driven and not a result of a pre-existing coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, I did not have a fixed conceptual framework at this stage, but rather a list of potentially useful concepts. While I was conducting research on what the literature thus far had established, I realized the concept of identity and liminality were relevant to my research. However, as I began conducting interviews and started the analysis process, it became clear to me that additional concepts would be necessary to make sense of the data. Therefore, the coding and analysis stage were used as opportunities to identify new and final concepts relevant to the data gathered. In other words, the inductive thematic analysis approach allowed me to choose themes and concepts that are data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

I used an inductive method because I was following the factist approach. The factist approach is one where reality is viewed to be accessible through the data (Alasuutari, 1995). Specifically, the use of testimony approach was important in this research in order to ensure that the interviewees' experiences were accurately represented. Thus, I ensured that the interviews conducted (and questions asked) serve as a window into the interviewees' experiences and thoughts (Whiting, 2008). In other words, the experiences of my interviewees regarding their journey to developing a sense of belonging in Canada are used as testimonies on the issue of finding belonging in a multicultural society where issues of "legitimate" belonging and identity persist. An inductive approach to analyzing the data complimented my use of in-depth semi-structured interviews by maximizing both the discovery and understanding of generation 1.5 Afghans' lived realities. I was able to discover what belonging, home, and identity mean to the

interviewees themselves; thereby producing a more nuanced understanding of belonging and home for Afghans in Canada (Simonsen, 2018).

First, I familiarized myself with the data once all the interviews were transcribed. At this stage I made notes of what ideas and concepts I found interesting. My first round of coding was open coding; this was exploratory in nature (Ezzy, 2002). In this round, I broke down the text (Attride-Stirling, 2001) and determined what constituted as each code. Here I tried to code for everything that “jumped out” or seemed relevant in every line of the interview transcriptions. Therefore, during open coding I was noting down all the ideas and feelings expressed in the text and writing the extract in the margins. For instance, here I made note of all the instances where the interviewees referenced war in Afghanistan such as the mentioning of bombs, the unpredictability of life, and the normalization of war conditions.

My second round of coding focused on the relationship between the codes selected from the first round. Here I organized the codes into preliminary themes. I analyzed how each theme is related to one another. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that “a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (p. 82). For instance, the coded data showed an emerging pattern relating to losses experienced as a result of displacement, such as the loss of important bonds. At this stage, I began interpreting the data through emerging patterns. For instance, I noticed there is relationship between the interviewees’ previous life quality in Afghanistan and elsewhere and the level of hope or positive feelings they attach to Canada.

In my third round of coding, I tried to organize the themes into larger themes and understand how they are all interconnected to my data. I also ensured my themes were coherent and did not overlap (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this stage, I determined the specifics of the theme by naming

it and exploring its connection to other themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). I looked at the entire themes map and determined whether it did indeed tell a rich accurate story about the data collected. In other words, the themes, in their collectivity, told a rich story of the migration of children from Afghanistan to Canada. These themes necessarily covered stories of displacement, homemaking and hope. Moreover, the themes identified were useful in my decision to choose the specific concepts I have used to analyze the data. For instance, the inductive thematic analysis approach helped me realize that the concept of third space will be useful in analyzing how Afghan immigrants develop identities.

While thematic analysis was extremely useful, it was nonetheless difficult at every stage, especially since I was operating with an inductive approach. During open coding, it was difficult to look at my data without already attempting to analyze it through concepts I was familiar with. I had to proceed cautiously and remind myself that I was looking at the story they were telling, and not what I was necessarily expecting to find. Coding was also challenging because I felt too familiar with the experiences described given my own nationality and immigrant background. Therefore, I had to step-back from coding the data through my own experiences and perspectives. While my interviewees and I share similar traits, I had to restrict myself from assuming *shared* experiences, and imposing my experiences.

It was also difficult to categorize codes into relevant themes and ensure there was no overlap between the themes. Identifying and naming themes required extensive back-and-forth review of my data and coding. It was especially difficult to finalize my themes because the codes could have been interpreted into different themes. Therefore, organizing and finalizing the themes required multiple attempts of organization and defining the specifics of each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the end, I had to make sure my themes were related to my research question in a significant way

and not necessarily in a quantifiable manner (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, I determined the “prevalence” of a theme by its ability to capture important ideas in my data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and by their ability to collectively tell a story. Once my themes and my conceptual findings told a complete story, I began producing the final report, the analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001). However, during the writing stage I realized there were gaps in my themes that were not initially considered (or missed) during coding. Therefore, in order to strengthen my analysis, I went back to the raw data (first round of coding) and refined my themes accordingly in order to better present the experiences of the interviewees. The written analysis makes connections between the themes identified in the data and the literature. The final themes identified and used for the written report can be found in *Appendix D: Major Themes Identified*.

In short, thematic analysis was necessary to tell the story of the data as accurately as possible. In the end, I connected the interviewees’ stories to my broader research interests on belonging in Canada. The coding and analysis process were inductive in nature as I let the data inform the themes I created and the concepts I used to understand the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was needed because there has been little research on the experiences of generation 1.5 Afghans. This allowed me to stay closer to the interviewees’ stories and provide rich accounts of their journey toward belonging and identity construction in Canada. Nonetheless, while rich data was collected and analyzed, these findings cannot be generalized to the experiences of all generation 1.5 Afghans; rather it is likely only generalizable to others sharing similar traits. This is the case because the concepts used were chosen directly based on the content of these specific 10 interviews; hence, the analysis was tailored to the stories of these 10 individuals.

Ethical Considerations

Given that my research required interviewing individuals, an ethics application had to be submitted to the Ethics Review Board outlining my methodology and purpose of research. The ethical considerations for this research included: informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, as well as minimizing any potential harms. First and foremost, I made sure I achieved informed consent from each interviewee. To do this, I explained the purpose of my research and the topic of my questions. Then, I gave them the consent form to read and advised them to let me know if they have any questions or concerns. Also, I let them know that they may choose to stop participating at any point without feeling the need to explain. To uphold transparency, I received the interviewees' permission to audio-record the interviews. The interviewees were advised that they may also choose to take break(s) if they wished to. I gave interviewees a \$10 Tim Horton's gift card at the beginning of the interview, but I made sure the interviewees knew they were not obligated to complete the participation because of the gift card.

The nature of this research is a deeply sensitive topic for some of the interviewees because their migration experiences were not easy. For this reason, anonymity and confidentiality were of utmost importance. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms are used. Additionally, I have refrained from referring to the names of family and friends that were brought up in the interviews. I ensured the content referred to in the analysis and content transcribed do not give away any of the interviewees' identity. To ensure confidentiality, I refrained from keeping paper copies of the interview transcriptions, instead the transcriptions were password-protected on Microsoft Word, on my password-protected personal laptop. Where I did print a paper copy, they were stored in a locked cabinet in my room and shredded once I no longer had use for it. Consent

forms were also locked in cabinet. The audio-recorded transcriptions were saved on a USB and locked in a cabinet.

To minimize potential inconveniences, I tried to make the timing and location of the interview as convenient as possible for the interviewees. Therefore, I met with them outside of their work hours and in locations close to their residence. In fact, I asked the interviewees to choose a geographical area that is convenient for them and then I located potential locations we could do the interview that would allow for private conversations to occur. Ultimately, the interviewees were active in choosing the time and location of the interview. This way, I tried to avoid inconveniencing interviewees as well as causing any discomfort.

Another ethical consideration that I have been cognizant of is making sure the interviewees' stories are presented as authentically as possible in the analysis. Throughout the research process, I struggled with not imposing my own experiences of migration and belonging in Canada, especially because I am myself an Afghan immigrant. While being an Afghan immigrant helped me in having a background understanding of the hardships faced by Afghan children in Canada, it also meant that I might unconsciously make methodological choices that fit my own narrative and understanding of belonging. Going into the interviews, I was aware this might be an issue therefore I attempted to minimize this concern by asking appropriate questions that were not judgemental or morally loaded. In fact, the use of semi-structured interviews helped me formulate probes based on the interviewees' responses and stories. The flexibility of this approach allowed me to more holistically capture the narratives of the interviewees, as they saw meaningful. By utilizing open-ended, neutral question, and asking follow-up questions based on the interviewees' responses, I attempted to get at their experiences from their own self-reflection and not my interpretation. Likewise, the use of inductive thematic coding helped me interpret the data using concepts and

themes that emerged from the data, as opposed interpreting the data using a pre-existing coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This way, my interpretations and analysis are informed by the meanings and rationalities of the interviewees.

The interviewing process itself was also an ethical consideration. While I was aware stories of migration and integration may contain traumatic experiences and discomfort for the interviewees, I underestimated the extent to which this may be the case for some of my interviewees. To address this, I made sure that I was actively listening and not displaying facial expressions or body language that might make the interviewees uncomfortable. Thus, I made sure to read their body language and tone when deciding whether (and how) to probe on sensitive topics. Additionally, because traumatic and difficult experiences were disclosed by the interviewees, I had to ensure that their experiences were respected. In other words, I made sure to use them in my analysis respectfully, and only when appropriate.

Limitations of Research

The limitations of this research have to do with the generalizability of the findings given the location requirements for eligibility to participate, issues with recruiting and the small sample size. Firstly, the use of location-specific requirement for participation meant I could not include the experiences of those who reside outside of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Ottawa-Gatineau, and Montreal. In fact, only three out of the 10 interviewees were from Ottawa, while the other seven indicated they lived and grew up in the GTA. Hence, data on the lived experiences of those from smaller cities or towns have not been explored. As such, this research is missing how the experiences of those individuals shape their sense of belonging. In fact, many of my interviewees spoke of how diversity in their hometowns make them feel more comfortable. I suspect racial and cultural diversity in major urban cities such as Toronto makes racial minorities believe more in

Canada's "multiculturalism". For this reason, the interviewees of my research may have different experiences (and perspectives) than those living in more homogenous cities and towns. Unfortunately, exploring the experiences of those outside of the indicated cities was beyond the scope of my research and was not practical for me. For this reason, I chose cities I could reasonably travel to in order to complete the interviews.

Recruiting participants willing to speak about their experiences proved to be more difficult than I had anticipated. While I initially began recruitment with the hopes of interviewing individuals from several Middle Eastern backgrounds, the difficulty of recruitment resulted in only accessing Afghan participants. Evidently this changed the focus of my research to Afghans only. While this impacted the extent of research, the focus on Afghans did not impact the quality of my research as I simply shifted the focus. Nonetheless, the difficulty of recruitment did result in snowball sampling wherein each new participant was recruited by a previous participant. Therefore, the experiences examined in this research may only reflect narratives of these individuals, excluding those with different traits. For instance, the experiences covered come mainly from well-educated Afghans living in diverse cities. Likewise, the small sample used in this thesis impacts the extent to which the findings can be generalized to the wider generation 1.5 Afghans in Canada. While these limitations impacted the extent of my research, it does not lessen the quality of this research given that the fact that this was exploratory in nature, targeting the experiences of a select few to shed light on their subjectivities and meanings. In other words, the methodological choice of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a relatively small sample size is in-line with the objectives of this research.

CHAPTER IV: HOMEMAKING IN CANADA

In this chapter, I demonstrate that generation 1.5 Afghans engage in a homemaking project to strengthen their sense of belonging in Canada. The interviewees are faced with the practicality of Canada being “home”¹⁷ because of the amount of time they have spent here as well as the connections they have built but are lacking a sense of at-home because of their liminal position and sense of unacceptance from white-Canadians. In making this argument, the first chapter outlines the interviewees’ homemaking journey and the considerations it entails in terms of what *home* represents for the interviewees and how Canada is a desirable *future home* due to its protective and desirable characteristics.

Migration and the Migrating Home

The interviewees’ migratory stories and experiences growing up in Canada show that they are constantly engaged in a homemaking project to strengthen their sense of feeling at-home in Canada. This is the case because the interviewees do not see Afghanistan as their *home* despite it being their homeland. However, even as they explain why Canada is “home”, there is a certain degree of ambivalence within their assertions. In fact, the interviewees’ stories show that *home* is a complex, multilayered concept that is both felt and developed through a multitude of factors dependent on the individual’s experiences of migration. Hence, these sections outline what factors constitute *home* and how the interviewees wish to make Canada *home*. To do this, the first section demonstrates how the loss of Afghanistan as *home* makes Canada their “home”. The second section examines their ambivalence towards *home* given their sense of in-betweenness. The third

¹⁷ I use home in quotations to distinguish between “home” as a physical space where safety, rights, social ties, comfort and familiarity are met and *home* as symbolic affective space where one feels at ease and accepted. “Home” serves as a pre-condition to *home*.

section argues that the interviewees are primarily concerned with developing a future *home* because they have no desire to go back to Afghanistan.

The (Un)Lived & (Un)Familiar *Home*

When explaining why Afghanistan is not *home*, the interviewees point to the lack of *life* lived in Afghanistan. The lack of life lived in Afghanistan means three things: (1) attachments to Afghanistan were weakened as support networks and social ties are diminished; (2) there was less opportunity to create positive memories; and (3) the interviewees mainly remembered Afghanistan in the context they fled. The context of war and their subsequent migration produced memories of fear and unpredictability of life in Afghanistan. Additionally, the displacement from Afghanistan effectively ended the possibility of them growing up in Afghanistan. In other words, generation 1.5 Afghans left Afghanistan in their early years of life limiting the memories they could make in Afghanistan, and even more so, limiting the memories they could recall. Therefore, displacement from Afghanistan weakened the ability to see it as *home* as attachments are stripped away and as interviewees stopped experiencing it as “home”. Furthermore, their memories of Afghanistan are negative ones:

Well umm I was very young when I left. I was I think six or seven years old at the time, so I don't have a lot of memories but what I do – I think – I might be speaking for other people of my age for the same time period, I think our first memories of ourselves would be something in relation to war ...So for us it would be fear. And my first memory of myself is when I was 2.5 years old and we were running away – that was the first time we ran away from our home. - Karima

Moreover, the lack of life lived in Afghanistan means that the quality of attachments to Afghanistan are weakened. For instance, the interviewees note that there is no one to go back *for* or *to*. For many, their close family members either also migrated outside of Afghanistan, have since passed away, or the bond to the remaining family members has weakened to the point where they are no longer regarded as “close”. Living in different countries not only produces physical

distance but it also creates an emotional distance; and the combination of both weakens the quality of relationships across borders. For instance, Sherzad notes how he no longer has a close connection with his cousins who migrated to other western countries:

[they live in a] different country altogether where you know they have their own life ... then there's no longer a one sort of common thing that you can relate to with them because their language is different now and your language is different now ... Um yea, so it makes us – it's hard for us to really come back to the same level as we were when we were children... - Sherzad

Displacement from Afghanistan ultimately weakens their sense of at-home because as the displacements become more frequent and more long-term, the connection to the country weakens. Therefore, the ability to envision Afghanistan as *home* becomes less realistic and desirable as it stops being “home”. Without attachments to go back for, there is little incentive for the interviewees to make Afghanistan *home*. For example, Karima argues “every time you're displaced, you lose. You lose relationships, you lose um family members, you lose friends, property, everything that makes you feel like you belong to that country is kind of stripped away with every displacement.” Evidently, displacement is experienced as loss.

Displacement experienced as loss ruptures the *home* as the familiarity with the space is taken away; thus, weakening one's sense of belonging. In this sense, Afghanistan appears to be a *past home* with which the interviewees express a current lack of familiarity. In fact, they point to their unfamiliarity with the way of life and environment as reasons for (potentially) feeling uncomfortable navigating life there. Part of the discomfort has to do with the lack of time spent in Afghanistan. For example, Faissal states “I came here at a young age so Canada is my home. Because I don't know anything about my back home, I haven't been there since I was young”. A lack of familiarity with the environment fuels a sense of discomfort signalling an “out-of-place” feeling according to many of the interviewees. In fact, the interviewees speak of an anticipated inability to blend-in with the general population in Afghanistan. For instance, Sara differentiates

between easily fitting-in and interacting with people in Canada with instances of being identified as a “foreigner” in Afghanistan despite following the same dress code. Likewise, Taimur states “if I go home like back home in Afghanistan, it’s not the same cuz I haven’t lived there, I haven’t experienced that culture. Cuz I went there and they all looked at me like I was a foreigner”. This shows how the interviewees do not feel *experienced* in life in Afghanistan. The inability to blend-in and go about life in Afghanistan makes them feel out-of-place and puts them at risk of being identified as a foreigner. In this case, Afghanistan cannot be *home* because interviewees do not feel at-ease given their unfamiliarity and identification as an outsider.

In addition to feeling uncomfortable, the unfamiliarity with the environment could result in feeling lost. For example, Abdullah argues that despite knowing the official and commonly spoken language Dari, he would still get lost and be vulnerable in Afghanistan because of his unfamiliarity with mundane every-day activities.

...if you were to take me back to Afghanistan right now I wouldn’t know how to deal with the locals, I don’t even know how the local currency looks like. Um I don’t even know a single street there – I don’t know – like obviously I speak the language but I probably would get lost or robbed within the first five hours. – Abdullah

Familiarity with the space is necessary for individuals to feel a sense of mastery on how things work. Familiarity evidently goes beyond familiarity with the physical environment as this could (in some cases) be regained with adequate exposure to the country especially given the fact that these individuals have some fluency in the official language. Hence, a lack of familiarity also refers to the assumed differences with the Afghan way of life as well as the socio-political situation in Afghanistan as noted by the interviewees. For instance, Sherzad notes if he ever went back to Afghanistan he would feel like “... some strange person in a really conflict, war zone, war-torn zone.” In this case, the unfamiliarity with Afghanistan has aided in the construction of it as a “strange” land with different culture and people. The inability to place oneself in this “strange”

land can be seen in Sherzad's perception of clashing ideologies, "... if I do go there I'd feel like I'm in a strange type of city or country where I cannot talk to people properly or openly because people might not be open-minded. People are not liberal there."

One of the domains in which a clashing ideology is assumed is regarding the treatment of women in Afghanistan. The interviewees' perception of gender inequality makes them feel more disconnected from Afghanistan. More specifically, there is a perception of an ideological clash between what they are familiar with in Canada and what they believe to be the norms in Afghanistan. For instance, Mina recalls how she was discouraged from playing soccer at school by her extended family members from Afghanistan because she was a girl. Mina's case provides a good example of how women's agency may fall under the purview of her Afghan family members, even when they live in different countries with a different mainstream culture. This can also be seen from Mina's interview when her parents encouraged her to listen to her in-laws (who live in Afghanistan) and not attend law school despite getting a scholarship:

I got engaged, I got my scholarship. "Nope, she's not doing it. I'm sorry, she's not". And my parents were like "[my dear], this is your family, the girl makes sacrifices" You know? You gotta do this and that. – Mina

Another interviewee describes how sexual assault against women in Afghanistan is common, and not penalized because women are discouraged from speaking up by their family members so as to avoid bringing "shame" to the family name:

And my aunt was like "yeah, don't say anything. You're a girl. Girls are not allowed to speak". And I was like "so these people can just get away with doing anything they want?" and she was like "yeah, cuz they're guys". Cuz (a) guys can do whatever they want, boys will be boys and (b) if you say something then they'll say "oh [this person's daughter], because she's speaking so loud she deserves to be raped" – Sara

The inability to hold perpetrators accountable due to social pressures makes it difficult to feel comfortable in Afghanistan. In other words, the lack of ease felt moving through space in Afghanistan alerts the interviewee that she is not at *home*, especially when she has experienced

otherwise in Canada. Therefore, the interviewees see themselves as somewhat disconnected and different from Afghanistan and Afghan norms.

These feelings of difference and disconnectedness exacerbate their unfamiliarity with Afghanistan. Not only is Afghanistan a country where interviewees spent a short number of years, but it is also a space which is imagined as vastly different from Canada in terms of the cultural norms and way of life. In other words, they feel as strangers to the land not only in matters of navigating the environment but also in fitting-in socially. These feelings of foreignness are maintained by the lack of (good) memories which may have counterbalanced the negative assumptions about Afghanistan. Therefore, Afghanistan is reduced to just being “another country,” suggesting a sense of indifference, *or* it is seen as a country in which interviewees do not see themselves being at-ease in.

These experiences and sentiments show that interviewees are not in exile. The literature on exile has found that immigrants who are in exile identify with their homeland and have a strong desire to go back if it were a realistic option (Allatson & McCormack, 2008). On the contrary, the interviewees have no desire to go back, nor do they identify with Afghanistan and Afghan culture. The lack of attachments to Afghanistan, and life lived in Afghanistan, alongside feelings of unfamiliarity and disconnectedness with the culture ruptures the idea of Afghanistan as *home*. The brief years spent in Afghanistan and the context in which Afghanistan was left behind make it so that the interviewees did not have a chance to develop positive ties to the country. Without a *home*, there is no inclination to go back, or to long for it. In fact, the interviewees’ construction of Afghanistan as a strange and restrictive land where they not only feel out-of-place but are also identified as outsiders displays their lack of belonging. The anticipated inability to act true to oneself and move through spaces with ease in Afghanistan demonstrates the lack of feeling at-

home (Gallegos, 2019). The lack of familiarity with Afghanistan encourages their desire to create a new *home*.

Not in Exile, but Not At-Home: The Ambivalence of Home

While the interviewees' migratory stories do not suggest experiences of exile, they nonetheless exhibit their liminality through their lack of a definitive state of belonging wherein they express ambivalent feelings toward Afghanistan and Canada and feel a sense of in-betweenness. Therefore, Canada appears to be their "home" for practical reasons. The most important reason has to do with the duration of time spent in Canada, as well as their belief that they will continue living in Canada. The combination of residence, length of time, familiarity, support network and ability to envision a future in Canada, make it "home" for the interviewees. For instance, Karima notes because her life is in Canada, Canada is her "home".

Well I've lived for 20 years now, and I left when I was – no sorry not 20, 17-18 years. So I've lived most of my life in Canada now. And of course when I first came here, I had spent more than half my life in other countries, so this country was new, it was unfamiliar, I didn't have the support group, I didn't know anyone and with time you build connections, you have a job, everything that will make this place feel like this is where you're settling. This is your home. So now I just – my life in Canada, I just feel like oh this is my home now. – Karima

While *home* necessarily entails matters of daily living and where attachments are built (Taylor, 2013; Lam & Yeo, 2004), it also represents the space where one can envision themselves as part of the greater "us" (Simonsen, 2018; Lam & Yeo, 2004), and where they can navigate spaces without any hesitation (Gallegos, 2019). The interviewees' description of their Canadian "home" lack these sentiments; these findings will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5. Instead, interviewees such as Abdullah point to their functional integration as proof of Canada being "home". For instance, Abdullah notes how familiarity with the streets, his social connections and job make Canada "home".

Yeah social connections, your friends and your family, and your job, your home. Even the familiarity with the streets, I mean I know how to get to Yonge Street without using a GPS. That is home. If I went to a different city, I would probably use my phone so yeah things like that. – Abdullah

For Aisha, an Afghan born in Iran, Ottawa is “home” because of how comfortable she feels moving within its public spaces and because of the memories she has associated to these spaces. The comfort she feels in Ottawa stems from not feeling out-of-place because she is familiar with the space; she does not feel inexperienced in navigating spaces in Ottawa. Aisha has increasingly familiarized herself with Ottawa since migrating at the age of seven to the point where she cannot get “lost” in Ottawa. She explains that “home” is likely to be Ottawa no matter where she moves.

I think home is here, in Ottawa. It doesn’t matter if we move or not. It’s just more comforting cuz I know where everything is and cuz I was so young ...Like I have memories of me being in different people’s houses, in different people’s neighborhoods and getting to know that specific place ... I don’t know if it makes sense but places I go a lot, I know the area really well and I feel comfort cuz if I get lost or whatever, I know where I am cuz Ottawa is kind of small. – Aisha

Some interviewees expressed how their “home” is limited to their city of residence in Canada as compared to “home” being all of Canada because of the diversity of their city. The existence of diversity provides some interviewees with a level of ease in not “standing out” as much. For instance, Faissal calls Toronto “home” because it is filled with minorities. Likewise, Abdullah argues that being a minority in diverse cities like Toronto is easier than being Caucasian. He says, “... because in Toronto you can wear whatever you want, you can speak what you like, you can eat what you like, nobody will judge you. If anything in my opinion being a Caucasian is harder than anything living in Toronto”. This means that Abdullah is not afraid to use his freedom of choice to express himself as he wishes because of the prevalence of diversity in Toronto. Therefore, he is able to feel at-home, where he does not feel judged. He continues by saying:

If I lived in a neighbourhood where it was predominantly dominated by one race or ethnic background ... I probably would have felt more like a minority. But since this was never the

case, I always – this is the reasons I always felt at home. Where like you know no one judged.
– Abdullah

Nonetheless, even though the interviewees call Canada “home”, it appears that there are some “homey” qualities missing. While Canada evidently provides opportunities to form new friendships and social ties, many interviewees had to leave behind friends and family in Afghanistan and elsewhere prior to migrating to Canada. These relationships were cut or significantly weakened due to years of separation. The loss of relationships and subsequent inability to replace (or repair) meaningful relationships weakens a sense of at-home. In fact, several scholars argue that the existence of family and friends are important elements of *home* (Taylor, 2013; Lam & Yeo, 2004; Tucker, 1994; Gallegos, 2019). This is noted in Sherzad’s interview as he speaks of the weakening of his bond with his cousins who were his childhood friends. The physical distance between him and his cousins induces a greater sense of loneliness in Canada, especially as he was growing up.

Likewise, Mustafa notes having to grow up without his mother and older brother was difficult and “depressing” especially during his teenage years which he sees as missed opportunity for forming a strong bond with his older brother. In fact, Mustafa recalls how visiting his brother who was his “best friend” as a child was “weird” because he did not have the opportunity to develop their bond. Likewise, seeing his mother after seven years at the age of 13 was “good” because he was finally able to get the “love of a mother” and call someone “mom” for the duration of that visit but it was also “weird” because he no longer really *knew* her. He continues by saying the following about his separation from his mother:

Do I miss my mom? Yeah I miss her, sometimes I think about her. But then I don’t think about her as much as I used to when I was a kid. Cuz as a kid you need somebody there for you right? But once you hit a certain age, you know I don’t need you. Like I love my mom yes, time was rough for her and rough for us ... It’s the hand of – I should say it’s the hand that I was dealt with. It was unfortunate but I’m making it better. I’m making better out of it - Mustafa

The loss of emotional support has consequences such as absence of moral support and guidance, forcing one to navigate their way by trial and error. It can also evoke feelings of loneliness especially when we take into consideration the lack of familiarity newcomers may have with life in their new environment. Indeed, newcomers may feel alone in a “strange” land. If the “strangeness” of the land does not turn into familiarity or comfort, the lack of one’s original support system may exacerbate the inability to feel at-home. In fact, Mustafa recalls feeling as if he would not “make it” as a child because of the extent of loneliness he felt as a child. The loss of important relationships further complicates how at-home interviewees feel as these relationships literally become distant, and somewhat inaccessible. In other words, the interviewees’ full support network is not located in their “home” or in one specific country but are found within multiple countries. This makes them experience Canada as an incomplete “home”.

Even for interviewees who’s entire (immediate) family resides in Canada, the initial separation caused by migration (typically between father and children) has changed the bond they currently share. The interviewees discussed these experiences in a sombre tone suggesting the change was and continues to be experienced negatively. The negative experience of changing relationships may weaken a sense of at-home because the weakening of these relationships is seen as irreparable. For instance, Karima recalls how the quality of her relationship with her father has weakened since their initial separation when he left to seek asylum in Canada:

So basically I hadn’t seen my dad for 1/5th of my life at that point and the whole memory of my dad was starting to fade away ... I could feel at the time that our relationship would not be the same because he was becoming, slowly, he was becoming a stranger to me ...I had a very very close relationship with my dad before. And then after reuniting the quality of our relationship never went to the same, back to where it was. – Karima

Likewise, Abdullah recalls how it was difficult adjusting to life with his father after several years of separation. He notes that the separation changed their relationship in some ways.

At that age it would change it a bit cuz the thing is that at that age a kid needs their parents and like you growing and not having that father figure around you and then coming back and all of a sudden he's back in your life then things would be different right? - Abdullah

While these changing relationships between children and parents become less grievous for the interviewees, it could lessen the quality of “home” as important relationships become disrupted in the migration process. Reuniting after years of separation requires a reconfiguration of the “home”, where they must learn to live with a stranger and (hopefully) become as comfortable with one another as they were in the past. The changing and weakening of important bonds then plays a role in maintaining a sense of in-betweenness wherein the interviewees continue to experience Canada as an incomplete “home” that not only requires mastery of national spaces and norms, but also re-learning the dynamics of the family home.

Furthermore, some interviewees expressed ambivalence as to where *home* really is given their experience of multiple countries and cultures. The ambivalence of *home* was noted throughout the content of the full interviews as the interviewees spoke of their relationship to Afghanistan and Canada. Their experiences show partial attachments to both countries, but no full attachment to either. This finding is in-line with the literature on immigrants and their sense of in-betweenness. In fact, the fluidity of home (Feng & Breitung, 2017; Kellet & Moore, 2003) is confirmed through the stories shared by the interviewees. For instance, some interviewees switched between calling Canada and calling Afghanistan home. In these instances, interviewees like Faissal note that Afghanistan is still *home* because it is where his “heart” and “motherland” is located. This insight came well after he initially called Canada “home”.

Right now Canada is economically number one country and my home but my heart is still in back home but I am not going there because I have a home in Canada so I am going to live here because it's still poverty there. – Faissal

Moreover, the interviewees see Afghanistan and Canada as not only having two different geographies and language, but also different cultures and way of life. These differences mean that

the interviewees' liminality is characterized by the negotiation of cultural differences, where they do not identify solely with one land and culture and are not experiencing one way of life. For instance, Mina shared many stories that demonstrate the extent to which she felt an in-betweenness. Besides symbolically feeling attached to two countries, the in-betweenness experienced also presented itself in a more concrete manner through interventions led by extended family and in-laws from Afghanistan. The interventions relating to how Mina should conduct herself as an Afghan girl/woman shows how her in-betweenness as an Afghan immigrant is maintained beyond borders.

In addition, the interviewees' liminality means that the interviewees see Canada as "home" but cannot cut all connections to Afghanistan. In some instances, the interviewees say they are at-home in Canada but then also say "if I go back home" suggesting *home* is where they left behind. These examples show how generation 1.5 immigrants find themselves connected to at least two countries, unable to fully let go of either or ground themselves fully in one. Thus, their experiences of liminality make their relationship to *home* and homeland complex. For instance, Abdullah struggles with determining whether the Afghan rupee *or* the Canadian dollar is *his* money.

...even if I were to go to the store and buy something I would probably deal with US or Canadian dollar, change *my* money into *their* local money – like even though I'm holding their money in my hand after I change it, like am I holding my money or foreign money? – Abdullah

Likewise, the interviewees' liminality can be noted from their inability to fully let go of Afghanistan. For instance, some of the interviewees express a felt responsibility for bettering Afghanistan and helping the Afghan people in Afghanistan. The emotional attachment to Afghanistan further exemplifies their sense of in-betweenness wherein they feel an inclination to intervene in the socio-political reality of Afghanistan. While, explicitly labelling Canada "home", these interviewees remain connected to Afghanistan. Other interviewees hesitate calling Canada

“home” *and* reject Afghanistan as one, further exemplifying the complexity of *home* for migrant populations. These insights show how home (whether as a physical or symbolic space) for generation 1.5 Afghans is not clear-cut; instead it is a space associated with various affective elements *and* can be lost and/or gained elsewhere through homemaking.

Homemaking and Imaginations of a Brighter Future

In order to feel more at-home in Canada, the interviewees engage in homemaking. Since they do not envision Afghanistan or other countries they lived in as their *home* or “home”, they are in the pursuit of strengthening their Canadian “home”. Therefore, “home” is not already pre-constituted but requires time and effort (Taylor, 2013). This is especially true for migrant populations (Feng & Breitung, 2017). More specifically, homemaking is labour (Kellet & Moore, 2003; Taylor, 2013) that involves developing networks and relationships, acquiring cultural capital, and becoming familiar with the space (Brun & Fabos, 2015). These pursuits are aimed at bettering one’s life and level of comfort felt in Canada. Additionally, homemaking is an on-going project given the interviewees’ liminality. Experiences of liminality cannot be overcome because of the losses experienced through the migration process, remaining (emotional) ties to other countries, and the fact that they were born elsewhere.

Firstly, homemaking is seen as the practical solution because the interviewees locate all aspects of their life in Canada and because Afghanistan is no longer experienced as “home” nor felt as *home*. I would argue that for the interviewees, many of whom are refugees, the need for a practical and safe “home” cannot be underestimated. In this sense, the need to integrate and create a better life for themselves is seen as a necessity for their own wellbeing in their visions of a brighter future (Brun & Fabos, 2015). For instance, Faissal notes how he realized it is better to engage in homemaking in Canada because of the safety it provides him:

So I realized I'm living here probably forever so I should start a life in here, study, get a job, hang out with friends. This is going to be my home as well. It would be better for me, safer...
– Faissal

This lack of choice in making Canada “home” can also be seen from Karima’s statement where she calls Canada the “default home” because she did not have the option to make elsewhere “home”.

When we moved here, I knew that this was *going* to be our home. But it didn’t feel like ... like that. I just – it’s not that I had any other alternatives, so it was kind of home by default but not where the heart was in a way. It’s like okay Canada is your home because you don’t have an option of having a home elsewhere. – Karima

Taimur’s discussions of his life in Canada also shows this lack of choice.

But like here in Canada it’s more of like I put up with it situation. I really don’t have a choice cuz I’ve been here so long, my roots are here now so to go somewhere else and start over would be a lot of work, more process, I’d have to deal with everything all over again right? So now it’s just like I have no choice, I’m gonna put my time in here and deal with it. – Taimur

In fact, having to “deal” with the pains of integration shows that homemaking is a strenuous and painful labour. It involves a great deal of time, effort, and dedication. In fact, “putting” in “time” is in of itself a homemaking strategy. For Taimur, strengthening his roots through “time” will hopefully make his life in Canada better. The decision to engage in this strenuous work is seen as the practical thing to do because starting elsewhere would require even more time and effort. Homemaking then involves “matter[s] of daily living” (Gallegos, 2019, p. 228). Amongst other things, homemaking is about survival, navigation and integration (Gallegos, 2019). Thus, Taimur’s “putting in time” and “dealing” with the situation can be understood as survival practices.

Moreover, many of the interviewees lived in other countries prior to migrating to Canada and yet they were not able to envision those countries as *home* nor experience them as “home”. Negative experiences in these countries inform the interviewees’ decision to engage in homemaking in Canada. For instance, in the case of Iran, a future could not be envisioned because

of the lack of legal status provided to Afghans. The interviewees living in Iran had no legal status nor the accompanying rights because they were deemed illegal migrants. The lack of legal status provided by the state eradicated any possibility of having a *legitimate* reason for residing in Iran. Ultimately, they had no protection from the state and no means or incentive to make Iran *home*. Without legal citizenship, the interviewees had physical reality but no structural or social reality in these countries, as in the words of Turner (1967). The lack of legal status meant that liminality could never be overcome as they were denied the means to improve their lives and be recognized as legitimate subjects. Homemaking then was not feasible or desirable because the interviewees' future remained uncertain as subjects in liminality, or as illegal migrants lacking rights and recognition.

The importance of being able to envision a better future in the homemaking journey is noted by Brun and Fabos (2015) in their research on refugees. For instance, accessing education is typically understood as a route to a better future yet Afghans in Iran are typically not allowed to attend school. In fact, when explaining how Canada has more opportunities, Hamze states that “in Iran, Afghanis were not allowed to go to school, not at all. That was the important thing for my mom, education, education, education. So when we moved here, it was school always”. Similarly, Aisha notes how she was only allowed to attend school because her mother was employed by the school as a custodian. Despite being born in Iran, Hamze and Aisha were not granted Iranian citizenship and were instead seen as unwelcomed guests. Therefore, Iran was not experienced as “home”. In fact, Hamze notes the following of Iran:

I don't know if you've ever lived in Iran but like it's horrible. Do you know what Jim Crow was? It's basically like Jim Crow between Iranians and Afghanis ... even though I was born in Iran, you never really felt like it was your country. Cuz it all depends on the way you looked, just feeling that, feeling the hate makes you not wanna be there. – Hamze

Sara also notes how her family relied on extended family members living abroad for financial assistance given the fact that her parents were not allowed employment under the law in India. Without having access to services that would help improve one's material condition, it is difficult to gain a sense of security and control over one's life, thereby limiting the ability of one to engage in homemaking (Brun & Fabos, 2015). Therefore, countries lived-in in between leaving Afghanistan and moving to Canada were never "homes" nor *homes* because of the limits placed on the interviewees for being unwelcomed guests. The interviewees' experiences show that they occupied a different position than those who were citizens of these nation-states because the interviewees' families were denied education, and employment rights. In these instances, the state plays an active role in maintaining the liminality of refugees by not extending legal citizenship to them because their residence is not welcomed, nor seen as natural. Arguably, the inability to acquire legal citizenship in these countries demonstrates the nation-state's desire to display its sovereignty by extending citizenship only when it chooses to, and by extension discouraging refugees from seeking long-term residence within its borders.¹⁸ In such cases, the interviewees continued to lack social reality in these countries.

I think Pakistan provided us with the shelter but not a home because there is no future. You can live there for 15, 20, 25 years but your situation is not changing because there aren't any opportunities, there is nothing you can do to change your quality of life in Pakistan living as a refugee. – Karima

Homemaking can also entail additional losses as the interviewees focus their efforts in building a new "home" at the expense of losing additional ties to family and old friends. For instance, Sherzad notes how he had to consciously focus on learning the language at the cost of losing connection with his childhood friends from Afghanistan and Pakistan. While this was an

¹⁸ The decision to extend or not to extend legal citizenship to migrants and refugees is always tied to displays of sovereignty as nation-states try to control who can enter through their borders and remain within their borders (Haddad, 2003).

investment into a better life in Canada, it came at the cost of experiencing additional loss. The loss of close relationships prevents the ability to feel fully at-home in Canada because language was gained at the cost of something else that was/is meaningful. Sherzad's homemaking involves learning English and perfecting his accent in order to feel more comfortable expressing himself. His homemaking has been aimed at functional integration as learning the language can help him become more independent and comfortable in his daily encounters. Hence, homemaking for the interviewees is an on-going process that takes time, effort, hard labour and additional losses.

My childhood friends so when they were left out in Pakistan or Afghanistan I obviously would want to communicate with them and be in touch with them but at the same time I had a life in Canada which was so complicated ... even more important was for me to learn the language – Sherzad

Homemaking is also never complete as the interviewees attempt to maximize the level of comfort felt and increase their familiarity with the space (Jacobson, 2010; Taylor, 2013). This is done through educational, economic and social means. Evidently, the interviewees' statements above show their mindset and desire to make Canada "home", even if they have no choice in the matter. Making life "easier" by learning the language, making friends and attempting to "succeed" in Canada are some of the homemaking strategies utilized by the interviewees. Additionally, sacrifices are made during this homemaking process such as the loss of language and loss of relationships as they focus on bettering their lives in Canada. The interviewees' role in these losses is indicative of their desire for homemaking as opposed to living in exile where they attempt to (or wish to) regain the past.

More specifically, the interviewees' hope and aspirations are located in Canada, meaning they look *forward* as opposed to the past. Therefore, even while having no choice but to make Canada "home", the interviewees express a great deal of hope for the future. They are self-aware of their current socio-economic position and have specific goals in mind to reach their desired

status in terms of field of profession, level of education, ownership of property and building of social networks. Many interviewees discussed their career and economic goals and how that will make their lives “better” and help them become more independent. For instance, homemaking for Sara has involved gaining control over her own life. The independence gained has made her feel more comfortable and, aids in strengthening her sense of at-home in Canada. Sara says, “I have my own car, I pay for my own insurance, so I have my own job here ... I was able to pick my own career path”. Thus, being educated, having a career, alongside living comfortably are important aspects of homemaking (Lui, 2014), and gaining control over one’s life (Brun & Fabos, 2015).

In short, the interviewees hope to strengthen their sense of at-home by increasing their attachments through education, employment, property ownership, and developing a strong support network. Arguably, an at-home feeling is a precondition to a greater sense of belonging given that it signals feelings of ease and comfort with one’s surroundings. While homemaking helps develop a sense of belonging, there are certain characteristics of Canada that help the interviewees experience Canada as “home” and shape their desire to strengthen their sense of at-home. The next section discusses how Canada offers the essential characteristics required of “home” in order for generation 1.5 Afghans to feel safe and confident when engaging in homemaking.

Critical Considerations for Homemaking & the Importance of Legal Citizenship

When the interviewees identify Canada as “home”; they are referring to its physical space enclaved by borders and governed by a specific set of laws. For this reason, the socio-political characteristics of Canada are important factors that the interviewees consider in their homemaking initiatives. By this I mean to say, the decision to engage in homemaking for migrant populations has much to do with the perceived level of security, and access to rights, freedoms and services provided by the Canadian state. Hence, legal citizenship plays a significant role in the ability of

the interviewees to both claim formal belonging, and confidently engage in homemaking. With legal citizenship accompanying their residence in Canada, the interviewees feel a right to be in Canada and claim it as their “home”. Thus, Canada becomes “home” because it is seen as offering a protective space for the interviewees.

Security and Safety as a Pre-Condition to Homemaking

State stability serves as a strong incentive for generation 1.5 Afghans to engage in homemaking. This is the case because the mass migration of Afghans began during periods of increased state instability. Many of the interviewees and/or their families fled Afghanistan between the late 1980s and early 2000s.¹⁹ Afghanistan is described as a country with a “fallen government”, characterized by “wars”, “conflicts”, “violence” and statelessness²⁰ by the interviewees. Afghanistan’s inability to govern effectively is closely tied to the rise of political unrest and violence creating an environment wherein different parties (both legitimate and illegitimate) can essentially fight for control over the various territories that make up Afghanistan.

Despite expressing an unfamiliarity with Afghanistan, many of the interviewees nonetheless have a negative perception of the country. In fact, the mystification of Afghanistan is not marked with curiosity and a desire to learn about it but is rather rife with negative rhetoric including references to corruption and a lack of rights. For instance, Sherzad describes Afghanistan and Afghans in the following words: “They’re conservative, their ideologies and mindset is completely

¹⁹ This period of time in Afghanistan is characterized by several civil wars, changes in government, as well as the rise of the Taliban as was discussed in chapter 1.

²⁰ Arguably, Afghanistan lacked the “state” title given that it was unable to have an efficient government and it lacked sovereignty. By popular definition, in order to be recognized as a state, four characteristics must be met according to popular definitions of a state: (1) territory, (2) population, (3) government, and (3) sovereignty (Marume, Jubenkanda, Namusi & Madziyire, 2016). With the Soviet invasion and the subsequent civil wars, as well as the rise of the Taliban, Afghanistan appears to have lost its title as a state, at least in the times when interviewees and their families began fleeing.

different. There is absolutely no human rights there. The political system is totally different. It's a failed state". Likewise, Faissal notes how after visiting Afghanistan, he thinks it is better to be living in Canada because of Afghanistan's socio-political climate. He says, "...the system is corrupted. So I seen poverty there, the children, the older and the middle-ages, they don't have jobs or no education because we all know that it's war going on there..."

The interviewees' discussions of Afghanistan show that Afghanistan continues to be perceived as having a host of socio-political issues. For example, Sara applauds Afghans' resilience in continuing to "...live their normal lives" and voting despite the frequent bombings that occur during elections season.²¹ This suggests that the ability to practice one's civil rights is routinely threatened by illegitimate actors through acts of violence; thereby further demonstrating the inability of the state to function. Whereas there is an on-going debate about the effectivity of Afghanistan as a "state", there is no such debate around Canada's statehood. In fact, civil rights in Canada are not undermined by threats of violence because of Canada's stability as a state.

Arguably, state stability plays a significant role in one's ability (and desire) to develop a sense of at-home given that one's ability to exercise various civil rights, and the quality of one's life in terms of living without fear of persecution and violence is directly related to how well the state is functioning and protecting denizens. Hence, the extent to which actors can engage in homemaking is dependent on the effectivity of the state; without a functioning state not only is it difficult to build a life, but it is also difficult to imagine a brighter future. Kellet and Moore (2003) note how the process of homemaking depends partially on the physical qualities of the space, such as safety and security. Even though the interviewees do not directly speak of state stability in Canada, the importance of this factor is underwritten in their expressions of appreciation for the

²¹ Sara refers specifically to the bombing that occurred in Qargha, Afghanistan in October 2018 during the Afghanistan parliamentary elections season.

services, rights and freedoms available to them in Canada. The appreciation of this stability shapes their desire to belong in Canada.

In addition, safety is another factor that is significant for the interviewees because of their experiences of war. Safety in this section does not refer to safety from acts of violence from lay people. Instead, it refers to widespread violence directed by the state or by large organized groups against citizens. One of the major indicators of the lack of safety in Afghanistan is the frequent references made to the war climate of the country. In fact, bombings and the sounds of fighter jets were daily experiences for some of the interviewees. For instance, Mina recalls her baby brother's first words were "the bombs are coming" in a memory of them witnessing bombs being dropped outside their window. Childhood experiences of war and the unavoidability of it in Afghanistan was the norm for the interviewees. Recollections of war taking place literally in one's backyard highlights the imminent danger some interviewees experienced on a daily basis. Whereas it was the norm in Afghanistan, the interviewees realize that life in Canada is not characterized by the same unpredictability and threats to their survival. For instance, the same interviewee notes that as a child she played with broken tanks in Afghanistan and that "I didn't know you come here and you have like [toys] to play with". The difference in terms of playing with war equipment and actual toys speaks to how Afghanistan for some of the interviewees is only known and experienced in the context of war.

The knowledge or experiences of war in Afghanistan make the interviewees appreciate the level of safety in Canada. For instance, Faissal says "obviously Canada is home to us because we'll be safe. Because there's less war and less crime." Safety and stability then serve as compelling reasons for the interviewees to make Canada "home". In fact, Faissal's use of the word "obviously"

highlights that value attached to the basic necessities of “home”, especially given their refugee background.

Moreover, while danger was experienced by all of the interviewees or their families, in some instances danger was more acute for specific interviewees. For instance, Karima notes how her family was specifically targeted by the Taliban because of their Hazara ethnicity.²² The visibility as a minority in Afghanistan put them in great danger in public spaces where they could easily be identified as Hazara. Moreover, Karima speaks of the risks and difficulties encountered during their crossing of the Taliban-controlled border to Pakistan. For example, Karima recalls having to hide under the bus-seat so that her Hazara ethnicity would not be discovered by the Taliban patrolling the border. She also notes the following of her experience crossing the border at the age of 6-7:

There was this loud cry of this man, he was screaming and as the voice got closer and closer it was a Talib guy, he was lashing or whipping this bus driver who was taking a Hazara across the border. And he kept on screaming “say it!” and the guy would be saying “if you smuggle Hazaras, this is what’s gonna happen to you.” And then the guy would whip him again. And his screams were so loud, I was so frightened. – Karima

Likewise, Mustafa recalls how his life changed the moment “...Taliban came and surrounded my house with AK-47s...” looking for his uncle, but mistakenly took his father. Mustafa’s experience crossing the Afghanistan-Iran border also shares similar danger from the Taliban despite his non-Hazara ethnicity. These stories not only show how some of the interviewees were targeted but also sheds light on the magnitude of the Taliban’s control over various regions of Afghanistan making it an unsafe space. For instance, he recalls:

²² The Hazara ethnic group is a minority in Afghanistan and are typically followers of the Shiite sect of Islam. Hazaras have been declared as kafirs (non-believers) by the Taliban and other terrorist organizations due to their religious beliefs. Hazaras are easily identified as Shiite Muslims because of their distinguished facial features, typically resembling Eastern Asians.

All I remember was smuggling – so we were smuggling through – from Afghanistan to Iran – all I remember was we were in these uh vans that were getting chased by the Taliban. So we had to throw our luggage cuz it was weighing too much. – Mustafa

Danger and the memory it has left behind cannot be disregarded as Mustafa notes that despite being young, he cannot forget the day the Taliban surrounded his home. He says, “... that picture has been stained in my brain. I can’t forget about it. But still all I remember was my mom was frightened. I was too young to realize what was going on. My sister was crying.” Experiences of war and the Taliban are common themes in most of the interviewees’ stories of migration. The danger and threats to survival in Afghanistan eroded the “home” while also impeding a desire for *home* in Afghanistan, thereby encouraging the interviewees to engage in homemaking in Canada.

In fact, decades of political conflict in Afghanistan makes homemaking, including a desire for homemaking in Afghanistan, unfeasible. For instance, Faissal notes how the on-going war in Afghanistan impedes his ability (and desire) to live there. Had there been no war, he believes Afghanistan would be just like Canada, but it is too late for that possibility:

If there was no war – cuz I can’t predict it in my mind but if there was no war, I am pretty sure everyone would be happy staying back home. Because it would be less racism, we can learn more about our own culture and our own religion. We can learn all of our own stuff back home. But not sure – I know war is everywhere, if there was no war I am sure it would be just like Canada ... obviously we’d live there. – Faissal

In brief, the importance of a stable and safe space encourages the interviewees desire to belong in Canada. Whereas, there was a need to flee danger in Afghanistan, there is no such fear when living in Canada. Therefore, “home” for the interviewees is a place where they can live life free from routinized danger in the form of violence and persecution. Without some perceived level of safety and security, one would not feel comfortable and without comfort one cannot feel at-home. The importance of comfort in strengthening a sense of at-home has been noted by several scholars including Simonsen (2018) and Kellet and Moore (2003). Similar to how a sense of safety

is expected in one's dwelling, individuals expect safety within all spaces of their "home". These considerations make Canada a desirable "home" for the interviewees.

The Perception of Equal Rights & Equal Protection of Rights

Beyond Canada being a stable and safe space, it is also a space which provides certain benefits for its citizens. For this reason, a Canadian legal citizenship is of utmost value to the interviewees, especially when they compare their legal status to their citizenship (or lack of any legal status) elsewhere. For the interviewees, legal citizenship symbolizes equal treatment of *all* citizens under the law. Therefore, the interviewees feel that regardless of differences in ethnicity or the number of generations spent in Canada, they have the *same* rights.²³ In fact, one of the interviewees argues that for all intents and purposes, he has the same rights as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. He goes on to say that "you can have whatever opinion you like, but on paper everybody is the same." The equality granted under the law plays a vital role in generation 1.5's ability to feel a certain degree of belonging in Canada; they feel they are equals because they are governed and protected by the same laws. Moreover, there is a perception that the Canadian state will intervene to protect the rights of its citizens regardless of gender, ethnicity and faith. This is precisely what is meant by Abdullah's statement that the government "stands up for you" as opposed to other governments wherein protection is not provided to all citizens.

One such example is the perception of differential treatment and protection of women's rights in Afghanistan. Throughout the discussions, several interviewees constructed Afghanistan as a country lacking adequate protection of rights for women. For instance, Sara describes how

²³ This is contrary to the Canadian *Citizenship Act* which permits the revocation of a Canadian citizenship on grounds of misrepresentation, fraud and knowingly hiding information on immigration or citizenship application. Moreover, previous law allowed the revocation of citizenship of dual citizens found guilty of terrorism. This subsection was repealed in 2017. Evidently, laws continue to change but dual citizens, especially those of Middle Eastern nationality, are more vulnerable to such laws as opposed to sole citizens of Canada whose citizenship cannot be revoked because they would become stateless.

sexual harassment in public spaces is common because not only is there a reluctance to hold perpetrators accountable, but victims are expected to stay quiet so as to not “shame” the family. The deployment of explicitly patriarchal values renders women second-class citizens where they have no “voice” and are expected to uphold the “family honour”. While the law does not permit acts of violence and harassment, state actors are nonetheless passive in addressing these issues. The predominance of gender roles and what it means to be a “good Afghan” girl or woman is arguably what permits differential treatment of men and women. For instance, Aisha notes how her family members in Iran express support for oppressive gender roles. She says, “... their perspective on women and I guess equality and stuff is just what’s different.” She also notes that the difference between Iran and Canada is “drastic” given the abundance of rights available to women in Canada and the difference in “ideologies”.

Sherzad makes a more direct comparison between Afghanistan and Canada in terms of rights granted and protected by the state. The designation of Afghanistan as a country with no rights or “human rights” makes an Afghan citizenship practically valueless. While rights may exist on paper, there is no means to exercise them if the state does not protect those rights. In this sense, a Canadian citizenship is interpreted as more desirable and useful because the state is perceived to uphold all citizens’ rights.

There’s freedom of expression here, there’s so many freedoms, so many rights, equality rights umm. Back in *Afghanistan*, there’s absolutely no rights whatsoever. Back in Afghanistan I can go to a deeper level about this. You know women have no rights in Afghanistan, they have no human rights. – Sherzad

Whereas, exercising one’s rights were not feasible in Afghanistan, other interviewees speak of having no rights because they had no legal citizenship as Afghans in Iran. For instance, Hamze highlights the fact that Iran’s laws did not permit him citizenship because his parents were not

Iranian. Without a legal status, Hamze's residence in Iran was labelled illegal and he had no rights, unlike in Canada where he was able to acquire Canadian citizenship, and its corresponding rights.

... by law I'm Canadian. And I'm a Canadian citizen. And I love that about Canada. Like I was born in Iran, like I was *born* there and I would have been more than happy to be – it's all about patriotism. I would have been more than happy to be a patriotic Iranian person, had they claimed me. But because my parents weren't Iranian, I wasn't. – Hamze

Moreover, the concept of equal rights is an important one to explore as it suggests there are no differences between dual citizens and non-dual citizens of Canada in terms protection of those rights. While it perhaps might be a motivating mindset, it ignores the various structural inequalities and systemic racism present in Canadian society. In fact, as Stasiulis and Bakan (1997) note, legal citizenship is often idealized wherein there is an assumption of fair and equal treatment by the objective state. In reality, this is hardly the case for migrants and other marginalized groups. More specifically, this perception ignores instances wherein Muslim Canadians' rights are undermined in the name of national security, a phenomenon called the "state of exception" (Razack, 2008). On the contrary, the interviewees see their legal citizenship (practiced through rights) as proof of their belonging in Canada.

In short, the interviewees' legal status in Canada is perceived to provide them with meaningful rights and protection that was not accessible elsewhere. While the interviewees' lives were not in danger in Pakistan, India or Iran, the lack of state given securities such as rights and status impeded a sense of at-home. Legal citizenship serves as a factual tool confirming to the interviewees that they are recognized as citizens of Canada, and have a right to live here. Or as Hamze says, they have been "claimed" by the Canadian state. Without legal citizenship and the accompanying rights and protection, the interviewees could not engage in homemaking with the same confidence and sense of security, nor would they desire to create *home* in Canada.

Access to Services Facilitating Homemaking

Access to services such as social assistance, funding for post-secondary education, and healthcare are also brought up as positive features of Canada. In stark contrast to Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, Canada has been able to better provide for the interviewees. For instance, Mustafa states that healthcare is a privilege he never had access to elsewhere, "... I have healthcare and all those stuff I never had as a kid. You know that's crucial for everybody to have healthcare you know?" Faissal also highlights the support provided by the government with his following statement:

I am supported by Canadian government. The government helps all the children and I was so young as a child, the government helped me out with child benefits ... Now I get supported by OSAP. I can give my loans – no my tuition right away ... The point is I am supported by government, I am supported by family and friends. So more secured. Let's say this situation was in back home, you're not supported by anyone ... So in Canada it's nice and secure, food and shelter, health, all these necessities are secured. – Faisal

Access to services further materializes the ability of the interviewees to engage in homemaking. The interviewees are able to feel like citizens of the country wherein they are provided with material support to improve their lives. The support granted by Canada is compared to the lack of support granted by Afghanistan. Therefore, a Canadian legal status helps the interviewees envision and work toward a brighter future because they can foresee Canada to be their future *home*. For instance, Karima states that how there was more hope when moving to Canada because Canada can provide for immigrants whereas Pakistan could not:

With Canada it was different cuz we knew that this was gonna be our new home. This was gonna be the place that we're gonna settle, and we're gonna grow up and have an education and hopefully make something out of our lives. So there was a lot of hope ... - Karima

In short, access to services aid in the homemaking project as individuals feel more secured and supported in their pursuit of a better life in Canada. Most notably, education appears to be of great importance to the interviewees. In fact, many see higher education as a means to a better

socio-economic standing. The interviewees speak of a desire to work in prestigious fields such as the legal and medical field, as well as in entrepreneurial positions and the public service. Higher education is seen as a service made accessible by the different levels of government through their funding services (i.e. OSAP). Thus, homemaking for the interviewees, and the future life in Canada depends highly on the acquisition of higher education. To this regard, the interviewees express a great deal of gratefulness for their legal citizenship and the opportunities it provides to them.

The Necessity of Freedoms for Racialized Minorities

Beyond specific rights and access to services, the interviewees speak positively of the freedoms provided by Canada. Notably, freedom of religion is referenced by many as they speak of their right to choose. In fact, the interviewees attribute their enlightened and open-minded personal qualities to Canada's secularist approach in education. Freedom of religion and freedom of choice are particularly appreciated by the interviewees given their minority status. By this I mean, the interviewees feel some level of comfort practicing their desired lifestyle and culture without state reprisal.

In fact, Canada's diversity is highlighted several times in these discussions with the interviewees. Rights and freedoms arguably allow the interviewees to choose for themselves; freedom of choice and its perceived protection by the state provides a sense of security as interviewees *could* choose to uphold their cultural practices and religion without feeling pressured by the *state* to assimilate. This can be seen from Faissal's comparison of Canada's openness to Afghanistan's restrictiveness:

Let's say I am Muslim, my friend is Hinduism (sic), I respect him, we hang out and go. I think that's great for Canada, letting all the cultures of people. We know what to do, who to respect, who these people are. But in back home it's kinda different. More restrictiveness. So basically in Canada you have more freedom to do anything. – Faissal

The existence of freedoms facilitates the interviewees' ability to envision a future in Canada as a minority. The freedoms granted under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* alongside the interviewees' legal citizenship serves as an affirmation of their formal belonging in Canada. The state aids in the development of a degree of belonging through granting legal citizenship, providing access to services and equally guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of *all* its citizens through legislation. Rights and freedoms, as well as access to services allow the interviewees greater agency and motivation to engage in homemaking. Without legal citizenship, the interviewees could not engage in homemaking with the same degree of hope and confidence because they would not have the state's support nor a sense of security that they will be allowed to remain in Canada. Thus, a legal citizenship provides the interviewees with a sense of *permanence* which then encourages them to emotionally and materially invest in homemaking.

Canada as a Symbolic Safe Space

Popular constructions of Canada as a tolerant and superior nation alongside the hegemonic understanding of Afghanistan as a deprived and corrupt country serve as motivating factors to make Canada *home*. The belief in "moral decay" and lack of rights and freedoms in Afghanistan and many Eastern countries make the interviewees see Canada as the superior nation. Thus, some interviewees attempt to distance themselves from the undesirable qualities of Afghanistan. For instance, Sherzad's contends that he "cannot" and does not identify with "Afghani culture". Likewise, Taimur notes that "I don't associate myself with a lot of Afghan traditions like to me they just don't make sense". These findings are indicative of the construction of a western "superiority" through a "clash of civilizations" discourse wherein the West represents "modernity, progress ... individualism, equality, democracy, secularism, tolerance and freedom..." while

Islamic nations have “... a backward ‘culture’ that is, at its core, undemocratic, oppressive, and violent” (Abu El-Haj, 2010, p. 245-246).

The interviewees’ discourses show three underlying impressions that seem to drive their will to belong in Canada: (1) their belief of a better life in Canada due to state-provided securities, (2) Canada as a superior nation, and (3) the opportunity to acquire the superior status for oneself. Consequently, Canada is desirable not only as a physical protective space but also as a symbolic one due to its alleged superior status. More specifically, Canada’s multiculturalism (read as tolerance by citizens), abundance of opportunities for upward social mobility, as well as its positive international reputation drives the interviewees’ desire to transform their Canadian “home” into *home*. In fact, the dominant discourse on Canada as a tolerant nation where all immigrants can succeed appeals to the interviewees to the extent that they can identify with it because they are included in this narrative and reassured there is a role for them to play in the nation building.

Canada as a Multicultural Land of Opportunities

Multiculturalism and tolerance are especially perceived as important features of Canada given generation 1.5 Afghans’ minority status and their past experiences as unwelcomed guests. Many of the interviewees equate diversity with multiculturalism by using the two terms interchangeably. Canada’s diversity is referenced by many of the interviewees in a positive manner. For instance, Taimur notes that Canada is the most diverse country in the world and that such diversity should be taken advantage of by the white and minority populations alike. Both white and minority groups can benefit from learning about each other, and it would create greater understanding between all.

We live in the most diverse country in the world, like you have that opportunity. Like I learn so much from talking to people about different things. But you can’t do that if you’re just sticking to like the Afghan community. – Taimur

Additionally, Canada is seen as a tolerant nation because of the mere fact that it is diverse. For instance, Aisha notes that Canada is increasingly becoming more “open to diversity” making her feel welcomed in talking about her background. The openness to learn about minority cultures makes the interviewees believe Canada is tolerant. However, the threshold for what counts as tolerant is fluid and subjective as the interviewees draw on their past experiences in other countries, including Afghanistan. In fact, Canada’s apparent tolerance is more pronounced for individuals who have experienced overt discrimination and racism in countries outside of Afghanistan. All of the interviewees who lived in Iran argue that Iran was not inclusive and was blatantly unaccepting of Afghans. For instance, the interviewees normalized their experiences of being subjected to racial slurs and exclusionary practices by saying “it is their country” or thinking life is necessarily filled with experiences like these. For instance, Mustafa recalls the discomfort he felt living in Iran:

So Iran in terms of being a country it’s very ... racist. Iran is definitely one of those countries where we didn’t feel comfortable. We felt uncomfortable because we never knew, we could be on the bus and someone would be like “oh Afghani terrorist, go back to your country”. “Afghani that, go back to your country”. “What are you doing here?” “You’re not welcomed into our country”. You had people throwing tomatoes at you so ... yeah. So we went through that. – Mustafa

Moreover, the interviewees who have experienced overt racism and discrimination appear to have decreased standards of “tolerance”, and to some extent already expect additional racism in Canada. This is the reason why Hamze anticipates some form of racism or discrimination in Canada. For instance, he states that:

It’s never happened to me, but it’s sort of like always in the back of your head. Right? Like it’s always there. Like what if it happens? What if it happens? What if it happens? And you’re afraid of it, but I know it’s not gonna happen ... - Hamze

When asked what makes him think he may become subject to discrimination, he says, “well it’s the fact that it’s [his name]. Like it’s Middle Eastern, you know? I dunno. It’s like everybody is a little racist, *everybody* is a little racist ...” This statement shows that there is a fear of

discrimination, but Hamze does not actually think people's prejudice will materialize given his lack of such experiences in Canada. In fact, Canada's toleration of diversity is what provides him some sense of security as a racialized Canadian. The discourse on diversity and multiculturalism is interpreted as minorities have a place within Canada that is discursively at the same level as white-Canadians.

Furthermore, Canada is conceptualized as a country with ample opportunities for success and improvement of socio-economic standing. Indeed, while almost all of the interviewees speak of financial difficulties upon arrival, as well as loss of their social status, they all believe they are in a better socio-economic standing now than they were before. For instance, Karima notes how her father worked minimum wage seven-days-a-week while Mina notes her parents went from being a teacher and engineer to banquet hall workers. Most of the interviewees speak of a rough childhood but reconcile those tough experiences with their belief in a brighter future. For example, Karima recalls having to work since her teenage years in order to help her family financially. Working reduced the time available to do better in school and have a "fun" adolescent and adult life. However, she notes she has finally "caught up" to her non-immigrant counterpart in terms of socio-economic standing as she points to having her own house, car and stable profession.

The opportunity for upward social mobility is believed to not only be the result state-provided securities, but also because of the population's tolerance of diversity. These perceptions demonstrate the extent to which the interviewees' have faith in Canada's multicultural reputation. In fact, the interviewees do not see their immigrant background, ethnic background, religion, or gender as limiting factors in their pursuit of success. They also do not see any difference between what they can achieve and what their non-immigrant counterpart can achieve in Canada (for the most part). For instance, Abdullah notes that:

Anyone has the chance of becoming anything. You don't have to be from a certain background or a certain financial background or anything to be a certain person. If you want to be a lawyer, a doctor, the school's doors are open for you as well as someone who is a millionaire. - Abdullah

This is in sharp contrast to the perceived reality of other western countries. For instance, another interviewee makes comparisons between Canada, Sweden and Germany arguing that opportunities are more secured in Canada than in those countries where there is a difference in how minorities are treated by the public. The placement of Canada as superior to even other western nations due to its alleged benevolent treatment of immigrants was noted by scholars including Mackey (1999) and Thobani (2007). Being able to achieve success, or have the opportunity to seek it, makes the interviewees believe they belong in Canada. For instance, Mina highlights the desirability of Canada by pointing to friends who re-located from Sweden to Canada in hopes of a better life.

I have friends that moved from Sweden, like Afghans. And they never felt Swedish. Whereas in Canada, I'm a Canadian whether anyone likes it or not. You know? Opportunities are the same for me as anyone else. – Mina

Likewise, Hamze draws distinctions between the United States' "melting pot" approach as opposed to Canada's acceptance of diversity wherein his differences are valued:

...it's not a melting pot. It's like the other thing, it's a quilt. You are who you are, and you're special in your own way. But you're still adding something to it. And it's like one big giant piece. And it just gets added, and it becomes better. – Hamze

Thus, the interviewees see Canada as a land filled with limitless opportunities for all because they believe in a fair and just society where success depends on merit, and not on race or ethnicity. Not only do these perceptions help the interviewees not feel "out-of-place" as they work to improve their lives, but it also informs their desire to seek membership in the superior nation. In fact, the interviewees generally expressed gratitude for having a chance to live in Canada,

especially when they compare their life in Canada to what it could have been in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

How did I get lucky to be here when people are dying [in Afghanistan]? People are starving, people are on the streets. What made God say [Mina] is gonna be in Canada, and she's gonna live this life, she's gonna be free to do what she wants? Whereas Gul Babul is gonna be living [in Afghanistan] begging on the streets." – Mina

Canada as a "World-Class" Nation

The interviewees' discussions of Canada demonstrate their belief of Canada being a superior, or "world-class" nation. In fact, some of the interviewees recall their excitement to migrate to Canada. Evidently, not only were these interviewees excited to improve their material condition by moving to Canada, but they also (initially) interpreted their migration as joining an elite nation. For instance, Aisha recalls her excitement to migrate to Canada as she thought it would be the equivalent of a "golden palace" or "paradise" in comparison to the life her and her family were living in Iran.

It was exciting. Cuz my whole life everyone was talking about [abroad]. Which is basically like in my imagination it was like just like a palace cuz we weren't treated that well in Iran. And obviously farming is not an easy job so it was tough. And I had this image in my mind of just like paradise basically. – Aisha

She continues by saying that as a child she was under the impression that people living in western countries were "rich" and well-off.

I thought of it as a hot palace not as a really cold place. It was still like I still wasn't disappointed when I realized nothing looked like what I had imagined it would be. But like – cuz it was kind of good in its own way. Like Iran is kind of dirty and dusty and the buildings aren't fully – like they're made out of – like the house I lived was made out of mud and bricks but like and what I imagined was this huge golden palace and like it was hot and people were like I dunno clean and rich looking. – Aisha

Similarly, Abdullah recalls how he too was excited to migrate to Canada saying, "India is a great place to live – it's great people, a great country. But in terms of world class, Canada is a – it's slightly higher and I *actually* recognized that at that age". The perception of Canada as superior

plays a significant role in the interviewees' gratitude toward Canada, and their desire to make it *home*. Beyond a superior economic system, Canada's supposed multicultural feature alongside its respect for international treaties regarding human rights is argued to make it "world-class".

The alleged superiority of Canada can also be seen from the value of holding a Canadian passport. More specifically, a Canadian passport allows individuals to cross borders with more ease as opposed to the stringent rules applied to "third world" citizens. In fact, Canadian citizens are able to travel to most countries without needing a VISA unlike citizens of Middle Eastern countries whose *request* for travel must first be approved by the designated country's immigration agency. In this sense, a Canadian passport is useful for its ability to avoid some of the restrictions put in place as part of managing undesirable populations' mobility. A Canadian citizenship formalized through the issuance of a Canadian passport provides the interviewees with access to the "world-class" group and allows them to legally identify with the "superior civilization", as opposed to the deprived and "backward" Middle East. The following quote demonstrates the value of a Canadian passport, but also underestimates the increased securitization of brown bodies at airports and land crossings due to "war on terror" initiatives.

You can go anywhere, you're Canadian. Your life starts now. You have the freedom to go anywhere with that thing. "Oh yeah, he's Canadian". Nobody will say anything, everything will say in your file than this person is Canadian. So I won't be having issues let's say if I go travelling in United States or Europe. They would check my passport as Canadian. – Faissal

Concluding Remarks

This chapter shows that generation 1.5 Afghans are not in exile despite their complex relationship to *home* and homeland. In fact, the interviewees' ambivalent sense of home confirms the findings in the literature that immigrants often feel connected to multiple spaces but do not fully belonging in either (Liu, 2014; Robles-Llana, 2018; Wang & Collins, 2016). In order to work toward a brighter future in Canada, the interviewees engage in homemaking as a way of feeling

more comfortable and attached to Canada. Homemaking for generation 1.5 Afghans depends heavily on their legal status as Canadians. More specifically, legal citizenship facilitates the interviewees' homemaking journey through its provision of rights, services, freedoms while also providing them with hopes of Canada being a future *home* through opportunities and tolerance. Through perceived equal protection under the law, legal citizenship provides the interviewees with passive belonging in the sense that they are in fact recognized as Canadian citizens by the state and have the corresponding rights. The interviewees generally express gratitude for being "claimed" by Canada. For instance, Hamze says "I am basically grateful to Canada for claiming me as a Canadian". Thus, a legal citizenship is experienced as being legally "claimed" by the state, suggesting the state will provide and protect. For these reasons, the interviewees rely heavily on their legal citizenship as proof of their belonging *in* Canada. While the findings of this thesis has thus far demonstrated a desire to belong by generation 1.5 Afghans, the next chapter examines the quality of their sense of belonging and the ways in which they attempt to belong *to* Canada through assimilation, integration, and identity constructions.

CHAPTER V: AFGHANS AS (UN)CLAIMED CANADIANS

Generation 1.5 Afghans feel Canada is their “home” but continue to work on strengthening their attachments in Canada, while attempting to change *Canadians*’²⁴ perception on Afghans as non-Canadians. This chapter discusses the interviewees’ conditional belonging in Canada and how that encourages them to engage in strategies to gain acceptance from *Canadians*. While the interviewees have formal belonging through legal citizenship, a deep sense of a belonging is dependent on being claimed by *Canadians*. In this chapter, I demonstrate how belonging *in* Canada through the creation of “home” does not equate to belonging *to* Canada, where Canada is *home*. As Hage (1998) notes, legal citizenship does not equate to national belonging because acceptance is carried out by those with governmental belonging through everyday practices. In order to belong *to* Canada, the interviewees need to have the legitimate national identity *and* be accepted by *Canadians*. Then, they can acquire full citizenship and have the same level of entitlement in determining future policies (Ali, 2008). The interviewees struggle with achieving acceptance due to their non-whiteness. In fact, neither functional integration nor legal status can help one acquire whiteness because it is a quality designated at birth, yet it is a core part of “Canadianness”. For instance, one interviewee questions how many generations she has to spend in Canada for her to be considered Canadian, asking, “so would my kids or grandkids be Canadian?” To understand how the interviewees experience belonging, the first section examines how their belonging is challenged through notions of whiteness followed by how strategies of belonging are utilized to acquire national belonging to Canada. The second section examines the ways in which the

²⁴ The use of *Canadian* refers to Canadians who can claim whiteness by essence, typically those with English, or Western European descent. On the contrary, the use of Canadian without italics refers to any Canadian citizen irrespective of their ethnic background.

interviewees construct hybrid and political identities as part of their homemaking journey in ways that disrupt the hegemonic boundaries of belonging to Canada.

Experiences of (Be)longing to Canada

The Afghan “Other” in White Canada

Challenges to one’s sense of belonging limit the extent to which the interviewees can experience national belonging. The interviewees’ experiences within national spaces demonstrate their construction as “others” by those with governmental belonging. In fact, the interviewees’ identities as Canadians and as legitimate national subjects are challenged by spatial managers who express overt and subtle disapproval of the interviewees. In other instance, the interviewees’ internalization of whiteness as valuable limit their ability to experience a deeper sense of belonging, thereby undermining their own psychological citizenship. These challenges stem from internalized ideas about what it means to be a “Canadian”,²⁵ racist encounters with *Canadians*, and feeling like they cannot access national spaces with ease. The occurrence of these challenges demonstrates the unstable sense of belonging experienced by the interviewees wherein they are longing to belong to Canada.

Firstly, a lack of psychological citizenship can be noted from the language the interviewees use when describing *Canadians*. While legal citizenship in Canada has been granted, the title and status of *Canadian* is reserved for individuals who fit within the constructed national image. These individuals are Western-European descendants who have a *Canadian* accent and lead a “western lifestyle”. These *Canadians* have governmental belonging; they have the power to claim or refuse to claim others as belonging to Canada. For instance, many interviewees recall having been told they do not “look” Canadian when they have attempted to assert a Canadian identity. Hence, they

²⁵ “Canadian” is used to refer to the Canadian national identity which is informed by whiteness.

express a general lack of confidence in their belonging as Canadians because they are not claimed by *Canadians* as one of theirs.

In fact, the interviewees understanding of “Canadianness” reinforces notions of whiteness. In the national field, whiteness serves as the ultimate symbolic capital which allow carriers of whiteness to naturally and automatically be imagined as legitimate *Canadians*; thereby holding governmental belonging. This is the case because Canada is imagined as a space of whiteness, a “white nation”, wherein the national identity relies on whiteness (Mackey, 1999; Anderson, 1991). For instance, the interviewees note that *Canadians* are those with European ancestry and white skin. Whiteness as “Canadianness” reproduces Canada as a white nation, thereby excluding racialized immigrants from national imaginations of “us”. In fact, whiteness allows white immigrants to become *Canadians* while serving as a barrier to belonging for racialized immigrants. The internalization of the dominant discourse on “Canadianness” has resulted in the interviewees identifying as part of the “us” in minority populations, as opposed to the “us” of the wider national community.

The value of whiteness is reflected in Mustafa’s discussions on how Russian immigrants are not recognized as immigrants because of their white skin until they speak with a visibly Russian accent, unlike his own external recognition as an immigrant because of his tanned skin. He notes how he is not seen as an authentic *Canadian* because he does not have “white skin, blue eyes and blond hair”. Taimur also notes he does not belong to Canada because he is not *Canadian* due to his non-white skin:

I dunno. It’s hard to say cuz like here you know, like here in Canada cuz technically I am not white, I am not *Canadian*, I don’t really fit in right. Cuz in this sense, I am technically still an immigrant. I am foreigner. – Taimur

The “normalizing” power of whiteness (Mackey 1999; Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007) can be noted from Taimur’s understanding that without being white, Canadians are still “foreigners” and

“immigrants”. Taimur’s lack of white skin prevents him from “fitting-in” with *Canadians*. This suggests that interviewees such as Taimur have internalized the hegemonic national identity which perpetuates the misconception that white settlers are *the* (and sole) legitimate Canadians, making all non-white Canadians “foreigners” to the land. The white settler *Canadian* is then able to exercise governmental belonging over non-white Canadians. Through equating non-whiteness to foreignness to the land, racialized Canadians’ claim of belonging to Canada becomes delegitimized.

Beyond white skin, *Canadians* are also believed to have a specific accent. The importance of a correct accent has been noted by several scholars in their discussions of national belonging (Simonsen, 2018; Hage, 1998; Charsley & Bolognani, 2016). Without the correct accent, one’s belonging to Canada can be challenged because it is another marker of being the “other” or the (inferior) “foreigner”. The importance of a *Canadian* accent was brought up by Faissal who argues that the correct accent helps individuals claim a Canadian identity more easily, thereby achieving a stronger sense of belonging. Therefore, speaking English and more importantly, speaking with the right accent are conditions to belonging to Canada where if you speak with an accent it is perceived as a language barrier by *Canadians*.

Let’s say if your accent is more, if you’re speaking the Canadian way or your English is better they will think you have lived in Canada for a while. But let’s say if you came from back home and your living in Canada for a couple of years somebody will think “oh you’re not Canadian at this point because of your language barrier”. – Faissal

A similar argument was made by Sherzad who notes how his accent serves as a barrier to belonging to Canada. Despite Sherzad’s insistence that he is solely Canadian and not Afghan-Canadian, he feels “un-Canadian” when he perceives judgement for his non-*Canadian* accent. Sherzad’s accent limits his ability to be claimed as a Canadian by those who are believed to have the authority to decide on the boundaries of belonging to Canada. Sherzad’s focus on his accent

highlights two elements of belonging. In order to feel a sense of belonging, not only does one have to feel like a Canadian but they must also feel that they are accepted as a Canadian by those with governmental belonging. Hence, his accent works as a discrediting capital that further exposes his non-whiteness, and therefore his “un-Canadianness”.

Having an accent makes me feel un-Canadian ... it makes me feel like I don't belong in this country ... it makes me feel like no matter how hard I try I will never be able to get rid of this accent. When people notice my – when I come across people and they say uh “where are you from?” and I tell them “oh I am from here”. And they say “oh no no, I am not asking in that way. I am asking where were you born because you have a visible accent” ... When that accent comes out, it makes me feel like I shouldn't talk. It makes me feel like I shouldn't say that word anymore - Sherzad

Moreover, the interviewees speak of their Canadian belonging and identity in an ambivalent manner as a result of feeling unclaimed by *Canadians*. For instance, detached language is used when explaining how Canada has rights and freedoms, or how Canada is tolerant as opposed to saying “we” are tolerant, or “we” have rights and freedoms in Canada. The interviewees' unsecured Canadian identity can also be noted from their use of justifications when asserting a Canadian identity. For instance, the terms “I guess” or using one's length of stay in Canada to support one's Canadian identity is often used. In these cases, psychological citizenship does not appear to have been achieved as the interviewees feel the need to demonstrate their belonging to Canada, as opposed to automatically being viewed and feeling like they belong to Canada.

Furthermore, not all “differences” are tolerated or allowed to push the boundaries of “Canadianness”. Consequently, pressures are exerted for individuals to adopt “white” norms and culture in order to be accepted. For instance, while Canada is presented as accepting of differences, the issue of the hijab and what it represents comes up in discussions of belonging and acceptance. For Aisha, wearing the hijab sparked feelings of difference and not belonging given the lack of

hijabis²⁶ at her school and her belief that nobody wanted to associate with her because she wore a hijab. She notes how her hijab was used to exclude her:

I wasn't allowed to play soccer once cuz I had the hijab. Not like I wasn't allowed, like I was allowed but the kids were like "no you can't play. Your headscarf will get in the way and it's not fair" and whatever, I was like okay. It wasn't a big deal but they used my hijab as like a reason why I couldn't play. – Aisha

Aisha states that her schoolmates did not "allow" her to play with them by using her hijab as an excuse. Aisha's schoolmates were able to act as spatial managers of the soccer field; thereby dictating who can participate and whether one can *exist* in the field. She also notes that Islam was not welcomed in her school, and she received judgmental "looks" for observing the holy month of Ramadan while in school. She recalls experiences of being called a terrorist and being bullied for being Muslim. Moreover, she says she was pitied by her white teachers because they thought she was being oppressed by her religion. These experiences made her resent her culture.

Yeah it wasn't nice and like whenever I'd have to – like when I'd have to pray and fast in middle school cuz I was excited cuz I grew up in Iran where everybody else wore the hijab and prayed, I was excited to do it cuz I was eight years old so that was the time to start and um like teachers just looked down at me. And they looked at me with pity cuz they were like "oh this poor little child, like she doesn't have – her mom's making her fast. Her mom's making her leave class and pray". You know? It kind of all just added to me just feeling different already and then being treated differently because of it. – Aisha

Aisha's experiences as a hijabi demonstrates how the hijab continues to be constructed as a marker of difference, or as an "embodiment of the 'other'" (Perry, 2013; Fekete, 2004) that does not fit within the national imaginations of the Canadian "us". In other words, the hijab symbolizes membership to a different group, one that does not fall within the constructed Canadian national identity. While Canada is a free society that allows the freedom of expression and religion, the decision to exercise that freedom is constrained by societal reactions informed by ideas of legitimate belonging and Canadian identity. Therefore, the freedom of expression and choice are

²⁶ The term "hijabi" refers to a woman who wears hijab. "Hijabis" is the plural form.

undermined by the national imagination of Canada as a white, Judeo-Christian nation. Hijabi women then are not granted with national belonging by those with governmental belonging. This point is made by Aisha when she explains how her mother is often subject to suspicious looks in grocery stores because of her hijab.

They see people, women as oppressed and they see them as like a lot of ethnic people refuse to be assimilated into the Canadian culture and so they're kind of confused as to what they're gonna buy or what are they here for. Or what business do they have in this situation or this area. – Aisha

Additionally, getting suspicious looks in public spaces, or somewhere like a grocery store where individuals from every background are expected to be found suggests that some are seen as having “no business” in such spaces. These public spaces, whether it is the grocery store or the soccer field, represent the broader Canadian landscape. While Canada is diverse, it is nonetheless a space of whiteness where there is some degree of expectation of “others” to try and become white. Hence, national spaces are not imagined as containing these Islamic differences, nor are these differences welcomed. Consequently, the existence of difference that falls outside of the white norm is met with resistance by *Canadians*, even if it is merely expressed through their national gaze suggesting that such differences are unnatural or unwelcomed in national spaces. This is the case because “others” are judged and ranked by the norms of whiteness (Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007), and how much they have adopted whiteness (Winter, 2015).

The national gaze is especially critical of “Islamic” differences because of the assumption that visibly Muslim immigrants do not wish to be integrated within Canadian society and are therefore “bad multicultural subjects” (Winter, 2015). In these instances, the sporting of a hijab is conflated with Muslim women’s lack of integration, a “betrayal of multiculturalism” (Ahmed, 2000). This shows that in order to be claimed by those with governmental belonging, immigrants must display their on-going efforts of “looking” and “acting” like *Canadians*. This is more

pronounced for Muslims given their construction as the “antithesis” of the West (Jackson, 2005; Razack, 2005), and as immigrants most in need of “cultural compliance” (Khosravi, 2012; Winter, 2014). By understanding the hijab as a marker of difference, Aisha’s psychological citizenship is threatened as she feels her mother is not accepted by those with governmental belonging. This also puts her sense of belonging in jeopardy.

Similarly, Mina’s experiences made her resent her religion and ethnicity after 9/11 when she was routinely targeted by schoolmates and one specific teacher. She notes how she began to feel different and inferior, causing her to retreat from participating in after-school clubs in order to become less visible at school. Mina’s differences were reconstructed as dangerous and non-Canadian through the association of Afghans and Islam to 9/11. Therefore, instead of feeling comfortable expressing her differences she was resentful of them. For instance, she says:

After 9/11 I did not want to be a Muslim. I was in grade 7 when that happened. And a lot of racism came out of that. I was such a proud Muslim, I’m Afghan, everybody knew who I was. So I was getting a lot of hate even though I was one of the really good soccer players on the team, so I was like the cool girl you know? Suddenly I went to like “she’s Muslim, she’s Afghan. And she killed all those people”. – Mina

9/11 also changed the way Taimur was treated at school and continues to be treated in public spaces, including public transportation. For instance, he recalls instances where he receives remarks such as “Osama bin Laden is your uncle” and suspicious looks on buses. These are by-products of 9/11 which Taimur continues to deal with daily. Moreover, he expresses frustration in how the coverage of terrorist events world-wide continuously reproduce Muslims as threats, making his sense of belonging even more unsecured. For instance, he notes the following:

You know, just when you think it’s like – “ah – hey it’s settling down”, one guy pops up and does something stupid. And you get people who come up and say “oh this guy was ISIS right?” and I go “oh is he? I didn’t know, cuz I am not an ISIS”. You know what I mean? “Cool, okay”. It just doesn’t go away. – Taimur

Dealing with Muslim and Afghan stereotypes pertaining to terrorism has left Taimur uncomfortable in spaces where he is the only visible minority. This is the case because he anticipates some judgement from *Canadians*, even if it is not verbalized to him by them. These feelings of difference and judgment make it so that Taimur does not feel Canadian because he is not *Canadian*. In this sense, the “war on terror” discourse plays a significant role in how the interviewees think they are viewed by others. Undoubtedly, these ideas inform one’s understanding of their treatment by others, ultimately limiting the extent to which they can develop psychological citizenship. Without psychological citizenship, the interviewees do not feel as comfortable occupying national spaces and feeling like they have *right* to occupy them. These experiences demonstrate the inability of “multiculturalism” to produce a more inclusive society, especially given the coexistence of “tolerance” *and* divisive discourses of Muslim inferiority. For this reason, individuals identifying as Afghan or Muslim are more likely to feel pressured in reconstructing their identities in order to feel accepted by those with governmental belonging.

Beyond the “war on terror” discourse, the interviewees are generally aware of how Afghanistan and Afghans are viewed by the Western world. For instance, Afghans being viewed as oppressed, uneducated, and backwards was brought up by some of the interviewees. Those who identify as Afghan in some way, or are recognized as Afghan by *Canadians*, think they face barriers to acceptance given the negative construction of Afghanistan and Afghans. In fact, Sara notes that the media plays a role in the dissemination of false ideas about Afghanistan and Afghans:

It’s not necessarily how it’s seen in terms of Western world where we always just assume that they so barbaric and so backwards, and you know they have nothing good going for them because that’s usually what we’re shown in the media news. – Sara

Being constituted as the “inferior other” makes the interviewees feel different and unaccepted by *Canadians*. For this reason, the interviewees recall experiences of feeling hesitant in expressing their Afghan heritage. For instance, several interviewees referenced the discomfort

they felt in pulling out their Afghan meal during lunch in grade-school. The desire to fit-in made some interviewees hyperaware of their ethnic and cultural differences because they believed these differences would set them apart from their classmates, thereby making them stand out negatively.

Failed attempts at securing employment within the public service also fuelled an unstable sense of belonging for some interviewees. More specifically, these interviewees questioned their ability to claim a Canadian identity when they were unsuccessful in becoming public servants. For instance, Hamze questioned whether he was not hired because of his Muslim name. Hamze's Muslim name served as a barrier to belonging when he thought *Canadians* might use it as a basis for exclusion. Likewise, Sherzad believed he was not hired because he was not *Canadian* enough.

It comes back to the idea that maybe I'm not Canadian because of my accent, because of my skin colour or because the way how I talk to people or anything, whatever the case may be it leads you back into thinking you're probably not Canadian. And that's why you're not getting this job – Sherzad

Similarly, Aisha recalls her young-self wishing to take off her hijab in the future because she did not see the legal field as a multicultural space accepting of Islamic differences:

I just had been thinking about it since high school. I never really saw myself wearing a hijab in the future, like in a job cuz I always saw myself as a lawyer and every time I would watch a movie with lawyers, the women would be wearing pantsuit and their hair would be perfectly styled and stuff – like it's super small, it's such a small thing but it really just – I couldn't see myself as a hijabi in the future – Aisha

The importance of displaying the correct national identity is paramount in being claimed by *Canadians*. The failure to adequately display this identity puts the interviewees at risk of being excluded or discriminated against. The interviewees' stories show that those with governmental belonging can limit the extent to which the interviewees can access various national spaces with ease. These spaces include grocery stores, soccer fields, school settings, professional fields, and public transportation. In the end, not “looking” and “acting” *Canadian* means that the interviewees

may be denied acceptance by *Canadians*, complicating homemaking as they are being made to feel not at-home.

These insights demonstrate how Canada is not *home* for the interviewees. Without being able to be themselves (Gallegos, 2019; Jacobson, 2010; Tucker, 1994) or exist in national spaces in an “unselfconscious way” (Graham & Khosravi, 1997) with ease (Tucker, 1994), Canada remains “home” without becoming *home*. Indeed, feeling the need to reconstruct their differences demonstrates their lack of acceptances and inability to express themselves with ease in national spaces thereby not feeling accepted by *Canadians* and not belonging to Canada. Therefore, in order to keep their sense of belonging intact, some interviewees minimize their encounters of discrimination and lower their standards for how they think racialized minorities are treated by *Canadians*. For instance, racist jokes are not taken as “hating” but as comedy and a common activity to engage in according to Taimur, or as a reflection of the alleged broader reality that everybody is racist to some extent according to Hamze. Likewise, Mina explicitly notes that she expects more from minorities in terms of not being ignorant, than she does of white nationals because of their shared (yet different) histories of oppression. In this way, the interviewees do not feel hurt by these encounters, but rather see it as a normal occurrence in Canada.

Likewise, Faissal notes how the existence of diversity inherently invites racism as some individuals will feel superior to others. He also hesitates to label his personal racist encounters with *Canadians* as racist. In another discussion, he notes that Arabs, Pakistani and Indian people all face this issue. In fact, the perception of such exclusionary practices against visible minorities as widespread is used to normalize it, thereby minimizing the harms produced.

I usually don't take it so seriously. When people say uh “you should go back to your country”, I simply ask them “Canada is my home so....” I don't want to say the word discriminating or racist, but I understand everyone faces that – Faissal

The normalization of racist encounters excuses *Canadians* for their ignorance and actions but does not grant the same leniency to minorities. This tendency is closely related to how the interviewees developed resentment toward their own culture, religion and origins as opposed to directing their anger or resentment toward *Canadians* who sparked these feelings. The normalization of racism can be understood as a form of symbolic violence wherein the dominance of whiteness becomes misrecognized as natural because they are perceived as truly belonging to Canada. For this reason, whiteness serving as pre-condition for governmental belonging also becomes naturalized. Hence, the interviewees experience a lower level of belonging characterized by their vulnerability to (in)tolerance by *Canadians*. In other words, the interviewees' differences are tolerated so long as it does not undermine the whiteness of the nation. The fact that tolerance is a choice as noted by Hage (1998), means that immigrants are never fully stable in their position, nor are they secured in their level of belonging.

The normalization of such practices also fails to recognize that while everyone may hold prejudice, racism can only be acted by those in some position of power. Therefore, as generation 1.5 racialized immigrants, the interviewees do not hold as much power to act on their prejudice. Consequently, the interviewees protect their sense of belonging by denying the extent to which such practices have exclusionary and racist undertones, especially given their past experiences of discrimination in other countries. Thus, they interpret diversity and the official rhetoric of multiculturalism as a proof of tolerance. More specifically, these experiences and the existence of rights granted by the state serve to counterbalance racist encounters wherein negative experiences are not interpreted as intolerance.

Multiculturalism then does not eliminate power imbalances between immigrants and *Canadians*. Immigrants are put in a position where their belonging must be tolerated by those with

governmental belonging, namely *Canadians*. Needing toleration shows that this population is not envisioned as part of the “us” through hegemonic discourses of “Canadianness”. Likewise, the interviewees do not see themselves as part of the greater “us” in Canada because they have internalized hegemonic understandings of Canadian identity and legitimate belonging. In other words, the interviewees do not feel included within the hegemonic construction of “Canadian” national identity, thereby limiting the extent to which they can occupy national spaces comfortably and feeling accepted by *Canadians*.

Negotiating (Be)longing

Given the fact that the interviewees are not natural carriers of whiteness, they engage in various strategies to strengthen their sense of belonging to Canada. The extent to which they are accepted and tolerated by *Canadians* depends on: (1) how well they can minimize the assumed differences between themselves and *Canadians*, (2) how well they can convince *Canadians* that their differences are not inferior or dangerous, and (3) how successful they are in acquiring symbolic capital that can be used for national belonging. These three strategies exhibit how the interviewees are longing to belong and working to belong, as opposed to simply belonging. Belonging to Canada then is a process that requires the interviewees to take an active role in (potentially) achieving it.

Firstly, the primary way by which the interviewees claim a sense of belonging to Canada is through residence and citizenship in Canada. In fact, many of the interviewees note that when questions of “where are you from?” arise, their answer is “Canada” or the specific city they reside in. The interviewees do not identify with being “from” Afghanistan. In this sense their “home” as Canada is used as a strategy of belonging because the interviewees argue that both their “home” and the “home” of *Canadians* is the same space. In fact, by differentiating between where one was

born and where they are “from”, the interviewees suggest that they are not different from *Canadians* because they have both been socialized in Canada. For instance, Abdullah says:

In order to get to the Afghan part, you have to ask me where I was born otherwise the answer is Canada, Mississauga, GTA. “What do you mean where am I from?” “I am from here. I live here.” But like okay, if you say where were you born, I’d say I was born in Afghanistan. So to me once again it’s about home. – Abdullah

Likewise, Taimur makes a similar argument.

When they don’t say “what’s your background?” and say “where are you from?” right, it’s like what do you mean exactly where am I from? Cuz like to me, I am from Brampton like now, I live in Brampton. - Taimur

Nevertheless, a Canadian residence and citizenship has been proven to be inadequate in securing acceptance and belonging to Canada. More specifically, this strategy has been limited in its ability to minimize the differences between themselves and *Canadians*. Hence, the interviewees also act as educators to *Canadians*. Ultimately, by minimizing the differences between Afghans and the western world, the interviewees are able to display their cultural capital as transferrable to Canadian society, thereby strengthening their belonging to Canada. In other words, by showing that their cultural capital is valuable or equivalent in “Canadianness”, the interviewees may achieve acceptance from *Canadians*. Mina and Sara in particular minimize the differences between Canada and Afghanistan by referencing the pre-Soviet invasion Afghanistan where people were free to practice the religion of their choice, and women were not required/pressured to follow dress codes. For instance, Sara associates extremism in Afghanistan with the immigration trend of educated Afghans fleeing to western countries. This suggests that extremism is a class issue, as opposed to an Afghan issue. Likewise, Mina routinely challenges co-workers’ misconceptions of Afghanistan:

“Like have you ever looked at Afghanistan?” He’s like “now you guys have buildings”. I was like “I was born in a building. Like what do you mean?” So I had to go back and I was sending him like documents from back in the days when women actually wore miniskirts,

like my aunts wore miniskirts and went to New Year's Eve partying just like in Canada. – Mina

Secondly, the interviewees attempt to show *Canadians* that their differences are not inferior and can therefore be used as way of securing national belonging. This strategy is meant to expand the boundaries of belonging by convincing *Canadians* that non-inferior differences can and should be included within the national imaginations of “Canadianness”. The school emerged as a major field in which the interviewees negotiated their differences in order to feel accepted. In fact, fitting-in in the school setting is crucial for newly migrated racialized minorities because most of their day is spent at school. In the case of Aisha, being smart in math and speaking fluent English strengthened her belonging as she realized she was academically smarter than her white Canadian-born classmates. Her academic fluency was used to counterbalance her status as a racialized immigrant. These experiences suggest that immigrant children feel pressures to prove their belonging through skills, as opposed to feeling accepted without any effort.

That's how I thought about it. And that kind of helped me feel like better about myself and like belonging in that school because I felt like obviously I was proving something to them cuz they'd never seen anyone look like me and have – and be fluent in English. – Aisha

Another interviewee suggests that the onus is on Afghan communities to integrate as means of acquiring acceptance from *Canadians*. Taimur asserts that immigrant populations should step-up and “be a little Canadian” by speaking English and not only associating with other Afghans. Speaking English and being “Canadian” by having a diverse group of friends are seen as correct cultural capitals. This view reinforces the idea of “Canadianness” where white nationals are automatically *Canadian* but minorities have to “look” and “act” “Canadian” in order to be tolerated and eventually be claimed by them. By extension, this practice reproduces hierarchies of belonging based on whiteness.

The interviewees attempt to acquire skills and qualities that are “Canadian” or are seen as beneficial in designating belonging to Canada. *Correct* cultural capital acquisition suggests that the capital already held by the interviewees are not seen as valuable, or as useful in their integration or assimilation attempts within Canadian society. Thus, some of the interviewees operate under the belief that there are intolerable differences between them and the general white population, and they believe that the general white population sees these same differences. Hence, the interviewees seek cultural capital that would be recognized as symbolic capital in the national field, which can then be used to claim national belonging.

The acquisition of “Canadian” cultural capital could be seen in the interviewees’ choice of entertainment and preference in leisure activities. In fact, many interviewees note how they are “white-washed” because they exercise their right to choose, especially when their choices are not in-line with Afghan cultural norms. For instance, even though Taimur notes he is not *Canadian* because he does not have white skin, he says he is white “within”:

Within I’m white – I have a lot of, like I grew up here and I grew up around lots of white people so I got a little bit of that like – I got “white-washed” you know. The things I like I really red-neck, you know I like hunting, I like fishing, I like all these redneck type things, so when people go like “what do you like to do?” I say all these things and they say “are you sure you’re Brown?” That’s what people tell me (chuckles). You know what I mean? So like when they say “where are you from?” “Well, I am from Afghanistan but I was raised here so I’m pretty white.” That’s what I tell ‘em. – Taimur

Acquiring the desirable cultural capital entails some level of assimilation as they wish to replace their Afghan cultural capital with “Canadian” ones in an attempt to minimize the differences between themselves and *Canadians*. It is important to note that the project of belonging does not conclude with the succession of “correct” amount of capital and assimilation, but rather the interviewees continuously re-evaluate their decisions and re-position themselves in Canadian society as their exposure to “Canadian” culture and Afghan culture fluctuates. For this reason, some of the interviewees recalled more overt attempts of assimilation as children, given the fact

that they wanted to fit-in at school, and then being able to comfortably express their own cultural heritage as adults. This is closely related to the interviewees' homemaking journeys given that the ultimate goal is to feel more at-home thereby feeling a stronger sense of belonging. Consequently, both homemaking and belonging are on-going projects which adapt to the changing needs and views of the interviewees.

Some of the assimilationist tactics adopted by the interviewees as children include actively working to make their accent more "Canadian", altering the spelling of their name to sound more "white", and opting for more "Canadian-style" lunch such as peanut butter and jelly sandwich as opposed to typical curry-type Afghan meals. Cultural capital is also acquired (both consciously and unconsciously) through the development of skills in sports and intelligence in school to fit-in better. These capitals made the interviewees more "popular" in school and helped them build friendships which were used to develop a sense of belonging.

For Sherzad, perfecting his accent continues to be the primary means by which he attempts to be accepted by *Canadians* and be able to connect to others. He notes "...I just wanna uhh erase all those differences and I just wanna umm sort of find a sense of belonging in this country". By "erasing" differences through acquiring "Canadian" cultural capital, he wishes to belong to Canada.

So when I talk to my peers, my friends who are born here and they have no accent, I just look at them, I just try to you know try to focus on the way they talk, so I can copy the way how they talk. And sometimes it doesn't work. Other times what happens is that I try to watch shows, *Canadian* shows, and I try to carefully focus on how they talk, their dialect and tone, so I can copy them. – Sherzad

The need *and* attempt to fit-in can also be seen from Aisha's decision to take off her hijab. Aisha saw her hijab as an impediment to becoming a lawyer due to the lack of hijabi women present in that profession. Hence, perceptions of belonging or being "out-of-place" are important in how individuals see their professional future selves, and which fields they think they can occupy.

In other words, unlike previous discussions on equal opportunity, Aisha's experiences shed light on the importance of representation and tolerance in elite professions. Whereas, different skin tones are tolerated, the hijab is "too" different to be tolerated in the legal field. Likewise, the hijab was also barrier to belonging in the academic field where she recalls feeling ignored, until she took off her hijab. Blending-in by removing her hijab gave Aisha the confidence to participate more in classroom discussions. In other words, minimizing differences allowed her to occupy spaces within the academic field with more ease and confidence.

I went through the first semester of university and I just kind of felt ignored, especially in program, there was no other hijabis in my program. Or in any of my classes and there were like 400, 300 people in my classes ...And after first semester I was like I want to see what happens if I were to look different and then I took it off and people noticed me. And professors called on me more, I was more confident. I think that's it, I saw myself as being more confident rather than people actually noticing I changed. – Aisha

Acquired cultural capital can also help the interviewees increase *Canadians'* tolerance or acceptance of their family members. By taking up some "Canadianness", the interviewees can increase the level of acceptance afforded to their family members through their association with them. For instance, being "educated" and being "eloquent" by western standards can help Aisha strengthen her mother's acceptance/tolerance by *Canadians*. Aisha notes that her mother often receives suspicious looks in public spaces as a hijabi, *until* Aisha is seen with her. Aisha points to her "arm full of tattoos" and western clothing style as the reason for the change in attitude of *Canadians*. For instance, she says:

...when I'm out with my mom and people would kind of treat *her* wrong, I have the ability as someone who like isn't – doesn't wear the hijab but I'm like a fully educated woman who's like eloquent and I know what I stand for, I can use to that to kind of stand up for her in situations like that. Like I feel proud knowing that she – like people make fun of her but I'm a product of her. – Aisha

While these strategies of belonging are utilized to gain acceptance from *Canadians*, they are limited in the ability to eventually secure unconditional belonging because legitimate belonging

still relies on notions of whiteness. Not being natural carriers of whiteness excludes the interviewees from being included in the national imaginations of “us”, and therefore make Canada *home* for themselves. Thus, the construction of hybrid and political identities are used as additional homemaking strategies that bridge the gap between “us” and “others” and blur the boundaries of belonging. This is explored in the next section.

The Construction of Identities in Liminality

The interviewees’ liminality adds additional complexities in the politics of belonging as they struggle to determine their identities, and how these identities fit within hegemonic expectations of them as Afghans and as Canadians. The interviewees’ experiences have thus far demonstrated their liminal position as immigrants without a definitive state of belonging who have partial ties to two cultures.²⁷ The identities constructed by the interviewees are informed by their exposure to two cultures, but also through their desire to belong to Canada. Thus, this section first discusses the ways in which the interviewees develop hybrid and fluid identities as a result of their liminality, followed by how these identities allow them to resist and challenge national imaginations of “Canadianness” thereby promoting Canadians as a political community as opposed to a national community.

The (Re)Production of an Afghan-Canadian Identity

Many of the interviewees feel internal and external pressures to express different identities depending on the social space they find themselves in and the group they are interacting with. More specifically, the interviewees feel pressures to remain Afghan but also feel pressures to be

²⁷ While the notion of culture is intrinsically problematic given its essentializing tendencies (Lambek & Boddy, 1997), I use emic categories throughout this thesis to present insider perspectives. In doing so, I am using categories created by the interviewees and not claiming that these cultural identities and their content are necessarily true outside of this group. Thus, my intent is not to explain their experiences through culture, but rather demonstrate how their *understandings* of what constitutes “Canadian” and “Afghan culture”, shape their experiences.

more “Canadian”. These pressures not only stem from external forces but are also on-going internal battles as the interviewees continuously refine their identities. Finding themselves not fully belonging to either group, they form fluid and hybrid identities geared toward navigating national, domestic, and “Afghan” spaces with more ease.

The interviewees’ hybrid identities can be seen from their self-identification as neither fully Afghan nor fully Canadian. For instance, some of the interviewees note they wish to keep their family-oriented values. Karima notes how her family-oriented quality subjects her to judgment by her white colleagues who do not understand it. Likewise, Sara notes how she too will enforce the same cultural expectations on her children as her parents did on her. Abdullah also maintains that he is “culturally” Afghan because he still participates in Afghan traditions but is also Canadian because he was raised here. Likewise, Faissal expresses his desire to instill Afghan culture and roots in his future children. Hence, even when wanting to be recognized as Canadians and feeling as though they belong, the interviewees wish to keep certain aspects of the Afghan culture because they find them valuable.

More specifically, many of the interviewees expressed varying levels of what they call an “Afghan-Canadian” identity. The hybridity of this identity can be noted from their ability to choose bits and pieces of each culture, while the fluidity can be noted from the refinement of the content of their “Afghan-Canadian” identity. More specifically, the content of their identity changes through time (as they age) and space (national or Afghan), and depends on whether they are interacting with *Canadians*, Canadians or Afghans. An Afghan-Canadian identity is sometimes constructed through “roots” such as “Afghan blood” yet socialization into “Canadian” norms. One interviewee also argues that the Afghan culture represents her parents’ culture and the Canadian culture represents her host-country’s culture, making her the by-product of both. Indeed, Mina

notes she cannot be one or the other, because she is both. Therefore, being Afghan-Canadian represents the amalgamation of both cultures in unique ways as seen from the varying content of the identity for each interviewee. The interviewees explain that they “picked and chose” elements from each set of norms based on what they believed fits their life and character. Therefore, while the Afghan-Canadian identity is solid, the content of what makes them Afghan-Canadian is fluid and subject to change as they continuously interact with both groups, and as one part of their identity becomes more pronounced than the other depending on the social setting.

The hybridity of their identities arises out of their liminality characterized by their in-betweenness of two cultures. For instance, Mustafa’s experiences growing up demonstrates how his identity was developed through close exposure to both “Canadian” and Afghan culture. Mustafa notes how one of his teachers acted as a second parent to him to the extent that he lived with her for some time. In addition, he notes that some of his favourite hobbies and aspects of his identity were developed during his stay with his teacher. Mustafa’s in-betweenness can be seen from his ability to live both in a “Canadian” household and an Afghan household depending on where he felt more comfortable at the time. In fact, he notes that when things at home “got out of hand”, he moved in with his “second” parent on a more long-term basis during his teenage years.

I decided to stay back and I stayed with [his teacher]. So that year I took up golfing, I started golfing and I got adapted to the Canadian culture. So she’s like my mom. She’s done everything. On my birthday I got a phone. She paid for my phone for a long time. She paid my [sports] fees. She was like my mom, you know? – Mustafa

Moreover, this in-betweenness is characterized by a lack of definitive belonging with either respective group wherein the acquisition of “Canadian” cultural capital may increase the level of tolerance afforded to them by *Canadians* but decreases the level of acceptance held by the Afghan community. This is because cultural capital is field specific (Bourdieu, 1998); what is considered valuable capital in one national field is not (automatically) considered valuable in the other. In

fact, Taimur and Mina feel they are never seen as the “us” in a group; they are the *Afghan* in Canada, and the *foreigner* in Afghanistan. The perceived feeling of rejection creates a dilemma as to where one truly belongs. Therefore, performing a “Canadian” identity amongst Afghans may be perceived negatively as it could be interpreted as losing one’s culture and roots as noted by many of the interviewees. Hence, some of the interviewees speak of the challenges they dealt with when their attempts of adopting more “western” preferences was met with parental disapproval, such as when their parents asserted that “Afghan girls don’t do that” or “don’t forget you’re Afghan”.

In addition, Mina notes that Afghans typically view Canadian girls and women as promiscuous, and that by living abroad, Afghan girls are believed to have likely adopted the same behaviour. Therefore, expressing a “Canadian” identity can be even more difficult for Afghan girls and women. While, Afghan parents may be more willing to let their sons express a “Canadian” identity, they proceed with more caution with their daughters given the gossip that such practices may warrant from the broader Afghan community. For instance, Sara notes how her parents claimed “...just cuz you’re in Canada doesn’t mean there are no Afghans there” when they restricted the activities she could partake in. This quote also suggests that Sara’s parents do not see her and themselves as Canadians, rather they are Afghans *living* in Canada. The gendered pushbacks by the broader Afghan community and the interviewees’ family members is in part due to traditional Afghan definitions of desirable femininity which is perceived to be in opposition of western femininity by the older generation Afghans. For instance, Hamze notes his mother was a “cool mom” who allowed him to partake in “western” non-Islamic activities such as consuming alcohol. Yet, the consumption of alcohol removes Afghan women and girls from being recognized as “good” Afghans.

Moreover, the interviewees' identity constructions and refinements occur through increased interaction with each group. For instance, Mustafa recalls his younger self enforcing the wearing of a hijab on his younger sister but stopped doing so when he himself began partaking in "non-Afghan" activities. Therefore, the interviewees' identity constructions occur through at times adopting, and at other times, rejecting dominant discourses of what makes a "good" Afghan. As they become more exposed to each group, they re-evaluate their own identity and understandings of desirability. Thus, while there are constructed boundaries enclaving "Canadianness" and Afghanness, the interviewees can move back and forth between both set of norms as result of their liminality.

For these reasons, the interviewees' liminality and hybrid identities result in a conditional belonging to both groups. Being "too" Western expels them from the Afghan group but not integrating enough expels them from the "Canadian" group. Nevertheless, their in-betweenness allows them to accentuate elements of each group in their own identity. While this does not circumvent issues of belonging, the interviewees feel more confident in their self-identity. This can be seen from Karima's comment:

It's not black and white. Like I'm never gonna be a full Canadian and I'm never gonna be a full Afghan. And ... like when I'm with my Afghan family members, I have nothing in common with them other than language and blood and a family history. I am very – I am considered too open-minded or too liberal for my Afghan family members. And then when I'm with my white friends over here, I don't belong with them either because they think I'm too close-minded. And the things that they enjoy doing, I don't. And the way they view life is so different. - Karima

Fluid hybrid identities are useful for the interviewees as they are able to choose elements of each identity as they see fitting in their politics of belonging. Negotiations of identity as part of the politics of belonging means that the interviewees construct and express their identity not only *against*, but *with* popular discourses of otherness. Hence, when the interviewees reject stereotypical constructions of Afghanness through expressing Afghanness, they are constructing

their identities against popular discourses of Muslim and Afghan inferiority. Likewise, the interviewees *still* engage with popular discourses of otherness when they avoid racist encounters by expressing different elements of their identity to distance themselves from Afghanness. The strategic use of identities in this way helps the interviewees develop a greater sense of belonging to Canada. For instance, Taimur takes up different identities in different social settings depending on whether he wishes to challenge *Canadians'* misconceptions or wishes to completely avoid negative encounters. Likewise, Mina notes many Afghans express different aspects of their Afghan-Canadian identity depending on which group they are interacting with, or whether they are moving between “Afghan” or “Canadian” spaces. For instance, she notes that in order to cope with the conflicting expectations, Afghan women take up a dominant Afghan identity at home, but a more Canadian identity in national spaces.

In short, expressing a Canadian, Afghan or Afghan-Canadian identity is not met without challenge, both from the Afghan community and from *Canadians*. This leads generation 1.5 Afghans to readily adopt and express different elements of their identity in order to mitigate unpleasant encounters and feel more comfortable, ultimately feeling more at-home. For instance, when they cannot express a Canadian identity, they display an Afghan-Canadian identity to avoid questions or challenges. The shifting and re-defining of personal identities shows how identity for generation 1.5 Afghans is characterized by fluidity and hybridity. The next section demonstrates how fluid and hybrid identities can reconstruct the boundaries of belonging.

Redefining “Canadianness” in the Third Space

Beyond producing hybrid identities, the interviewees’ in-betweenness has the power to fuel political identities capable of challenging and redefining hegemonic understandings of “Canadian” identity and belonging to Canada. Generation 1.5 Afghans play a vital role in the re-imagination

of the nation and national identity in Canada through their expression of non-conventional identities which undermine stereotypical understandings of what it means to be “Canadian” or Afghan. The third space in which interviewees find themselves in is characterized by the existence of contradictory values pertaining to the ideal cultural identity. These differences become negotiated as the interviewees form political identities. I argue that the development of political identities falls within the interviewees’ homemaking journeys as they work to change the “home” to fit them, as opposed to only changing themselves to fit within the “home”. Ultimately, by disrupting the national community, the interviewees may be successful in creating *home*.

The interviewees work to reconfigure the boundaries of belonging to include differences that are not within the national imaginations of “us” which rely on whiteness to confer membership. The interviewees’ political identities collectively promote the emergence of a political community which undermines the national community in Canada. This means that the interviewees’ political identities re-construct Canada as a land made up different ethnic, religious and cultural communities who have political goals as opposed to Canada being a land constituted by a national community dependent on whiteness. The re-imagination of the nation alters the hegemonic understanding of who qualifies as a national, and what defines “Canadianness”. For instance, the dominance of whiteness as a marker of belonging is challenged by the interviewees including Mina who says:

Canada is the land of immigrants. It doesn’t matter what the white people say. They’re immigrants, maybe a few generations older. You know they may have a few generations on us but they’re still immigrants, they came from somewhere else, they’re not natives. - Mina

Political identities are developed through the interviewees’ negotiations of difference inherent in the third space and through the need to feel at-home. The liminality of the third space means that the interviewees lack a definitive belonging allowing them to form “new”, and non-traditional identities. For instance, Karima says “I cannot say I didn’t belong but I can’t say I

belonged either. I was just so different. I was not like them. I didn't think like them". Likewise, while Mustafa expresses ambivalence in his identity, he nonetheless expresses a new, non-traditional identity that does not abide by constructed boundaries on Muslimhood and "Canadianness".

So I've adopted – I guess I can call myself Canadian. I am Canadian. I've been cultured, I've been so – I've adapted the culture ... I mean I don't – I *do* practice being a Muslim. But am I super Muslim? No. You know do I go out drinking? Yes, I do. Like I have drinks here and there. – Mustafa

This quote targets two areas of Mustafa's identity: a Canadian and a Muslim. First, he explains he is a Canadian despite practising some aspects of Islam and then he explains he is a Muslim despite adopting some western practices. Therefore, Mustafa's identity is not black and white because it transgresses the boundaries of "Canadian" national identity and traditional Muslim identity. Mustafa's political identity breaks down the boundaries of exclusion wherein Muslims are not imagined as Canadians while also shedding light on the non-monolithic Muslim identity.

Moreover, hybrid identities at the individual level can serve as political identities at the social level whereby instances of individuals living outside the oppressive binaries serve to undermine the idea of a white nation. Whether the interviewees outright challenge *Canadians'* perception on Afghans through discourse or through expressing unconventional Afghan identities, the consequences are political. Through instances such as these, the interviewees challenge the exclusive "Canadian" national identity ultimately expanding the boundaries of belonging to include communities beyond *Canadians*. For instance, Aisha's non-conventional Afghanness not only challenges Afghan norms but it also challenges *Canadians'* understanding of Afghans and Muslims. Aisha notes how her visible tattoos intermixed with her mother's visibly Muslim identity challenges *Canadians'* perception that Muslim women are different and not "normal".

I think that changes the way they would see other Muslim women as well because obviously I have an arm full of tattoos and I dress like this all the time. And going – walking with her when I’m away at a grocery store and seeing what people look at her and when I come up to her and talk to her as like a daughter, they kind of like look away after that ... At grocery stores, we were at the court house a couple months ago. And people just kind of look like side-eye my mom and when I come up to her and like talk to her, or hug her or something, they kind of look away. They’re like “oh never mind”. I don’t know why. I’ve never figured it out. But for some reason they kind of aren’t as suspicious of her when they see her being a normal mom to like a normal person. – Aisha

Through living outside of the constructed norms of “Canadianness” and Afghanness, the interviewees challenge the way others see Afghans, and what being “Canadian” means. For instance, despite growing up in a strict household which is the norm in many Middle Eastern communities, Sara says she would instil the same values and standards on her children even if it defies our understanding of “Canadian”.

So those kind of things I feel like I would definitely carry over with me. They might not be as Canadian in terms of – and I don’t just mean Canadian in terms of Caucasian people, I mean Canadian in terms of – even my ethnic friends who grew up here it was a common thing for them to go out whether they be Sri Lankan or whatever, it was a common thing to go out. So it’s Canadian in that sense because Canada is very multi-national. So it might not such a Canadian thing ... but it is something that I would like to carry forward in terms of values. – Sara

Additionally, when the interviewees are faced with overt discrimination or racist encounters, they do not shy away from challenging stereotypes through discourse, whether it concerns the Afghan identity or the “Canadian” identity. Here the interviewees educate, or strongly reject the expressed stereotypes against Afghan and Canadians. I would argue that the need to defend both identities comes from a place of un-security. By this I mean, given the perceived and real threat of not belonging/rejection, the interviewees feel the need to modify and change the discourse in order to strengthen their own position within Afghan and “Canadian” spaces, and amongst other social actors. Whereas as children they distanced themselves from the attacked identity, as adults they protect and defend the attacked identity.

One of the ways in which the interviewees may change the national imagination of “us” and promote more inclusive definitions of “Canadianness” is by becoming politically aware of the social injustices and inequality. Here the interviewees are able to slowly change the “home” to fit oneself through the homemaking project as opposed to solely changing oneself to fit the “home”. Thus, by being and practicing being a politically aware actor, the interviewees can resist oppressive practices. For instance, Karima’s background as a refugee and minority (in Afghanistan and Canada) urged her to become more aware of the politics on immigration and equality in Canada. Her position within the third space allows her to move beyond binary application of identity and nationhood, and instead focus on “bettering” Canada through the promotion of a political community. Only through getting involved, did she really feel like Canada is her *home*. Karima identifies her senior year in high school as the time period where issues of citizenship and equality became political for her:

I was reading the news, there would be commentaries about how Harper was either like against immigrants or this and that. ...I started thinking that as a minority it’s so important to be aware of the politics and the politicians, so we need to be informed because the policies that are gonna be passed by the government in Canada, these policies will most likely never marginalize the uhh white population, or the kind of status quo. And they were very likely to marginalize the migrants and the marginalized groups ... I started being more involved, and I started thinking I had a role to play whether that was voting or um keeping up with was happening in the country... the more I got involved, the more it felt like Canada was my home and I owed it to the country to do something for it, in a way. – Karima

Karima’s experiences of persecution also motivate her to be involved in shaping Canada’s future. By participating in building the future of Canada, or bettering its socio-political condition, Karima is developing a psychological citizenship where she feels responsible and entitled in participating in such activities ultimately strengthening her belonging to Canada.

So with my experiences and my background and having grown up in war-torn country and now living in Canada, I feel the duty to make sure that – I don’t think Canada would ever go that bad but to make it a better place. To make it a more tolerant and a happy place I guess. So I take my voting very seriously. I take um my activism very seriously, things that matter

to me. I like to challenge people when they say racist and sexist and homophobic or Islamophobic things. – Karima

Moreover, educating practices can be conceptualized as political resistance against dominant discourses of legitimate belonging to Canada. By challenging stereotypical constructions of Afghans, the interviewees are able to redefine the contours of “Canadian” identity to include elements of difference, which may include various levels of Afghanness. This means that the interviewees are not only able to make space for themselves in Canada, but also make space for their family. The interviewees’ in-between position within the third space allows them to take on *and* defend new hybrid identities such as defending Afghan values. For instance, Mina provides several instances wherein she took the role of an educator to *Canadians* and how she rejected the discourse on Afghans as “backward”.

I had to defend the Afghan world, like we’re not suicide bombers. People come to Afghanistan, we’re just dumb for welcoming everybody. So I had to talk to him about that. And he was like “but you’re not like *Afghan*”. I was like “I was born there”. – Mina

Here Mina rejects her *Canadian* co-worker’s assumption that she is not *really* Afghan because she did not grow up in Afghanistan. Mina identifies herself as an Afghan to the co-worker to challenge how he thinks of typical Afghans. Her position as an educated Afghan woman disrupts the hegemonic construction of Afghans as “inferior others”. She also notes how “it’s hard that we all have to fight to prove something like that ...But you have to fight”. This shows that Mina takes her role as educator seriously. Through educating *Canadians*, she undermines stereotypes and attempts to re-define Afghan identity within western discourse.

Mina’s role as an educator began after 9/11 when she felt targeted at school for being Afghan and Muslim. During this period, Mina first began to internalize the dominant discourse on Afghans and Muslims as terrorists but soon expanded her knowledge on the history of Afghanistan by self-educating herself through using Google. During this time, she learned to “fight for people” and

now sees herself getting more involved in politics as way to change how Muslims and Afghans are seen in Canada.

At that point I didn't even know enough to defend. You know? So I would feel guilty. I *hated* school, I didn't want to go to school. My homeroom teacher was an amazing guy and he told me "you're gonna get into politics" and I was like "no, I won't. I hate politics". And I think he's right, I am getting into politics now. So he saw the way I was like – I didn't know enough to defend myself at the moment and I would go home and come back and respond. And like I was learning to fight for people – Mina

Moreover, the interviewees see themselves as having the ability to be "racist back" when undermining *Canadians'* or other racial minorities' perception of Afghans and Muslims. The interviewees' responses are aimed at equalizing the playing field wherein they do not see themselves as victims but rather as knowledgeable actors who have the power to disrupt negative views of Afghans and Muslims, even if it is through non-conventional means. For instance, by engaging in racist joke-making, Taimur show that not only will he stand his ground, but he also reveals the absurdity in the racist remarks made against him.

So someone comes in and makes fun of something you have, you make fun of something they have. They make fun of something, you make fun of something back. And usually you don't do it in like an aggressive way, in an intense way. You do it more in of a joking way right so like they can see that it's a joke right and not that you're offended and pissed off. You show that you know they're joking, so you're joking back. You know what I mean? - Taimur

Political identities have the potential to not only reconfigure the boundaries of belonging to Canada, but also change the perspective of one's own family on Afghan and "Canadian" identity. For instance, Mina recalls how being Afghan-Canadian and Afghan at the same time was hard given the pushback she was receiving from her parents and extended family. However, she continued fighting her "battles" which ultimately made her parents more open to an Afghan-Canadian identity. More specifically, Mina notes she fought for "normal" things such as socializing with friends, playing soccer or going to school dances. Overtime, these negotiations became more accepted. Mina notes how fighting for "normal" things "... was just like battling

where I was learning so many new things, which there was nothing wrong with it but my parents knew something completely different”. In fact, the term “white-washed” was used by several interviewees to describe their hybrid identities. These interviewees used this term to explain how they have taken up “white” activities and identities that are not within the norms of Afghan culture and/or values, but they do not deny that they are still Afghan in some ways. For instance, while Hamze does not identify as a Muslim and sees himself as “mostly” Canadian, he says he is “obviously” still an Afghan. Therefore, hybrid identities arising from the third space provide alternative ways of expressing Canadian and Afghan identities.

However, while the interviewees challenge the dominant discourse on Afghans and Muslims, there are instances where some of the interviewees express opinions which are common within western discourse. This reality is emblematic of the interviewees’ position within the third space, a space where they are neither fully here nor there. This is also not surprising given that the interviewees’ perception and (re)construction of identities do not occur in a vacuum, but rather occur in relation to the dominant discourses, regardless of whether they reject or embrace them. One such discourse is their belief that they do not look visibly “Canadian”. Another example of embracing discourses is the ways in which some of the interviewees’ understanding of Afghan people is shaped by the western tendency to see them as uneducated and inferior.

The interviewees struggle with reconciling their ethnic, religious, cultural background with their desire to fit-in and belong to Canada. These struggles are realized through the multiplicity of identities which are developed at varying extents and subject to change. Generation 1.5 Afghans are resilient and adaptive individuals who negotiate their identities to not only move within national spaces with ease but also potentially change the definition of “Canadian” identity and reshape the national imagination of “us”. Their liminality and positioning in the third space allow

them to strategically develop identities, as well as engage in practices which challenge the stereotypes imposed on them. In this way, the interviewees promote the rise of a political community which may help them envision Canada as *home*. Therefore, belonging and identity are projects that are continuously developed, justified, contested and enacted by generation 1.5 Afghans, and other social actors.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter demonstrated how the interviewees engage in strategies of belonging to gain acceptance from *Canadians* but fall short because of their “non-Canadian” appearance and their desire to hold on to some Afghan values or culture. The interviewees find themselves within the third space where their homemaking journey and identities are shaped through their engagement with dominant discourses on legitimate belonging and by their desire to build a better life for themselves. At all times, generation 1.5 Afghans are faced with situations where they feel the need to shift identities or engage in practices that will increase their cultural capital. These experiences shed light on the conditional and unsecured belonging generation 1.5 Afghans experience, and it also uncovers the ways in which they resist stereotypical and rigid definitions of “Canadian” and Afghan identity. Homemaking, in the end, involves a mixture of working on the self and working on the “home” to make the two more compatible, ultimately producing *home* where they are accepted as Canadians. Belonging to Canada can then be achieved through feeling at-home, being claimed by *Canadians*, and feeling/having the right/ability to participate in the constitution of Canada as a political community.

CONCLUSION

This research explored the migratory and homemaking journeys of 10 generation 1.5 Afghans in Canada, and the array of considerations encountered when discussing issues of home, identity and belonging. I argue that generation 1.5 Afghans make sense of their belonging through past experiences and hopes for the future, while also engaging with a multitude of discourses on desirable identities and legitimate belonging in their practical “home”. I demonstrate that given the lack of lived experiences in Afghanistan, and perceptions of a better life in Canada, the interviewees are constantly engaging in homemaking initiatives to feel more at-home in Canada. This is not to say that the interviewees have not experienced “othering” and racist encounters with nationals in Canada. Rather, the interviewees’ experiences of displacement and war make them more appreciative of a Canadian legal citizenship, and its accompanying rights. For these reasons, the interviewees reconstruct their identities and engage in various homemaking strategies not only to fit-in better in Canada, but also make Canada more accepting of them.

In this process, the interviewees minimize the impacts of discourses of foreignness and Muslim/Afghan inferiority informed by notions of whiteness, by focusing more on the existence of diversity and legal citizenship as proof of their belonging in Canada. Likewise, belonging is also shaped not only through their current experiences, but also their past experiences and future aspirations. Thus, belonging for the interviewees can also be understood through the mobility and re-creation of home. This way, the interviewees claim belonging through “home”, but also work to strengthen their sense of at-home by attempting to make Canada *home*.

To make this argument, I used the concepts of exile, liminality, home, citizenship, national belonging and third space. More specifically, while research on exile suggests migrants have a desire to go back home where they feel they truly belong, generation 1.5 Afghans represent a

population for whom *home* in the homeland was not only lost long ago, but also experienced briefly. This is the case because they have lived most of their life in Canada and have little (positive) memories of Afghanistan. For this reason, the concept of homemaking better explains the relationship they have with space, as it highlights the fluidity of it. To overcome their sense of in-betweenness, generation 1.5 Afghans engage in various homemaking strategies to strengthen their sense of belonging. These initiatives are strengthened by their legal status as they turn to their legal citizenship for confidence in their right to live in “multicultural” Canada. However, legal citizenship does not grant them with national belonging because they still feel rejected by *Canadians*. In other words, while the interviewees belong in Canada through legal status and residence, they do not belong *to* Canada because they are not claimed by white-Canadians and do not feel as entitled in determining the future of Canada. For this reason, Hage’s concepts of passive belonging and governmental belonging are used to analyze how generation 1.5 Afghans attempt to acquire correct cultural capitals to (hopefully) belong to Canada unquestionably.

The interviewees also use their position within the third space to resist hegemonic imaginations of Canada as a white, Judeo-Christian nation and attempt to reconstruct Canada as a political community truly accepting (as opposed to tolerant) of racialized differences. Therefore, even while the interviewees attempt to acquire correct cultural capitals and aim to fit-in, they also constantly challenge rigid understandings of “Canadian” and Afghan identity as two different and irreconcilable identities. In fact, some interviewees explicitly challenge dominant stereotypes about Afghans and all the interviewees demonstrate a non-binary cultural identity by living their lives as Afghan-Canadians who adopt values and norms from both cultures. Ultimately, they work to redefine “Canadianness”, and thus legitimate belonging to include cultural and racial differences that have traditionally been ignored out of a preference for whiteness.

In this way, this research has provided first-hand accounts of how home is reproduced in a different space and what losses and difficulties are experienced throughout this process. By analyzing the subjectivities of generation 1.5 Afghans, I demonstrate that belonging and home are not only constructed through gaining acceptance, but also through hopes for the future solidified by holding legal citizenship. While legal citizenship has been criticized for its inability to reimagine “others” as “us”, this research sheds light on the significance of it for marginalized populations who have no other means of claiming some degree of legitimate belonging and consequently being able to engage in homemaking confidently. In doing so, I further demonstrate the marginalization of such populations; wherein legal citizenship serves as the sole protective tool, despite lacking permanence.

Given the difficulties encountered in recruiting participants for this research, future research should first focus on building closer ties with the community prior to recruitment. While, participants for this research were mostly recruited through snowball sampling and my own Afghan background helped in that, to acquire a more diverse sample, the researcher should immerse themselves in the community and gain their trust and interest prior to conducting interviews. This way, the research may be more generalizable to the broader generation 1.5 Afghan population in Canada. While this research has shown how the interviewees partially rely on diversity to feel comfortable in national spaces and thereby feel more at-home, future research should investigate the experiences of generation 1.5 Afghans residing in more remote cities and towns where there are different levels of ethnic and cultural diversity.

A broader sample size could then examine the relationship between diversity in the city of residence, higher education, employment/profession, and sense of belonging and identity. By focusing more on these aspects, we may better understand how class and representation produce

experiences of (un)belonging and how that plays a role in the process of homemaking for displaced racialized populations. Since a deeper sense of belonging is achieved through not only gaining acceptance from the dominant population, but also becoming well integrated, the role of class may further complicate the extent to which individuals can engage in homemaking, acquire “Canadian” cultural capital, and ultimately gain acceptance. While being racialized immigrants, the interviewees of this study all demonstrated some level of privilege through their ability to acquire post-secondary education and pursue employment in their fields of interest. Hence, it would be interesting to know whether the (perceived) inability to achieve “success” in Canada as a racialized minority changes the way they experience belonging or negotiate identity. The experiences of these individuals may uncover additional nuances pertaining to identity and belonging in the interplay between migration and homemaking.

Finally, it may be worthwhile for future studies to focus more exclusively on the structural liminality experienced by refugees and those deemed illegal migrants in nation-states unwilling to extend legal citizenship. These experiences may shed further light on how displaced populations seek belonging, construct identities, and understand citizenship when their social and legal future remain uncertain. A greater understanding of these experiences would also better contextualize such populations’ perspectives and sense of belonging in nation-states where they *were* granted legal citizenship and thereby able to overcome their structural liminality, such as in the case of the interviewees of this study. Only through acquiring a holistic understanding of the experiences of displaced racialized populations could we begin to truly understand and dismantle oppressive practices of othering and nation-building; thereby promoting a more inclusive and accepting society.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Poster

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Did you arrive in Canada between the ages of 5-12 from the Middle East?

If yes, you are invited to take part in a study focused on understanding the experiences of finding belonging in Canada.

You are eligible for this study if:

1. You arrived in Canada between the ages of 5-12;
2. You were born in the Middle East;
3. You are now 18 years-of-age or older; and
4. You reside in Ottawa/Gatineau, Montreal OR the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)

1 hour to 1.5 hour
Individual, in-person interview

Each participant will be gifted a \$10 Tim Hortons card upon arrival. This card is yours to keep whether or not you choose to participate or complete the interview and questionnaire.

Cost of parking or transit fare will be compensated before the start of the interview.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without any consequences. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity should you choose to. Any data collected up to the time of the withdrawal will be promptly and securely destroyed. The interview will be audio-recorded.

Limited Space Available: 10-12 Participants Needed; First-come, first-serve.

If you wish to participate, or inquire about this study, please contact Geti
Faize, the principal researcher, at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]

Thank you!

Appendix B: Consent Form



Université d'Ottawa
Faculté des sciences sociales
Criminologie
University of Ottawa
Faculty of Social Sciences
Criminology

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📠 613-562-5304
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Ottawa ON K1N 6N5 Canada
www.uOttawa.ca

Consent Form

Title of Study: Middle-Eastern Belonging in Canada

Geti Faize (Principal Researcher)

Email: [REDACTED]

Cell: [REDACTED]

Professor Maritza Felices-
Luna (Co-Supervisor)
Department of Criminology
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Ottawa
[REDACTED]

Professor Baljit Nagra (Co-
Supervisor)
Department of Criminology
Faculty of Social Science
University of Ottawa
[REDACTED]

I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research conducted by Geti Faize, a Master's student in the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa. The purpose of the study is to understand how individuals who came to Canada as children from the Middle East make sense of their multicultural identities and belonging in Canada.

Participation: My participation will consist of an in-person interview lasting approximately 1 hour to 1.5 hour where I will be asked about my experiences of growing up in Canada. The entire interview will be audio-recorded.

Risks: My participation in this study means that I may discuss issues for which, I might feel emotional and/or psychological discomfort, distress or anxiety as a result of reflecting on any negative experiences or memories. The researcher has assured me that every effort will be made to reduce these risks including taking a break if and whenever I choose to. I have also been advised that I may choose to withdraw consent at anytime, or refuse to answer any questions, without facing any consequences.

Benefits: My participation in this study will be beneficial, as it will be used to learn about the unique experiences of people who immigrated to Canada as children. This is an opportunity through which I am able to safely provide an opinion on my experiences and how they have impacted my perception of myself and the Canadian society.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the data collected will only be used for the purpose of this research. I have been given assurance by the researcher that no identifiable information (such as name, address, etc.) will be published and that any potentially identifiable information that I provide (such as names of places or people) will be deleted or altered during transcription. The researcher has also assured me that a pseudonym will be used



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instead of my real name. The researcher has notified me that only the principal researcher and her supervisors will have access to the data.

Conservation of data: I have also been assured that the data collected (audio-recorded interviews and transcripts) will be kept in a secure manner. During data collection, all digital data will be stored in Geti Faize's password protected computer in a password-protected file. Printed transcripts, signed consent forms and any other written material such as consent forms will be stored in Geti Faize's personal room at home. After the research is completed, all electronic data will be changed to hard copy, then using the secure deletion program on the MacBook; all the electronic data will be deleted. The hard copy of the data will be stored in a sealed envelope in professor Maritza Felices-Luna's office at the University of Ottawa for a period of five years, then the files will be shredded.

Compensation: I will be given a Tim Horton's gift card valued at \$10 at the beginning of the interview, which I have been advised is mine to keep whether or not I choose to continue with the research process. In addition, I will also be reimbursed for transit fare or parking costs that I incur as a result of this research.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate in this study and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above study conducted by Geti Faize of the Criminology Department, in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa, whose research is supervised by professors Maritza Felices-Luna and Baljit Nagra.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5

Tel.: (613) 562-5387

Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of this consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Signature of the interviewee

Date

Signature of the researcher

Date

☎ 613-562-5303

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Appendix C: Interview Schedule

Questions	Topics of Interest
What is the story behind your migration journey to Canada?	- Country of birth / homeland - Reason/context for migration - Process of migration - Memories/attachments to homeland - Emotional attachments to homeland
Can you tell me what it was like growing up in Canada having come from _____?	- Difficulties experienced / “pains of integration”: e.g. making friends, language barrier, school curriculum - Presence of diversity? - Experiences of (un)acceptance - Attachments to and involvement in school - “Pull and push” factors (e.g. wanting to fit-in but cultural expectations from parents) - How interviewee perceives his/her culture/religion/nationality is received at: school/work/national spaces - Networks of support (family, community, friends, teachers, etc.)
How do you feel living in Canada now?	- Attachments to Canada - Aspirations for the future (education/profession/material) - frame of reference (Canada vs. Afghanistan) - Coping strategies/mechanisms
As someone who migrated to Canada as a child, what does home mean for you?	- Where “home” is & why - Necessities of life? Acceptance? Comfort? Safety? Family? Roots? Future? - Relationship to Canada and homeland - How the interviewee identifies (nationally/culturally)
How do you think your experiences have shaped your sense of ethnic/national/religious belonging?	- how experiences of discrimination shape (un)belonging - identity negotiations and constructions - how the interviewee understands “Canadian” identity

Appendix D: Major Themes Identified

1. Migration produces a sense of in-betweenness.

- Maintained connections to homeland: roots, family, culture, desirable Afghan values
- Current life in Canada: socialization, and various social ties
- Lack of full belonging with Afghans and Canadians

Migration produces a sense of in-betweenness wherein the interviewees have multiple connections dispersed across borders and lack full belonging with either group.

2. There is a desire to identify with Canada.

- Past experiences elsewhere: of discrimination by the state and the people, war & instability
- Discourses of western/Canadian superiority: multiculturalism, rights, and opportunities
- Future-oriented, as opposed to looking to the past

Belonging in Canada is informed by hierarchies of desirability produced by their negative experiences elsewhere and popular discourses.

3. *Home* is a process that entails homemaking.

- It has characteristics: familiarity with environment and social norms, comfort, social ties, and acceptance by white-Canadians
- It has pre-conditions: legal citizenship, security and safety provided by the state
- It is developed through: time, strategies of belonging & identity (re)constructions

The *home* in Canada is produced over time through homemaking initiatives that aim to change (or train) oneself to fit-in better, *and* also change Canada to be more accepting of them. This is done through increasing attachments to Canada, acquiring “Canadian” cultural capital, educating *Canadians* and producing identities that change dominant understandings of “Canadianness”.