

SURVIVING RACIST CULTURE: STRATEGIES OF MANAGING RACISM
AMONG GAY MEN OF COLOUR—AN
INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Racism, a unique source of stress, occupies a peripheral point of analysis in the literature on gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) health research. Canadian investigators have not examined the coping strategies that non-White gay men use. Lacking knowledge of the group's coping responses overlooks the dynamics of resistance and prevents interventions for addressing racism from being developed. The current study's aims were to explore the contexts in which gay men of colour experienced gay-specific racism; to investigate their understanding of factors contributing to the experience of racism; and to examine strategies they used to manage the stress of racism. Foregrounding issues of White supremacy and racial oppression, the study used frameworks from critical race and queer theories and minority stress theory, integrating insights from the psychological model of stress and coping. Data were collected in Ottawa, Canada, employing focus groups and in-depth interviews with 13 gay men who identified as Black, East Asian, South Asian, and Arab/Middle Eastern. Using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), the study concluded that racism was pervasive in Ottawa's GLB community, at individual, institutional, and cultural levels. Racial-cultural socialization processes were found to influence racist attitudes and practices. Racism's subtle, insidious forms undermined discrimination claims by gay men of colour, in that White gay men denied any racist attitudes and actions. In general, participants used problem- and emotion-focused coping techniques to moderate the impact of racism. The value of social support for coping with the stress of racism was highlighted, revealing a vacuum of care in public health and social work practice with gay men of colour. Social workers and allied health professionals should neither view the experiences of gay men of colour through the lens of sexual orientation alone, nor focus solely on sexual behaviours that place them at risk of HIV/AIDS. In doing so, they would risk not only discounting the

complexities of the men's lives, but also sustaining and perpetuating a life without potentialities beyond deficit. The implications and limitations as well as recommendations for future study are discussed.

Keywords: race, racism, discrimination, stigma, minority stress, stress and coping, gay men of colour, IPA, critical race theory (CRT), queer critical theory (QCT), Ottawa, Canada

Dedication

To the most important woman in my life, my mom, Alhaja Khadijat Kuburat Olasoji Giwa. Thank you for your kindness, devotion, and endless support and prayers. Your selflessness will never be forgotten. I pray that the blessings of Allah always be upon you.

—With love, your son, Wale

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I have longed for some time now to write this part of my dissertation. It represents for me the end of a very long journey, with many ups and downs. The loss of my grandfather and grandmother, early in my doctoral education, was very difficult; they died a year apart. I fondly remember my formative years spent with them in Nigeria; they helped to raise me into the man that I am today. Along the way, everyday financial issues slowed me down considerably, threatening to derail my progress and the completion of my degree. I had to take on full-time work in precarious, low-wage positions while completing my degree on the side. Internal institutional politics left me with a negative impression of academia, causing me to doubt if I had chosen the right career. Lingering scars from that early experience in the world of academia lay just below the surface.

Yet the many academics I met along the way, some of whom I had the privilege to collaborate with on peer-reviewed publications, showed me a different side of academia, which I have come to enjoy and value. Among them is Dr. Karen Schwartz at Carleton University, who, after seeing the work I did on a federally funded community police race-relations project in Ottawa, planted a seed in my heart: I could complete a doctorate degree.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACO	AIDS Committee of Ottawa
AOP	Antioppressive practice and theory
APA	American Psychiatric Association
CCHS	Canadian Community Health Survey
CCHC	Centretown Community Health Centre
CMA	Census metropolitan area
CRT	Critical race theory
FGS	Faculty of Graduate Studies
FTP	File transfer protocol
GLB	Gay, lesbian, and bisexual
GLBT	Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender
GLBTQ	Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning
HPV	Human papillomavirus
IPA	Interpretative phenomenological analysis
LGB	Lesbian, gay, and bisexual
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

LGBTIQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning
LGBTQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NHS	National Household Survey
OC Transpo	Ottawa Carleton Transportation
PTS	Pink Triangle Services
QCT	Queer critical theory; also called <i>queer crit</i>
TCPS	Tri-Council Policy Statement
UK	United Kingdom
WSW	Women who have sex with women
YMSM	Young men who have sex with men

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background and Statement of the Problem

Despite Canada's reputation in the Western hemisphere as a beacon of cultural diversity, the multifaceted ways in which racism manifests itself in the lives of gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB)¹ people of colour are not well understood. Experiences with racism of GLB people of colour have received significant attention in the United States, but have lacked sustained debate and critical analysis in Canada. In the few studies that have directly and indirectly explored the issue, findings suggest that racism exists within the predominantly White GLB² communities in Canada (Brennan et al., 2013; Brotman & Lévy, 2008; Crichlow, 2004; George et al., 2012; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Greensmith & Giwa, 2013; Husbands et al., 2013; Nakamura, Chan, & Fischer, 2013; O'Neill, 1999, 2010; Roy, 2012; Walcott, 2006). Yet hardly any systematic research has been done into how GLB people of colour respond to the life challenges that racism presents.

¹ This study is concerned with the experience of gay men of colour—a population that continues to be marginalized in both the mainstream White GLB community and extant research. Because the researcher identifies as gay and the study is focused on men, the acronym GLB is used as opposed to the common expression LGB. The positioning of the L before the G can be understood as a critical assessment of the overwhelming focus on (White) gay men in the literature and in North American culture, where women typically occupy a low social status. In using the term GLB, my intention is to draw attention to the unequal distribution of power and privilege in predominantly White GLB communities. Gay men of colour do not share power and privilege equally with White gay men precisely because those men are White. The privileging of GLB in this research should, therefore, not be seen as undermining the need to raise awareness about the diverse challenges facing lesbians and other sexual minority groups.

² In using this construct, I want to be clear that a GLB identity refers to a person's sexual orientation, defined in terms of who a person is emotionally and sexually attracted to. I have omitted the "T" (transgender) from the common initialism—GLB—because that speaks to gender identity, not sexual orientation; it refers to gender identities not consonant with the sex assigned to a person at birth. A transgender person may identify with any sexual orientation, including heterosexuality. However, because a transgender person's gender-nonconforming behaviour and expression blur the line between dominant gender norms of masculinity and femininity, their inclusion in GLB is often meant to be inclusive of their place within the broader sexual minority community. In this context, the views and concerns of GLB people dominate and, at times, have been carelessly appropriated as if indicative of the experience of transgender people. My omission avoids any perceived strategic attempt to mislead or inaccurately suggest that the study is inclusive of the experiences of this population, since none of the research participants identified as trans. The present research is limited to the experience of cisgendered gay men of colour.

Compared to their White counterparts, GLB people of colour are only marginally represented in empirical research efforts (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; L. E. Nelson, Walker, DuBois, & Giwa, 2014; Woodruffe, 2008). The lack of sustained research engagement contributes to a dearth of knowledge about their needs and information on effective intervention strategies. When GLB people of colour are included in mainstream GLB research, a deficit/pathology model is often applied to understanding their lived experience (Akerlund & Cheung, 2000). This model focuses on the perceived risks and weaknesses of GLB people of colour, such as a seeming failure to achieve a positive integration of their ethnoracial³ and sexual orientation identities. They are portrayed as having an increased susceptibility to HIV/AIDS, and an inability or powerlessness to transcend their “substantial and continuous difficulties” (Akerlund & Cheung, 2000, p. 1). This deficit/pathology view does not emphasize the strengths, resources, and capacities of GLB people of colour. It effectively conceals any understanding of how GLB people of colour cope with experiences of hardship. Yet, because the group must deal with multiple forms of oppression (such as racism in the GLB community and homophobia or heterosexism in communities of colour), knowing how they respond is an important subject of social research.

Within GLB communities, the dominance of HIV/AIDS as the main entry point into debates about diversity-based inequity has obscured the complexity of oppression that GLB people of colour and, more specifically, gay men of colour experience (Giwa, 2015; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012). This focus has resulted in a denial of the saliency of race and how

³ Throughout this dissertation, the socially constructed labels *ethnoracial* and *visible minority* are used interchangeably to refer to individuals and/or groups who are non-Caucasian or non-White in race. As defined by the Employment Equity Act of Canada, and for the purposes of this study, an individual is a visible minority if he belongs to anyone of these ethnoracial groups: Black (e.g., Somalian, Nigerian, Trinidadian and Tobagonian); East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean); South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan); and Arab (e.g., Syrian, Palestinian, Iraqi).

racialization operates as a fundamental organizing principle in mainstream, White, GLB communities. Scholarship is much needed that centralizes race, racism, and racialization in research for and about this group of men as a means of understanding the phenomenology of the racial discrimination they experience and their coping responses to it.

In the remaining pages of this introductory chapter, I outline the purpose of the study and specify the underlying research questions for investigation; delineate the scope of the study; highlight the significance or importance of the research problem for social work; overview current debates on diversity in sexual orientation terminology and identities, and its relevance to the study of racism and coping among gay men of colour; describe the delimitations of the study; provide an outline of the organization of the dissertation; and conclude with a chapter summary.

Purpose of the Study

The present study is an experiential qualitative inquiry into how gay men of colour make sense of and cope with racism-based discrimination. This neglected area of research and knowledge, which my study aims to fill, includes a consideration of the group's positive psychosocial attributes (Harper, Jernewall, & Zea, 2004; Majied & Moss-Knight, 2012), shifting away from the deficit focus of existing research. By its focus on how participants cope with and survive everyday experiences of racism, the study also seeks to reveal the oft-hidden stories of racial violence that produce racialized structural relationships.

The overarching research question for investigation is: What are gay men of colour's experiences of—and their strategies for coping with—racism? To answer this question, I investigate the following subquestions using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA):

- (a) In what specific contexts or circumstances do gay men of colour experience racism and discrimination in the GLB community of Ottawa?

- (b) What do gay men of colour understand to be the factors that contribute to their oppression and social exclusion in the GLB community of Ottawa?
- (c) What strategies do gay men of colour use to cope with the overt and/or covert racism they experience in the GLB community of Ottawa?

Scope of the Study

This study was conducted to elucidate the experiences of and coping strategies used by adult gay men of colour, aged 18 and older, in managing direct, face-to-face racism and indirect racism (e.g., online racism) in incidents of racial discrimination in the GLB community of Ottawa, Canada. The perceived, self-reported, usefulness of these strategies in buffering the impact of racism-related stress was also examined. These two focuses combine to more broadly shed some much needed light on the overt and covert dynamics of racism in the GLB community of Ottawa, as manifested at the individual, institutional/systemic, and cultural levels.

Significance of Research Study and Relevance to Social Work

The significance or importance of this study can be summarized into three distinct, interrelated parts. First, the study will contribute to the literature and theorizing on coping among gay men of colour in Ottawa, and document the manner in which they respond to the stress of racism. In doing so, it will address current knowledge and research gaps. Second, insight derived from the study will add to our understanding of factors that promote and hinder resilience in how gay men of colour deal with the adversity of racism. Lastly, the study will contribute to social workers' knowledge about how to improve practice competence, thereby allowing for more effective access and service delivery to this population.

This research has much relevance for social work, since it draws on the profession's social justice values. From its earliest beginnings, social work has strived to be a catalyst for

social transformation. Social workers continue to work to unchain people's shackles of oppression, and promote social change and equality. In this sense, the profession has been instrumental in bringing attention to a multifaceted perspective on oppression, presenting a process for change based on empowerment and critical consciousness.

As Lundy (2011) noted, however, "social workers, like other helping professionals, have been slow to fully recognize alternative sexual orientations and to provide gay and lesbian positive services" (p. 115). Although the social work landscape has profoundly changed—to some extent emboldened by the Canadian legalization of same-sex marriage in 2005—Lundy's point about the insufficiency of GLB-positive services remains true for people of colour. Mainstream therapeutic social work practices with GLB people have focused primarily on White people (Crichlow, 2004; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; B. Ryan, Brotman, & Rowe, 2001), thus limiting the scope and applicability of such services to non-White GLB people. As a result, GLB people of colour who seek social services often feel marginalized.

Communities of colour seek to offer protection for their members, in their resistance to White hegemony. However, GLB people often find their marginalization is exacerbated within communities of colour because of heterosexism or sexual stigma (Brennan et al., 2013; Crichlow, 2004; George et al., 2012; Husbands et al., 2013; Nakamura et al., 2013). The result is that GLB individuals are left with little, if any, professional help and/or social support systems to negotiate their identities within often hostile social environments (see Crichlow, 2004). As well, the almost nonexistent communal and professional support for GLB people of colour reinforces a negative conception of same-sex orientation. These conditions intensify the need for mainstream social services to expand and develop culturally appropriate support services for GLB people of colour.

Racialized sexual minorities in GLB communities need to be supported in dealing with racism-related stress. Social work undeniably needs to recognize the fundamental diversity of GLB communities, which are diverse in more ways than one. For example, although racialized GLB people share the experience of a sexual minority group, the distinctiveness of their racialized condition must be understood beyond the framework of a shared sexual minority identity. The needs of GLB people of colour are not all the same, and services must be tailored to the group's specific requirements. Further, racialized minority cultures are complex; their religious, familial, and communal structures must be considered. To be relevant, any social work intervention aimed at meeting the needs of the GLB population must first understand this diversity. These structural and sociocultural factors may compromise the ability of GLB people of colour to counteract their experiences of racial discrimination and the heterosexism of their ethnoracial communities. Their development of a healthy, positive same-sex identity may thus be hindered.

To guide the provision of social work services for sexual minorities of colour, and to prevent their experiences from being subsumed under or reduced to those of White GLB people, social workers must be made aware of the social factors that influence, empower, and/or disempower those who must navigate two or more identities in a society that does not fully accept them. One step in achieving this goal is to develop a knowledge base that will inform research, policy, and practice. Through focusing on first-hand accounts of gay men of colour with regards to their coping responses to racism, social workers could use the findings from this study to inform their interventions and advocacy efforts towards meeting the needs of this underserved and marginalized population.

Diversity in Sexual Orientation Terminology and Identities

Current methodologies concerning research with GLB people of colour debate issues of language and identity. Specifically, sexual orientation and identity terminologies used in research involving GLB people of colour are seen as methodological barriers that contribute to the limited research on this population, since the concepts themselves have been normed to the experience of the dominant White GLB population (Crichlow, 2004; DeBlaere, Brewster, Sarkees, & Moradi, 2010; L. E. Nelson et al., 2014; see also Mays, Cochran, & Zamudio, 2004; Morrow, 2003; Worthington & Navarro, 2003; Zea, Reisen, & Díaz, 2003). A central concern of American and to some extent Canadian scholars doing research on GLB people of colour is that the mainstream's taken-for-granted appropriation of concepts such as *gay*, *lesbian*, and *bisexual*, and the euphemisms men who have sex with men (MSM) and women who have sex with women (WSW), "obscure [the] social dimensions of sexuality" (Young & Meyer, 2005, p. 1144). For GLB people of colour, this approach to research denies cultural variability in self-identification, and works against a "deepen[ing] understanding of sexual orientation terminology across culture" (DeBlaere et al., 2010, p. 335). One solution to this challenge, as argued by DeBlaere et al., is for researchers exploring the lives of GLB people of colour to offer multiple terminologies for self-identification, beyond the White, Western taxonomies of gay, lesbian, and bisexual. In ethical terms, then, allowing GLB individuals to self-identify however they choose guarantees their right to self-determination. Flexibilization in self-definition, moreover, can advance collective understanding of cultural variation in sexual orientation identification among GLB people of colour, which can prove instructive for future research with this population, particularly in Canada.

DeBlaere et al. (2010) offered a number of culturally specific sexual orientation and identity terminologies applicable to research with GLB people of colour in the United States. These include such terms as *down low*, *homo thugz*, *same-gender-loving*, *top/bottom*, and *warias*. Little is known, however, about the transferability and applicability of these terms to the Canadian context. In Canada, discussion about cultural dimensions of identity are very much couched in the dominant discourse of multiculturalism, contextually embedded in a shared sense of sameness. The obvious irony of this concept—that a belief in multiculturalism itself could be the basis for an imposition of values on others—demonstrates the deep pervasiveness of social inequalities by sexuality and race, and the perceived superiority of Whiteness, even when these feelings of superiority are masked by a belief in multiculturalism and a neoliberal ideology.

For GLB people of colour, an outcome of this discourse is the dearth of scholarly attention on the interlocking variable of race and sexual orientation; more often than not, these issues are subsumed under the category of HIV/AIDS,⁴ an important research area dominated by White gay men (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012). Very little has resulted from this knowledge-building effort about culturally appropriate sexual orientation terminologies to use in research involving GLB people of colour. The labels *gay*, *lesbian*, and *bisexual* continue to be given currency both in empirical and theoretical investigations involving GLB individuals from diverse ethnoracial backgrounds.

Crichlow (2004) has attempted to interrupt this normalizing practice, in his focus on the life experiences of English-speaking African Canadian and African Caribbean men in same-sex

⁴ Also, it is important to note that this focus is driven by market economy forces, such that research funding is literally designated for HIV/AIDS. To get funding, many people have had to prioritize HIV/AIDS as a way to get to other areas of interest to sexual minorities, including multidimensional research such as mine. The problem, of course, is that in these studies important issues such as racism receive far less attention, due to funding obligations.

relationships. He sought to explicate the meaning that the men in his study attached to their efforts at negotiating communal structures of dominance and heterosexism within Black communities. He provocatively employed the terms *buller men* and *batty bwoys*, colloquialisms rooted in Caribbean heritage and used in denigrating ways against Black same-sex practising individuals, in part to reclaim the terms and to remove the negative social stigma associated with them. To some degree, however, Crichlow's work gestured to the difficulties of identifying an appropriate language to authentically represent men whose experience—mediated, for example, by history and geography—place them in unique sociocultural contexts. Still, as the author has noted, “the vernacular character of the terms reflects the cultures of same-sex practices that are specific to Black Canadian and Caribbean men” (Crichlow, 2004, p. 31).

Certainly, what Crichlow's (2004) research and others like it demonstrate is that despite researchers' best efforts to represent their research participants' identity as authentically as possible, concepts are fluid and may never be adequate enough to capture the complexity of human sexuality, experience, and nature. Researchers may end up discouraging people from participating in their study by their choice of terms used to describe the study population. DeBlaere et al. (2010), for example, pointed out that “a man who identifies as gay may not have the same understanding of his sexual orientation as a man who identifies as same-gender-loving” (p. 334). In this instance, both men may self-exclude from research studies with the terms *gay* or *same-gender-loving*, based on their different understanding of the concepts. Such variations in meaning, coupled with the potential for a lack of consensus on terminologies for sexual orientation identity among individuals with shared group identities (e.g., Black gay men), further demonstrate the challenge faced by researchers when trying to define the parameters and scope of their study.

Nevertheless, researchers do need to clearly lay out how they assess for dimensions of sexual orientation in their research studies (DeBlaere et al., 2010). For example, they may ask participants to identify according to a previously constructed set of sexual-orientation identity categories; or perhaps they give the participants free rein to self-identify using their own terms. However, as was the case in this study, researchers are often compelled early in the research process to identify their target population, whether for ethics review or recruitment purposes. As such, it is not always feasible for scholars doing research on GLB people of colour to know in advance what terminologies are considered appropriate by members of the target population. A researcher, it would appear, would only have access to this information once recruitment has ended and participants have been identified. In line with DeBlaere et al.'s (2010) recommendation of taking into account multiple sexual-orientation terminologies, once recruited into the current study, participants were given the opportunity to either select from a list of sexual-orientation identity categories or to self-identify as they saw fit. The majority self-identified with the label used by the researcher during the recruitment phase. Ultimately, the terminology privileged by men in the study is the language reflected in this document.

Delimitations of the Study

Several delimitations exist within this study. First, the study was designed to investigate the experiences of and strategies for managing and coping with the stress of racism. As such, its goal was to centralize the discourse of racism too often neglected in conversations about various forms of oppression within GLB communities, not to dismiss or overlook the interrelationship of racism and other social categories of oppression.

Second, the research was limited to self-identified gay and bisexual men and men with a history of sex reassignment or gender confirmation surgery, who defined as racially and

ethnically non-White. These are men of colour who have sex with men, and identified as Black, East Asian, Arab/Middle Eastern, or South Asian. Mixed-race men who identified with one of the above four racial, ethnic, and national-origin groups were able to participate in the study, as were men of mixed racial backgrounds, White and non-White, if they identified primarily with the latter racial group. Although men of colour who self-described as bisexual (i.e., attracted to both men and women) were engaged in the recruitment process, in the end none were recruited or included in the study. Neither were men of colour with a history of sex reassignment or gender confirmation surgery, two-spirit Aboriginal men, nor men who practised same-sex relations but did not identify with a sexual minority label (i.e., straight/heterosexual).

Third, the researcher employed focus groups and individual interviews for data collection. Although the latter method has been preferred for interpretative or phenomenological research, the novelty of the research topic justified the focus group component of the study, as it was intended to address an assumed issue of concern to a “circumscribed and homogenous” (Dunne & Quayle, 2001, p. 680) group. In this sense, the central tendency of the IPA approach to privilege individual interviews as a means of eliciting data underplays the significance and role of social context in shaping analysis of personal experience. The group dynamic aspect of focus groups, with its authority to generate rich discussion about how gay men of colour cope with racism, adds depth and thickness to the research findings.

Fourth, a decision was made to examine the phenomenon of racism and coping strategies among four ethnoracial groups of gay men, even though a single population may have sufficed for research purposes. This decision was made on the ground that there is a dearth of literature on the experiences of these men in general and in Canada specifically. A focus on a single group would have yielded some important information and contributed to the gap in knowledge, but

examining several racial and ethnic groups simultaneously allowed for greater depth of understanding of the research topic, and comparisons within and across groups. The design served as a way to check the credibility or validity, confirmability, and possible transferability of findings from the phenomena studied.

Lastly, the study was restricted to reported experiences of racism within the GLB community of Ottawa; it was not designed to address racism in any broader context. In deciding to focus on a particular GLB community and not on the city as a whole, I do not mean to suggest that gay men of colour are unaffected by racism and discrimination from mainstream society. The limited focus of attention I chose allowed for the concentration of awareness on the study phenomenon, and stimulated a deeper understanding of an underresearched topic in GLB and critical race studies in Canada.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters, starting with Chapter 1 as the introduction. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review on multiple-minority stressors of racism and heterosexism; the effects of racism on health and well-being; and emerging findings on racism-specific coping among gay men of colour. Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical frameworks—queer critical theory and minority stress theory, complemented by insights from the transactional theory of stress and coping—that underpin the study, and presents an integrated conceptual framework for understanding the multidimensional nature of oppression experienced by gay men of colour. Chapter 4 describes the methodology for data collection and analysis. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study. Chapter 6 offers an interpretation and discussion of the findings in relation to previous scholarship. Chapter 7 is the conclusion, which brings together the various issues raised in the dissertation, including a discussion of the

limitations of the study, an analysis of the implications of the study for social work practice, and recommendations for future research.

Summary

This chapter provided background for the research topic and outlined investigative questions for the study. A significant point of the chapter, which sets the tone for the study, is that social discrimination and related intolerances are not uniformly experienced by all members of the GLB community. Individuals belonging to more than one distinct social group may experience multiple forms of oppression. Gay men of colour are affected by homophobia or heterosexism within communities of colour, and racism within GLB communities. As a result of the social discrimination arising from racism and homophobia, they experience exclusion and marginalization within GLB and ethnoracial communities.

Although not all gay men of colour live or work in predominantly White GLB communities, and thus may encounter racism from outside this context (i.e., in the broader society), it is nonetheless important to examine their experience of racial discrimination from the specific context of GLB communities. For gay men of colour who patronize White gay spaces such as clubs/bars, restaurants, and Pride Parades, and are subjected to racist situations there that can impact negatively on their health and well-being, an understanding of their coping responses to racism is crucial to identifying culturally appropriate interventions. In order to address this issue, empirical data about how gay men of colour cope with the racism of mainstream White GLB communities is therefore vital.

By far, the major proportion of current research on GLB people in Canada focuses on the experiences of White men and women. In cases where the experiences of people of colour are considered, they are often examined from a deficit perspective. This study begins to fill the gap

in Canadian literature, by focusing on the ways that gay men of colour resist oppression every day, as evidenced in their strategies for coping with racism. The findings of the study may provide a strengths-based, resilience framework from which social workers and other allied professionals can work to address issues relevant to this population.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Research is available that focuses on discrimination against gay men of colour in their ethnoracial communities because of the social oppression of heterosexism (Crichlow, 2004; George et al., 2012; C.-S. Han, Proctor, & Choi, 2014b; Harris, 2009; Hill, 2013; Icard, 1986; Szymanski & Sung, 2013; Washington, 2001; J. P. H. Wong & Poon, 2013). However, little research explores the exposure to racism in predominantly *White* GLB communities as a source of stress experienced by these men (C.-S. Han et al., 2015; Meyer, 1995, 2003a, 2003b). This chapter provides a review and critical discussion of the literature on racism and discrimination in GLB and ethnoracial communities, with specific focus on gay men of colour. The review helped to shape the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that guided field inquiries and the overall study design.

Three salient themes emerge from the empirical and theoretical literature examining the experiences of gay men at the intercentricity of race/ethnicity and sexual orientation. These form the primary foci for the research topic:

1. the multiple-minority stress of belonging to racially and sexually stigmatized social groups—namely, the heterosexist, gendered expectations of ethnoracial minority communities, and the culture of Whiteness and racism in GLB communities;
2. the deleterious effects of racism on psychological and physical health; and
3. the emerging findings of the research on coping with racism in GLB communities.

In the following pages these themes are explored, placing critical attention on Canadian content where possible.

Multiple-Minority Stress: Ethnoracial Communities' Heterosexism and White Racism in GLB Communities

The concept of minority stress is rooted in social and psychological theoretical traditions and social stress theory. Broadly, it can be understood as an individual's experience of stigmatization and discrimination owing to a minority social status or statuses (Brooks, 1981). Three tenets underpin this construct: First, a person's minority status can subject him or her to distal stressors—externally based stressors such as the lived experience of racial discrimination. Second, having a minority social status can increase one's exposure to proximal stressors—internally based stressors arising from experiences of distal stressors, such as homonegativism and internalized heterosexism or homophobia.⁵ Third, the combination of distal and proximal minority stressors can result in a poor health-related quality of life for individuals with stigmatized identities (Lick, Durso, & Johnson, 2013; Meyer, 1995, 2003a, 2003b; Meyer & Northridge, 2007; Meyer, Ouellette, Haile, & McFarlane, 2011; Shilo & Mor, 2014).

In a hegemonic culture where sexual and racial prejudices are pervasive, negative stereotypes and stigmas associated with marginalized, nondominant social identities can manifest in chronic stress (e.g., Balsam, Beadnell, et al., 2013; Hatzenbuehler, 2009). When internalized by the socially stigmatized individual, associated real or expected microaggressions⁶ can have

⁵ In some research, *heterosexism* and *homophobia* are used interchangeably (see, e.g., Szymanski & Sung, 2013). Where references are made to homophobia, this is consistent with the terminology used in the work being discussed. I make a distinction between these two concepts: homophobia is a dislike or disdain for homosexuality and heterosexism is the system that supports homophobia. See page 19 for more discussion about heterosexism.

⁶ Microaggressions are characterized by ephemeral, daily assaults directed at minority social status individuals or at those who are not White. They can involve environmental, behavioural, or verbal insults intended to demean the targets of oppression, in an effort to secure the structural advantage and social dominance of the oppressor (Nadal, 2008; Sue et al., 2007). In the specific context of racial discrimination, three major forms of microaggression are: *microassault*—overt, verbal and nonverbal, discriminatory attacks intended to be injurious to the target of oppression; *microinsult*—derogatory messages that convey disrespect about the target's racial identity or group; and *microinvalidation*—acts that exclude, deny, or negate the target's experience of discrimination (Sue et al., 2007). The latter forms of microaggressions—microinsult and microinvalidation—may be intentional or unintentional (see Noh, Kaspar, & Wickrama, 2007).

distressing consequences on the individual, family, and community systems. The cumulative effects of multiple stressors can subject an individual to poor mental and physical health (Balsam, Molina, et al., 2011; Cochran, 2001; Greene, 1994; N. M. Lewis, 2009; Meyer, 1995, 2003a, 2003b; Nadal, 2013; Siegel & Epstein, 1996; Szymanski & Sung, 2010; Velez, Moradi, & DeBlaere, 2015) and hinder the individual's use of mainstream health and social services.

Although repeated exposure to negative life events (e.g., everyday racism) can cause minority stress, this is by no means its only source (Meyer, 1995). The enduring conflict in values between the dominant structures of society and the lack of fit experienced by those in devalued social positions is a major contributing source of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). At the heart of minority stress is the “deprivation of a foundational sense of harmony between the person and the social environment” (Meyer et al., 2011, p. 205). Thus, when there is a lack of harmony or a sense of well-being in one's environment, the feeling of disharmony can be psychologically and physiologically taxing; such a disturbance can produce substantial stress and contribute to racial and ethnic differences in health and mortality (Allison, 1998; Chae et al., 2015; Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Della, Wilson, & Miller, 2002; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Selye, 1982).

For gay men of colour, two separate social issues often converge; they are affected by sexual-identity discrimination within communities of colour, and racism within GLB communities (Brennan et al., 2013; Crichlow, 2004; George et al., 2012; Gibbs & Jones, 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2007, 2008a; C. W. Han, 2013; Hemphill, 1991; hooks, 1989; Husbands et al., 2013; Manalansan, 1996; McBride, 2005; Nero, 2005; Sohng & Icard, 1996). The combination of heterosexism and racism, from a minority-stress perspective, leaves these individuals with little or no access to resources, services, and a community where they can

truly belong. With limited and questionable support structures, their ability to counteract any oppressive attitudes they may encounter in their ethnoracial or in predominantly White GLB communities could become compromised (Akerlund & Cheung, 2000; Meyer, Frost, & Nezhad, 2015; Meyer, Schwartz, & Frost, 2008).

Heterosexism in Communities of Colour

Outside of North America, knowledge about public acceptance of nonheterosexuals has been hampered by limited research data (T. W. Smith, Son, & Kim, 2014). However, in Canada and the United States, research has documented an increasing societal acceptance of GLB people, which has been characterized as indicative of support for gay and lesbian rights (The Environics Institute, 2010; Herek, 1991; McClosky & Brill, 1983; Rayside & Bowler, 1988; T. W. Smith, 2011; Witeck, 2014). Such research suggests a cultural and ideological shift towards more tolerance for people's sexual orientations. Furthermore, the rights of GLB people have been advanced in these countries, albeit at an uneven pace. For example, same-sex couples living in Canada have had the right to legally marry in all 10 provinces and three territories since July 2005. In June 2015, the United States Supreme Court made a landmark decision that recognized same-sex marriage nationwide in that country. This decision overruled several state laws that excluded marriage rights to same-sex couples (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015). Four years before, in September 2011, the country had revoked its ban on openly gay men and lesbians serving in the military. A similar policy was removed from Canadian law in 1992 (Belkin & McNichol, 2000/2001), allowing members of GLB communities to serve in the Canadian military.

Despite these and other institutional advancements in GLB legal and social rights, heterosexism continues to be a major obstacle to social and psychological well-being for people

who live outside the dominant structures of society. The increased risk for mental disorders and suicidal behaviour among children and young adults in recent years, whether because of their real or perceived sexual orientation, attests to the scope of the problem (Cochran, Mays, Alegria, Ortega, & Takeuchi, 2007; Haas et al., 2011; McCabe et al., 2010; Meyer et al., 2015). For those who self-identify as non-White, moreover, the stress associated with the denigration and stigmatization of a nonheterosexual orientation is heightened when attempting to manage the hostility directed at them from others within and outside of their ethnoracial communities (Balsam, Molina, et al., 2011; Crichlow, 2004; Szymanski & Sung, 2010).

Heterosexism eludes a universally accepted definition (I. Smith, Oades, & McCarthy, 2012), but the term generally includes overt and covert manifestations of sexual prejudice against GLB people and the preferential treatment of heterosexuals at the individual, institutional, and cultural levels (Balsam, Beadnell, et al., 2013; Herek, 2004). By design, heterosexism promotes and assumes opposite-sex sexuality as the only so-called normal form of sexual orientation in human relationships (Collins, 2004). However, like other forms of oppression that rely on the logic of segregation, it is important to understand that the problem inherent in heterosexist-based discrimination is not limited to one racial group or another; on the contrary, it reflects a systemic pattern of social prejudice against sexual minorities.

Attempts to portray ethnoracial communities as more heterosexist than White communities can repathologize racial minority group members. The public may come to perceive White communities, with their generous and visible level of acceptance of GLB members, as superior to communities of colour, which they view as lacking such acceptance. This perspective can derail interventions for addressing heterosexism at the societal level. Instead, the focus may shift onto the ethnoracial communities as the ones that need change. As some scholars (e.g.,

Parks, 2004; Phillips, 2005; B. Ryan, 2003) have directly expressed or implied in their work, there is a need for caution with this type of assessment, particularly in light of the mixed evidence regarding anti-GLB attitudes in White communities and communities of colour (see, for example, Bonilla & Porter, 1990; Herek & Capitanio, 1995; G. B. Lewis, 2003; Lippincott, Wlazelek, & Schumacher, 2000; Moradi et al., 2010; Schulte, 2002; Waldner, Sikka, & Baig, 1999). Indeed, maximizing heterosexism in racialized communities tends to “absolve gay White men and women from any real responsibility for addressing White privilege or racial injustice within gay spaces” (C.-S. Han, 2008b, p. 17). Rather than singling out communities of colour for their heterosexism, a more balanced approach is warranted. A critical acknowledgement—rather than the parochial sentiment expressed in some research—that similar forms of sexual prejudice prevail in communities of colour would suffice to bring attention to this important issue.

For example, a study of 19 African Canadian and African Caribbean *buller men* and *batty bwoys* in Toronto and Halifax Black communities suggested that while these settings can prove to be nurturing environments, community members’ stance on same-sex sexuality make them oppressive places for nonheterosexual, gender-nonconforming men (Crichlow, 2004). Consistent with research findings from the United States involving African American gay and bisexual men (e.g., Della et al., 2002; Fullilove & Fullilove, 1999; LaSala & Frierson, 2012; Malebranche et al., 2009; Pitt, 2009), this state of affairs exists because “Black men are expected to be heterosexual and stereotypically masculine, to procreate the race, and to follow heterosexual cultural norms” (Crichlow, 2004, p. 102).

Recent Canadian research has yielded similar results regarding homophobia in Black communities. George et al. (2012) examined the role of Black and sexual minority communities in the lives of 24 African, Caribbean, and other Black gay men in Toronto. That study reasoned

that Black gay men would rely on the social and emotional support of their ethnic and national communities, despite opposition to their gay identities. However, in response to the experience of homophobia, some men distanced themselves from their ethnic and national communities although maintaining affiliation with them. Other men exercised discretion regarding the disclosure of sexual orientation, to protect themselves and their families from the homophobia within their own communities. The study's hypothesis in both cases was that the resulting feeling of estrangement could increase sexually risky behaviour, out of the need for acceptance and gratification.

Similar cultural expectations and demands have also been found to impact members from other ethnoracial minority groups. Among men of Asian ancestry, there is a strong cultural expectation that they will adhere to traditional gender roles and ideals of filial piety (Chan, 1989; Nakamura et al., 2013; Sohng & Icard, 1996). Interlaced with these responsibilities are the constraints of procreation and the continuation of family lineage and name through marriage (Chung & Szymanski, 2006; Li, Holroyd, & Lau, 2010; Operario, Han, & Choi, 2008; Poon & Ho, 2002; Tremble, Schneider, & Appathurai, 1989; Wooden, Kawasaki, & Mayeda, 1983). Research demonstrates that the influence of these cultural markers on sexual and gender identity can affect actions and sexual behaviours among this population (Nadal & Corpus, 2013; C. K. Tan, 2011). In a qualitative study of 10 Asian American gay men who were primarily from China, Korea, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, Chung and Szymanski (2006) found that participants were reluctant to disclose their sexual orientation to family members due to the perceived conservativeness of Asian culture and the need to avoid confrontation with parents over their same-sex identity. Because men are expected to carry the family name, the disclosure

that one is gay may be interpreted as a threat to the continuation of traditional family structure and a repudiation of one's role within the culture.

In another study, Poon and Ho (2002) investigated the cultural and social barriers that could increase HIV risk in a sample of 15 predominantly gay Asian youth in Toronto. In that study, researchers found that, among the mostly ethnically identified Chinese respondents, heterosexism in Asian families might precipitate psychological stress and a sense of isolation stemming from the youths' fears—that they would be rejected, their sexual orientation would be discovered, or they would bring shame on the family by not conforming to traditional gender roles or stereotypes. To deal with these stresses and gain some sense of validation, such youths might engage in unsafe sexual behaviours that increase their risk for HIV infection.

Further, in one of the few studies to have investigated the experiences of Canadian South Asian homosexual and bisexual men, Ratti, Bakeman, and Peterson (2000) reported higher levels of internalized homophobia—a type of proximal stressor—among the sample of 46 participants than in their European Canadian counterparts. The authors suggested that hate for oneself and others who are homosexual or bisexual may have roots in the homophobia found in the South Asian culture, where same-sex orientation is perceived as a Western phenomenon. Growing up in an environment where same-sex sexuality is considered foreign and abhorrent, the daily verbal and behavioural attacks associated with this attitude may force the nondisclosure of one's sexual orientation in fear that it may bring shame to the family and ethnocultural community. The study provided some support for internalized homophobia as a risk factor for HIV and high-risk sexual behaviours among the sample of non-European Canadians.

It is interesting to note that these findings—not including the internalized homophobia-HIV acquisition risk link reported in the study—are consistent with those documented among

South Asian gay men in the United Kingdom, where the bulk of research involving this population appears to be concentrated (see, for example, Bhugra, 1997; Siraj, 2009; Jaspal, 2012; Jaspal & Siraj, 2011). Here, the literature attests to the significance of familial *izzat* (honour), as an important factor that influences self-disclosure among gay men of South Asian origin. Tied to the concept of *izzat* are the heteronormative values of marriage, family-building and procreation (Jaspal, 2012; Jaspal & Siraj, 2011; B. Khan, 1997; Yip, 2004b, 2005). Individuals whose sexual identity contravenes or hinders the fulfillment of this heteronormative social script may be at risk for ostracization and physical violence; they may also experience threats to the psychological coherence aspect of their identities (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010; Jaspal & Siraj, 2011; see also Minwalla, Rosser, Feldman, & Varga, 2005). To mitigate these risks, South Asian gay men may avoid disclosing their sexual orientation to family, friends, and others within their ethnocultural group (Bhugra, 1997; Jaspal & Siraj, 2011); when possible, they may also engage in the strategy of passing (as heterosexual), as a means to deflect attention from the stigma attributable to their sexual orientation in order to achieve psychological well-being (Jaspal & Siraj, 2011).

Likewise, within the Latin-American culture, allegiance to family is paramount. The primary and extended family units take precedence over individual needs (Munoz-Laboy et al., 2009), creating a deep sense of familial bond. Although this connection can be an important source of strength and protection against systems of racialized oppression in the broader society (Nabors, 2012), the protective aspect of familism can develop into emotional conflict and anguish for those whose sexual-orientation identity deviates from cultural-specific norms (Diaz, 1998; Morales, 1992; Vasquez, 1979). These individuals may struggle with obligations to the family and need to overcome their own repressed same-sex desires, in a context where attitudes toward same-gender sexual behaviour is restrictive (Diaz, Ayala, & Bein, 2004; Munoz-Laboy et

al., 2009; Quevedo-Gómez, Krumeich, Abadía-Barrero, Pastrana-Salcedo, & van den Borne, 2012).

For Latino gay men, community and family norms, attitudes, and values concerning sexuality are rooted in patriarchal social structures that privilege hegemonic masculinity. The concept of *machismo*—with its emphasis on “honour, respect, and dignity, as well as aggressiveness, invulnerability, and sexual prowess” (Gonzalez & Espin, 1996, p. 586)—exemplifies this construction of maleness, and ties it to a set of highly rigid, regulatory gender roles. Culturally prescribed roles for Latin-American men include the expectation that they will provide for, protect, and defend the nuclear and extended family units with loyalty and fidelity (Morales, 1992). These normative expressions of masculinity are embedded within broader cultural practices that invalidate nonmasculine gender behaviours and conspire to directly and indirectly pressure nonheterosexual men to conceal their sexual identities (Diaz et al., 2004). The negative consequence for those who choose to challenge this heteronormative system of beliefs by disclosing their same-sex orientation is the loss of family ties. But family ties are central to the emotional and material support contingent on one’s conformity to gender role stratification (Diaz, 1998; Diaz et al., 2004; C. Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009). An earlier study (Diaz et al., 2004) that investigated the harmful effects of sexual-orientation discrimination on the health and well-being of Latino gay men makes these points even more strongly.

Diaz et al. (2004) reported the effects of sexual-orientation discrimination, as well as other factors, on sexual risk behaviour among 912 Latino gay men in three cities in the United States. Of these, 64 percent reported having been verbally harassed as children for being gay or effeminate; 70 percent said that their sexual orientation had hurt or embarrassed their families; 64 percent indicated having hid their sexual orientation by passing as straight in order to be

accepted; and 29 percent said they had moved away from families and friends because of their same-sex identity. The study further revealed that these numbers were important for understanding homophobia as a predictor of sexual risk. In particular, the psychological distress and experience of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation affected the likelihood of the men's participation in sexual situations where safer sex practices were compromised—that is, the likelihood of their having unprotected sex to assuage feelings of anxiety and stress. These men thus ran the risk of contracting HIV.

Taken together, these studies highlight the sociocultural constraints associated with a nonheterosexual identity among gay and bisexual men from a variety of ethnoracial communities/identities. The nondisclosure of one's sexual orientation may act as a buffer against poor psychological health relating to the distal stressor of heterosexism that is perceived as bringing shame on the family and cultural community. However, the hypervigilance of keeping one's sexual-orientation identity secret is stress-producing and can delay or prevent access to support services for discrimination and identity-related stress. In some cases, the stressor of heterosexism was suggested as a possible predictor of sexual risk for HIV infection.

When considered from the sexually marginalized groups' perspective, the culturally gendered expectations, demands, and pressures of many ethnoracial minority communities place undue burdens on members who identify as gay. Gay men of colour desire to maintain a strong cultural identity and community connections (George et al., 2012; Greene, 1994; Hemphill, 1991; Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010; Nakamura et al., 2013; Parks, 2004; Poon & Ho, 2002), but their identity development process may be complicated by prescriptive, heteronormative assumptions and relatively rigid sex and gender roles that invalidate same-sex practices (Cass, 1979; Gibbs & Jones, 2013; LaSala & Frierson, 2012; Zamora-Hernandez & Patterson, 1996). A

subsequent internalization of negative messages from family members and broader ethnocultural communities regarding same-sex desire can cause them to conceal aspects of their identity as a means of survival (Alexander, 2004; George et al., 2012; Greene, 1994; Nakamura et al., 2013; Poon & Ho, 2002).

In an effort to manage these competing demands and negotiate their hostile social and community environments, gay men of colour may perceive the need to keep their racial and sexual identities separate (Christian, 2005; Conerly, 2001; George et al., 2012; Icard, 1986; Nakamura et al., 2013; Ratti et al., 2000), overriding individual or collective preferences for integrating both identities (Crawford, Allison, Zamboni, & Soto, 2002; Manalansan, 1996; Meyer & Ouellete, 2009) in a way that would validate the multiplicities of these separate selves. Indeed, as has been argued by several authors (see Crawford et al., 2002; Estrada & Rutter, 2006; Fukuyama & Ferguson, 2000; Monteiro & Fuqua, 1994), framing these identities as if diametrically opposed rather than as an integrative components of self can exacerbate the complex and multifaceted challenges faced by this population, including impeding healthier functioning and improved well-being.

This view of an incessant conflict over one's racial or ethnic and sexual-orientation identities has been challenged. Meyer and Ouellette (2009) conducted a study with Black lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. In contrast to the portrayal of these identities in mutually exclusive and conflicting terms, participants in their study reported a search for unity and purpose at the intersections of racial or ethnic and sexual identities. While the study did not set out to disprove the identity dissonance experienced by Black lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals in general, it did reveal this experience to be dynamic and dialectical, often related to external sources of oppression rather than solely to an internal identity conflict.

Nevertheless, the perceived necessity for separation of identities by gay men of colour can be understood in the context of a need to: (a) preserve the protective shield offered by their respective ethnoracial communities from the daily harsh realities of general and gay-related White racism (Fukuyama & Ferguson, 2000; Fung, 1996; Greene, 1994; Icard, 1996; Nakamura et al., 2013) and (b) maintain access to a network of same-sex individuals for play and love, outside of the heterocentric structures of their ethnoracial and cultural communities (Icard, 1996).

Heterosexism and Religious Experiences Among Gay Men of Colour

Within communities of colour, religion has long played an important role in the groups' ability to manage the interlocking dynamics of inequality that give rise to chronic contextual stress, including exposure to racial discrimination (Ellison, Musick, & Henderson, 2008; Hayward & Krause, 2015; E. K. O. Lee, 2007; J. O. Lee, 1960; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Sanchez, Dillon, Concha, & De La Rosa, 2015; Taylor, Mattis, & Chatters, 1999). Religiosity promotes cognitive and affective well-being as well as stress resiliency, contributing to a self-perceived quality of life (Ellison, 1991; E. K. O. Lee, 2007; Othelia, 2007; Pargament, Koenig, Tarakeshwar, & Hahn, 2004; Park, Roh, & Yeo, 2012). Having strong religious convictions may attenuate the burden attributable to psychological effects of stressful or traumatic events (Ellison, 1991). The ability to reframe unpleasant and difficult life situations as opportunities, through reference to religious symbols or beliefs, can make coping with the negative experience less ominous. Similarly, using religious coping can help people deal with life challenges; this faith-based coping strategy is positively correlated with greater life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Ellison, 1991; E. K. O. Lee, 2007; Othelia, 2007; Park et al., 2012). Indeed, in a longitudinal study of the relationship between religious coping and spiritual, psychological, and

physical functioning, affirmative religious coping was found to be predictive of stress-related growth and positive mental health status (Pargament et al., 2004). Religion has consistently been shown to shield the general population of racial and ethnic minorities from the negative effects of stress on well-being, and to enhance their quality of life (Ellison, Boardman, Williams, & Jackson, 2001). However, do the salutary effects of religion on well-being manifest themselves equally for gay men of colour?

In fact, religious heterosexism is a system of social oppression that contributes to hegemonic narratives of heteronormativity within ethnoracial communities. For gay men of colour, religious environments are not entirely welcoming or inclusive of them as parishioners (Barnes & Meyer, 2012; Crichlow, 2004; Garcia, Gray-Stanley, & Ramirez-Valles, 2008; Lassiter, 2015; Meanley, Pingel, & Bauermeister, 2016; Minwalla et al., 2005; Nakamura et al., 2013; Walker & Longmire-Avital, 2013; Yip, 2007a, 2007b). Denunciation of same-sex romantic relationship is commonplace in religious communities; scriptural injunctions may be hurled at individuals of nonheterosexual orientation, expressing contempt and disgust of them; their compliance with heterosexual norms may be coerced; and they may be silenced into concealing their sexuality (Boykin, 2005; Crichlow, 2004; Garcia et al., 2008; Jaspal & Siraj, 2011; Murray, 1997; Wilson, Wittlin, Muñoz-Laboy, & Parker, 2011). In these contexts, same-sex sexual activity is perceived as wrong and sinful (Barnes & Meyer, 2012; Crichlow, 2004; Icard, 1996; Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010; Kubicek et al., 2009; Minwalla et al., 2005; Pitt, 2010). This view is often accompanied by false or erroneous inferences regarding the incompatibility of religious faith and sexual orientation (Kubicek et al., 2009; Minwalla et al., 2005; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000; Yarhouse et al., 2009; Yip, 2004a). Thus, gay men of colour may feel pressured to choose between their two identities—their sexual orientation and their religious identity—in the belief

that the two cannot coexist. Framing these identities in such a dichotomized fashion may have negative social and psychological implications, including inducing experiences of religious and sexual identity conflict (Anderton, Pender, & Asner-Self, 2011; Barnes & Meyer, 2012; Barton, 2010; Boellstorff, 2005; Garcia et al., 2008; Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010; Miller, 2007; Minwalla et al., 2005; Pitt, 2009, 2010).

Identity conflict occurs when a person experiences two or more identities—which they hold and consider salient to the development of a strong sense of self—as unrelated or irreconcilable (Coyle & Rafalin, 2001). This threat to identity may diminish an individual’s self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Alexander, 2004; Crichlow, 2004; Jaspal, 2012; Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2012; Woodyard, Peterson, & Stokes, 2000). Because most religious denominations perpetrate and perpetuate negative messages that contribute to such identity conflict, religiosity may be less positive for some ethnoracial sexual minority persons; they may turn away from traditional religion toward a more personal and spiritual relationship with God (Barton, 2010; Dahl & Galliher, 2009; Doyal, Papparini, & Anderson, 2008; Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010; Kubicek et al., 2009; Love, Bock, Jannarone, & Richardson, 2005; Miller, 2007; Minwalla et al., 2005; Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Pitt, 2009; Rostosky, Otis, Riggle, Kelly, & Brodnicki, 2008; Rostosky, Riggle, Horne, & Miller, 2009; Seegers, 2007; Sherry, Adelman, Whilde, & Quick, 2010; P. P. Tan, 2005).

Although the terms *religiosity* and *spirituality* are sometimes used interchangeably in the academic literature (Fukuyama, Puig, Wolf, & Baggs, 2014; Hollowell, 2012; Sherry et al., 2010), their conflation negates the small but important difference between them. While religiosity tends toward a more public display of formally sanctioned religious behaviours and practices, spirituality may be understood as an inward expression of faith based on the spiritual

formation of an individual relationship with a higher power or God (Anderton et al., 2011; Este & Bernard, 2006; Garcia et al., 2008; Kharitonov, 2012; Yip, 2003). Studies in which gay men of colour were asked about their experiences in religious contexts provide empirical support for this difference. Miller (2007) explored religious development and spiritual formation among 10 African American gay men living with AIDS, examining their experiences of the religiously sanctioned homophobia, heterosexism, and AIDS phobia of the Black churches they grew up in. The results indicated mixed satisfaction with church participation. Although the men varied in their reasons for attending church, over time most of them stopped going to church, believing that their clergies' homophobic sermons inaccurately portrayed God's feelings toward them. The decision to disassociate themselves from religious institutions was not a repudiation of God; rather, the men felt confident to leave because they knew that God loved them and they believed they could forge a more intimate and healthy relationship with God outside of structured religion, where they were subjected to biblical narratives of condemnation.

Minwalla et al. (2005) found a similar process was at work among their study's participants. The authors investigated the dual identity experiences of six progressive Muslim gay men. Four of them had been raised from birth as Muslims and two converted from Christianity to Islam during adulthood. They attended one of two Al-Fatiha conferences in the United States and Canada. Three of the six men were born in Pakistan, one in the Asian Peninsula, and the remaining two in North America. In that study, some participants distanced themselves from the religion because of feelings of betrayal and rejection by Allah due to their same-sex orientation. These conflicting feelings were reportedly augmented by the men's reading of the Qur'an, family pressures for marriage, and traditional, cultural interpretations of religious texts in a manner that disparaged same-sex relationship. To cope with the struggle of integrating

their sexual and religious identities, these men adopted spiritual principles that exhorted the virtues of a “good human being” over religious doctrines of a “good Muslim,” given the latter’s tendency to exclude Muslim gay men from its definition. They also challenged traditional interpretations, which in Islam condemned same-sex sexual relationships by reinterpreting the Qur’an in such a way as to affirm the nonheterosexual dimension of their identities, and to encourage personal development of an intimate relationship with Allah outside of the confines of organized religion.

Another study explored the role of religiosity in the life course of 66 Latino gay, bisexual, and transgender men who had been raised as Catholics (Garcia et al., 2008). The study revealed a religious trajectory consistent with participants’ developmental stages: religious indoctrination in childhood, experience of sexual and religious identity conflicts in adolescence, and resolution of this conflict in adulthood. In the adult life-stage where decisions regarding individual religious or spiritual identities were made, 41 percent of the men were reported to have either low levels of involvement in institutionalized religion or no religious affiliations. Notably, these men held individualized spiritual beliefs about God and engaged in activities that promoted personal spiritual growth outside of religion. The authors concluded that the rejection of institutionalized religion among this group of men might be related to the disapproval of same-sex sexuality within the Latin American Catholic Church.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that exposure to antigay nonaffirming messages in religious contexts can contribute to identity dissonance, and precipitate such strong measures as rejection of one’s religion of childhood. Despite the presence of sexual prejudice in most religious organizations, however, it is important to note that not all gay men of colour respond in the same way as those reported in the studies. The personal development of a spiritual identity

and practice is not contingent on the rejection of organized religion. In fact, research shows that some men are able to achieve positive integration of their sexual and religious identities while maintaining membership in an institutionalized religion (e.g., Brennan-Ing, Seidel, Larson, & Karpiak, 2013; Dahl & Galliher, 2009; Kubicek et al., 2009; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000; Walton, 2006).

Doyal et al. (2008) found that among their sample of eight gay men from sub-Saharan Africa living in the United Kingdom, most continued to attend church or mosque in the face of religious condemnation over their same-sex orientation. Among other strategies, these men coped with condemnatory postures of their religious settings by not revealing their sexuality, and by reinterpreting religious teachings; participants also expressed the importance of changing the attitudes of religious leaders and congregations, in order to promote greater acceptance of members with nonheterosexual orientations. Similarly, in a sample of 34 African American gay men who attended predominantly Black churches, participants neither rejected nor compartmentalized their identities (i.e., being Black and gay) when confronted with antigay religious messages; instead, they neutralized the power of religious leaders by challenging their biblical authority and position as individuals unaffected by self-serving biases (Pitt, 2010). In this way, the men were able to reframe or ignore ecclesiastical teachings that pathologized or denigrated their sexual behaviours and identities.

Finally, drawing on a longitudinal mixed-methods study (comprising 526 quantitative surveys and 36 qualitative interviews) of racially and ethnically diverse young men, the majority of whom identified as gay, Kubicek et al. (2009) investigated the intersection between sexuality and religion so as to understand how participants reconciled messages about same-sex sexuality from religious sources with their sexual identity. Despite negative messages encountered from

places of worship, some participants wanted to continue being involved in religious institutions, given the meaningful and valuable experiences they had there. The qualitative responses demonstrated that respondents sought to integrate their religious identity with their sexual identity in two ways: by exploring more gay-affirming congregations, religions, or belief systems; and by focusing on personal spiritual development. In both cases, the desire for connection to a higher power was omnipresent. Participants noted that the ability to survey other religions and belief systems led them to discover that all religions shared foundational teachings for an ethical life; this understanding was interpreted to mean that as long as they “lived a good life” they would find love, understanding, and acceptance from God. This finding typified the connection to the spiritual world that participants surmised provided a direction for their development of a closer relationship to a higher power; it afforded them the flexibility to be selective in how they worshipped or practised their beliefs.

The above data underscores the importance that gay men of colour assigned to religion or spirituality in their lives, and suggests that the process of religious disaffiliation is complex and difficult, especially for those with a sustained involvement in faith-based institutions and for whom leaving is not a viable option regardless of their exposure to negative messages from these institutions. Moreover, consistent with minority-stress theory, these studies also demonstrate that gay men of colour are at risk for prejudice-related stress within ethnoreligious settings due to their nonheterosexual orientation. Unlike their heterosexual counterparts, these individuals are pressured to find ways to reduce the sting and prejudice-induced messages of their religious organizations in order to minimize and/or cope with the resultant psychological distress that arises from the experiences of conflict between religious and sexual identities.

White GLB Racism

Racism comprises the oppressive behaviours and attitudes of those in positions of power toward ethnoracial others. Much like its heterosexist cousin, racism is an additional source of minority stress experienced by gay men of colour within predominantly White GLB communities (Brennan et al., 2013; K.-H. Choi, Han, Paul, & Ayala, 2011; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han et al., 2015; Nakamura et al., 2013; Ro, Ayala, Paul, & Choi, 2013). GLB communities are far from being places of solace and reprieve from the harsh realities of life. Instead, expressions by White members of these communities of racist ideologies of dominance and superiority are not isolated instances of oppression; rather, they mirror images of White racism found within the broader societies of Western industrialized countries (Callander, Holt, & Newman, 2015; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2007).

As an ultimate expression of power based on racial advantage or privilege, racism shapes the collective understanding of people and assigns maligned members to the periphery of the White dominant group imaginary. This ideological and cultural expression of difference and inferiority is sustained by agencies of socialization, through which stereotypical beliefs, attitudes and values about people of colour (and others with stigmatized identities) become further entrenched. In practice, racist attitudes may be manifested directly or indirectly to undermine the self-worth and dignity of targeted groups (Fleras, 2014; Henry & Tator, 2010; J. M. Jones, 1997; Sue et al., 2007).

For gay men of colour, regardless of the form in which racism gets expressed, the cumulative and long-term effects of racial discrimination can diminish quality of life. Racism-related stress can lead to deleterious health conditions, including poor mental and physical health (C.-S. Han et al., 2015; Meyer, 2003a, 2003b; Ro et al., 2013). The association between racism

and negative health, discussed further below, finds support in scholarship suggesting that the experiences of gay men of colour differ considerably from those of nonminority gay men (e.g., Boykin, 2005; C.-S. Han et al., 2015; P. A. Jackson, 2000). These differences can be traced to a fragmentation of identities among gay men of colour, who often feel compelled to choose between identifying with either their sexual or racial identities (Akerlund & Cheung, 2000; Conerly, 2001; Dubé & Savin-Williams, 1999; Gibbs & Jones, 2013; Icard, 1986; Manalansan, 1996; Stokes & Peterson, 1998). Research shows that gay men of colour encounter difficulty integrating these identities due to external pressures associated with each—that is, heterosexism within ethnoracial minority communities and racism in GLB communities (Adams & Kimmel, 1997; Christian, 2005; Crichlow, 2004; Manalansan, 1996; Morrison, 2008; Stokes & Peterson, 1998). Nevertheless, in analyzing race-based discrimination, the social context of GLB communities in contributing to this conflict must be taken into account. This consideration can contribute to an understanding of racism as a unique predictor of negative health outcomes.

Mainstream White GLB communities exert pressure on non-White, same-sex people similar to the pressure exerted by the heterosexism and traditional male gender-role expectations in racial-minority communities. Here, instead, gay men of colour are disadvantaged by “Whitening practices” (Bérubé, 2001, p. 237) that simultaneously deny their existence and present a monolithic representation of GLB people and culture. Such Whitening practices exclude sexual-minority members of ethnoracial-minority groups from gay and lesbian spaces, institutions, and political movements, by

. . . mirroring the whiteness of men who run powerful institutions as a strategy for winning credibility, acceptance, and integration; excluding people of colour from gay institutions; selling gay as white to raise money, make a profit, and gain economic power; and daily wearing the pale protective colouring that

camouflages the unquestioned assumptions and unearned privileges of gay whiteness. (Bérubé, 2001, p. 246)

The end result of this Whitening practice is a fortification of the power and unquestioned White-skin privileges enjoyed by White GLB people, without regard to mobilizing that power to fight racism within the GLB community (Bérubé, 2001).

Overlapping with and extending Bérubé's (2001) discussion of Whitening practices, Nero (2005) theorized that despite the preferred discourses of a multicultural gay community, the racial formation of Whiteness that now so largely prevails in this space highlights the deep-seated nature of racism and racial hostility directed at sexual-minority men of colour. The "controlling images" (Collins, 2000, p. 5) of gay men of colour—especially Black gay men—in largely White gay and lesbian cultures are as imposters who exist only to satisfy White gay male desire. For Nero, this one-dimensional representation of Black gay men reinforces the notion that race and sexual orientation, as they exist for these men, are incompatible. These seemingly incompatible categories feed the dominant narrative that to be gay means to be White. The Black gay man as anomaly or inauthentic and the White gay man as bona fide create a situation where only the latter can lay claim to a same-sex orientation. This is the sine qua non of the former's exclusion within the community: "the ubiquitous image of the black gay male as an imposter or a fraud naturalizes and normalizes the exclusion of black gay men from sites of territorial economies where wealth is created" (Nero, 2005, p. 235). Such exclusion is paradoxical: it defeats the ideas articulated under the social-inclusion agenda of multiculturalism, and explains in part why gay ghettos—territorial and economic spaces from which the cumulative effects of racism relegate Black and other gay men of colour to the bottom of the social hierarchy—remain putatively White.

These authors' works provide some theoretical and conceptual frames for making sense of racism in GLB communities, but their discussions are more than theoretical speculation. Empirical findings on the impact of encounters with racism reveal the embeddedness of racist attitudes and behaviours in this cultural space. Research demonstrates how subtle and blatant forms of racial discrimination affect sexual-minority men of colour, as well as revealing the mechanism for maintaining the status quo. Recurring themes in these studies point to three dimensions of race-based discrimination experienced by gay men of colour: invisibility—exclusion from institutional venues and media cultural productions; sexual racism; and sexual objectification and racial stereotypes. These are discussed below.

Invisibility or Exclusion From Institutional Venues and Media Cultural Productions

Allusions to invisibility or feelings of exclusion within GLB communities are commonplace in the narratives of gay men of colour, who feel unwelcomed and alienated in these social environments (Brennan et al., 2013; Diaz, 1998; George et al., 2012; Giwa, 2010; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Green, 2008; C.-S. Han, 2007; O'Neill, 1999). Continuous attempts by White nonheterosexual people to construct a monolithic image of the GLB community have the effect of keeping gay men of colour from feeling a sense of belonging (Brennan et al., 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Minwalla et al., 2005; Norsah, 2015). For these men, perceived differential treatments are borne out in everyday encounters and actions aimed at denying them membership in order to promote the interests, cultural norms, and aesthetic values of the dominant White group.

For example, Bérubé (2001) noted that gay men of colour are often subjected to the practice of triple carding at entrances of gay bars and nightclubs: they must produce three pieces

of identification, in an overt, blatant form of racism. The example of a gay Latino man in the Castro district of San Francisco illustrates this point:

There were also some racist discriminatory practices on the part of the bars in that sometimes they would ask for an inordinate amount of IDs from people of colour. . . . They would ask for two, three picture IDs. So it wasn't a very happy time for Latino gays. . . . We were still a marginal group. The dominant group was still white gay men. (Ramirez, 2003, p. 232)

Similar occurrences of discrimination have been reported elsewhere in the United States—in cities like Washington, Boston, Los Angeles, and New York—and in countries like Australia. For example, in a study involving eight Southeast Asian gay men in Melbourne, some participants were refused entry into a popular gay nightclub and, in the off-chance that entry was gained, the men were met with condemnatory racist remarks from staff and other (White) patrons, such as: “This place is crawling with Asians!” (Ridge et al., 1999, p. 51). Underlying this crude racial remark was the view that this largely White gay space was being overturned or encroached upon by a racial other, whom the White patrons of this establishment perhaps felt did not belong and were culturally, socially, and aesthetically inferior to them.

As these examples demonstrate, such incidents are not limited to a few bad apples. On the contrary, they represent Whitening practices designed to exclude gay men of colour from largely White GLB institutions: “the attempt to patrol the borders of whiteness in gay-owned business establishments seems to be a systematic practice to ensure only certain types of people are allowed into gay bars” (C.-S. Han, 2007, p. 60).

Akin to the situation described above, the proliferation of media images of White gay men is a form of subtle racism that perpetuates a monolithic view of the GLB community. Gay men of colour are constructed as outsiders looking in. Far from innocent, the circulation of such

images function as a divisive trope intended to produce an idealized imagery of the cultural community as White, legitimizing White power and privilege:

Representations of queers of colour in gay media [is] important to understand because they allow us to realize what kind of visibility is given to them, how they are rendered intelligible and licit as subjects, and if they are rather commoditized objects or excluded abjects. (Roy, 2012, p. 177)

Juxtaposed to the affirming images and messages White gay men daily receive about themselves, gay men of colour experience devalued and discredited identities related to the diminution of their sexual currency (Green, 2007; Husbands et al., 2013; McKeown, Nelson, Anderson, Low, & Elford, 2010; Walcott, 2006). Comparative studies of gay print media have consistently shown that White gay men are depicted more often on the covers and inside the pages of commercial gay magazines than their racialized counterparts (Eshref, 2009; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Roy, 2012; Saucier & Caron, 2008; Sonnekus & van Eeden, 2009). For instance, in his analysis of the representations of queers of colour in Québec's three main gay magazines (*Fugues*, *RG*, and *Être*), Roy (2012) found that White gay men—regardless of age—accounted for the significant number of those represented on these magazine covers, at 89.4 percent. This finding is consistent with that of previous studies: the general aesthetic tendencies of comparable leading magazines reinforce dominant, White, representation of male same-sex sexuality (C.-S. Han, 2008b).

Despite the marginal representation of gay men of colour in these magazines, certain aspects of their bodies are overrepresented in salacious and sensual images. That is to say, while the entire bodies of gay men of colour may not always be fully represented on the covers of *Fugues*, *RG*, and *Être*, some parts of their bodies are “often fetishized and exoticized as objects of desire” (Roy, 2012, p. 181; see also Brennan et al., 2013). To borrow from Millum's (1975) work on the images of women in advertising, cropping photographs to show body parts in place

of the entire body reduces gay men of colour to consumable, commoditized objects. It invalidates the existence of gay men of colour and demonstrates how racialized images can affect self-perception and bolster negative racial perceptions of gay men of colour in others.

From the foregoing discussion, it becomes apparent that gay men of colour experience racism at different entry points. The overt, blatant forms of racism already mentioned very likely contribute to the displacement of related racist behaviours onto new spaces of contestation, such as the Internet. As some social commentators have implied, the Internet represents the latest frontier where racism is being propagated, debated, and contested (Chee, 2012; Manske, 2014; Weber, 2012). The movement of bodies into technological space assures that perpetrators of racism are protected by the shield of anonymity afforded their targets (Callander, Holt, & Newman, 2012; Paul, Ayala, & Choi, 2010; Poon, Ho, Wong, Wong, & Lee, 2005). Such anonymity means that gay White “men could express blatantly racist comments in exchanges of messages and be shielded from any real-time interpersonal or social consequences” (Paul et al., 2010, p. 6).

Sexual Racism

In the past, racism was mostly perpetrated in volatile, emotional, and often face-to-face confrontations. Nowadays, the direct and often indirect racism of the online world has been added to this dynamic, targeting gay men of colour, especially in personal ad sites used for cruising and locating potential sex partners (W. Brown, 2003; Paul et al., 2010; Phua & Kaufman, 2003; Plummer, 2007). This type of social discrimination has been described as sexual racism, which Icard (1986) has conceptualized as a permutation of sex role stereotypes and racial stereotypes. Among gay men of colour, as the example in Figure 1 substantiates, identification of racial discrimination in this context is unequivocal; racial politics is not filtered out on these sex-

seeking websites (Callander et al., 2012, 2015; Paul et al., 2010). Nevertheless, what is important to understand about this prejudice is that it is an exclusionary form of sexual segregation based on race. Members of the dominant racial group, White gay men, have the power to deny sexual approbation to and shun same-sex activity with men from racialized groups, whom they perceive as sexually undesirable or to have a devalued sexual currency (W. Brown, 2003; Caluya, 2006; Green, 2007; C.-S. Han, 2007; McKeown et al., 2010; Phua & Kaufman, 2003).

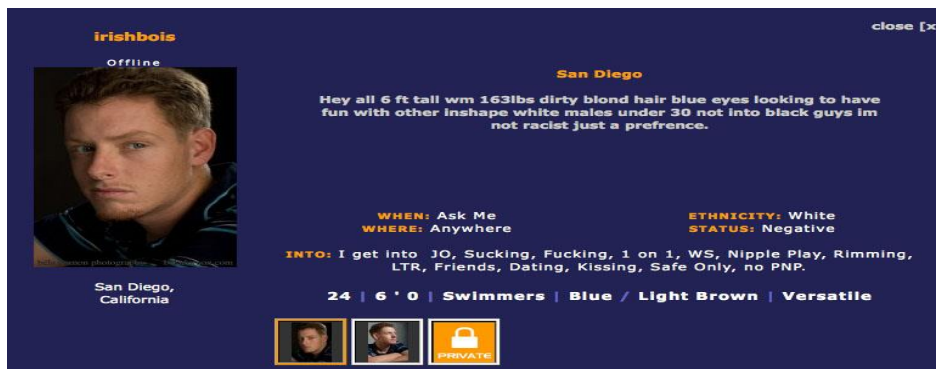


Figure 1. Online advertisement for sex with White men.

When sexual approbation and relations do occur—as the personal ad in Figure 2 suggests—they are likely to be exploitative in that gay men of colour are expected to assume stereotypical sex roles based on race in fulfillment of the racialized fantasies of some White gay men (Brennan et al., 2013; Boykin, 1996; Husbands et al., 2013; McBride, 2005; Paul et al., 2010).

Chubbie daddy looking for submissive bottom young asian boys

Posted by u4me99 on 05/02/2013

Location: London, East London, All Saints

My age: 43 years old

Description

I'm a white chubby daddy type guy looking for a young slim very submissive bottom asian boy to use for my pleasure.

You must be willing to do anything I say including being tied up and blindfolded.

Prefer under 25 slim smooth or little body hair and open minded.

If you are genuine then reply with your full details and photo. No photo no reply. Do not send 1 line reply do not just send phone number.

I accommodate and discrete. I am clean and disease free and you must be also. No time wasters!

Figure 2. Online advertisement for sex with Asian men.

Several studies have examined the phenomenon of online sexual racism, noting how the issue of race factors into the production of sexual attractiveness or desirability. For example, in an online study, W. Brown (2003) posted fictitious profiles of four gay men distinguished by race—White, Black, Asian, and Latino—in the chat rooms and personal sections on gay.com and XY Personals, in four major American cities: Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and San Francisco. The author sought to investigate the frequency with which people showed interest in the men depicted in the profiles. In descending order of importance, results indicated that White and Latino men received the most hits and responses, followed by Asian men, and then Black men. These results are consistent with those of other studies (e.g., Paul et al., 2010; Phua & Kaufman, 2003; R. K. Robinson, 2008) and suggest that in the gay marketplace of desire, Asian and Black men have devalued erotic capital, placing them outside of the sexual networks of those considered to have a sociosexual desirability status.

W. Brown's (2003) study demonstrated implicit racial attitudes and behaviours directed at gay men of colour in online dating and sex-seeking websites. Race has been explicitly communicated as the basis for refusing potential sexual partners in other studies as well. For example, in focus group discussions ($n = 50$) and in-depth interviews ($n = 35$) with African American, Latino, and Asian/Pacific Islander men regarding their racialized interactional experience on the Internet, Paul et al. (2010) found that race was a strong factor in partner selection. Sexual desirability was structured hierarchically, along racial lines, with gay men of colour consistently found to be at the bottom rung of this scale. The diminutive status of one Japanese gay man, whose response other participants echoed, was reinforced as a race-based stipulation when searching for and negotiating sexual hookups online:

However, when I'm online it's a constant reminder in terms of . . . the details of the ad and the specifics. You know, if they say "Asian only" or more frequently,

“no Asians,” then I say oh, yeah, that’s right. That’s me. . . . In the online world, it’s all about the specifics, so it’s either, you know, “looking for Asian” or “no Asians, please.” So it’s kind of like, it’s hard not to, you know, it’s hard to ignore it. It’s constantly in your face. (Paul et al., 2010, p. 7)

Similar sentiments can be found in the works of das Nair and Thomas (2012), Raj (2011), and D. W. Riggs (2013), in which the collective consensus seems to be that in the White gay imagination, Asian gay men are considered undesirable.

Gosine’s (2007) personal exploration of “race” play in the Toronto chat rooms at gay.com illustrates a comparable occurrence. He alternated between his true (Indian) and pseudo (White) racial identities, to examine the interactive influence of race “on the organization, flow of dialogues and relationships between users in the chat rooms” (p. 140). Based on a comparative analysis of instances where he identified as Indian and passed as White, he found that White men responded more positively to the latter than they did the former, with conversations often ending abruptly once it was revealed that he was not White. He recounted one such conversation between him and a potential suitor, to demonstrate the salience of race in online interactions:

<badpup> What’s ur background?

<Garf23> Indian

<badpup> Oh

<Garf23> “Oh?”

<badpup> Not into that Sorry

Consistent with findings from other studies, this interaction between “badpup” and “Garf23” typify the overt racism encountered by gay men of colour in online dating sites, such as gay.com. While some people may view the author’s chosen method with skepticism, similar conclusions were reached in research employing comparable methods to investigate the

occurrence of sexual racism online and in gay social venues such as nightclubs (see Caluya, 2006; das Nair & Thomas, 2012; Raj, 2011). This suggests that, regardless of the method chosen to collect the data, the same results are found time and again.

Other studies (e.g., Carballo-Diéguez, Miner, Dolezal, Rosser, & Jacoby, 2006; Phua & Kaufman, 2003; Poon et al., 2005) have examined the online experiences of sexual-minority men of colour who have sex with men (MSM). However, many were criticized for limited data collection and—more importantly—their disregard for the racialized impact of this environment on users. Recent arguments against these studies were summarized by Paul et al. (2010). In the Canadian research by Poon et al. (2005), the authors stated that “these were [participants] who specifically used Internet chat rooms, were not interviewed face-to-face, and were primarily describing their reasons for such use with consideration of implications for HIV prevention” (p. 3). Likewise, Phua and Kaufman’s (2003) quantitative study was judged to have focused on “the race and ethnicity of those placing ads and their indication of racial preferences in such ads” (p. 3). Finally, Carballo-Diéguez and colleagues’ (2006) study was critiqued with respect to its limited focus on “sexual negotiation and HIV serostatus disclosure among Latino MSM in Internet-related encounters” (p. 3).

Online technologies for sexual and intimate encounters are constituted by race and imbued with negative affect. Two consistent effects of sexual racism have been identified in the literature, along with the corresponding impacts they have for gay men of colour. First, this form of discrimination may contribute to feelings of indifference and rejection of members from their own racial and cultural groups (see Ayres, 1999; Phua & Kaufman, 2003; Poon et al., 2005; Ramirez, 2003). Such dislike or aversion has been likened to individual self-contempt or hatred. For example, C.-S. Han (2007) postulated that among same-sex men of colour, the exaltation of

White men perpetuates negative racialized stereotypes in which White men are constructed as ideal partner preferences and men of colour are viewed in pejorative terms. Romantic or sexual relations between men from the same racial backgrounds may even be perceived as incestuous (Brennan et al., 2013).

The desire for White men, argued Boykin (2005), is often justified with reference to stereotypes that have helped to maintain the dominance of Whiteness and subordination of gay men of colour. When gay men of colour denounce other gay men of colour as unsuitable sexual partners, co-existing and entwined with this frame of logic is the issue of self-repulsion: what do these men see when they look in the mirror (C.-S. Han, 2009)? “If they find [other gay men of colour] unattractive, how do they see themselves? More importantly, why do they see themselves in such a way?” (C.-S. Han, 2009, p. 112).

Extending C.-S. Han’s (2009) argument, valuing White men over men of colour can result in risk-prone health behaviour (Chae & Yoshikawa, 2008). Chae and Yoshikawa found that among Asian and Pacific Islander gay men, race-based preferences for and perceived group devaluation by White men was associated with unprotected anal intercourse, thus increasing the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. These findings are not unique to Asian and Pacific Islander gay men. Similar outcomes have been reported among gay men from other ethnoracial groups, with evidence of an association between racism and sexual risk behaviour (see Diaz et al., 2004; C.-S. Han et al., 2015; Ro et al., 2013).

The consistency of these findings is not surprising from minority-stress and queer critical theoretical perspectives (discussed in the next chapter), since gay men of colour are continually exposed to overt and subtle forms of racism; the cumulative effect of racism-induced stress can take a toll on psychological well-being and produce feelings of powerlessness and low self-

esteem, which can then heighten health-risk behaviours. Despite this pattern of relationship, there remains some question whether race-based sexual desires constitute racism (Callander, Newman, & Holt, 2015). In the online profiles of White gay men seeking men for sex, several of Paul et al.'s (2010) participants expressed reservation about whether race-based sexual preferences were necessarily racist, even when they or members of their own groups were rejected or excluded as potential sexual partners because of the colour of their skin. One Vietnamese man was quoted as saying: "I don't think it's racism, necessarily. You know, it's people's preferences" (p. 7).

More than just about personal preference, however, splitting desirability along racial lines illustrates how the structure of systemic racism operates to privilege a White, middle-class gay ideal and aesthetic. Gay men of colour live in a culture that depreciates them and exalts White gay men (Boykin, 2005; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2009; Poon & Ho, 2008). The preferential treatment of White men over men of colour fuels competition for their interest as partners and may result in the latter finding themselves in compromising positions not of their choosing, such as being unable to negotiate safe-sex practices (Teunis, 2007). Further, statements such as those of the Vietnamese man above—suggesting that White gay men's exclusion of gay men of colour as sexual partners is not racist—are problematic for their apologetic stance (C. W. Han, 2013). Such attitudes legitimize White racism and contribute to internalized racism that can lead gay men of colour to think of themselves and each other as inferior:

Rather than confronting this racism, many of my gay Asian brothers have become apologists for this outlandish racist behaviour. We damage ourselves by not only allowing it, but actively participating in it. We excuse their racist behaviour because we engage in the same types of behaviour. When seeking sexual partners for ourselves, we also exclude "femmes, fat, and Asians." (C. W. Han, 2013, p. 97)

Sexual Objectification and Racial Stereotypes

In addition to issues of sexual racism and invisibility or exclusion from institutional venues and media cultural productions, gay men of colour are subjected to a third form of discrimination: racially based sexual objectification. As with other kinds of social discrimination, this can be either overt or subtle. Sexual objectification has been defined as “the experience of being treated as a body (or collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others” (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 174). White gay men fetishize and commoditize body parts of gay men of colour, such as their penises; this sexual objectification is both exploitive and dehumanizing (Groves, Saleh, Lassiter, & Parsons, 2015). Gay men of colour are made to feel inadequate or embarrassed about themselves when they do not “measure up” to the standards and racially imposed stereotypes enacted on them by White gay men. One study explored the relationship between body image and social oppression among 61 ethnoracialized gay men in Toronto (Brennan et al., 2013). Among the study’s findings was that unreasonably high expectations placed on gay men of colour, expectations that White gay men had largely escaped, might contribute to low self-esteem and reinforce existing stereotypes and taboos related to their bodies. One participant from the Black, African, and Caribbean group, whose sentiment echoed many others, was quoted as saying:

Being African, everybody thinks you have a 13 or 14-inch penis . . . [and] you can shag for six hours, nonstop flight. . . . They don’t think you are a human being, you can have a normal size dick. . . . You get affected because . . . as you take it out, they say, “You are black, you should have something bigger than that.” So, it’s the disappointment. . . . Of course, it affects you. It affects your self-esteem. (Brennan et al., 2013, p. 5)

Such unfair racist expectations are not limited to just Black, African, and Caribbean gay men.

The same study also found that East and Southeast Asian men, for example, were subjected to a

form of feminization, emasculating their bodies to justify their submissive sexual position in anal intercourse. One participant stated:

I guess with the assumption of . . . being automatically perceived as bottom [the sexually receptive position] . . . the “feminine person” is the bottom so are you assuming that because of my body that I wouldn’t want to have the option of being the top [the insertive sexual position]. . . . If there’s only two options that I have to be this right away, without even knowing me, that I’m playing the role of a . . . woman. . . . Is that because of my body, I wonder? Because . . . you’re fragile and geisha-like or what not. (Brennan et al., 2013, p. 5)

The feminization of Asian men is based on a binary construction of hegemonic masculinity, in which White men understand themselves as “properly” masculine (as opposed to the hypersexualized, hyperdeviant image of Black men) and Asian men as subordinate and effeminate. Constructed stereotypes concerning the gender models of masculinity and femininity serve more than just sexual position, however. They also determine one’s place on the social and sexual desirability scales: “If gay white men are masculine, they are masculine compared to gay Asian men. If masculinity is desirable and femininity is not, then clearly white men are desirable but Asian men are not” (C. W. Han, 2013, p. 97).

Many studies have associated Asian gay men with the stereotype of the submissive bottom, but other research has contradicted this (see C.-S. Han, Proctor, & Choi, 2014a; R. K. Robinson, 2008; J. Y. Tan, Pratto, Operario, & Dworkin, 2013). For example, American research by R. K. Robinson (2008), on the structural dimensions of romantic relationships in online dating environments, suggested that sexual approbation and desirability were tied to the performance of sex role stereotypes. A common theme underlying the Mandingo racialized mythology is that Black men have extremely large penises, which makes them ideal as tops during anal intercourse (e.g., Brennan et al., 2013; Husbands et al., 2013; Paul et al., 2010; Plummer, 2007; Teunis,

2007). R. K. Robinson's results demonstrated that Black men who had sex with men, and identified as bottoms, received far fewer messages of interest compared to those who identified as "tops," thus confirming the Mandingo sexual fantasy advanced by Boykin (1996) and McBride (2005).

Despite the negative consequence of being overlooked for not conforming to the masculine insertive stereotype, this study clearly demonstrated the limits of racial stereotypes and sex roles, by revealing the fluidity in conception of sex roles among Black MSM. The needs of sexual-minority men of colour—Black or otherwise—who may wish to assume sexual positions other than those prescribed for them by the stereotypes become secondary to those of White nonheterosexual men engaged in racialized sexual encounters (Green, 2005; C.-S. Han, 2007; C.-S. Han et al., 2014a; Husbands et al., 2013; Teunis, 2007).

The social reality of racism is complex and multidimensional. Gay men of colour appear to be caught in a paradox: on the one hand, they are discriminated against on the basis of skin colour, with resulting discriminatory practices, expressed either overtly or subtly, aimed at social exclusion or marginalization. On the other hand, certain parts of their bodies are exoticized, eroticized, fetishized, and objectified, as if to imply greater acceptance and racial inclusion of the group within the largely White, gay, sociosexual enclave. However, after assessing the research included in this review, nothing could be further from the truth.

Far from the rhetoric of inclusion and belonging, the sexual racism and objectification of gay men of colour stresses their otherness, making feasible their bodies as sites of possible consumption for the pleasurable experience of White gay men. Through its endorsement of White, gay male beauty, the gay print media reinforces the value of Whiteness, while at the same time resisting and stymieing discussions about racism. This stance serves to contradict any

notion of ignorance as innocent or disorganized: “Ignorance—the privilege of not having to know about something—is calculated” (T. D. Morgan, 1996, pp. 280–281). In the sense described here, the subjugation of gay men of colour, through a carefully calculated representation and objectification of their body parts, “promotes a vision of the gay community where ‘race’ [becomes] a non-issue” (C.-S. Han, 2008b, p. 15). These contrived attempts at diversity and inclusivity notwithstanding, gay men of colour continue to be affected by discriminatory practices. More devastatingly, their experience of racism is linked to poor mental and physical health.

Impact of Racism on Racial Minorities’ Health

In Canada as elsewhere, racism permeates social life; to use critical race theory terminology, it is not *aberrant* but rather is an ingrained feature of contemporary society. Racial discrimination is rooted in structural inequalities, with power and social rewards unevenly distributed on the basis of socially constructed racial classification (Aylward, 1999; Bell, 1992; Berman & Paradies, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2014; Collins, 2000, 2004; West, 2001; Wise, 2010). In this way, racism serves to “create and reinforce oppressive systems of race relations whereby people and institutions engaging in discrimination adversely restrict, by judgment and action, the lives of those against whom they discriminate” (Krieger, 2003, p. 195).

Racism has three main categories: individual, institutional, and cultural (J. M. Jones, 1997). In individual racism, a single person of colour is subjected to different treatment. Institutional racism targets members of vulnerable social groups (such as racial or ethnic minorities) for the purpose of denying them parity of participation in society’s political, economic, and cultural life. Cultural racism concerns the pedestalization of the dominant White group’s cultural heritage and practices as superior to those of subordinated racial others.

Regardless of category, an important consequence of the power differential salient to racism's production is that it results in disparate outcomes for oppressed racialized groups in critical health-related domains (C. J. P. Harrell et al., 2011; Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou, & Rummens, 1999; Noh, Kaspar, & Wickrama, 2007; Paradies, 2006; Pascoe & Richman, 2009; D. R. Williams & Mohammed, 2009). For example, many studies connecting racism and adverse health consequences have been conducted in the United States. Among American racial minority populations, racial discrimination has been seen to lead to unfavourable mental and physical health conditions (Clark et al., 1999; Mays et al., 2004; Paradies, 2006; D. R. Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000). These include negative mood and depressive symptoms (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999; Paradies, 2006; Steffen & Bowden, 2006); development of cardiovascular health conditions, including hypertension and coronary artery disease (Brondolo et al., 2008; G. C. Gee, Spencer, Chen, & Takeuchi, 2007; C. J. P. Harrell, Hall, & Taliaferro, 2003; T. T. Lewis, Williams, Tamene, & Clark, 2014; R. M. Peters, 2004); and increased health problems related to cigarette and tobacco use, exposure to and use of multiple substances, and alcohol use and dependence (Bennett, Wolin, Robinson, Fowler, & Edwards, 2005; Y. Choi, Harachi, Gillmore, & Catalano, 2006; G. C. Gee, Delva, & Takeuchi, 2007; Krieger, Smith, Naishadham, Hartman, & Barbeau, 2005; Landrine, Klonoff, Corral, Fernandez, & Roesch, 2006).

There is a dearth of Canadian research on the impact of racism on visible-minority health status (M. Khan, Kobayashi, Lee, & Vang, 2015; Nestel, 2012; Veenstra, 2009). The fact that Canada, unlike the United States, does not consistently record the race or ethnicity of people in its care registry data contributes to the problem (M. Khan et al., 2015; Nestel, 2012; see also Hyman, 2001; Kobayashi, Prus, & Lin, 2008; Varcoe, Browne, Wong, & Smye, 2009). Despite

this constraint, the limited evidence that does exist suggests that race and racism may play a key role in the creation of racialized health disparities; further, some evidence points to racial and ethnic differences in morbidity (see, for example, Gupta et al., 2002). It is interesting to note that research examining health-related impacts of racism on racialized populations in Canada often begins from the standpoint of recent immigrants (M. Khan et al., 2015), a problematic category that fails to distinguish between two groups of immigrants—immigrants from European countries and those from non-European countries. As well, the term overlooks the fact that, since 2001, over 75 percent of immigrants to Canada have belonged to a visible-minority group (Nestel, 2012). Nonetheless, this population is said to enjoy good health, compared to Canadian-born members of racialized groups; but their health deteriorates the longer they stay in the host country, in a phenomenon known as the “healthy immigrant effect” (J. Chen, Wilkins, & Ng, 1996; McDonald & Kennedy, 2004; Newbold, 2005).

The health impact of the immigration experience is not the same for non-White people from non-European countries and White people from European countries (Ali, McDermott, & Gravel, 2004). The healthy immigrant effect is strongest among non-European immigrants (Ali et al., 2004). A recent study corroborated this finding, reporting that after controlling for the experience of social discrimination and socioeconomic conditions, visible minority status emerged as a significant factor in the decline of immigrants’ health (De Maio & Kemp, 2010). This finding appears consistent with Wu and Schimmele’s (2005) analysis, which showed that socioeconomic status was not a key explanation for racialized health inequities. In another review, Ng, Wilkins, Gendron, and Berthelot (2005) explored the dynamic of immigrants’ health using the National Population Health Survey (1994/1995 to 2002/2003); consistent with prior

findings, they found that immigrants from non-European countries were more likely than Canadian-born populations to report decreased health.

Research has also indicated a relationship between self-reported racism and impaired psychological functioning among racialized groups in Canada. Respondents in such studies have reported feelings of suicidal ideation (Lovell & Shahsiah, 2006; Soroor & Popal, 2005); anxiety and low self-esteem (Soroor & Popal, 2005); and symptoms of depression (Soroor & Popal, 2005). In the area of physical health, where certain types of diseases have been linked to specific racialized populations, research showed that Canadians of South Asian descent were more prone to developing coronary artery disease (Gupta et al., 2002) and to have higher prevalence of diabetes (Beiser, 2005; Gupta et al., 2002; Leenen et al., 2008; O'Loughlin, 1999; Shah, 2008; Sohal, 2008). Likewise, compared to individuals of European/White origin, an elevated incidence of liver and cervical cancer was reported among Asian immigrants (McDermott et al., 2011). Further, evidence showed that Aboriginal people and people from HIV-endemic regions of the world—namely, Black people of Caribbean and African descent—had much higher rates of HIV/AIDS infection (Public Health Agency Canada, 2014).

Racism may play a role in why racial and ethnic minorities delay accessing health care services. These include services relating to mental health (Beiser, Simich, & Pandalangat, 2003; A. W. Chen & Kazanjian, 2005; Jarvis, Kirmayer, Jarvis, & Whitley, 2005; Lovell & Shahsiah, 2006); cervical cancer (E. M. Gee, Kobayashi, & Prus, 2007; Lasser, Himmelstein, & Woolhandler, 2006; Lofters, Glazier, Agha, Creatore, & Moineddin, 2007); breast cancer screening (Choudhry, Srivastava, & Fitch, 1998; S. L. Jackson et al., 2003; J. Nelson & Macias, 2008); and cardiovascular and diabetes-related health conditions (Lau, 2010; Leiter et al., 2011; Shah, 2008).

Most adopted population or community-based studies feature data infrequently disaggregated by race, such as in the case of the label of *immigrant* being used in reference to White and non-White immigrants alike. There is a need for systematic collection of race-based data: “Disaggregating data based on race is important because it helps to make the impact of racism and racial discrimination visible and thus allows us to address the root problem” (Randall, 2007, p. 187). A corresponding gap is that such research uses a predominantly heterosexual referent group; less attention is paid to nonheterosexuals. Like Randall, Cochran (2001) pointed to the importance of researchers directly assessing for and disaggregating data based on same-gender sexual behaviour or sexual-orientation identity. The lack of clarity or breakdown of individuals in this domain makes it difficult to determine the scope or severity of the health-related issues of nonheterosexuals compared to heterosexuals. As some research on lesbians’ and gay men’s mental health suggests, having this information could guide health practitioners in providing targeted services to meet the needs of their diverse service users (Bieschke, McClanahan, Tozer, Grzegorek, & Park, 2000; Cabaj & Stein, 1996). This knowledge becomes especially important when considering that the health-related outcomes of racism may be exacerbated for those situated along multiple axes of stigmatized identities, such as gay men of colour.

Health Outcomes of Racism Among Gay Men of Colour

Mental Health

Only a few studies have directly examined the relationship between gay-related racism and negative mental or psychological health outcomes among men of colour who have sex with men. However, there is some indication of an association between the experiences of self-reported racism and poor self-rated mental health or symptoms of psychological distress. For

example, Diaz, Ayala, Bein, Henne, and Marin (2001) found a high prevalence rate of symptoms of psychological distress in a probability sample ($N = 912$) of Latino gay and bisexual men recruited from three cities in the United States. Seventeen percent of the men in the study expressed thoughts of suicidal ideation; 44 percent reported feelings of anxiety; and 80 percent reported experiences of subthreshold disorders such as depressed mood. Among the social discrimination measures investigated (including homophobia, poverty, and racism), racism in the context of a gay community was found to negatively influence mental health and to be directly related to low self-esteem: 26 percent of participants reported discomfort in spaces primarily attended by White gay men, and 62 percent reported having been sexually objectified because of their race or ethnicity (Diaz et al., 2001). It is possible that the repeated exposure to racist environments and objectifying experience, which can result in depersonalization, contributed to feelings of low self-worth. The denial of personhood for reasons beyond one's control (e.g., race) can prove further destabilizing and disempowering, with important consequences for psychological well-being.

Ibanez, Marin, Flores, Millett, and Diaz (2009) conducted another three-city probability study, in which they asked Latino gay men ($N = 911$) about their experiences of general and gay-related racism. Supporting Diaz and colleagues' (2001) findings, Ibanez et al. found that those who had darker skin colour and Indian or African/mixed-race features reported more racism in both general and gay-specific contexts than those with lighter skin or European-looking features. Thirty-six percent reported having experienced general racism; another 58 percent indicated they had experienced gay-related racism. Variations in reporting of racism might have reflected differences in the items measured under the general racism subscale, such as "being hit or beaten up," and in the gay-context racism subscale, such as "feeling uncomfortable in a White gay bar;

being turned down for sex.” A salient conclusion of this study was that men who had experienced frequent episodes of some form of discrimination reported lower self-esteem ($r = -.30, p < .001$), a factor known to predict depression (Schmitz, Kugler, & Rollnik, 2003).

A similar phenomenon was observed in Szymanski and Sung’s (2010) cross-sectional study involving 144 Asian American lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) persons, of whom 67 percent identified as lesbian or gay, 29 percent as bisexual, and 4 percent as not sure. The authors investigated the impact of external racist stressors on psychological health. In their findings, the more that experiences of racism were reported in race-related dating and interpersonal relationship problems in LGBTQ communities, the higher were the respondents’ levels of psychological distress. Such reported problems included prejudice or rejection due to one’s race or ethnicity, and being subjected to sexual objectification. These findings regarding the association between racism and negative mental health are consistent with previous research. Nevertheless, the researchers neither disaggregated their results according to sexual orientation or gender identity, nor provided a breakdown of the distribution of the psychological distress reported by study’s participants. Therefore, it is difficult to discern, for example, the prevalence of this issue among Asian gay or bisexual men respectively.

More recently, however, K.-H. Choi, Paul, Ayala, Boylan, and Gregorich (2013) investigated the impact during the previous year of experiences of sexual orientation and racial discrimination on the mental health of racially and ethnically diverse MSM in Los Angeles County, California ($n = 403$ African American; $n = 393$ Asian and Pacific Islander; $n = 400$ Latino). The study corroborated previous research in its finding that higher levels of discrimination were associated with psychological distress. It also advanced previous research in finding that the forms and sources of such discrimination were distinctively correlated to mental

health across the different ethnoracial groups. For example, in the part of their study that focused on racism, Asian and Pacific Islander MSM were more likely to identify the mainstream gay community as the primary source from which they encountered racism. However, the opposite was true for African American and Latino MSM, who reported having experienced more racism in the general community than in the gay community. In this regard, a positive association was found between the past-year experience of racism within the general community and depression ($b = 0.11$; 95% confidence interval [CI] = 0.07, 0.16; $P < .001$). Based on their data, the authors cautioned that the experience of general racism may have adverse generalized psychological effects on all gay men of colour, not only on African American and Latino MSM. Yet, with respect to racism in the mainstream gay community, this experience of discrimination was positively related to anxiety among Asian and Pacific Islander MSM ($b = 0.19$; 95% CI = 0.08, 0.30; $P < .001$). This association was not statistically significant for African American MSM ($b = -0.02$; 95% CI = -0.10; 0.06; $P = .587$) or Latino MSM ($b = -0.02$; 95% CI = -0.13; 0.09; $P = .724$). According to the authors, this difference may have to do with how racism in the gay community was manifested, where sexual partnership and desirability were hierarchized (in descending order) from Whites to Latinos, Blacks and Asian and Pacific Islander men (K.-H. Choi et al., 2013).

K.-H. Choi et al.'s (2013) finding of a positive relationship between general racism and depression is consistent with an earlier observational cross-sectional study (Graham, Aronson, Nichols, Stephens, & Rhodes, 2011) that explored factors influencing depression and anxiety among 54 Black sexual-minority men. Experiences of racial discrimination and harassment in the general-public context, outside of the GLB community, were found to negatively affect psychological health. For example, 30 percent and 33 percent of the study participants screened

high for depression and anxiety respectively, exceeding numbers found in the general population. Moreover, while 95 percent of the participants had experienced discrimination and harassment at least once, of those who had experienced it in the previous year, 44 percent stated it was because of their race; another 52 percent also reported being victims of similar discriminatory practices and behaviours in public places, including retail venues, the criminal justice system, entertainment venues, religious and educational institutions, places of employment, and in the context of receiving medical services.

Graham and colleagues' (2011) findings provide an opportunity for additional explanatory analysis when compared with K.-H. Choi et al.'s (2013) findings. (In the latter study, Asian and Pacific Islander men were more likely than the Black or Latino MSM to report racism in the gay community than in the general community.) To some degree, Graham and colleagues' research illustrates how the experience of racism is differentially lived, particularly with respect to its unequal structuring of life chances. For Black men—gay or otherwise—the experience of racism is ubiquitous; within the broader society, they are discriminated against on multiple fronts.

Asian people's experience of racism in North America is very different. Their lives have been circumscribed by the model-minority stereotype that credits their successes in academic, educational, and professional fields to their supposedly higher work ethic and intelligence. In this sense, it is possible that one effect of living in a culture that purportedly recognizes one's talent or hard work, even if for political or strategic reasons, is that one may be shielded from racism. That is, for Asian men and women, the general social tendency is to think in terms of a race-blind metrics of economic and social success that privileges one's status as a member of a highly successful group. According to this logic, Asian men are less likely to experience racism and

discrimination in the general public compared to Black men or non-Asian men of colour because of their racially “exceptional” status. This changes, however, when an individual’s measure of value revolves around his perceived sexual currency. In the GLB community, the representation of Latino men and, to a lesser degree, Black men as more sexually desirable than Asian men may account for why Asian men were more likely to report racism in the gay community than in the general public.

In Canada, published research on the association between racial discrimination in predominantly White GLB communities and mental or psychological health among gay men of colour is rare. However, one study explored the psychological health correlates of perceived discrimination among Canadian gay men ($n = 177$) and lesbian women ($n = 169$; Morrison, 2011). Evidence of greater depression and psychological distress were linked to experiences of verbal insult stemming from participants’ sexual orientation; this finding was found to be greater for gay men than lesbian women.

In another study using data from a pan-Canadian online survey comparing psychological, social, and sexuality-related problems among bisexual ($n = 564$) and gay ($n = 1,109$) men, the researchers (Engler et al., 2011) found that when compared to gay men, bisexual men were at lower, but still significant, risk for experiencing problems with anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation or attempt, and body image. However, bisexual men had greater odds of lifetime suicidality, a finding consistent with a population-based study using data from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS; see Brennan, Ross, Dobinson, Veldhuizen, & Steele, 2010). One-third of gay respondents reported problems with depression, loneliness or isolation, finding friends, and relationship issues; the same was not true for bisexual men in the study.

Brennan et al.'s (2010) population-based, cross-sectional study assessed the independent effects of sexual orientation on the health status and risk behaviours of heterosexual, bisexual, and gay Canadian men. In the mental health domain, and when confounders were controlled for, gay men were 3.1 times and 2.4 times more likely to report mood or anxiety disorders than heterosexual men; they were also 4.1 times and 6.3 times more likely to report lifetime suicidality than heterosexual men.

Although these Canadian studies provide some insight into the relationship between perceived discrimination based on sexual orientation on the one hand and mental health and risk behaviours on the other, they were carried out with a predominantly White GLB population, with very little representation from members of racial or ethnic minority groups. In Morrison's (2011) study, where non-White respondents were clearly present, albeit in small numbers, the author did not clarify whether findings derived from her largely (89 percent) White sample could be extrapolated to participants from non-White minority groups. The lack of breakdown of participants by race and/or ethnicity is another major drawback of these studies.

Physical Health

Very little research exists on the physical health disparities that gay men of colour experience in relation to racism. For the most part, research efforts have instead focused on the connection between sexual orientation and physical health; attention has generally centred on sexually transmitted infections among MSM (Sandfort, Bakker, Schellevis, & Vanwesenbeeck, 2006). For example, a study of 80 HIV-seropositive participants (Cole, Kemeny, Taylor, Visscher, & Fahey, 1996) found an association between health risks and the psychological inhibition of sexual orientation: HIV infection progressed more rapidly among those who hid their same-sex identity than among those who disclosed it. Although not disclosing one's HIV

serostatus can guard against negative social consequences including stigmatization, ostracism, and physical assault, nondisclosure was related to three HIV-relevant end points: lower CD4 counts, which correlate with disease progression and when an individual should undergo treatment (see also Strachan, Bennett, Russo, & Roy-Byrne, 2007; Ullrich, Lutgendorf, & Stapleton, 2003); an AIDS diagnosis; and, ultimately, death (Cole, Kemeny, Taylor, Visscher et al., 1996). Evidence of psychological inhibition correlated with incidence of sexually transmitted infections has also been expanded, beyond HIV/AIDS, to include other areas of physical illness. In a sample of 222 HIV-seronegative gay men, those who concealed their same-sex identity were at elevated physical health risk for cancer and diseases such as pneumonia, bronchitis, sinusitis, and tuberculosis (Cole, Kemeny, Taylor, & Visscher, 1996).

An association has been reported between receptive anal intercourse and anal cancer among gay men, with a demonstrable linkage with infection caused by the human papillomavirus or HPV (see Daling et al., 1987; Frisch, Smith, Grulich, & Johansen, 2003; Machalek et al., 2012). In HPV-related research, findings are that HIV-infected MSM are at increased risk for anal cancer (Mitra & Crane, 2012) and anal HPV is independently correlated with HIV seropositivity (Gao et al., 2010).

Some researchers have explored other aspects of the sexual orientation–physical health connection. Cochran and Mays (2007) conducted a study ($N = 2,272$) of the association of minority sexual orientation with physical health complaints. The authors documented higher levels of psychological distress and health problems among adult homosexually experienced heterosexuals than among the exclusively heterosexual comparison group. These health problems included heart disease, liver disease, digestive problems, migraines or headaches, asthma, back problems, and chronic fatigue syndrome. The same held true for gay men, for whom higher

levels of psychological distress were correlated with digestive problems, urinary problems, migraines or headaches, and chronic fatigue syndrome. In addition, HIV infection among gay men was related to lack of physical health generally. The authors' results, less the HIV finding, are consistent with those from a Dutch population study ($n = 143$; Sandfort et al., 2006), which found that gay men and lesbians were more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to self-report acute physical health symptoms such as headache, sore throat, heartburn, and fever, and chronic conditions such as diabetes, migraine, asthma, and high blood pressure.

Huebner and Davis (2007) extended these results with their investigation of the correlation between antigay discrimination and physical health effects among gay men ($n = 361$). Findings revealed an association between perceived discrimination and physical health outcomes, such as the number of missed days from work because of being sick; the number of doctor or physician office visits; and the frequency with which study participants took nonprescription medications.

More recently, Frost, Lehavot, and Meyer (2015) similarly demonstrated a link between minority stress and physical health, including flu, hypertension, sexually transmitted infections, tendonitis, and cancer. Their population sample was White ($n = 134$), Black ($n = 131$), and Latino ($n = 131$) gay, lesbian, and bisexual men and women. These researchers found that experiences of prejudice-related life events predicted serious physical health problems over a one-year period, and that this relationship remained statistically significant after controlling for nonprejudice life events as well as static and dynamic factors known to influence physical health including race, gender, age, and socioeconomic status.

Consistent with the above findings that GLB people may be at elevated risk for physical health difficulties due to their sexual-minority status (Conron, Mimiaga, & Landers, 2010), a

limited number of current studies have explicitly linked the experience of racism to adverse physical health outcomes among sexual-minority men of colour. In one study that investigated self-rated general health and physical pain and impairment among two-spirit American Indians and Alaska Natives ($N = 447$), the measurement of self-reported racial discrimination was positively correlated with higher odds of physical pain and impairment and a fair or poor assessment of general health (Chae & Walters, 2009). Moreover, among participants who reported a high level of self-actualization—a positive self- and group-racial-identity attitude—the study found a weak association between race discrimination and general health; the opposite was true for those with low levels of self-actualization. These findings suggest that higher levels of self-actualization may help to curtail poorer health and physical pain and impairment as well as buffer against the impact of racism.

Another study explored, among other factors, the relationships between lifetime experiences of racial discrimination and sexual dysfunction among African American gay men ($N = 174$; Zamboni & Crawford, 2007). The authors found that racism was associated with sexual problems. Mediation analyses have also demonstrated that more lifetime racist experience was strongly correlated with psychiatric symptoms, which then predicted sexual disorders or problems. Further findings from a forward multiple regression analysis showed that, of the 10 predicting variables of sexual problems examined by the researchers, lower levels of self-esteem most strongly predicted sexual dysfunction among study participants.

Some other studies (Ayala, Bingham, Kim, Wheeler, & Millett, 2012; Diaz et al., 2001; Diaz & Ayala, 2000; Ellerbrock et al., 2004; Jarama, Kennamer, Poppen, Hendricks, & Bradford, 2005; Yoshikawa, Wilson, Chae, & Cheng, 2004) have examined the role of social oppression including factors that promote risky behaviours, such as poverty and financial hardship,

homophobia, anti-immigrant discrimination, and racism. These have implications for the physical health and well-being of gay men of colour. For example, C.-S. Han's (2008a) research showed that Asian Pacific Islander gay men were at risk for unsafe sexual behaviours due to sociocultural factors related to the experience of racism and an inequitable negotiation of the sexual division of power. In other words, the competition to obtain White gay men's attention and companionship or to score sexual favours might lead them to adopt a stereotypical feminine sex role, in which their ability to negotiate safe sex practices would be jeopardized.

Compounding this problem was the respondents' perception of a shortage of gay White men interested in them as sexual partners. This may have increased their chances of assuming the submissive, bottom role in sexual interactions, putting them at risk of exposure to the acquisition and transmission of HIV. Similar findings of the relationship between racism and unsafe sex practices were obtained in studies with different populations of nonheterosexual and gender-nonconforming men of colour (see Ayala et al., 2012; Bruce, Ramirez-Valles, & Campbell, 2008; Diaz & Ayala, 2000; Diaz et al., 2004; Fields et al., 2013; Kraft, Beeker, Stokes, & Peterson, 2000; Mizuno et al., 2012; Nakamura & Zea, 2010; Stokes & Peterson, 1998).

Research also suggests that racism-related stress and stigmatization may precipitate drug and alcohol use, which contribute to sexual risk behaviours (Jerome & Halkitis, 2009). Most notably, C. F. Wong, Weiss, Ayala, and Kipke (2010) identified that African Americans and Latinos of Mexican descent who reported greater experiences of sexual racism in gay social settings and/or sexual relationships were at increased risk for drug use compared to their White counterparts. This finding corresponds with results from an American national sample that included lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults (LGB; $n = 577$). McCabe, Bostwick, Hughes, West, and Boyd (2010) investigated the association between substance use disorders and sexual

orientation, racial or ethnic discrimination, and gender discrimination. Discrimination based on race and ethnicity was reported by 49.5 percent of LGB participants of colour during the previous year, and found to be singly associated with the group's greater odds of substance use disorders; these were seen as, most likely, measures to cope with the psychological and stress-related effects of racial animus. However, this was untrue for the remaining factors that were investigated. Likewise, it is not clear how the findings broke down according to same-gender sexual behaviour or sexual-orientation identity; this may be related to the small number of LGB participants of colour in the study. In addition, no information was provided regarding the contexts—general or LGB settings—in which participants' experiences of racial discrimination took place, further limiting analysis and understanding of the nature of racism within predominantly White LGB sociospatial contexts.

Mizuno et al. (2012) added to the above pattern of findings in their analysis of health risks related to the syndemic confluence of adverse social experiences among Latino MSM ($N = 1,081$). Specifically, exposure to racism and homophobia was associated with a higher risk of unprotected anal intercourse among men with casual sex partners, compared to those who had not been exposed to such instances of discrimination (AOR = 1.92, 95% CI, 1.18-3.24). Participants were also more likely to report binge drinking (AOR = 1.42, 95% CI, 1.02-1.98), in respect to vulnerability from perceived stressors, suggesting a synergistic effect between discrimination based on racism and homophobia, and binge or heavy drinking.

Taken together, these results add to the limited published research on racism and physical health among men of colour who have sex with men. However, it is notable that many of the reviewed studies are cross-sectional, and cannot be used to establish a cause-and-effect relationship due to their temporal design. This limitation might be addressed through a

longitudinal field research method, to determine the direction of causal relationships between variables. Overall, more research is needed to elucidate the pathways by which the social stressor of racism may affect physical health outcomes for this population.

Racism-Related Experiences and Emerging Findings on Coping Strategies

Used by Gay Men of Colour

Discrimination based on race may have an adverse effect on the mental and physical health of gay men of colour, undermining their ability to cope. Despite the general recognition of the harmful effects of racism and repeated calls for action to combat it within the GLB community, very little attention has been paid to understanding how the targets of racism cope with their experience. Individuals and groups confronted with racism employ different strategies to actively resist or manage race-based discrimination and stigmatization. Only a few researchers have explored racism-related coping strategies among gay men of colour. Appraising the effectiveness of context-specific coping strategies could help develop interventions aimed at helping people navigate experiences of racism.

One study examined the responses of Asian and Pacific Islander gay men ($N = 23$) to different types of social discrimination experiences, including racism, homophobia, and anti-immigrant discrimination (Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004). Among respondents, confrontational-type responses (i.e., putting down, insulting, and/or educating) were most common, at 18 percent; this was followed by self-attributed, external attribution, social-network-based and avoidance responses, at approximately 10 percent. In the case of the latter response style, evidence indicated that avoidance did not necessarily imply passivity. An important finding by researchers was that some participants internalized the experience of racism, attributing their occurrence to themselves, rather than to the actual source of the discrimination. In doing so, the

researchers conjectured that these men might feel disempowered to negotiate risk-reduction strategies when confronted with the passive/submissive Asian stereotype.

Likewise, Bryant (2008) explored, among other factors, the strategies used by Black MSM ($N = 13$) to cope with homophobia and racism. Consistent with Wilson and Yoshikawa's (2004) overall findings, Bryant's research showed that participants used confrontation-type (e.g., vocal disapproval of discriminatory interactions) and social-network coping responses when faced with multiple oppressions of homophobia and racism.

Although Wilson and Yoshikawa's (2004) and Bryant's (2008) studies highlighted how participants responded to racial stigma and discrimination, little attention was given to their sociohistorical context and nature. Bryant's examination of homophobia and racism together, without results being clearly demarcated, obscured an understanding of strategies used in response to these issues independently. Further, both studies sampled either Asian/Pacific Islander gay men or Black MSM, making comparison of coping strategies across racial groups impossible.

Some research questions racial stigma management strategies among gay men of colour, in which those perceived as abnormal or as having a discreditable identity seek to become normal. For example, C.-S. Han (2009) examined how Asian gay men managed stigma related to race-based sexual and gender stereotypes. Unlike previous studies' findings, participants in his study employed either a hypermasculine presentation to neutralize racial stereotypes of them as feminine, submissive bottoms; or a hyperfeminine presentation that substituted one stigmatized identity for another, less stigmatizing, one (i.e., drag queening). The hypermasculine presentation included expressing desire for masculine roles in intimate and interpersonal relationships, and engaging in corrective bodily practices so as to appear more masculine. The hyperfeminine

presentation was perceived as more successful in terms of its potential benefits for notoriety, social capital, and elevation in social status. While limited in scope, given that the author recruited from only one racial and ethnic group, this study is unique in its attention to the persistent and primary source of racial stigma directed at Asian gay men—that of submissive sexual bottoms, who are incapable of measuring up to the idealized masculinity of the White gay male. In common with prior research, however, no attempt was made in the study to discern how Asian gay men comprehended and/or worked to change their stigmatized status beyond simply managing the social stigma.

K.-H. Choi et al. (2011) conducted the first study investigating the stigma strategies used by African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Latino MSM of colour in the United States. It employed focus group discussions ($n = 50$) and in-depth interviews ($n = 35$) to explore how gay men of colour managed their experiences of racism and homophobia. Of the five strategies revealed, concealment of sexuality and disassociation from social settings were used in the management of discrimination based on sexual orientation and racism, respectively. In contrast, dismissing the stigmatization, drawing strength and comfort from external sources, and direct confrontation were used concurrently to mitigate instances of racism and homophobia. Similar to Wilson and Yoshikawa (2004), K.-H. Choi et al. found that not all stigmas and discriminations are created equal; each might require a different type of response.

Building on previous findings in related research, C.-S. Han et al. (2014a) investigated how Asian gay men ($N = 55$) managed and negotiated the social stigma of race and racism within the larger gay community. Four racial stigma management strategies were identified, reflecting individual- and group-level processes. These were: passing, distancing and affiliating, promoting racial visibility, and increasing racial identification.

According to the authors, some participants sought to manage their stigmatized identity by passing as non-Asians; however, this strategy had limited effectiveness outside of virtual reality, due to the visibility of racial markers such as skin colour. Distancing and affiliating was somewhat successful; here, participants attempted to differentiate themselves from other Asian gay men, in order to associate more closely with White gay men, and to neutralize the perception of them as feminine and undesirable. One Asian gay man said: “I’m bigger than other Asian guys, so I think that white guys that don’t normally go for Asian guys find me attractive. I also don’t look like a bottom, so I usually don’t get rice queens hitting on me, it’s usually just ordinary white guys that hit on me” (C.-S. Han et al., 2014a, p. 227). Beyond increasing the self-esteem of such individuals, even if for a short period of time, these men might intentionally or unintentionally contribute to the stigmatization of their own group by reinforcing the same racial stereotypes that White gay men have perpetuated about them.

Unlike the first two strategies, which focus on the personal level, promoting racial visibility as a strategy against the stigma of race/racism involved a set of actions meant to elevate the social status of the group as a whole. Becoming more visible in the gay community was thought to be important for recognition and to contest negative stereotypes held by White gay men about Asian gay men, due to misinformation or ignorance.

Lastly, Asian gay men sometimes chose to identify more with their own racial group. This is consistent with the attitude or position of identity politics. Dating within the group and encouraging coalition among Asian gay men, as a political action, was also believed to improve the group’s overall social status and protect or enhance their views of themselves; additionally, insisting on a social marketing portrayal of two Asian gay couples (as opposed to Asian–White gay couples) would help with how Asian gay men see themselves and how others see them.

In other studies, minority stress arising from social discrimination was suggested as a risk factor for alcohol use. For example, Mutchler, McDavitt and Gordon (2014) reported that Black and Latino young men who had sex with men ($N = 40$) might resort to substance use during sex as a means to cope with environmental stressors in their lives, especially those related to the experience of racism and heterosexism.

More recently, C.-S. Han et al. (2015) examined the coping strategies used by African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Latino men, to determine the moderating effects of these strategies on race-related stress for sexual risk and unprotected anal intercourse. Their study comprised 403 African Americans, 393 Asian/Pacific Islander and 400 Latino men, for a total sample of 1,196. Among the sampled population, 65 percent reported being stressed from the experience of racism; 19 percent reported that they experienced racism, but were not stressed by it; and only 16 percent said that they did not experience racism within the gay community of Los Angeles County.

There was a racial and ethnic difference in these findings. Compared to the African American and Latino groups, Asian/Pacific Islander men were more likely to report racism-related stress, at 73 percent. African American men reported stress from racism at 63 percent, followed by Latino men at 60 percent. In regards to the coping strategies—avoidance, dismissal, social support, education, and confrontation—used to deal with racism, significant racial and ethnic difference was seen in the domain of education/confrontation. This strategy was most prevalent among the Asian/Pacific Islander men and less prevalent among African American and Latino men respectively. No significant racial and ethnic differences were reported for avoidance, dismissal, and social support strategies. Finally, analyses of bivariate and multivariate logistic regressions revealed that men who had experienced stress as a result of racism in the gay

community had been more predisposed to engage in unprotected anal intercourse in the previous six months, with no reported differences in the prevalence and impact across racial and ethnic groups.

From the above discussion, it can be seen that the literature suffers from limited information about how gay men of colour cope with racism. Even when the topic is addressed, it is often in relation to different forms of oppression. While focusing on these issues simultaneously can yield rich empirical data, discussing racism and strategies for managing it may not receive the time and attention needed, due to competing research priorities. What is more, none of the studies reviewed were undertaken in Canada. One possible indication of how gay men of colour might counter the effects of social stigma in interpersonal relationships appears in the study by Poon and Ho (2008). In that study, respondents ($N = 21$) did not self-attribute rejection from White gay men to themselves but instead viewed the rejection as reflecting on the stigmatizer, the implication being that they maintained their sense of self-esteem. It is possible that because the study focused on how Asian gay men managed and negotiated stereotypes related to their bodies and preference for White gay men, it did not explicitly address how they coped with racism. Further, the range of racism response strategies and the specific contexts in which they might be used by gay men of colour from different ethnoracial groups in the GLB community was not examined. The present study aims to fill these gaps in the literature.

Summary

The overview of the extant research in this chapter related to the topic at hand, with particular attention paid to three overarching themes: the multiple-minority stress of belonging to

a racial and sexual stigmatized group; the deleterious effects of racism on psychological/mental and physical health; and racism-related experiences and coping strategies.

In all, the pervasiveness of racial and sexual discrimination was shown to have important health consequences for gay men of colour. However, unlike discrimination based on sexual orientation, there is a scarcity of empirical research about how gay men of colour cope with the experience of racism in GLB communities. Indeed, as this chapter revealed, nowhere is this truer than in Canada.

The paucity of knowledge about coping strategies that could buffer against the negative outcomes of racialized oppression poses a challenge for social workers and other helping professionals. These professionals have a general concern for the well-being of individuals from marginalized groups, and the amelioration of social inequality in society. Thus, the dearth of critical knowledge may impede clinical and social interventions aimed at promoting the optimal health and welfare of gay men of colour, and at mitigating the psychosocial harm of racism.

Chapter 3

Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

In this chapter, I outline the theoretical considerations underpinning this study of the experiences of racism among gay men of colour in Ottawa, and the strategies they use to cope with the related stress. The research is situated within a strand of theoretical perspectives—queer critical theory and minority stress theory, with the latter incorporating insights from Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress and coping. I highlight the important ideas of these theories, to advance understanding of the context and sociostructural forces implicated in the group's oppression.

These two theoretical frameworks underscore the interconnected nature of oppression. Queer critical theory, an offshoot of critical race theory (CRT), is an extension of race-based discrimination within society at large (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Misawa, 2010a, 2010b, 2012). It allows for a cogent analysis of race and racism within GLB communities. Minority stress theory emphasizes that difficult situations, such as experiences of heterosexist or racist events, can lead to deleterious mental and physical health for members of stigmatized groups (Brooks, 1981; Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Meyer, 1995, 2003a; Szymanski & Sung, 2010), such as gay men of colour. It provides a way to understand people in their environment. In addition, minority stress theory accounts for the salience of ameliorative effects of coping and social support on well-being (e.g., Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Meyer, 2003a), suggesting that successful coping with the challenges of minority stress may lessen its negative effects on health. Below, I discuss each theory to illuminate how they shape my project. A brief but crucial overview of CRT is presented first, to provide some context for the reader regarding the formation of queer critical theory.

Following a discussion of these theories' central premises, I present a conceptual model that connects the theoretical perspectives, to more clearly show the pathway linking racism with coping actions and outcomes for health and well-being. The proposed model is an attempt at a unified theoretical and conceptual approach for understanding the multidimensional forms of oppression experienced by gay men of colour. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Critical Race Theory

A leftist, antiracist, and social reconstructionist movement, CRT emerged in the mid-1970s as a response to the inadequate engagement of critical legal studies with race and racism (Tate, 1997). It challenged existing conceptions of race and racial power as manifested within society's legal-cultural arenas (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lipsitz, 2011; Matsuda, 1991). Central to its critique is the notion of White supremacy and racial privilege, since these relate to the structural continuities of racism that help to maintain and reinforce White dominance (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Hylton, 2010; Rollock & Gillborn, 2011).

As a transdisciplinary, praxis-oriented theory, CRT troubles the classical liberal belief in meritocracy or equality of opportunity, thus revealing hidden weaknesses in many constitutional democracies (Yosso, 2005). By definition, it is a discourse of liberation whose goal is to eradicate racism through unmasking cultural patterns and practices that sustain racial inequality (Bell, 2009; Matsuda, 1991; N. Razack & Jeffery, 2002; Rollock & Gillborn, 2011; Yosso, 2005). Reflected in this definition, and functioning as a theoretical point of departure for some CRT scholars, is a materialist understanding of the disparate impact of racism on people of colour. According to Delgado (2001), a materialist or racial-realist perspective stresses that racism is a "means by which society [discriminatorily] allocates privilege, status, and wealth" (p. 2283). Its

underlying rationale, unlike the ideology of racial equality entrenched in liberal civil rights theory, invites consideration of racialized subordination “within a context of reality rather than idealism” (Bell, 1992, p. 377). That is, an analysis of how racism operates in society must take into account its material effects.

Scholars have recognized that, as a method of social critique and social change, CRT shares with critical discourse analysis a commitment to examine how ideologies of power are embedded in legal discourse and practice, shaping the racialized experiences of people of colour. Idealists, as Delgado (2001) referred to them, believe that “racism and discrimination are matters of thinking, attitude, categorization, and discourse” (p. 2282). From their point of view, racism will cease to exist once racial stereotypes and unfounded assumptions about people of colour have been removed from the public consciousness (Delgado, 2003). Regardless of which direction one leans in, salient to these approaches is the belief that legal and social institutions are organized in a manner that is inherently unfair and limits opportunities for non-White racial minority groups.

In common with other critical stances that repudiate the subordination of people of colour, such as radical feminism, adherents of CRT abjure the idea of the law as objective or neutral and colour-blind (Bell, 1992; Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). From this point of view, the law does not work to eliminate racial inequality in society. Rather, in its insistence on a decontextualized and ahistorical account of racial politics, it exacerbates the problem (Delgado, 2003; Hylton, 2010; Matsuda, 1991).

Critical theorists of race are committed to pursuing social change and racial justice, and embrace an epistemological, ontological world view premised on a critical consciousness about race and racism. Using storytelling and counter-storytelling as their tools, CRT scholars centre

the subjugated and experiential knowledge of racialized people as forms of active citizenship; their narratives counter the dominant racial discourses of oppression (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Narratives of non-White racial groups about the oppressive force of racism are seen as different in form and content from narratives of the dominant, White racial group (Bell, 1987; Duncan, 2005; Essed, 1991). Knowledge is thus organized from the bottom up—that is, from the perspectives of people whose voices have been and continue to be silenced over the grand narratives of the prevailing White group in society. By emphasizing the voices and experience of racial minorities, however, the suggestion is not that their accounts correspond to the only reality or truth (Delgado, 1989; Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). Rather, as Rollock and Gillborn (2011) have noted, “their position at the margins of racist society means they will be able to make an especially insightful contribution” (p. 2) to collective understanding of how racialized practices and discourses of superiority and inferiority shape power relations across the board.

To this end, proponents of CRT subscribe to a set of beliefs about the saliency of race and racism in society, casting doubt on the foundations of the liberal order, including Enlightenment rationalism about human differences. The following six major principles or tenets of the theory have been identified.

1. CRT asserts a normative, nonaberrational view of racism, positing it as an endemic fixture of human civilization and common experience for many people of colour, despite the official or dominant White group’s attempts to mystify its existence through, for example, the assimilationist or integrationist trope of multiculturalism.
2. CRT considers that, in most areas of life, racism advances the interests of White elites and working-class people materially and psychically, with the accompanying implication that there is no incentive or willingness (unless it converges with their

interest to do so) on their part to eradicate it; this dynamic is also known as *interest convergence*.

3. CRT accepts as evident that race has no deterministic or biological basis, but is a social construct with real-life consequences. This construct emerged out of historical circumstances of European colonial expansionism, during which people were intentionally stratified based on skin colour, for the purpose of legitimizing White power and privilege.
4. CRT recognizes and draws attention to the practice and consequences of differential racialization, in which the dominant group in society controls the worth and value of non-White racialized groups, based on their own shifting socioeconomic, cultural, and political needs at any given time.
5. CRT views identity as dynamic and interrelated; a perspective grounded in notions of intersectionality and antiessentialism, which posits that people have multiple—as opposed to unitary—identities that can overlap, conflict with each other, and make visible the limitations of culturally mediated representations to account for the unique experiences of multiply marginalized group members.
6. CRT recognizes that people of colour bring a unique voice and perspective to bear on analyses of oppression, informed by their past and present histories and experiences of White racism, which may be unfamiliar to White people because of their differentially situated social, political, economic, and cultural contexts. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001)

As these six tenets reveal, CRT has, from the start, articulated a politics of difference focused on the interplay between privilege and oppression. Its ideas have gained traction in other

disciplines beyond its legal field of origin, and among White and non-White scholars. As a critical social theory that is committed to transformative and emancipatory goals, CRT provides a vehicle with which researchers can explore the dynamics of race and racism, and contributes to knowledge about groups that continue to be marginalized across different levels of social life. It establishes and maintains a discourse about race discrimination related to people of colour, giving “researchers an opportunity to disseminate their knowledge about unheard and marginalized voices obtained from non-White racial populations” (Misawa, 2012, p. 242). In this way, CRT disrupts normative—and, to a lesser degree, essentialist—notions of a universal or monolithic reality, in its view that individual and collective experiences of oppression are constituted within a multiplicity of social positions on the basis of difference. This critical focus on the differential nature of oppression is particularly well suited to the exploration of the unique experiences of gay men of colour, using the “micro-theoretical” (Misawa, 2012, p. 242) lens offered by queer critical theory.

Queer Critical Theory

CRT has had its critics. Some scholars (Hobbel & Chapman, 2009; Valdes, 1995; Wing, 2000) have argued that CRT essentializes the various experiences of people of colour by reaffirming the authority of the heterosexual male, and treating sex/gender issues as insignificant or peripheral. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2000), CRT sexual-minority scholars sought “to create a body of queer jurisprudence that examines whether antiracist literature and movements incorporate a heterosexist bias that marginalizes and excludes the concerns, perspectives, and voices of gay and lesbians” (p. 321). Espinoza and Harris (1998) correctly noted that there are people of colour whose experiences of racism are also shaped by other forces of subordination. In the case of sexual minorities of colour, CRT antiracist essentialism takes

little or no account of the sexual dimension of racial oppression, consequently reifying a “heteronormative model of racial justice” (Hutchinson, 1999, p. 8).

Queer critical theory (QCT) or *queer crit*, with its concern for a nuanced examination of race and sexual orientation and other forms of oppression, emerged from CRT in the mid-to-late 1990s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). As a distinct subfield of critical race scholarship, queer crit remains relatively small and, based on my observation and discussion with an expert in the field (F. Valdes, personal communication, June 26, 2009), is frequently used interchangeably to refer to queer legal theory as opposed to queer theory in general. Arguably, ideas between these theories overlap significantly, creating space in which to refer to the same object-specific conceptual knowledge. QCT extends CRT’s analysis of race and ethnicity to include nonheteronormative discourse.

A microtheoretical perspective, QCT emphasizes that identities are multiply inflected, and must therefore be theorized in noncompartmentalized fashion—for example, race/racism cannot be examined in isolation from sexual orientation and vice versa. This view of the interlocking dynamics of oppression, at first glance, may appear to bear a striking resemblance to intersectionality, a central plank of CRT. The intersectional model of identity, initially advanced by Crenshaw (1989, 1991) in her discussion of the limitations of monistic legal remedies to fully account for the gender-based discrimination experienced by Black women, highlights the need for a consideration of intersecting grounds of identity and oppression to better understand how people construct and make sense of the world. Notwithstanding the contribution of this feminist legal and political thought to an understanding of the intersection of race and gender, critical race legal scholars such as Hutchinson (1999) have critiqued intersectionality for its limited focus on two forces of oppression in the lives of women of colour—patriarchy and racism. Despite

Hutchinson's (1999) awareness of centrality of intersectionality to analysis of the subordination of women of colour in civil rights jurisprudence, he considered that intersectionality risks giving the wrong impression of singly applying to women of colour as the only group subjected to multiple forms of oppression (namely, racism and sexism), thereby homogenizing their experiences.

In Hutchinson's (1999) view, the intersectional model of identity fails to account for how multiple axes of oppression are constitutive and mutually reinforcing. As others have noted, intersectionality conceives of categories of identities as discrete, crisscrossing only at particular points and moments, whereas the notion of interlocking or multidimensional identities posits a process of indivisible interaction and collision that in turn shapes subjectivity (Ahmed, 1998; Hutchinson, 1997, 1999; S. Razack, 2008). The additive or multiplicative model of oppression intimated by intersectionality suggests that oppression occurs in cumulative fashion, as additional problems arise to be overcome. It neglects the structural mechanism or framework of oppression and reinforces unhelpful false dichotomies (Andersen & Collins, 2016); in this scheme, an individual is either a person of colour or a member of a sexual minority. Thus, intersectionality may have less application to sexual minorities of colour, given their experience of multilayered subordination. Hutchinson's (1999) observation casts doubt on the idea that social identity categories of oppression merely intersect; instead, a more interlocking and multidimensional line of analysis is preferable.

Any socially constructed racial and sexual binary creates a condition where gay men of colour may feel pressured to choose between their race and their sexual orientation (C. W. Han, 2013; Misawa, 2010b; Valdes, 1995) in order to fit into a particular social group (or groups). Therefore, the multidimensional analysis suggested by Hutchinson (1999) has great import for

understanding the interlocking matrices of oppression in the lives of sexual minorities of colour. For instance, although research about gay men of colour frequently laments the struggles they face in communities of colour due to heterosexism, and in predominantly White GLB communities because of racism, they do so in ways that reinforce the singularity and separatedness of these oppressions. Often, the impression is given that as gay men traverse their communities of membership, they provisionally lose their racial/ethnic or sexual ties, as a result of the primacy given by members from those communities to one or the other identity. This experience of having their multiply diverse statuses scrutinized and policed by group members can erode self-worth and confidence, as well as hinder individual efforts to embrace the multiplicity and hybridity of one's social identities. From a queer crit perspective, rooted in an understanding of the multidimensional nature of human oppression, the manner in which race and sexual orientation factor into these men's lives cannot be wholly understood by examining these experiences in isolation from one another.

My focus on race as it interlocks with sexual orientation is not meant to privilege race over other social identities. Rather, echoing Valdes (1997, 2009), this focus should be seen as a response and an attempt to contribute to a body of knowledge embedded in antiracism discourse, especially one related to racism within GLB communities in Canada, where the topic remains underresearched. Although race, class, and sexual subordination are seen to collide in shaping the life experiences of sexual minorities of colour, there continues to be an absence of a critical analysis of race inequity (among other systems of social stratification) within gay and lesbian equality scholarship and discourse (Hutchinson, 1997). This is a crucial point that, in some ways, elucidates an important difference between queer crit theory and other antiracism theories such as conventional queer theory. Conventional queer theory

perpetuates a subjective sense of balkanization, because of its failure to critically engage with race-based identity and struggles. These operate on multiple social levels to subjugate sexual minorities of colour in areas such as the law and in society more generally (Misawa, 2010a; Valdes, 1997, 2009).

Writing about race in adult education and reflecting on the continuing absence of an official queer crit group, Misawa (2010a) stated that he “personally [identified] with queer crit theory and not queer theory because the former does not discount [my] racial identity and the latter does” (p. 191). This statement illustrates, albeit from one critical scholar’s subject position, the potential utility of a queer crit theoretical lens for theorizing the different systems of oppressions in the lives of gay men of colour. Extrapolating from his writing on first- and second-stage sexual orientation legal scholarship, Valdes (1997) concluded with the following remark on the dis/engagement of race and ethnicity that is applicable to a critique of conventional queer theory and scholarship:

A failure to account for race and ethnicity . . . can exact both substantive and strategic cost. Such a failure may interfere with substantive analyses of sexual orientation inequality because it serves to limit “our” collective ability to detect, unpack, expose, and critique complex sources of intersectional patterns of sexual minority subordination. But even more so, a continued collective disengagement of race and ethnicity disregards the opportunity . . . to announce and nourish an ethic of mutual care, respect, and support that resolutely rejects and repudiate white supremacy . . . an ethic that ultimately is necessary to the dignity, harmony, and equality that all humans deserve regardless of colour and sexuality. (p. 1324)

There are substantive as well as strategic costs associated with not accounting for the role of race and ethnicity in our research and theorization of difference. We can be blinded to the reality of many people of colour who are same-sex identified and/or gender nonconforming.

Rather than seek to understand their unique experience, such a colour-blind approach may deny the group's negative racial experiences and perspectives. At worst, it can leave uncontested the White racial privilege that enables the ideology of colourblindness to operate (Goldberg, 2002; West, 2001; Wise, 2010). The vision of racelessness that forms the central point of liberal dialogue on race overlooks the true impact of racism, as if it were possible to make the problem of racism disappear by simply “unseeing” it.

However, unlike other theories that eschew or jettison analysis of race and racism as important factors in the lives of sexual minorities of colour, a queer crit perspective focuses on the interlocking systems of race and sexual orientation (Hutchinson, 1997, 1999; Misawa, 2010a, 2010b, 2012; Valdes, 1997, 2009). In queer crit's analysis, the way to end race-based oppression is not through colourblindness, but by being conscious of how race discrimination can lead to unequal outcomes. After all, to be colour-blind, as Goldberg (2002) has reminded us, is to be “blind to people of colour” (pp. 222–223). A colour-blind approach is a race-evasive tactic that absolves White people of their accountability for the maintenance of racism, and undermines collective effort to challenge White supremacy (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Henry & Tator, 2010). QCT responsiveness and sensitivity to the reality of sexual minorities of colour thus highlight the ways that liberal discourses of racism, such as deracialization rhetorical practices, obscure the pervasiveness of racial inequality in contemporary life.

According to Misawa (2010a), at least six themes comprise the key tenets and basic ideas of queer crit theory. These are: (a) the centrality of the intersection of race/racism and sexual orientation/homophobia; (b) the challenge to mainstream ideologies; (c) the confrontation with ahistoricism; (d) the centrality of experiential knowledge; (e) multidisciplinary aspects; and (f) a social justice perspective. Each tenet is discussed below.

Centrality of the Intersection of Race/Racism and Sexual Orientation/Homophobia

Race matters. According to classic liberal ideals, all people should be treated equally, and a colour-blind society should be created, but these ideals have not been reached. Most people of colour are judged not on the content of their character but by the colour of their skin (West, 2001). Racism operates, in this sense, as a marker of acceptability; those who are defined as outside the normative boundaries of Whiteness are pushed to the margins.

The intercentricity of race and racism forms the cornerstone of CRT. Similarly, queer crit race analysis acknowledges the salience of race and racism in society generally and in predominantly White GLB communities specifically. For people of colour who identify as nonheterosexual and/or gender nonconforming, the importance of how these social identities interlock with a race-based system of oppression is integral to analysis and function of multiple systems of oppression in their lives. In GLB communities where the tendency is to decentre race and racism from analysis of oppression based on sexual orientation, a queer crit approach invites a wider interrogation of these interrelated oppressions, as a means of challenging White majoritarian understanding and sustained systematic oppression of GLB people of colour. That is, the unapologetic attempt by White GLB people to displace race and racism as constitutive forces of oppression worthy of examination and discussion supports an over 500-year colonial legacy of racist attempts to delegitimize the social realities of people of colour (Pon, Giwa, & Razack, 2016).

Misawa (2010a) observed that, in today's politically correct society, race-based discrimination manifests itself more covertly than overtly. He strongly believes that the push toward colourblindness has created a situation where people avoid discussions of race or skin colour, with the effect that racial discrimination has become subtle and almost impossible to

detect. Still, for people of colour, the experience of racism, whether implicit or explicit, can lead to negative outcomes. Others' actions toward them, based on a subjective opinion about their character due to race, can constrict life opportunities, and have nonsalutary effects on health and psychological well-being (Clark et al., 1999; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Paradies, 2006). Race-based discrimination's damaging effects for gay men of colour, together with contextual dynamics such as power and racially prescribed sex roles, contribute to unsafe sexual behaviours (C.-S. Han, 2008a).

Beyond unsafe sex practices, the interaction between multiple determinants of inequality such as race/racism and sexual orientation/homophobia can leave GLB people of colour particularly vulnerable to inequality from race-based and anti-GLB discrimination. They are susceptible to racial and economic justice matters that intentionally or unintentionally escape the attention of their White counterparts. For example, a study by the Center for American Progress and Movement Advancement Project (2015) showed that LGBT people of colour were at increased risk for economic insecurity because of legal discrimination, lack of family recognition, and unsafe schools. The group fared worse than their White counterparts in each of the economic indicators measured: they had higher unemployment and poverty rate; they were less likely to have health insurance, and more likely to encounter housing discrimination; they experienced higher levels of harassment at school; and they had lower college completion rates.

Another study found that the rate of poverty among African American same-sex couples was nearly three times higher than that of White same-sex couples (Albelda, Badgett, Schneebaum, & Gates, 2009). This finding has labour, family, and social welfare policy implications for African American same-sex couples and their children, insofar as the experience

of economic injustice puts them at risk of poverty, homelessness, dependence on welfare services, and the possibility of child welfare involvement.

Finally, the pervasive discrimination and criminalization of GLB and transgender people—especially people of colour—at different stages of the criminal legal system warrants considerable attention, given their overrepresentation at the policing, adjudication, and incarceration levels (Hanssens, Moodie-Mills, Ritchie, Spade, & Vaid, 2014; Mogul, Ritchie, & Whitlock, 2012; R. K. Robinson, 2011). Akin to the racial profiling perpetrated against their heterosexual counterparts, GLB and transgender people of colour are all too frequently stopped and frisked by the police, often as a result of misconceived prejudices and stereotypes about race, sexual orientation, and gender. In these encounters, the police, for example, have been known to arrest and charge transgender individuals found in possession of condoms with loitering with the purpose of prostitution. In the penal context, trans prisoners—unlike GLB prisoners of colour—are confronted with harm and violence perpetrated by other prisoners and prison staff, including sexual victimization that places them at risk of contracting HIV (R. K. Robinson, 2011). Ultimately, the manifestations of biased policing against GLB and transgender people of colour have the consequence of a presumption of guilt, and belief that those victimized deserve their victimization.

Challenge to Mainstream Ideologies

As a framework and movement committed to racial justice (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Lipsitz, 2011; West, 1995), CRT challenges conventional explanations of racial inequality, especially those advanced by Whites to sustain their powerful social positions. Such explanations “act as a camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant [racial] groups” (Yosso, Villalpando, Bernal, & Solórzano, 2006, p. 91). They exclude the voices and perspectives of

people of colour. As people of colour challenge mainstream ideologies, they advance their understanding of race-based discrimination, thereby accounting for the profound role of White supremacist ideology in contributing to their subordination (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Haney-López, 2007; Misawa, 2010a; West, 2001):

White supremacist ideology is based first and foremost on the degradation of [racialized] bodies in order to control them. [T]his fear is best sustained by convincing them that their bodies are ugly, their intellect is inherently underdeveloped, their culture is less civilized, and their future warrants less concern than that of other peoples. (West, 2001, p. 85)

A queer crit perspective broadens this discussion by injecting the views of sexual minorities of colour into the mix. Focusing on the population at the centre of current research, Misawa (2010a) asked: “[Are] the conventional norms and standards . . . created and sustained by White heterosexual males . . . applicable to queer people of colour?” (p. 193). Within communities of colour, where heterosexuality is also constructed as the ideal sexual orientation, this question could be widened to examine whether related norms and standards in those communities are equally applicable to nonheterosexual group members. Similar questions may be asked in GLB communities, where mainstream ideologies of race and sexuality privilege a White racial aesthetic. Are the conventional norms and standards created and sustained by White gay males applicable to gay men of colour? And to what do White gay men owe their exalted status? Such questions get at the heart of the structuration of social relations based on race, ethnicity, and class, among other social categories that hierarchize and grant race-privilege to White gay men even as non-White gay men are subjected to racial discrimination and social marginalization. An interrogation of these categories contributes some understanding to the perennial question of how gay stays White and what kind of White it stays (Bérubé, 2001). What is more, they create a

space of resistance to challenge dominant racial discourse, through which gay men of colour can feel empowered to devise strategies appropriate for mitigating the impact of both racism and heterosexism on their lives.

More concretely, perhaps, the utility of queer crit to challenge mainstream ideologies of predominantly White GLB communities can be seen with Proposition 8 and the It Gets Better campaigns in the United States and Canada. Of particular interest to this research is what Lenon (2013) referred to as the “racially normative representations and the racializing of homophobia” (p. 44) ubiquitous within these mainly gay sociopolitical movements. The passage of Proposition 8 in 2008, which struck down same-sex marriage rights in California, revealed a division along racial lines. Communities of colour became a scapegoat (Lenon, 2013) for the court’s decision to not uphold gay marriage. In the mainstream GLB community, the larger (White) gay agenda for equal marriage was a struggle often equated with the civil rights movement. From this point of view, communities of colour were a direct threat to this agenda; they were blamed for the failure of Proposition 8.

A queer crit perspective would challenge the implicit White gay majoritarian view of these communities as monolithic, and its construction of itself as more liberatory-minded. It would see the GLB mainstream as reinforcing a backwardness of communities of colour. It would consider the fact that the denigration of communities of colour by White GLB people was an attack against same-sex people of colour who were also members of the GLB community. What is more, if the GLB community was truly committed to the liberation of all its members, it would seem imperative to think beyond same-sex marriage as the only avenue for full equality.

In the aftermath of the legal recognition of same-sex marriage, however, it might be instructive to think about these questions: How is the struggle for legal recognition of same-sex

marriage helpful to fighting against the oppression of racism? In what ways do these systems of oppression interlock to enforce the subjugation of stigmatized groups? What, if any, opportunity exists for creative coalition-building across racial and sexual-orientation lines, to resist all forms of oppression? By asking these questions, a queer crit perspective would offer a direct challenge to GLB racialized heterosexism and White normative ideologies; it would present a different way of looking at the social issues that may have contributed to the passing of Proposition 8.

The It Gets Better campaign was launched in September 2010 with a YouTube video by Dan Savage and his partner, Terry Miller. The goal was to inspire GLB youth to not give up, and to remind them that no matter how hard things were now, their lives would eventually get better. At the time, the campaign was an effort to mobilize a nation-wide response to the surge in GLB youth suicide. Whilst the intent and message of the campaign were beyond reproach, the method and manner with which the message was communicated were not. Savage and Miller's video, and others that followed, appeared to speak to all GLB youth experiencing harassment because of their sexual orientation. A queer crit analysis reveals, however, that the videos reified a dominant White discourse of gayness. Their centring of White speakers communicated an absence of the importance of the issue for GLB people of colour. In addition, they extolled the primacy of sexual prejudice as the most significant force of oppression in their lives, over other forms of oppression (e.g., poverty), including the racism perpetrated against people of colour from mainstream society.

From the videos, moreover, exactly for whom it gets better is left to the viewer to decide. The message received by GLB youth of colour watching these videos might have the opposite effect intended by the video's creators, given the videos' tendency to reinforce the group's marginality (Johnson, 2014). In fact, responding to the erasure and tokenized representation of

people of colour in the Savage/Miller video, many GLB people of colour have posted messages on the Web about their experiences and struggles dealing with other people's heterosexism and coming to terms with their own sexuality. Similar to but addressing the limitations of the mainstream videos, videos created by GLB people of colour communicate to GLB youth of colour their sense of worth and importance, in a society that devalues them and tries to make them invisible.

Confrontation with Ahistoricism

Examining and challenging oppression in the present demands an application of lessons from the past to inform future directions. CRT contests the tendency towards ahistoricism in the organization of social life (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993). It believes that the law maintains inequality and perpetuates the status quo. From this point of view, for example, the overrepresentation of young men of colour (especially Blacks and Aboriginals) in prisons cannot be divorced from past and continuing devaluations of their lives. This is not an anomaly. These men are routinely racially profiled and subjected to unfair police treatment that leads to their incarceration (Comack, 2012; Giwa, James, Anucha, & Schwartz, 2014; Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2013). Far from occasional or isolated occurrences, such treatment is fundamentally rooted in relations of European/White superiority and perceived non-White inferiority (Brewer & Heitzeg, 2008; Wilderson, 2010). Such oppression, too, made possible the Atlantic slave trade, the practice of lynching (Myrdal, 1944; E. Williams, 1944), and the establishment of the residential school system that decimated Aboriginal peoples' traditional life ways (Coulthard, 2014; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). The imperial and colonial legacies highlighted by these historical events are vital to understanding present realities, and key to correcting distortions embedded in dominant cultural beliefs.

A queer crit perspective emphasizes the historical context of the inequitable experiences of sexual minorities of all races. For example, possibly the most controversial period in GLB history in North America was when homosexuality was classified as a pathological condition. Until 1973, when the American Psychiatric Association (APA) declassified same-sex sexual orientation as a mental disorder, individuals with nonheterosexual and gender-nonconforming identities were categorized as mentally ill and deviant (Misawa, 2010a). This understanding was fuelled by biased research gleaned from people with mental illness plus a history of incarceration, and advanced the idea that same-sex sexual orientation was a problem in the first place.

For many, the threat of being labelled with mental illness meant that they avoided any contact with the helping professions. Others were exposed to ineffective “corrective” treatments designed to make them heterosexual. Nonheterosexual health and social service professionals were equally impacted, as many feared disclosing their sexual orientation. This disadvantaged similar service users of their professional expertise and personal tacit knowledge. Despite the APA’s official declassification, the proclivity of faith-based organizations and the dominant sexual group to stigmatize same-sex and gender nonconforming people as deviant remains an important feature of contemporary society (Fone, 2000). The privileged position of heterosexuals in society remains secure.

Like heterosexism, the practice of racism is not a vestige of a bygone era. Modern racism remains an intractable feature of contemporary society. The denial of racism is a historic tendency in GLB communities, much as it is in the general society, and continues today unabated (Brennan et al., 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Misawa, 2010a, 2010b, 2012; Pon et al., 2016). Among gay populations, expressions of overt racism can generally be

detected on sex-themed gay websites that cater to men looking to connect with other men, where vitriolic racist sentiments are all but commonplace (Callander et al., 2012, 2015; Gosine, 2007; Paul et al., 2010; Poon et al., 2005). Within the larger GLB community, subtle discrimination also manifest, for example, in interpersonal relationships and discriminatory carding practices that subject gay men of colour to differential treatment from their White counterparts (e.g., Bérubé, 2001).

Deeply embedded ideas of cultural diversity and multiculturalism, intertwined with race, function to deny the salience of racism. This ideology, which perpetuates racism, is the historical legacy of White racism in Anglo-Western societies, including Canada. It echoes what Lowe (1996) has described as the ontology of forgetting Canada's checkered past, which has been marred by incidents of racist and xenophobic violence, inequality, and colonialism. As opposed to finding a way forward, the denial of racism masked by an overall concept of cultural diversity and multiculturalism operates to maintain the naturalization of Whiteness and existing systems of dominance. The tendency of most White GLB people to deny seeing race, or to ignore the specific historical circumstances out of which modern racism evolved, obscures how colour-blind ideology perpetuates racism. An awareness of the long history of racism is crucial to an understanding of the present reality, and to addressing the impact of racism in the context of culture, interpersonal relationships, and on gay men of colour.

The Centrality of Experiential Knowledge

From a strengths-based perspective, centring on the lives of people of colour validates their lived experiences of oppression (T. N. Brown, 2003; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Giwa, 2015; Misawa, 2010a). In turn, the experiential knowledge of oppressed groups is vital to ameliorating social structures that maintain and reproduce racial oppression (Bell, 1992; Delgado

& Stefancic, 2001; Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). Yosso et al. (2006) have stated that “the experiential knowledge of people of colour is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination” (p. 91).

By extension, the narratives of gay men of colour are crucial for understanding the realities of their everyday lives in a racist and heterosexist society. They demonstrate the interlocking nature of these oppressions and their impact upon gay men of colour (Brennan et al., 2013; Crichlow, 2004; George et al., 2012; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012). As valid and appropriate sources of knowledge, the life experiences of gay men of colour can help contest and critique inequality. Scholars such as Valdes (1995) and Misawa (2010a) have suggested that, among sexual minorities of colour, personal as well as collective narratives of discrimination can resurrect subjugated knowledge and empower the development of epistemic cognition of oppression, especially where such knowledge has been denied. The insight of sexual minorities of colour can provide a counterbalance to the views and narratives about oppression and injustice prevalent in a dominant or majoritarian knowledge system (C.-S. Han, 2008b). Additionally, such shared knowledge can give voice to those who have been and continue to be silenced (Harper, Jernewall, & Zea, 2004; Kumashiro, 2001), and promote social change through the transformation of power relations.

Multidisciplinary Aspects

Queer crit recognizes that sexual minorities of colour embody multiple identities and positionalities, and may experience discrimination or oppression from different angles simultaneously. As such, it rejects a unidirectional analysis of the groups’ experience, in favour of a multifaceted approach (Misawa, 2010a; Valdes, 1995). As well, queer crit recognizes the diverse histories of sexual minorities; their positionalities have been shaped in different ways by

White supremacist and heterosexist discrimination (Misawa, 2010a). The conditions and experiences of such oppression are not monolithic. Thus, naming and understanding the relationship between various positional markers that contribute to discrimination and oppression can permit an explanation of its effects on the targeted group and, to some extent, also on the oppressor.

Another key aspect of this perspective is that it seeks to bring together the various voices of sexual minorities of colour from across different fields of academic inquiry and professional and nonprofessional contexts, for the realization of an “empowered collective voice” (Misawa, 2012, p. 244). These efforts are important for two reasons. First, queer crit implicitly recognizes that no single discipline or theory can fully account for the multiple positions and oppressions experienced by sexual minorities of colour. Only by combining the strengths of various disciplines and theories can social inequality be addressed or ameliorated. The social work lens of this research project adds to the extant knowledge about the life experiences and circumstances of gay men of colour, while at the same time addressing their continued exclusion within social work research and literature (Poon, 2011).

Second, more often than not, individual stories of racial and sexual/gender discrimination are considered isolated cases, or dismissed as the views of overly sensitive people. One sexual-minority-of-colour person’s experience of discrimination or oppression might not receive the level of attention it deserves. However, unifying these different voices into a collective whole would make it less likely that such individual accounts would remain ignored (Misawa, 2012).

The Social Justice Perspective

CRT denounces all forms of oppression and is committed to eradicating racial discrimination (Matsuda et al., 1993). In the same way, the queer crit social justice perspective

contests discrimination based on race and sexual orientation (Misawa, 2010a, 2012). Together, these two perspectives offer a set of tools for conceptualizing and responding to injustices including those based on race, gender, class, and sexual orientation.

Because of their multiple identities, sexual minorities of colour are vulnerable to discrimination or oppression evident everywhere in their lives: in the larger society, in the GLB community, and within their own ethnoracial communities. Within these liminal spaces are contradictory notions of oppression/marginalization and emancipation/empowerment. In each, negative assumptions and stereotypes are put forward about the group, which leads to their exclusion and stigmatization. Yet these contexts also offer possibilities for driving social change and empowering the group to contest and rearticulate racial and heterosexist ideologies.

However, as people living with discredited identities, they are denied full and effective participation in society. This misrecognition or status inequality (Fraser & Honneth, 2003) may affect the distribution of opportunities and serve to sustain existing power structures.

Importantly, such asymmetrical relationships help to maintain uneven power outcomes, and the voices of sexual minorities of colour may be supplanted with those of the dominant racial and sexual group. In addressing the inequality faced by sexual minorities of colour, then, queer crit integrates all components of the theory discussed above in its goal for social justice. Human value can be prioritized and transformative social change can be generated.

Minority Stress Theory

Stress is “any condition having the potential to arouse the adaptive machinery of the individual” (Pearlin, 1999, p. 163). The experience of stress is a fact of life for everyone. Different life occurrences—such as the racism discussed above—can activate the body’s stress response (Clark et al., 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Selye, 1982). Although stress is

ubiquitous, its level of intensity varies from person to person. What one person might find stressful, another person might find acceptable. In general, when confronted with stressful life events, people respond or cope in ways that decrease stress or make it manageable. Excessive stress or stress overload can impair one's health; factors that discourage risk behaviours may be preempted (Dohrenwend et al., 1992).

The psychosocial stress that originates from a person's stigmatized social identity or minority status is referred to as *minority stress* (Brooks, 1981; DiPlacido, 1998; Meyer, 1995, 2003a). Brooks (1981) described it as

. . . a state intervening between the sequential antecedent stressors of culturally sanctioned, categorically ascribed inferior status, resultant prejudice and discrimination, the impact of these forces on the cognitive structure of the individual, and the consequent adjustment or adaptational failures. (p. 84)

Minority stress arises out of the clash of value systems between majority and minority groups (Meyer, 1995; Mirowsky & Ross, 1989; Pearlin, 1989), where minorities have little social power or influence. This clash leads to conflict in the social environment, requiring minority group members to adapt, since the stress produced can affect physical and mental health outcomes (Dohrenwend et al., 1992). Building on the earlier work by Brooks (1981), Meyer (1995) conceptualized the minority stress model as a way to examine the influence of stigma and discrimination on the psychosocial health of sexual minorities.

Sexual minorities, like members of other stigmatized groups, must contend with negative societal attitudes related to their minority status (Meyer, 1995). Meyer's model posits that gay men living in a predominantly heterosexist society experience chronic stress due to sexual stigma, and that this stressor contributes to negative mental health outcomes: "stigma, prejudice and discrimination create a hostile and stressful social environment that causes mental health

problems” (Meyer, 2003a, p. 674). Corroborating evidence links the adverse effects of this stigma to psychological distress (Hatzenbuehler, McLaughlin, Keyes, & Hasin, 2010), including depression, anxiety, and internalized self-stigma.

The complementary symbolic interaction and social comparison theories have also been used to analyze the connection between person and environment. In symbolic interaction, emphasis is placed on the fact that the environment provides individuals with schemas to organize and make sense of their experience in the world, and that individuals create meaning out of their interactions with others. Social comparison theory, which considers the meaning individuals attach to constructing their self-concept, suggests that individuals’ self-worth is determined based on a subjective evaluation of self in relation to others. This thinking recalls Cooley’s (1902) “looking glass self” (p. 184), which intimated that an awareness of the self is shaped by others’ perception of one’s being.

Social reaction or labelling theory contributes additional elements to an understanding of minority stress theory, especially with its focus on stigma, and social and attitudinal responses to people with stigmatized identities. Social reaction theory suggests that deviance—norm-violating behaviours such as same-sex sexual practices—can cause an individual to be labelled and subjected to negative social attitudes.

Gay men of colour, learning about who they are through their social environments, are vulnerable to discriminatory messages about themselves (Allport, 1954). Living in a racist and heterosexist society, these men are repeatedly admonished for the colour of their skin and for their sexual orientation. Having internalized negative messages about their racial/ethnic minority status and sexual identity, they begin to view themselves as less-than their heterosexual and White counterparts. This feeling of inadequacy and worthlessness precipitates the tension that

results in minority stress (Meyer, 1995, 2003a; Pearlin, 1999). For gay and bisexual men and other sexual minorities, “negative regard from others therefore leads to negative self-regard and adverse mental health outcomes” (Meyer, 1995, p. 39).

Minority stress theory has been applied to different population groups. However, I share Dentato’s (2012) call for more research with sexual minorities. Such research must engage minority stress theory from the perspective of gay men of colour, for, unlike their White counterparts, this group continues to be only marginally included in empirical research. As a result, the unique circumstances of gay men of colour are subject to the theoretical ideas, models, and approaches developed for White gay and bisexual men and other sexual minorities. For example, as a theoretical and explanatory framework for minority health risk, Meyer’s (1995, 2003a) minority stress model engages primarily with the issue of heterosexism or sexual prejudice. But while gay men of colour are impacted by heterosexist events, their experience of racism is clearly also an important area of consideration.

Discrimination due to racism has been shown to affect nondominant racial groups in a variety of ways, resulting in poor health outcomes (e.g., S. P. Harrell, 2000; D. R. Williams, Spencer, & Jackson, 1999). Meyer (1995) asserted that “the general approach [of minority stress theory] is suited for studying other stigmatized groups” (p. 40), but race-based discrimination continues to occupy an inferior position to the more dominant focus on sexual orientation discrimination. My discussion extends Meyer’s (1995, 2003a) application of minority stress theory to sexual stigma by adapting it to race-based discrimination, in addition to the heterosexism experienced by gay men of colour.

Meyer’s (2003a) conceptualization of minority stress pinpoints three main characteristics. First, minority stress is understood as unique, in that stigmatized groups experience it in addition

to general life stressors. Second, it is chronic, as it is rooted in relatively stable oppressive sociocultural structures. Third, it is distinguished by socially mediated processes that go beyond the individual target of oppression, to include institutional and structural mechanisms of social order. Along with these features, Meyer highlighted distal and proximal stress processes as important elements of the model. Hatzenbuehler and colleagues (2010), in their application of the model, noted that these stress processes can act as predictors of psychopathology. Although distal and proximal stressors operate in tandem, for the sake of simplicity, it is helpful to discuss them as discrete concepts.

Distal minority stressors are “objective stressors in that they do not depend on an individual’s perceptions or appraisals—although certainly their report depends on perception and attribution” (Meyer, 2003a, p. 676). They are marked by the risk of real or perceived violent and nonviolent behaviours (e.g., derogatory comments or slurs), targeted at actual or assumed members of a stigmatized group. An individual may or may not identify with a minority status (e.g., self-identify as gay or a person of colour). However, if perceived by others as belonging to a stigmatized minority group, that individual may become a victim of external prejudices and stereotypes perpetrated against members of that group. Because distal stressors do not require one to identify with an assigned minority status, they can be objectively observed and measured. In this way, distal stressors can be viewed as external to the individual.

Proximal minority stressors are, by contrast, subjective. They depend on how people perceive stressful events, and are related to an individual’s self-identification with a minority identity (e.g., gay). Because of variations in the meaning and evaluation people ascribe to themselves and different parts of their identities, no one’s subjective experience of minority stress is going to be the same. An individual who identifies strongly as gay may experience

significant stress related to sexual stigma. The opposite may be true for someone who identifies more with, say, his racial/ethnic background and less with his sexual orientation.

Meyer (1995) identified three kinds of stressors that were central to his conceptualization of minority stress: internalized homophobia, perceived stigma, and actual experiences of discrimination and violence. In the following section, I review these stressors. I have combined internalized homophobia with racism, in order to make this component of the model applicable to the study of racial discrimination among gay men of colour. In addition, I consider the ameliorative role of social support and coping highlighted in the model. These may mitigate the impact of minority stressors, thus demonstrating the theory's applicability for understanding coping strategies of racism-related stress among the target population.

Internalized Homophobia and Racism

Internalized homophobia is the practice of applying to oneself the negative social attitudes directed at people whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual (Frost & Meyer, 2009; Meyer, 1995, 2003a). Within the existing literature, this component of minority stress is also known as *internalized heterosexism* (Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, & Meyer, 2008) and *internalized homonegativity* (Mohr & Kendra, 2011). The latter is defined as “a sense of negativity or denigration of the self or parts of the self, based on internalized heterosexist cultural, social, legal, familial, and/or religious expectations regarding sexuality” (Denton, 2012, p. 7). Internalized homonegativity may be a more accurate descriptor of this phenomenon, since it captures both the phobic and cultural attitudes central to the devaluation of sexual minorities (Denton, 2012; Mohr & Kendra, 2011).

Internalizing homophobic stereotypes and prejudices begins long before individuals are aware that they are GLB. The point at which they begin to apply these labels to themselves

signals an identity shift (Meyer, 1995); this is where, together with an internal sense of shame, they “also begin to apply negative attitudes to themselves, and the psychologically injurious effects of societal homophobia takes effect” (Meyer, 1995, p. 40). This analysis is analogous to Goffman’s (1963) *deviant identity*, which is consistent with a negative self-concept. Even if GLB people manage to achieve a strong sense of sexual identity, internalized homophobia is not likely to be overcome; it is more apt to endure throughout various life stages (Cass, 1984; Frost & Meyer, 2009; Gonsiorek, 1988; Troiden, 1989). The socialization of GLB people in heterosexist environments, and their continued exposure to events prejudicial to same-sex orientation, contributes to this reality. These factors make internalized homophobia an intractable problem, with the potential for minority stress and a negative impact on mental health and well-being (Herek, Cogan, Gillis, & Glunt, 1998; Meyer & Dean, 1998; Rowen & Malcolm, 2003).

Similarly, racist attitudes and practices of the dominant White gay male culture can lead gay men of colour to harbour negative thoughts and feelings about themselves and members of their racial/ethnic group (see, for example, C.-S. Han, 2008b). Living in a racist society, gay men of colour may internalize the stigma of racism. They may develop certain ideas, views, and ways of practice that uphold or maintain racial discrimination. For example, echoing the dominant White gay script that gay men of colour are unattractive, these men may refuse to date or engage in sexual relationships with men from their own or other racial minority groups. The situation is compounded by “defensive othering” (Schwalbe et al., 2000, p. 425), whereby members of oppressed groups ascribe to each other the dominant group’s negative attributes and stereotypes of them. In this way, the attempt is made to appear more like the oppressor, through a display of shared mind-set and dislike for one’s racial and ethnic group members.

Internalized racism, which Hall (1986) defined as the “subjection of the victims of racism to the mystifications of the very racist ideology which imprison and define them” (p. 26), cannot be viewed solely as an individual misgiving or the weakness of those who are oppressed (Pyke, 2010). It also needs to be seen as systemic, in that it relies on a system of structural disadvantage based on the othering, devaluation, and vilification of people of colour in the larger social context. The low self-esteem and loathing of self and others that result from this process represent symptoms of an otherwise structural oppression (Pyke, 2010). As the effects of this stressor accumulate, they can lead to chronically high levels of stress with consequences for poor mental and physical health (Meyer, 1995, 2003a).

Perceived Stigma

The minority stress model further posits that the expectation of rejection or discrimination for something outside of one’s control (e.g., sexual orientation or race) can be anxiety-provoking for people affected by stigma and labelling. They may develop an increased awareness of being labelled and stigmatized in their interactions with others. The constant worry about experiencing stigmatization in the future, combined with the expectation of rejection, produces chronic stress:

A high level of perceived stigma would lead minority group members to maintain a high degree of vigilance—expectations of rejection, discrimination, and violence—with regard to the minority components of their identity in interactions with dominant group members. (Meyer, 1995, p. 41)

For GLB people, this vigilance might entail hiding or concealing the fact that one is not heterosexual, in order to minimize the likelihood of social rejection and violence. In this way, concealment can operate both as a coping mechanism and a barrier to formal and informal social support networks and resources (Meyer, 2003a). However, the effort required to maintain secrecy

around one's sexual orientation is chronic and constant, since vigilance necessitates the "exertion of considerable energy and resources" (Meyer, 2003a, p. 41). The weight of concealing a stigmatized identity for reasons of discrimination, rejection, and/or fear of negative evaluation from others can be stressful, with potential for adverse effects on mental and physical health (Meyer, 2003a).

Expectations of rejection among gay men of colour may heighten their vigilance against the possibility of racism. What is more, the fear of external harm to one's self-esteem and confidence may lead some gay mixed-race people (e.g., mixed Indian and British ancestry) to conceal or hide the aspect of their racial identity that is stigmatized, and emphasize the one perceived to have more social and cultural currency. For nonmixed-race gay men of colour (i.e., Black men with light skin), it could mean passing as White. Similar alternatives are not available to those with unambiguous and easily identifiable racial identity, such as Black men with dark skin.

The above discussion raises some interesting questions. If a gay person can conceal his sexual orientation, but a gay person of colour cannot hide his skin colour, how would this affect his perceived stigma? Would a gay man who visibly belongs to a racial minority group experience discrimination in the same way as someone who passes? In response to these questions, it is important to understand that race- or racism-based discrimination and sexual prejudice are two sides of the same coin. Both are symptoms of systems that subjugate and dehumanize target groups, while advocating the superiority of another (often a perceived majority) social group. As Lorde (1983) has reminded us, we need to be mindful of the danger of a hierarchy of oppression and victimization as a nonuseful marker for an analysis of power relations. Such a hierarchical perspective can undermine a comprehensive analysis of the

relationship of power. This point notwithstanding, a gay person's perception of stigma would be affected by the concealment of his sexual orientation, in that he would be protected externally from the social discrimination of sexual prejudice. If one's oppressor were unable to discriminate based on a stigmatized social identity, the target would be spared the experience of oppression. However, as already mentioned, the personal or internal implications of such concealment could have health-related implications.

In the case of a gay man of colour unable to hide his skin colour, his perception of stigma would be heightened due to the experience of direct or subtle racism. Since an opportunity exists for the oppressor to stigmatize on the basis of an identifiable identity, he is able to discriminate against the target on this ground. The clear targeting of the victim by race is what makes this account different from the example of a concealable identity. What this response also reveals about the second question is that a gay man of colour who visibly belongs to a racial minority group would not experience the same level of oppression as someone who passes for the reasons already discussed, and because the decision to pass is one that someone with a visibly dark skin is unable to exercise.

Discrimination and Violence

Because of the negative attitudes and stereotypes associated with nonheterosexuality and/or being a person of colour, GLB people who self-identify with either or both of these minority positions may experience rejection, violence, and real or vicarious discrimination (Meyer, 1995). Observable characteristics of a stigmatized identity may give rise to aggravated occurrences of prejudiced events across various social contexts (Crocker & Major, 1989; Herek, 2002; Herek & Glunt, 1991; Pescosolido, Martin, Lang, & Olafsdottir, 2008). GLB people may encounter the loss of support from private and public social systems—family, friends, and

religious organizations. This experience leaves them vulnerable to emotional and psychological distress that might negatively influence their perception of the world, and contribute to feelings of inferiority and self-denigration (Garnets, Herek, & Levy, 1990; Meyer, 1995).

There is a cultural-symbolic element to this aspect of minority stress:

Perhaps the most critical aspect of antigay violence and discrimination is its meaning within the context of societal heterosexism and minority oppression. . . .

Prejudice events have a powerful impact more because of the deep cultural meaning they activate than because of the ramifications of the events themselves.

(Meyer, 1995, p. 41)

The example of racial discrimination and bias against gay men of colour illustrates this point. In the gay male culture where White men have cultural currency, online bigoted messages such as “Not into Asians” or “No native chopstick users” become acceptable means to denigrate men who are not White, in the guise of personal preference. Such overt expressions of racial hostility make possible the explicit rejection of gay men of colour by White gay men as sexual or romantic partners. Structural discrimination also manifests in the form of double carding, where gay men of colour—unlike like their White counterparts—are required to show multiple identifications for entry into gay bars or nightclubs. Perhaps more profound than the painful effects of racial discrimination itself, these racially discriminatory messages and episodes communicate a cultural sense of nonbelonging. Gay men of colour are repeatedly and continually reminded (both overtly and subtly) of their nonmembership and exclusion. The combination of racism-related life events and social marginalization can pose a threat to a person’s self-concept and heighten sensitivity for future exposure to discrimination and violence.

Coping and Social Support

Addressing the importance of coping, defined as “the cognitive and behavioural efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them” (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, p. 223), Meyer (1995, 2003a) postulated that the activation of minority stress need not constrain a person’s ability to cope with a stressful situation or event. He showed that among GLB people, when factors that can lead to stress are properly managed, the relationship between minority stressors and mental health outcomes can be mediated.

Meyer’s (1995, 2003a) concept of coping borrows from and contributes to Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984) transactional model of stress and coping theory, which has been described as the most broadly applied framework for appraising the mechanisms of coping with stressful events (Donnellan, Hevey, Hickey, & O’Neill, 2006). In stress and coping theory, stress is posited as a person-environment interaction; stress is inherent in neither the situation nor the individual who experiences it. Rather, it is a transaction between the stressor and one’s cognitive construal of it based on primary and secondary appraisals. Primary appraisal refers to an assessment of the significance of a stressor as stressful or not, whereas secondary appraisal concerns what can be done once an event has been appraised as taxing or exceeding one’s social and cultural resources to cope (Krohne, 2002). In this view, effective coping is dependent on the congruence or goodness of fit between the perceived stressor and an individual’s coping strategy, as mediated by personal appraisal of the stressful event.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identified two main categories of coping responses to stress: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping is more adaptive to stressors that are within the control of the individual; they are amenable to change. This kind of coping emphasizes the source of stress in order to eliminate and/or decrease its negative

impact on the individual, who is actively engaged in adaptive behaviours aimed at stress adaptation. Likewise, it is concerned with future-oriented strategies, such as proactive or preventive coping. As a dynamic coping response to stressful events, problem-focused strategies may consist of gathering or seeking out information, evaluating the upside or downside of a given action, and taking action (Lazarus, 1993).

Emotion-focused coping relates to individuals' management or control of emotive responses to stressful events in situations where the source of stress is beyond their control (Lazarus, 1993, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Stanton et al., 2000). Attenuation of emotional distress is achieved via cognitive reappraisal of the perceived stressor—a reframing of how a stressful situation or environment is viewed. It may involve altering the meaning one attaches to these experiences, such as denying an encounter with racism in order to distance oneself from the stressful event.

Problem-focused and emotion-focused coping efforts are generally viewed as diametrically opposed. The former is considered superior in that it has been linked with positive adaptation and overall good health, while the latter response is negatively correlated with adaptation and good health outcomes (Carver, 2011; Compas, Malcarne, & Fondacaro, 1988; Endler & Parker, 1994; S. P. Harrell, 2000; Rostosky et al., 2008; Szymanski & Owens, 2008). However, this binary logic simplifies an exceptionally complex process. For example, problem-focused coping does not always enhance positive affect, and emotion-focused coping can help shift how a potential stressor is perceived and experienced. Additionally, very similar coping strategies may serve more than one purpose. A gay person of colour may seek professional support to obtain practical guidance on dealing with racism (problem-focused), and/or to gain emotional support and validation (emotion-focused). The same individual may, having

cognitively reappraised the precipitating event, identify other options for taking control of the situation (problem-focused), or reevaluate his emotional response to the stressful event to make it more manageable (emotion-focused). Still, it may be that different coping techniques are employed consecutively or in conjunction with other strategies to promote adaptation to stress (Lazarus, 2000; Matheson & Anisman, 2003). Ultimately, the effectiveness of these coping responses may be contingent on the situation, on the individual's personality, and on the evaluative sense of one's internal and external ability to cope with stress (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; Cheng, 2001; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Meyer (2003a) emphasized the importance of social support for GLB people, as a means of responding to stigmatization. Minority coping or group-level resources—support derived from one's membership in a stigmatized group—can counteract adverse mental health effects of minority stress (Peterson, Folkman, & Bakeman, 1996). For example, in one study, sexual-minority men and women who conveyed greater feelings of connectedness to the GLB community experienced higher levels of social well-being (Kertzner, Meyer, Frost, & Strirratt, 2009). Notably, their higher level of social well-being was connected to fewer depressive symptoms and enhanced psychological health. This finding highlights the importance of social support as an important predictor of quality of life. Underpinning the idea of social support, therefore, is that although having a minority status can be challenging, having support in common with others having this identity can be a source of resilience and coping with prejudice and related stressors. The camaraderie and cohesiveness of a minority group can provide a buffer zone that is validating of an individual's experience (S. P. Harrell, 2000). In addition, it can facilitate the reappraisal of a stressful experience, and minimize the negative attribution of

stigma-related stress on mental health outcomes (E. E. Jones et al., 1984; Pettigrew, 1967; Thoits, 1985).

Although different factors (for example, personality) may complicate access to group-level coping and resources, distinguishing this type of strategy from personal coping is important, since an individual may have effective personal coping but fall short on group-level coping. According to Meyer (2003a), the absence of group-level resources can put an individual at risk for negative health outcomes, regardless of the efficacy of his or her personal coping skills.

Making Connections: An Integrated Conceptual Model Linking Racism With Coping Actions and Health Outcomes for Gay Men of Colour

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a general shortage of data addressing the coping strategies used by gay men of colour to manage the stress of racism. In Canada, this type of research is nonexistent. The lack of such information limits what can be known about the interlocking pathways by which racism impacts mental and physical health outcomes. Linking racial discrimination and health is vital for service delivery to this vulnerable population.

Although different conceptual models exist to facilitate some understanding in this area, their scope is very broad, causing them to suffer from inattention to the unique situation of sexual minorities of colour. Such models overlook the multiple, marginalized identities of gay men of colour, and the different sites in which their experiences of racism materialize, particularly in the context of GLB communities. As a result, the perspective of heterosexual people of colour becomes the lens through which the group's experiences are viewed. Without an awareness of the challenges faced by this group, it is difficult to formulate a model for a conceptual pathway that shows the health effects of racism-related stress.

Sometimes a conceptual model seen as applicable to the general population of GLB people may be used, offering insight into the potential pathways by which sexual prejudice-related events affect health. However, it is important to remember that the model may address sexual orientation discrimination in particular, and might have been developed with the experience of White GLB people in mind. Although this focus is not a problem in and of itself, it is noteworthy that only through extrapolation can the model be used to hypothesize the relationship between various social categories of minority stressors (e.g., racism) and health outcomes for gay men of colour. These weaknesses point to the need for the conceptual model presented as Figure 3.

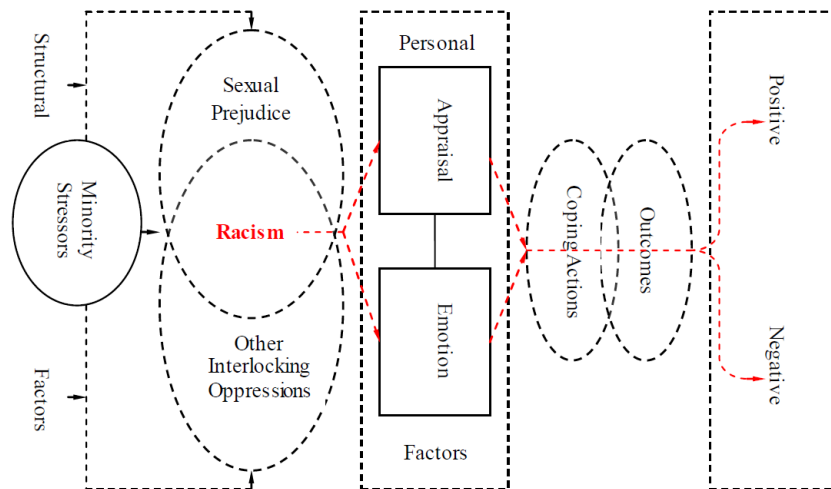


Figure 3. Conceptual pathway through which racism-related minority stress impacts coping and health outcomes.

The model consolidates and integrates subject matter and existing knowledge grounded in the experiences and wisdom of people who are members of a racial and sexual minority group. It illustrates the elements comprising the stress and coping process, and underscores their

interconnection to health outcomes. Integrating insight from QCT and minority stress theory, it follows to some degree the transactional model of stress and coping. It explicates potentially synergistic relationships between external environmental demands and internal individual/group responses for dealing with presenting stressors. In addition, it highlights major systems of interlocking oppressions in the lives of gay men of colour.

Of particular importance is its racism component. Till now, this component has been inadequately explored in the academic literature in general, and in social work literature in particular (Poon, 2011). This aspect of the minority stressors, followed through the entire illustration, centralizes the issue of racism as an important risk factor for stress among gay men of colour. In this way, it reflects the centrality of race in queer crit theory. Similarly, the racism-related minority stress, illustrated with the red font colour in the figure, corresponds to Meyer's (1995, 2003a) operationalization of sexual prejudice as a minority stressor for GLB people. The framing of the current research topic allows for an understanding of the stressful effects of racism on coping and health outcomes.

Four components comprise the model: minority stressors, appraisal and emotion, coping actions, and health outcomes. These components and their relationships to each other are discussed below.

Minority Stressors

This model takes as its starting point that the social stress arising from discriminatory actions related to sexual prejudice, racism or racial discrimination, and other interlocking forms of oppression amount to stressors in the lives of gay men of colour. Although racism and race-related stress are central to this research, these stressors are conceived as interrelated structures

(marked by the overlapping ovals), each reinforcing the other. Stressors are events, situations, and/or conditions that pose a threat, challenge, or harm to one's psychosocial well-being.

Individuals vary in their response to stress, just as the types of stressors they face as members of a stigmatized group also vary. The experience of racism is not uniform; different racial groups are subjected to negative stereotypes specific to their social group. Stressors, therefore, are also not static; they ebb and flow depending on the precipitating context of the stressful event. In this way, they may be acute or chronic, specific to a particular event or situation, or appear as a general life event or daily hassle. The concept of chronicity suggested here is consistent with the broad view of chronic stress proposed by Meyer (2003a), with regard to the high levels of stress confronted by GLB people due to interpersonal prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Appraisal and Emotion

Although appraisal and emotion are areas of interest in quantitative research, here they play a qualitative role; they underscore the importance of individual cognitive processes in managing emotions and subsequently enacting coping strategies in response to racism. A perception of discrimination related to one's minority status leads to primary and secondary cognitive appraisals of the event. In the primary stage, the event is assessed along three scales: not important, good, or stressful. Consider, for example, the case of a Black gay man approached by a White gay man for sex based on the perception of the Black gay man having a large penis. The Black gay man might not perceive the event as important, and thus rebuff the suitor's advances for lack of interest in White men. The same individual may categorize the solicitation as good, on the basis that the suitor's proposition legitimizes his desirability as a sexual partner, leading to increased self-esteem. Conversely, the individual may view the event as stressful

because of its racial overtones, and the suitor's desire to fulfill a racialized sexual fantasy, at his expense. Under secondary evaluation, subsequently, the Black gay man must decide how best to respond to the presenting situation. Specifically, he must determine whether or not he has the coping resources to do so effectively. Co-occurring with this process, emotions are elicited once it can be established that a given situation or event has significance to the individual's self-concept and well-being. Unimportant episodes are the least likely to engender an emotional response. In this sense, emotions function as an adaptive mechanism that requires one move beyond understanding of personal situation into action, to bring about change. Both appraisals and emotions are crucial to the coping experience.

Coping Actions

How people choose to appraise and emotionally react to a given event or situation will inform their personal and social coping responses. A situation for which there exists effective coping is less likely to be perceived as stressful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping capacities are, in this sense, an essential part of the appraisal and emotion process. As Meyer (2003a) explained, coping can moderate the impact of stigma in that "stress and resilience interact in predicting mental disorder" (p. 677).

Resilience is characterized by flexibility in response to changing situational demands and an ability to bounce back from negative environmental risk experiences (Block & Block, 1980; Rutter, 2006; Ungar, 2008). Thus, it is not a fixed trait of an individual (Masten, 2001). According to Rutter (1987), when circumstances change, resilience alters; hence, anyone can learn and develop resilience.

In the same way that others have challenged the fixity of the construct of resilience, Meyer (2003a) called into question the bifurcation of coping approaches or styles within the

stress literature. This bifurcation can obstruct conceptual distinctions and erect a false dichotomy of minority individuals as either victims or resilient actors. Meyer warned that viewing minority persons as resilient can shift the full weight of the oppression onto their shoulders, away from a structural analysis of the problem. When these individuals fail to exercise effective coping during periods of stress or adversity, their perceived absence of resilience or superior coping strategies is judged as a personal failure. In a similar manner, minority persons are constructed as passive casualties of oppression, with little or no control over their situation. This victim stance carries the risk of pathology. Implicit in this perspective is that those who lack effective coping, or are less resilient, may be at fault for the stress they experience.

These distinctions reflect a difference between subjective and objective approaches to stress. In the former, variations in individual appraisals are underscored, with emphasis placed on personal coping with stress. Intervention thus seeks to change how individuals think and cope with difficulties, with a heavier burden placed on such persons. In the objective approach, stressful events or situations are understood as taxing in and of themselves, regardless of one's resiliency or ability to cope. In this approach, a structural-level analysis of stress is adopted, wherein the stress-inducing environment becomes the target of intervention.

Consistent with Meyer's (2003a) position in regards to sexual prejudice, therefore, the proposed conceptual model acknowledges the importance of intervention at both the personal and structural levels for mitigating the distal and proximal risk factors of racism.

Health Outcomes

Growing research evidence documents the possible deleterious effects of everyday forms of racism on the health and well-being of minority individuals and groups. The current study focuses on race-based discrimination, to examine gay men of colour's appraisal and coping

responses to environmental stressors of racism. These outcomes may have positive or negative health effects. The potency of such appraisal is a good indicator of how well an individual will cope. Figure 3 depicts this connection with overlapping ovals that have a straight red dotted line running through them, to signify the close association between coping and health outcomes.

Coping—whether personal or community supported—serves as a moderator of people’s experiences of individual- and structural-level discrimination based on race. In the proposed model, minority persons with adaptive coping strategies for managing racism-related stress are more likely to have positive health outcomes, compared to those with maladaptive coping strategies (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984). The latter strategy may make a bad situation or experience worse, not better.

In addition, three characteristics of minority identity may impact on the health outcomes of a minority person: prominence or salience, valence, and level of integration with other identities (Meyer, 2003a). Prominence is concerned with how salient an identity or aspects of an identity are to a person. The degree to which people identify with an aspect of themselves, and encounter self-image threat in that domain area, the more likely they are to experience negative emotional states with possible effects on mental and physical health. Because identities are not static, the prominence of an identity oscillates, and is suggested to be context-dependent. At the risk of a crude oversimplification, valence alludes to an individual’s self-evaluation of his social identity, and ultimately himself. Negative self-regard or the attribution of a negative character to oneself is hypothesized as an explanation for mental health problems, and is suggested to be inversely related to depression. The last of Meyer’s (2003a) minority identity characteristics, the level of integration with other identities, refers to the interconnectivity of an individual’s various identities. An integrated identity contributes to improved health outcomes, whereas a fragmented

identity poses a threat to a person's self-concept, and can be detrimental to health and subjective well-being.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented an overview of the two theories underpinning the current research study. They reveal the salience of race and racism in contemporary society in general, and in GLB communities in particular, exposing mechanisms intrinsic to their operation. The experience of racism is shown to be a common occurrence for non-White people, perpetuated by structural inequalities deeply rooted in historical, social, cultural, and power differentials.

Addressing the social inequality of racism requires the abandonment of a colour-blind/postracial narrative, and the centring of race and racism in social discourses and practices of discrimination, at the micro, meso, and macro levels. The social stressors of racism and discrimination pose a health risk to sexual minorities (in this case, gay men of colour). As important means of responding to the stress, appraisal and adaptive coping strategies have been highlighted.

An integrated model connecting both theories, foregrounding oppression based on race, was presented. It is designed to help conceptualize the pathways through which racism might impact health outcomes for gay men of colour.

Chapter 4

Methodology

In this chapter, I discuss the rationale for the selected qualitative research method and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach. I also provide an overview of the research design, along with a detailed review of sampling and data collection methods, including participant recruitment strategies and the plan followed for analyzing the data. Lastly, I consider reflexivity in research, drawing upon a lived account that locates me within the topic of inquiry and illuminates the influence of my biographical/experiential background on the research process.

Researching Lived Experience: A Qualitative Method of Inquiry

Qualitative research represents a form of social inquiry that is oriented towards an in-depth understanding of human experience. According to Marlow (2005), qualitative research “involves the nonnumerical examination of phenomena, using words instead of numbers, and focuses on the underlying meanings and patterns of relationships” (p. 11). Qualitative researchers adopt an inductive, bottom-up, orientation to the production of knowledge, placing emphasis on the subjective understanding of those with experience of the phenomenon being studied.

Underlying the epistemology (Who has the authority to know? How does one know? What counts as evidence for knowledge?) And ontology (What is the nature of social reality?)

Associated with qualitative research are notions of interpretivism and constructionism; the view of participants provides the point of orientation (Bryman, 2008; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

As a site of multiple interpretative practices, qualitative research stresses the socially, culturally, and historically situated understanding of human experience within the constraints of everyday life—that is, a person-in-the-environment perspective. Embedded in this research

strategy, as in the phenomenological human science approach, is the view that humans orient themselves in their life-world, so that attempts to explicate the personal/group experiential accounts or lived experience must always begin in the “world of lived experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 53). In other words, the very idea of human experience as inextricably linked to the life-world and therefore inseparable from it, signifies that meanings about the essence of an experiential phenomenon can only be grasped or intuited through engagement and contextual consideration of these interrelated aspects. This understanding closely mirrors the concept of the hermeneutic circle, which describes the process of interpretation as involving an examination of the “part” and the “whole,” in order for the researcher to gain a more comprehensive insight about the social world of the study’s participants (J. A. Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

Along the same lines, the epistemology of qualitative inquiry holds that what can be known is fundamentally constructed and multiple in nature. From this follows an underlying belief that knowledge is not static. It is almost always in a state of deconstruction and reconstruction, based on socially mediated discourse. Thus, knowledge is not innate to the self; it is a social construction of the consciousness that finds expression through language as co-constructed in relationship with others (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Within the qualitative research tradition, therefore, knowledge about social phenomena is created when the researcher and the researched engage in a collaborative, interpretative, knowledge-building process. This perspective is in stark contrast to the value-free objectivist science espoused by adherents of Enlightenment philosophy (e.g., positivism), in which the researcher-participant relationship is dichotomized with the researcher placed in the privileged position of knower.

In qualitative research, conversely, researchers and participants are collaboratively positioned: the researcher, as the research instrument, is neither an “objective, distanced

observer” (Langley, 2015, p. 82) nor a passive collector or recorder of data. It is now widely accepted that because researchers are inescapably part of the social world they wish to understand and are influenced by their environments, all research is value-laden and context-dependent; the researcher’s own preconceptions, beliefs, assumptions, and position influence the research process (Denzin, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Padgett, 1998; Seidman, 2006). Likewise, participants are not passive providers of information, but are instead stakeholders (or “experts”; see J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 135) who have an active interest in the outcomes of the research (Seidman, 2006). The implication of this collaborative process on knowledge construction in qualitative research is that there is no one truth, but a multiplicity of truths. No universal or objective knowledge, but a perspectival account of reality.

As the above formulation indicates, it is not presumed that any value-free observation, insight, or knowledge can be fully apprehended by researchers; instead, it is understood that a “discovered reality” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 524) is jointly constructed by researchers and participants, and interpreted in light of the historical, temporal, cultural, and structural contexts within which we make sense of our experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Shkedi, 2005; J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Furthermore, by construing the relationship between researchers and participants in cooperative/egalitarian terms, this holistic, person-centred approach advocates that researchers account for the influence of power in the research process through the practice of reflexivity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Indeed, central to any researcher-participant relationship is trust and openness; the combination of these values with the researcher’s reflexivity can help facilitate depth and richness of the life-world, as recounted by participants with experience of the phenomenon under investigation.

Implicit in the above analysis, moreover, is that the ontological underpinnings of qualitative research as regards the nature of social reality is constructionism; this relativist perspective can be compared to the objectivism of quantitative research, which espouses a fixed view of reality (Shkedi, 2005), independent of human experiences. Instead, the constructivist paradigm holds that reality is socially constructed and contextually contingent, based on an agreed-upon pattern of truth claims; therefore, “what is ‘real’ becomes relative to the specific location and people involved” (Glesne, 2006, p. 6). Constructivists also believe that there can be multiple realities, with no one more superior or privileged than another. They also accept as valid that social reality is knowable through experience and action. Understood in the above sense, the role of research is not, in the qualitative framework, to identify a single objective truth about the world (Golafshani, 2003). In fact, this is generally considered to be inconsistent with the qualitative philosophical grounding, since the constructivist philosophy is based on the idea that there are multiple, socially constructed truths that are dependent on the lived experience of the individual (Madill, Jordan, & Shirley, 2000). The role of research in the qualitative paradigm is to describe multiple perspectives, interpret situations and findings, and provide a base for building theory (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Although I embrace the epistemological and ontological premises of qualitative research, that our knowledge of the world and understanding about the nature of social reality cannot be studied outside of their experiential contexts, the paradigm’s ontological reference to *multiple realities* need to be interrogated and problematized especially in social-justice-oriented research such as the current project. Specifically, the suggestion that all accounts of realities are valid neglect that some narratives (e.g., dominant-group stock stories about the nature and veracity of human relations) may be pejorative of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, or religion. Accepting all

stories as equal, moreover, creates difficulty when responding to situations rooted in injustice (e.g., racism). Such acceptance may blind us to the reality that whereas truth claims and knowledge as conceived are products of social discourse, individual stories take shape within a powerful sociohistorical and political background (Code, 1995).

Developing from this perspective, then, the current research follows the lead of critical race theorists and queer crit scholars. These scholars, of whom I count myself one, have a commitment to bringing to the fore the phenomenological, counternarrative accounts of gay men of colour that are different in content, focus, and form from those found in contemporary Canadian society. Instead, we seek the effects, consequences, and concrete ways racism plays out in and within a predominantly White GLB community.

With the above in mind, and considering that the question and aim of this research was to gain an understanding about the experiences of and coping responses to White racism among gay men of colour, a qualitative method of inquiry was judged most appropriate. The efficacy of qualitative methodologies as means for researching the multilayered and complex experiences of GLB people of colour has been well documented. American and Canadian research that looked at the experience of stigma and discrimination related to race and sexual orientation, for example, point to the value of qualitative research with this population, particularly among MSM of colour.

Despite this recognition, however, only a limited number of American and Canadian studies have sought to gain the perspectives and/or validate the experiences of GLB people of colour as they pertain to the social oppression of racism and the group's coping responses to the effects of racism-related stress. According to a study from the United States, while much knowledge has been gained over the years about the experience of MSM of colour with racism

and homophobia, “less is known about how members of these groups mitigate the impact that racism and homophobia can have on their lives” (K.-H. Choi et al., 2011, p. 153). Writing in a Canadian context, Giwa and Greensmith (2012) have similarly argued that while the preponderance of studies on HIV/AIDS with gay and bisexual men of colour are important, due to the endemic nature of the disease among this population, the enormous attention paid to the issue has been to the detriment of other critical considerations such as the social oppression of racism.

Taken together, it may be inferred from the findings of these American and Canadian studies that there is a need for more empirically based research on the varied experiences embodied by GLB people of colour, and among gay men of colour in particular, that goes beyond the current disease/deficit focus pervasive in academic literature. This gap in knowledge and the call for more comprehensive research about the lived experience of gay men of colour propels my investigation of how these men negotiate experiences of racism through exploring their coping responses to race-based discrimination. Adopting a qualitative methodology in the present study thus has the benefit of offering a rich, detailed understanding of participants’ perspectives of their lived experiences, outside of what could be achieved using a quantitative methodology.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: An Approach to Research

Phenomenology, as defined by van Manen (1990), is the “study of the lifeworld—the world as we immediately experience it pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or reflect on it” (p. 9; see also Husserl, 1970; Schutz & Luckmann, 1973). That is, phenomenology aims at a recollective account of human experiential meanings of lived

experience, grounded in considering the intentionality of social actions as meaningful to the actors (Bryman, 2008).

The essence of human experience is the underlying structure of experiential phenomena. A number of phenomenological approaches exist for explicating this essence, including reflective and transcendental phenomenology, dialogical phenomenology, empirical phenomenology, existential phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology, and social phenomenology (Creswell, 1998). Each of these methods has slightly different approaches to the practice of phenomenological research. As well, each emphasizes different philosophical assumptions regarding how individuals consciously make sense of their lived experience both autonomously and in social interactions with others. I have employed IPA as the chosen approach for conducting research with gay men of colour about their coping responses to the experience of racism.

IPA is a well-established method of qualitative inquiry in health psychology (Palmer, Larkin, de Visser, & Fadden, 2010; J. A. Smith, 2011; J. A. Smith et al., 2009; Tomkins & Eatough, 2010). Notwithstanding IPA's psychological foundation, the approach has wide applicability beyond its field of origin and has been adopted by researchers in related disciplines of human, social, and health sciences (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). The method has been found suitable for addressing a wide range of research topics. In an article evaluating the contribution of IPA over a 12-year period (1996 to 2008), J. A. Smith (2011) reported that 293 empirical studies had been published; the majority originated from the United Kingdom (UK). Seventy-one of these publications appeared in 2008 alone and, in that same year, 11 papers originated from outside the UK. Five of the non-UK papers were from United States. Only three were from Canada, and it is important to note that the discipline of the Canadian publications was not social

work. Thus, the use of IPA in this study would be an important contribution to the field of social work education, research, and practice.

There are several reasons why the qualitative phenomenological approach of IPA, which aims to methodically and assiduously reflect on everyday experience, is appropriate for the current research study. First, IPA has a commitment to explore the personal and social world, in order to better understand how people make sense of major or significant life experiences (J. A. Smith et al., 2009), such as racism. Phenomenologically speaking, IPA is concerned with examining people's experience in its own terms; as such, it eschews any effort "to fix experience in predefined or overly abstract categories" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 1), a concern that, to use a Husserlian coinage, harkens back to the need for phenomenologists to go back to the things themselves.

Second, as an interpretative-hermeneutics project, IPA emphasizes the situated and interpretative dimension of the experiential grounding of knowledge claims. This perspective acknowledges that humans are sense-making beings and that information gleaned by researchers from research participants represents the latter's attempt at making sense of their lived experience. Equally, the overlapping, relational, and dynamic aspect of IPA research suggests that researchers working from this approach engage in a process of "double hermeneutic" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003)—they are endeavouring to make sense of participants who are at the same time busily making sense of their individual and/or group experiences. Thus, by virtue of its epistemological and ontological positions, IPA promotes the expression and authority of participants' voices on their own terms, while simultaneously acknowledging the centrality of researchers in the phenomenological inquiry.

Third, the qualitative method of IPA is favoured in this research, since the research is concerned with individual-group understanding and interpretation of subjective experiences of racism and related coping responses. Under IPA, the investigation of human experience is situated within a sociocultural context in which a phenomenon occurs, thus enabling an in-depth knowledge about the contextual factors at play in an individual's life. IPA is well suited for investigating complex human issues, especially those found among people marginalized or excluded from traditional methods of research. Writing about the use of IPA in research on sex and sexuality, for example, J. A. Smith et al. (2009) argued that IPA can call into question understandings that could lead to the othering, medicalizing, and pathologizing of people and their behaviours (p. 143). IPA is particularly apt for studying the experience of gay men of colour, since it can challenge monolithic understandings of oppression based on sexual orientation. In the case of participants in this study, moreover, IPA invites opportunities for the discovery of multiplicity of truth claims and perspectives without insisting on a universal account of reality.

Fourth, my rationale for using IPA has to do with its *idiographic* phenomenological premise—that is, its knowledge of the particular. This sets it apart from *nomothetic* research (knowledge of the general), with its predilection for generalized claims about a given phenomenon or human behaviour. IPA seeks a detailed understanding of participants in the research project as a precondition for revealing something about them; at the same time, it allows the retrieval of their respective accounts within the data provided. In other words, an idiographic account offers “a detailed, nuanced analysis of particular instances of lived experience” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 37). From this analysis, it is possible to elucidate the convergences and divergences of a shared experience within the group and across the groups being examined prior

to any general claims being made about the particular phenomenon. Thus, J. A. Smith et al. (2009) have suggested that “in a good IPA study, it should be possible to parse the account both for shared themes, and for the distinctive voices and variations on those themes” (p. 38).

IPA’s idiographic sensibility can be seen as operating on two distinct yet interrelated levels. In the first instance, there is a commitment to detail and depth of analysis; at this level, the researcher’s primary concern is to get as much thickened/detailed account of the lived experience as possible, believing that the richness of a participant’s shared narrative will allow for a deeper analysis than would be possible in nonidiographic, noninductive research. In the second instance, IPA researchers strive to comprehend how those with experience of a particular phenomenon understand it; in the context of this study, the question to be asked is: how do gay men of colour perceive and cope with the experience of racism both individually and as a group? Through a detailed and systematic analysis, the IPA researcher is able to facilitate the appearance of the phenomenon as understood from the point of view of individual and group participants.

Fifth and lastly, the value of IPA in conducting social science research with lesbian and gay men has been demonstrated in the academic literature, particularly in the UK. Researchers, there, for example, have used IPA to examine sexual health decision making among cisgendered men in same-sex romantic relationships (Flowers, Smith, Sheeran, & Beail, 1997); to understand the impact of HIV antibody testing on HIV-risk management among gay men (Flowers, Duncan, & Frankis, 2000); and to study decision processes of planned lesbian parenting (Touroni & Coyle, 2002). However, a search of extant Canadian literature reveals that with the exception of Giwa and Greensmith’s (2012) study, which focused on the perceptions of race relations and racism among gay and queer social service providers of colour in Toronto, Canada, no published studies have yet applied the theoretical and methodological approach of IPA to exploring the

impact of racism on the lives of gay men of colour. In fact, no studies have systematically broached the topic of how GLB people of colour in general and gay men of colour in particular cope with personal and/or group experiences of racism. Therefore, this study hopes to fill this gap in the literature and contribute to the conversation on how gay men of colour negotiate and survive everyday experiences of racism.

Design

This exploratory study utilized a cross-sectional, qualitative research design; participants represented a cross-section of the population of interest, with data collected at one point in time. Respondent selection was based on purposive homogenous sampling of participants with insight into the particular experience being researched.

Sample

Research sample. The study's sample population consisted of self-identified gay men of colour in the city of Ottawa. These men were given the opportunity to self-identify using language reflective of their self-concept, since men of colour who engage in same-sex relationships may not identify with mainstream Western sexual orientation constructs such as "gay." Thus, cultural variability in self-identification was taken into consideration. Beyond their multiple social group identities, the men were asked about and identified with various relationship statuses, including being in relationships with partners of different ethnoracial backgrounds, such as White men. They also identified as HIV negative or positive, and perceived themselves to have different levels of connection to the predominantly White GLB community of Ottawa.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria. To participate in the study, a participant had to: (a) identify as gay/bisexual, or as otherwise attracted to and/or participating in a same-sex

relationship, if alternative terms to the word *gay* or *bisexual* was preferred, or as having undergone sex reassignment or gender confirmation surgery (i.e., female-to-male), with an exclusive attraction to men or toward both men and women; (b) be 18 years of age or over; (c) belong to any one of the four largest ethnoracial or visible minority groups in Ottawa: Black, East Asian, South Asian, or Arab/Middle Eastern; (d) understand and be comfortable speaking English in an individual or focus group setting; (e) be a permanent or former resident⁷ (i.e., lived for one year or more) of the city of Ottawa; and (f) have individually encountered or experienced racism within the GLB community of Ottawa.⁸ Individuals meeting these study criteria, as determined during the eligibility screening process, were engaged in an informed consent process; the completion and submission of a consent form was a prerequisite for enrolment in the study.

Importantly, the inclusion of the English language proficiency criterion was not intended to silence the valuable information non-English-speaking (e.g., French-speaking) gay men of colour might have shared about their experience of racism and their coping strategies. However, because focus groups constituted the primary method of data collection, and their quality rested on individual group members' being able to understand and interpret the spoken words of other participants, it was significant that communication occurred in one identifiable language—English. Information from the Statistics Canada (2007, 2012, 2013) Ottawa Community Profile data indicated that, regardless of ethnic or racial background, English was the dominant mother tongue language among Ottawans, and the language spoken most often at home and work. The

⁷ Permanent resident as defined here referred to someone whose principal establishment or permanent home was in the city of Ottawa, and to which, when absent, he would return to.

⁸ Because of the social nature of the phenomenon being investigated, participants were likely to know or have witnessed other gay men of colour (e.g., friends) being discriminated against. Notwithstanding the occurrence-rich content of these encounters, this study proceeded from the standpoint of the individual participant, with discussion grounded in the concerns of other members in the group (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

fact that individuals from the target sample population would be most conversant in English made it the language of choice for the research study. A related decision to exclude non-English-speaking individuals from the research study had to do with the researcher not having the capacity or resources to transcribe or interpret non-English qualitative texts (i.e., transcripts).

Similar to the language requirement for inclusion in the study, it was equally important that research participants (excluding English-speaking former residents) maintained current established residency or domicile in the city of Ottawa for the period the data were being collected. The rationale for this residency requirement had to do with the close proximity of Ottawa, in the province of Ontario, to the city of Hull/Gatineau, located in the French-speaking province of Quebec. Although this proximity makes it easy for people to move freely between two provinces for play, work and/or to live, in the context of this research study, such border flexibility could have resulted in the recruitment of individuals with French language capabilities and whose primary or permanent residence was not in Ottawa. The advantage of this residency requirement was that it ensured that relevant study participants were recruited for the research.

Sampling Selection Strategy

The sampling method for this research was a two-stage sampling approach, integrating purposive sampling as the first stage, followed by snowball sampling until thematic/data saturation had been reached. In line with IPA requirements for a homogenous sample (J. A. Smith et al., 2009), participants were recruited based on a number of shared characteristics—that is, on the basis of homogeneity in background but not necessarily in attitudes—and aforementioned inclusion criteria. Assuring homogeneity of the study population was important as it had the benefit of increasing participants' comfort level with each other, thus promoting open communication about the topic at hand.

Purposive sampling method. The most common and important qualitative research method is purposive sampling (Welman & Kruger, 1999). This method involves the selection of individual participants based on specific characteristics that are desirable for the purpose of research (Creswell, 2003): “Such sampling is essentially strategic and entails an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling” (Bryman, 2008, p. 458). The use of the purposive sampling technique is fundamentally required for successful phenomenological research in which individuals will have experience of the phenomenon under discussion (Pascal, 2010); and it is demanded in phenomenological research such as this, which is committed to understanding how gay men of colour make sense of their experiences of racism and their coping responses. Thus, purposive sampling was highly appropriate for sampling in this study.

While purposive sampling is intended to select individuals who have a specific knowledge base regarding the research, it should not be conducted using a cavalier approach. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), guidelines for selection of participants include that they should be “knowledgeable about the cultural arena or situation or experience being studied; willing to talk; and representative of the range of points of view” (p. 66). Ultimately, however, the required sample characteristics should be firmly set, in order to ensure that the sample is selected effectively. The above reasoning was taken into consideration in conceptualizing this research, resulting in the identification of study variables which participants had to satisfy in order to be included in the research sample (see “Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria,” above).

Although the use of purposive sampling is a good method of identifying participants for a phenomenological study, there may be a problem obtaining sufficient participants to achieve saturation of data, particularly in cases where the population may be sparse or unwilling to

participate (Porter, 1999). This issue can be particularly problematic when the population is hidden and/or diffuse, as was the case in this research. To overcome potential problems with obtaining a sufficient sample to achieve data saturation, purposive sampling was the first stage in the study; it was then expanded, using snowball sampling with the purposively selected participants from the first stage representing entry points into a larger community/network of potential participants within the GLB community of Ottawa. In other words, the selection of initial participant seeds through a number of recruitment methods enabled the identification of additional participants who met the criteria for inclusion in the study “on the basis of links to the initial case” (Neuman & Robson, 2009, p. 138).

Snowball sampling method. Snowball (or network/reputational) sampling is described by Neuman and Robson (2009) as a multistage technique involving the identification of initial research participants who then recruit additional study subjects from within their networks until the desired study sample size has been reached (see Figure 4). As a nonprobabilistic sampling technique, the snowball sampling method is based on the observation that, even though the researcher may have difficulty in obtaining access to a hidden population such as the study population, initial contacts with the purposively sampled participants from the first stage will increase the potentially available sample because these participants will know other members of the population. This approach made the difficult-to-reach population that was expected ideal for snowball sampling as a second stage, with the potential to increase the researcher’s access to information-rich key informants.

Because there is no sampling frame from which to enumerate the total city of Ottawa population of self-identified gay men of colour, I began the snowball sampling method by identifying a participant who met the criteria for participation in the study. The same inclusion

criteria were applied to those selected via snowball sampling as during the initial purposive sampling round, thus ensuring that the sample remained consistent throughout the recruitment process (Check & Schutt, 2012). I then asked this participant to pass on information regarding the study to others within his networks; this first round increased the number of participants available (Check & Schutt, 2012). I continued this process until sufficient data saturation had been reached (Creswell, 2003). As such, the snowball sampling technique was ideal for increasing the number of participants in the research beyond “the few members of the target population” (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002, p. 166) that I was able to locate through my own contacts or recruitment efforts.

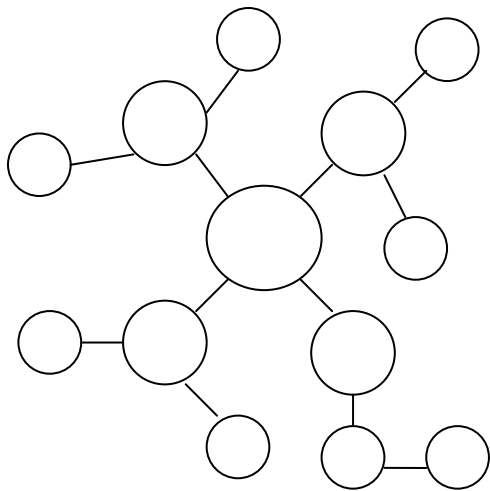


Figure 4. Sample sociogram drawing for participant recruitment.

Recruitment

According to J. A. Smith et al. (2009), establishing access or rapport with key gatekeepers is crucial to the viability of an IPA research project with a difficult-to-reach population. For the current project, attempts were made to recruit participants with support from

both ethnospecific and mainstream GLB community organizations, and groups in the study area (see Appendix A, for a list of these organizations and groups). GLB-friendly health and social service organizations were also approached and asked to pass on recruitment information to gay men of colour who used their services, in order to encourage their involvement in the research. In both cases, an agency recruitment letter (Appendix B), accompanied by a study information letter addressed to potential participants (Appendix C), was widely distributed by email and in person to individuals, organizations, and groups that agreed to promote and/or refer eligible gay men of colour for the study. Consistent with the ethics of social research, the latter document outlined the objectives of the research; what participants would be asked to do, along with an estimated completion time; who would have access to the research data, and how that would be managed; and gave the researcher's contact information.

In addition to the above recruitment strategies, study information was advertised through word of mouth and publicized on Facebook and in online chatrooms (i.e., gaycanada.com, gayottawa.com, and [craigslist Ottawa](http://craigslist.com)). Furthermore, recruitment flyers (Appendix D) were circulated by email to the listservs of local college and universities campus groups, as well as to professional and social groups working with and for members of the GLB community (e.g., Ottawa Police GLBT Liaison Committee and the Public Service Pride Network). Also, outreach was done at social venues frequented by gay men, such as night clubs, bath houses, and the GLB bookstore. Recruitment information was also communicated to the news media, which resulted in my live appearance on *All In A Day*, a radio talk show broadcast in the greater Ottawa, West Quebec, and Kingston areas. Recruitment through word of mouth, Facebook, and listservs were the most successful.

Despite extensive recruitment effort, the number of participants recruited into the study was low. However, the small number was ideal in the present study because of the perceived sensitivity of the topic and my interest in how participants made sense of their experience at both the idiographic/intrasubjective and group/intersubjective levels. Moreover, as J. A. Smith et al. (2009) have pointed out, “it is important not to see . . . higher numbers as being indicative of ‘better’ work” (p. 52), as smaller-sized groups are sufficient to generate discussions that would be unmanageable in a larger focus-group context. They also allow for greater contributions from individual participants; provide for insight into detailed personal and/or collective account of the phenomenon under investigation; minimize opportunity for side conversations; and create an environment more conducive to sharing than would be possible in a larger group (Bryman, 2008; D. L. Morgan, 1997; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009; D. A. Peters, 1993; J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

Eligibility screening. Prior to study enrolment, gay men of colour who demonstrated interest in the study underwent an initial eligibility screening process, to determine that they indeed met the study’s criteria. An eligibility screening form (Appendix E) was developed for this purpose, with the options of being completed in person, over the phone, or by other means convenient to the prospective participant and agreed to by me. Regardless of the screening method chosen, gay men of colour who contacted me about their interest in the study were asked for their verbal informed consent before they could have their eligibility to participate determined. They were also informed of the project’s voluntary nature should they wish to withdraw before or during the screening process. Once verbal consent had been obtained, a brief description of the research study was provided.

Potential participants were then asked a series of questions contained on the eligibility screening form, to determine their eligibility for the research study. At no point during the

eligibility screening process were individuals made aware of their eligibility status. A decision was made and communicated to interested participants once all questions on the eligibility screening form had been asked and answered. Only those meeting the study's criteria for participation were invited to complete an informed consent form. If an individual did not meet the study's criteria, he was thanked for his time and no other information was collected.

Informed consent. Gay men of colour who met the eligibility screening requirements and were still interested in participating in the study proceeded to the informed consent stage. Unlike the eligibility screening methods discussed above, the men were required to complete the informed consent process in person, at a place and time convenient to them and to me.

On meeting, the goals of the research and possible topic areas for exploration during the individual and group interviews were discussed with the men. As well, owing to the conversational nature of individual interviews and focus groups, the men were informed of the potential for additional topics beyond those mentioned to come up. Men who expressed discomfort talking about personal experiences of racism or how they had coped with it were encouraged to reconsider their participation in the research.

Written informed consent was then obtained before enrolling any participant in the study. The consent form (Appendix F) included, among other things, a discussion of the principles of voluntary participation and withdrawal, and an assurance of anonymity. As J. A. Smith et al. (2009) pointed out, "anonymity is all that qualitative researchers can offer. . . . To say that something is 'confidential' is to say that no one else will see it, and this is not the case" (p. 53). Therefore, to assure anonymity of research participants and minimize the likelihood of individual and/or focus group responses being linked back to any one participant, personal information contained in the consent form were kept separately from the transcripts comprising the research

data. The completed forms were stored in a locked filing cabinet that was accessible only to me and, on request, could be made available to research members involved in the study, such as the doctoral supervisory committee. For this study, however, all consent forms were completed at the start of the scheduled interview.

Ethical Considerations

Institutional Ethics Requirements and Conformity

In addition to the ethical principles for social research outlined above and detailed more explicitly in the informed consent form, this study is equally bound by the ethics requirements of its home institution. The Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) at York University adheres to the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) on ethical conduct for research. As part of the ethics review process for research involving human participants, graduate students doing original research to fulfill their degree requirements are required to successfully complete the Tri-Council online tutorial and to receive ethics approval from the Institutional Review Board at York University, prior to undertaking their research study. I completed the Tri-Council online tutorial on May 17, 2011. A certificate of completion is included as Appendix G.

As a next step, Thesis/Dissertation Research Proposal Submission (TD1) and FGS ethics review protocol (TD2) forms were completed and submitted along with the protocol package to the Graduate Program Office in the School of Social Work. The protocol package consisted of the TD1 and TD2, the informed consent document, the TCPS tutorial certificate, and other relevant documents, including the dissertation proposal that had been reviewed and approved by my dissertation supervisory committee. The completed protocol package was reviewed by the graduate program director for completeness before being forwarded to FGS for a secondary review.

A third and final review was undertaken by the chair and subcommittee of the human participants research subcommittee, in the Office of Research Ethics, at York University. The entire ethics review process lasted approximately two months, at which time a decision was rendered on the submitted protocol package, with results communicated to the student researcher, FGS, and the graduate program assistant and/or director. The ethics letter of approval is included as Appendix H.

Data Collection

Setting

The research study was conducted in the census division of Ottawa. After Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, and Winnipeg, Ottawa/Gatineau is the seventh most populous census metropolitan area (CMA) in Canada with a percentage of 19.2 visible minorities (Chui & Flanders, 2013). Within Ontario, the Ottawa/Gatineau CMA is second (at 22.8 percent) for its proportion of visible minority population, behind Toronto (at 47 percent; Kozo, 2013). According to the 2011 National Household Survey and Ottawa Community Profile, the top visible minority groups in the study area are Blacks, East Asians (in particular, Chinese), South Asians, and Arabs or people of Middle Eastern descent (Statistics Canada, 2013). The City's GLB community profile reflects this ethnoracial diversity, which enabled a broad analysis of the experience of gay men of colour with racism.

Arabs, like other ethnic and racial groups mentioned, form a classification and demographic category used by Canada's national statistics agency to refer to Canadian residents from Middle Eastern countries like Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Iraq, Algeria, Palestine, and similar places of origin. Although ethnic and racial classification systems provides a means for the social, economic, political, and cultural organization of society in a racially stratified world,

there are certain limitations that must be borne in mind. Chief among them is that the use of broad ethnoracial categories overlooks within-group similarities and variances, since the focus is on differences between and across ethnoracial groups. The grouping of people into socially constructed homogenous categories, moreover, denies agency to those who otherwise do not identify with the racial category they have been asked to “fit” into. Lastly, ethnoracial classifications have the potential to reify biological determinism arguments of racial superiority and hierarchy, where Whiteness forms the standard by which other racial groups are measured. Importantly, my use of these concepts and categories is not without reservation for the limitations and challenges they pose for research as described above. For the purpose of this study, however, the reference to Arabs and similarly related ethnoracial taxonomies is consistent with the concepts’ broad application in the Canadian context.

As a final point, it is worth mentioning that the selection of Ottawa as the study site is a unique departure from other research that has explored the experiences of gay men of colour in Canada. In most cases, and not surprisingly, these studies were concentrated primarily in the city of Toronto, despite the increasingly growing ethnic and racial diversity of Canadian cities generally. In a comparable discussion on the methodological challenges and strategies of conducting research with GLB people of colour in the United States, DeBlaere et al. (2010) noted the direct impact of a high concentration of GLB research on people of colour in metropolitan cities, stating that the

. . . repeated sampling of individuals who are out, active in [GLB] communities, and live in urban settings . . . reveals limited empirical understanding of the experiences of [GLB] people of colour who live in rural areas, are less out, and/or have limited access to or involvement in [GLB] communities or social groups. (p. 340)

Extrapolating from and situating these authors' point within the specific context of research with gay men of colour in Canada, it is necessary for academic research to move beyond the nucleus of Toronto and similar leading cities in order to increase national discussion of issues faced by this population and for researchers and practitioners to have a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges encountered by racialized members of the GLB community.

Methods

The two primary qualitative methods of data collection used in the current study were focus groups and individual interviews. A description of each method follows, preceded by a discussion of their respective site selection strategies. Participants also completed a self-administered questionnaire on their sociodemographic characteristics.

Site Selection Strategies

Focus groups. In preparing to conduct focus group interviews, a critical piece of the planning decided on early was where the group discussions would take place. Making site selection decision is an important aspect of the planning process. I needed to consider factors such as the ability of participants to get to the focus group site and their comfort at the site, as well as those of immediate concern to me, such as making sure that discussions yielded the data needed for analysis. A failure to do so might result in a less desirable outcome. As D. L. Morgan (1997) pointed out, "the site must balance the needs of participants and the needs of the researcher" (p. 54).

Accordingly, for the purpose of this research study, group interviews took place at a neutral, specialized research data collection agency in Ottawa, Opinion Search. I chose this site because it would be quiet, allowing for accurate, disruption-free recording of group discussions compared to either mainstream or GLB-specific community centres where distractions such as

people attending community programs might be more difficult to control. Secondly, I chose the facility because it would be comfortable for participants. Opinion Search had three spacious, renovated rooms designed specifically for focus groups. The rooms could easily be arranged into different styles, to suit the needs of the research—small and intimate living room, boardroom, or classroom. For the current study, the rooms were arranged into U-shaped seating, and came equipped with digital audiorecording and a fixed unobtrusive ceiling mounted camera for videorecording. I sat at the front end of the table.

Lastly, in making a decision about site selection, the issue of accessibility was taken into consideration. Opinion Search was conveniently located in downtown Ottawa and was accessible by locally operated OC Transpo's rail and regular commuter systems or taxis, in addition to being wheelchair accessible. Taken together, these factors made the chosen site ideal for conducting focus groups with gay men of colour.

Individual interviews. The same factors considered in the selection of the focus group site helped to guide the selection of the one-on-one interview locations. In agreement with research participants, two interviews were conducted at the Ottawa Public Library's main branch, two in the counselling room of Pink Triangle Services (PTS) of Ottawa,⁹ and one at the Centretown Community Health Centre (CCHC), for a total of five interviews. In all cases, I had access to a noise-free, private room in which to interview and audiorecord the participants' responses. These locations were centrally located, mainly in the downtown core of the city, and accessible by public transit. Excluding the CCHC, a modest fee was paid for the use of rental facilities at the Ottawa Public Library and Pink Triangle Services of Ottawa.

⁹ The Pink Triangle Services of Ottawa changed its name to *Kind Space in October 2015. The former name is used in the dissertation for context sensitivity.

Sociodemographic Questionnaire and Qualitative Data Methods

Sociodemographic data questionnaire. Responses to a sociodemographic data questionnaire was solicited from the participants on a range questions including, but not limited to: gender, age, country of origin, socioeconomic status (i.e., individual or household income) education, sexual orientation, relationship status, HIV serostatus, ethnoracial identity, and length of time in Canada. The information provided was aggregated to provide an accurate representation of the study's sample characteristics. A copy of the sociodemographic data questionnaire can be found in Appendix I.

Focus group data collection method. Focus groups, as defined by Wilkinson (2004), are “a way of collecting qualitative data, which—essentially—involves engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion (or discussions), ‘focused’ around a particular topic or set of issues” (p. 177). According to D. L. Morgan (1997), focus groups can be used as a self-contained source of data collection or as adjunct to another method. For this study, they were used in the former sense, to answer the research questions. The focus groups gave participants the opportunity to consider their own and each other's experiences in a safe and supportive environment, making this a unique feature of the research approach and technique. As D. L. Morgan (1997) has pointed out, “the process of sharing and comparing among participants is . . . one of the most valuable aspects of self-contained focus groups” (p. 21).

According to Onwuegbuzie et al., (2009), “focus groups are less threatening to many research participants, and this environment is helpful for participants to discuss perceptions, ideas, opinions, and thoughts” (p. 2; see also Krueger & Casey, 2000). More than just about perceptions and/or opinions, moreover, focus groups are a form of interview that emphasizes social interaction between participants that share a specific set of characteristics and experiences

(Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009), as selected using the sampling methods discussed above. In both conceptual and technical terms then, focus groups are intended to develop and interpret knowledge not only from exchange between the researcher and the participant, but also between participants, building a social consensus—or sometimes failing to build this consensus, which can be illuminating in and of itself (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009).

The process of the focus group can thus be described as follows:

Focus groups are groups of unrelated individuals that are formed by a researcher and then led in group discussion of a topic for one to two hours. The researcher asks specific questions and guides the discussion to ensure that group members answer these questions, but the resulting information is qualitative and relatively unstructured. (Check & Schutt, 2012, p. 205)

The researcher does not actively participate in the group discussion, but facilitates conversation and generally allows research participants to take their own direction (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Adopting this stance in the current study meant that a free, open exchange of ideas and discussion on topics related to the research questions was the result (Neuman & Robson, 2009). Using this method, therefore, added depth to an area into which there has so far been little research in Canada.

Focus groups in IPA research. Focus groups are not immediately a congruent method for data collection in IPA research. Some scholars either express skepticism about the method's ability to yield a true idiographic account of a phenomenon (see Dowling, 2007) or suggest a closer examination of the approach's compatibility with group-generated data (Langdrige, 2007; J. A. Smith, 2004). As noted above, meaning making within a focus group is often based not on the individual cognitive process, but is instead a social process of integration and contextualization, within the group awareness, of a given concept. To some degree, this is

seemingly inconsistent with the goals of phenomenological research, which is to achieve, at least at the first order of analysis, an understanding of the individual's point of view on its own (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009).

Although this observation represents the commonly held position for doing phenomenological research, it is not universal. A philosophical consideration based on Heidegger's interpretative phenomenology, for example, does not demand that the views expressed by individuals should arise in isolation; instead, the interpretation process demands interaction between the individual and his or her engagement with the world (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009; Palmer et al., 2010; Pascal, 2010). The social phenomenology approach developed by Schutz, moreover, offers an even more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon as a shared though subjective social reality, rather than a perspective that is developed in isolation (Lock & Strong, 2010).

As the above comments would suggest, then, the effectiveness of the focus group method in phenomenological research depends on the tradition of phenomenology in use (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009). For instance, in a traditional Husserlian phenomenological approach, "the intention is to adopt a detached position where prior assumptions can be suspended" (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009, p. 666). Such detachment would mean that the use of the focus group interview, in which individuals' own positions may be swayed by the social involvement and exchange of ideas, may interrupt the formation of a detached view; thus, this is not an effective approach in the case of "pure" Husserlian phenomenology (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009). However, in Heidegger's view of phenomenology, it is assumed that the viewpoints of the phenomena are already "contaminated" or sociorelationally constructed; thus, the use of the focus group data collection approach is not detrimental to the outcomes of the research

(Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009; Palmer et al., 2010). Focus groups, in this sense, allow individuals to be actively “engaged in the reflection, elaboration, and sharing of experience” (Tomkins & Eatough, 2010, p. 255). These can be considered part of the phenomenological understanding of a given object that are fundamentally socially constructed (Wilkinson, 1998).

Given the foundation of this research study in IPA, the deeply individual as well as shared nature of the phenomenon under investigation, and the researcher’s interest in the interplay between individual and group aspects of participants’ experience, the use of a more interactive meaning-making process rather than the one-on-one interview method that is commonly used can be justified.

Focus group strategy. Between May and June of 2012, I conducted three focus group discussions or interviews with gay men of colour from three of the four major ethnoracial groups previously mentioned ($N = 8$; see Table 1 for a breakdown of focus groups completed).¹⁰ Participants were segmented, for data collection purposes, according to their racial and ethnic group. D. L. Morgan (1997) identified race among other variables, such as gender, as one of the most frequently considered elements in running mixed or segmented groups, noting that “racial differences in perspective could become an issue during group discussions” (p. 36). Therefore, a participant who self-identified as Black in the current study participated in a focus group with others from the same ethnoracial background. Organizing the focus groups in this manner provided a “rare opportunity to collect direct evidence on how the participants themselves understand their similarities and differences” (D. L. Morgan, 1997, pp. 20–21) as well as to

¹⁰ As many focus groups as possible were conducted to achieve within-group and across-group data saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), with three to six different focus groups supported as being adequate to achieve data redundancy (see Krueger, 1994; D. L. Morgan, 1997).

facilitate “analyses that examine differences in perspectives between groups” (D. L. Morgan, 1997, p. 35).

Segmenting participants by race and ethnicity was equally important, because these could have had a potential impact on data generated from the focus group discussions. According to Mizock, Harkins, and Morant (2011), “matching researcher and participant race may increase comfort levels in the research and increase participant satisfaction and disclosure” (para. 9). Because I identify as Black (from Nigeria), and as having previous experience conducting individual and focus group interviews with a similar target population, I facilitated the focus group with Black gay men. Although attempts were made to recruit moderators from the South Asian, East Asian, and Arab/Middle Eastern ethnoracial communities, difficulties in recruiting from these communities in general, and time constraints in particular, meant that I moderated these groups as well. This decision does not appear to have negatively impacted the research or the participants’ ability to discuss their experiences in sufficient detail.

For IPA studies using focus groups, the suggested number of participants per group is four or five (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 73). D. L. Morgan (1997) has argued for an even smaller number, similar to the size of the current study, noting that “small groups are more useful when the researcher desires a clear sense of each participant’s reaction to a topic simply because they give each participant more time to talk” (p. 42). Commenting on his own experience with focus groups, he remarked: “I have conducted groups of three highly involved participants that would have been unmanageable at size six, and I have led discussions in naturally occurring groups of 15 to 20” (p. 43). In two out of three instances, the Black and South Asian groups respectively had three participants, and only two in the East Asian group (despite confirmation of attendance, one participant did not show up for the scheduled focus group). Although it was difficult to

recruit from all four ethnoracial groups, this challenge was more pronounced in the case of participants from the East Asian and Arab/Middle Eastern population. In the latter respect, no focus group was held, as only two people showed interest; thus, they were interviewed individually.

Table 1
Completed Focus Groups

Participant	Race/ethnicity	Age group	Number in attendance
Mike	East Asian (Philippine)*	31	2
Tobey	East Asian (Philippine)Δ	26	(1 no-show)
Eddie	Black (Namibia)Δ△	21	
Philippe	Black (Burundi)	30	3
Kwame	Black (Ghana)Δ	31	(1 no-show)
Mr. M	South Asian/Indo-Guyanese (Guyana)Δ	41	
Anil	South Asian (India)*Δ	35	3
Dexter	South Asian (Pakistan/India)*Δ	27	

*Asterisk signifies that the participant was born in an Oceanic country or Canada, but self-identified as belonging to the specified ethnoracial minority group.

ΔTriangle denotes the participant's use of pseudonym. Participants who used their real names do not have a triangle.

△This participant was born in Namibia but grew up in another part of Africa, before arriving in Canada.

The exact dates and times of the focus group interviews were communicated to all participants two weeks in advance of the event, and reminder emails were sent closer to the date. To make sure that the focus groups ran smoothly, ground rules were established at the outset and agreed to by participants. This helped to ensure that everyone's voice was heard. During the focus groups, participants were given the option to select pseudonyms, which were used to track the stories and connections between comments. As part of an ethical research practice, I encouraged group participants to use their selected pseudonyms (or other nonidentifying pointers) when referring to themselves and each other during the discussion. By doing so, participants contributed to my effort to redact from the transcripts any identifying information that might have linked group members with their data. Not all participants chose to use a pseudonym, however; two preferred to use their real names. These participants' requests were

honoured, and accord with the conclusion reached by Grinyer (2002) that, if unquestioned, the orthodox research practice of allocating pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants who wish to identify with their real names can lead them to feel a loss of ownership over their stories.

Using D. L. Morgan's (1997) funnel strategy, "each group [began] with a less structured approach that emphasize[d] free discussion and then move[d] toward a more structured discussion of specific questions" (p. 41). The less-structured aspect of the strategy was achieved with the aid of a "discussion-starter question" (D. L. Morgan, 1997, p. 49) through which participants were asked about their interest in and experience with the topic of research inquiry, thus allowing for diversity of experience and perspective to emerge. By contrast, in the structured component of the interview, participants discussed and responded to study-specific research questions for which a higher level of moderator involvement was required.

For the above reason, it was critically important "to organize the discussion topics into a guide that [could be] follow[ed] in more or less the same order from group to group" (D. L. Morgan, 1997, p. 47). My supervisory committee subjected the unpiloted interview guide (Appendix J) to a review and critique, to determine its effectiveness and currency. Based on their feedback, adjustments were made before actual use. The interview guide contained key, overlapping research questions for discussion, accompanied with specific probes under each question. For the purpose of this study, it was used mainly to ensure continuity of dialogue among study participants, to ascertain that important study-related questions were asked and responded to fully, and to make sure that group conversations remained focused on the research topic. Its use, at least in the early stages of the focus group discussion—that is, during participants' response to the discussion-starter question—was not rigid, so that the participants' free flow of ideas, thoughts, and perspectives would not be interfered with.

It is important to clarify that in using a structured-type discussion format, the researcher's intention is not to elicit a formulaic yes/no response from participants, as in the quantitative approach. Quite the contrary, the type of questions asked are meant to encourage participants to tell and elaborate on their stories, in order to bring them back to the experiential meaning of events (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). In adopting a structured approach to interview questions, therefore, my aim was to facilitate the comparison of participants' responses within and across discussion groups, in order to answer the main research question (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Although research questions were standardized and asked in the order they appeared on the interview guide, with flexibility in mind, no choice of answers was given for participants to select from; instead, they were encouraged to share as much detailed response as was comfortable for them.

Each focus group lasted between one-and-a-half to two hours, the recommended length of time for a well-designed group interview (see D. L. Morgan, 1997; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009; Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996). The groups were audio- and videorecorded, with participants' permission; a copy of the videorecording form signed by participants is included as Appendix K. The data were transcribed by a professional transcription company, and transcribers were required to sign a confidentiality agreement (Appendix L). Audio-only files from the focus groups were uploaded to a secured file transfer protocol (FTP) site provided by the transcription company, and recordings were transcribed verbatim. I then edited the completed transcriptions for typographical and content errors using videorecordings from the focus group sessions. One of the advantages of videorecording is that it enables individual speakers to be identified. Also, it helps in relation to multiple speakers at the same time, something that is much harder to do with just an audiorecording (D. L. Morgan, 1997). Videorecordings of the interviews were not made

available to the transcription company. They continue to be secured in a locked cabinet in care of the researcher and will be used for future publications specific to the purpose for which they were collected. Light refreshments were provided at each focus group session. Participants were also provided with a \$30 honorarium in an opaque brown envelope, which I recorded on a payment sheet (Appendix M), as an expression of my gratitude and to cover any costs associated with their participation in the study.

Strengths and weaknesses of focus groups. As a uniquely qualitative form of data collection technique, focus groups provide substantial advantages, including interaction between members identifying some issues that might never arise between participants and interviewers in traditional phenomenological individual interviews, as well as the ability to gain access to significant amounts of research data in a limited amount of time (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; D. L. Morgan, 1997; J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Another advantage of these groups is that they reduce researcher bias in the interpretation process—an issue of consistent debate within the literature and practice on phenomenology (Finlay, 2009). Traditional phenomenological interviews have a potential for the interviewer, rather than the interviewee, to gradually dominate the conversation, leaving the output of the research more aligned with the researcher’s views than those of the participants (Seidman, 2006). Focus groups minimize this problem, because the discussion is directed to be between participants, rather than between researcher and participant. This is a significant advantage, since participants, for example, are able to act as checks and balances for each other by identifying factual errors or tempering extreme views. To help this process, the moderator can ask questions such as “What do others think?” or “Do others in the group agree?” The method also allows the moderator to offer participants the opportunity to say which issues they found most important in the group discussion, thereby engaging in data analysis. For

example, the facilitator might ask: “In all of the issues covered, which ones are most important for you?”

Focus groups do have a number of challenges that must be borne in mind. One practical challenge is data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The focus groups conducted for this study were audiorecorded to ensure accuracy of the content shared at both the review and transcription stages. The researcher’s dual role as data collector and group facilitator can result in a loss of the ability to create field notes (or, as in phenomenological research, engage in memoing/reflective writing; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). To address this challenge, and with the consent of research participants, I made the decision to videotape the sessions. I was then able to completely focus on the flow and content of the discussion, and to probe interesting responses with follow-up questions.

Another problem that can be encountered in the focus group research process is keeping the discussion on topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The focus group method is ideal for exploring issues that the researcher did not anticipate; however, by the same token, the discussion can get off-topic enough that it might not be useful for the research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The development and use of the interview guide addressed this problem. In line with D. L. Morgan’s (1997) cautious warning on the effective use of interview guides by moderators, the research instrument served as a “resource to maintain the balance between the researcher’s focus and the group’s discussion” (p. 48).

Sometimes one or more participants can dominate the conversation, thereby possibly skewing data generated from the session. Directly related to this issue is the phenomenon of groupthink, in which a participant expresses a position reflective of the larger group that may be in conflict with his own perspectives (Giwa et al., 2014; Janis, 1982). In these situations, efforts

were made to encourage each group member's participation, stressing the importance of their individual contribution to the research topic. For my part, as the moderator/interviewer, I endeavoured to use differences of perspectives to generate group discussions, making sure not to privilege any one view or position.

Individual interview strategy. Consistent with the above discussion, individual interviews were not initially conceptualized as an element of the study design. However, for the reasons discussed below, it became necessary to include this research technique as part of the data collection process. Individual interviews facilitated the participation of gay men of colour who otherwise would have been excluded from the study, and provided a means for methodological triangulation.

As a critical race scholar, I am committed to giving voice to socially marginalized groups like those being researched. I therefore consider it important for researchers to reflect on how their chosen methods might act as a barrier to participation, so that steps can be taken to counter these limitations during the planning and design of their studies. In the context of this specific research, because people can experience racism in many different ways, and be at different stages in their processing and negotiating of this experience, they might not always feel comfortable discussing the topic in a public forum. Accordingly, in this study, participants who preferred not to engage in group discussions but felt strongly about participating in the study, or whose limited availability precluded their participation in a scheduled focus group, were given the opportunity to meet with me for an individual interview. Likewise, research participants recruited into the study after the focus group for their ethnoracial community had been held, and those from an ethnoracial group that did not have enough participants for a separate focus group to be held, were interviewed individually.

In the end, three individual interviews were conducted between June and August of 2012, and two additional interviews in December 2014 ($N = 5$; see Table 2 for a list of individual interviews completed). For the entire time the study recruited participants, only two Arab/Middle Eastern participants showed interest. I also contacted the two participants (one East Asian and the other Black) that did not show up on the day of their focus group sessions to see if they still wanted to be interviewed. Only one new participant, an East Asian gay man who had not been enrolled in the study earlier, was recruited during this data collection phase by means of snowball sampling.

Table 2
Completed Individual Interviews

Participant	Race/ethnicity	Age group	Number in attendance
Maximus	Arab/Middle Eastern (Tunisia)* Δ	27	1
Ali	Arab/Middle Eastern (Syria) Δ	35	1
Al	East Asian (Thailand) Δ	27	1
Jordan	East Asian (Singapore) Δ	34	1
Justin	Black (Montreal)* Δ	46	1

*Asterisk signifies that the participant was born in Canada, but self-identified as belonging to the specified ethnoracial minority group.

Δ Triangle denotes the participant's use of pseudonym.

The steps followed in the focus group were repeated in the individual interviews. Participants were sent a reminder email with the date, time, and location of their one-on-one interviews. As was done in the focus groups, before an interview could start, I reviewed the consent form with each participant and obtained their individual consent to participate in the study. They were then asked to identify a pseudonym to protect their identity and identify them within the study. All five participants chose not to be identified with their real names. The research questions in the interview guide were explored using a combination of semistructured and structured interviewing formats. Interviews were audiorecorded and subjected to the same transcription protocol detailed above for the focus groups. However, they were not

videorecorded, given the one-on-one nature of the interviews, which did not present the same data complexity as the focus group method. Each interview lasted between one and two hours, and participants were provided with a \$30 honorarium in an opaque brown envelope.

Focus groups and individual interviews as self-contained methods. As already mentioned, focus groups and individual interviews comprised the primary data collection methods for the study. These methods were employed as self-contained means for collecting research data. It was not the goal of the individual interviews, for example, to supplement the data from the focus groups in the belief that the latter were inadequate to count as a sufficient or legitimate body of knowledge (D. L. Morgan, 1997). For this reason, and as will be seen in the forthcoming chapter, the findings of the study were presented separately. Presenting the findings in this way is consistent with the understanding of these methods as independent data collection techniques, which made triangulation possible. Also, combining the findings would risk obscuring the group discursive dynamics of focus groups, undermining the socially shared meaning making process of experience. Finally, there was a practical dimension to my decision to present the data autonomously. I wanted to be sure that the findings were clearly discernible, with significant data from both methods highlighted. By arranging the findings in this manner, it was easy to see where the data shared or did not share many characteristics (for a visual representation, see Appendices N and P). Ultimately, this approach helped to enhance confidence in trustworthiness of the findings and interpretive validity.

Data Analysis

The data analysis method chosen for this research was IPA (J. A. Smith, 1996; J. A. Smith et al., 2009; J. A. Smith, Flowers, & Osborn, 1997; J. A. Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999). IPA enables the systematic analysis of participants' experiential data in order to understand how they

make sense of their lived experiences and the world around them. Following the transcription of the focus group interviews, a six-step analysis was conducted (see Figures 5 to 8), with research data managed by hand. The steps were as follows:

1. reading and rereading of original data;
2. initial noting or exploratory commentary;
3. developing emergent themes;
4. identifying connections across emergent themes;
5. looking for patterns across individual- and within-group-level themes; and
6. looking for patterns and themes across focus groups.

Excluding the latter steps, the same analytic process was followed in analyzing individual interviews (see Figure 9).¹¹

Step 1: Reading and Rereading of Original Data

As has been suggested throughout this chapter, IPA seeks to “elicit detailed stories, thoughts and feelings from [participants]” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 57) regarding their experience of the phenomenon under investigation. This initial data analysis phase entailed individual reading of transcribed data from the three focus groups conducted, while simultaneously viewing and listening to original recordings from these sessions, in order to assist with “a more complete analysis” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 82). Specifically, with the aid of the videorecordings, data were spot-checked/edited to ensure accurate recording of participants’

¹¹ For this reason, I chose not to rewrite the steps taken in analyzing the individual interview data. The main differences in the analytic process between focus groups and individual interviews can be seen in Steps 4 to 6. As opposed to looking for connections in emergent themes at the individual cases, I delayed this step until I was able to look simultaneously across all five cases, using the analytic method of abstraction. From there, I was able to identify recurring emergent themes that the different cases shared (see Appendix N), with the master table of themes shown in Appendix O. In short, there were four steps to the analysis of individual interviews, compared to the six for focus groups.

words and their attribution to the right person. The videorecordings themselves were not subject to analysis, as this was not the objective of the research. For each focus group, a copy of the clean transcript was reproduced to match the number of participants in the group. For example, the Black focus group had three participants; thus, three copies of the clean transcript were recreated for a combined total of four transcripts. The copied transcripts were used for individual analysis; the original transcript was used for group analysis. In this way, the focus group data were parsed twice, once for idiographic accounts, and next for group patterns.

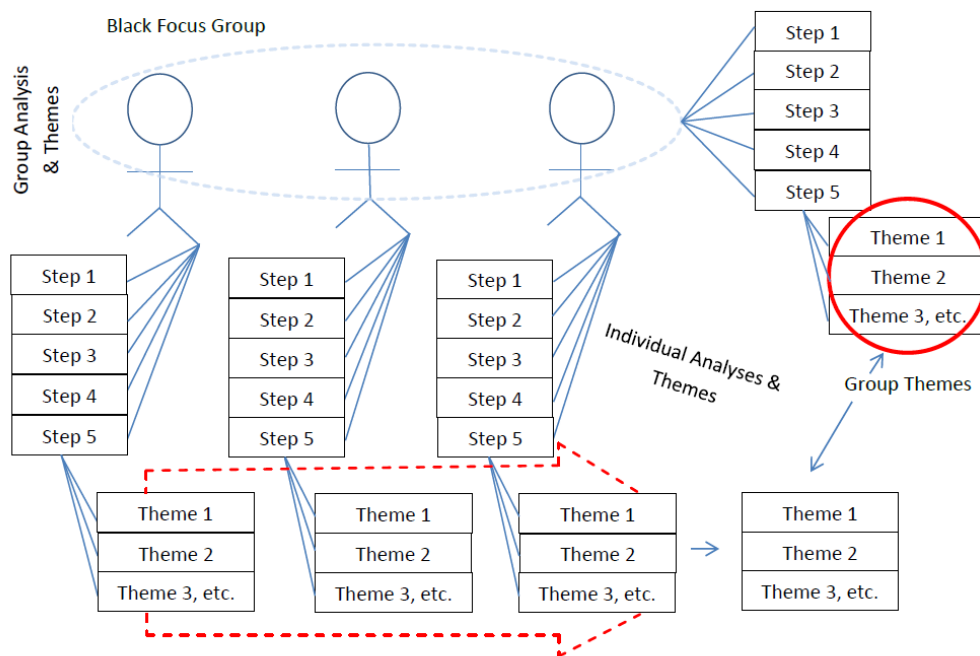


Figure 5. Data analysis steps for the Black focus group.

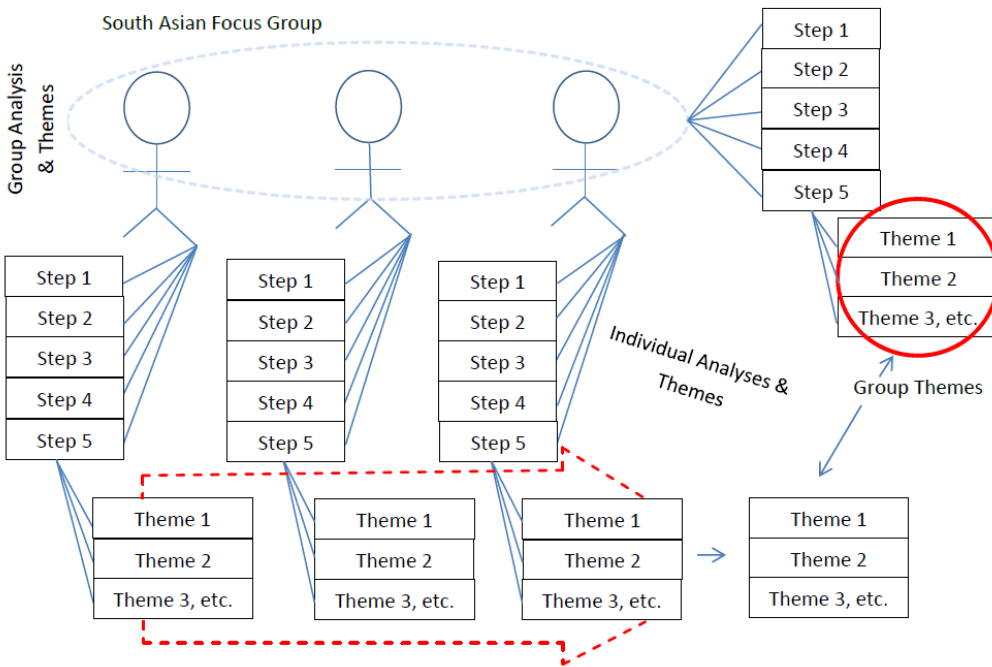


Figure 6. Data analysis steps for the South Asian focus group.

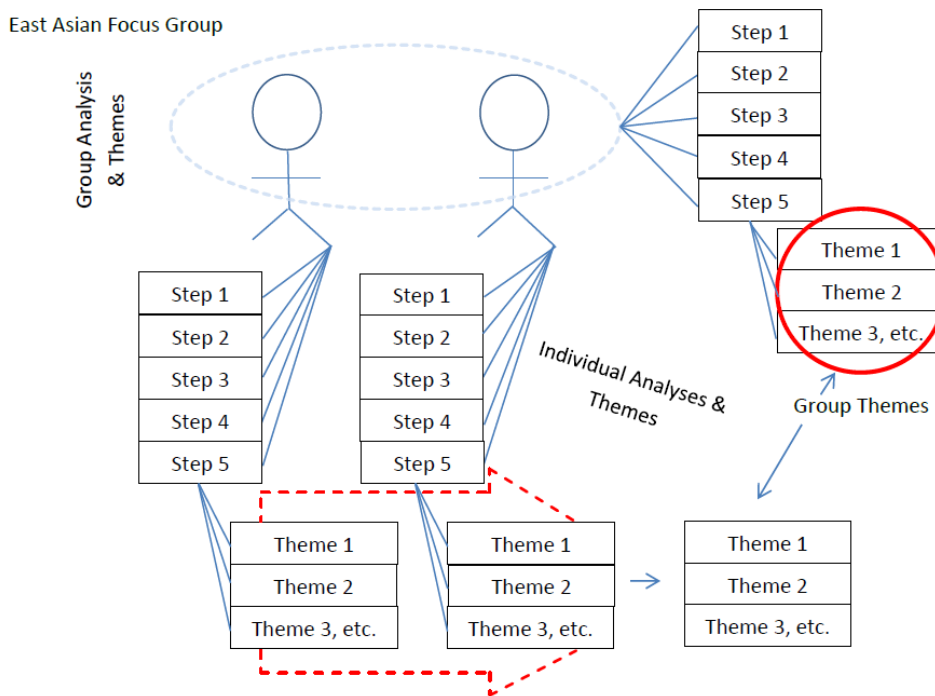


Figure 7. Data analysis steps for the East Asian focus group.

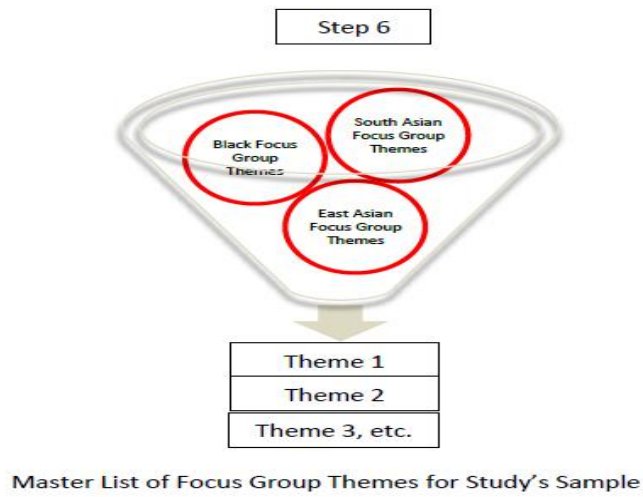


Figure 8. Master list of focus group themes for study's sample.

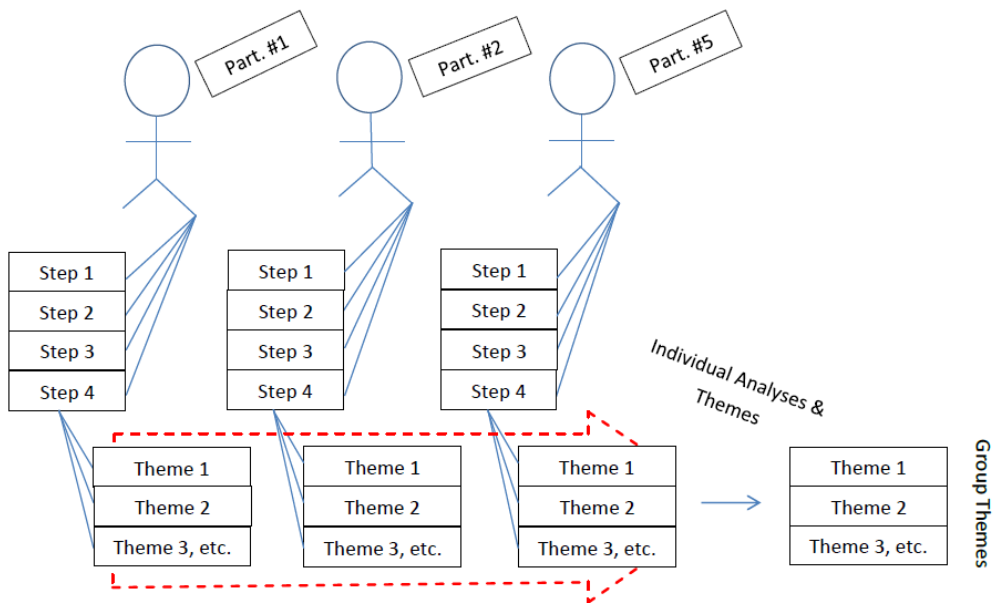


Figure 9. Data analysis steps for individual interviews.

Step 2: Initial Noting/Exploratory Commenting

This second step of IPA analysis, when done correctly, is considered to be the most exhaustive and protracted of all the stages (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Although I have classified the step under a separate heading, it is important to recognize that Steps 1 and 2 are often performed simultaneously, since initial noting and commenting will occur during the reading and rereading of transcripts. At this level of analysis, however, the intention is for the researcher to make exploratory comments on any aspects of the transcripts that he finds most interesting. J. A. Smith et al. (2009) described this process as “close to being a free textual analysis . . . [where the researcher’s] aim is to produce a comprehensive and detailed set of notes and comments on the data” (p. 83).

Following J. A. Smith et al.’s (2009) lead, transcripts of individual participants within a group were analyzed for initial or exploratory noting, reflecting IPA’s idiographic commitment. This step was repeated for the group as whole to capture the dynamics of interaction between participants, especially during instances of shared agreement or understanding and dissenting opinion. In this way, the data were parsed twice for individual- and group-level analyses. Exploratory noting was accomplished using descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments. Alternatively, I underlined text that I found important and provided an account of its importance in the right margin of the transcripts.

Step 3: Developing Emergent Themes

The process of developing emergent themes entails, at a basic level, an engagement with both the original transcript and resulting analysis of exploratory comments. Primary attention, however, is paid to the initial/exploratory notes developed from the reading and rereading of primary research data. As explained by J. A. Smith et al. (2009), this analytical shift contributes

to the effective management of voluminous data and, when exploratory commenting has been comprehensively done, should directly relate back to the interview transcripts, thus reducing the researcher's need to refer back to the original data.

Working mainly with the initial notes, transcripts of each participant within a group were analyzed for the development of emergent themes, in keeping with IPA's idiographic focus. Similar to Step 2, the left margin of the transcript was used to document identified emergent themes or phrases—that is, to “produce a concise and pithy statement of what was important in the various comments attached to a piece of transcript” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 92). This process was then repeated for the whole group. Individual-level emergent themes and group-level emergent themes were typed and ordered chronologically (i.e., in the sequence they appeared in the transcripts) in separate Word document tables. Themes were annotated with their respective page and line numbers, where they could be located in the transcripts. Key words from participants were included, as a reminder of the data source.

Step 4: Identifying Connections Across Emergent Themes

As the heading suggests, in this step the researcher engages with the individual-level and group-level emergent themes that had been put in chronological order. J. A. Smith et al. (2009) suggested a number of ways for pulling together the most salient emergent themes. These include:

- abstraction—grouping likes with likes towards the development of superordinate themes and a new name for the cluster;
- subsumption—analytic process by which an emergent theme develops into a superordinate theme, as it brings together related themes;

- polarization—identifying oppositional relationships among emergent themes, through a focus on difference as opposed to similarities;
- contextualization—corresponding emergent themes to particular narrative moments or important life events to gain local understanding of a participant’s account;
- numeration—an account of the frequency with which an emergent theme appears within the transcript; and
- function—the specific function an emergent theme represents within the transcript.

To search for individual- and group-level connections across emergent themes, I employed the strategy of abstraction. In this way, all themes related to coping, for example, were grouped together. The practice of grouping themes under a preliminary thematic category—“Theme 1, Theme 2,” and so on—helped with the initial challenge of moving them around, as the process can quickly become confusing. The table of themes for both levels of analyses were then reviewed for a second time, with the aim of reducing them further, especially where a higher number of emergent themes were identified. This resulted in the regrouping of data, with some themes being collapsed. The resulting themes were reviewed for a final time to distinguish themes with significant differences from the broader cluster of common themes. For example, the themes Perpetrator as Motivator and Informal and Formal Support both concerned themselves with coping, but the former dealt with the source of influence on coping choice, while the latter related to the type of support that might help gay men of colour to cope with racism.

Step 5: Looking for Patterns Across Individual- and Within-Group-Level Themes

At this stage of the analytic process, the researcher is particularly interested in identifying patterns across individual- and within-group-level themes. According to J. A. Smith et al. (2009),

key questions for the researcher to ask include: “What connections are there across cases?”; “How does a theme in one case help illuminate a different case?”; and “Which themes are the most potent?” (p. 101). As the authors also suggest, this level of analysis involves “laying each table or figure out on a large surface and looking across them” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 101) for possible patterns and connections. For each focus group, and based on the results of Step 4, the final tables of emergent themes from analyses of individual participants’ transcripts were compared with those of other group members. This produced a new set of recurring themes, which were then cross-referenced against the group-level themes for similarities and differences.

Step 6: Looking for Patterns and Themes Across Focus Groups

As a final step in the analysis, the resulting table of group-level superordinate themes from Step 5 were analyzed for connections and polarity across groups. Superordinate themes were ordered chronologically (i.e., in the order in which they were mentioned) on a Word document. Following the analytic method of abstraction, related themes were grouped together, with a new or existing name assigned to the cluster. At times, this step of analysis resulted in the reconfiguring of existing superordinate themes, due to the shared relationship among categories of themes. Appendix P presents the final result of the recurrent superordinate themes across cases. Alignment of superordinate themes to subquestions from the key research question followed, with the latter assuming a higher order status and the former nested directly below them, supported by verbatim extracts from each participant (see Appendix Q). Although the subquestions could have guided the search for patterns and connections described in Step 4, delaying this process until Step 6 ensured that themes were not haphazardly matched to a particular question or discarded prematurely.

Following the above analytic processes, resulting data themes and researcher's analytic interpretation are typically re-presented in a logical and coherent narrative form, supported with extract verbatim texts from participants (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). This process is required in order to effectively communicate the findings of the study, as well as to reduce the amount of data available to a manageable amount for readers. It is only through this process that the research will become usable.

Reflexivity and Subjectivity in the Research

The necessity for self-reflexivity within one's research is well documented (Bryman, 2008; Dei & Johaal, 2005; Fook, 2002). Reflexivity involves situating oneself both within and, I would argue, outside the boundaries of the research, to better understand how one's epistemology, ontology, and axiomatic composition might influence the research enterprise (Jan Fook, quoted in D'Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007, p. 84). Thus, I note my own social location as a Black, Muslim, gay man, whose experience growing up with multiple identities has made me sensitive to the problems of racism and their manifestations. I am always disturbed whenever I experience or encounter social discrimination relating to the colour of one's skin. In these situations, what hurts most is the sense of powerlessness one feels about not being able to challenge oppressive, dominant societal ideas of a particular race or ethnic group. Not surprisingly, the fear that raising the issue will not necessarily lead to a concession on the part of the wrongdoer hinders one's ability and willingness to bring attention to the problem. There is, in fact, the possibility that identifying the issues when they occur may result in denial on the part of the wrongdoer, adding further humiliation to the injured party. The following story is a personal account of an experience I had in the predominantly White GLB community of Toronto while completing my doctoral residency at York University.

On a cold December night in Toronto, my life partner, a White French-Canadian man, and I, a Black African man, decided to grab a bite at a gay-owned eatery on Church and Wellesley (an area known as the “gaybourhood”). Undecided about where to eat, we looked at several restaurants before settling on a well-known establishment. Although neither of us had ever eaten there before, we were optimistic that the food and dining experience would be to our liking. We entered, and soon we—I say “we” but in reality it was more like my White partner—were greeted and given a table. The table we were given was in the restaurant’s solarium—and came complete with floor heaters, which did not suffice to heat the area. We remained cold all through the meal.

Once seated, we were presented with the menus and dinner specials by our waiter. Almost immediately, I began to notice the uncouth manner in which I was being treated. The waiter, who was noticeably gay and White, proceeded, unapologetically, as if I was absent from the dining table. His mannerisms, warm gestures—friendly smile, attentiveness, and eye contact—were directed towards my partner alone. I tried hard to keep my feelings in check, only to realize that this waiter was not alone in his bad-mannered ways. Looking back on it, I realized an initial sense of displacement when my partner and I walked through the restaurant’s front door; we were greeted by the host, who seemed uncomfortable seeing a Black man and a White man together. He pretended to not notice my presence in the room. Our waiter acted in similar fashion. His behaviour suggested that he would have preferred to be anywhere rather than serving a mixed-race couple. This offensive behaviour continued all through supper.

At one point, both my partner and I observed that we received far less attention than the other patrons. I felt this was due to my presence in the space, as my partner had received favourable treatment from the outset. We were not the only interracial couple in the room; some

White/East Asian couples were also present. But we were by far the most visible. My skin's dark complexion brought into sharp focus the visibility of our partnership amid the mostly White-skinned crowd. In addition to the uninviting demeanour of both the host and waiter towards me, their rude behaviour also made for a negative dining experience for my partner.

To add insult to injury, a painful reminder of the insidious nature of racism appeared closer to the end of the evening, when the waiter presented the supper bill squarely to my partner. At first, I joked with him about "getting stuck" with another bill, yet I was fully aware of the racial undertone implicit in the waiter's action. In handing the bill to my partner, the waiter seemed to assume, consciously or unconsciously, that I (or Black men in general?) could not pay for the \$40.00 meal but that my White partner could. This erroneous assumption angered me deeply. I was reminded once more of the interplay of power, racism, societal pressures, and challenges faced by couples in interracial relationships.

This personal story provides some insight into the background and sociocultural baggage I bring with me to the current research study. The experience of overt and covert discrimination act as daily reminders of my otherness, my difference from the dominant White gay culture. Powerful and visceral as they are, I had to take care, however, to not let them overshadow the experience and narratives of participants in the present study. Researchers working within the phenomenological convention are encouraged to "bracket" or suspend their own subjectivities—their past experiences, assumptions, views—so that they may give primacy to the voice and experience of their research participants (see Ashworth, 1996; Giorgi, 1994). Although I agree with the importance of researchers being aware of how their past and/or current knowledge, experience, and assumptions can impact on the research process and findings, I follow J. A. Smith (2004) who, writing from within the hermeneutic tradition of phenomenology, rejects the

notion of bracketing in favour of a more holistic approach that neither devalues nor makes irrelevant the experience and understanding of the researcher. Like J. A. Smith and others writing from within this tradition, moreover, I question the desirability and indeed the appropriateness of bracketing, since disembodied bracketing undermines an intersubjective construction of the life-worlds. Finlay (2009), for example, argued that “[an] explici[t] relational approach to phenomenological research is . . . seen to emerge out of the researcher-coresearcher relationship, and is understood to be co-created in the embodied dialogical encounter” (p. 13). In line with this thinking, my belief is that researchers need to be critically self-aware of their own subjectivity and to use this consciousness in re-examining taken-for-granted assumptions about their perspectives, methods, and procedures when seeking to explore participants’ lived experience.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the methodology chosen for the study. In it are detailed the IPA approach, locating it within a qualitative paradigm, and the steps followed to realizing the objective of the research. In addition to a discussion of the research design, recruitment strategies, and data collection methods, ethical concerns regarding participants’ consent, anonymity, and privacy were also addressed. The technical but iterative steps involved in the analysis and interpretation of the data were also described. These were critical considerations in my effort to produce a piece of scholarship that would meaningfully contribute to the fields of QCT and social work practice with gay men of colour. The chapter concluded with a discussion of researcher reflexivity in interpretative phenomenological research.

Chapter 5

Findings

This chapter presents findings from the research conducted with gay men of colour about their experience of racism in the GLB community of Ottawa and their coping strategies. The findings have been arranged according to the research questions being investigated and emerging themes from the analysis of qualitative data. Direct quotes are used to allow participants' own words to speak for themselves. Omitted data in the extracts are represented with square brackets and clarifying information italicized, as per IPA rule. To begin, I provide a descriptive analysis of the study's population based on information collected from the sociodemographic data sheet or questionnaire. Next, I report findings from a series of three focus groups, with attention paid to similarities and differences within and across groups. In addition, findings from the five individual interviews are presented; the data provide an additional lens for understanding racism faced by gay men of colour. Finally, in accounting for rigour in the research, the analytical process was informed by Yardley's (2000) guidelines for assessing quality in qualitative research. I outline how I met research quality guidelines and conclude with a chapter summary.

Qualitative Descriptive Analysis of Participants' Sociodemographic Characteristics

The participants' demographic profile presented in Table 3 shows that the sample consisted of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Study participants ranged in age from 21 to 46 years, with a mean of 31.61 years ($SD = 6.67$) and a median of 31 years. The South Asian group had an average age of 34.3; the Black group had an average age of 32; the Arab/Middle Eastern group had an average age of 31; and the East Asian group had an average age of 29.5. The sample was highly educated; 62 percent had a college diploma or undergraduate degree.

Another 31 percent held a postgraduate degree; this level of educational attainment was most commonly reported among the South Asian group, followed by the Arab/Middle Eastern and East Asian group, which tied for second place.

The Canadian-born sample was 31 percent, most of whom were South Asians. Foreign-born individuals comprised the majority of participants, at 69 percent. Combined, 46 percent of East Asians and Blacks reported that they had been born outside of Canada compared to 23 percent of Arab/Middle Eastern and South Asians. Of the foreign-born, 46 percent reported that they had lived in Canada for more than 10 years. For all participants, the majority (62 percent) reported having lived in Ottawa for seven years or more.

In terms of religious self-identification, participants were almost evenly split between Christianity/Catholicism (total number of responses: five, or 38 percent) and Other (total number of responses: six, or 46 percent). In the Other category, non-Christian/Catholic identities were as follows: atheist/agnostic, spiritual, and animist (with an Afrocentric frame of reference). Blacks self-labelled as Christian/Catholic at 15 percent, whereas East Asians and South Asians classified as atheist/agnostic and spiritual at 38 percent. Among the Arab/Middle Eastern participants, one identified as Christian/Catholic and the other as atheist.

Overall, many (10 out of 13, or 77 percent) of the participants reported their sexual orientation as gay/homosexual; this was most common in the South Asian group, at 31 percent. Participants in the East Asian, Arab/Middle Eastern, and Black groups identified with this descriptor at 15 percent, respectively. Blacks were also inclined to self-identify as same-gender-loving and homosexual, exclusive of the gay label, at 15 percent. The vast majority of participants—69 percent—were employed full-time: 38 percent earned \$60,000 or more per annum; 15 percent earned between \$50,000 and \$59,000; and another 15 percent earned between

\$20,000 and \$29,000. Blacks were more concentrated in the low-income brackets than the other men.

In the context of the GLB community of Ottawa, 85 percent of the participants reported discrimination based on race/ethnicity. One participant each in the Arab/Middle Eastern and East Asian groups indicated that they did not face discrimination because of their race or ethnicity. Thirty-one percent reported discrimination due to age. Twenty-three percent reported verbal harassment, with one of the participants also indicating physical harassment; and 15 percent reported being discriminated against on the grounds of disability (i.e., for having physical disability and HIV/AIDS). Of those who encountered verbal harassment, none had reported the abuse to the police. One participant conveyed that he was “afraid of the police.” In the single case of physical harassment for which the police were notified, the experience was reported as negative, with the participant stating that “they [the police] suck.” For those that did not experience verbal or physical harassment (77 percent), 15 percent reported either a “neutral” or “compliant but wary/suspicious” view of the police.

Regarding the participants’ current living situation, 31 percent of the Arab/Middle Eastern and Black men disclosed renting an apartment or house, compared to 31 percent of East Asians and South Asians, who tended to live in their own homes. Most of the participants (54 percent) indicated that they were single. Blacks commonly reported this relationship status, at 23 percent; East Asians and South Asians were tied for second, at 15 percent each. It was characteristic for the Arab/Middle Eastern group to express being in a monogamous relationship, however (at 15 percent). Of the participants in a relationship (46 percent), all were involved with partners of a different race, White being the most commonly referenced. None were in a same-race relationship. An almost even split of participants reported using and not using drugs in the

past year (46 percent versus 54 percent); Blacks and East Asians were equally likely to report using drugs, at 15 percent each. Marijuana/weed, Ecstasy, and cocaine were the popular drugs of choice, in addition to alcohol. In regard to self-reported HIV serostatus, 85 percent of the participants reported as HIV negative. Blacks comprised the largest group to have been tested within the last six months.

Table 3
Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample (N = 13)

	Total count	Percentage (%)
Education		
High school diploma/GED	1	8
College/university graduate	8	62
Post graduate	4	31
Racial/ethnic background		
Arab/Middle Eastern	2	15
Black	4	31
East Asian	4	31
South Asian	3	23
Nativity		
Canadian-born	4	31
Foreign-born	9	69
Length of residency in Canada		
1-3 years	3	23
> 10 years	6	46
Lifetime	4	31
Length of residency in Ottawa		
1-3 years	3	23
4-6 years	2	15
7-10 years	4	31
> 10 years	3	23
Lifetime	1	8
Religious affiliation		
Buddhism	2	15
Christianity/Catholicism	5	38
Other	6	46
Sexual orientation		
Gay/homosexual	10	77
Queer	1	8
Same-gender-loving	1	8
Other	1	8
*Employment status		
Full-time	9	69
Part-time	2	15
Student	1	8
Self-employed	2	15

(table continues)

	Total count	Percentage (%)
Personal/household income		
Less than \$10,000	1	8
\$10,000--\$19,000	1	8
\$20,000--\$29,000	2	15
\$30,000--\$39,000	1	8
\$40,000--\$49,000	1	8
\$50,000--\$59,000	2	15
\$60,000 or more	5	38
*GLB discrimination/harassment source		
Age	4	31
Disability	2	15
Language proficiency/immigration status	2	15
Physical harassment	1	8
Verbal harassment	3	23
Race/ethnicity	11	85
Socioeconomic status	1	8
Living situation		
College/university housing	1	8
Friends/family	1	8
Partner/spouse	1	8
Renting	6	46
Own house	4	31
Relationship status		
Single	7	54
Committed monogamous	4	31
Domestic partnership	1	8
Other	1	8
Recreational drug use		
Yes	6	46
No	7	54
Self-reported HIV serostatus		
Positive	2	15
Negative	11	85
Last HIV test taken		
Last 6 months	7	54
7-11 months	4	31
1-2 years	2	15

*Note: Total count for *employment status* exceeds the number of participants in the study because one participant reported that he worked full-time and was self-employed. The same is true for *GLB discrimination/harassment source*, in which participants often selected more than one source of oppression.

Qualitative Findings From Focus Group Discussions

This section reports findings from the three focus groups that were conducted. Eighteen major themes emerged from the group data. These helped to answer the study's three specific subquestions, and ultimately the central research question. Attention was paid to the superordinate and recurring themes emerging from the analysis of group interviews. Group-level

themes are illustrated with key extracts or interesting verbatim quotes representing participants' perspectives on their experiences of and coping responses to racism; the study thus conforms with the idiographic ideals of IPA.

Racism and Discrimination in the GLB Community of Ottawa

The first research question was: In what specific contexts or circumstances do gay men of colour experience racism and discrimination in the GLB community of Ottawa? From participants' responses, the following four superordinate themes were generated: (a) interpersonal and intergroup situational contexts of racism; (b) general and institutional social contexts of racism; (c) physiological and psychosocial impact of racism on sense of community connectedness; and (d) racism, social identities, and multiple interlocking systems of oppression. Each of these is discussed in turn below.

Interpersonal and intergroup situational contexts of racism. Participants unanimously agreed that they encountered racism in one-on-one situations and in groups with White people. More often than not, the discrimination occurred in the context of hooking up with a guy for sex, in person or online; dating; making friends; and clubbing. The dynamic of these encounters often meant that gay men of colour felt that White gay men ignored them or cursorily acknowledged their presence in public spaces, and had no real intention of getting to know them. When gay men of colour wanted romantic relationships, they often found that White gay men would rebuff their advances and opt for platonic friendship instead, out of fear of dating someone from a different racial and ethnic background. Sometimes, the racism could be so blatant that gay men of colour were left silent or speechless. Other times, however, the racism could be as subtle as simply refusing to stand or sit beside someone of colour at a gay venue:

But the way I see it is more that you'll meet people and they'll be friendly and everything to you, and they'll want to be friends. But taking it that extra step to dating, that's where I find the barriers exist. So everyone's willing to be your friend, but very few would be willing to date somebody of a different culture. (Mr. M, South Asian, gay)

I actually experienced it one time. There is this guy on the bus. [] I checked him out, he checked me out, and we started talking. We are at the same stop, and before parting ways, he is like, "You are not Asian enough for me." That's what he said, so he doesn't want to carry on to wherever we're about to go. So I'm like, "What?" I didn't know what he meant by that. (Tobey, East Asian, gay)

I came out in Ottawa, so I was looking for that place of affirmation. But when you go to those places, it's like the people don't see you. You can walk into the gay bar and no one will see you. And even the place that you go and stand, people start moving away. And yeah, if you go and sit down, no one will sit around you. People will sit around when it's the last seat, the actual last seat. And it [*racism*] was unspoken, it was unspoken. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

Likewise, the experience of racism can involve the objectification of gay men of colour by White gay men, in a process reflecting the latter's repulsion and desire of the former. Participants reported being objectified—treated as if they were properties for the pleasure of White men to gaze at. This objectifying behaviour made them feel uncomfortable or insulted:

I'm a human being, and [] they don't even see the human being. It's like they just see the object. And sometimes, like especially the older White guys [] they really look at you and you feel naked, yet you're dressed. (Philippe, Black, gay)

I was at the only gay bar in Ottawa and this guy came up to me, and he was, like, older, and he was, like, I want to wrap you in a banana leaf and take you home. It was so racist, and, like, for some reason, I don't know why, he thought he was

being charming [] sweet. I didn't know what to say, except, where would you get a banana leaf that big. He just started saying stuff. [] The words just washed over me. [] I heard nothing. [] I just walked away. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

I think actually my strongest experiences of racism in the GLB community in Ottawa is online. [] You're [] fetishized for being Asian, and so the reason why someone wants to be with you is because you're Asian, you have a certain look, you [] don't have, like, body hair, and Asians are seen to be smaller guys. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

Mike's quotation demonstrated one of two extreme points of objectification that he was subjected to; another time, he commented on his experience of being sexualized by White gay men: "Oh, I really want your hot Asian ass, blah, blah, blah." In both cases, Mike may have felt stripped of his agency and humanity. When another participant in the same focus group suggested that the sexual objectification of gay Asian men by White men might be a type of "good racism" or that the source of Mike's sexualization is what White gay men are attracted to, the comment could have been interpreted as an insult. Mike replied: "All right, but I don't want to be attractive to someone because I'm Asian. I want to be attractive to someone because I'm who I am. And I'm not in the business of just trying to attract anyone."

The contrasting experience of being seen as undesirable or repulsive provoked discussion about the role of racial attitudes in determining desirability. A significant number of participants construed their rejection by White gay men as rooted not only in racism but also in the perception of them as socially undesirable. Kwame, a participant in the Black group, remarked: "As Black gay men, we are not socially desirable for them. We don't have the same desirability as other White gay core." Even when gay men of colour had attained the muscularity or physical prowess so prized within the gay community, they found that this accomplishment was no match for the salience of race-based rejection. A participant in the South Asian group, Dexter, said:

“Like, you could work out your whole life and be [] jacked like Mr. M and you’d never experience acceptance.” There is perhaps no better demonstration of the expression of White rejection based on race than the online public denigration of gay men of colour, so eloquently captured by the participant quoted below:

I internalize it whenever I read a profile online that says “No Asians” or whatever. And for me, that’s my experience of racism, [] when people have publicly declared their dislike for particular groups. [] That particular one still gets to me, yes. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

The explanation of racial discrimination as the reason for why White gay men rejected or did not find gay men of colour desirable was not uniformly shared, however. A small number of participants believed that the negative response was due to the sexual proclivities and preferences or attraction of White gay men, as opposed to discrimination based on their race or ethnicity. Commenting on a discussion point raised by focus group members, that his rejection by a White gay man may have been because of his race and ethnicity, the participant quoted below expressed initial ambivalence and then certainty that a different factor may have contributed to the rejection:

Possibly [] but I wouldn’t think [] I mean ultimately it was probably just his attraction. He didn’t have the physical attraction. And whether that was caused by ethnicity or something else, I don’t really care. He’s not attracted, bottom line. You know, don’t waste my time. (Mr. M, South Asian, gay)

In another focus group, a participant trying to make sense of his experience of rejection—that he is not Asian enough—alluded to issues of language/accent and the degree of his foreignness. He believed that if his accent was thicker and more foreign-sounding, the White man he was in conversation with might have found him more attractive and desirable:

I'm very, in a way, more English, and in a way, I don't sound [] way foreign for them. So, they're, like, you can communicate just fine. So they like the big, heavy accent. [] They want shorter English, okay. (Tobey, East Asian, gay)

An important aspect of the participants' discussion also pertained to online racism or cyber racism, which refers to racist content conveyed over a computer network or the Internet. Some participants thought that there was more direct racism online than in person; in-person racism was described as a more subtle and indirect form of discrimination. Of concern was that the online environment, being a nonrestrictive space, encouraged White gay men to freely and with impunity say or demand whatever they wanted from gay men of colour, sometimes accompanied by a threat of physical violence:

On Grindr [] I've had people say really racist things [] like [] don't fucking come into this bar or you'll get beat up. [] Or, like, really inappropriate jokes, like, oh well just don't blow it up [] because, like, I'm a terrorist, right. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Cyber racism can also be manifested with respect to the demand for unsafe sex practices with gay men of colour:

Respondent: I actually think there's more direct racism online, [*and*] more subtle racism in person, only because online, there is a tendency to [] communicate in a way that they don't in a face-to-face sort of way. [] I can tell that there are different etiquettes that I don't [] buy into, but other people do.

Interviewer: What about etiquette?

Respondent: Etiquettes online, you can pretty much say anything, and [] there's no sort of limits. For example, I get messages online like, "Fuck me. Fuck me without a condom," which I would never encounter someone saying that

in person to me. Why would you feel compelled to say that to me online?
So, there are fewer limitations. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

General and institutional social contexts of racism. Participants also noted that racism permeated all areas of the GLB community, such that it was everywhere but nowhere, and reflected White gay men's exercise of their power and dominance over gay men of colour. Some even raised the concern that racism was much worse there than in the city of Ottawa overall.

Anil, a participant from the South Asian group, said:

I would agree [] that racism is kind of everywhere in the GLB community [] it's to some extent worse than it is in the broader public [] you have more visible South Asian people.

This notion of invisibility was a widely shared concern. Many participants expressed feeling invisible or experiencing themselves as imposters, with White gay men acting as the community gatekeepers, deciding who could and could not be a member:

I totally see this side of racism in the sense that I don't see a lot of mixing of groups. Like, if you walked down, let's say, Bank Street, I don't see a lot of racial integration in the GLB community. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

Another participant shared a similar statement and experience, reflecting the core feeling of alienation of self from others in one's racial group:

I was telling him, when we went to the Black gay summit in Toronto, how it was like such a nice experience. And in fact, as I was so used to the White community, like going out with the White people and everything, I was nervous instead of being comfortable. [] Like, when I got there, to see a room full of Black men [] you don't know how to react and everything. And I find it so sad. Like, they're your own people, you're supposed to be comfortable [] you know, it took some time to be comfortable. (Philippe, Black, gay)

A number of participants also discussed how racism was deeply embedded in the institutional fabric of the community, such as in the mainstream gay media, including advertisements, magazines, and businesses that sell goods and provide services. Consistent with the preceding discussion, gay men of colour felt invisible or unimportant in these contexts. Their exclusion served to reinforce their marginalization and might reflect the dominant White group's attempt to erase their existence from the community entirely:

I was at a party [] Stroked Ego was opening [] getting ready to open. I look very similar to some of my other friends, who I was hanging out with. And one of the guys from Stroked Ego was, like, hey, do you want to model underwear? And he asked all the White guys and not me [] as an afterthought he asked [] did you want to do it too? And I'm, like, no, no. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

I think it might be the way that these organizations promote or communicate their messages. I don't think that they tap into the racial minority community. I think that these organizations need to go out to these communities that require their services. [] So, I think there's this kind of disconnect where these organizations probably find it easier just to continue the status quo, provide services to their existing clientele, and then bring in the racial minority outliers when race-based stuff happens. So, I think there is a bit of disconnect. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

I do outreach work and we have, like, posters with information, and sometimes we go to the Black event. And when you see the posters, they depict only White male, like, six-pack. And I was telling them, why don't you have any Blacks, like, we go into an outreach with Black clients, and you don't have any Black people. And they said, is it really necessary? (Philippe, Black, gay)

Physiological and psychosocial impact of racism on sense of community

connectedness. Participants were unequivocal about the impact of racism on themselves and their relationship to the GLB community. They generally reported feeling uninterested or

uncomfortable being in the mainstream GLB community because of the discrimination perpetrated against them, although professional (i.e., work) factors kept some connected to the community. The perception of the community as extremely cliquish added to their sense of exclusion. Instead, most preferred to connect with gay men from their own or other ethnoracial communities, and described the significance of this connection in a positive way. For some, this preference for connection was limited to those with reciprocal feelings; it was not felt for everyone. Talking about the impact of racism on his connection to the broader GLB community, Mike, a participant in the East Asian group, observed: “Only because I work in the sector. I have a feeling that if I didn’t work in the sector, I wouldn’t be connected.” Another participant opined that cliquishness among White community members was an issue. Philippe, a participant in the Black group, said: “One thing I notice in Ottawa, it’s so cliquey. People don’t mix that easily like the other places, like people from Montreal or in Toronto.” Still, despite the inclination for connection with other gay men of colour, this desire was not expressed equally for all persons:

Just before I get into the next point, the connection is not with everybody.

Because, like, there was this individual that a mutual friend tried to set me up with a long time ago, who was emphatic about saying he wasn’t interested in Indian guys. And then every time I encounter this individual [] he doesn’t even talk to me, it’s hostility. (Anil, South Asian, gay)

Regardless of the GLB context in which racism takes place, the experience can have physical, psychological, and social impacts. Socially, gay men of colour are made to feel that they don’t belong, and are reminded of this reality on a daily basis through exclusionary practices that normalize Whiteness. Feeling socially rejected can take a psychological toll on the well-being of gay men of colour; it can precipitate cognitive defences to maintain emotional

balance and limit beliefs of being “less-than” their White counterparts. In addition, physical and physiological responses to racism can exacerbate health problems:

It just feels weird when you’re sitting amongst a bunch of people, in a social setting, talking about whatever people they find attractive, and in an idealized sense. And you’re sitting there and you realize that none of these people look like you. (Anil, South Asian, gay)

I don’t feel part of that community, and I feel very uncomfortable being identified with that community. So whenever people talk about the gay community, I always say the gay community is not homogenous. And also I don’t feel comfortable going there because you’re going to repeat the same treatment, the same experience, the same uncomfortable experience. And I have irritable bowel syndrome, so it’s like there we go again. So to remove myself from that space [] it’s a form of relief. If I can find my own space, I won’t go there because the treatment is traumatic. I’m not being melodramatic. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

Another health effect of racism was the perception that it could influence risking unprotected sex, given the feelings of social exclusion and sexual devaluation. Some gay men of colour might feel pushed to engage in unsafe sex practices as a way to achieve sexual approbation. This issue was shared by a small number of participants only, mainly in the East Asian and South Asian groups:

There are many reasons why people may try and have unsafe sex, and I think for sure [] many Asian guys don’t even feel connected or feel validated, and [] they may feel like [] they don’t have as much sexual capital. So, I think that people who do experience racism [] or discrimination will maybe resort to decisions that will lead to unsafe sex practices in some instances. So, I think there’s a correlation, personally. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

I don't know, I mean in university, right, a few of us who were gay would always go out together. And then we'd like dish the next morning, and I always found my stories a little bit kinkier, or, like, riskier. [] I don't think people value my life or my body as much as they would White gay men, you know what I mean? (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Still, there was the shared feeling of physical and emotional fatigue arising from having to deal with racism in various social contexts, such as when dating, clubbing, and participating in recreational clubs. Although some participants did not feel extremely offended by such encounters, having been exposed to racism since they were young, the unequal burden of the experience was nonetheless exhausting. This was a common theme in both the South Asian and Black focus groups. Mr. M, a participant in the South Asian group, stated:

Well, the curling club, for example. I did it for one year, but honestly, I was just tired of being the only one. I mean you're not scared for your physical security. It's more that you just feel out of place. You feel unappreciated, I guess.

Another account expressed a similar sentiment, indicating the fatigue that resulted from talking to White gay men about their racism, with the general impression that one was in an endless fight or battle against the violence of racial hatred:

Talking about racism to White gay men is very difficult because it's, like, you're constantly fighting and you get tired of it. I get tired of it, you know. [] I don't have anything against White people, but it's difficult to love someone who doesn't love you. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

Racism, social identities, and multiple interlocking systems of oppression.

Experiencing racism did not impact how the majority of participants self-identified. For example, many did not identify more with their ethnoracial identity because of the racism they encountered in the GLB community, although two participants from the Black group did so.

These participants understood that their oppression was based on the visible marker of their skin complexion. This point was seen to be most accurate in a North American context, where they were more likely to experience intolerance and discrimination because of their race than because of their sexual orientation, since others might not know that they were gay or same-gender-loving/homosexual. The same would not be true in their home countries in Africa, where Black people are the numerically dominant racial group. In this case, they would identify more with their sexual orientation for the reason stated above, in order to bring visibility and attention to this aspect of their identity:

For me, in North America, because this question is being asked in Ottawa, I do identify more with my ethnicity, Black or African, more than with my sexual orientation. In North America, people see my skin but people don't see my sexual orientation. [] When I tell people that I'm gay, they don't even believe it. Are you really sure, you don't look gay. Yes, I am really sure. But if the same question was asked in a different place, in Ghana, I would say that I'm more gay than I am Black. [] So it depends. In Ottawa, in North America, my ethnicity intersects with language. It also intersect with so many things; it's my predominant identity, yeah. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

One common point across racial and ethnic groups is that heterosexism in communities of colour is a problem. For some participants, this was a likely factor in their decision to identify more with their sexual orientation and not their ethnoracial identity:

[] So, I grew up in a place where being gay is a sin. [] I noticed that my teenage years are worse. [] So, I pretty much got out. [] Living here in Canada, [] I still have a feeling that I need to convince them. Even though I'm gay, I can be a better person. (Tobey, East Asian, gay)

From a similar perspective, [] I think to be Filipino is to have strong ties with the family. And there are a lot of expectations. There's a strong desire in Filipino

culture to look good, to add to your community. So, if you deviate from what is considered the norm, then you're not being a good Filipino. And so, for me to be gay was not the norm. [] That wouldn't make my family look good. So, in a lot of ways, I had to suppress my own sexual expression whenever I was with my family. So, basically, my ethnocultural expression was with my family. So, yes, I would be kind of, like, separating the two. It didn't work. I think there is a bit of a freedom about it now because I don't have family association here in Canada. I probably identify with my sexual identity. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

[] My ethnocultural identity makes up very little of who I am. I grew up in rural [*Western Canada*]. You know, I was surrounded by White and Aboriginal people. I didn't grow up with any cultures or tradition. And especially being a gay person, when I did get enculturated, like, when I encountered my culture or my tradition, I was rejected from it so aggressively that I just, I didn't identify with it, right. I identify as being more gay than I do South Asian. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

For other participants, regardless of the heterosexism and racism they experienced, these identities were seen as integrally connected or interlocking rather than being isolated or compartmentalized experiences. Despite the challenges posed by the heterosexism of communities of colour and the racism of the GLB community for integrating both of these identities, it did not make it impossible for them to do so. Philippe, a participant in the Black group, remarked: "Yeah [] it's exactly the same thing for me too. I do identify myself as, yeah, Black and gay, but because the society ask—they want like a label, which is so North American." A similar point was made regarding the interconnection of these identities, regardless of their distinct and unique features:

Yeah, I'd say it's equal, you know. But it's just because they're very, they're sort of two separate worlds, right. And I mean, when I'm in one world obviously I feel more connected to that, and when I'm in the other world I feel more connected to the other. (Mr. M, South Asian, gay)

Although the above findings might give the impression of a clear-cut identity matrix, the process of self-identification is not linear. One participant, whose perspective echoed others regarding the salience of the intersections of social identities, spoke to the complexity of this concern. His account reflected a struggle between compartmentalizing and not compartmentalizing his identities, given the perceived difficulty involved with piecing together the different aspects of himself to make a unified whole. His narrative offered a nuanced contextual understanding of the multifaceted process involved with identity negotiations; it demonstrated that while one may choose to raise the profile of one identity over another, it would never be without consideration for its effects on the whole self:

I really believe in intersectionality. [] It's so important to recognize that. So when I said I don't identify, the truth of the matter is, I partly identify more with my racial identity because Whiteness frames so much of my world and everything. So I encounter racism, perhaps it's more pervasive than, say, or rather more insidious than my sexual orientation or disability. So honestly speaking, it's probably race, but I want to transcend compartmentalizing myself because it's so damaging for me, personally. I think it's damaging to be myself in these pockets because it becomes difficult to piece them together after doing that. (Eddie, Black, gay)

Causes and Factors Contributing to Racism in the GLB Community of Ottawa

The second research question was: What do gay men of colour understand to be the factors that contribute to their racial oppression and social exclusion in the GLB community of Ottawa? Seven superordinate themes emerged from the analysis, as follows: (a) unconscious racism and inexperience to racial/ethnic diversity; (b) internalized cultural superiority, White fragility, and receptivity to charges of racism; (c) White denial of racism, obliviousness, and victim-blaming rationalizations; (d) racial numeric underrepresentation, culture of silence, and lack of community support; (e) ingroup racial resentment/competition and internalized racism;

(f) gay beauty stratification, social situatedness, and the racialized politics of desirability; and (g) the conflation of racism, sexuality, and Black masculinity. These themes are discussed in greater detail below.

Unconscious racism and inexperience to racial/ethnic diversity. One of the factors that participants believed contributed to their experience of racism was the lack of White gay men's exposure to diversity or people from racial and ethnic minority groups. Some of the participants from the East Asian and South Asian groups held the view that White gay men relocated to Ottawa from small homogenous towns and cities—for example, from the Maritimes—where people of colour were not significantly represented. The homogeneous context of these communities was conceptualized as a barrier to positive cross-racial relations; White gay men were socialized to not look past their own life experiences, with the effect that they lacked motivation to push beyond cultural conditioning and upbringing. Consequently, when White gay men behaved in racist and discriminatory ways, they might have been blind to or lack awareness of their racism. The lack of exposure to diversity held explanatory power—racism was not perceived as a conscious and deliberate act. On the contrary, it was seen to operate outside of conscious awareness:

Another part of Ottawa is that there's a high proportion of people from the East Coast. And they seem, again, to be very nice people, and again, because they're growing up in communities that are all White, they come here and [] they've already got the filters on and the tunnel vision. And so they feel no pressure [] they're not driven to broaden their cultural horizons. They just want to preserve that way of life that they've had. (Mr. M, South Asian, gay)

I think it's different maybe for people who have [] travelled or have had exposure to different cultures. [] The White Canadians that I meet in the GLBT community in Ottawa, a lot of them have come from smaller towns and villages [] maybe

from the Maritimes or whatever, and Ottawa is the city to come to for the opportunity. So, perhaps there is that lack of exposure to people of different cultures or races, which they may have still taken on from their home towns. So, it's probably a work in progress. I don't think, for me, the racism in Ottawa isn't serious, but I think it actually comes from [] lack of exposure as opposed to it being about direct hatred. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

Internalized cultural superiority, White fragility, and receptivity to charges of racism. The majority of participants expressed their belief in the view that White gay men have an internalized sense of dominance, attributable to the larger Canadian narrative of cultural superiority. In this narrative, the image of Canada is one of enlightenment—it includes people from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. This perception of Canada as progressive may be internalized by White gay men, reflected in their own progressive social values, making it difficult for them to gain insight and understanding on how their behaviour and actions may be complicit in enacting racism. When feelings of superiority are challenged or an individual's behaviour is called into question for being racist, the shared sentiment is that White gay men engage in defensive moves that distance them from the issue at hand, in an effort to rebalance the scale of dominance and reestablish their presumption of innocence:

I think a lot of people are really offended when you call them out on it or when you challenge their racism. [] I think you were speaking to it, too, Anil, which was, like, I mean because we live in Canada, people think, oh well, you know, we're perfect. This is a [] very Canadian narrative that we get shoved down our throats, which is so untrue. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

I think that there are racist people in Ottawa, but it's so politically correct here that people are so afraid to be seen or to be told off as being racist. [] That guy that we were talking about earlier, [] he made some, I don't remember exactly what he said, but it was a pretty banal stereotype about Asians. I can't remember

what it was. I wish I did. And then [] I said, “You racist. Why would you say something like that?” And then he retorted, “Why do you think I’m racist? That’s a really horrible thing for you to say.” [] And so I think there is racism. It’s a style of racism. And it’s internal as well. I don’t think it’s an overt one. And also on that note, people are afraid of being called out as being racist. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

I remember seeing a poster in the GLBTQ Centre that said gay is the new Black. I really hate that slogan, for many reasons, but mainly because it makes it seem as though there’s no intersectionality. That being Black and gay is somehow an oxymoron. And that [] being White is a prerequisite to being gay. And so [] I went to my friend, who is one of the coordinators, and I asked him, well, don’t you see anything problematic with that slogan? And he said no. I had to explain it to him. Afterwards it’s like, I see where you’re coming from but you need to understand it’s supposed to be a tongue-in-cheek saying, because every trend—you know, in fashion everything is described as the new Black when it’s trendy and when it’s in season. And so he’s saying that to be gay is seen as becoming more culturally acceptable on television and that kind of thing. [] That didn’t sit well with me at all. And to an extent he was right, to be gay is becoming more culturally acceptable, but to be a White gay male, who is able-bodied and upper middle class. That is what he’s referring to. (Eddie, Black, gay)

Notwithstanding the consensus over White gay men’s internalized sense of superiority and fragility when called out for their racism, the participant quoted below reflected on the commonness of being asked about his nationality, a question he felt was intended to emphasize his non-Whiteness. Despite feeling offended by the question, he found that White gay men who asked him that question openly received feedback on their discriminatory behaviours, and even corrected themselves:

Interviewer: And what is your sense of feelings around those kinds of questions? When they ask those kinds of questions, how does that make you feel?

Respondent: Well, I mean, I'm offended. But in some ways too [] I feel sorry for that person, that they're so small-minded that they wouldn't even realize what they're asking, and why they're asking. Which is why I make a point of pointing it out to them, that you know, you're asking me this question because I don't look like you or I'm not White.

Interviewer: When you do that, when you kind of push back, what is the reaction?

Respondent: Well usually people are nice about it. They're like oh yeah, I guess. And some will correct themselves. Like, I don't mind somebody asking me what's my ethnicity, or my background or something, but don't say nationality and think that, you know, only White people are Canadian.
(Mr. M, South Asian, gay)

White denial of racism, obliviousness, and victim-blaming rationalizations.

Participants were emphatic about the predisposition of White gay men to deny their experience of racism, which was seen as dismissive of the participants' past and present reality. They were made to be the source of the problem, so that the onus of responsibility was placed on them to prove the racist perpetrator's transgression. In these encounters, White gay men were perceived to trivialize the occurrence of racism as a relic of an earlier time and to mischaracterize their actions as innocent or innocuous, in an attempt to discredit the gay men of colour and raise doubts about the authenticity of their reproaches. The idea that racism could still exist would seem so unbelievable that it must be false. Thus, White gay men were blinded to the enormity of their discrimination, with the result that the gay men of colour were subjected to demoralizing verbal insults and slighting remarks or innuendoes. In defence of the perpetrator, support from other White gay men might come easily and swiftly, with the target of racism subjected to criticism and condemnation, in a situation characteristic of being ganged up on:

This is what made it Ottawa, right, because that could happen anywhere. But this is what made it feel like it was happening at home. I ran into someone who knew him, and they both play on the rugby team, and the dude is involved with one of the banks that gives us a lot of money. And, like, oh I heard you met so and so. I didn't know you could be that rude. [] And this dude is on the diversity committee at this bank that [] I work with, and his friend was racist. [] Not only did his friend, like, do this action, but he felt the need to report this action to a broader community, where he needed to feel support and validation. [] Not only that, but this other, this third person, who wasn't even there, had the audacity to challenge me on it. And when I explained to them the situation, they were, like, oh, well he was just being nice. Like they just came straight to his defence.
(Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Respondent: So whenever I talk about my experiences, it's denied; it doesn't exist and it's only [] in my imagination.

Interviewer: Denied by whom?

Respondent: By mostly White gay men. My account of what happened, for example, in the bar, you know, that when I go to the bar people just withdraw. Like there is this unspoken, I don't want to say, should I say aversion, it's just kind of people just move away from you, like there's a problem.

Interviewer: So these White individuals, what kind of things would they say to you?

Respondent: They say it's not true. They try to minimize it; they try to dismiss it, that it's not true. People wouldn't do that. I know someone with a Black boyfriend, you know, that is what they say. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

Despite the commonness of this theme, one participant differed in his opinion by deflecting culpability for racism away from White gay men to put the blame squarely on gay men from his ethnoracial group, especially those outside of Canada:

There are some people who are still in the Philippines who are seducing Canadians [] so that they can migrate. So, because of that, there are some profiles saying No Asians. But I don't think of it as racism because it's really some people, that's what they use it for, for trying to seduce White people so they can land here. (Tobey, East Asian, gay)

In this way, White gay men were made the victim or injured party in the encounter. Unlike the situation above, where other White gay men came to the rescue of the alleged White transgressor, this participant assumed the responsibility of defending White gay men. His account reflected the view that gay men from his ethnoracial community might be responsible for their negative experience because of their actions, as opposed to criticizing the actions of White gay men.

Racial numeric underrepresentation, culture of silence, and lack of community support. Internal dynamics that appear external to, but are integrally related to the actions of, White gay men were identified as contributing factors to racism. Here, some of the Black and South Asian participants expressed concern over the groups' small number and representation in the GLB community compared to their White counterparts. Without the strength of numbers, racism was seen as inevitable, since White gay men would lack the opportunity for positive relations and exposure to people from different social groups and backgrounds. Not feeling a sense of belonging or having the desire for social inclusion appeared relevant to the decision to leave Ottawa for more racially and ethnically diverse cities. The situation would tend to be self-perpetuating:

Brown people in Ottawa don't typically stay in Ottawa. [] You guys both work here and you have awesome jobs here, which is why I think you stayed. [] All of my Brown friends, especially guy friends, who I've known through university or who have been here, are like out of here as fast as they possibly can. [] They just

want to be part of the mainstream. So, I think the absence of a population contributes to that discrimination. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

The importance of number extended beyond a yearning for belonging and inclusion within the mainstream GLB community, to include the possibility of creating a distinctive space for gay men of colour. Kwame, a participant in the Black group, said: “I always tell myself it’s unfortunate we don’t have the numbers here. If we had our own numbers, we’d have our own space, you know.”

Related to the above dynamic was the culture of silence that one participant, for example, attributed to the experience of racism. Other gay men of colour were criticized for not challenging White racism, often choosing to turn a blind eye to the problem or pass for the dominant race, thus maintaining the dehumanizing effects of racism. By remaining silent, these individuals were believed to permit White gay men to perpetuate racism:

For every person like us, there’s another GLB coloured person, or South Asian person, and probably there are other GLB South Asians, who don’t challenge. Who are willing to just live in their bubble, and pretend they’re White, and pretend like there’s not a problem. (Anil, South Asian, gay)

In cases where racism was challenged, however, the lack of social support from others created a situation where the targets may have felt alone in their decision to speak out: “And then when we do speak up, and we do challenge shit, people don’t support us. And we like stand out on a limb.” (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Ingroup racial resentment/competition and internalized racism. Participants did not always feel that gay men of colour were united in their struggle against racism, due to internal competition for the attention of White gay men or the preferential treatment of another gay man of colour by White gay men. This view was commonly reported in the South Asian and East

Asian groups. The feeling of competition created cleavages and division within a group, and might go undetected until it was too late— after the group’s relationship had completely disintegrated. However, far from a completely negative experience, the disruption can create opportunity for new insight and perspective into the impact of power relations on group dynamic. Embedded within the dynamic of intragroup competition was the issue of internalized racism. Participants felt mistreated by other gay men of colour in social situations where White gay men were made the centre of attention, demonstrating the same racist attitude and practices of White gay men, with the result that they were overlooked and rejected as potential dating partners or suitors:

The weirder thing is that I find that I’m getting racism from other minorities. Like, for instance [] I’d be at a party, and then, like there would be people of other ethnicities who want to talk to the White guys at the party. And then [] they will just like cock block you. It’s just awkward, weird. (Anil, South Asian, gay)

I felt, like, the White guys would sort of pay attention to me, and the Asian guys felt, like, I was competition. And I didn’t actually understand what the dynamic was in that group until things went sour, and then I was able to come to a lot of realizations about [] the actual interaction. [] And I think it made me realize that there are a lot of really interesting racial power dynamics that are going on here because I didn’t see that. [] So I felt like I was in this competition. And it created a lot of issues in that group. I was laughing for a lot of the time. I mean, I didn’t realize it was actually serious. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

Internalized racism was not restricted to discrimination perpetrated between gay men of colour; it also involved individual internalization of the dominant White group’s racism, which manifested in the expression of a sense of inferiority to members of the dominant race, and having a limited sense of self and others from the same racial and ethnic group:

I'm trying to be less Asian. So I really try to be more Westernized for them [] like, Whitewashed or something. Basically, that's because as I said, I'm really attracted to the White and not the Asian. So I guess I try to be more like them too.
(Tobey, East Asian, gay)

A similar sentiment was echoed regarding the complexity of White racism and how it can get under the skin to undermine one's sense of humanity: "Racism can be so complex that you begin to hate yourself, you begin to say to yourself that perhaps if I clean the skin, you know, yeah."
(Philippe, Black, gay)

Gay beauty stratification, social situatedness, and the racialized politics of desirability. The majority of focus group participants thought that the GLB community functioned hierarchically when it came to notions of beauty and attractiveness. The structuring of desirability along racial lines was seen to contribute to the racism directed at them. At the top of the social stratification ladder were White men; at the bottom were gay men of colour. Here, Whiteness was normalized and used as the standard that gay men of colour had to measure themselves and each other against. This standard could evoke significant feelings of little or no self-control over relationship choices:

I call it the gay hierarchy. So you know, you have sort of the 20-something White muscular guy on top, and you know, then maybe a 30-something less muscular White guy. [] But I found [] among the non-Whites, we, as Brown people, I think we are ranked fairly high. Like, for example, I don't have to try nearly as hard as an East Asian guy would have to try. (Mr. M, South Asian, gay)

In the GLB community in Ottawa, I think that White is considered the norm, and queer people of colour are considered the other. [] It's kind of, like, I guess White people have sexual currency so everyone finds a White person attractive. That's a generalization, not across the board. But as a person of colour, you don't feel like you necessarily have a plethora of choice out there. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

I recently got into an argument with a friend of mine. We were talking and I was saying that [] if you [] go to the bar or gay spaces, most of the posters that they make, you know, hardly will you find a Black gay man on the cover. You know, if you find a Black gay man on the cover [] it would be in the jungle print with his White boyfriend. You know, hardly do we see a Black on Black love. You know, they don't portray that ideal. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

In the first quote above, the participant's observation, that East Asian gay men had to try harder than their South Asian counterpart to be found attractive by White gay men, could be open to interpretation and debate. A participant from the group concerned had a different perspective, which he related in his account of the difference between the beauty ideals of White gay men in Canada and those from his home country of the Philippines:

Here, it's, like, the opposite. The White people find me attractive. I know that I am good looking way before coming to Canada [] but it's really now that I [] feel more validated about the physical element of how I look. [] Like, we don't give a lot of effort, that is good looking for them. (Tobey, East Asian, gay)

Despite agreement about the ordering of racial groups according to their desirability within the GLB community, an issue the participants clearly felt exposed them to racism, not everyone agreed that this was a positive thing or a good practice to continue. One participant expressed the following position: "But it's horrible that we have to think like that" (Anil, South Asian, gay). Other participants may have shared the same concern; however, most did not comment on the issue, and the researcher did not solicit their views.

The exalted White beauty ideal was critiqued for its dominant message of White supremacy, given its narrow definition of beauty and exclusion of gay men of colour from its description, with the result that only White gay men could be seen as beautiful. This narrow definition might additionally work to segregate gay men of colour from each other, in forcing

them to think of any race other than White as substandard. The idea of sociocultural situatedness and its influence on understanding beauty and the aesthetic would be omitted from consideration:

But I find that when you go [] and you're locked into a place with people who look a certain way, like for instance, when I went to China, like, I didn't think that I was attracted to East Asian guys. I went to China and I started finding lots of them attractive. It's weird, but, like, that was the norm, right. And so I was exposed to it; it was totally different. (Anil, South Asian, gay)

Yeah, all the posters are the White Adonis, and I get tired of it. That kind of exclusion, that kind of a social exclusion [] pictures a certain form of racism and White supremacy act. The idea that it's only White males that can be beautiful. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

The Whitewashing of beauty is not practised solely by White gay men. Gay men of colour may be lured into the performance of prejudice and discrimination. Although White gay men are generally exalted for their Whiteness, this valorization is unevenly distributed, as only certain kinds of Whiteness are considered beautiful. This restricted concept of attraction can influence a person's perception of beauty, and arouse question of counter racism or "reverse racism," on the part of gay men of colour:

On Grindr this week, I had an experience where a red-headed guy approached me and said, want to get together. And I replied I'm not into redheads. So, am I racist too because, you know, typically redheads are only White. But what I don't specifically like is the combination of the red hair, the pasty skin, and the freckles. Like I just find that completely unattractive. So yeah, I mean we have our preferences too. So does that make us just as racist? (Mr. M, South Asian, gay)

Conflation of racism, sexuality, and Black masculinity. The conflation of race, sexuality, and masculinity was flagged as a contributing factor to the experience of racism. This

issue was mainly discussed in the Black group, where it was felt that the sexual orientation of Black gay men was constructed so as to undermine their masculinity. In the White gay imagination, Black men cannot be gay; Black masculinity presumes the absence of same-sex attraction or relationship. Black gay men were therefore often perceived to be suffering from a type of identity crisis, with the implication that a stable Black man would not identify himself as gay. From this point of view, the thinking is that only White gay men can be gay:

You know [] I think that's also because, for Black men in particular, for some reason, our sexuality and our masculinity have been conflated, and that the one affects the other. [] And so I think that's the lens through which we're viewed in the LGBT communities, that this is bad, that you're identifying as gay is a bad thing for you. And you need to save yourself from yourself because what you're doing is compromising your manhood, and as a result, compromising your personhood, too, right? (Eddie, Black, gay)

Compared to Black gay men, White gay men were believed to enjoy the privilege of having their masculinity go uncontested. To be White and gay was seen as normal, whereas the opposite was true for Black gay men. White gay men operating under the above assumption may act towards Black gay men in a discriminatory manner, on the account that they are not "real" members of the GLB community. This attempt to erase an aspect of Black gay men's identity means that their full humanity fails to be recognized.

Coping Strategies for Confronting Racism in the GLB Community of Ottawa

The third research question was: What strategies do gay men of colour use to cope with the overt and/or covert racism they experience in the GLB community of Ottawa? Data analysis yielded seven superordinate themes: (a) emotion-focused engagement coping; (b) emotion-focused disengagement coping; (c) problem-focused engagement coping; (d) problem-focused

disengagement coping; (e) effective, ineffective, and influencing factors on the choice of coping strategies; (f) service delivery issues, imbalances in available resources, and intervention options; and (g) issues, strategies, and action plans on racism. The characteristics of each of these themes are described below.

Emotion-focused engagement coping. Most participants were in agreement about using emotion-focused engagement strategies to cope with racism. These strategies were used in a multitude of contexts, with the common purpose of being focused on their emotional reactions to racism-related stress. One strategy involved accepting others as they are and recognizing what one can and cannot control, to avoid being pulled down by other people's negativity. Tobey, a participant in the East Asian group, stated:

I have already learned since I was younger to just not listen to the stuff that I know are negative. [] So I don't really listen to all the stuff that I know will just bring me down.

This sentiment was echoed by another participant in the Black group, Philippe. Describing how he felt himself affected by racism, he said: "It used to make me feel bad and question myself. And now, it doesn't bother me at all. I'm like, what you see is what you get. And it has helped me a lot." Indeed, the ability to recognize and accept that one may not be able to influence the racist behaviours of others was seen as a mark of resilience:

I think in some ways, there is an acceptance that people have different levels of exposure and people have different values. People may be at different levels of evolution, blah, blah, blah. And I think for me, it's come to accepting that much more. [] So, the more I accepted that, yes, people [] are the way they are or whatever, like, from whatever upbringing. They cannot all behave or think in the same way. So, part of that is resilience and acknowledging that people may say things that you might consider stupid or that you just do not agree with. But

needless to say that I have [] my own perspective and that person's perspective is his own. So all that I can control is here in me. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

The strength of resilience was reflected in the accounts of some participants in the Black group who engaged in rumination-related coping strategies, which involved identifying and transforming a perceived irrational or unrealistic thought for something more realistic. Other times, it entailed recognizing racism for what it was, as a way to avoid absorbing the racist messages directed at them:

I think about racism constantly [] which is weird, because most folks think that [] if you don't think about it, it's not an issue. But I actually, you know, I disagree with that. I think the more you don't recognize it for what it is, the more you become tolerant of it and start absorbing some of those negative messages. (Eddie, Black, gay)

For me, personally, to believe that I will be accepted on the same level as other White gay men, is a little bit unrealistic. I have given up on the hope that they will accept me the way I want them to. [] I don't want to say it's not true, but at some level I believe that I'm always going to be perceived as an other, not in a good way. I believe that there is that internal discomfort of me being recognized, of me being accepted as an equal. And that kind of recognition is normally limited to the White gay community. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

In addition, participants relied on the support of their social networks to cope with the racism encountered both within and outside of the GLB community. These networks consisted of gay and queer-identified friends of colour, gathered together in a safe space to debrief about personal and collective experiences of racism, and demonstrate support for one another:

Another thing I do, some of my fabulous, radical, queer friends of mine, we have Black family evenings and stuff. And so we go out and we have martinis and we just get together and talk about stuff that we can't really speak about in the

classroom. There was an incident when a professor was clearly being racist and we can come together and really vent and speak about that and get that off our chest, right. We party together. (Eddie, Black, gay)

I think it's also debriefing with a lot of my friends who are people of colour. We often joke about people who have said certain things and that we might know in common. [] I don't know, maybe it's our own form of retaliation in a way, but yes, we kind of debrief about that. Like, "Oh, my God, I can't believe that this person said this." Like, "Oh, yes." (Mike, East Asian, gay)

A strong social support network can also include nonplatonic friends, such as an intimate partner. This individual may or may not be from the same racial and ethnic background. The strategy of venting to a romantic partner of a different race—White, for example—was sometimes used to cope with racism. Anil, a participant in the South Asian group, was the only one to use this coping style. He said: "Oh, but one thing I forgot to say in the strategies, if I've experienced a racist incident, I sometimes will vent to my partner. And sometimes he gets it a lot."

Across the three focus groups, the strategy of humour was used for coping with racism. Participants employed humour as a joint joking strategy and a tool for challenging racism in a positive, nonconfrontational manner. Dexter, a participant in the South Asian group, opined: "Well I mean, whenever I get angry, it backfires on me. So I try to use like humour as a way to deal with it. And try and, like, educate people slowly." This sentiment was echoed by other participants:

Like, the person who made the comment is there a special for the Black gays, I used to say hi to him all the time. So, like, when he said that, each time I saw him, I'd say to the person I am with, oh yeah, this is my friend, the racist guy I told you about. (Philippe, Black, gay)

The above quote from Mike, in which he debriefed with friends of colour about their shared experience of racism, also captures the use of joking as a form of humour.

Participation in sport and recreational activities likewise provided a channel for the release of negative energy and emotions associated with racism-related stress:

I'm also engaged in sports. I do run. I took part in two marathons. I'm preparing for a third marathon. So it's a way of coping because I needed to get some of the edge off. [] I can channel that energy into something aggressive, yeah. I needed to reduce the impact of the negative energy from social exclusion, social isolation. I needed to channel it into some sport. (Kwame, Black, same-gender loving/homosexual)

Although participation in recreational or leisure activity such as swimming was stated by another participant to be helpful, especially for developing self-confidence to complete a task and life in general, its connection for dealing with racism was not evident. This remained true after further probing by the researcher:

Interviewer: So, being part of the swim team, how has that helped you cope with racism?

Respondent: I don't really cope.

Interviewer: You don't cope?

Respondent: Yes. For one thing, they're all White. Like, seriously, I'm the only Brown there, they're all White. And I felt like I belonged, like I actually belonged. And the more I hung out with them, it felt good.

Interviewer: So what kind of things did they do to make you feel included or welcome?

Respondent: Well, one thing I'm really surprised at is they actually wait for me. Because after swimming, we go out, we socialize. Like, we go out for

dinner or we go out to the movies or whatever. So, because we will take our time to shower, I'm always the last to finish, to get outside. I'm a very late guy. I'm the only one who brings the lotion. Like, they just wash off. I lotion and I fix my hair or whatever. And every time after that, the locker room is already empty. Like, they're all gone. And as soon as I head out, they're all out there waiting for me, and they're not angry whatsoever. "Oh, you took long," something like that. And then we will go out. And when we go out, I'm actually part of the conversation and actually talk. And I don't feel different. (Tobey, East Asian, gay)

Lastly, a unique finding to the Black group was the use of spiritual-centred Africultural coping for mitigating the effects of racism, facilitating the attainment of meaning and purpose in one's life:

Traditional African spirituality, the idea that every human being is a spirit, you know. The idea that God is not a White male, you know, who is always present, always knowing. The idea that there's more to life than this physical body. The idea that there are spirits around, ancestral spirits are always with us, they are always helping us. [] I can relate to that kind of [] philosophy compared to the Judeo-Christian world view of how life is, so that is helping me a lot. [] Traditional African spirituality is similar to the Native American spirituality, and that helps me a lot. I gain more understanding and more appreciation for my life through that medium. And that helps me also to feel good about my sexual orientation and my fluid identity because [] precontact, you know, gender was fluid. There were shamans, and the shamans were allowed to be gay. So that informs my thinking about my own identity [] than the normative, you know, Judeo-Christian thought. So I'm branching. I'm finding ways of using the traditional precontact traditional notions of spirituality [] as a coping strategy. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

Emotion-focused disengagement coping. In their effort to cope with racism, participants did not always express their emotions or seek support from intimates and others. Social withdrawal and emotional distancing or suppression were strategies used to cope with racism. Suppression would sometimes be employed because of the fear of reprisal: “Just harder to say what you think most of the time. I [] self-censor a lot more” (Anil, South Asian, gay). Another group member expressed a similar idea, fearing that his words or actions could have punitive consequences on him:

I mean [] you can't tell people to fuck off. Because you see them [] and this community is so small, if you tell someone what you're actually feeling or thinking, like if you actually tell them to fuck off, that will come back to haunt you. And like you'll meet someone new, and they'll be like, oh, I know you. You're friends with my friend, and you told him to fuck off at a party, and he was just making a joke, what's wrong with you? (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Social withdrawal might take the form of avoiding or spending less time in the GLB community to escape the experience of being devalued, and spending more time with heterosexual and nonheterosexual friends outside of the GLB community. Mr. M, a participant in the South Asian group, said: “Well withdrawal also. Like I find I'd just rather spend time with straight people and outside of the community I guess.” This strategy also manifested in the form of choosing to not participate in GLB community activities and directing one's effort at connecting with others in a shared experience:

And I don't bother myself so much with wanting to feel validated in spaces that don't want to validate me. So even at school, in the GLBTQ community, I don't participate in many of the initiatives that are being put together. And you know, instead I want to focus my efforts on, you know, connecting with folks who share my experience and think the way I do, I guess. (Eddie, Black, gay)

Trying harder was an emotion-focused disengagement strategy that a small number of participants adopted; it required that they exert more effort, in hopes of being accepted by White gay men and minimizing their exposure to racism. Philippe, a participant in the Black group, said: “I think I work harder so that I can be accepted. And like doing community work at the Gay Zone, I’m always in that kind of environment, and to the point that I’ve become one of them.” Another participant echoed this reality, adding that the experience can induce feelings of resentment about working twice as hard as White gay men:

You just have to try harder than your White friend, for example. You have to try harder to meet people. You have to put more effort into it. You have to look prettier, or whatever. So it’s just more effort, I guess, so you kind of resent the fact that you have to put more effort than some other guy. (Mr. M, South Asian, gay)

Problem-focused engagement coping. Participants also used behavioural and cognitive restructuring strategies to cope with racism. These efforts were focused on eliminating the source of stress or altering its meaning so that it would be less stressful or threatening. A common strategy among several participants, for example, was to confront or challenge someone about his racism. Talking about the importance of recognizing racism for what it is, Eddie, a participant in the Black group, opined: “I call out the shit for what it is, right. And that’s where I am at.” Mike, a participant in the East Asian group, noted how sometimes the desire to challenge racism offset the need to explain why a particular event was racist. He remarked:

I just really wanted to call that person out for their racism. So I was just like, “You’re racist. That’s stupid.” And they’re like, “Why is that racist?” And I was kind of just, like, “Well, it was just stupid and ignorant and it’s racist and you’re wrong.”

This matter-of-fact approach to racism extended to group situations, where nonhelping White bystanders were present:

One example I wanted to bring up, I was at a party once. It was, like, seven years ago. And somebody made a racist comment. It was about me and I didn't even talk to this person. I don't know, it was just some comment he made, and, like, sort of I would be cleaning the place or something. It was really bad. [] And a lot of people were kind of shocked because they didn't really know, like, what to say. But I was just, I was just surprised that people didn't just call him out and say that's inappropriate. And nobody did. I mean I did, I said that's inappropriate. But none of the other, like, mostly White people, at the party, even, like, thought, you know you need to call that shit out. [] It's like calling somebody the N word [] it's just not done. (Anil, South Asian, gay)

Similarly, a small number of participants used the coping approaches of being an advocate and a volunteer. In both cases, the goal was to promote the visibility of gay men and other sexual- and gender-minority people of colour, and to introduce greater diversity into the service and cultural landscape of the community:

Mind you [] I have tried to make it better. And just like you guys have, in different ways. So I think that's another way of coping with it. [] You know [] like, when the film festival's picking their movies, I'm, like, this one, this one, and this one because there are people of colour, you know. [] Very selfishly like shoving your agenda down their throat. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Like [] I even started volunteering, because everywhere we go, we see only White people. Like, the services, it's as if they're designed, like, for White people only. So I went to Gay Zone to create visibility so that people like me can identify and know that they can have those services. And by doing that, I've noticed that, as I was saying, like, I can be among a group of people, but they always say hi to

me because they see me often, then they get to know me, know my personality, know how I am, and then that made it easier. (Philippe, Black, gay)

Another behavioural coping strategy of participants was to be vigilant in identifying potential racism, both in their personal lives and in other social contexts. This ensured that they were not serendipitously confronted with racist actions without the resources to adequately analyze and reframe ongoing processes of racial discrimination:

I guess [] I'm not allowing myself to be desensitized to things. Like I try not to find myself in a position where I think it's normal to be treated a certain way, right. I need to be very critical about everything, so I try to sort of have my critical thinking cap on always. When I see something on television, or in a movie, and I deconstruct it and I think about well, who is framing that picture, who's framing the narrative, who's framing the conversation. That's one thing I do. (Eddie, Black, gay)

I would say that sometimes in my online behaviour [] I'm making prejudgments based on look and based on profile as a result of the prejudgments based on me, so that I'm being the first to strike in some way. I'm like, "Yes, that person looks like he would be racist. That person looks like he would discriminate." Yes, so, from that perspective, I tailor my approach. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

Behavioural and cognitive coping strategies also differed by race and ethnic group. In the South Asian group, participants might go abroad—for example, to the United States—to find a romantic partner, as a way to reduce exposure to racial discrimination. One participant reflected on how his experience of racism in Ottawa impacted his ability to date and be romantically involved with another person:

Over the years, just the way I've dealt with the whole dating situation, or whatever, was to travel and to meet people from other places and connect with

people who don't live here and can give me the same kind of, I guess, acceptance that I crave here. (Anil, South Asian, gay)

Another participant considered the idea of interregional and overseas dating but decided against it mainly because of the energy/motivation, work, and time required:

I've thought about doing what Anil did, or just try to, you know, maybe just dating somebody from another city, basically. But, I don't know, I just don't have the motivation I guess to do that. It's a lot of work, as you can probably attest to. (Mr. M, South Asian, gay)

In the Black group, by contrast, coping strategies included information seeking, such as participating in and listening to race scholars speak about racism, in an effort to gain critical insight for making sense of the oppression in one's life:

I listen to a lot of progressive people within that area. I listen to Melissa Harris-Perry. She's also an African American woman. So I listen to these people and they give me a sense of meaning, they try to explain it to me. They try to make meaning out of something difficult. I think that really trying to make meaning of it, trying to break it apart and trying to understand it, really helps. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

Likewise, behavioural retribution took the form of treating White gay men in the same negative way that the participant quoted below believed he and other gay men of colour were treated:

When we go out, it's hard to say, but I find that we [] give the same treatment of what they give us. Like for instance, we can be in a group. We all speak French and English, but as soon as like there's somebody from an outside group with us, we speak in Burundi. We don't see them. Like we just get up. And we've got so many comments about it. When we don't pay attention, they come to us. (Philippe, Black, gay)

Problem-focused disengagement coping. Half of the focus-group participants coped with racism by way of behavioural and cognitive strategies that were the opposite of the active coping responses reported above. The most common of these reported practices were denying, refusing to see race or racism, and avoiding/ignoring or walking away from the problem. Tobey, a participant in the East Asian group, suggested knowing that some White gay men find him attractive because of his skin colour was enough to overlook acts of racism directed at him: “Even though I will get a racist remark, I know that [] there are lots of White people out there who are so attracted to me just because of my colour.” Other participants echoed the sentiment that they would disregard or not think about the racist event:

But, like, I don’t know, especially in social situations, and more recently, I tend to just walk away from it, or just ignore it, which also tends to kick me in the ass later. [] Within work context I’m obviously on top of it. But like [] my problem though is that I feel, like, it’s worse. Like, I don’t think it’s getting better, I actually think it’s getting worse. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

I don’t always think about it. And, but the difference, like I said earlier, I’m interested in people, not in their colour. [] There are some people who, any small thing they see racism in it. Like it’s as if they’re looking for that, you know, that racist comment, all the time. I’m not like that. I’m just, I don’t want to think about it. (Philippe, Black, gay)

As much as I try to resist it, try to push it away [] I spend a lot of time thinking about these things, which take a lot of my time. Thinking [] on these negative experiences [] I could have used that time to invent something, to be the master of something, like Steve Jobs. [] If you don’t experience these daily humiliations, daily putdowns, or daily racialized slights, you’d be free [] to be creative. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

The strategy of using alcohol to cope with racism was not common within and across groups. What is more, its purpose might vary depending on the individual's intention and his social situation. Alcohol can cloud a person's judgment and place him in compromising position, where unsafe sexual practices are likely to occur:

I don't know about you guys, but I turn to the drink sometimes to sort of deal with the crazy situations that I'm in. Like, I mean, there's been a few nights at a bar [] where something really obviously racist will happen, for me. And I'll be, like, I need alcohol to solve this problem. And I will drink my face silly and then go home with some random White guy who I don't like. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Although the majority of participants in the current study indicated not using alcohol or drugs to cope with racism, many expressed that, among other gay men of colour, they suspected that alcohol and drugs were being used for this reason. This was a consistent finding across the different racial and ethnic groups:

Xavier,¹² the gay guy [] that I was talking to you about, he has started taking drugs. Drugs have been a good coping strategy to deal with the kind of social stress [] that he's facing. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

Other participants' comments resonated:

I actually see it as a coping mechanism for everything, not just for racism. Young people start drinking usually for the peer pressure [] and the social aspect of drinking. And then if a person personalized the racism that they're feeling, some will resort to alcohol. Not just to alcohol, but other stuff as well, like, maybe drugs or whatever, to not feel bad about themselves. I think it's a mechanism for other people, because I have never drank my whole life. (Tobey, East Asian, gay)

¹² A pseudonym.

But like some of the Black drag queens in town, like, I was talking to them and they were saying that like they did a lot of drugs and alcohol to deal with [] like, how crappy the community was. [] Like we actually went out for dinner and then they were, like, oh yeah, well you know, I just get drunk and high to deal with, like, being in Ottawa. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Effective, ineffective, and influencing factors on the choice of coping strategies.

Participants discussed the perceived effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the different coping strategies that they used for dealing with racism-related challenges. In two out of the three focus groups, strategies that focused on communicating or educating others about racism were the most commonly reported. Interacting with the perpetrator of a racist act was felt to open up lines of communication for dialogue, education, and mutual understanding. Similar advantages applied to the strategy of education. The possibility that the target might have a positive influence on helping others to increase their awareness of racism was seen as a strength—the target would feel like a part of these individuals' change and transformation:

Communication is the key for everything. Because we learn, we educate, everybody is entitled to their own opinion. By talking about it and mentioning it, it helps. So for me [] communication is really the key. (Philippe, Black, gay)

This understanding correlated with a similar statement made by another participant relating to the value of education for fighting against racism, with perceived benefits to its recipient and the educator:

The educating piece has been really great because I actually find that some of the people, who I've actually invested some time into making better human beings, have actually changed. And it's actually really neat to see some sort of cultural evolution in some people. And I find that fantastic. I like to think that I'm part of the change. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Travelling, social support, spirituality, and understanding one's locus of control were additional coping strategies that participants alluded to as being effective. Unlike the aforementioned strategies of communication and education, these strategies differed by racial and ethnic groups. In the South Asian group, the strategy of travelling was perceived as effective for dealing with racism in the context of dating. Anil said: "For me, the travel was useful." By contrast, in the Black group, social support and connection with other queer people of colour was found to be effective in processing and debriefing about racism and discrimination. This continued to be the case even when the choice of coping was seen to be restrictive in terms of establishing romantic and intimate relationships with other Black gay men:

Respondent: I guess connecting with other queer people of colour.

Interviewer: So the Black Fam?

Respondent: Yeah, the Black Fam, that helps. But it has its limitations because they're all women, right. So that's been restrictive (all laugh). (Eddie, Black, gay)

Another participant in the Black group identified spiritual coping as an effective strategy for dealing with racism, especially when he felt alone and in the absence of a social support network. The ability to motivate himself was deeply connected to his sense of spirituality, which gave meaning and purpose to his life:

Spirituality is very important because most of the time I'm alone and sometimes I don't have access to a social support network. But my ability to inspire myself, to find meaning in myself really helps, that connection with my traditional spirituality is very [] helpful. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

One participant in the East Asian group considered that his ability to differentiate between what he could and could not control had helped him cope with racism most

effectively—he was now able to maintain a positive state of mind, and not dwell on negative thoughts:

I think it has actually helped me in some ways to accept that racism is always going to be around. So that's something that [] I can't control, I can't change. I think there's always work to be done in the community, but there's always going to be that. So I think it's about knowing what I can control, and usually that's just my own reactions, perceptions, and feelings. And really, all I have to do is stay focused on things that are positive and not dwell on things that are negative.

(Mike, East Asian, gay)

Ineffective strategies for coping with the experience of racism included the one consistent strategy across two out of the three focus groups: expressing anger. Anger was perceived to trigger stereotypes unflattering to the self, and to undermine the target's ability to rise above the experience of racial oppression:

But the getting angry bit, it triggered in me the, you know, the stereotype of, you know, the bitter queen. Well, you know, you get angry about it and then you get very negative. And people pick up on that. So yeah, I found that to be unproductive. And in fact, try to now, overtly try to make sure I'm not being too negative. (Mr. M, South Asian, gay)

An angry confrontational attitude, where the target of racism would challenge the perpetrator without expressing his reasons for doing so, was considered equally ineffectual. Elaborating on his earlier statement about calling out the person who he felt mistreated him, the participant quoted below expressed that his reaction may have acted as a barrier to progressive dialogue:

Respondent: The strategy of just calling someone out about their racism and not actually giving a substantial reason, probably not so helpful for me.

Interviewer: Why is that? It didn't work because the end result of what you wanted was what?

Respondent: It didn't progress the dialogue. It just kept us both in the pockets that we were in to start off. Just a heated emotion. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

The coping strategies of drinking and altering one's accent to appear more English-sounding were perceived by some participants to be ineffective in dealing with racism. These strategies differed by racial and ethnic groups. One participant in the South Asian group, Anil, said: "Well sometimes getting drunk is not the best way to cope with these kinds of things." By contrast, in the East Asian group, attempts to speak more "American" or "Canadian" added to an already challenging situation. It made it difficult to be understood by native English-speaking people, and resulted in the decision to communicate more naturally, even with an accent:

Respondent: Changing my accent, basically, is the only thing.

Interviewer: Has it helped you cope or not cope with racism?

Respondent: Not really. [] I get bothered every time I had a remark about my accent. So, I try to sound more English. It didn't work because they did not understand it more. I tried to sound American. Also didn't work. So I'm, like, okay, I will just speak and try to shape my words right. I don't care if I have an accent whenever I speak anymore. (Tobey, East Asian, gay)

It is worth mentioning that the strategy of venting that was reported earlier, which now appears in my presentation of ineffective coping strategies, was not explicitly signalled as ineffectual. Its inclusion here reflects the potential for misuse, with possible relationship consequences. Anil, a participant in the South Asian group, said:

You know, it's good to vent. And he [*the boyfriend*] likes to listen. He's very comforting but I shouldn't just use him that way, just as a punching bag, and just

to sort of, you know, unload. It is not helpful to unload to your partner all the time.

Lastly, despite the stated value of communication and education as effective strategies for coping with racism, participants were not uniformly of this view. The perceived inability of these strategies to have a bigger impact on a national or global scale was seen as their drawback, in that the process of oppression was limited to a microlevel analysis. In discussing personal strategies that may have proven effective in coping with racism, the participant quoted below offered a revealing account of the strategy that he viewed as ineffective:

Like, I mean as opposed to just sitting down with somebody and talking about how racist the comment was that they made, I'm the kind of person that would write a thesis about it and have that publicized in the academic journal. Or launch some massive campaign, or start writing a book, or something. But it's writing or taking to the streets in a protest or going on radio, talking about it [] this is just who I am, but I try to balloon that on a global stage. And I try to turn it into something that could benefit me as well, right. (Eddie, Black, gay)

Analysis of the sources of influence on participants' choices of coping strategies revealed the impact that internal and external systems of support and resources can have on a person's ability to manage and, possibly, thrive in the face of constant racial adversity. Participants reported being influenced in their coping choices by critical thinkers and activists; by positive social support; by their parents (specifically, their mothers); and by their education. The one consistent finding shared between participants in the South Asian and Black focus groups, when the category of mother was included, was positive social support. Anil, a participant in the South Asian group, commented: "Yeah, and you interact with people who are supportive and so you kind of develop coping strategies based on your interactions with positive people, as opposed to,

I don't know, people who are negative.” Another participant had a similar sentiment, reflecting the close relationship between him and his mother:

Like, for me, it's, like, my mom. [] We talk a lot. [] I will be, like, oh, they talked about me, blah, blah. And then she'll be, like, so what if they talked about you, just to minimize what they said. And she's, like, everywhere you're going to go, whether you like it or not, they're going to talk about you. There's so many things which happens to us, we have no control of that, but the only control that we have is how you cope with it [] after it happens. (Philippe, Black, gay)

The remaining findings differed by racial and ethnic groups. Participants in the South Asian group were more likely to cite their education as influencing their coping choices:

My education is, like, probably the biggest factor that has influenced my coping strategies. I have a degree in psych and poli sci. So I think my [*educational*] awareness of [] oppression and [] discrimination influenced my coping strategy. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Yeah, I think my education is probably one thing. I guess just personal experiences, just the benefit of age and stuff that [] with time, you learn what works and what doesn't. (Mr. M, South Asian, gay)

Similarly, a Black participant alluded to the external influences of activists and public intellectuals in his choice of coping strategies. These individuals epitomized what he aspired to be:

I don't think I've ever been influenced by someone close to me. But I'm influenced by phenomenal thinkers and activists, or intellectuals: Angela Davis or James Baldwin, whom I adore. And so, maybe because I want to be an activist and a public intellectual and somebody who people could look up to as a beacon of hope, my approach is usually ground breaking. (Eddie, Black, gay)

One surprising and interesting finding, specific to a participant in the Black group, was the identification of the racist perpetrator or aggressor as an influence on one's choice of coping strategies. For this man, the perpetrator was a source of motivation for him to rise above his oppression and not feel powerless over his own life or situation:

The people who have influenced me in developing my coping mechanism, I think the people who I experienced direct racism from or who I perceived discriminated against me. I think they also, at the same time, motivated me to find a coping strategy in the sense that I didn't want to give them the satisfaction of their prejudice. I didn't want to make them right; [] I didn't want to give them that satisfaction of their self-righteousness, of their prejudice. And I think that I proved them wrong. And I think that, to some degree, that experience of racism was a source of encouragement to rise above the ordinary expectations that they had of me. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

Service delivery issues, imbalances in available resources, and intervention options.

Assessment of professional support and resources available to help gay men of colour cope with racism was evaluated. Participants commonly thought that such services did not exist, when compared to major cities like Toronto. Mike, a participant in the East Asian group, answered: "I don't think there's necessarily a specific form of support." Other participants did not express disagreement with this position. Eddie, a participant in the Black group, opined: "I don't know any." The same view was expressed by Anil, a participant in the South Asian group, who said: "Well I don't think there are any gay-men-of-colour-specific supports out there in Ottawa."

Despite the unavailability of critical support for addressing racism, some participants believed that gay men of colour could be served by going to Pink Triangle Services, where support can be provided on a limited scale, or similarly related mainstream social services, such

as Family Services Ottawa. This view was expressed mainly by participants in the East Asian and South Asian groups; none of the participants in the Black group shared this point:

Respondent: You can go to Pink Triangle Services, yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that Pink Triangle Services would be able to provide the level of support needed to deal with racism?

Respondent: They will provide you with a certain degree of support. I think that they will have a certain level of cultural understanding, and I think that they would try their best, but I think that's also limited. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

I think if you live in Ottawa, you could go to the family counsellor, like the LGBT family counsellor at Family Services Ottawa. There's Ernie Gibbs, who's also a counsellor at the Centretown Community Health Centre. And then Pink Triangle Services, which very racistly started up this ethnocultural group. [] I mean when they restarted the group recently, it was very racist because it was run by a White person. [] I'm just not interested. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Not all participants in the South Asian group considered it offensive that a White gay man was chosen to lead a group intended for sexual- and gender-minority people of colour. Mr. M said: "Well I don't think there's anything wrong with that." The two remaining participants, however, felt that Pink Triangle Services should have recruited someone from the racialized communities it aimed to serve. Anil stated: "I'm going to say it's a little weird. Like they should have [] somebody from the group."

There was one finding unique to the East Asian group, however. Among participants, there was the perception that mainstream GLB services were unevenly distributed. Available services were seen to be geared towards a certain group of gay men, those who were dealing with issues of coming out or living with HIV/AIDS. Tobey, for example, said: "I noticed, in my perspective, support for the gays are just for a few things: coming out and being HIV positive. I

don't feel like there's services or support for race or racial discrimination whatsoever." These services were critiqued for their lack of attention to issues of race and ethnicity and their interlocking relations to sexual orientation. In this way, the needs of gay men of colour who do not meet the above two criteria are overlooked. Agencies like the AIDS Committee of Ottawa (ACO) can step in to provide some culturally specific services, but personnel constraint is a barrier to quality support. An organization dedicated to serving gay and other sexual- and gender-minority people of colour would be ideal:

Someone of colour could come to the ACO for support as a person of colour, and [he] could [be] provide[d with] support. But that level of support is limited because there are only two people within the institution that provide more mainstream services. I think that it would be great if there were more organizations dedicated to assisting gay men from cultural groups. [] So, if you had an organization that was more dedicated to it, then there would probably be a much higher level of support. So, there is support, but there's a ceiling on it.
(Mike, East Asian, gay)

In the Black group, likewise, participants reflected on the point that service providers were not always sensitive to their needs and realities. Some practitioners were found to be dismissive or prejudicial in their outlook, and to lack appreciation of their varied aspirations beyond a focus on and promotion of safer sex:

I think what Philippe said is what I was thinking. I think that service providers, being social workers or teachers, they should not dismiss what we believe are our experiences. You know, they should not write it up, you know, that we're too angry and that our anger colours everything. And, like, I think that they [] should allow us to speak. They should allow us to speak and take our account seriously.
(Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

I think we need to reframe certain conversations. Because for me, what I've noticed is that whenever you bring up issues pertaining to gay Black men, it usually revolves around sex, right, and sex education. *Down low*, I hate that term so much. But I think we need to recognize that there are deeper issues, other than just sex. I think issues around mentorship and love, communal love and what that means, and healthy relationships and how we begin fostering that and developing that. So I think it's a recognition that we have other aspirations, we have many aspirations that aren't taken into account and that we have many experiences. [] I don't think there's a blanket policy for service providers that, you know, just do these type of things and you'll be able to reach a wider group. I don't think it quite works that way. I think that they need to open themselves up to celebrating and recognizing the difference within our community. Because even the same ways that the LGB community is not a homogenous group, neither are gay Black men. We aren't homogeneous either and I think we need to have a heterogeneous space where we recognize that there's difference and that we all come from different locations and every location should be validated. (Eddie, Black, gay)

Although participants saw the necessity for the creation of formal support services to help gay men of colour cope with racism, they generally believed that the establishment of informal support systems were equally, if not more, important. Mr. M, a participant in the South Asian group, said: "Having such a formal structure of support is fine, but there are less formal ways of doing that too, I think." For example, eating at fancy restaurants in Ottawa for \$25 or less and carpooling to Toronto every month to attend gay South Asian parties were suggested. This point echoed the convictions of other participants:

It should not always be in the formal setting like this. Maybe once in a while, on a Friday, we can meet in someone's apartment, in a bar, or somewhere and try to help some of our friends who are falling through the cracks of society. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

I think that discussion groups or social groups with like-minded people that you can identify with, relate with, share similar experiences of racism or discrimination. I think that that's probably something that could help, especially in Ottawa. I don't feel like there is that form of support. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

The participants' discussion of informal support broadened to include a mentoring component, underscored by the importance of positive role models. This topic was mainly discussed in the South Asian and Black focus groups. Participants critiqued the lack of racial and ethnic minority gay role models who could support their journey of self-discovery and personal growth. It was suggested that it could be beneficial for gay men of colour who were open about their sexual orientation to develop relationships with those who were still struggling with their identities—perhaps helping them navigate the heterosexism of communities of colour and the racism of GLB communities. Such relationships could help to foster a constructive image of the self and others, as opposed to images that reinforce negative stereotypes:

Well, [] coming out of the closet, it would have been good to maybe have some kind of, you know, South Asian gay buddy program or something. Where you could call somebody [] from a similar background that [] you could just talk to and get advice. And I think that would help a lot. (Anil, South Asian, gay)

There is a yearning to feel mentored as well, to getting full mentorship, to see successful, happy, kind, gay Black men, right. And maybe my age comes into part of that because I'm 21 and I want to see, even within the gay Black community, we produce a lot of negative stereotypes and negative images and I'm sort of looking for a positive role model. (Eddie, Black, gay)

There is a deep feeling of pain and loss attached to the absence of role models in these participants' lives, a perceived social reality that White gay men do not have to contend with. The pain could act as a force for creativity and incentive to find solutions to their unmet needs;

but it could also highlight the significance of this loss of relationship and support for one's sense of identity and place:

There's no one to look up to. Like there are no mentors. [] When I was seeing this Brown chap, we decided to invent this character. [] We can go to like Uncle Raoul, even have dinner at his house. And you know, Uncle Raoul has dated so many people and he has like all these super-educated books on his bookshelf. And he can, you know, bring us under his wing and sort of culturated us into being gay, as a South Asian person. We don't have that. Whereas, you know, people who are White, and who are in the gay community, they have it. There's so many people that they can do that with. Like we don't have that. (Anil, South Asian, gay)

I need love and affection and support from other Black gay men, and I don't have that. Because I don't have it, it's a burden that I'm carrying upon my shoulders, because I know I'm not in the right space. I'm not where I need to be, and it becomes very painful when you're not where you need to be. (Eddie, Black, gay)

Consistent with their shared view about the lack of positive role models, participants' explanation for the contributing causes comprised a wide range of political, economic, and social factors:

I think there are a number of factors really. I think some of them are economic too. The fact that most of us live in communities that are deprived of resources and access to adequate health care, for example, and stuff like that. [] I feel there's a glass ceiling as well and we're only expected to go so far, right. And stigmatization as well, the fact that queer racialized folks are, you know, on the streets. [] It's such a huge—I mean I don't even know where to begin, but I think there are a whole host of social, political and economic factors that contribute to the lack of role models. (Eddie, Black, gay)

I actually can't think of a queer person, or Brown person of colour. There are no representations or role models. And those people who dare to be role models, like

El-Farouk Khaki, who you know, he tried to be a role model. Like, I mean they just [] get knocked down so fast. Like, they get bitch slapped out of the spotlight.
(Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Issues, strategies, and action plans on racism. Notwithstanding the complex issue of racism, participants were commonly optimistic about the possibility for change. Individually and collectively, they believed that White gay men could take on greater responsibility for educating and confronting racism. This way, gay men of colour would not always be burdened with the responsibility of teaching them about how or why their actions are racist. Speaking about individual responsibility, Mr. M, a participant in the South Asian group, opined: “I guess, yeah, maybe educate themselves, but maybe not in such a formal way. Like just open your mind.” Another participant from the East Asian group, Mike, reiterated this position: “I think there needs to be more exposure to each other’s cultures. How to actually get there? It’s probably going to require some form of education.” A similar view was expressed by Philippe, a participant in the Black group, who noted the frustration of constantly feeling that he has to educate White people. Commenting on his understanding of why White gay men feel predisposed to express racist attitudes towards him, he suggested that White gay men should do the heavy lifting of informing themselves about their own racism: “I think because they’re so used to it. [] I do believe, whenever I hear something racist, it’s as if I have to educate them.”

From a collective standpoint, participants discussed the need for White gay men to take proactive steps in securing the kind of change desired. The suggested recommendations, however, differed by racial and ethnic groups. For example, participants in the East Asian group articulated that, as part of any problem resolution effort, the first step was to recognize that a problem existed. This began with an accurate identification and naming of the issue:

I think in Ottawa in particular, there's a lot of, "Oh, let's just not deal with anything that's controversial and let's hide behind the curtain." [] So you can't have conversations, you can't have education, and you can't have outreach unless you're actually naming things. (Mike, East Asian, gay)

Similarly, participants in the South Asian group expressed a need for visibility and representation in key areas including, but not limited to, porn. Of concern was the Whitewashing of the adult gay porn industry, which excludes gay South Asian men. Such action could help to normalize the group's sexual appeal and desirability. By not taking the dominant position, White gay men could be integral to bringing about real positive change:

I think South Asian gay porn. I'm sorry, back to that. I just [] think we need to like claim more space. And [] I think part of it means kicking the assholes off of their pedestal and taking up more of that pedestal. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Another participant, Anil, captured this feeling of erasure when he asked: "Why couldn't the advertisement billboards have a South Asian person in the ad?" The implication of this question is that their integration would foster a sense of inclusion and acceptance.

The above issues and strategies or action plans included gay men of colour themselves, with additional differences in findings across racial and ethnic groups. Specifically, it was felt that gay men of colour who witnessed racism should denounce the bigotry, as opposed to keeping silent. Part of this effort would require, when possible, occupying positions of influence and using these platforms to effect change:

I think those of us who see what's happening, and recognize what's happening, I think we have an obligation to speak up about it, and sort of occupy positions where we have influence, just to create some of those changes. So whether it be taking up a coordinator's position to introduce new programs, or speaking to folks

that we know who can do that, and I already have, I think that that's the first step.
(Eddie, Black, gay)

Other times, a commitment to collective understanding and appreciation of each other's culture—that is, dominant White and racialized ethnic groups—could promote positive interethnic relations. Time and patience were seen as crucial to the realization of this change process:

I just think that you will need a certain period of time before it will really feel like change, because there are lots of festivals out there to promote and welcome other cultures that are not focused on the White or Caucasian community. I mean, there is the Asian month and there are festivals and other stuff. So, I think that it will not be an overnight success or something. It will not happen overnight, but I think that we're getting there. [] So far, it's just in a slow way. (Tobey, East Asian, gay)

Even then, some participants in the Black group suggested that the formation of a racialized cultural space was necessary to ease their continued exclusion from the mainstream White gay culture:

Moving forward, I think that we should also concentrate on finding or creating our own spaces. I think that will be one of the cures to the social problem of our continuous exclusion. [] I doubt that the dominant White gay community will be able to accept us the way we want them to accept us. I am very skeptical about that kind of unattainable goal. I don't think it's going to happen, so we should find our own space, if possible. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

Still, gay men of colour may need to be proactive in celebrating and embracing their own beauty, as a way to challenge the mainstream definition of attractiveness. Mr. M, a participant in the South Asian group, remarked: "You know, we can start our own Facebook pages, posting the hot guy of the day but having him be Brown."

Qualitative Findings From Individual Interviews

This section reports the findings from the five individual interviews conducted with gay men of colour about their experience of racism within the GLB community of Ottawa. Fifteen key emergent themes were discerned from the analysis regarding racism-specific contexts, the contributing factors to racism, and participants' coping strategies. The findings are supported by verbatim extracts from the interviews.

Gay Contexts of Racism in the GLB Community of Ottawa

The first research question was: In what specific contexts or circumstances do gay men of colour experience racism and discrimination in the GLB community of Ottawa? Three main themes emerged from the data: (a) racism in gay bars/clubs and dating websites; (b) racism in platonic and social relationships; and (c) racism in romantic relationships. These themes are discussed in detail below.

Racism in gay bars/clubs and dating websites. In general, participants found racism everywhere in the GLB community of Ottawa. Some encountered racism in the context of going out to gay bars/clubs, where it was common for rejection to occur because of their race, which posed a barrier to meeting people for fun if a participant was looking to pick up. Other times, racism acted as the reason for being treated differently based on the perception that the participant was a drug dealer or drug user:

I think I mentioned just being in a bar, you know. [] But I remember [] it was September of 2013. [] I was one of the hosts for the RCMP for a bunch of officers and friends that came from all over the country. And so a bunch of them who are gay said, "Hey, any gay bars in Ottawa?" And so I took them gay-bar-hopping and one of the bars we ended up in was The Edge. And four of us went and all three of them hooked up. [] They're like, "How come you didn't find anyone?" I'm like, "Well, some people just didn't want to talk." [] You know,

they give you that look, right, when you're trying to go up to them, [*and you think*] "What the fuck did I do?" And one of them I remember buying—you know, yeah [] sometimes I'll throw money and I'll buy drinks [] when I can afford that. So I'll buy drinks and everyone's like, "Oh, thank you very much." I'm like, "So want to have a dance?" "Oh, no. You're not my type." "Okay. Well, what's your type?" "You know, like, White." (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

Respondent: Well, one thing in the community, frequently me and two other friends of mine that are Black [] we have all experienced this reoccurring where, out of the blue, in the bar, somebody will come up and assume that we deal drugs, that we have drugs for sale or that we know where to get drugs (laughs), especially the heavy drugs. It's crazy.

Interviewer: What kind of heavy drugs are you talking about?

Respondent: Well, I [] have been asked if I could get crack, coke, [and] Ecstasy in the bars. They automatically think that we are gang affiliated, just because of the colour of our skin, or we could be gang affiliated or at least we have a cousin or a nephew that's gang affiliated. [] I feel that so often, it is just ridiculous. (Justin, Black, gay)

Most of the participants said they had encountered racism on online dating websites, regardless of whether they met the requirements or dating checklists of White gay users. A similar experience was also manifested in a nondating website, where efforts were made by a White gay man to discourage other White people from patronizing a Black-owned gay business:

But I find that coming here [*to Canada*] and facing that sense of racism in the gay community where people [] on, you know, Squirt or Craigslist, when you share a picture with them they tell you they're not interested in you simply because you're Asian, or "You're not my type." "Well, what is your type?" You know, if someone's ad listing is saying, "I'm looking for someone who is understanding and financially and emotionally stable," I fill all of those requirements. But when

I send a picture, I'm suddenly no longer their type. And I've had incidents where I'm chatting, without sharing a face pic with someone on Craigslist, between, you know, 10 to 20 emails back and forth and, you know, it's, "Oh, you're such a great person. I'd love to meet you." And then, "I'd love to see a picture first." You send a picture. Next thing you know, "You're not my type," and I'm like, "Well, that came out of left field." So I think for me my understanding is just either finding out that you're of a certain race or meeting you in a bar and going, "I don't talk to Black people or Asian people." (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

In fact, with my business itself, I am experiencing that. [] Somebody [] was talking to somebody online who deliberately opened up an account to tell people not to shop at my business. And he is your stereotypical, apparently White guy with facial hair, whatnot, and, you know, a shaved head. (Justin, Black, gay)

I have seen it more with [] say, for example, like, Plenty of Fish and those types of online social media. [] My experience is, you know, I have gone online and, you know, tried to talk to people, but they would say, you know, "Caucasian only." Or, "White only," or "No Asians, no Blacks," you know? So that is where I have seen more of it. I don't see it going out because I mean, I don't think anybody would want to be outright racist towards you, to your face. So I see it more in the online sense. (Al, East Asian, gay)

Less frequently reported by participants in the online dating context was that the setting provided user anonymity to both gay men of colour and White gay men for different reasons. For the former, it offered a defence against disclosure of racial/ethnic identity, this delaying possible rejection based on race or ethnicity. In the latter, those with racist views are afforded the platform for transmitting their message of racial exclusion:

Yes, I still go online and sometimes online you have a certain—you know, the screen gives you a sense of anonymity. But, you know, [] I've met people in, let's say, a Starbucks or a Tim Hortons before I would take them home. And then they

see you and they're like, "Oh, you didn't tell me you were Asian," which I'm like, "Oh, I just wasted four hours." But I just don't do that [*now*]. And I think part of the reason why I have stayed single is because, I mean, [] I tell my friends, "Look, if you know someone, do tell them that I'm Asian, do tell them that I'm not like most Asian people." I always say I'm Scottish with a skin pigmentation disorder. You know, I'm the only Asian guy in my pipe band. They all [] look at me and they're like, "You're not Asian," you know. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

Racism in platonic and social relationships. For most of the participants, racism was encountered in nonsexual, general, social situations. The racism often took the form of racial microaggressions masquerading as compliments, such as being perceived as speaking good English; racial tokenism (i.e., recognition as an honorary White person); exclusion from White cliques; receiving disapproving looks from White gay men; and being the target of terrorist innuendos. Common to this experience is the subtlety of White racism, such that racist incidents appear either as innocent/unintentional or nonexistent:

A few years ago I was invited to join [] a [*gay*] social group here in Ottawa, working professionals, like, 25 to 35. It was a social group that always went out to have drinks once a month. And I did that for a while because my friends dragged me along and, after a while, no one talked to me. Everyone had a little clique. [] I remember sitting down—getting there early once and there was a long table and I sat in the middle. And everyone gathered here [*on one side*], and they're like, "Oh, we don't have enough chairs." I'm, like, "There's some here." "Oh, well, it's okay. We'd rather move another table here." (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

[] At the After Stonewall Gallery Christmas party, [] you could see the guilt all over his face because he was looking at me very condescending and, like, "Why are you here? Can't you see we're all White?" kind of look. And I thought it was just my imagination, that I was having a bad day or I was tired, or hungry and tired, and sometimes my mind thinks crazy thoughts. And it wasn't the case. [] It

was the looks, it was like the up-and-down look []. [] But it did make me feel uncomfortable. It brought me [] back to the way I was treated when I was a child. See, I was adopted by Irish-German parents, raised in a White community in southern Quebec. So I know when somebody is being racist because I grew up with it most of my life. [] I mean, you can't pull the wool over my eyes. [] It's, like, I can hear what you're thinking. (Justin, Black, gay)

As an Arab, [] the first thing they will ask is "Where is your gun," right? That could just [be] because you are an Arab and it is associated with having a gun or being a terrorist []. It was a one-on-one conversation, in public, with people passing by. I was asked loudly, where's my gun. (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Racism in romantic relationships. Similar to the online experience of racism, some participants also confronted racism when looking for romantic relationships; the colour of their skin kept them from being seen as relationship material. Racial stereotypes often played a part in White gay men's decision to rebuff romantic advances from gay men of colour, preferring friendship instead. For gay men of colour attracted to White men, the likelihood of romance is diminished, since White men are likely to seek out other White men before considering men outside of their race. Repeated exposure to racism can dissuade gay men of colour from seeking out individuals for romantic opportunities:

I've always said I would [] love to date. I have a certain [] everyone has a certain type. I love to date a certain type. If he's, you know, blond hair or brown hair, whatever, but first and foremost I want to get to know the person because each individual's different and just because you're Black or you're Asian [] all Black people aren't thugs, all Asian people aren't bottoms. That's [] you know, I've had people come up to me and go, "Well, I don't date Asians because you're all bottom." So I'm like, "Well, I'm not." And they go, "Well, you can't [] you have to be," or, "You're all very submissive." Well, I'm not. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

I guess the challenge I see is that [] there are more prospects when looking for a significant other for Caucasians as opposed to minorities; since there are more Caucasians, their prospects are greater. Whereas with someone who is a minority, if you have someone who is more inclined to be attracted to a Caucasian, you are definitely limited in your selection. So I think that there is a challenge there—so basically less prospects. [] Minorities will be less inclined to approach a Caucasian man, you know, if they have had these experiences of racism. You know, they might not be as willing to approach a stranger compared to, I don't know, another Caucasian man with another Caucasian man. (Al, East Asian, gay)

I think that if you are White, you may have more selection because you are kind of at that top, you are the epitome of that pyramid. [] And then, if you are not White, then you essentially start [*thinking*], “Oh, I'll never get a White guy,” or, “I'll never get this, I'll never get that.” (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Contributing Causative Factors to Racism in the GLB Community of Ottawa

The second research question was: What do gay men of colour understand to be the factors that contribute to their racial oppression and social exclusion in the GLB community of Ottawa? Six themes were discovered in the data: (a) anti-Muslim prejudice; (b) White cultural/racial homogeneity, intolerant diversity, and exclusion; (c) White fear, veiled bigotry, and the silence of racism; (d) media bias, White ideals of beauty, and the exclusion of gay men of colour; (e) social invisibility and the racialized deficit discourse of dependence; and (f) cultural marginality, Canadian diversity, and the myth of inclusive citizenship. Each of these themes is discussed below.

Anti-Muslim prejudice. For a small subset of participants, the experience and causes of racism were not uniform. Gay men of colour who were able to pass as White experienced the least racism, but encountered other types of bias such as anti-Muslim discrimination, regardless of whether they identified with the religion or not:

You see, [] I am probably [*in*] better [*shape*] than any Arabs here [*in Ottawa*], because of my blue eyes and my skin colour. So that's my defence right? They [*White people*] won't see me as an Arab, immediately. [] And when I say, "Oh, I am from Syria," there is a, "You're not an Arab. You don't [] look like an Arab," right? So I don't know, what does that mean? Is it a bad thing to be an Arab? Or not, right? [] So [] sometimes I get away from racism because of that, probably. (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

I think [] a lot of people have trouble [] identifying my ethnic background. I have had people ask me if I was Italian, or Brazilian or Portuguese or from different regions of the world, where it is still considered maybe White or Whitish. [] Italian may be easier for them [*White gay men*] to relate [*to*] than Tunisian, [] or maybe they think that, you know, "Oh, [] he's Tunisian, he's Arab. He may be Muslim. This is what he thinks about women," or, "This is what he thinks about that," and so they are able to sort of put me in a box. This is their frame of reference concerning this ethnic group/religion/this area of the world. So yeah, [] it might be easier for them to think I am Italian or Brazilian; maybe this is a happier place for them. (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

White cultural/racial homogeneity, intolerant diversity, and exclusion. The participants elucidated a number of key factors that they felt contributed to their own and other gay men of colour's experience of racism or discrimination in the GLB community of Ottawa. Lack of racial diversity at some social venues reinforced the view they were unwelcome or did not belong; it fostered a "redneck attitude" environment. Racialized stereotypes emphasized the point that they lacked sexual or erotic capital; it legitimized their exclusion as sexual partners. Also, derogatory race-based remarks limited White gay men's interest in them generally. In the same way, the concept of community was critiqued as a misnomer due to exclusionary practices that marginalized racialized members, in which non-White identity was constructed as a weakness, revealing the intolerant character of some White GLB people:

[] As an immigrant to Canada, I have never faced any issue of racism in regards to my colour, where I'm from in the wider, general community here in Ottawa. [] I come from a faraway land that doesn't support homosexuality. Coming here you would think that people, being more open and we talk about diversity in Canada, that you think the gay community will understand. And yet I find [] that the gay community's like its own little nucleus where everyone is concerned about, you know, "Are you White? Are you blond? Are you brown-haired? Are you smooth? Are you [a] twink and are you young?" And unfortunately, if you're a person of colour you don't fall into that category even though I'm smooth, I'm pretty young, I'm good looking, I think. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

[] I feel that there is, like, this very redneck, gay redneck attitude that comes from there [*the CP*]. But not at the Lookout. [] Not at Mercury Lounge, not at any of the other places. The Edge was never like that; it was real nice and mixed. And I like that; I like that mix. [*At CP*] it's [] basically [] the same crowd, the same people, a lot of chronic alcoholics that go there every day at the same time and whatnot, and [] that's actually a culture, it's a culture. And so I rattle things up when I walk in (laughs). (Justin, Black, gay)

Just because of comments that you hear, here and there. For example, you know, you will hear the sort of prejudice [] or the sort of cliché, if you are Asian, you must have a small penis or, you know, [] you'll hear different derogatory comments or perhaps misconceptions that people are sort of saying, and therefore maybe limiting other social groups. And I think that that's [] definitely sad. (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

White fear, veiled bigotry, and the silence of racism. Several participants noted that racism was unspoken, signifying that it was a taboo topic in the community. The combination of fear, lack of knowledge, and an uncomfortable feeling about addressing racism among White GLB people ensured that the problem remained unchallenged; it contributed to a climate of intolerance. The asymmetrical power relations between White and non-White gay men were seen

to promote racial/cultural bias and exclusion, especially when gay men of colour voiced a position that denied privilege or benefits to White people. Likewise, the silence around White racism was perceived to add to the lack of progress on the issue, having potentially deadly consequences for gay men of colour. In this way, racism operated under the veil of hypocrisy, hidden beneath a smile of seething resentment:

There has been no response because no one talks about it [*racism*]. People know it happens. People don't want to talk about it. [] Going back to the 1980s: no one talked about GRID or AIDS. It happened. And if we're going to keep doing that, it's going to get worse. We're going to see maybe an increase in the spike of suicides, you know, among not just teens now but among gay people of colour because there's no support. It's like they're crying out for help. They don't know where to go. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

[] I know when people will smile to you and then, behind your back, say something different. That's also being somebody not living here all my life and moving here and then, you know, going through a rough time and then, boom, now I've got my own business and I've got a whole window on Bank Street. There were so many haters for the first three months, jealous, resentful, hating guys, especially from CP. (Justin, Black, gay)

In terms of power. We [] are not equal, we [*are seen not to*] understand Western culture, we are here, immigrants, right? We are second citizens. If we [] say "no" to something, they [*White people*] may say, "Oh, well, go back to your country." (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Media bias, White ideals of beauty, and the exclusion of gay men of colour. For many participants, the role of the media in perpetuating a one-dimensional representation of the GLB community contributed to their experience of racism. The media were seen to reinforce the idea that to be gay was to be White. This logic was discerned to play out at the institutional/business

level; in magazines or gay calendars; and in movies. In each of these areas, White gay men overwhelmingly represented the image of the community:

Oh, skin colour's the most obvious. I think in part it's the gay media. You know, if you look at gay media and you have a twink, jock, or hot men 2015 calendar, maybe you see one Brown guy, [] but the other 11 months are, you know, White. "Oh, look, he's [] so diverse from this model because he's blond haired, blue eyed and this one is brown haired, brown eyed." Well, that's not fucking diverse. That's two White guys. Diverse is Black guy or Asian guy. How often do you see an Asian person in the calendar? Like maybe never. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

You won't see this [*racial diversity*] at [] CP. This is my cover photo; this is [] actually our model in here. But this is our cover photo of our underwear model, the MC, my business partner, and myself. That, you don't see at CP. We make our shit colourful (laughs). (Justin, Black, gay)

I think that here in Ottawa, in the GLBT community, I think that being White is sort of the epitome of [] I guess the pyramid, if you want, [] you can't go any "higher." And I think that's a little bit sad, truthfully. [] And it is very dangerous because people [*gay men of colour*] can begin to have very negative self-esteem or no self-esteem, [] and begin to think that they are not attractive. They may become depressed, [] anxious in social scenarios, where they don't need to feel anxious []. But I do think that it [*White beauty ideal*] exists, though. I do think that we [] have to transcend this sort of mentality. I would like [] to think that I have transcended it; [] I don't know. (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Social invisibility and the racialized deficit discourse of dependence. One consequence of the media's portrayal of the GLB community as White is that gay men of colour are rendered invisible at Pride festivities, within gay sport associations, and in the context of their circle of friends. They are maligned, placed on the periphery, or seen to be less of a priority

than their White counterparts. At the same time, their invisibility is thought to be due to their low numbers in the community as a whole:

Well, [] you know, our community is very small, [] I find. [] I think there are definitely a lot more Whites as opposed to visible minorities. Like, being Asian myself, I don't see too many Asians, gay Asians out as much as [] our Caucasian counterparts and things like that. So I do have a group of Asian gay friends but, you know, few and far between. I do have, you know, Caucasian friends as well but I have more of them than Asians. (Al, East Asian, gay)

I think it also has to do with population, the amount of GLBT [*people of*] colour in our community. We don't have [*the number*]; that's why I am hoping that those changes will also increase tourism, ethnocultural tourism, that it will attract more Blacks and Asians and [] whatnot, to just come down to club for a weekend, come down to see the sights, come down to shop, and dine. And [] in Montreal, like, [] Haitian [and] Trinidadian friends of mine, their interest in Ottawa is, like, zero. And that's why I got excited before because I know that there is now a community of us. (Justin, Black, gay)

So they [*White gay men*] are very ignorant with respect to everything they do. But there are lots of things they ignore, but one of them is racism. So, as a White man, it is not a priority to talk about someone who is Arab, who is probably Black, who is Asian; it is not a priority, right? We are the minority in the majority, even if its [*the*] gay community [*that*] is the minority. But for us, they are a majority. So [] I think there is always going to be that power imbalance between us versus them, right? (Ali, Middle/Eastern, gay)

Another issue raised (albeit by only one participant) had to do with the deficit perception of gay men of colour perpetuated in the White and non-White imagination. In this image, gay men of colour are positioned as dependent, reliant on the services of benevolent White people and organizations:

I remember [] working very hard [] with Pride []. I went out to all of those events [], because before me I think PTS [*Pink Triangle Services*] was a very White organization. Maybe today it still is but, of course, today you have people [who] have brought the trans issue to the forefront. But previously, PTS was really gay and lesbian. Gay White, lesbian White. The occasional [] coloured people [], I remember one person actually coming to tell me, “Look, the only coloured people we ever saw were those in the support groups or those who were about to commit suicide who needed help.” And I go, “That’s really sad.” They [] met me and they go, “Wow. We’re blown away. There’s a person of colour who is stable and working for PTS in a public profile role, a high profile role.” So I think I helped to break down some of those barriers. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

Cultural marginality, Canadian diversity, and the myth of inclusive citizenship.

Participants were largely in agreement about the Canadian myth of social progress. Most expressed disillusionment with the reality of life in Canada when contrasted with their long-held belief in the country as a just society. Structural inequality in the labour force, for example, was one area in which people of colour were seen to fare worse than their White counterparts:

For example, in the [] workplace, [] especially in the Canadian government, there are mechanisms put in place so that minorities have jobs, right? However, you still can’t avoid some people having more biases towards other races. And you can’t necessarily capture that. So, in an interview process, you may have one person who may not think they are racist, leaning towards [] one candidate because they can identify more with them. Or during an application process, if someone [*is*] sifting through a hundred, 200 resumes in a day, they may look at a name which they, as well, can identify with, like some generic ones, like John or Alex, as opposed to, say, a more, you know, ethnic name. So it’s there but, you know, it might be taking place on a subconscious level. (Al, East Asian, gay)

The broader cultural sentiment of diversity and inclusion that Canadians pride themselves on, which the GLB community claims as its own, was thought superficial. This is because White

gay men were easily dismissive of gay men of colour because of ingrained racist beliefs. In doing so, White gay men were no different than their neighbours to the south:

But then again, to be sidelined without first someone knowing you is [] for me, it's appalling and it's appalling it happens in Canada, a country that is supposedly open and more diverse and more accepting of all people versus, let's say, our neighbours down south. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

In the same vein, the ubiquity of racism in the GLB community cast doubt about the ability of gay employers to hire on merit and not discriminate based on ethnicity. Ali, a participant from the Arab/Middle Eastern group, remarked: "So if you apply for a job and the owner is, let's say, gay, and if the employee is an Arab, how much is that going to affect the decision of hiring or not, right?" Another participant's point differed, although not too drastically, from Jordan's. His quotation below gestures to a feeling of ambivalence and deep polarization on the part of White gay men about their feelings towards gay men of colour, exemplified by a love/hate relationship. This ambivalent feeling reinforced, on the one hand, the marginality of gay men of colour and, on the other, emphasized their sexual or erotic capital. Gay men of colour were situated at the crossroads of conditional citizenship. Justin, a participant from the Black group, said: "They either really love them, and that's what they like, or they are indifferent. And you can tell the clear line between those that have absolutely no interest and those that are only interested."

Coping With Racism in the GLB Community of Ottawa

The third research question was: What strategies do gay men of colour use to cope with the overt and/or covert racism they experience in the GLB community of Ottawa? The data highlighted six major themes: (a) emotion-focused engagement coping; (b) emotion-focused disengagement coping; (c) problem-focused engagement coping; (d) problem-focused

disengagement coping; (e) lack of services, enhancing existing support systems, and building care infrastructure; and (f) taking action for social change. These themes are discussed below.

Emotion-focused engagement coping. For a significant number of participants, coping with racism was best achieved using self-management techniques focused on their emotional reactions to the stressful situation, which were not intended to eradicate the source of their stress. Participants employed humour, deep breathing exercises, meditation and prayer, going to the gym, and support from friends or a romantic partner. Ali, a participant from the Arab/Middle Eastern group, commented: “[] That time [] when it [*racism*] happened, [] I was with my partner, so I had support. I wasn’t alone. And [] he had a couple of friends. So probably that was my support.” Other participants’ comments indicated similar pattern of action:

[] I surround myself with friends who are like-minded or at least who don’t care whether or not I’m a person of colour or [*about*] my sexual identity. [] Most of them have ended up being very gay friendly, gay positive. [] I’m now a godfather to, you know, my best friends’ [*kids*]. [] One of them, he has got two. [] He is the captain of a unit with, like, six openly gay members. [] I think more straight people are becoming more socially aware about gay people. [] The sad part [] the irony is that straight people have less fears about gay people, regardless of the skin colour, than gay people have of their own kind. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

I do a lot of meditation and prayer. [] [*This*] helps me to surrender all negative thinking. [] Teaching myself to love and helping others to love themselves, that’s what prayer is for me. It’s eradicating all negative thinking and things that [] are lies of the past, of our forefathers and whatnot. It’s about the truth now, the absolute truth. We were created to love. That’s what I believe. And so when I remind myself of that, then I can let go of all of the hurts and the pains that have been inflicted on me, and also all the hurts and pains I have inflicted on others, because I was hurt. (Justin, Black, gay)

Emotion-focused disengagement coping. Some participants also chose to cope with racism by withdrawing/distancing from or limiting their involvement in the GLB community, so as to focus on things and people that brought them fulfillment. At other times, the psychological impact of racism was so strong that it induced internal self-blame and feelings of hatred for self and others within one's racial and ethnic community:

Certainly, for me, I am happy living my life, whether it's in the band or with my business. [] I've often said to my friends I'm okay if I'm single for life, as long as I have friends that I love and are around me all the time. [] But I am not going to go out of my way to find a partner. [] I don't know if I sweep it under the carpet just to not think about it. I do think about it, but I don't make that a principal priority in my life right now. You know, if [] someone [] comes along that happens to be of common interest or is mutually attractive, I'd absolutely entertain the idea of dating. But to go out there in the community and spend all this time to end up either getting so little or to end up [] being hurt or being potentially hurt by an idiot who can't see beyond your skin colour isn't a good use of my time, and my time is precious. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

I remember when I was still learning my emotional management, [] to understand, you know, the dissociative and the hyperarousal and stuff that came from PTSD. [] I get down on myself, [] and then actually judge and criticize myself. [] That kind of hate, that kind of racism diseased my mind, where I am like reprogramming it now at this age. It diseased my mind, it caused me to think bad things about myself and the world as a whole. It caused me to be actually ignorant towards my own people because that kind of hate caused me to have shame and false guilt. (Justin, Black, gay)

Problem-focused engagement coping. The majority of the participants adopted either behavioural coping strategies that were intended to remove the source of stress, or cognitive strategies aimed at altering the meaning of the stressful event—to see the situation from a

different angle. These included confronting or challenging racism directly; volunteering; cultural disidentification; understanding others' viewpoints and perspectives or showing empathy; having relationships only with gay men of colour; and modelling diversity and inclusion in business practices. Maximus, a participant from the Arab/Middle Eastern group, opined: "I am not very attracted to a lot of White men. So that's just [] it's just the way I am, but maybe that's my way of coping with, you know, the sort of discrimination that may ensue." Other participants expressed related sentiments about their coping strategies:

For example, I've had someone say to me, "Well, you know, Asian people are all great and all [] but you all here are, like, taking away jobs from us, you immigrants." And I go, "Well, I didn't take away any job. I created my own company." You know, I have White guys working for me. But that's essentially [] the underlying racial [] undertone. And that undertone, that undercurrent is not on the surface but it certainly, I think, inhibits people's thoughts. Maybe subconsciously, maybe it's on the back of their mind when they're talking to an Asian person in a bar saying, "Well, you know, I'd rather go for a White guy."
(Jordan, East Asian, gay)

Respondent: I participate in a support group. I offer my services as a recreations facilitator for African-Caribbean Black men and women living with HIV. I haven't been doing as much work as I did two and three years ago, just because of my own business popping up. But I will be going back and volunteering my services with the organization.

Interviewer: And how does your volunteer work with that organization help you to cope with the experience of racism?

Respondent: Oh, it's so empowering. No. 1, you know, if you are experiencing racism, you really and truly need to connect with community and get the support so, no. 1, you are not isolated. Because racism can create isolation, and

isolation creates fear and [] other negative attributes that come with it.
(Justin, Black, gay)

Problem-focused disengagement coping. The stress of racism can sometimes prove too taxing. In these instances, participants chose to cope with the stressful situation by avoiding places or sources of their stress; electing to not personalize racist actions; and, in the past, using drugs or alcohol as coping mechanisms. Similar strategies were also thought to be used by other gay men of colour to cope with racism:

Respondent: But I [] tried not to take it to heart because obviously these people are looking for something else. And they have these [] internal issues with themselves that, you know, I am not going to [] deal with it, and, you know, it hurts a little bit at first but then, you know, you just move on.

Interviewer: And so when you say move on, what does that look like?

Respondent: It's me trying to, you know, shake [] that feeling off, and getting back on the horse, you know, like, [] I would have sent another message to someone else, [to] see how they are doing and things like that. So I definitely didn't let it discourage me because I knew that, you know, [] people have their preferences. It may not be racial; they may not be trying to be racist, but I understand that people have their preferences. (Al, East Asian, gay)

Well, for most of the times because I [] always knew that there was that stigma. Of course, I would turn to alcohol and [] whatnot, in the bar, and then drugs. [] I was doing it then, for the wrong reasons, because it was out of self-pity and it was out of shame. I found I got overintoxicated. The last time I think I have ever been overintoxicated in a bar, I can't remember when the last date was. It's been at least a couple of years. (Justin, Black, gay)

I tend to just kind of let go of the [*racist*] comment, sort of transcend the experience, and to not let this negative energy penetrate me or affect [] my self-esteem [*or make me feel*] that something is wrong with my ethnic background. [] You can't let people sort of transform your perception, or [] try to crush [*you*] because it's a very White world, right? (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Not all of the different coping strategies were found helpful in dealing with racism. Using drugs and alcohol, overlooking a racist incident or denying its existence, confiding in a romantic partner or friends, and presenting as resentful or angry were thought to be counterproductive:

[] I just don't think about it. I'm sure it [*sweeping racism under the carpet*] is not helpful in that it doesn't solve the problem. If I go out to a [*gay*] bar, I'm sure that [*racism*] would arise again and so I just don't go out to a bar. If I do go out to a bar, which is once every three years now [], it's usually because my gay friends are there and it's a bunch of them. So I do it because it's a party for them or whatever and it's a social time. And I hang out just around them. I don't really talk or socialize with anyone else. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

It was drinking and using drugs. All they brought was resentment, anger, rage and jail (laughs). Yeah. [] And the addiction brought me to places where I [] would steal to get my next fix and whatnot. And [] I had such [] lack of love of self that I would go, frequent, places that I knew there would be guns and knives and whatnot. [] Like I said, I feel like a walking miracle, I really do. I really do. (Justin, Black, gay)

[] Well, yes and no. He [*the partner*] told me, "Oh, just ignore [*it*]," you know. But no, wait a second. You would not understand what [] it means to [] face racism, because you're White. Right? [] So, in that way, it was a tough go. But talking to his friends [] they all [*were like*] "Oh, [] things happen." (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

By contrast, the display of empathy and not identifying with one's ethnic community, and confronting or walking away from racial incidents, where the self is not the target or when the source is a stranger, were thought to be effective coping strategies:

I think both [*disassociating and empathizing*]. [] Because if you don't suffer, you won't be stronger. So if I hadn't had my first experience I wouldn't be [] empathetic towards that [*other*] person for a second time. I would have been so angry at him, right? But I wasn't angry. I was just very compassionate that, "Oh, my gosh, I am sorry that's how you feel," right? [] I think the second one was extremely, extremely helpful, and that was, for me personally, the best step to take. But looking back to the first experience, as I said, I am laughing at myself that I dissociated myself to be an Arab, right? But I don't blame myself; it was fear, right? (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

[] If it was a complete stranger, I wouldn't [] I don't know if I would confront them directly; if it was someone that, you know, a friend of a friend or someone I knew, I would definitely say something. But a complete stranger, I don't know if I would, you know, take the effort to say, you know, "Don't be racist." [] I wouldn't [] just because they don't mean anything to me. (Al, East Asian, gay)

If someone were to discriminate [*against*] me directly, then I would defend myself. [] I would, you know, try to [] reason or speak with the person, like, to find out more about the person, like, you know, "Where are you coming from with this?" and to understand, you know, [] why they are saying this. But in general, as soon as I identify something toxic in my environment, I just kind of let that go and [] move on, right? I choose not to engage in negative experiences, and I think that's a choice, other than if it's directed at me. Then I will [] deal with the person, and then move on. (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Beyond the coping strategies themselves, embedded in the participants' narratives were accounts of strength, resilience, and hope. In the face of racism, many did not allow themselves

to succumb to the oppressive force of racist thoughts and actions. This was a quality that some thought would make them good role models for others. Ali, a participant from the Arab/Middle Eastern group, said: “So because I can see [*and*] sense these things, [] I always take the position that I will be doing role model for the gay community, rather than, “Oh, my gosh, I am doing survivor,” or, “I am the victim.” Others echoed this sentiment:

But I think certainly my personality and my character has helped me become more resilient in that I am not worried about, “If you don’t accept me being gay and Asian or you don’t accept me being a person of colour, it’s not my problem. I can move on. I have a life to move on with, if you can’t accept that.” [] I don’t get on my knees and beg, “Oh, please, you know, date me.” No, because I don’t need [] your pity. [] If you’re planning on giving me a handout [], “Oh, you poor thing, Jordan. I’ll date you or make out with you or sleep with you because I don’t usually sleep with Asians but oh, poor thing, you.” I’m like, “Don’t do it because of that. Do it because you find me as an individual person [] not because I’m Asian but because it’s me [*you find*] unique and [*interesting*].” And I think from my small handful of gay friends, they don’t see me as any different from the mixed, you know, White guy or Asian guy. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

You know, [] I just have to remind myself of the transition, the transformation of taking something negative and doing something good with it. So that’s like I said, you know, when the guy looked down on me I only raised my head higher and smiled more. [] It’s true. And it works. Then they [*perpetrators of racism*] are, like, “Okay.” They get bitch-slapped without getting slapped. (Justin, Black, gay)

Justin’s quote indicates how he also used the perpetrator’s action as motivation to stand tall in the face of racial adversity. Similarly, Ali, a participant from the Arab/Middle Eastern group, identified American psychologist Carl Rogers as an outside influence on his choice of coping strategies. He emphasized Rogers’s particular method of active listening to clients: “The way I coped, I would say the person who influenced me was Carl Rogers.” Other participants

identified their parents or a combination of their parents and books as sources of influence on their coping choices:

Yeah. I [] definitely think my parents had a huge impact on how I deal with [] someone who is ignorant or [*racist*]. [] My parents have taught me to be very patient and understanding of people, so they have had a huge impact, I believe. [] They definitely try to be patient, and in instances where there are conflicts, they try to stay very, like, level headed, and not lose their tempers and, you know, talk things out. But of course there [] are instances where, you know, it happens. But more often than not, they are very patient and understanding and they like to talk. (Al, East Asian, gay)

[] My father. Yeah, my father is someone who is [] very intelligent and [] he had to deal with a lot of racism throughout his life. Also, quite a few books, and it [] seems a little ridiculous, but I used to work at Chapters. And there was a book that I came across that a customer had bought [*back*]. And it was called, “What Happy People Know.” So it [] was a great source of inspiration as well, in terms of being happy, [] and to transcend [*negative*] experiences and whatnot. (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Finally, participants commonly viewed their racial and sexual orientation as interlocked. However, these connections were undermined when navigating between their racial/ethnic communities and the GLB community. In their own racial/ethnic communities, some participants felt that they had to downplay or conceal their sexual orientation, to avoid some people feeling uncomfortable; to prevent negative consequences on the family still living in the country of origin; and to circumvent death penalty where this is still being practised. Regardless, the majority of the participants did not feel more drawn to their ethnocultural communities because of the racism in the GLB community. In most cases, the heterosexism of racial/ethnic

communities might have led them to identify more with their sexual orientation than their racial identity:

[] I don't identify more, at least in Canada, for either/or. Certainly, when I go back home to Singapore my racial identity I think is the primary undercurrent. I try, and I think I do this in part because, you know, ultimately family [] blood is thicker than water. You know, [] my parents, I think they're always a bit uneasy around the subject, but I know my mum has asked about, you know, am I dating anyone? I used to say [] six years ago I'd go, "You mean a girl or a boy?" Nowadays I know that she means a boy, but I don't [] you know, I don't bring that up. I just usually say, "Oh, no. Not really." (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

I [] have some friends, [] Arab friends and whatnot. But I don't think that [] I could live my life in an open way and be who I truly am being friends with them. I don't think that the two [] can co-exist, [] at the same time. So you kind of have to draw a line. And it's either, you know, being fake or not being authentic with who you are, kind of concealing this aspect of you because it bothers them. However, notice that the reverse doesn't happen, right? Like, [] your religion bothers me, so can you please conceal that for awhile? Like [] why can't we just all co-exist? But [] I guess I am just kind of tired of having to hide who I am and playing this game and not being true to myself []. So I have [*had*] to sort of make a few sacrifices, and the people who aren't okay with who [] you truly are aren't worth it. (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

For one participant, however, a life experience of racism led him to, at first, loathe being identified with his ethnoracial identity and community. This changed in his early 40s with the development of a strong sense of racial/ethnic identity. Now, he mainly identifies with being Black more than being gay.

Oh, my ethnoracial [*identity*], yeah. See, when I moved to Montreal in 1985, and I came out, because of the racism [] I experienced growing up, I tried everything

not to be myself. I straightened my hair, I refused to listen to anything that had R&B or anything that was [] like [*Black*], I was ashamed of myself; I was ashamed of my community, because that's what I was taught. [] Now, when I think about it, it's ridiculous, that you could be brainwashed, [] be completely brainwashed to hate your own culture. And that [] happened to me. [] I like how I feel about myself now, being gay. And being gay and being of colour and being of the life experience I went through []. [] Not only that, just also the heterosexual [*Black*] community as a whole, women, men, whatnot. I take pride in that now, you know? Yeah, it's important. (Justin, Black, gay)

Lack of services, enhancing existing support systems, and building care

infrastructure. On the whole, participants generally expressed the need for supportive services to help gay men of colour cope with racism. Currently, this type of service was thought to be nonexistent, both at the formal and informal levels. Although the majority of the men emphasized their wish for more formal support, informal support was not seen as less important. Their expectation was that gay men of colour could connect with each other to provide comfort and emotional care that their White friends, for example, could not provide because of their different lived experience and social location. Formal support, in contrast, was thought to be helpful for self-esteem building among gay men of colour in dealing with racism:

I think an action needs to be done in terms of creating some kind of a resource or a support network. And I say that in very broad terms because [] I don't like to define things sometimes. [] Like, I don't know, Centretown Community Health Centre, right? [] would have a safe space to have it. I know they have the gay men's nights on Thursdays. [] Or, like, the Buzz Restaurant. I'm sure they'll host one. And the next step would be [] it's a partnership. You have to have me or [] maybe start with your respondents, "Hey, you know what? We're starting this collective. Would you be interested in coming out and meeting other gay men of colour?" This is not a, you know, find sex or relationship [*social gathering*]; if it

happens, it happens. But this is really support [*for*] each other. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

I believe it is these social groups. It's like a coffee club, a bowling club. You know, bowling's easy; you just get together and pay \$3 a game, you know? I mean, and it's fun. You go to West Park Lanes and I don't see why not. Or, you know, everybody coming together and going to Rainbow Cinema on a Tuesday night because it's only \$2. Like, I mean, a group of six costs \$12, you know? (Justin, Black, gay)

Counselling, because there is lots of sex addiction in the Arab community, lots of STIs [*sexually transmitted infections; among*] Arab gay men. [] Because remember, like, LGBTQ [*people of*] colour, I am sure you know this, but, like, they always [*face*] discrimination, right? [*Both*] in the GLBTQ [*community*] and then their [*ethnoracial*] communities, if they are out and gay. So if there are no [] places to go for counselling, how are they going to cope? Lots of gambling, drug addiction [*and*] sex addiction []. (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

In line with the above views, the transient nature of Ottawa's GLB community was highlighted as a possible factor in the lack of services for supporting gay men of colour with their experience of racism. For one participant, the low number of gay men of colour in the city might not justify the creation of a dedicated organization or services specific to helping the group. Another participant noted that some gay men of colour are increasingly being integrated into mainstream gay services and programs, so that an organization dedicated to GLB people of colour might not be necessary:

But, you know, I don't know if Ottawa is big enough really to have one dedicated organization for that. [] In the last year or two, you've already been having trouble finding respondents, right? [] Ottawa is a very transient community. [] I'd say that Ottawa has a lot of movement in and out. Just on a daily basis, about half the people who work for the government don't live in Ottawa. And when I

say Ottawa, as in most of them may just be in Nepean/Kanata/Orleans. [] I know people [*who*] commute from Kemptville, Rockland, you know, way out west, like to Arnprior. So on a daily basis, Ottawa is almost like a commuter town, right? (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

Well, [*the*] African, Caribbean and Black Group; it's part of the AIDS Committee of Ottawa, but they offer [] support services to family and friends and other community members [] that are African, Caribbean and Black. It is not just about HIV because half of the [] people are there to get supports to understand HIV and addiction and, you know, cultural integration, especially if you are coming from Africa and whatnot. [*Also*], Centretown Community Health Centre [*has*] couple of gay Black men [] working as attendants, greeters and whatnot. It's a nice mix of people. [] It's not just White gay men. And also there are counselling services there, as well. (Justin, Black, gay)

Consistent with the observation that services could be developed to better meet the needs of gay men of colour, enhancing support for newcomer gay immigrants and refugees was suggested as a top priority for service providers. Of significance is the need for service providers to become culturally competent so that they can provide the best care and support possible, both for coming out and for integration of newly arrived immigrants and refugees into Canadian society:

But what I think about is the person of colour who is gay who has come to Canada and settled in Ottawa, who's from a different country, maybe doesn't speak the language, doesn't really [*have*] a lot of friends, has no one here, they basically came with the clothes on their back, that's the group of people that I find probably need the most support. And they don't have it. I speak English. I have a lot of friends. I have networked a lot. [] If [*I*] needed help [*I*] know where to find it. But those people coming here living in social housing on EI or on refugee status have no one. And I think PTS, being an umbrella organization of the LGBT village or whatever it's called [], should create or at least set up a once a week or

once a month support group or at least train all of its staff to [] have that awareness. [] It is all these intersecting issues coming together, right? A person of colour, doesn't speak English, doesn't know where to find resources, no family, no friends, a refugee. He's an outcast in his home community. The last thing we want him to do coming here is to be an outcast here too. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

It [*coming out*] is absolutely a real issue. [] It depends where the person is; was the person born in Canada or was the person an immigrant, because both have different processes. [] For an immigrant who has come from a different country, they [] are [*dealing with*] post- and premigration issues. Right? Losing identity completely, not the sexual identity but the racial identity. So building all these back, within Arab men, plus working with the coming out, it is a tough work. There is nothing in Ottawa, right? (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Taking action for social change. Participants underscored several actions that could be taken by White and gay men of colour to create the type of change needed in Ottawa's GLB community. The need for discussion about racism in the community was identified as an important first step in the change process. Also, it was suggested that organizations and businesses should embrace racial diversity as a critical aspect of the community's growth. This could create opportunities for partnerships across racial lines. Connected to this point was the felt need for gay businesses to recruit and retain people of colour at their place of employment. The creation of a GLBT of colour community board was proposed, with now being a good time for the idea to take shape. Finally, social gatherings that are inclusive of the community's growing diversity could promote the coming together of people from different racial backgrounds:

I think when it comes to events that are held in our community, [] everyone should come out more, [] just to get to know each other better and [] to see that there are many different races and colours in our community []. I think that we have a lot to learn from each other. Being gay, bi, transgender, lesbian, we all have

similar experiences, coming to terms with who we are, and then, [] just having [] different experiences and different cultural backgrounds. You know, it's interesting. [] I like learning about people and [] I would think that other people like learning about other people as well. (Ali, East Asian, gay)

I find that more [White] GLBT businesses in this community need to learn that [] the more [] diverse we are, the better we will do, especially now, you know, the population, development, things are shifting, changing, expanding, growing, and we need to get rid of these old thoughts and ideas if we all want to, like, excel and make this city great. (Justin, Black, gay)

Talk about it. [] Because when people talk about it, there is going to be more awareness, there is going to be understanding the differences, respecting the differences that we have because, if we don't know that, we will assume we are the same, right? Then there may not be a respect. So it is unfortunate that the only thing [the] gay community talk about is sex []. (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Accounting for Quality in Qualitative Research

The distinctive goals of qualitative and quantitative research necessitate paradigm-specific standards for assessing their quality and validity. Most, if not all, researchers working within the qualitative paradigm agree that conventional, quantitative, methods of criteria such as validity, generalizability, and reliability are not appropriate measures for quality in qualitative research. Within the extant methodological literature, a number of assessment guidelines have been proffered for ensuring rigour in qualitative research. Nevertheless, in line with J. A. Smith et al.'s (2009) endorsement of Yardley's (2000) guidelines, and the authors' discussion about the fit of the guidelines with IPA research, I decided to examine the quality issue for this research study using Yardley's (2000) four quality principles: (a) sensitivity to context; (b) commitment and rigour; (c) transparency and coherence; and (d) impact and importance.

Sensitivity to Context

Sensitivity to context, according to Yardley (2000), is demonstrated when the researcher attends to the sociocultural context in which the study takes place; when s/he engages with existing literature on the topic of inquiry; and when thoughtful consideration has been paid to the manner with which study materials are obtained from research participants (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

First, on the issue of sociocultural context, an explication of my rationale of IPA as a methodology along with the study's focus on both the idiographic and group context of participants' lived experience evidence my responsiveness to this guiding principle. The difficult environment that gay men of colour have to successfully navigate makes it necessary to understand what the phenomenological experience of racism is like for each of them. However, because their experience occurs within a larger social-cultural-political terrain, it is equally important for the study to address the shared nature of the participants' experience in the group. There may, still, be difficulty accessing the study population for the reason mentioned above. In this case, given my shared experience of racism and self-identification as a gay man of colour, my insider status enabled me sufficient access to the community and groups of people I wished to learn more about and to develop rapport with. At the same time, however, my "peripheral" membership role (as determined by my limited participation in the core activities of the group; Adler & Adler, 1987, as cited in Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 55) positioned me as an outsider to the population of study. Such positioning can facilitate newer understanding about the topic of inquiry and contribute to deep insight into the studied phenomena. Likewise, the involvement of GLB-of-colour and mainstream GLB-affirming community groups and/or social service organizations in the recruitment for the study of "experiential experts" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009,

p. 180), further demonstrated my sensitivity to the research context and contributed to its realization.

Second, the extant substantive literature on critical race and queer crit theories, minority stress theory, and stress and coping theory was used to orient the study's conceptual and theoretical frameworks, with findings related back to the broader literature on the topic of investigation in the discussion section. However, there is a dearth of literature on gay men of colour's experience of racism and their coping responses. The results of this study begin to fill that void in the Canadian context. Therefore, it was necessary to review and include relevant literatures from the United States and elsewhere where the issue had been explored to some degree among a similar sample population.

Third and lastly, the starting point of this phenomenological research was my lived experience of racism and my effort to make sense of the varied ways I have coped and continue to manage with this difficult life circumstance. I do so because "my own life experiences are immediately accessible to me in a way that no one else's are . . . [and because] . . . the phenomenologist knows that one's own experiences are also the possible experiences of others" (van Manen, 1990, p. 54). The human dimension of this study thus necessitated adherence to some fundamental research ethical protocols, particularly those relating to data collection. I demonstrated sensitivity to data obtained from participants by following the detailed plan described in the data collection and analysis sections of this chapter. The latter were supported by verbatim extracts from participants to help ground my analysis of the arguments. Following these steps ensured that the voices of participants were present within the work in addition to allowing readers to assess the interpretative conclusions reached (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

Commitment and Rigour

According to Yardley (2000), commitment is demonstrated through a researcher's prolonged engagement with the topic of study, his or her development of methodological competence and skill, and immersion in the research data.

By contrast, rigour refers to the comprehensiveness and soundness of the study (Yardley, 2000). For example, it addresses the adequacy of study sample—not in terms of size, but data redundancy—in generating needed experiential materials for in-depth analysis. Consistent with Yardley's (2000) original work and, as J. A. Smith et al. (2009) have further suggested, rigour also concerns the thoroughness and quality of the interview, including the completeness of the researcher's analysis and interpretation.

Both commitment and rigour were demonstrated in this study by the close attention paid to participants during data collection and in the responsibility taken with the analysis of individual and group participant data. In particular, efforts were made to move beyond surface interpretation of the study data—that is, beyond a simple description of the phenomenon—towards a more in-depth interpretation and unfolding of the meaning of participants' experiences. In doing so, care was taken to ensure that my interpretation paralleled the experiential narratives of research participants. Likewise, the use of multiple approaches to inquiry demonstrates my commitment to an understanding of the breadth and complexities of participants' accounts, and underscores the methodological rigour of my work, which allowed for triangulation of findings.

Transparency and Coherence

The act of fully disclosing in one's writing the stages, steps, and actions taken to bring a research project to fruition is referred to as transparency (J. A. Smith et al., 2009; Yardley, 2000). Transparency can be demonstrated in a number of ways. For example, to enhance the

transparency of my research, I provided a detailed description and tables or figures, where appropriate, of the participant recruitment and selection processes; delineated who and how the group discussions were conducted; and outlined the analytic method and stages followed. In line with Yardley's (2000) suggestion for reflexivity disclosure, moreover, I openly reflected on my own positionality in this chapter by drawing on an intimate, experiential account of perceived racism to foreground my motivation for undertaking this research (see Reflexivity and Subjectivity in Research, below, for discussion).

Coherence, correspondingly, refers to the relationship between the research question and the philosophical, theoretical, methodological, and analytical perspectives taken (Yardley, 2000). The research question driving this study was phenomenologically grounded and designed to be consistent with the core principles of IPA, as it sought to understand the experience of racism and related coping strategies from the perspective of gay men of colour. The small purposive homogenous sample facilitated the retention of the idiographic underpinning of IPA with its commitment to a detailed examination of each participant's experience, in addition to the group's at large.

Writing about the aesthetics of coherence in the finished report, likewise, J. A. Smith et al. (2009) posited that a piece of research would also be judged by whether it presented a coherent argument, if the themes hung together logically, and if ambiguities and contradictions had been satisfactorily accounted for in the write-up. In keeping with their recommendation for attaining coherence/logic, therefore, I read and reread drafts of the dissertation, so that the analysis and any presenting inconsistencies in the study became clearer with each successive reading. Immersing myself in the data and paying close attention to the unfolding participants'

accounts further contributed to this goal, by making sure that my interpretations of the research findings had been carefully arrived at.

Impact and Importance

Yardley's (2000) fourth and final principle for assessing the quality of qualitative research is impact and importance. Underpinning this principle is the idea that no matter how well research has been executed, the test of its true impact lies in whether or not it reveals something interesting, important, or useful to the reader (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). As previously mentioned, although my lived experience and that of others in my immediate and professional social networks provided the impetus for the current research, this undertaking was also influenced by the need for an oppositional, critical discourse that both resisted and challenged the prevailing disease-deficit narrative that had become synonymous with gay men of colour, both nationally and internationally. Most social science researchers hope their work will foster empowerment of those being researched, but in this area such a goal has become increasingly difficult to achieve, due to funding bodies' incentivization of predominantly White researchers to conduct research in the field of infectious disease (e.g., HIV/AIDS), where racialized sexual minorities are the main target population (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012). These studies, rather than emphasizing the resolve of same-sex people of colour to survive everyday violence of racism, oppression, and discrimination, to name only a few, the dominant public truths created are those that portray racialized and sexualized subjectivities as degenerate and in need of saving. Thus, in developing an understanding of the strategies used by gay men of colour to cope with racism, the current research revealed the strength with which they have endured the real-life challenges of racism so that new forms of public truths inspired by their individual and group resilience can be created.

This understanding is an important contribution to the academic literature on, and social work practice with, gay men of colour in Canada.

Summary

This chapter detailed findings from the two data collection methods employed in the study: focus-group discussions and individual interviews. The information that emerged from the sociodemographic questionnaire enabled the contextualization of important demographic characteristics. Through focus group discussions and individual interviews, the study answered three critical subquestions discussed throughout the chapter; in turn, these questions helped to answer the main research question. Participants were not always uniform in their responses; findings revealed points of convergences and divergences both within and across groups, which added depth and nuance to the study. The experience of racism was expressed in diverse ways, and shown to materialize at the individual, institutional, and cultural levels. Several other factors were identified that contributed to racism and the social exclusion of gay men of colour.

Despite their experience of everyday racism, participants demonstrated many strategies they used to manage/survive and, indeed, thrive in the face of racial adversity. These included emotion-focused engagement coping, emotion-focused disengagement coping, problem-focused engagement coping, and problem-focused disengagement coping. Determination of whether a particular strategy was effective or not depended on the situation at hand—an effective or appropriate strategy in one context might be inappropriate or counterproductive in another. Although participants were cautiously optimistic about change, consistent with the action-oriented approach of QCT, they identified crucial steps and actions that could be taken by White gay men and the GLB community as a whole to address racism. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the measures taken to ensure research quality.

Chapter 6

Discussion

The main objective of the current study was to explore the experiences of gay men of colour with racism, and their strategies for coping with it. This is the first study in Canada to do so, using a racially and ethnically disparate sample population. In the province of Ontario, studies involving gay men of colour have generally focused on the experiences of those living in major urban centres like the city of Toronto. The same practice can be seen nationally, where attention has typically centred on the three leading hubs for GLB research: Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. The contributions of gay men of colour in places like Ottawa have generally been overlooked. By its focus on gay men of colour in Ottawa, the present study aims to purposefully expand current knowledge about racism beyond what is normally studied, by examining the Ottawa group's overall coping strategies. In this study, the unique perspectives of gay men of colour in one part of the province or country are not presented so as to reflect the standard experience of all gay men of colour. Yet their insights can contribute to our understanding of racism-related stress, and point to effective interventions in fields like social work and other allied health professions.

In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed and interpreted in relation to previous research. The discussion follows the order of the three research subquestions asked and reported in Chapter 5. In addition to explaining the meaning and importance of the findings, where appropriate, alternative explanations of the findings are provided.

Setting the Context:

GLB-Specific Circumstances of Racism and Discrimination

As the findings in Chapter 5 make clear, racism is a major problem in the GLB community of Ottawa: an overwhelming 85 percent of the participants reported experiencing it. Prior research has confirmed similar results, which attest to the prominence and significance of racism in GLB communities (Brennan et al., 2013; Callander, Newman, et al., 2015; Crichlow, 2004; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han et al., 2015; Husbands et al., 2013; Poon & Ho, 2008; Roy, 2012; van der Meide, 2001). This racism negatively and disproportionately affects non-White racial and ethnic minority gay men. The extent of the problem, coupled with its effect on gay men of colour, suggests that racism is a source of stress. Cumulative exposure to racism can become overwhelming (Pascoe & Richman, 2009), and raise questions about one's inner sense of self-worth and value. Like all things, however, the stressor of racism is not experienced equally. Racist incidents were more common among Black, South Asian, and East Asian gay men and less common among the Arab/Middle Eastern group. What has been less theorized is why some Arab/Middle Eastern gay men report little direct, personal racism in GLB communities, as was the case in this study. This is an important finding, considering the geopolitics of anti-Arab/Middle Eastern sentiment in Canada and other Western countries (Hennebry & Momani, 2013; Iyer, 2015; Salaita, 2006).

One possible explanation is that the outward appearance of Arab/Middle Eastern gay men in the current study closely matched that of White gay men. The Whiteness of their skin complexion—and, in one case, having blue eyes—may have facilitated their ability to “pass.” Racial passing has, historically, referred to an individual of mixed racial identity who successfully passes for and is accepted as a member of the dominant White racial group

(Dawkins, 2012; Larsen, 1929). This was the case for one of the two Arab/Middle Eastern participants, who reported a mixed Tunisian and Canadian heritage. Yet as the findings in this study corroborated, the concept can equally apply to individuals with a monoracial identity like the second participant, whose physical characteristics (i.e., hair texture and colour, skin and eye colour, and facial features) evenly resembled those of White people. In this way, passing can afford safety and protection to certain individuals, ensuring that they are shielded from the negative effects of White racism.

Indeed, an earlier investigation by Ibanez et al. (2009) found that Latino gay men with darker skin colour and Indian or African features were more likely to be discriminated against than their more European-looking, lighter-skinned counterparts. More recent research, which explored race relations and racism from the perceptions of gay and queer social service providers of colour in Toronto (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012), reported a similar dynamic. In that study, among the Latin American participants, the light-to-pale skin complexion of a foreign-born participant from Mexico was inferred to have mitigated his exposure to racism, with accent discrimination identified as the main source of bias. What emerges in these studies is that the darker in complexion or further away from Whiteness one is, the likelihood or odds of being targeted for racism increases. Although there is need for more research to establish causality, the evidence seems to suggest a relationship between being dark skinned or having nondefining White characteristics (e.g., facial features) and racism.

The insidiousness and complexity of racism is revealed by the extent to which it permeates the GLB community in Ottawa. Participants felt that racism was deeply embedded in the structure of the community, reporting most encounters with it at the interpersonal/intergroup and general/institutional levels. In the former, the dating context proved particularly challenging,

given the conflicting dominant White racial sentiment about gay men of colour as appealing—and appalling (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Munoz, 1999; Poon & Ho, 2008). Although White gay men are disposed to sleeping with gay men of colour in private, they are indisposed to being seen in romantic relationships with them in public. Befriending them may not carry the same level of discomfort; however, the literature on interracial relationships among adolescents suggests that this type of friendship is more difficult to maintain and tends to be less reciprocal because of social stigmas, such as those based on race (see Billy & Udry, 1985; Kao & Joyner, 2004; Vaquera & Kao, 2008).

It appears from the findings that, for White gay men, image and perception are of great import. Who they date and are seen to be dating matters a great deal; it functions as a status symbol used to denote one's social standing in the community. Thus, to date outside of one's race may be seen to result in a diminished social status. The experience of race-based dating preferences was generally perceived by participants to be more subtle in person than online (Callander, Newman, et al., 2015). Given the silence around the reason for the participants' rejection, these preferences reinforced the men's social exclusion from the GLB community. Online racism, by contrast, tended to be more overt or blatant. Expressions of racial hatred were more clearly communicated, and sometimes included threats and intimations of violence.

The issue of dating preferences based on race has been examined in other studies (Callander, Holt, et al., 2012, 2015; Gosine, 2007; Paul et al., 2010; Phua & Kaufman, 2003; Plummer, 2007; Poon et al., 2005), with similar conclusions drawn. However, some of these studies also revealed mixed interpretations among participants regarding the meaning of this phenomenon, such that some found the act racist and others did not (see, for example, Callander, Holt, et al., 2015; Callander, Newman, et al., 2015; Paul et al., 2010). In the latter case, the

tendency was to think of racial dating bias as a matter of preference or taste. The present study supports these findings. Yet, the fact that the majority of participants also found the act deplorable is worth highlighting. White gay men's repudiation of gay men of colour on the grounds of their skin colour amounts to racism. It is a mode of othering, implicated in the construction of arbitrary ingroup and outgroup categories, with gay men of colour situated on the periphery. The framing of gay men of colour as outsiders serves to maintain a homogeneous and incomplete picture of the GLB community, in which the perception of gay sexuality is inferred to mean White. What is more, allowing racism in dating practices to be conceptualized as a so-called preference can result in a situation where certain iterations of racism go unchallenged (Callander, Holt, et al., 2012; Callander, Newman, et al., 2015; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Phua & Kaufman, 2003).

In the context of online dealings where participants looked to meet other men for sexual hookups and/or friendship, most of the participants encountered this setting as problematic, due to the vitriolic racist epithets and display of racist attitudes and stereotypes (e.g., "No Asians") on the part of White gay men. In many ways, using an online platform to establish connections with others could prove menacing, as it facilitates messages of racial superiority and hatred. The subtlety of in-person racism might be tempered by the perpetrator's need to avoid being confronted by the target. But similar restraint seems less important online, where users' anonymity acts to privilege their freedom of expression—a White gay man can articulate a racist thought without regard for the implication of his words or action. Findings from other research support those of the current study, in their suggestion that online anonymity provides the opportunity for some White gay men to air their racist views openly, without fear of repercussion

or consequence (Callander, Holt, et al., 2012; Callander, Newman, et al., 2015; Gosine, 2007; Paul et al., 2010; Poon et al., 2005; Suler, 2004).

Interestingly, not all participants in the current study labelled the online sex and dating practices of White gay men as racist. This finding corroborates the work by Callander, Newman, et al. (2015), which also advanced the idea that the reluctance to do so may be because of the strong connotation attached to the word *racist*, and that participants in their study were implicated in the same behaviour as White gay men. Indeed, in the current study, one participant expressed doubt about labelling such practice racist, a sentiment that was echoed by few others. He queried whether he was equally guilty of racism, having conveyed in the past his aversion for White gay men with red hair and freckles. His account poses an interesting conundrum but, much like the explanations offered by Callander, Newman, et al. (2015), overlooked one difference: when White gay men claim to not desire Asian men, as captured in the phrase “No Asians,” the plurality of the signifier Asian suggests the exclusion of *all* Asians and not just the individual Asian man. This is not the same as saying that one is not interested in certain types of White gay men, since not all of them have red hair and freckles. In this way, the possibility exists for dating other White men with features considered desirable. Along this line of thought, current findings suggest caution with respect to the interpretation of why some gay men of colour choose to not label an incident racist: they may shy away from doing so to avoid the negative emotions aroused by racism. In other words, because there is such a sensitivity among White men to being labelled as racist, and since the word connotes such a moral transgression, men of colour may be careful not to offend White men by calling them out as racist, mostly because they do not want to deal with the repercussions of that White man justifying his behaviour or words. As an alternative, and a way to process race-based social rejection, they may look to non-race-related

explanations, such as thinking that White gay men do not find them physically attractive in terms of body shape, size, and muscularity (see, for example, Brennan et al., 2013).

Juxtaposed to the exclusionary dynamic of race-based sexual preference is the pervasive sexual objectification of gay men of colour. Findings from this study suggest that, despite the conception of gay men of colour as undesirable romantic partners, there is no shortage of interest in them for indiscriminate sexual pleasure. The objectification of their body parts, for the sexual enjoyment of White gay men, reflects the unimportance of their human worth and value. Gay men of colour are valued only to the extent that they are able to satisfy the exotic fetish of White gay men (Crichlow, 2004; Fung, 1996; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; McBride, 2005; Teunis, 2007). As persons, they are mere commodities for the spectacle of White curiosity. Their mortal existence is rendered a footnote in the drive for an exotic encounter. Far from a shift in consciousness on the part of White gay men, the practice of only valuing the body parts of gay men of colour is not different from rejecting them as romantic partners. Sexual objectification is the enactment of power; it is a mode of relation in which the dominant group “innocently” exercises control over people with less power. In doing so, they become blind to the full humanity and complexities of the objects of their desire (Ayres, 1999; Green, 2008; C.-S. Han, 2008b).

An American study by Teunis (2007) reached a similar conclusion. Reflecting on the sexual power dynamic involved in the process of sexual objectification of Black men, the author suggested that White gay men, in expecting to be catered to sexually by gay men of colour, maintain positions of privilege and dominance. Even as they take the sexually submissive, bottom, role to Black men, White gay men ensure that power remains firmly in their control.

Black men, like other gay men of colour, are merely made to perform the sexual role that has been scripted for them.

Similar to interpersonal and intergroup manifestations of racial discrimination, the expression of racism at the general and institutional level reinforces the view that gay men of colour are inferior to White gay men (Bérubé, 2001; Cho, 1998; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Ratti, 1993; M. Riggs, 1989). As observed by participants in the study, the engagement of some organizations in questionable business practices and the invisibility of gay men of colour within cultural spaces, such as in gay advertisements and magazines, augment the notion of their subordination.

One of the important ways that participants felt they were made to feel invisible was through their exclusion from White gay circles. White gay men were described as “cliquey,” “standoffish,” or “snobby,” and behaved as if they were “clones” of each other, participants said. Such behaviours suggest that some White gay men may be averse to pushing beyond their comfort zone to embrace people who do not belong to their racial/ethnic and cultural groups. In addition to mirroring each other’s aesthetic qualities, the insularity of the group was seen to contribute to the lack of racial integration within the broader GLB community. The research by Nakamura et al. (2013), on the experiences of community integration among first- and second-generation Asian MSM in Canada, supports this finding. The authors found that, although some Asian MSM held a more positive impression of the gay community than their ethnoracial community, others found it racist, and difficult to make friends and meet people; the sense of the gay community as being “cliquey” and “hard to crack” were highlighted as contributing factors in this experience.

Institutionally speaking, well-intentioned organizations may be complicit in reproducing racism, when they overlook how their practices unfairly advantage White gay men and disadvantage gay men of colour. Perhaps more disconcerting, as the findings also suggest, is the unapologetic position of some individuals and organizations when they have been made aware of an unfair or exclusionary business practice. For example, it is problematic to use the images of White gay men on outreach posters for HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention without seeing the exclusion of gay men of colour from the posters as contentious. Refusing to see the importance of including these men suggests that the general inclination to think of institutional or structural racism as ordinarily unconscious, outside of an overt/blatant demonstration of discrimination, may actually be part of the problem.

Unlike conscious racism, in which an individual or organization is implicated in a racially motivated behaviour, the reference to *unconscious* can undermine accountability. Rather than hold individuals or organizations responsible for their racist actions, they may be forgiven for not knowing better, since they would have acted differently under a more enlightened circumstance. The problem with this kind of thinking is that it fails to recognize how individuals and organizations may intentionally act in discriminatory and exclusionary ways to maintain the status quo. The rhetoric of innocence implied in the concept of *unconscious* may provide a convenient way for some individuals and businesses to express their racist views without having to take accountability for their behaviour when it is time to do so.

Psychologists Blanton and Jaccard (2008) found that, while people may not always know or have control over the causes and consequences of their racial biases, this did not amount to evidence to support the claim that they possess unconscious racism. They asked: “How do researchers show that people possess [racist] views that they cannot perceive?” (p. 281). For

these authors, evidential claims that White people, for example, harbour unconscious racism are the outcomes of overly strong interpretations of findings from implicit attitude measures. To Blanton and Jaccard's point, other studies (e.g., Aberson & Ettlín, 2004) have suggested that White people may behave in a racially biased manner when said action can be ascribed to nonracist intentions.

In the current study, the example of outreach posters with White gay men that were used to promote HIV/AIDS awareness among Black gay men illustrates this point. Philippe said: "I was telling them, why don't you have any Blacks [] and [*they said*], is it really necessary?" Questioning the necessity for Black representation on HIV/AIDS awareness posters aimed at Black gay men comes across as nonracist, since the disease can be seen to be racially neutral. That is to say, HIV/AIDS affects gay men as a whole, regardless of race or ethnicity. However, implicit in the question posed to Philippe is the perceived threat of his request to the position of White privilege and dominance. If Black gay men do not access HIV/AIDS support and care at the same frequency as White gay men, how would the use of White-themed posters encourage them to seek such services in the future? Would a Black gay-themed poster be used to persuade White gay men to seek HIV/AIDS treatment and support services?

Regardless of the means by which racist expressions manifest themselves, and the different contexts in which they occur, one key finding of the study is that racism can impact the health and well-being of gay men of colour (Chae & Walters, 2009; K.-H. Choi et al., 2013; Diaz, Ayala, Bein, Henne, et al., 2001; Diaz, Ayala, & Bein, 2004; Giwa, 2015; C.-S. Han et al., 2015; South Asian Network & Satrang, 2006; Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004). Most of the participants felt challenged by racist incidents and reported feeling physically and, perhaps, emotionally exhausted from the experience. In one case, a participant noted the stressful impact

of racism on his irritable bowel syndrome, suggesting a possible link between racism and its effect on the gastrointestinal system. Interestingly, the few participants who reported not being challenged or bothered by racism because they had grown up with it, also reported similar physical and emotional outcomes as those who did. This finding suggests that, although previous exposure to racism may lessen its perceived future risk, the feeling of exhaustion that results from being the target of racism is inescapable.

Another finding supports a tenuous relationship between racism and unsafe sexual practices among gay men of colour (K.-H. Choi et al., 1999; Diaz, 1998; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Nemoto et al., 2003; Stokes & Peterson, 1998). The weakness of this association may be explained by the novelty of the research topic—most participants appeared to have had few opportunities to reflect on how racism factored into their sexual behaviours and practices. However, earlier studies suggested that the devaluation and sexual rejection of Asian men by White men could lead to their depression and participation in unsafe sexual activity (Chae & Yoshikawa, 2008), increasing their risk of sexually transmitted infections and diseases. With one exception—or possibly two—it is conceivable that participants may have circumvented the subject due to the public nature of the discussions, and to avoid being judged by others.

Previous literature supports the association between racial discrimination and negative physical and mental health outcomes. For example, Zamboni and Crawford (2007) reported that racism was a predictive factor in poorer sexual functioning among African American gay and bisexual men. Another study found that, among gay and bisexual Latino men, the experience of social discrimination—such as racism—was a strong predictor of psychological symptoms including suicidal ideation, anxiety, and depressed moods (Diaz et al., 2001).

Participants in the current study reported exhaustion from being in unsafe and hostile environments where they perceived racism to have been levied against them. The physiological symptoms of low energy, tiredness, upset stomach, and in one case, irritable bowel syndrome, may point to a kind of race-based battle fatigue. Racial battle fatigue arises from the wear and tear of daily having to activate social-psychological stress responses in the combat against racism and discrimination (W. A. Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). Research in which this theory has been applied demonstrated a relationship between racial minority health disparities and the social stressor of racial discrimination (e.g., Orozco, 2015; W. A. Smith et al., 2007; W. A. Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2012). For example, in one study African Americans who reported more perceived instances of racial discrimination were at higher odds for generalized anxiety disorders (Soto, Dawson-Andoh, & BeLue, 2011). More research is needed to better understand the application of this theory to the racialized context of GLB people of colour.

All forms of oppression are interconnected. Several of the participants seemed to take this position when considering the impact of racism on their social identities and self-identification. Their reported experience of racism neither pushed them towards their ethnoracial communities nor obliged them to identify more or less as gay or someone of colour. There was some indication, however, that the heterosexism of communities of colour may have influenced the decision of some gay men of colour to identify more with their sexual orientation than their racial/ethnic identity. In the Canadian cultural context, the experience of racism appears to have led other participants to identify more with their racial/ethnic identities. One participant expressed a sense of struggle and difficulty with compartmentalizing his identities, due to the awareness that they were intricately connected. These varied responses point to the complexity

of navigating multiple social identities, and suggest that several factors (e.g., self-concept, racism, heterosexism, and cultural context) may influence self-identification.

More than a decade ago, Conerly (2001) asked: “Are you Black first or are you queer?” Although Black same-sex people were the focus of his work, the above findings from the perspective of diverse gay men of colour provide a measured response to the question. The findings are consistent with Conerly’s own view that responses to the question will vary. Some participants held both identities equally central to their self-concept. For others, however, the decision to identify with either their sexual orientation or their racial identity was influenced by the heterosexism found in communities of colour and the cultural context (Canada versus country of origin) in which the question was asked. Similarities can also be found between current findings and those reported by George et al. (2012) and Schnoor (2006), in which the consensus seemed to be that an individual’s experience of identity would be a function of the person’s self-concept and interaction with his environment.

Towards an Understanding of the Causes and Factors That Contribute to Racism:

What Do Gay Men of Colour Think?

When considering factors that may be contributing to racism, participants identified and discussed a number of critical issues. One key finding was the migration of White gay men from the Canadian maritime provinces to Ottawa (see N. M. Lewis, 2012, 2014). The homogeneity of these places of origin was seen to negatively shape their world view; most were perceived to have grown up without exposure to people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Participants interpreted White gay men’s lack of awareness and sensitivity to racial issues as contributing to the unconscious racist attitudes and actions directed at them. That is, White gay men were not perceived to act in an intentionally racist way.

A lack of environmental exposure to diverse racial and ethnic cultures can lead to racial prejudice among White people. Several studies, including this one, have demonstrated that interracial understanding is a major benefit of an exposure to diversity. Research into the effects of diversity on intergroup attitudes and behaviour suggest that exposure to diversity may help students from homogeneous backgrounds—those from all-White or all-Black communities, for example—learn about themselves and the cultures of people different from their own (see, for example, Gurin, Dey, Gurin, & Hurtado, 2004). A similar conclusion was reached in a meta-analysis study (Toosi, Babbitt, Ambady, & Sommers, 2012) in which the researchers found that participants who engaged in interracial interactions were more likely, at first, to report negative emotions such as anxiety, compared to those who participated in same-race interactions. However, with repeated interracial interactions, the negative feelings subsided.

The positive effects of diversity consciousness extend beyond interracial relations. To illustrate: research by Ueno and Gentile (2015) into friendships between GLB students and straight students in college showed how the straight students' understandings of nonconforming perspectives and experiences different from their own helped them construct moral identities. In that study, the moral identities of straight students were underscored by their intentional and sustained friendship with GLB students, which they attributed to personal enlightenment and political engagement.

The cultural myth of Canada as a country that respects racial and ethnic differences has been implicated as a factor contributing to racial discrimination, influencing White gay men's response to claims of racism. The myth of national superiority based on liberal values of accommodation and cultural diversity can act to insulate them and other White people from criticisms of wrongdoing, thus providing an environment of racial protection (DiAngelo, 2011).

Because of this blind spot, they may unwittingly discriminate against gay men of colour. The understanding seems to be that, living in a country like Canada, White gay men may perceive themselves incapable of acting in racist ways. Specifically, their positive internalization of the multicultural ideals of Canada may conflict with accounts of racism levied against them by gay men of colour.

Moreover, since the process of internalization can be intensely entwined with one's self-concept, White gay men may resort to defensive moves as a way to assuage their feelings of guilt or uphold their racial innocence. Such defensive moves have been the focus of previous research (van Dijk, 1992). For example, in her examination of the concept of White fragility, DiAngelo (2011) discussed how the smallest amount of racial stress (e.g., calling White people out for racist behaviour or language) could trigger unconstructive emotional responses from White people—anger, fear, and guilt. Far from advancing the racial dialogue, when White people express themselves by arguing in defence of their virtue, keeping silent, or leaving the stressful situation, the balance of the scales may be tipped in the White group's favour.

The current study supports the above conclusion, especially in finding that White gay men deny the racialized accounts of gay men of colour, instead putting the blame for the gay men of colour's negative experiences with racism directly on them (see C.-S. Han, 2008b). Despite that most accounts of denials reported by participants occurred at the individual level, there was indication of a social dimension to denials of racism, where White gay men came to each other's defence. This finding corroborates van Dijk's (1992) work, with its suggestion that such defence aims to portray a positive image of the dominant White group, in order to shield its members from allegations of racism. For van Dijk (1992), this public discourse of denial is more disconcerting, given its potential to shape consensus within the group.

The present study's findings indicate that the experience of racism and social exclusion of gay men of colour may also be related to their low numbers within the GLB community. This lack of numbers may act as an incentive for racism among White gay men and contribute to their efforts to keep the physical and social spaces of the community exclusively or at least predominantly White (Bérubé, 2001; Nero, 2005). Despite their small number, participants criticized other gay men of colour for keeping silent and not challenging racism. This criticism seems to overlook the risk associated with demands for social change—White gay men could intensify their acts of racism and make an already hostile situation even more unbearable. But because of their small number in the GLB community, some gay men of colour may feel alone or perceive a lack of instrumental support if they speak up to challenge White gay men about their racism. Thus, at the risk of further marginalization, they may turn a blind eye to acts of discrimination.

Indeed, several of the participants echoed this point, while objecting to the perceived lack of social support from seemingly liberal-minded White members of the GLB community. Given this objection, the suggested fear that some gay men of colour may feel about speaking up seems justified. Besides, not all gay men of colour are open about their sexual orientation to themselves and those around them, including family members and friends. By speaking up, they may risk disclosing their gay identity in advance of them being ready to reveal it. For this reason, silence or omission about White racism may seem a logical solution to self-preservation.

Prior research has also shown that racism can lead people of colour to internalize White people's negative messages (Brennan et al., 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2007). They may collude with the oppressor, thus maintaining the status quo—White power and privilege, and biased beliefs about their own humanity. For example, C.-S. Han (2008b)

researched the role of gay stock stories in the marginalization of gay Asian men. He found that the pedestalization of White gay men resulted in the loss of power for Asian men over their sexual choices and, more devastatingly, led them to see each other as competition and not as allies. This latter finding is consistent with those of the current study. Some members from the East Asian and South Asian groups saw themselves as competition for the attention of White gay men, with the result that there was considerable resentment and distrust among group members. In looking to White gay men for validation, gay men of colour may demean others who look like them, in an attempt to mirror the dominance of the racial group in power. They may expect that their actions will grant them acceptance into the dominant social group. By engaging in behaviours that perpetuate White dominance, they inadvertently maintain the ideology of White supremacy (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C. W. Han, 2013). Moreover, in mirroring the dominant relations of oppression, gay men of colour contribute to the devaluation of themselves while helping to fortify the normative aspect of Whiteness that enforces their subordination.

Within the mainstream gay culture, the White gay man is celebrated as possessing the standard, ideal beauty (Brennan et al., 2013; Callander, Newman, et al., 2015; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Green, 2008; Roy, 2012). This standard of gay beauty is another factor that contributes to the experience of racism among gay men of colour. White gay male beauty is applied to all other gay men, without regard for cultural specificity in shaping hegemonic notions of desirability and social relationships. But White beauty is achieved through framing non-White racial beauty as ugly. Hence, gay men of colour are reminded of their diminished sexual capital or currency in the marketplace of desire, and their pool of romantic interests is significantly reduced.

Constructing White beauty as supreme means that different racial and ethnic groups may end up competing against each other for the next best spot on the beauty hierarchy, so as to avoid the social pathology or stigma of one's group being branded the least desirable. This system of racialized competition speaks to how Whiteness comes to personify beauty. White gay men have grown up and been socialized in a cultural context that exhort their importance and value (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; K.-H. Choi et al., 1999; Harro, 2000; Pease, 2010; Roy, 2012). Whiteness assumes an unassailable status, supported by the ubiquity of positive White images and the expectation of racial comfort and belonging. Because of Whiteness, White gay men have not been conditioned to think about race and its related unearned privileges. Race and racism, including how they shape the beauty discourse, is something that happens to other people who do not look like them. Thus, White gay men's unquestioned dominant position over non-Whites is consistent with their experience of living in a society that prioritizes their reality and perspective.

It is not surprising, therefore, that White gay men would position themselves as the most attractive and desirable social group. With White dominance and supremacy firmly established, gay men of colour are left to compete for remaining inferior positions. Often, the outcome of this process is influenced by the actions (or lack thereof) of White gay men. For example, White gay men's decision to prioritize Latin American men as the most desirable among non-White racial groups reinforces their attractive value. In turn, other gay men of colour may judge their self-worth and value based on the ability to date a White or Latin American gay men, at risk to their psychological health (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Poon et al., 2005). Ahmed (2006) summarized it best, saying: "In a way, if Whiteness becomes what is 'above,' then Whiteness is what allows some bodies to move 'upward'" (p. 137). A previous study of Internet sex ads, documenting the differential value placed on gay men from diverse racial and ethnic minority groups, pointed out

that being rejected or devalued because of one's race can result in psychological distress (Paul et al., 2010). Ultimately, what is important to understand about this hierarchical system of racialized beauty is the ability of White gay men to maintain and extend their power in narrowly defining beauty ideals through a White frame of reference, without regard for the damage or impact their actions may cause.

Lastly, findings of the conflation of Black masculinity and sexual orientation as a source of racism were surprising and unexpected. The concern was expressed that, among White gay men, identifying as Black and gay was tantamount to having a damaged identity. Among White gay men, to identify as both Black and gay is to call into question one's authenticity as a man; these identities are read as mutually exclusive and noninterlocking. This finding is a departure from the Mandingo mythology commonly invoked in the representation of Black gay masculinity (McBride, 2005). According to this mythology, Black gay men are imagined to have big penises, making them ideal as tops in sexual encounters with White gay men. In sexual terms, they are positioned, behaviourally, as masculine. Their masculinity appears to pass largely unquestioned and undiminished. But outside of this context, current data seems to suggest that it is deleterious for Black men to self-identify as gay. The negative framing of a gay identity raises two important questions: If claiming a gay identity is bad for Black men, why is it respectable for White men? How is that White men are able to maintain their sense of masculinity while at the same time affirming a gay identity?

Consistent with previous research on gay Whitening practices (Bérubé, 2001), the construction of a gay identity as something damaging to Black men may reflect an attempt by White gay men to exclude Black men from their cultural space. In doing so, White gay men would be allowed to retain their sense of dominance and racial hierarchy. Ahmed (2006)

intimated a similar logic in her theorization of habits and space, suggesting that Whiteness is a form of “bad habit” (p. 129), by which White people are allowed to occupy space restricted to non-White bodies. In inhabiting space, the space is transformed into the quality of the bodies occupying it, that is, White. Thus, in the context of the GLB community, the exclusion of Black bodies would ensure that White gay men continue to assume the Whiteness of the space, reinforcing the equation of gay and Whiteness.

Coping With Racism:

What Works and Does Not Work for Gay Men of Colour?

The findings of the current study demonstrate that gay men of colour adopted and tailored their coping strategies according to the stress experience of racial discrimination. These different strategies underscore the concept of minority stress advanced by Meyer (1995, 2003a), and reflect the well-known stress and coping typologies postulated by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), namely: *emotion-focused coping* and *problem-focused coping*. These two broad classes of coping have been classified as disengagement and engagement coping respectively. In the present study, it was found that these binary categories could be further distinguished to more accurately reflect their perceived utility. Specifically, the data suggested that not all emotion-focused coping was negative, as disengagement would imply. Just the same, not all problem-focused coping could be considered positive. Coping characteristics and effectiveness are context-dependent, requiring an individual to recognize and appraise the level of threat; select a coping response; and evaluate the benefits of that coping response.

When it came to the experience of interpersonal racism, participants coped with these discriminatory events in several ways. Emotionally accepting others (i.e., perpetrators) as they are, seeking social support from other people of colour or romantic partners, and using humour

to reduce the stress of racial discrimination encapsulated the different emotion-focused engagement reactions. In many ways, the first strategy reflected participants' attempts at managing expectations they had of others, especially White gay men. Understanding that White gay men might have grown up in environments that lacked racial diversity helped to contextualize encounters of personal racism. In this sense, a higher expectation might be placed on individuals from racially and ethnically diverse communities (e.g., Toronto) compared to those from homogenous areas (e.g., the Maritimes).

The process of managing one's expectations of others, however, may reveal ideas about what one can and cannot control. Having this insight may help to orient one's energy output, so that attention can be focused on things within one's power to change, minimizing further risk or impact of racism on the self. There is a parallel between this finding and those reported by K.-H. Choi et al. (2011). In that study, the researchers reported that when participants perceived their stigmatizing situation as inevitable, they chose to dismiss the stigmatization. This way of responding to racism is consistent with the ideology of emotion-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Related to the above strategy is rumination. Some participants rejected negative treatment as an inevitable rite of passage. Instead, they chose to think about racism, thereby avoiding becoming desensitized to it. Although thinking about racism did not end the discrimination directed at them, it enabled them to understand what conduct they could expect from White gay men, in effect removing the sting of discrimination or minimizing their emotional response to it.

The social and emotional support of other racial/ethnic minority group members, both gay and nongay, was found to play a positive role in managing racism-related stress and discrimination. These support structures provided a safe space where participants could discuss

personal and group-specific issues of racism. The non-White racial composition of the group seemed to have been an added benefit, helping to bring together people who shared a common experience. The way they nurtured each other seemed to help individuals to feel their experiences affirmed, so that they could begin to heal. As well, the close emotional ties and bond that developed between individuals in the group could act as a source of positive reinforcement for weathering future life challenges. In addition to relying on the support of their social networks (e.g., the “Black Fam”)¹³ for coping with racism in the GLB community, findings demonstrate that some participants used the same coping strategy in response to racism outside of the GLB community, such as in processing the incidence of racial discrimination experienced in a classroom.

These findings emphasized the value of informal social network systems. Receiving social support from others within one’s network can be a good defensive measure against racism (Bryant, 2008; Noh & Kaspar, 2003; Yoshikawa et al., 2004). In this way, social support appears to have a protective property in managing individual and group experiences of racism. However, as the research by C.-S. Han et al. (2015) cautioned, this finding must be interpreted with care, given the mixed results of the benefits of social support strategies in coping with racism.

Some participants used humour as a way to challenge racism. The ability to make fun and light of an issue appears to have favourable implications (Allport, 1961; Freud, 1928/1959; Maslow, 1962). In addition to naming the issue, which can help to normalize the experience, the target is able to keep the source of the problem engaged in the discussion process. Maintaining an open line of communication can help reduce the negative stress of racism, and the perpetrator may find his capacity for change bolstered. In addition, humour appears to provide participants

¹³ “Black Fam” was a term used by one participant to refer to the Black racial composition of the social support group he was part of.

with perspective, ensuring that their experience does not become overwhelming. Moreover, compared to anger or dramatic interactions, which may have a counteractive effect for the target, humour may be useful for cultivating prospects for desired change (Abel, 2002; Kuiper, Martin, & Olinger, 1993).

The finding of the positive effects of humour on cognitive appraisal of a stressful situation is consistent with other research in this area (e.g., Kuiper et al., 1993; Lefcourt et al., 1995). For example, Abel (2002) investigated the relationship between humour, stress, and coping strategies among undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory psychology course. She found that participants with a high sense of humour appraised everyday problems as less stressful and reported less current anxiety, compared to those with a low sense of humour. These participants were also more likely to use problem-solving coping strategies than participants in the low humour group.

Patterns revealed in several studies point to the importance of physical activity for managing stress. For example, a study that investigated the relationship between stress, physical activity, and body mass index concluded that nonphysically active participants were stressed at a higher level compared to their active counterparts (Lippke, Wienert, Kuhlmann, Fink, & Hambrecht, 2015). Because the study was cross-sectional, the authors could not confirm whether physical activity buffered stress or, in the case of inactive participants, if high stress level was the result of not adopting a physically active lifestyle. The positive benefits of physical exercise on well-being and coping with stress was confirmed in a qualitative study with nine university students (Kim & McKenzie, 2014). The researchers found that engaging in physical activity had the following six advantages: (a) positive emotions; (b) unity of mind and body; (c) heightened self-esteem; (d) leisure; (e) problem-focused coping; and (f) enhanced health behaviour. Other

studies have reported similar findings (see also Truong & Museus, 2012). In the current study, several men indicated participating in individual and group recreational activities out of interest, such as swimming and curling, but only two participants discussed how running or working out at the gym related to coping with racism. In the former example, the experience of racism can leave one feeling precarious, and running can act as a conduit for releasing pent-up emotions and anger—getting “some of the edge off.” In this way, it may help to reduce stress hormones and maintain homeostasis in the body (Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006).

One other interesting finding of this study, which is not discussed in earlier studies, is the coping strategy of venting to one’s romantic partner. This is not a commonly used strategy across the different racial/ethnic groups; it was reported and discussed by one participant in the South Asian group. For this participant, venting was an effective method of coping with racism. In addition to expressing painful feelings and aggravation, venting permitted him to receive support from someone close and nonjudgmental. Much like the encouragement offered by individuals in social support networks, a romantic partner can provide a safe space for a man to comfortably and candidly speak about his experience of racism. In this way, he can feel respected and affirmed. Another participant in the Arab/Middle Eastern group indicated receiving some support from his romantic partner. However, compared to the South Asian participant, the quality of support was not as strong as he would have wanted. Other participants, the majority of whom reported as single, did not identify this strategy. Those in monogamous relationships, other than the South Asian and Arab/Middle Eastern participants, reported differential risk exposure to racism. The minimal experience with racism may have resulted in their lack of need for venting to intimate partners. It is also possible that when they did encounter racism, they perceived the

experience as not acutely stressful, further negating the need for emotional support from a close partner.

There is empirical support for venting as a way to cope with stigmatization. For example, in a study that looked at the strategies used by gay and bisexual young men who were coping with heterosexism, McDavitt et al. (2008) reported that venting emotions—talking, crying, and involvement in creative expressions such as drawing—emerged as an important outlet for youth who felt socially isolated. Although the study did not focus on racism specifically, the research finding confirms the salience of venting as a coping mechanism for dealing with stigma and discrimination.

Findings in the current study also illustrated that participants coped with their experience of racism using emotion-focused disengagement strategies. Although these strategies may provide temporary relief or escape from the stressful situation, they do not actually resolve the problem. This is because, on the whole, emotion-focused coping aims to reduce or manage emotions caused by a stressful event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The most common strategies were emotional distancing or suppression, social withdrawal, and self-critical thoughts about one's self.

Consistent with the premise that people use emotion-focused coping when a stressful situation is perceived to be beyond their control, participants did not always express their real emotions, especially to the perpetrator—the source of their stress. They may have thought that expressing such emotions would bring about little change. Indeed, the data indicated that participants considered that, were they to make their exact feelings known, negative consequences might result. Fear of retaliation by someone known to the perpetrator emerged as important to their decision to conceal anger, and their preference for using profanity to express

their feelings. This finding suggests that Whiteness, as a manifestation of privilege and power, can both inflict wounds and curtail expression of open opposition to the system of White supremacy. Although emotional distancing and suppression can seem beneficial to the target, some scholars have suggested that this style of coping can lead to negative health outcomes (e.g., Feagin & McKinney, 2003).

In terms of social withdrawal, the decision to spend less time in the GLB community and more time with heterosexual and nonheterosexual friends enabled participants to avoid the negative experience of racism. The need for validation from others with shared experience and values looked to be a compelling factor in this decision. Participants appeared to have accepted the fact that White gay men would not give them the recognition and validation they needed, and thus did not see any reason to continue to involve themselves in the community. In making this decision, they seem to have moved towards regaining a sense of power over their lives, by refusing to allow White gay men to dictate their worth and value. At the same time, retreating from the community looked to come at their own expense. The decision seemed to have been foisted on them. They were faced with the choice either of withdrawing or continuing their membership in a community where they knew they would experience racism. Indeed, it is likely that participants' decision to leave may have been motivated by their need for self-preservation, even though they may have preferred to maintain their connection to the GLB community. Previous research with MSM of colour regarding their coping strategies for dealing with racism and homophobia revealed a similar pattern (K.-H. Choi et al., 2011). Some participants in the study by K.-H. Choi et al. intentionally avoided social situations and settings where they expected to be subjected to racism. Others, however, chose to avoid certain individuals rather than distance themselves completely from these settings (see also C.-S. Han et al., 2015).

Some participants employed the self-critical notion of “trying harder” in their efforts to cope with racism. At first glance, the idea may seem unproblematic. However, a closer analysis of the participants’ data revealed the possible internalization of the stressful racist event. They may have blamed themselves for their negative experience of racism, believing that they could have done more to prevent the situation from happening in the first place. In this way, they diminished the responsibility of the perpetrator, and transferred the full burden of the event to themselves. Indeed, compared to the strategies already discussed, trying harder implies that racism is something within the target’s control. Yet, as the evidence suggest, there are two outcomes to this emotion-based coping: one either becomes like White gay men, or resents the feeling of having to exert more effort than them. Regardless, rather than engage in behaviours that would address the real problem, participants focused more on actions (such as doing community or volunteer work, and putting more effort into looking good) that might win them acceptance or validation from White gay men. Their efforts seemed to err on the side of risk, with no assurance that White gay men would recognize them as equals.

Experiencing racism may thus provoke feeling direct responsibility for discrimination perpetrated by the dominant White group, and fuel corrective actions on the part of the target for perceived recognition and affirmation. In a study of body image among ethnoracialized gay and bisexual men, Brennan et al. (2013) found that participants engaged in a number of bodily corrective measures (for example, skin lightening), as a way to negotiate their experience of racism and to achieve acceptance from White gay men. As in the current study, Brennan et al.’s participants looked to have internalized the experience of racism, believing that by altering the way they looked—that is, to appear more White—White men would find them more desirable (see also C.-S. Han, 2008b).

There was clear indication that participants also sought to cope with racism by taking a problem-focused engagement approach. The strategy of confronting or challenging the perpetrator was widely reported. In taking this action, participants wanted to resist their oppression by calling attention to the aggravating situation and its source, regardless of whether the event took place in public or in private. There is an empowering quality to this strategy—it allowed participants to exercise autonomy and voice, so as to avoid the label of victim. This finding substantiates previous research that found that gay men of colour engaged in open and direct confrontation to actively counter racial stigmatization (e.g., K.-H. Choi et al., 2011).

However, K.-H. Choi et al. (2011) reported that direct confrontation was the least used stigma-related coping strategy among their participants. In this regard, their finding contrasts with the current study. The difference may be explained by the researchers' focus on multiple experiences of social discrimination, specifically racism and homophobia. The present study only looked at the coping responses of gay men of colour to racism. Scholars such as Bryant (2008) and Wilson and Yoshikawa (2004) have reported similar findings. In their investigation of the experiences of racism and sexual discrimination among Asian/Pacific Islander MSM, Wilson and Yoshikawa (2004) found that participants used confrontational and nonconfrontational coping strategies in response to racism and homophobia. Bryant (2008), whose investigation examined how Black MSM learn to cope with homophobia and racism, reported comparable findings.

Taking concrete actions such as advocating for the interest of sexual minorities of colour during a gay film festival, and doing volunteer work to help demystify the perception of gay services as limited to White people, were means by which a small number of gay men of colour coped with racism. In addition to benefiting themselves, there was a potential social value to these strategies for other gay men of colour, who might see themselves reflected in the media and

services they consume. As the findings further suggest, there is an opportunity for White people to develop a heightened awareness of racialized discrimination as manifested in the media, social services, and health care environment.

Moreover, unlike direct confrontation, the strategies of advocacy and volunteerism demonstrate specific efforts that can be undertaken to effect a particular change. They should not be seen as superior to other strategies, since the choice of coping strategy may be influenced by the social situation and individual motivation. Yet, according to some researchers (e.g., Mattis et al., 2004; Szymanski, 2012), racism-related events are a predictor of an individual's involvement in social change activism. For example, Szymanski's (2012) study on racist events and individual coping styles as predictors of activism found that African American men and women were more likely to engage in activist-related activities, with benefit to the whole group. The researcher also found that, when experiences of racist events were low, individuals with high reflective coping participated more in activism compared to those with low reflective coping. However, when the level of racist events was high, all of the participants engaged in activism. Szymanski's (2012) study concluded that activism was one way that African Americans coped with racism.

Several interesting findings also emerged from the current data, reflecting coping differences among racial and ethnic groups. The coping strategy of looking for and dating gay men from outside of Ottawa and Canada was reported by a participant in the South Asian group. Another participant from the same group considered taking similar action, but reneged because of the amount of work required. This finding suggests that gay men of colour might be forced into drastic actions to deal with their experience of racism. Going abroad could be seen as an attempt to escape an unpleasant situation; this participant, however, took control of the situation.

In travelling to the United States, thereby widening his pool of potential mates, he was able to circumvent his local dating problem. The change in thinking and environment may have contributed to his renewed self-confidence, as he was able to find a partner. There is an economic dimension to this finding, with implications for other gay men of colour. An individual's ability to travel abroad implies a certain level of economic freedom. Not all gay men of colour have discretionary funds to look for a romantic partner abroad. Thus, this coping strategy may be limited to gay men of colour who are financially successful or well off.

In the Black group, information seeking was a coping strategy reported by one participant. This strategy entailed attending and listening to race scholars discuss issues of race and racism, and drawing lessons to help make sense of one's experience of racial discrimination. The low number of participants who used this strategy suggests that information seeking may be limited to those feeling they lack social network support or a repertoire of coping strategies to validate their personal experience of racism. For this participant, the reputable standing of the race scholars and their presentation topics might have helped him to sort through his thoughts and validated his experience. Here, the finding points to the possible isolating feeling that racism can produce; individuals may feel they have to deal with their experience of racism alone. External validation, however, may help them to not internalize the racist event. In this way, they may come to understand their exposure to racism as not their fault, but as reflecting systemic and structural inequalities in society.

Recently, a study conducted by C.-S. Han et al. (2015) found that participants used problem-focused coping strategies to manage the stress of racism. However, among the problem-focused coping strategies documented, information seeking was not one of them. According to the authors, the difference may be due to the choice of questions asked; participants were asked

only about their *immediate* response to a racist incident. The limited line of inquiry contrasts with the current study, which sought a full account of the different ways that gay men of colour coped with racism, both past and present.

Another participant in the Black group mentioned treating White gay men in the same negative way that he and his friends were treated. Engagement in retribution-type behaviour such as switching from English and French to Burundi ensured that White gay men were kept at a distance. At other times, the participant and his friends would extricate themselves from the particular setting, so as to make White gay men feel they were invisible and inconsequential. This was not a surprising finding, given the number of men in the study who reported feeling excluded/invisible or treated as if they were imposters in the GLB community (Brennan et al., 2013; Cho, 1998; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2007, 2008b; Nero, 2005). The finding also suggests that the individual participant might have thought that his actions would help him to regain his sense of power. Indeed, a study by Wilson and Yoshikawa (2004) pointed to a similar account. As opposed to switching from one language to another, some of their participants put down or insulted the source of their discrimination.

Vigilance against the possible threat of racism was mentioned by another participant in the Black group as the way he coped with racial discrimination. He was able to think critically about his surroundings in order to analyze and better understand the problem, thereby avoiding feelings of self-blame. Being alert to the reality of racism helped him from inadvertently becoming the target of discrimination. Vigilance can help to develop or maintain sensitization to racism, pushing one to always be on the lookout for signs of discriminatory practices. Maintaining vigilance, however, can be taxing on the individual (T. T. Lewis, Cogburn, &

Williams, 2015). The effort required to always be on guard can deplete personal resources needed in other areas of life.

On a more perilous level, vigilance can expose one to many instances of discrimination, directed both individually (racism against gay men of colour) and at a group level (racism against people of colour in general). There is similarity between the current findings and those reported by Wilson and Yoshikawa (2004), with respect to self-attributed responses to coping with social discrimination. For example, to avoid being the target of racism and homophobia, one of the participants in that study stated that he would avoid being too “flamboyant” or “loud” in public. This self-policing behaviour is consistent with the type of regulatory vigilance demonstrated by the participant in the current study.

Similarly, among the Arab/Middle Eastern group, participants expressed either only dating gay men of colour or disassociating from their cultural roots. The former strategy is comparable to the vigilance demonstrated by the participant in the Black group. Here, however, the participant felt that by not dating White gay men, he would lessen the likelihood of coming into contact with racism. The benefit of cultural disidentification was thought to outweigh the cost, since the individual would be free to identify with a nonstigmatizing identity other than Arab. There is similarity between the concepts of *cultural disidentification* and *passing*, as the individual concerned also possessed physical features that made it possible for him to not identify as Arab (i.e., having blue eyes and a white-to-pale skin complexion).

Although less used, problem-focused disengagement coping constitutes another means by which some participants coped with racism. Walking away and choosing to ignore or not think about racism were common strategies. In this way, participants avoided dealing with stressful racism-related situations. These strategies may provide immediate reprieve from an otherwise

difficult and painful experience, while also making sure that the racist incident did not get out of hand. The data also suggest that the decision to walk away or ignore a racist episode may be a deliberate calculation on the part of the target (Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004). Some people may choose to avoid stressful situations of a social nature for fear of being outnumbered by members of the dominant racial group; they may fear that they will not be supported in their effort to challenge racism directly. Thus, as opposed to blindly ignoring the problem, avoidance may be a carefully thought-out response to a situation in which the target feels disadvantaged compared to the perpetrator. This understanding may help to explain one participant's outright expression of aversion to racism in environments where he perceived himself to have the upper hand, such as in the context of delivering an anti-oppression training.

In addition, the strategy of avoidance may reflect an individual's normal disposition, in which thinking about racism may come to represent an irritation; it may be out of one's character to do. Not thinking about racism may help to facilitate the recognition of others as human beings, and discourage the focus on their skin colour. There are limitations to this thinking, however. In overlooking a person's race or skin colour, an aspect of their humanity is diminished. At the same time, being colour-blind can occlude consideration of the far-reaching systemic effects of racism for White people and people of colour, and limit the target's own understanding of his oppression. The finding of avoidance is consistent with that found in the study by C.-S. Han et al. (2015), whose subjects were African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Latino gay men. Active avoidance was equally used across the different groups; it was not limited to one ethnic and racial group.

The consumption of intoxicating substances such as alcohol was not used as a coping strategy by the majority of participants, except for one participant from the Black group and one

participant from the South Asian group. (Another participant from this latter group intimated the same; however, his account came in the context of supporting the former in not feeling alone in his choice of coping strategy.) Alcohol seemed to serve them as an escape route. It helped them numb the emotional pain of racism, which sometimes compromised their thinking and judgment, leading to unsafe sexual contexts (see Diaz, Ayala, & Bein, 2004). In one case, alcohol enabled the participant to remove himself from an uncomfortable or stressful racist situation at a bar or nightclub. Given the nature of bars and nightclubs as places to drink and socialize, the participant's expression of a need for alcohol could be seen as normal. From a strategic point of view, it provided a sensible way out of racist encounters. Previous research has demonstrated an association between the experience of stigma and substance use. McDavitt et al. (2008), for example, found that gay and bisexual young men used drugs to manage the emotions of sexual stigma and to deal with feelings of isolation. Although the researchers focused on strategies for coping with heterosexism, their findings point to the function of substance use as a stigma management strategy, and can be extrapolated to the current study.

It is possible that the fear of judgment from others, particularly in the focus group context, deterred participants from disclosing their own use of alcohol and/or drugs for coping with racism. Thus, while the majority of participants reported not using alcohol as a coping strategy, most believed that alcohol and drugs were means by which other gay men of colour dealt with racial discrimination. One participant from the East Asian group also understood alcohol to be a universal coping strategy for other problems, including peer pressure. A possible explanation for this difference may be the perceived stigma attached to drinking, especially if one appears to drink excessively, and to lack control over the use of alcohol. Still, the marginal

finding of alcohol as a coping strategy for racism may accurately reflect the experience of study participants.

Understanding the coping strategies used by gay men of colour would be incomplete without also considering the strategies they found most and least effective in coping with racism. Further reflection on the influencing sources of their coping strategies helped to contextualize their approaches to dealing with racism-related stress.

Communication and education were the strategies most uniformly shared across racial/ethnic groups. These strategies had the advantage of promoting open dialogue between target groups and perpetrators, thereby increasing mutual understanding and recognition of people's differences. Their benefit lies in the opportunity for the target to educate White gay men on how their conduct may be racist, so as to promote personal growth. For targets, as the findings support, the chance to contribute to another person's growth has intrinsic value; they feel part of the change. C.-S. Han et al. (2015) reported a similar finding among their study participants, however with significant racial and ethnic difference. The coping strategy of "education/confrontation" was most common among the Asian/Pacific Islander group, followed by African American and Latino gay men. Combining education with confrontation was misleading, however, this would suggest that both are related or interchangeable. The present study showed that the purpose of confrontation was not always to educate, and that one strategy does not precede the other. Also, no significant differences were found among the different racial and ethnic groups regarding the use of communication and education as strategies for coping with racism.

The finding that social support was an effective strategy for coping with racism was not surprising. Among other benefits, supportive relationships or resources can promote one's sense

of belonging, increase self-worth and value, and create a feeling of safety (George et al., 2012; Meyer, 2003a; Yoshikawa et al., 2004). A previous study (Yoshikawa et al., 2004) showed that family and friendship networks were effective in coping with racism, homophobia, and anti-immigration discrimination; furthermore, such support was associated with lower levels of unprotected anal intercourse with a primary partner. By comparison, reduced opportunity for family and friendship support, along with higher levels of exposure to all three types of discrimination, was found to have the reverse effect (Yoshikawa et al., 2004).

Other research has questioned whether social support can buffer the effects of racism. For example, in their research on stress and coping with racism and their role in sexual risk for HIV among men of colour who have sex with men, C.-S. Han et al. (2015) reported four coping strategies employed by participants: avoidance, dismissal, social support, and education/confrontation. As with other coping strategies, they found little evidence that social support buffered against stress from racism. Current findings were consistent with Yoshikawa et al. (2004) but not C.-S. Han et al. (2015). The discrepancy may be due to differences regarding the perceived quality of support received or not. In the present study, participants may have received the support needed to cope with racism, whereas participants in C.-S. Han et al.'s study may have regarded the quality of their support as inadequate.

When efforts to find local White romantic partners have been exhausted, travelling abroad to find one, for example to the United States, was seen as an effective strategy for coping with racism. Perhaps the strategy brought one closer to others with perceived shared values and interest. Rejection by White gay men in one's country of origin can lead to a negative impression of them; travelling abroad may help to renew optimism in the possibility for long-term relationships with White men who have similar romantic aspirations. An individual's negative

impression of White gay men—as a group—may change because of the positive experience of dating one; he may now not see all White gay men as racist. The appeal of this strategy may also lie in the perception of Americans as less likely to hide their intolerant racist views compared to Canadians (Javorčíková, 2005). Direct knowledge of the reason for one's rejection may be seen as less difficult to process than a rejection shrouded in mystery, as is the case with subtle racism. The benefit of the former is that it reduces the amount of time one spends looking for a partner and, in turn, minimizes exposure to racist episodes.

Reliance on spiritual beliefs, meditation, prayer, and acceptance of what one can and cannot control emerged as effective strategies for coping with racism. For example, one participant said his spirituality developed out of a perceived lack of social support. He did not draw strength from other gay men of colour; instead, his spiritual beliefs deepened to where he felt strengthened by his connection to ancestral spirits. Spirituality can give purpose to one's life by helping the individual to make sense of his pain and suffering. Beyond this benefit, however, it can also nourish a constructive self-concept and promote positive self-evaluation and psychological adjustment; an individual may come to appreciate his own value and worth.

These findings are not atypical, especially in the context of religious heterosexism. For example, several studies have noted the importance of religion and spirituality in the lives of gay men of colour, despite their being subjected to religious intolerance because of their sexual orientation (e.g., Garcia et al., 2008; Kubicek et al., 2009; Pitt, 2010). Similarly, knowing what one can and cannot control may lessen the stress of racism. The understanding of racism as an inevitable aspect of the general social fabric (Aylward, 1999; Bell, 1992; Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; N. Razack & Jeffery, 2002) can make the experience less isolating or stigmatizing. This awareness can alter one's perception of a racist situation, including

unrealistic expectations that one might have of other people. At the core, then, is the realization that the only real control people have is over themselves—in this case, the way they choose to respond to an incident of racism.

Anger appeared the least effective strategy in dealing with racism-related stress. It did not matter if the anger was justified, or if the perpetrator was made aware of his racist behaviour or not informed about the reason for the target's display of anger. In all cases, displaying anger was viewed as counterproductive. Findings suggest that avoiding self-stereotyping (e.g., as the “bitter queen”) may factor into why participants did not consider anger to be an effective strategy. Concern over how they would look to others also emerged as an important consideration. In addition, rather than encouraging productive dialogue, anger was seen to keep disputing parties in a heated state of emotion. This finding adds credence to the research by Wilson and Yoshikawa (2004), where one participant felt that the display of anger would prove the perpetrator right.

Like anger, the use of alcohol to cope with racism was deemed ineffectual. This may reflect the role that using alcohol or drugs was perceived to play in the management of stress—both are maladaptive coping behaviours that inhibit people from dealing with the challenges of daily life (e.g., T. M. Hall, Reback, & Shoptaw, 2015; Moore, Biegel, & McMahon, 2011; Mutchler, McDavitt, & Gordon, 2014). Participants may have inferred that, beyond an immediate relief, drinking or drug use was not a long-term solution to the stress of racism. Reliance on alcohol, for example, can heighten one's risk of addiction. One may feel trapped in a cycle of using, so that the stress from using simply leads to more stress. The findings also suggest that drinking to intoxication can place an individual in a compromised position, increasing his risk of

acquiring the virus that cause AIDS (Diaz et al., 2004; Mutchler et al., 2014; R. G. Robinson, 2015).

Despite communication and education being found to be effective, the data also demonstrate their limited efficacy as coping strategies. This discrepancy may be due to their microlevel orientation, as opposed to the findings being contradictory. The focus of change at an interpersonal level overlooks the kind of effort needed to effect macrolevel social and systemic change. This observation points to the possible danger of looking narrowly at the problem of racism and its possible solutions. Rather than an either/or thinking, the findings point to the importance of system-wide approaches, with the potential to eliminate racism and its pernicious effects. In addition, they suggest that the choice of coping strategy may be influenced by an individual's personality and temperament. People who believe that racism will continue to exist may be more inclined to use microlevel strategies, such as working to change the attitudes and beliefs of people within their reach of influence. Alternatively, those who consider that racism can be eliminated may lean towards macrolevel changes, such as engaging in public denunciation of racism. Regardless, in both cases, current evidence implies equal or comparable value; the outcome of one strategy is not more important than another's.

The other interesting findings in this study concern the strategy of venting. On the one hand, venting to one's intimate partner was considered helpful for dealing with racism, but on the other, inattention to a partner's tolerance threshold can have the opposite effect. In the process of wanting to be heard and validated, there is the potential for the venting partner to neglect the welfare of the listening partner; the latter may be treated as an emotional punching bag for the other's frustration and anger. Relationships in which the partners are from different racial and ethnic backgrounds may be more vulnerable to this predicament. A White man in a romantic

relationship with a South Asian man illustrates this point. Beyond the status of a lover, the White man represents the dominant racial group that is the source of his partner's negative experience. Despite the White partner's efforts to be supportive, he may not fully understand the experience of racial discrimination. Venting can disintegrate into an attack against the White partner, and the external stressor of racism misdirected towards him. In the end, both partners may feel overwhelmed or defeated in their need to be supportive and to feel heard and validated.

In a small number of cases, people close to the participants—supportive and caring individuals with a positive outlook on life, such as a parent—had an influencing role on their coping choices. Positive people are able to inspire solutions to a problem compared to people who might want to dwell on negativity, without any real solution for moving past a difficult experience. They can also be perspective seekers in the face of adversity, and can help put things into perspective, creating new ways of seeing and thinking about a problem. Perceiving that positive people are oriented towards problem solving can make them credible sources of information on coping with life's challenges. If they have gone through their own personal hardships and emerged from them unscathed, their actions may have modelled healthy resilience strategies, which can set the condition for an individual to become optimistic in his outlook on life.

In one study, whose findings parallel the current research, Yoshikawa et al. (2004) examined whether family and friendship networks protected the mental health and HIV risk among Asian/Pacific Islander gay men from the influence of discrimination. They found that men who had conversations with family members and gay friends about their discriminatory experiences had a reduced level of unprotected anal intercourse with primary partner. The study's

finding point to the influencing role of these networks on sexual-health decision making in the context of social discrimination.

In the current study, moreover, differences were found across three racial/ethnic groups. South Asian gay men reported that education influenced their choice of coping strategies. The type of degree program—psychology and political science in particular—seemed critical to their exposure to social justice issues, and may have helped them to develop a wide range of personal and social responses to inequality and discrimination. Among Black and Arab/Middle Eastern men in the study, external sources of influence had a positive impact on some of their coping choices. In the case of Black participants, esteemed public intellectuals and activists of the same race occupied important roles in their lives (see also K.-H. Choi et al., 2011). These individuals symbolized good living role models and, in one case, may have inspired a commitment to activism and engaged scholarship. For the Arab/Middle Eastern group, one participant expressed, for example, being influenced by the pioneering work and research of a highly regarded psychologist.

Perpetrators of racism may be motivating sources for targets of racial discrimination—these sources of racism were an additional influence on coping choice for two participants in the Black group. Targets might seek to avoid conforming to stereotypical conceptions of them or give their perpetrators the satisfaction of being right in treating them poorly (Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004). How a target copes and the strategy used become important, as a maladaptive coping approach such as drinking may work to the advantage of the perpetrator, reifying stereotypes about a given target. Ultimately, however, the motivating role of the perpetrator creates opportunity for targets to rise above low expectations of themselves.

In terms of the health and social care landscape in Ottawa, the unanimous opinion of participants was that there was an absence of formal channels of support in dealing with racism experienced in the GLB community. Gay men of colour were seen to lack options for receiving support and care. GLB organizations might have perceived that racism was not a major issue in the community, making the need for such services unlikely. Likewise, they might lack understanding about the group's needs and information on how best to serve them. Where programs exist, the lack of awareness about the different forms of racism may contribute to actions that reinforce existing patterns of discrimination in service delivery, such as hiring a White gay man to run a group for GLB people of colour. Still, the perception may be that gay men of colour are best served by service providers from their ethnoracial communities, overlooking issues of heterosexism among other sociocultural factors. Regardless, available services are inclined to be more general in their program and population focus— such as coming out, and people living with HIV/AIDS—with the consequence that gay men of colour are not provided with the full spectrum of support they need (Crichlow, 2004; Giwa, 2015; Poon, 2011; B. Ryan, Brotman, Baradaran, & Lee, 2008). In this way, the services of GLB organizations continue to be geared towards the needs of White GLB people, despite the appearance of inclusiveness. The exception seems to be in cases of HIV/AIDS, where gay men of colour appear to receive the treatment and care they need. For gay men of colour who are HIV negative, however, few if any services exist to meet their unique needs and concerns. The data thus suggest that organizations with mandates other than HIV/AIDS, and dedicated to GLB people of colour, might be helpful in providing a higher level of support.

The same concern applies to mainstream organizations that have programs and services directed at people of colour. In this case, gay men of colour may lack support in dealing with

racism, perhaps because of the concentration of services on the needs and priorities of their heterosexual counterparts. Like GLB organizations, these agencies and their providers may lack appropriate knowledge about working with same-sex people of colour (Lundy, 2011; O'Neill, 1999, 2010; Poon, 2011), and consider that they would be best served by a GLB organization. In fact, a study by B. Ryan et al. (2008) explored queer people of colour's access to health care and social services. Participants believed their health care needs would be best met through "specialized community-driven initiatives" (p. 329), and mainstream health care services were thought to be in need of a transformation, in order to address their specific needs and realities.

All of these factors may contribute to the current situation of a service gap in meeting the needs of gay men of colour, especially in relation to the experience of racism. From the data, it is clear that gay men of colour would benefit from a formal system of care in dealing with stressful racism-related situations. In particular, individuals without informal social support or newcomer immigrants and refugees might derive the most advantage from this type of service, as would those whose support does not adequately help them to cope with racism.

Notwithstanding the importance of a formal system of support and care, participants were unequivocal about the necessity of informal systems of support. Opportunities for informal discussions or for gay men of colour to come together in groups were expressed as an important complement to formal care provision. The desire for this type of support may reflect concerns over the lack of safe space for gay men of colour to congregate in the GLB community (Giwa, 2010; Norsah, 2015; South Asian Network & Satrang, 2006). Informal support structures might be seen as offering gay men of colour the chance to apply their collective assets in meeting their own needs, which could help to avoid possible negative experiences that can result from interaction with mainstream health and social service providers (B. Ryan et al., 2008).

For example, a needs assessment conducted by South Asian Network and Satrang (2006) on the South Asian lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and questioning (LGBTIQ) community in Southern California found that 22 percent of respondents experienced discrimination in health care settings. Discrimination because of sexual orientation or ethnicity/nationality/immigration status emerged as the top source of inequity. In response to how a health care provider could demonstrate sensitivity, 11 percent of the respondents said “take race and sexuality into consideration when giving advice or treatment” (p. 18). The current finding of the role and importance of informal support is consistent with that found in the needs assessment report, which identified friends as the most significant source of support for general and South Asian LGBTIQ issues.

Positive gay role models and mentors of colour were significant topics of concern for many of the participants. In K.-H. Choi et al.’s (2011) study, the possibility for participants to have access to positive role models from whom they could seek advice and support was important. The authors found that, among African Americans, drawing strengths from role models within their racial/ethnic group was a way to mitigate the impact of racism and homophobia (K.-H. Choi et al., 2011). This finding corroborates the current study, in its suggestion that thriving and successful gay men of colour may be effective resources for those struggling with the experience of racism. They could, for example, offer advice and insight into their own struggles and coping strategies. However, in the current study, the lack of opportunity to connect with successful gay men of colour who had gone through similar life challenges was a problem. Participants did not feel that they had access to such people. To them, they were devoid of the opportunity for the mentorship that was available to White gay men, especially while navigating multiple identities and coping with racism.

The data also revealed a constellation of social, economic, and political factors related to the lack of gay role models and mentors of colour in the GLB community. For example, the perceived aversion of White GLB community members to GLB people of colour in leadership roles keeps the latter out of the public eye. In effect, GLB people of colour may not see themselves reflected among those in positions of power, who they can look to as role models or mentors. Such behaviour may reflect the desire of White GLB people to keep the community White, and fits with the Whitening practices that Bérubé (2001) noted.

Overcoming Racism in the GLB Community of Ottawa: A Call to Action

Despite the presenting challenges of racial discrimination, participants held hope for change. In keeping with critical race theory and queer crit's broad action-oriented goal, they identified progressive steps that could be taken by White gay men to address racism in the GLB community. In order to deal with racism most effectively, it is first necessary to identify that a problem exists (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; South Asian Network & Satrang, 2006). The practice of naming is critical to problem resolution; it can help to frame an issue and structure thinking about what needs to be done (see also Yee & Dumbrill, 2016). In addition, naming can facilitate dialogue and the movement of a problem from obscurity into light, thereby ensuring greater accountability. However, while the data indicate that White gay men may be cognizant of racism in the GLB community, the social advantages and benefits of Whiteness result in their reluctance to solve it. This can have the consequence that racism remains hidden or ignored.

Along with naming is the importance of individual and collective responsibility to learn about racism (Kivel, 2011). Participants considered that White gay men could do more to educate themselves on how their actions supported the differential treatment of gay men of colour. In this way, gay men of colour would not be laden with the stress of having to always teach them about

racism. That process can be taxing and onerous. Although learning about racism can entail formal sources of information, the learning process need not be so formal. Keeping an open mind and seeking opportunities for connection with people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds are ways that White gay men could improve their self-knowledge and awareness about racism. These informal ways of learning can help to disrupt the privilege and entitlement of the dominant White group, which maintain and reproduce racial inequalities. This finding also suggests that the concept of learning about racism may seem an arduous task for some White gay men. They might feel inundated by the amount of literature available on the topic. Although educational resources are appropriate references for some people to learn about racism, others may prefer a different way of connecting with the issue (i.e., learning about non-White cultures through their food), eschewing the “one size fits all” approach.

White gay men can also fight against racism and discrimination by ensuring diversity in race and other social identity matrices in media and cultural content consumed by members of the GLB community (Brennan et al., 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Roy, 2012). The continued Whitewashing and erasure of gay men of colour from these spaces normalize the image of the GLB community as White. As the data show, this practice can have important implications for community functioning. For example, the perceived invisibility of South Asian men in gay porn may reinforce the group’s marginalization (Fung, 1996), resulting in their characterization as undesirable. The logic is that if South Asian men are not visible as desirable in sexually explicit content like pornography, White and other gay men of colour might not think to consider them as potential sexual partners. This perspective reflects the view that gay male pornography plays an important role in the construction of sexual desirability; it helps to

define what is and is not socially desirable. Thus, if South Asian men are not represented in pornography, it must mean that they are not sexually desired.

Several participants discussed other concerns that can be substituted for the example of pornography, such as the lack of racial diversity in mainstream gay advertisements. Regardless, what the findings seem to suggest is that increasing the representation of sexual minority men of colour in gay media and other cultural productions might help to normalize their reality, and promote their inclusion and sense of place in the GLB community.

In addition to the positive roles that White gay men can play in the fight against racism, gay men of colour also have a role to play, according to the findings from the study. As one way to resist racist power structures, they can take a more active role in denouncing racism and discrimination (Kivel, 2011). More broadly speaking, those with platforms to advocate change should exercise this privilege, and draw attention to racism as a social reality. Remaining silent, as the data underscored, is counterproductive to the goal of ameliorating racism directed against non-White racial minorities in the GLB community. The importance of this finding is that, while gay men of colour might perceive that speaking up about racism would lead to negative consequences, they fail to realize that their silence will not protect them (Lorde, 1980). In staying silent, they collude with the oppressor in their own oppression. This point echoes the conclusion reached by Callander, Holt, et al. (2015), whose respondents tended to demand change from themselves rather than from those who had discriminated against them.

Further findings point to engagement in self- and group-affirmative practices as another action that could be taken by gay men of colour to assert their humanity and dignity in the face of racism (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012). This effort might be particularly helpful in challenging White gay men's endorsement of racist attitudes about the group's desirability. As opposed to

seeking or waiting for validation from White gay men (C.-S. Han, 2008b), gay men of colour could take a more proactive measure in validating their own beauty, lives, and existence. Indeed, it was posited that gay men of colour might want to create their own cultural space, where the totality of their lives could be fully affirmed. These findings indicate the desire of gay men of colour to gain control over their racist treatment by White gay men, in order to safeguard and nurture personal and group well-being. Also, they point to the extent that gay men of colour might be willing to go to meet their own needs, perhaps because of the belief that White gay men would continue to discriminate against them. By not allowing White gay men's criticism or judgment to define their value and worth, they would retain the power and confidence to accept themselves and each other.

Summary

This chapter examined the findings of the study in light of the three main research questions and against previous findings from related scholarship. Several main themes were identified and discussed, to better describe the experience of racism among gay men of colour and their coping responses to it. While some findings were consistent with previous research, others revealed new insight into the impact of racism on gay men of colour and their coping strategies. In the end, and despite the overwhelming and taxing effects of racism, participants maintained hope that change was possible. However, this would require commitment on the parts of White and non-White GLB community members.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This study was undertaken to explore racism in the GLB community of Ottawa. The theme is an underresearched area of historical inquiry. Despite the growing body of empirical and theoretical literature on racism in GLB communities in Canada, key questions remain unanswered about how gay men of colour survive and, indeed, thrive in the face of racial adversity. The present study sought to answer three separate but interrelated questions:

1. In what specific contexts or circumstances do gay men of colour experience racism and discrimination in the GLB community of Ottawa?
2. What do gay men of colour understand to be the factors that contribute to their oppression and social exclusion in the GLB community of Ottawa?
3. What strategies do gay men of colour use to cope with the overt and/or covert racism they experience in the GLB community of Ottawa?

Findings highlight the multiple social contexts in which discrimination by race and ethnicity occurred; documented the contributing factors to the incidence of perceived and experienced racism; and identified the different coping strategies used by gay men of colour to deal with racism-related stressors. In this chapter, following a synthesis of the empirical findings from the study with reference to the research literature, I overview the contributions of these findings to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks I used in the study. Next, I discuss the implications of the study's findings for practice, before considering their possible limitations. Suggestions for future research are detailed, and the chapter ends with a conclusion.

Synthesis of Empirical Findings

Contexts in Which Gay Men of Colour Experienced Racism

Racial discrimination exists at multiple levels and is embedded in everyday interactions. White privilege results from processes of institutional and cultural conditioning, by which White attitudes of racial and cultural superiority are maintained; racism buttresses this White structural advantage (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Essed, 1991; Fleras, 2014; Harro, 2000; Henry & Tator, 2010; Rollock & Gillborn, 2011; Wise, 2010). Such conditioning requires a critical interrogation of cultural permissiveness towards racism, which may privilege a postracial discourse. The social construction of racism as a historical artifact makes antiracism work difficult (Pon et al., 2016); it can help to perpetuate racism in subtle ways. On some level, perhaps, the postracial narrative can be understood as an attempt to claims of liberal ideals of equality and social justice. Yet, in a climate of racial hostility and intolerance, it is clear that racism remains an intractable feature of contemporary gay life.

The findings of the study—that gay men of colour encountered racism and discrimination in interpersonal, cultural, and institutional contexts within the GLB community—are therefore significant, but not surprising. This account of oppression mirrors that of the broader Canadian society, as experienced by visible minorities in general (e.g., Javorčíková, 2005; Nestel, 2012; Noh, Beiser, et al., 1999; Noh, Kaspar, et al., 2007). Such an account is equally consistent with other studies of gay and bisexual men of colour, in which everyday racism has been shown to be a common experience (see, for example, Brennan et al., 2013; Callander, Holt, et al., 2012, 2015; K.-H. Choi et al., 2011; Crichlow, 2004; Fung, 1996; George et al., 2012; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han et al., 2015; Husbands et al., 2013; Minwalla et al., 2005; Norsah, 2015; Poon et al., 2005; Raj, 2011; D. W. Riggs, 2013). The interpersonal, cultural, and institutional dynamics

of racism illustrate the mechanisms by which White gay men seek to exclude gay men of colour, and create spatial distance. This mode of territorialization echoes Lipsitz's (2011) concept of White spatial imaginary, in which Whiteness is rewarded and reinscribed into the operation of power relations. For gay men of colour, this results in a lack of "safe space" for reprieve from the negative conditions of racism. This lack of safe space reinforces the hostile environment of the GLB community, and may be seen to contribute to the feeling of dissonance and fragmentation among gay men of colour, with implications for their psychological sense of community.

Individual White gay men are not alone in maintaining racial hierarchies and subordination; acts of racial discrimination carry through the entire community, including businesses, and help to uphold the system of White supremacy (Bérubé, 2001). The differential treatment of gay men of colour based upon skin colour communicates the message that they are unwelcome, and adds to their struggles for identity and belonging. Racism's less overt forms makes it tempting to believe that there is less discrimination in the GLB community. Social condemnation of overt acts of racism may have tempered direct, in-person, racism. However, the perception of less racism in the GLB community can lead to illusory or mistaken conclusions. There is a need to be concerned about the transposition of racism online, where expressions of racist beliefs are commonplace (W. Brown, 2003; Callander, Holt, et al., 2012, 2015; Gosine, 2007; Phua & Kaufman, 2003; Plummer, 2007; Poon et al., 2005), and the shift to online communication technology helps to conceal White racism from the general public view.

This study's revelation that racism occurs in multiple spaces within the GLB community is an indictment of its pervasiveness, and an affirmation that White GLB people are not immune to racism, regardless of their sexual minority status. The experience of sexual prejudice is not a deterrent against perpetrating oppressive practices. Gay men of colour were most likely to

experience racism in interpersonal and intergroup relations, where they felt that White gay men at the same time desired and were averse to them. For example, despite being seen as desirable for private sexual encounters, they were less ideal for public romantic relationships. For some participants, it was a common experience to be kept on standby in sexual situations, as a last minute option to the preferred company of other White gay men.

The objectifying behaviours of White gay men at gay bars and on the Internet added to the dehumanization experienced by the majority of gay men of colour, who perceived that they were treated as sexual objects and not as human beings. In describing their lack of attraction to gay men of colour, White gay men's claim of racial preference facilitated their expression of overtly racist remarks. This situation was most pervasive online, where user anonymity functioned as a shield for White gay men to articulate their racist beliefs (Callander, Holt, et al., 2012, 2015).

The experience of racism also manifested at the institutional/organizational level. Some participants felt unsupported by GLB individuals and organizations in their community work, compared to the support received by their White colleagues. Similarly, apathy towards the recognition of the need to diversify or target outreach materials to gay men of colour reproduced the sense of their unimportance, since the expectation seems to have been that gay men of colour would see their image reflected back to them in White gay men. In addition, resistance to the visibility of gay men of colour within the community was evident in the attitude of business owners to ignore or fail to notice them as models for promotional events, preferring White men for the role instead. At other times, the resistance could be felt through the effort of White members of the community to frustrate and/or discredit the leadership of gay men of colour for having a different opinion from the dominant White group. Finally, GLB organizations might be

less inclined to recruit from racialized communities to fill staff or volunteer vacancies. For example, in the case of running a drop-in group for people of colour, the decision was made by an organization to hire a White person for the position.

What Contributed to the Experience of Racism

The second question was what gay men of colour understood as contributing to their experience of racism and discrimination. From the evidence, White racial socialization appears to be a key part of the problem. The socialization processes for White gay men were seen to promote the group's intragroup identity and cohesion, at the same time that it excluded non-White racial others from the White imagination. Bonilla-Silva (2014) referred to this social experience as *White habitus*, which he defined as "a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates whites' racial taste, perceptions, feelings, and emotions and their views on racial matters" (p. 152). Growing up in a homogeneous environment, it is likely that White gay men were conditioned to believe in the inferiority of people of colour, and the superiority of the White majority culture. Their socialization may also have taught them to act and perceive the world around them in a certain way. Participants' awareness of socialization as a powerful influence on racial and ethnic bias led to their view that, because White gay men lacked exposure to racial diversity, an unconscious White racial attitude fuelled the discrimination against them. Increasing understanding of racism among White gay men could help to address the issue of subconscious racism.

The larger context of Canadian society also promotes a culture of White superiority (Fleras, 2014; Henry & Tator, 2010; Pon et al., 2016; Yee & Dumbrill, 2016), which White gay men were thought to internalize as part of their individual and collective identity. Specifically, the Canadian narrative of multiculturalism creates a blind spot that results in White people not

being able to appreciate the complexity of the racialized experience of people of colour and, in this case, gay men of colour. Consistent with critiques of multiculturalist ideology, the findings point to the danger inherent in this national narrative. At best, White gay men were likely to deny they were racist and, at worst, to blame gay men of colour for their negative experiences of racism. When confronted with allegations of racism, White gay men were found to behave defensively, as if to guard against the view that their actions were racist. In doing so, they failed to consider how living in a majority White society had shaped their views of people who were not White. Such an absence of accountability speaks to unearned cultural privilege and White racial innocence, both made possible by multiculturalism's claim to equality and social inclusion.

The small number of gay men of colour in the GLB community was identified as a contributing factor to racism. This finding emphasized the point made above, that White gay men lacked exposure to people of colour. Increasing the visibility and representation of gay men of colour could help to improve race relations. However, this would require addressing the problem of racism. But gay men of colour are leaving Ottawa, or have thought about doing so. Welcoming environments, in which gay men of colour felt that they belong and were included, would be necessary to their sense of connection; these might influence their decision to stay, and add to the community's racial makeup. Their low numbers were also seen to affect the willingness of some gay men of colour to speak out about racism, since doing so could result in repercussions to the self, especially if help and support from others were missing. Knowing that one had the support and backing of gay men of colour—and White men—could give them the confidence needed to challenge White racism. Further, strength in numbers could augment the group's ability to pursue strategic goals, such as the creation of a space for gay men of colour (Giwa, 2010; Norsah, 2015).

The ubiquity of Whiteness in GLB communities in general (e.g., Eshref, 2009; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Roy, 2012), and in Ottawa GLB community in particular, added to the experience of racism encountered by the gay men of colour in the study. White gay men benefited from the privilege of seeing themselves reflected everywhere in the community, while gay men of colour were rendered invisible. As the most desirable social group, they enjoyed a position of dominance on the beauty scale, with gay men of colour positioned on the bottom rung.

Portraying Whiteness as the standard beauty normalizes White gay male attractiveness at the same time as it casts off non-White ideals of beauty (Ayres, 1999; Caluya, 2006; Husbands et al., 2013; Roy, 2012). Gay men of colour may feel an absence of power in their ability to attract White gay men, since they have to wait to be chosen, and may exert more effort in looking good than their White counterparts (Brennan et al., 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Norsah, 2015). The resulting myth of White beauty affects how gay men of colour see themselves and each other; by their choice of sexual and romantic partners, they may help to perpetuate the logic of “White is best.” This pattern of self- and group devaluation reflects, ultimately, an internalization of racial oppression. The valorization of White gay men has the effect of segregating gay men of colour from each other and, as the findings demonstrated, can lead to ingroup competition for attention from White gay men. Diversification in cultural portrayal could help to correct the invisibility and silence that result from the substantial representation of Whiteness in the GLB community, which limits the ability of gay men of colour to define themselves. It could also challenge the dominant group’s association between Whiteness and gayness that makes unimaginable the co-identities of race and sexual orientation for certain groups of gay men of colour.

For example, institutional and cultural practices of predominantly White GLB communities play an important role in perpetuating and maintaining racial inequalities. The gay media, including pornographic media, are major players in shaping popular ideas about the community (Eshref, 2009; Fung, 1996; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Roy, 2012). Exclusion of gay men of colour from media productions reinforces their status as inferior, which helps to fuel their otherness and status as outsider. The lack of inclusion and diversity in gay media makes clear how gay men of colour are seen by White gay men, especially by those responsible for the production of these magazines and media involving sexual activities. Such exclusion constrains gay men of colour from fully participating in the community and, once more, promotes the cliquishness of White gay men that keeps gay men of colour at a distance. This cliquishness may be responsible for the lack of racial integration within the community. Ultimately, this exclusionary practice upholds the basic power of the dominant White group and culture.

How the Gay Men of Colour Coped With Racism

The study's final question explored how gay men of colour coped with overt and covert racism. The findings revealed four coping typologies, as follows: emotion-focused engagement; emotion-focused disengagement; problem-focused engagement; and problem-focused disengagement. All four are consistent with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) two main categories of coping strategies: emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping. In the former, the aim is to reduce one's negative reactions to stress, whereas the latter seeks to remove or eliminate the cause of stress. The taxonomy of these coping strategies belies their complexity. The labels *engagement* and *disengagement* might give the impression that the latter coping strategies are inferior to or not effective as the former. However, the current findings contradicted this binary thinking. They suggested that participants employed coping strategies based on an appraisal of

the stressful situation and their likelihood to attenuate stress responses. In this regard, there was little difference in the type of coping strategies used in response to overt and covert racism. An individual's reaction to online racism, for example, was not considerably different from those employed offline.

Although problem-focused engagement coping strategies are thought to have an adaptive mitigation effect, the findings did not always reflect this outcome. To illustrate, the coping strategy of confrontation was found by participants to be both effective and ineffective in coping with racism. This finding highlights the importance of understanding the cost and benefit of a coping strategy in helping an individual to manage or deal with the stress of racism. By the same token, the findings demonstrated that not all coping strategies are created equal. The emotion-focused disengagement coping strategies of anger and drinking or taking drugs, for example, were found to be counterproductive in dealing with racism-related stress. However, venting to a romantic partner was seen as effective, if done in a considerate and respectful manner.

According to the literature, people are more likely to use emotion-focused coping if the stressful situation is perceived to be outside of their control, compared to when it seen to be within their control (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In the latter case, they will use problem-focused coping. Individual, institutional, and cultural racism is beyond the power of gay men of colour to control. It is simply not possible for an individual to predict in advance if and when he will be discriminated against because of his skin colour. Further, given how racism is deeply ingrained in Canadian institutions and culture, its sheer systemic magnitude makes it unlikely to be within one's control. Nevertheless, from the findings, it appears that gay men of colour were more likely to use problem-focused coping in interpersonal contexts and situations where they had some influence to challenge or call attention to racial discrimination and bias. By contrast,

emotion-focused coping was used in circumstances where they perceived they had little influence or control over the situation. These dynamics are consistent with findings in the stress and coping literature regarding stress types and coping responses.

Within the deficit literature, by contrast, the tendency has been to portray the lives gay men of colour in abject terms. The depiction of them as perpetually struggling to integrate their multiple social identities (e.g., race, sexual orientation, and religion) gives the impression that they do not have positive resources and support in their lives. In this literature, they are portrayed as victims. However, the findings of this study suggest that these portrayals amount to a narrow interpretation and reading of the complex lives of gay men of colour; they eschew the men's strength and fortitude to survive everyday racism, and fail to consider variability in assets for dealing with the realities of racism-related stress. The perpetrator as a source of motivation for dealing with racism, for example, illustrates how two participants sought to supersede the victim label. Using the action of the perpetrator as drive to rise above their negative treatment demonstrated their strength of resolve and resistance. The findings of this study also point to internal (e.g., mother) and external (e.g., positive people, critical thinkers and activists, and perpetrators of racism) sources of influence in participants' lives, from which they took inspiration about coping with racial adversity. These individuals and groups provided encouragement and motivation for coping with racism.

Notwithstanding the coping strategies used by gay men of colour to deal with racism, formal channels of support were found to be lacking. Participants reported not having access to professionals to whom they could turn for support in coping with the racism they encountered in the GLB community. Although references were made to GLB-positive mainstream social service organizations, the services offered were not directly related to the needs of gay men of colour. In

some contexts, available services were seen to have a narrow focus, with the issues of coming out and living with HIV/AIDS taking top priority. While mainstream organizations provide direct support services to people of colour, an assumption of these services is that they address the needs of all people of colour, regardless of sexual orientation. The focus on people of colour and not on the unique needs of service users speaks to a concern about sensitivity (Lundy, 2011; O'Neill, 1999; Poon, 2011; B. Ryan et al., 2008), since non-GLB practitioners may lack awareness about the interlocking dynamics of race and sexual orientation to adequately support gay men of colour in addressing the issue of racial discrimination.

The same concern arises among GLB practitioners who work in mainstream or GLB-specific organizations. While they may be able to offer support with coming out, for example, helping gay men of colour to cope with their experience of structural racism could prove challenging. Indeed, among study participants, the programs and services of GLB organizations were found nonresponsive to the needs and realities of gay men of colour. Agency staff might behave in ways that reproduced racialized oppression, without regard to how service users were directly affected by a program or lack of one. In cases where the service being offered corresponded to an identified need—for example HIV/AIDS—there is the risk that practitioners would only focus on treatment and care for that identified need. In doing so, they could overlook how the social factor of racism might have contributed to someone's risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease.

The importance of informal support was stressed by participants; they clearly preferred informal support over formal support. This may have to do with the view that mainstream organizations and GLB organizations were not always open and responsive to the needs of gay men of colour. By informal support, they meant the opportunity for gay men of colour to come

together as a group, in an informal setting, and offer assistance to each other. Such support could take place over dinner gatherings at a local restaurant; going to the apartment of one group member on a Friday night for drinks and conversation; or driving to Toronto each month to attend gay South Asian parties. Participants indicated that the informal nature of these activities could create a social support network of people for fun and supportive relationship that could be helpful for managing stress in difficult times.

Also, participants may have thought it advantageous to pursue their individual and group's self-interest rather than wait for or depend on formal organizations to provide the service they might need. Thus, the other advantage of an informal group was that it offered an outlet for gay men of colour who could be struggling with their sexual orientation or looking to build their social support network. These individuals might be reluctant to seek out support from formal organizations, possibly to avoid stigma and any negative consequences related to their sexual orientation and race (Crichlow, 2004).

Informal mentoring and access to positive role models was also recognized as an important component of this psychosocial support. However, structural inequalities were believed to have contributed to the paucity of role models for gay men of colour within the GLB community, an experience that the participants did not believe was common to White gay men.

However, as the findings further suggest, informal support and formal support are not mutually exclusive; both can coexist and both are needed to provide optimum support to gay men of colour. For example, gay men of colour who lack access to informal support because of the location of the group may continue to feel alone in their experience. Having a competent professional to talk to could be helpful in this case. Likewise, because gay men of colour are not from uniform backgrounds, their experience of the informal group could vary; they might not all

derive equal benefit from participation. For these individuals, an alternate support option would be ideal.

Finally, for gay men of colour the experience of racism yields social, psychological, and physical consequences. Social exclusion may cause these men to resort to psychological defences for purposes of self-preservation and adapting to racism. Sometimes, the effects of racism may even take a toll on the physical body. These negative outcomes notwithstanding, the gay men of colour in this study did not feel more drawn to their ethnoracial communities because of the racism in the GLB community. In fact, the heterosexism of communities of colour may have contributed to some participants identifying more with their sexual orientation than with their racial identity.

In the end, eliminating racism from the GLB community would seem to require the collective effort of White gay men and gay men of colour. After all, the negative effects of racism affect all members of the community, regardless of race. In many ways, the burden of educating about racism has fallen on the shoulders of gay men of colour. White gay men could lighten the weight by taking ownership for their own learning (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Kivel, 2011); they could educate themselves on how their Whiteness confers unearned privileges denied to their non-White counterparts. Through the process of this self-education, they may come to understand how their own actions and those of other White gay men might constitute racism, without the need for gay men of colour to explain to them why a particular behaviour was racist. There is no one way to learn about racism, however. Formal and informal methods of gaining self-knowledge are appropriate for this task; both require an open mind and a willingness to learn and try new things.

Effective problem solving requires recognizing that a problem exists. This is important because racism is deeply ingrained in people's lives; it has become normalized. Denormalizing racism would start with raising the consciousness of White gay men to their deep-seated unconscious and conscious acts of racial discrimination perpetrated against gay men of colour. The engagement of White gay men in confronting systemic racism and racial privilege would be needed to achieve racial equality in the GLB community. As the findings revealed, one aspect of White privilege that could be addressed is the overwhelming representation of White men in gay media and pornography (Eshref, 2009; Fung, 1996; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Roy, 2012). Increasing the diversity and positive image of men of colour could help to normalize and ameliorate the burdens of invisibility and marginalization they face.

By the same token, gay men of colour could challenge themselves to speak out against racism when it happens. This finding points to the potential for larger change at the macro and meso levels beyond those operating at the micro level. In drawing attention to racism in this way, White GLB people might be moved into action to address a perceived racial inequality. For example, pointing out the systemic exclusion of films and documentaries on the lives of GLB people of colour at Ottawa's LGBT film festival could promote racial awareness and prevent against racism in the future.

The goal of racial inclusion and acceptance in the GLB community will not come overnight, according to one participant, and gay men of colour will need to be patient. Ongoing city-wide cultural celebration was seen as a positive contribution to the fight against racism and intolerance. Only time will tell if the results have been worth the effort. In the absence of affirmation from White gay men, it was suggested that gay men of colour could take a more hands-on approach to valuing themselves. They could develop a presence online through

Facebook, where they could celebrate the beauty of gay men of colour unapologetically and on their own terms.

Conceptual and Theoretical Implications

Prior research into the discriminatory experience of gay men of colour has documented the multiplicative effects of overlapping oppressions on their general well-being. By and large, this research draws on intersectionality and antioppression theories (AOP) to explicate the intersectional effects of oppressive conditions. In doing so, they have contributed important insight to our understanding of the complex realities of navigating multiple identities, a continual part of life for many gay men of colour.

In keeping with the premises of these theories, however, researchers have been reticent to focus on a single axis of oppression. This reluctance is understandable. Like other members of the general public, gay men of colour do not lead isolated or compartmentalized lives, and are not singly oppressed by one system of oppression. The complexities of their lives cannot be fully understood unless one takes a broader view of oppression, a point supported by the findings from this study.

Opponents of the single-axis framework have criticized the approach for reinforcing hierarchies of identity and oppression. Although valid, these criticisms may fail to notice that, in discussing multiple social justice issues, the theme of racism is often relegated to the margins (Pon et al., 2016). Racism is likely to be sidestepped in preference for conversation about class and gender parity, for example. The disinclination to discuss racism may have to do with the fear, anxiety, and division it is seen to generate. Debate about class may be thought less controversial; the reason why some people (and not others) are financially successful is chalked up to their industriousness and hard work. This way of thinking overlooks the structural inequalities

inherent in a capitalist system, of which the issues of race and ethnicity are important considerations. Debates about gender parity receive special attention because of the increasing awareness that women play important roles in society. However, as historical and contemporary feminist movements make clear, resulting benefits from this discussion do not accrue equally to all women (Hobson, 2016). For example, Aboriginal and women of colour are not well represented in many areas of public life, including politics and government.

While intersectionality and AOP theories endeavour to be comprehensive in their analysis of oppression, the above examples illustrate how they can fall short of this goal. In attempting to focus on multiple axes of oppression simultaneously, these theories risk diluting or minimizing one form of oppression over another. One or two types of oppression may become privileged, while less attention is devoted to an analysis of other systems of oppression—racism, for example. Thus, similar to the criticism levied against a single-axis framework, and despite allusion to the contrary, it can be argued that intersectionality and AOP theories hierarchize identity and oppression. This is not surprising, given that all forms of oppression generate unique experiences and outcomes, and therefore merit their own attention. This is not an argument against the logic that oppressive systems of race, class, and gender are connected, or that they reinforce one another. On the contrary, these different examples of oppression produce distinctive challenges, which are unlikely to be given equal attention and consideration when examined from a single theoretical lens such as AOP (Pon et al., 2016). Far from their emancipatory conception of justice, these theories may perpetuate oppression for no other reason than that they fail to adequately theorize the multidimensional aspect of peoples' lives. In this way, they may overpromise and underdeliver on results.

The perspective of queer critical theory (or queer crit) is one of the few existing theories that appreciate the complexity of the lived experience of gay men of colour. The empirical findings synthesized above corroborate the suitability of this theory for understanding the experience of racism and other forms of oppression among gay men of colour. They demonstrate the applicability of queer crit as an important starting point for the development of race consciousness within the GLB community, a political standpoint from which to challenge the system of Whiteness in the pursuit of racial transformation (Misawa, 2012). Compared to the perfunctory acknowledgement of race and racism in the subjugation of racial others, less common is a deep analysis of the effects of these constructs in producing racialized relations.

The theoretical perspectives of queer crit, discussed in Chapter 3, are supported by current empirical findings. Where race and racism are seen to be key factors in contributing to the racialized experience of individuals and groups, it is necessary to centralize these constructs and not consign them to the periphery (Misawa, 2010a, 2012). In particular, the continuing omission of the narratives of gay men of colour is not innocuous; it fits the broader White romanticism of racism as an ahistorical phenomenon. Decentring Whiteness is an act of resistance to a hegemonic system of White supremacy (C.-S. Han, 2008b; Lipsitz, 2011; Wise, 2010). Thus, the current study's focus on the narratives of gay men of colour has provided a counterstory to the dominant stock stories propagated about race and racism in the GLB community. In doing so, the normality of these stock stories was confronted, revealing an underlying racist ideology. This study has enabled the expression of subjugated knowledge or truths often denied to gay men of colour about their experience of racial discrimination, and showed how racism continues to be a problem in contemporary life and gay culture (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Misawa, 2012).

Moreover, the centrality of experiential knowledge provided a foundation upon which the dominant stock stories could be contested. It offered an irrefutable account of the lived experience of gay men of colour, a reality that racially conscious and unconscious White gay men may choose to ignore or be slow to understand. Consistent with the multidisciplinary aspects of queer crit, likewise, the study brought together multiple voices of gay men of colour for the realization of a collective voice that can be used to challenge racism and discrimination. A united voice can avoid or minimize an individual's experience of racism from being dismissed by White gay men as baseless and without foundation (Misawa, 2012).

Ultimately, at the core of the study's focus on racism is a belief in social justice and emancipatory ideals, focused on replacing inequitable patterns of power and privilege with more just and equitable social relations, in which racism does not dictate the conditions of social life, and gay men of colour are no longer marginalized.

Similarly, the findings illuminated the operations of minority stressors and ameliorative coping processes (Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Meyer, 1995, 2003a), enabling an understanding of the negative effects of racism-related stress for socially disadvantaged groups. The minority stress model draws together scholarship from many disciplines including the stress and coping literature, which emphasizes the link between stress and health outcomes (Alessi, 2014; Meyer, 1995, 2003a). This study's investigation of the minority stress of racism on gay men of colour facilitated an assessment of their coping strategies, and provided an insight into the impact that such stress may have on their health. Current findings add credence to the theory's relevance for exploring the social experience of racial discrimination among gay men of colour; the negative consequences that can result from discriminatory experiences were borne out in the findings reported in Chapter 5 and discussed in Chapter 6. These findings contribute to the growing

empirical literature on the potential physical and mental health consequences of racism on gay men of colour, and add to the stress-coping literature in Canada. The developed conceptual model, shown in Figure 3, reflects the interaction of these theories to explicate the pathway by which racism impacts health.

Meyer's (2003a) minority stress model attends to the ameliorating effects of minority group coping. The idea is that when GLB individuals experience sexual prejudice, for example, they would rely on other GLB people in the community for support and encouragement. As part of this shared aim, the minority group could provide a different way of looking at the stressful situation (Alessi, 2014). To some degree, Meyer's minority group coping was supported in the present study. When possible, a small number of gay men of colour turned to other GLB people of colour for support and camaraderie. Others were denied the benefit that a minority group support could provide. Arguably, Meyer's minority group coping assumes an open access to a supportive network of GLB people within the community, when this is not always the case. This study has shed light on the limitation of this thinking, and uncovered the many strategies used by gay men of colour to cope with racism.

Implications for Practice

A major finding from the study is the lack of formal systems of support aimed at helping gay men of colour to cope with racism. The perceived lack of support can compound their experience of stigma and discrimination. At the same time, the absence of professional resources can leave them feeling unsupported and alone in dealing with their difficult situation (Crichlow, 2004). This finding presents challenges with three options for resolution. First, community health and social services can improve the competence of their practitioners through acquisition of skill sets to meet the needs of gay men of colour. Second, mainstream community health and social

services can expand the scope of their practice to include the development of infrastructure services that address the stressful impact that racism in the GLB community has on gay men of colour. Third, as some participants noted, it might be worth the effort to institute a GLB people of colour organization.

Improve the Competence of Health Care Professionals

The study's practice implications for social workers and allied health professionals may help to inform their work with gay men of colour. Among them is the need to recognize "the danger of a single story" (Adichie, 2009). Working with gay men of colour, health professionals might incorrectly focus attention on sex education, concentrating on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. In doing so, salient issues of concern to the group, such as the need for positive role models and mentors, might be overlooked. The life aspirations of gay men of colour might be ignored and not taken into account. This oversight is understandable and, perhaps, inevitable. Practitioners are influenced by scholarship relevant to their field of practice. When such scholarship is heavily skewed in the direction of a deficit perspective, which emphasizes disease prevention, they may orient their practice towards this aim, in belief that they are meeting the needs of their service users. However, as the findings from this study demonstrated, such professionals may be helping to perpetuate negative outcomes for gay men of colour. Thus, when working with gay men of colour, social workers and allied health professionals should think critically about the sources relied upon to inform their practice.

It may also be helpful to draw on research from non-White scholars, for the purposes of achieving a balanced perspective. Ultimately, however, there are no prescriptive guidelines for practice. Although gay men of colour have shared histories of racial oppression, their needs are not all the same. Like gay men in general, they may encounter sexual prejudice in society, but

their experience of life bends in different directions. Being sensitive to the different experiences of gay men within the GLB community is essential to the delivery of effective social services.

Similarly, there is a need for service providers to understand the realities of gay men of colour. Lack of knowledge about their experience of racism in the GLB community can impact direct professional work (Lundy, 2011; O'Neill, 1999; Poon, 2011; B. Ryan et al., 2008). Service providers may disbelieve the validity of racism there, out of a lack of exposure to racial discrimination. Thus, they may act in dismissive ways, disregarding the accounts of gay men of colour about racism. They may overlook the need to suspend judgments about service users, seeing them as either "too angry" or "too focused" on the issues of race and racism. More importantly, to better serve them, they should create space for the men to speak about their experience. With increased knowledge, they could support gay men of colour in having access to resources needed to support themselves and each other.

This option has the least, if any, fiscal strain on an organization's bottom line. The main effect is that practitioners who work with GLB people will be required to take a more holistic approach to their work with gay men of colour, in which issues of race and racism are not obscured. Personnel training to help practitioners develop awareness of race and racism and its possible central role in their service users' lives can be helpful in this regard. Although treating gay men as if they are all the same streamlines service delivery, the practice overlooks their unique differences and experiences. In the case of gay men of colour, it could mean denying them access to much needed supportive services. Continued professional development in this area will ensure that gay men of colour receive the support they need, and contribute to a good standard of practice and care.

Expand Social Services' Scope of Practice

Mainstream community health and social services could expand the scope of their practice to include the development of infrastructure services that would address the stressful impact racism in the GLB community has on gay men of colour. Financial resources could be diverted to creating a targeted health and care service section that would be responsible for meeting the needs of GLB people of colour. Here, as above, it would be important to recruit and retain practitioners of colour who identify as GLB. Previous research has shown that non-White racial minority service users are more likely to express preference for a same-race practitioner (Lum, 1986), with underutilization of services related to the perceived lack of culturally competent providers (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1998). Thus, the matching of service providers to service users could facilitate the uptake and delivery of appropriate services that can lessen the negative impact of racism.

Institute an Organization Devoted to GLB People of Colour

An organization for GLB people of colour would run independently, as opposed to being institutionally embedded within a mainstream organization. This configuration would allow more creativity in the service delivery process and more flexibility in operational decision making than would be possible in a mainstream organization. Reflecting the epistemological and ontological beliefs of queer crit, for example, the proposed organization could adopt a race-and-racism lens in its operations and services. Rather than focus solely on issues of racism, insight from these perspectives would inform the delivery of a comprehensive service, such that other aspects of an individual's identity will be considered. The centrality of race and racism as core operating principles of this organization would thus contrast with the additive model typical of most mainstream organizations, where issues of race and racism tend to be an afterthought.

Summary of Implications for Practice

The common thread in all three considerations, particularly the first two, is the need to diversify service providers. It is likely that the racial makeup of mainstream social services and GLB organizations is predominantly White. The case for diversification is about ensuring effective delivery of services, best offered by service providers with similar backgrounds to service users. The latter may be suspicious of White service providers because of perceived bias or direct experience of racial discrimination. The important currency of race leads to different life outcomes. White service providers may be less knowledgeable about the impact of racism on the lives of gay men of colour, since they have not had to endure such discrimination. Moreover, they may not understand how their membership in the dominant racial group shapes their world view or informs their conceptualization of the struggles of gay men of colour. Direct services and important factors that should be assessed for during intake could get ignored; gay men of colour might not receive adequate support for dealing with oppression and discrimination. White service providers might not understand the unique needs of gay men of colour that arise from their membership in multiple marginalized groups. They might not recognize the need to tailor services to gay men of colour and White gay men differently. Hiring service providers who are gay and who identify with a non-White racial/ethnic identity could address most, if not, all of these concerns.

Apart from formal support services, gay men of colour in the study also alluded to the importance of informal support systems for coping with racism. Here, social workers and other health professionals could advocate on behalf of the group for resources to help make this a reality. They could help find physical space for the group to meet on a regular basis, or provide assistance with grant writing for funding to be put towards the group's operation, in whatever

way they see fit. This kind of support would contribute to the group's autonomy and control over its affairs. In their capacity as ally, they could promote and refer to the group other gay men of colour struggling with racism or looking for a place to belong. In addition, they could work with the group to denounce racism in the GLB community. Such engagement and support would help gay men of colour to feel validated and understood. Finally, practitioners could leverage the group's insight and knowledge about everyday operation of racism in the GLB community to inform professional development and practice competency.

Limitations of the Study

As with all research, a few limitations of the study need to be borne in mind when interpreting the findings. First, the analysis of the study data was guided by IPA, an approach that is unavoidably subjective. Replication of the exact analyses of this author's work might prove challenging for another researcher. Considering IPA's recognition of the researcher/analyst as integral to the research enterprise, and his/her analysis of study data as occupying a particular viewpoint, it is expected that differences would emerge in interpreting research data. Important for IPA, as with other qualitative approaches, is the need to ensure the credibility or validity of the research findings.

Second, consistent with the qualitative and phenomenological design of the research, the study relied on participants' self-reports of their experiences of racism. Self-reported information may contain a social desirability response bias, in which participants can either underreport or overreport experiences of racism and choice of coping strategies. For example, given the centrality of gay bars and night clubs as meeting points for socialization, respondents in this study might have chosen to downplay their use of alcohol and other intoxicants as coping

strategies. Similarly, because racism is experienced and interpreted differently depending on the individual, one person might construe an incident as racist where another might not.

Third, a researcher-constructed interview protocol was developed, based on a review of the extant literature, to answer research questions outlined at the top of this chapter. Answers to the protocol's five semistructured questions were designed to assess how participants coped with the experience of racism, and to solicit their views on needed support for gay men of colour. It is possible that using instruments designed for measuring racism-specific responses in GLB communities may contribute to a deeper understanding of the topic (see, for example, Balsam, Molina, et al., 2011). Yet, given the preliminary nature of this investigation as a new area of empirical inquiry in Canada, the general tendency of these scales to measure and quantify reduces their utility for qualitative and phenomenological studies, in which the words and narratives of participants are privileged. What is more, due to time constraints, financial pressures associated with higher education, and the challenge of working with difficult-to-reach or hidden populations, the interview protocol was not field-tested. However, it was reviewed by the researcher's dissertation committee, with feedback and corrections made to the wording of some questions.

Lastly, the findings have limited generalizability to gay men of colour as a whole. This cross-sectional study used a small sample size of nonrandomly selected respondents from the city of Ottawa. Since respondents chose to participate in the study, it is possible that their perspectives might not be shared by gay men of colour elsewhere in the city or country. However, generalizability in the form of proximal similarity is possible, since findings would only be generalized to contexts similar to that of current study—that is, to similarly sized cities with comparable social and representational constraints on the visibility of gay men of colour in

public space. Still, compared to other studies undertaken in metropolitan cities where gay men of colour are highly visible and concentrated, the current study could demonstrate how findings do or do not overlap with previous knowledge about racism in GLB communities. This way, the transferability of earlier findings to settings where gay men of colour are less visibly represented can be analyzed.

Suggestions for Research and Future Directions

When considering the implications of the findings for research, what emerges is the need for more empirical studies with and for gay men of colour. The literature on the group leans heavily towards the deficit side. The current study was an attempt to intervene in the knowledge process and challenge this one-dimensional view of the complex lives of gay men of colour. Despite the fact that gay men of colour hold more than one minority identity and face adversity, they manage to survive and even flourish. Understanding the processes that make this possible is important to the goals of advancing knowledge about them. The present study is one small contribution to this larger goal. Other research informed by a strength perspective could contribute to thinking more complexly and richly about the lived experience of gay men of colour, beyond the prevalent deficit discourse of HIV/AIDS. This focus is consistent with a social justice-oriented research, in which the goals are to expose systems of oppression and develop strategies for social change.

The above contributions notwithstanding, the findings also underscored potential areas for future research. First, the phenomenon of online racism appears to be an area for further exploration into the experience of racism among gay men of colour. In the online environment, participants were more likely to encounter blatant forms of racism. It would be important to understand how the manifestation of racism in communication technology fits within the larger

discourse of offline racism in GLB communities. For example, is the movement to and expression of racism online the effect of White gay men feeling unable to talk openly about race and racism? How, if at all, does this shift of pattern shape social debates about and mass mobilization against racism both on- and offline?

Second, considering the low visibility of gay men colour in Ottawa, investigation into retention factors is needed to increase an understanding of migration patterns. This research could help to identify systemic factors, beyond racism, that fuel the exodus of gay men of colour to racially and ethnically diverse GLB metropolitan areas.

Third, this study focused specifically on the coping strategies used by gay men of colour in Ottawa to deal with racism in the GLB community. It would be important to expand the scope of research to consider whether the same coping strategies are used to address systemic racism in the broader Canadian society, and heterosexism within communities of colour. One study could explore, for example, whether exposure to racism in the larger society hardens gay men of colour in dealing with racial discrimination in the GLB community. Another study could ask whether earlier exposure to sexual prejudice in communities of colour influences coping strategies used by gay men of colour to cope with racism and discrimination in the GLB community.

Fourth, given that gay men of colour are impacted by the minority stress of racism, and may respond in a number of ways to manage the situation, it remains crucial to identify strategies that buffer the impact that racism has on them. The present study provides some preliminary insight, including contextual factors that lead to the utilization of one strategy over another; however, a large-scale study is needed to better understand the motivation that drives this decision. This investigation may also confirm the generalizability of current findings.

Lastly, on a methodological note, attention needs to be paid to strategies for increasing the quantity of research with gay men of colour in Ottawa. Despite the significant amount of time allotted in the current research to recruitment and the wide-ranging strategies and services engaged in the process, the recruitment of study participants proved challenging. As was pointed out by participants in the study, however, the opportunity to participate in the research could result in the creation of a living document that would both catalogue their voices and reflect their lived experiences of racism. In this way, the study will help to advance research collaboration with gay men of colour, and create opportunity for other researchers to strengthen a research capacity to broaden our knowledge base.

The challenge encountered in recruiting participants for this study speaks to the consequence of being overlooked, and reflects a broader discourse of erasure. Complexification of research methodologies in which researchers look to outside experiences, in addition to those of participants in their regional settings, may help to address the lack of research and knowledge infrastructure about gay men of colour in Ottawa. The results of a comparison group study could strengthen research evaluation and improve service outcomes. Helping gay men of colour in Ottawa to build trust and confidence in the research enterprise is one way to improve their participation in empirical studies. This could be accomplished through their continued engagement and sustained involvement in research that matters to them. Researchers play a critical role in making this happen, and must be willing to make adjustments to their research design to accommodate the interest and needs of this population.

Conclusion

As an exploratory investigation into how gay men of colour cope with racism, this study adds another dimension to an understanding of their marginalization in the GLB community.

Beyond the fact that they are subjected to racial discrimination, the study revealed the various coping strategies used to mitigate the impact of racism. In doing so, it attempted to push past the deficit focus of other research, by looking at individual and group assets and strengths. Such an approach is critical for identifying unique capabilities and interventions for vulnerable individuals, who may require support in dealing with their experience of racism.

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Appendix A

Advertising and Recruitment Sites for Research Study

Mainstream and Ethno-specific Health and Social Service Agencies

Ottawa Public Health (Multicultural Health Coalition)
The Men's Project
Community Health Centres (in the Ottawa area)
Family Services Ottawa (GLBTTQ+ Around the Rainbow)
Somali Centre for Family Services
Jewish Family Services of Ottawa
Lebanese and Arab Social Services Agency of Ottawa
Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre
Youth Links, Ottawa Public Health

Mainstream GLB Community Services and GLB-Friendly Organizations in Ottawa

Egale Canada
GLBTTQ Community Centre of Ottawa
The Village/Le Village
OutOttawa.com
Gay Zone
Lambda Foundation
Bruce House
AIDS Committee of Ottawa (ACO)
Pink Triangle Services (Queer Kaleidoscope, ColourQueer Members)
Youth Services Bureau (Ethnocultural community program, GLBTTQ Youth Drop-in)
Gay Clubs (The Lookout Bar, EDGE Club & Lounge, Centretown Pub Complex)
Gay Dating Sites (Gay Canada, Craigslist Ottawa, OttawaGay.com)
Bathhouse (Club Ottawa)
Carleton University GLBTQ Centre
Pride Centre University of Ottawa
Algonquin College Positive Space
Jer's Vision (renamed Canadian Centre for Gender & Sexual Diversity)
Public Service Pride Network
Canada's Capital Gay & Lesbian Couples Social Group
After Stonewall Books
One in Ten
Venus Envy Ottawa
Wilde's Adult Emporium
Ottawa Senior Pride Network
Lambda Foundation
Ottawa Police Service GLBT Liaison Committee
Bruce House
Capital Xtra

Ethno-specific GLB Organization or Group

Agitate

Black Community

Black Ottawa 411
Ottawa Young Black Professionals
3Dreads and a Baldhead
Black History Ottawa (Black Ottawa Dialogue)
South African Rainbow Nation Association
St. Vincent & the Grenadines Ottawa Association
St. Lucia Ottawa Association
The Umoja Network Group
Carleton University Race and Ethnic Hall

South Asian and East Asian Communities

Desi Ottawa
Ontario South Asian Community Association
South Asian Connection
The Capital Chinese News/Canada China News
Ottawa Asian Heritage Month Society
CHIN Ottawa South Asian Programming (Hot & Spicy – Mirch Masala)

Arab/Middle Eastern Community

Ottawa Arab Community Project
Ottawa Arab Forum
National Council on Canada-Arab Relations
Ottawa Muslim Network
Ottawa Muslim Community Circle
Muslim Link Ottawa's Online Newspaper

Media and Social Networking Site

Facebook
Ottawa Start Community News
CBC Radio - All in A Day
Community Information Centre of Ottawa

Appendix B

Agency Recruitment Letter



Faculty of Liberal Arts
& Professional Studies

School of Social Work

4700 Keele St.
Toronto, ON
M3J 1P3

Tel: (416) 736-5226
Fax: (416) 650-3861

www.yorku.ca/laps/sowk

*“Surviving Racist Culture: The Phenomenology of Discrimination
Experienced by Gay and Bisexual Men of Colour and their Coping Strategies”*

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am a doctoral candidate and principal investigator for the research study noted above. I am working under the direction of Dr. Narda Razack, in the School of Social Work at York University, Toronto. For my doctoral dissertation, I am researching the experience of racial discrimination among Black, South Asian, Arab, and East Asian gay and bisexual men in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) community of Ottawa, Ontario. I will seek to understand how gay and bisexual men of colour make sense of racial exclusionary practices of oppression, as well as the coping strategies they employ to deal with the racism of the dominant GLBT culture. I intend to recruit 16 gay and bisexual men from these communities, age 18 or older, who have experienced racism. Eligible research participants, as determined by a screening process, will be asked to complete an informed written consent form to participate in the study. To reach an ethnographically diverse sample of gay and bisexual men, I would like to request your agency's support in posting and circulating the participants' study information letter and enclosed study flyer at your agency and throughout your networks. I would also be grateful if you would encourage eligible agency service users to participate.

A sociodemographic data questionnaire will be administered and participants will be asked to take part in a one-time focus group discussion about their experience of racism and their coping strategies. These activities will last five minutes and three hours, respectively. The research interview questions are designed to elicit personal and group experiences, and present few, if any, risks. One-on-one interviews will occur only in the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as an illness or personal emergency.

Participants' anonymity and confidentiality are of the utmost importance and will be rigorously maintained. All identifying information will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet. I will use pseudonyms to identify each participant, and only group results will be presented. Research interviews will take place at Opinion Search, a specialized focus group facility in Ottawa. Participation in this study is voluntary; participants may withdraw at any time without penalty or consequence. If you have questions concerning the research study, please feel free to contact me. You can reach my supervisor, Dr. Narda Razack, at nrazack@yorku.ca, or at (416) 736-2100, ext. 66333. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Sincerely,

Sulaimon Giwa, PhD (Candidate)
Enclosure: Participants' Study Information Letter and Study Flyer



Appendix C

Participants' Study Information Letter



Faculty of Liberal Arts
& Professional Studies

School of Social Work

4700 Keele St.
Toronto, ON
M3J 1P3

Tel: (416) 736-5226
Fax: (416) 650-3861

www.yorku.ca/laps/sowk

*"Surviving Racist Culture: The Phenomenology of Discrimination
Experienced by Gay and Bisexual Men of Colour and their Coping Strategies"*

Dear Potential Participant:

Thank you for considering taking part in a research I am conducting in the Ottawa gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community. I am a doctoral candidate, working under the direction of Dr. Narda Razack, in the School of Social Work at York University, Toronto. I am researching the experience of Black, South Asian, Arab, and East Asian gay and bisexual men, age 18 or older, who have experienced racism. This research may lead to a better understanding of how gay and bisexual men of colour cope with racism, and suggest policy, research, and practical interventions that can improve the delivery of social services to them.

If eligible, you will be asked to complete a consent form and a sociodemographic data questionnaire, and participate in a one-time focus group discussion. These activities will last five minutes and three hours, respectively. One-on-one interviews will occur only in the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as an illness or personal emergency. Research interviews will be audiorecorded for transcription purposes. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality are of the utmost importance and will be rigorously maintained. All identifying information will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet. Nicknames or aliases will be used to identify each participant, and only group results will be presented. Research interviews will take place at Opinion Search, a specialized focus group facility in Ottawa.

Participation in this research is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty or consequence. If you would like to know more about the study or indicate your interest to participate, please feel free to contact me. You can also email my supervisor, Dr. Narda Razack, at nrazack@yorku.ca, or telephone her at 416.736.2100, ext. 66333.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Sincerely,

Sulaimon Giwa, PhD (Candidate)




Appendix D
Recruitment Flyer

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

We want to hear from YOU!

IF YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED RACISM SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE



WE ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT:


- How do gay/bisexual men of colour think about race and sexual orientation?
- How do gay/bisexual men of colour respond to and cope with racism?

ELIGIBILITY:

- Are you Black, East Asian, Arab, or South Asian and identify as a gay/bisexual man or man with a history of sex reassignment or gender confirmation surgery?
- Have you faced/experienced racism within the Ottawa's GLBT Community?
- Are you 18 years of age or older?
- Are you a permanent resident of the City of Ottawa?

IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO THE ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS, FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE STUDY!

CONTACT:
Sulaimon Giwa, PhD Candidate
School of Social Work, York University
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Appendix E

Eligibility Screening Form

Screener's Information

Screener's Name: _____

Date Screened: _____ / _____ / _____
Date Month Year

Mode of Screening: In Person Over Phone Other _____

Basic Information

Name/ID: _____

How did you learn about the study? _____

Best (3) days and time to attend focus group: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Eligibility Checklist

	YES	NO
Age? _____ Over 18 years old?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you a current or former resident of Ottawa, with one or more years of residency? _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you comfortable speaking in English?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you identify as a gay <input type="checkbox"/> , bisexual <input type="checkbox"/> or female-to-male (FtM) transsexual <input type="checkbox"/> man?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you Black? _____ Place of Birth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you East Asian? _____ Place of Birth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you Arab? _____ Place of Birth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you South Asian? _____ Place of Birth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eligible for study?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Like a reminder call for interview/focus group?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix F

Informed Consent Form



Faculty of Liberal Arts
& Professional Studies

School of Social Work

4700 Keele St.
Toronto, ON
M3J 1P3

Tel: (416) 736-5226
Fax: (416) 650-3861

www.yorku.ca/laps/sowk

Title of Study:

Surviving Racist Culture: The Phenomenology of Discrimination Experienced by Gay and Bisexual Men of Colour and their Coping Strategies

Research Investigator:

Sulaimon Giwa, DipPE, BA (High Honours), MSW, PhD (Candidate)

Focus and Purpose of the Research

I am researching how Black, South Asian, Arab, and East Asian gay and bisexual men make sense of racial exclusionary practices of oppression, as well as the coping strategies they employ to deal with racism in the predominantly White gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community of Ottawa, Ontario.

Study Design

This study will utilize a cross-sectional qualitative research design, with data collected at one point in time. Respondent selection will be based on purposive homogenous sampling of participants with insight into the particular experience being researched. I will use focus groups, and where appropriate one-on-one interviews, to understand the men's experiences of racism and their coping strategies. I will use interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to analyze research data.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research

I would like to talk to you about your experience of racism and the things you do to cope with it. If eligible, you will be invited to participate in the study. You will be asked to complete a sociodemographic data questionnaire, which should take no more than five minutes. Later, you will be invited to participate in a one-time, focus group discussion with three others (for a total of four people) from the same ethnoracial group as yourself. The open-ended focus group questions are broadly framed around three interrelated topic areas: (a) questions about your understanding and experience of racism; (b) questions about your identity and connections and how the experience of racism influence these factors; and (c) questions about how you cope with racism. It is anticipated that the focus group will last about three hours. Focus group sessions will take place at Opinion Search, a specialized focus group facility in Ottawa.

Risks and Discomforts

There are no known risks or inconveniences associated with your participation in this study. As research on intimate, structural/systemic experiences of racism and discrimination may be viewed as sensitive, every effort will be taken to ensure that you are informed about the nature of the study and that you can access support from the researcher at any time prior to, during, or after your participation. A resource list of community organizations that provide gay-positive mental health services will be provided at the interview site should you wish to access the service of a professional.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You

You may experience positive satisfaction in having shared your experience. From a research, policy, and practice vantage, your participation will contribute to increasing people's understanding of the complex social dynamics of racism experienced by gay and bisexual men of colour and their coping strategies. There is the potential to help improve practice competence among health and social service practitioners (e.g., social workers), thereby ensuring intervention efficacy when working with these populations. No incentive will be provided for participation in the research.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, or would like to withdraw at any time, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to you. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future.

Withdrawal from the Study

You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, you may request to have the information you provided not included in the data analyses and/or deleted from the transcript. Following this request, all associated data collected will be destroyed immediately wherever possible.

Confidentiality

With your permission and for purposes of this study, the interview will be audiorecorded; the audio recording will be used for transcription purposes only. All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Your data will be locked in a separate file cabinet in the researcher's locked office. The data will be stored for three years

after the research is completed and destroyed thereafter. De-identified (i.e., anonymous) interview transcripts will be retained, however, for future research in other projects on a similar subject. Confidentiality will be protected to the fullest extent possible by law. Because data collection occurs primarily through focus groups, anonymity cannot be assured during the actual data collection. However, all participants will be asked to keep the identities of other members and content of what was shared in the group confidential. Your signature below means you voluntarily agree to not share such information with anyone.

Questions about the Research:

If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, feel free to contact me. You may also contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Narda Razack, by telephone at 416.736.2100 ext. 66333 or email nrazack@yorku.ca. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact The Graduate Program Office at the School of Social Work, York University, at 416.736.5226 or by email at lapssowk@yorku.ca. You may also contact the Senior Manager and Research Policy Advisor, Office of Research Ethics, York University.

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____ consent to participate in "*Surviving Racist Culture: The Phenomenology of Discrimination Experienced by Gay and Bisexual Men of Colour and their Coping Strategies*" conducted by Sulaimon Giwa. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature: _____
Participant

Date: _____

Signature: _____
Principal Investigator

Date: _____

A copy of this form is available for you to keep.



Appendix G

Tri-Council Certificate of Completion



Appendix H

Ethics Approval Letter



UNIVERSITÉ
UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF
RESEARCH
ETHICS (ORE)

5th Floor,
York Research Tower,
4700 Keele St.
Toronto ON
Canada M3J 1P3
Tel 416 736 5201
Fax 416 650 8197
www.research.yorku.ca

Certificate #:	STU 2012 - 053
Approval Period:	03/28/12-03/28/13

Memo

To: Sulaimon Giwa, Department of Social Work

From: Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor, Research Ethics
(on behalf of Wade Cook, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

Date: **Wednesday 28th March, 2012**

Re: Ethics Approval

Surviving Racist Culture: The Phenomenology of Discrimination Experienced
by Gay and Bisexual Men of Colour and their Coping Strategies

I am writing to inform you that the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee has reviewed and approved the above project.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: 416-736-5914 or
via email at: acollins@yorku.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LLM
Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor,
Office of Research Ethics

RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE

Upon receipt of an ethics approval certificate, researchers are reminded that they are required to ensure that the following measures are undertaken so as to ensure on-going compliance with Senate and TCPS ethics guidelines:

1. **RENEWALS:** Research Ethics Approval certificates are subject to annual renewal.
 - a. Researchers are required to submit a request for renewal to the Office of Research Ethics (ORE) for review and approval.
 - b. **Failure to renew an ethics approval certificate or (to notify ORE that no further research involving human participants will be undertaken) may result in suspension of research cost fund and access to research funds may be suspended/withheld ;**
2. **AMENDMENTS:** Amendments must be reviewed and approved **PRIOR** to undertaking/making the proposed amendments to an approved ethics protocol;
3. **END OF PROJECT:** ORE must be notified when a project is complete;
4. **ADVERSE EVENTS:** Adverse events must be reported to ORE as soon as possible;
5. **AUDIT:**
 - a. More than minimal risk research may be subject to an audit as per TCPS guidelines;
 - b. A spot sample of minimal risk research may be subject to an audit as per TCPS guidelines.

FORMS: As per the above, the following forms relating to on-going research ethics compliance are available on the Research website:

- a. Renewal
- b. Amendment
- c. End of Project
- d. Adverse Event

Appendix I

Sociodemographic Data Questionnaire

Do you identify as a male*? Yes No

**Men with a history of sex reassignment or gender confirmation surgery are eligible to participate in the study.*

How old are you? (check only one)

Under 18 Over 18 (please specify) _____

Which racial/ethnic group do you **primarily** identify with? (check only one)

Arab South Asian
Black Other (please specify) _____
East Asian

If you emigrated from another country _____, how long have you lived in Canada? (check only one) (country of origin name)

1-3 years > 10 years
4-6 years Other (please specify) _____
7-10 years

How long did/have you live(d) in the Ottawa area? (check only one)

1-3 years > 10 years
4-6 years I have lived in Ottawa all my life
7-10 years Other (please specify) _____

Which of the following best describe how you self-identify in terms of sexual orientation? (check only one)

Batty bwoy/buller man Mithli junsiya
Bayot Queer
Bisexual Same-gender loving
Down low Tóng xing liàn
Gay/homosexual Top/bottom
Homo thugz Warias
Kathoey Other (please specify) _____

What is the highest level of education you have completed? (check only one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary/Primary school | <input type="checkbox"/> Post-graduate studies (e.g.,
Masters, PhD, MD programs) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary/High school | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College/University | |

Which denomination best describes your current religious affiliation?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhism | <input type="checkbox"/> Judaism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christianity | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Islam | |

Which of the following best describe your current work status? (check only one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working full-time (>30 hrs/week) | <input type="checkbox"/> On disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working part-time (<30 hrs/week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student (full or part-time) | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self employed | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |

What is your personal or household (if living with someone) annual income?
(Please check either the personal or household box. Also, check only one box below.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 - \$59,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 - \$19,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 - \$29,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (e.g., unemployed; please
specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 - \$39,000 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 - \$49,000 | |

Have you ever experienced discrimination or harassment based on any of the following in the GLBT community of Ottawa? (check all that applies)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Race/ethnicity | <input type="checkbox"/> Age |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English proficiency/speaking with
an accent | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration status |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomic class | <input type="checkbox"/> Disability |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |

Are you aware of any GLBT of colour specific organizations in Ottawa? Yes No

If yes, please identify? _____

Have you attended these organizations events in the past year? Yes No

If no, what was your reason(s) for not attending or participating? _____

Are you a member of or have you attended events of a GLBT (that is not GLBT people of colour specific) organization in Ottawa? Yes No

If yes, which organization and/or event? _____

If no, what was your reason for not becoming a member or attending/participating in the local, non-GLBT people of colour events? _____

What is your HIV/AIDS status? (check only one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negative | <input type="checkbox"/> I did not get my last test result |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Positive | <input type="checkbox"/> Never been tested for HIV/AIDS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My last test was indeterminate | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not want to answer/disclose |

When was your last HIV/AIDS test taken? (check only one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never taken an HIV/AIDS test | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years ago |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In the last 6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more years ago |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7-11 months ago | |

Have you used any recreational drugs in the past year? Yes No

If yes, what drug(s) and reason(s) for drug use? _____

Which condition best describes your current living situation? (check only one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless | <input type="checkbox"/> Rooming house |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transitional housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Living with partner or spouse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group home/assisted living | <input type="checkbox"/> Renting an apartment or house |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College/university housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Living in a house I own |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Living or staying temporarily with family or friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |

How would you characterize your current relationship status? (check only one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single | <input type="checkbox"/> Married to person of the same sex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open/casual relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> Polyamorous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Married to person of a different sex | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic partner | <input type="checkbox"/> Separated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dating | <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In monogamous relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No current primary relationships | |

If you are in a relationship with another person(s), is this individual from the same ethnoracial group? Yes No

If yes, please identify the person(s) ethnoracial group_____

Have you ever experienced any of the following in the GLBT community of Ottawa because you identify as a man of colour who is gay, bisexual or with a history of sex reassignment or gender confirmation surgery (ftm)?

Verbal harassment Yes No

If yes, did you report this to the police? Yes No

How would you describe your experience with law enforcement? _____

Physical harassment Yes No

If yes, did you report this to the police? Yes No

How would you describe your experience with law enforcement? _____

Do you know another participant in the focus group? Yes No

If yes, what is the context or nature _____ of your relationship?
(e.g., friend, work colleague, etc.)

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

**Please put the completed questionnaire in the envelope provided at the front,
before the focus group begins.**

Appendix J

Focus Group/Individual Interview Questionnaire Guide

In this focus group or individual interview, I am interested in your experience of racism within the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community of Ottawa, in how you coped with this experience, and in your feelings about the usefulness of the coping approaches you employed.

Introduction: Icebreaker question

1. What motivated your interest in the research study?

Questions about racism and your experience of it in the GLBT community of Ottawa

2. What does racism mean to you?

Possible prompts: Where do you think racism exists? Why does it exist? How does it exist? What situation or event led you to become aware of racism?

2a. What *obvious* ways does the racism you described get played out in the GLBT community?

Possible prompts: What explicit things are done that suggests racism is being acted out?

2b. What *hidden* ways does the racism you described get played out in the GLBT community?

Possible prompts: How is racism acted out in very subtle ways?

3. Tell me about a recent, personal experience of racism you had in the GLBT community.

Possible prompts: What happened? Where in the community did the incident occur? Why did it happen? Who was involved? Would you say you felt supported by friends and/or bystanders? How was the situation resolved? How did you feel about the way things ended?

4. Can you share with me your reactions or feelings to the racist experience you just described?

Possible prompts: How did you feel physically, emotionally, and mentally? How has this experience impacted future choice, decisions and behaviours?

4a. In what ways has this experience of racism you just described affected how you think or feel about yourself?

Possible prompts: Do you see yourself differently now than before you had the experience of racism? How so? In what ways is your sense of self/who you are as a gay/bisexual man of colour affected by how White gay/bisexual people treat you?

4b. In what ways has this experience of racism affected your life?

Possible prompts: Partners, friends, family, work, health, wellbeing?

5. Thinking about your experience of racism in the GLBT community, how do you feel White gay/bisexual people treat gay/bisexual men of colour?

Possible prompts: In what ways are gay/bisexual men of colour treated differently than White gay/bisexual men (ask for examples)? What are the racist acts perpetrated by White gay/bisexual people in the community?

Questions about identity, connections, and how the experiences of racism in the GLBT community of Ottawa influence these factors

6. Have these experiences of racism you described made it difficult for you to be yourself in the GLBT community? Why do you think this is?

Possible prompts: If you could be yourself in the community, how would your ideal self be different from the way you are currently? What kinds of things would you do that you do not feel you can do now? How would you be? What challenges do gay/bisexual men of colour have that White gay/bisexual men do not have? What specific things make being gay/bisexual men of colour difficult? Is it harder for gay/bisexual men of colour to find acceptance and validation in the GLBT community? Why do you think this is? Does the effect of racism lead you to reject an aspect of your self?

7. How has the experience of racism you described affected your connection to members of your racial/ethnic community?

Possible prompts: Are you more or less connected to your ethnoracial community because of the experience of racism? Why/why not? How are gay and bisexual men from your racial/ethnic community viewed by their heterosexual members? Do you feel connected or not connected with other gay/bisexual men from your racial/ethnic group? In what ways are these connections important or not for your sense of self?

8. In what ways has the experience of racism you shared affected your relationship to the GLBT community?

Possible prompts: How would you best describe your relationship to the community? Do you patronize GLBT businesses (including gay bars)? Are you active in the community activities/events?

9. Describe the problems you have come across integrating/incorporating your racial or ethnic identity with your sexual orientation.

Possible prompts: In what ways is your racial or ethnic identity connected to or related to your sexual orientation identity? Do you identify more closely with your racial/ethnic identity or sexual orientation identity? Do you see these identities as connected or not connected to each other? Why/why not?

Questions about how you coped with racism you experienced in the GLBT community of Ottawa and what you see as needed support for gay/bisexual men of colour

10. How have you coped with personal experiences of racism discussed in the group?

Possible prompts: How have you dealt with your experience of racism? What approach or actions did you take?

10a. Which approach or actions have you found most helpful in coping with these personal experiences of racism?

Possible prompts: What are the approach/actions? How have they helped you to deal with racism? Why do you find them most helpful for dealing with racism?

10b. Which approach or actions have you found least helpful in coping with these personal experiences of racism?

Possible prompts: What are the approach/actions? How have they not helped you to deal with racism? Why did you not find them helpful for dealing with racism?

11. Are there people, things, or situations in your life that have influenced your choice of coping approaches or actions to these personal experiences of racism?

Possible prompts: Who were these people—what role did they play in your life? Partner, family, friend, employment, work colleagues, cultural background, toughness, etc.? What choices have you made about how to respond to your experience of racism and why?

11a. In what ways have these people, things, or situations been effective in influencing your choice of coping approach/action?

11b. In what ways have these people, things, or situations not been effective in influencing your choice of coping approach/action?

11c. Describe any strengths, particular resources, or knowledge you feel you have as a result of your ethnoracial background that has helped you to cope with the experience of racism shared in the group.

12. If you had to describe how people in your life that you normally go to during difficult times see you, what would you say?

Possible prompts: Who are the people in your life that you go to during difficult times (e.g., partner, family, friends, religious leaders, colleagues, etc.)? In what kind of situations would you go to them? What would they say about you: tough, withdrawn, depressed, etc.?

13. What are your views and feelings on how other gay/bisexual men of colour are coping with the experiences of racism shared in the group?

Possible prompts: Family, friends, counselling, religion, etc. Do they cope positively or negatively? If so, how?

14. What forms of social support currently exist to help gay/bisexual men of colour cope with the experience of racism you have all shared?

Possible prompts: Which of these social supports have you used? Which of them did you find helpful? Which did you find least helpful?

14a. What forms of social support might be helpful to gay/bisexual men of colour in managing experiences of racism like the ones you have shared with each other?

Possible prompts: Access to culturally competent service providers, cultural background, religion, etc.?

Concluding questions

15. What would be a positive step by White and non-White people in the GLBT community to address racism that the group described?

Possible prompts: What actions or steps should be taken to address racism in the GLBT community? How do you feel about the community's response to the issue so far? How have you tried to address the issue?

16. How would you describe the quality of group interaction and exchange in relation to each others experiences of racism and how you have coped?

Possible prompts: Did you feel that you learned from others? Did you find the focus group helpful in talking about these issues? Why/why not? Is there information you withheld from the focus group that you would share in a one-on-one interview?

17. Is there anything else that you would like to share that has not already been addressed?

For this study I have defined racism as: The effects of being treated differently, including being judged, ignored, harassed, threatened, or assaulted because of the colour of one's skin and/or ethnicity. Racism can occur in personal interactions but also can be found in the practices of larger cultural institutions such as schools, hospitals, and the police (e.g., schools avoiding admitting people of color, police profiling of young Black men). Racism also has the effect of offering certain social groups (based on their White skin, accent, Christian background, etc.) more power and privilege than groups that are the target of prejudice.

Appendix K

Audio & Videotaping Release Form

(Opinion Search, Ottawa, Ontario)

AUDIO & VIDEO TAPING RELEASE

I grant permission for audio & video taping of the session in which I will be participating for research purposes only but not for public disclosure. I understand that these recordings will be used only for the purpose of transcription and preparing a research report of the discussion results. I agree not to reveal the explanatory concepts discussed during the session.

	Late & Paid (LP)	Late & Not Paid (LNP)	Paid & Sent (PS)	No Show (NS)	Participated (P)
1					
2					
3					
4					

Recruited By: SG

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Appendix L
Confidentiality Agreement
Transcription Services*

I, _____, transcriptionist (with transcription agency's name), agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentation received from Sulaimon Giwa related to his doctoral study on "Surviving Racist Culture: The Phenomenology of Discrimination Experienced by Gay and Bisexual Men of Colour and their Coping Strategies." Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents;
2. To not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Sulaimon Giwa;
3. To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;
4. To return all audiotapes and study-related documents to Sulaimon Giwa in a complete and timely manner.
5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed) _____

Transcriber's signature _____

Date _____

*This document is used with permission. Slight alterations were made to tailor the document to the need of the research.

Appendix M

Record of Payments to Research Participants

Thank you for participating in the focus group or individual interview on *“Surviving racist culture: The phenomenology of discrimination experienced by gay and bisexual men of colour and their coping strategies.”* As my expression of gratitude, please accept the \$30 honorarium to cover any costs associated with your participation in this research.

Participant Name (real or pseudonym)	Honorarium Amount	Date of Participation & Receipt of Honorarium		Signature Verifying Receipt of Honorarium
		DD/MM/YYYY	GROUP*	

*Note: BL = Black (Focus Group); EA = East Asian (Focus Group); SA = South Asian (Ind. Interview); AR = Arab (Ind. Interview)

Appendix N

Recurrent Themes for Individual Interviews

Superordinate Themes						Present in over half of sample?
	Al	Ali	Jordan	Justin	Maximus	
Anti-Muslim prejudice	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO
White cultural/racial homogeneity, intolerant diversity, and exclusion	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
White fear, veiled bigotry, and the silence of racism	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
Media bias, White ideals of beauty, and the exclusion of gay men of colour	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Social invisibility and racialized deficit discourse of dependence	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
Cultural marginality, Canadian diversity, and the myth of inclusive citizenship	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
Racism in gay bars/clubs and dating websites	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES
Racism in platonic and social relationships	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
Racism in romantic relationships	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
Problem-focused engagement coping	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Problem-focused disengagement coping	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Emotion-focused engagement coping	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
Emotion-focused disengagement coping	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO
Lack of services, enhancing existing support systems, and building care infrastructure	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Taking action for social change	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Appendix O

Master Table of Themes for Individual Interviews

A. Focus on racism-specific contexts or circumstances	Line
<i>Racism in gay bars/clubs and dating websites</i>	
Al: I have gone online [] but they would say [] “Caucasian only”	22
Jordan: I think I mentioned just being in a bar	1
Justin: [] In the bar, somebody will come up and assume that we deal drugs	6
<i>Racism in platonic and social relationships</i>	
Al: [] You see more Caucasians hanging out with Caucasians. [] And it’s rare that you see a mixture of races in one big group in Ottawa, I find	3
Ali: [] The first thing they will ask you, “Where is your gun,” right?	11
Jordan: [] It was a social group [] and, after a while, no one talked to me	23
Justin: [] He was looking at me very condescending and, like, “Why are you here? Can’t you see we’re all White?” kind of look	6
<i>Racism in romantic relationships</i>	
Al: [] There are more prospects when looking for a significant other for Caucasians as opposed to minorities	26
Jordan: [] I’ve had people come up to me and go, “Well, I don’t date Asians because you’re all bottom”	19
Maximus: I think that if you are White, you may have more selection because you are kind of at that top, you are the epitome of that pyramid	5
B. Focus on understanding of oppression and social exclusion	
<i>Anti-Muslim prejudice</i>	
Ali: [] You don’t [] look like an Arab,” right? So I don’t know, what does that mean? Is it a bad thing to be an Arab?	7
Maximus: [] “Oh, [] he’s Tunisian, he’s Arab. He may be Muslim”	6
<i>White cultural/racial homogeneity, intolerant diversity, and exclusion</i>	
Ali: “Where is your camel?”	7
Jordan: [] Coming here [] and we talk about diversity in Canada, that you think that the gay community will understand	24
Justin: [] I feel that there is, like, this very redneck, gay redneck attitude	3
Maximus: [] You will hear the sort of prejudice [] or the sort of cliché, if you are Asian, you must have a small penis	15
<i>White fear, veiled bigotry, and the silence of racism</i>	
Al: [] I feel like there is racism [] but it is not spoken of as much	1
Ali: [] If we [] say “no” to something, they [<i>White people</i>] may say, “Oh, well, go back to your country”	17
Jordan: There has been no response because no one talks about it [<i>racism</i>]	3
Justin: I know when people will smile to you and then, behind your back, say something different	9
<i>Media bias, White ideals of beauty, and exclusion of gay men of colour</i>	
Al: Just [] based on media. You always see more Caucasian males, you know, on TV, movies, things like that	25
Ali: “Oh, you’re Arab. You’re big.” [] That’s what the media describes	16
Jordan: Oh, skin colour’s the most obvious	25

Justin: You won't see this [<i>racial diversity</i>] at [] CP	3
Maximus: [] Being White is [] the epitome of [] I guess the pyramid, [] you can't go any "higher"	5
<i>Social invisibility and racialized deficit discourse of dependence</i>	
Al: Well, [] you know, our community is very small, [] I find	17
Ali: So they [<i>White gay men</i>] are very ignorant with respect to everything they do	16
Jordan: [] "Look, the only coloured people we ever saw were those in the support groups or those who were about to commit suicide who needed help"	27
Justin: I think it also has to do with population, the amount of GLBT [<i>people of</i>] colour in our community. We don't have [<i>the number</i>]	1
<i>Cultural marginality, Canadian diversity, and myth of inclusive citizenship</i>	
Al: [] In the [] workplace, you still can't avoid some people having more biases towards other races	8
Ali: So if you apply for a job [] and if the employee is an Arab, how much is that going to affect the decision of hiring or not, right?	16
Jordan: [] It's appalling it happens in Canada, a country that is supposedly open and more diverse	3
Justin: They either really love them, and that's what they like, or they are indifferent	15
C. Focus on coping	
<i>Emotion-focused engagement coping</i>	
Ali: That time [] when it [<i>racism</i>] happened, [] I was with my partner, so I had support. I wasn't alone	2
Jordan: [] I surround myself with friends	29
Justin: I do a lot of meditation and prayer	10
<i>Emotion-focused disengagement coping</i>	
Jordan: [] But to go out there in the community and spend all this time [] being hurt [] by an idiot who can't see beyond your skin colour isn't a good use of my time	8
Justin: [] I get down on myself, I get hard on myself and then actually judge and criticize myself	4
<i>Problem-focused engagement coping</i>	
Al: So I try to be as understanding [] if [] it goes beyond that [] I'll definitely [] take a stance	9
Ali: I dissociated myself to be an Arab	4
Jordan: [] And I go, "Well, I didn't take away any job. I created my own company"	23
Justin: [] I offer my services as a recreation's facilitator for African-Caribbean Black men and women living with HIV	5
Maximus: [] I am not very attracted to a lot of White men. So that's just [] maybe that's my way of coping	13
<i>Problem-focused disengagement coping</i>	
Al: But I [] tried not to take it to heart [] you know, shake [] that feeling	20

off	
Jordan: [] I'm sure it's not helpful in that it doesn't solve the problem	5
Justin: [] I would turn to alcohol and [] whatnot, in the bar, and then drugs	2
Maximus: I tend to just kind of let go of the [racist] comment	6
<i>Lack of services, enhancing existing support systems, and building care infrastructure</i>	
Ali: [] The only thing which comes to mind is [] counselling	8
Ali: [] Counselling, because there is lots of sex addiction in the Arab community, lots of STIs [among] Arab gay men	10
Jordan: I think an action needs to be done in terms of creating some kind of a resource or a support network	4
Justin: [] Or, you know, everybody coming together and going to Rainbow Cinema on a Tuesday night because it's only \$2	15
Maximus: [] Maybe counselling [for] self-esteem building	15
<i>Taking action for social change</i>	
Ali: [] I think everyone should come out more, you know, just to get to know each other better	8
Ali: Talk about it	12
Jordan: I think having a discourse about the whole issue and making the gay community aware is important	29
Justin: [] we need to get rid of these old thoughts and ideas if we all want to, like, excel and make this city great	5
Maximus: [] Cultural festivals where [] visible minorities are shining	17

Appendix P

Recurrent Themes for Focus Group Participants

Superordinate Themes	Anil	Mr. M	Dexter	Tobey	Mike	Eddie	Kwame	Philippe	Present in over half of sample?
Interpersonal and intergroup situational contexts of racism	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
General and institutional social contexts of racism	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Physiological and psychosocial impact of racism on sense of community connectedness	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Racism, social identities, and multiple interlocking systems of oppression	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Unconscious racism and inexperience to racial/ethnic diversity	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
Internalized cultural superiority, White fragility, and receptivity to charges of racism	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
White denial of racism, obliviousness, and victim blaming rationalizations	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Racial numeric underrepresentation, culture of silence, and lack of community support	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Ingroup racial resentment/competition and internalized racism	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Gay beauty stratification, social situatedness, and the racialized politics of desirability	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Conflation of racism, sexuality, and Black masculinity	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO
Emotion-focused engagement coping	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Emotion-focused disengagement coping	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Problem-focused engagement coping	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Problem-focused disengagement coping	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Effective, ineffective, and influencing factors on the choice of coping strategies	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Service delivery issues, imbalances in available resources, and intervention options	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Issues, strategies, and action plans on racism	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Appendix Q

Master Table of Themes for Focus Groups

A. Focus on racism-specific contexts or circumstances	Line
<i>Interpersonal and intergroup situational contexts of racism</i>	
Tobey: We are at the same stop, and before parting ways, he was like “You are not Asian enough for me”	23
Mike: Oh, I really want your hot Asian ass, blah, blah, blah	12
Eddie: We could sit with you [] and talk about issues [] we’re not quite ready to date you	18
Kwame: I was looking for that place of affirmation. [] You can walk into the gay bar and no one will see you	1
Philippe: I was going to get a beer [] this guy’s like [] my God, you’re so beautiful [] you look just like Precious	17
Anil: You’ll be like one Brown guy out of three White guys [] you’ll meet somebody new, and they will talk to all the White guys, and you’re just not there	19
Mr. M: So everyone’s willing to be your friend, but very few would be willing to date somebody of a different culture	14
Dexter: I was at the only gay bar in Ottawa and this guy came up to me [] he was like older, and he was like I want to wrap you in a banana leaf and take you home	15
<i>General and institutional contexts of racism</i>	
Tobey: Even online [] they say that Asians are kinky and wild	15
Mike: I don’t see a lot of mixing of groups	7
Eddie: It’s like [] White, gay, bisexual men sort of granting permission for Black, gay, bisexual men to be part of the community	13
Kwame: If you find a Black man [] it would be in the jungle print with his White boyfriend	21
Philippe: I do outreach work [] when you see the posters, [they depict] only White male, like six-pack	13
Anil: It’s [racism] kind of everywhere in the GLB community [] it’s to some extent worse than it is in the broader public [] you have more visible South Asian people	16
Mr. M: I couldn’t even find it [gay porn with South Asian men]	18
Dexter: One of the guys from Stroked Ego was like hey, do you want to model underwear? And he asked all the White guys and not me	15
<i>Physiological and psychosocial impact of racism on sense of community connectedness</i>	
Mike: I have a feeling [that] if I didn’t work in the sector, I wouldn’t be [connected]	2
Eddie: I end up leaving the conversation feeling completely drained	24
Kwame: I don’t feel comfortable going there [] And I have irritable bowel syndrome	10
Philippe: I find the people really cold	18
Anil: Sitting amongst a bunch of people, in a social setting, talking about	1

whatever people they find attractive [] you realize that none of these people look like you	
Mr. M: I was just tired of being the only one. I mean you're not scared for your physical security. It's more [that] you just feel out of place	19
Dexter: I always found my stories a little bit kinkier, or like riskier. [] I don't think White people value my life or my body as much	7
<i>Racism, social identities, and multiple interlocking systems of oppression</i>	
Tobey: I noticed that my teenage years are worse	9
Mike: I would be kind of, like, separating the two. [It] didn't work	18
Eddie: I'm not just discriminated against on the basis of race [] I'm very much discriminated against on the basis of ability	28
Kwame: In North America, when I tell people that I'm gay, they don't even believe it. Are you really sure, you don't look gay	11
Philippe: I do identify myself as, yeah, Black and gay	11
Anil: I'd say that they're kind of overlapping	25
Mr. M: When I'm in one world obviously I feel more connected to that, and when I'm in the other world I feel more connected to the other	16
Dexter: My ethnocultural identity makes up very little of who I am [] I was rejected from it so aggressively that I just, I didn't identify with it	18
B. Focus on understanding of oppression and social exclusion	
<i>Unconscious racism and in exposure to racial/ethnic diversity</i>	
Mike: A lot of them have come from [] the Maritimes or whatever [] there is that lack of exposure to people of different cultures or races	23
Anil: I did find this. [] Ottawa's full of all these people from small towns who don't have exposure to diversity. [] So they don't know how to deal with you	13
Dexter: It's like everything from, you know, only into White guys	5
Mr. M: There's a high proportion of people from the East Coast. [] They're growing up in communities that are all White	7
<i>Internalized cultural superiority, White fragility, and receptivity to charges of racism</i>	
Mike: And [] White people are afraid of being called [] racist	17
Eddie: And so he's saying that to be gay is seen as becoming more culturally acceptable [] but to be a White gay male, who is able-bodied and upper middle class [] is what he's referring to	6
Kwame: There is that internal discomfort of me being [] accepted as equal	20
Philippe: Some people are racist here in Canada [] it's politically correct, so you don't feel it like in your face [] it's so multicultural Canadian	21
Anil: But [] because they live in Canada [] they think they're still open-minded	20
Mr. M: Well [] some will correct themselves	1
Dexter: I mean because we live in Canada, people think oh well, you know, we're perfect	2
<i>White denial of racism, obliviousness, and victim blaming rationalizations</i>	

Tobey: But I don't think of it as racism [] some people [] trying to seduce Canadians so they can land here	11
Eddie: And he said no [] he didn't click in. [] I had to explain it to him	23
Kwame: So whenever I talk about my experiences, it's denied	17
Philippe: As you said, that they deny it. Because sometimes you say something, oh, it's in your head, it's not racist	7
Anil: When you call people out [] you're being a dick	2
Mr. M: But it did make me evaluate [] am I being too negative	9
Dexter: I didn't know you could be that rude	19
<i>Racial numeric underrepresentation, culture of silence, and lack of community support</i>	
Kwame: If we had our own numbers, we'd have our own space	11
Philippe: It has to start from somewhere	10
Anil: There's another [] South Asian person [] who don't challenge [] and pretend they're White	12
Mr. M: You are like one of ten	16
Dexter: I think the absence of a population contributes to [] discrimination	1
<i>Ingroup racial resentment/competition and internalized racism</i>	
Tobey: I'm really attracted to the White and not Asian	19
Mike: And [] White guys would sort of pay attention to me [] the Asian guys felt like I was competition	17
Kwame: It's created a lot of self-doubt. [] As much as I push it away, there is [] the ghost of self-doubt	14
Philippe: Racism can be so complex that you begin to hate yourself	27
Anil: I'd be at a party [] there would be people of other ethnicities who want to talk to the White guys [] they will just cock block you	6
<i>Gay beauty stratification, social situatedness, and the racialized politics of desirability</i>	
Mike: White is considered the norm, and queer people of colour are considered the other	4
Kwame: We don't have the same desirability as other White gay core	4
Philippe: I'm not White [] don't have six packs [] Black gay man and fat	3
Anil: I didn't think that I was attracted to East Asian guys. I went to China and I started finding lots of them attractive	15
Mr. M: I call it the gay hierarchy. [] You have sort of the 20-something White muscular guy on top	11
Dexter: Gay media and presentation [] more attainable for White [] you're the right skin	11
<i>Conflation of racism, sexuality, and Black masculinity</i>	
Eddie: That you're identifying as gay is a bad thing for you. [] Because what you're doing is compromising your manhood [] and [] personhood	12
C. Focus on coping	
<i>Emotion-focused engagement coping</i>	
Tobey: I have already learned since I was younger to just not listen to the stuff that I know are negative	24

Mike: There is an acceptance that people have different levels of exposure and [] values. [] I think for me, it's come to accepting that much more	3
Eddie: Some of my fabulous, radical queer friends, of mine, we have Black family evenings and stuff	19
Kwame: I'm also engaged in sports. I do run. [] So it's a way of coping because I needed to get some of the edge off	4
Philippe: I'd say to the person I am with, oh yeah, this is my friend, the racist guy I told you about	5
Anil: If I've experienced a racist incident, I sometimes will vent to my partner	14
Dexter: Whenever I get angry, it backfires on me. So I try to use like humour as a way to deal with it	12
<i>Emotion-focused disengagement coping</i>	
Eddie: So even at school, in the GLBTQ community, I don't participate in many of the initiatives	27
Philippe: I think I work harder so that I can be accepted	1
Anil: Just harder to say what you think [] I self-censor a lot more	22
Mr. M: Well withdrawal also	20
Dexter: I mean [] you can't tell people to fuck off	11
<i>Problem-focused engagement coping</i>	
Mike: I just really wanted to call that person out for their racism	25
Eddie: So I guess I call out the shit for what it is, right	7
Kwame: I listen to [] progressive people [] they give me a sense of meaning	2
Philippe: I even started volunteering [] create visibility for people like me	11
Anil: Travel and to meet people from other places	13
Dexter: When the film festival's picking their movie, I'm like this one, this one and this one because there are people of colour	3
<i>Problem-focused disengagement coping</i>	
Tobey: Even though I will get a racist remark [] there are lots of White people out there who are so attracted to me	8
Kwame: As much as I try to resist it [] I spend a lot of time thinking about these things	21
Philippe: I don't always think about it [] I don't want to think about it	4
Dexter: I turn to the drink [] to sort of deal with the crazy situations	16
<i>Effective, ineffective, and influencing factors on the choice of coping strategies</i>	
Tobey: Changing my accent, basically, is the only thing	10
Mike: I think it has [] helped me [] accept [] racism is [] going to be around	3
Eddie: Connecting with other queer people of colour	23
Kwame: Religiosity/spirituality has helped me a lot	13
Philippe: Communication is the key for everything	6
Anil: For me travel was useful	22
Mr. M: Yeah, I think my education is probably one thing	8

Dexter: The educating piece [] some of the people [] I've actually invested some time into making better human beings have actually changed	4
<i>Service delivery issues, imbalances in available resources, and intervention options</i>	
Tobey: I noticed support [] for the gays [] are just for a few things. Coming out and being HIV positive	11
Mike: I don't think there's necessarily a specific form of support	20
Eddie: I don't know any	24
Kwame: I think that service providers [] should not dismiss [] our experiences [] that we're too angry [] our anger colours everything	23
Philippe: I'm really glad that we have this conversation. [] And once they know it's there, maybe it's going to help to have those resources	9
Anil: There's no one to look up to. Like there are no mentors	18
Mr. M: Formal structure of support is fine, but there are less formal ways of doing that too, I think	21
Dexter: You could go to [] Family Services Ottawa. [] And then PTS, [which] very racistly [restarted the] ethnocultural group. [] It was very racist because it was run by a White person	19
<i>Issues, strategies, and action plans on racism</i>	
Tobey: I just think that you will need a certain period of time	17
Mike: Let's just not deal with anything that's controversial and let's hide behind the curtain	26
Eddie: I think those of us who see what's happening [] have an obligation to speak up	12
Kwame: Moving forward [] we should [] concentrate on finding or creating our own spaces	26
Philippe: I think because they're so used to it	7
Anil: Why couldn't the advertisement billboards have a South Asian person?	7
Mr. M: I guess, yeah, maybe educate themselves	18
Dexter: I think South Asian gay porn	1