Heteronormativity, Housing Policy, and Skid Road: A queer geography of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

Spencer Nelson
Department of Geography
McGill University, Montreal

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ABSTRACT

In the twenty-first century, housing crises and neoliberal housing policies have made Vancouver one of the most unaffordable cities in North America. Moreover, the housing crisis differentially affects particular demographics and communities. Although these phenomena have been well-documented in Vancouver, few have analyzed this growing concern through the lens of queer theory. Using archival data such as planning documents, newspapers, and policy reports, I trace a chronology of Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) housing policy and discourse in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside through the analytic of heteronormativity. I argue that heteronormativity has remained an underlying principle in the formulation and execution of SRO housing policy, though its manifestation varies with the changing political economy. Furthermore, my analysis indicates that neoliberal and heteronormative housing policy uniquely affects particular figures such as the LGBTQ+ individual, the racialized subject, youth, working mothers, and the aging bachelor, all of which are unable to fulfill the heteronormative demographic and class duties of "Canadiana." My research provides a queer material framework for analyzing the housing crisis and urban geographical issues across various scales of governance. I conclude that in order to adequately address the crisis, we must reconsider why housing policy is created to privilege the heteronormative subject.

RÉSUMÉ

Au XXIe siècle, les crises du logement et les politiques néolibérales sur le logement ont fait de Vancouver l'une des villes les plus inabordables d'Amérique du Nord. En outre, les crises du logement affectent différentiellement certaines segments démographiques et communautés. Bien que ces phénomènes soient bien documentés à Vancouver, peu de recherche a été conduite sur ces préoccupations croissantes sous le cadre de la théorie queer. À l'aide de données d'archives telles que des documents de planification, des journaux et des rapports sur les politiques, je trace une chronologie de la politique et du discours sur le logement pour personnes seules (SRO) dans le Downtown Eastside de Vancouver sous la lentille de l'hétéronormativité. Je soutiens que l'hétéronormativité reste un principe sous-jacent dans la formulation et l'exécution des politiques du logement SRO, bien que sa manifestation varie en fonction de l'évolution de l'économie politique. De plus, mon analyse démontre que les politiques de logement néolibérales et hétéronormatives affectent de façon unique certaines individus tels que les personnes LGBTQ+, les personnes racialisées, les jeunes, les mères qui travaillent et les célibataires vieillissants, qui ne sont pas tous en mesure de répondre aux critères démographiques et de classe hétéronormatifs du « Canadiana ». Ma recherche apporte un cadre matériel queer pour examiner la crise du logement et les enjeux géographiques urbains à différentes échelles de gouvernance. Je conclus que pour aborder de manière adéquate la crise du logement, nous devons reconsidérer pourquoi la politique du logement est créée en fonction à privilégier le sujet hétéronormatif.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

"We have eight days to get out of the Regent," Jack Gates, a resident of the Regent Hotel in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside exclaimed after hearing the news that he was being evicted from his unit (McIntyre, 2018). The Regent and the Balmoral Hotels were recently shut down due to about 1,000 bylaw violations (McIntyre, 2018). These hotels are not intended for travelers, rather they are single room occupancy (SRO) hotels intended for long term or permanent stay. Unfortunately, the disinvestment in the Regent and Balmoral Hotels is not an isolated scenario, as SRO hotels across Vancouver's Downtown Eastside have been subject to neglect, not just now, but for over half of a century (Evans & Strathdee, 2006; Liu & Blomley, 2013; McKay, 2003). Moreover, the housing crisis affecting Vancouver has exacerbated an already dire situation in the Downtown Eastside (Ley & Dobson, 2008; Pawson, 2017).

As one of Canada's poorest neighbourhoods, the Downtown Eastside houses a substantial amount of its residents in SRO hotels (Krausz & Jang, 2015). By design, the units in these hotels are intended to house one person in a bedroom, while bathroom and kitchen facilities are often elsewhere on the floor or in building's common spaces (Rollinson, 1991). Indeed, living in these units makes it quite difficult, if not impossible, to subscribe to the nuclear family structure. According to one survey, 79% percent of SRO residents are men, 90% are in single households, and only 1% are families with one or more children of dependent age (Lewis, Boyes, McClanaghan, & Copas, 2008). These housing and familial contexts are in stark contrast to the vast suburbs and master-planned developments that are oriented towards the traditional nuclear family structure (Lauster, 2016). Why is it that SRO hotels which house non-family and heterodox family arrangements are subject to disinvestment?

I argue that housing policy and discourse in the Downtown Eastside is constructed on a heteronormative logic which prioritizes the heterosexual nuclear family and the single-family house. In this thesis I understand heteronormativity as not just a privileging of sexual norms (heterosexuality), but a suite of coinciding norms on gender, race, nationality, class, and familial structure (Oswin, 2010). In Canada, this coincidence prioritizes specifically a white, heterosexual, middle-class or wealthy nuclear family. I argue that across changing socio-political economic contexts, heteronormativity is a mainstay of housing policy in Vancouver. Moreover, I argue that heteronormativity uniquely affects particular figures, such as the LGBTQ+ resident, the racialized subject, youth, the working mother, and the aging bachelor. Using heteronormativity, I build on the work of scholars engaging in questions of race, class, gender, and home, amongst others, to provide an added layer of complexity that entangles these perspectives to understand their relationship to normative family structures.

1.1 Thesis Aims and Research Objectives

In this thesis, I document a chronology of SRO housing policy in Vancouver, through the lens of heteronormativity to analyze how law and discourse privileges particular familial types and their housing stock. This research aim is two-fold. First, I collected and catalogued an archive of policy and discourse related to SRO housing in Vancouver, and housing in the Downtown Eastside more generally. Second, I situated these findings in the context of heteronormativity to understand how particular domesticities and families are rendered either legible or illegible by the government, and the subsequent implications for their quality and affordability of housing. These analytical aims of my thesis are underpinned by the following research questions:

1. What role, if any, did heteronormativity play in the creation and development of the Downtown Eastside, and how has the narrative evolved?
2. How have city projects and agendas influenced single room occupancy housing, and how does that relate to notions of heteronormativity?
3. Which residents are most affected by heteronormative policies and discourse surrounding housing in the Downtown Eastside?

This research contributes to the extensive literatures on the Downtown Eastside and queer geographies. In Chapter 2, I analyze the literature on SRO hotels in North America and Vancouver specifically, to argue that they are discussed as centers of neglect and disrepair, and that when their residents are racial or sexual minorities, the discourse is grounded in sanitization and eradication. I also analyze the literature on SRO hotels in the context of mega-events to argue that these events have culminated in a reduction in quality and quantity of SRO hotels, at the expense of their residents. Domesticities plays a central role in the conceptualization of the modern home in Vancouver, and in my review of this literature, I argue that residents of the Downtown Eastside are rendered abject and unable to produce a "proper" domesticity. Across the literature, it is evident that SRO hotels are neglected and rendered abject. Following this contextual discussion of SRO hotels, I provide a more in-depth analysis of my conceptual framing of heteronormativity, and how it can be a lens to examine the institutional privileging of particular familial structures. I examine heteronormativity as a tool for a subjectless critique of law, policy, and even housing to argue that heteronormativity provides original insights into the construction of state policy and the promotion of an ideal citizen. Finally, I discuss my methodological approaches and archival materials to argue that critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a useful method to queer the archive.

In Chapter 3, I set out the thesis' aims and goals by providing a critical queer analysis of heteronormativity in the archive. I first situate the Downtown Eastside in a larger national housing agenda to argue that the single-family house benefited in the post-war era at the expense of the SRO hotel. I evaluate foundational texts and planning discourse pertaining to the mid-century evolution of the Downtown Eastside, and in particular the urban renewal movement. Then, I discuss the implications of razing and renewal policy, to argue that urban renewal policies operate to effectively *queer* certain geographies and residents, in a heteronormative fashion. Using newspaper articles, government reports, and legal documents, I frame two of Vancouver's most pivotal events, Expo 86 and the 2010 Olympics, in the context of housing, and how one can understand the policies related to all of these events as rendering certain housing stock and their residents abject and even *queered*. Overall, I argue that heteronormativity has been an underlying ideology in the discursive and material development of the Downtown Eastside.

In Chapter 4, I elaborate on the framing and analysis of Chapter 3 to identify a suite of figures rendered abject and *queered*, in the context of SRO housing policy in Vancouver. I first discuss the role of the LGBTQ+ resident (a nominally queer subject) in the planning and public narrative of the development of SRO hotels in the Downtown Eastside. I draw on newspaper articles, industry reports, and government surveys to argue that LGBTQ+ residents of SRO hotels are cast as extranational and outside of the benefits of progressive housing policy, even in the public commitments to inclusive planning efforts. I follow this with an analysis of the racial minority figure, and how Indigenous and Chinese SRO residents are rendered outside the ideal normative family structure, as enshrined in popular media and government documents. Next, I argue that the child is cast as a non-normative figure, as the Downtown Eastside is discursively

structured as an exceptional place of neglect and the past, in contrast to the future, child-oriented suburban single-family houses of other neighbourhoods in the city. Finally, I argue that two figures and residents of SRO hotels, the single working mother and the aging bachelor, are outside the "normal" family composition, and occupy status as abject and extranational to the Canadian project.

Ultimately, I conclude the thesis with a call for reinterpretation of home and family. I identify the main arguments of each chapter, and then note the significance of the work to the larger disciplines of urban geography and urban planning, as well as queer theory. I then call for additional research engaging with the theories and themes identified in this thesis to continue to address the scholarly need to integrate urban geography and urban planning with queer theory. Overall, I conclude with a call for housing justice, which includes not only affordability and availability, but also appropriate housing stock for varying family structures. To imagine a housing economy that does not perpetuate heteronormative ideology requires a fundamental reconceptualization of what is deemed aspirational in the context of the family and the home.

2.0 RESEARCH CONTEXT, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

The Downtown Eastside is one of the most studied neighbourhoods in Canada, with a plethora of existing literature on its evolving socio-political landscape (Damon et al., 2017). For geographers in particular, the area has been of important study in the subjects of health (Miewald & Ostry, 2014), planning (Smith, 2003), class relations (Blomley, 2004), and more. Because of the extensive scholarship on the Downtown Eastside, I highlight only a subset of this literature which centers critical approaches to home and housing, largely within the discipline of geography. Despite extensive research in and on the neighbourhood, few scholars have engaged with queer theoretical approaches. This thesis frames the changing housing dynamics of the Downtown Eastside with a queer theoretical lens. In this chapter, I detail the contextual literature, theoretical framework, and methodologies for this thesis. First, I discuss the contextual literature on the development of SRO hotels, and domesticities in the Downtown Eastside to argue that SRO hotels are neglected in policy and discourse. Next, I identify my working framework by articulating the theories of heteronormativity, and how it has been applied to studies of home. Lastly, I discuss how I collected my archival materials, and my use of critical discourse analysis as a method for data analysis.

2.1 Research Context

There is an extensive body of literature on the Downtown Eastside and SRO hotels more broadly. The advent of SRO hotels has been discussed in the context of North American urban histories and with respect to larger housing policy agendas. In this section of the chapter, I first discuss scholarship on the SRO hotel, highlighting common themes like health, aging industry

workers, and the juxtaposition with suburbanization. I then discuss the literature on SRO hotels in Vancouver, arguing that they house a largely marginalized population in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Since there is an extensive body of literature on the Downtown Eastside and my thesis articulates a chronology of housing policy in Vancouver, I selectively focus on two pivotal mega-events in the history of the Downtown Eastside, Expo 86 and 2010 Olympics, to argue that SRO hotels have declined in quality and quantity over time. Next, I engage with critical literature on home and homemaking in the Downtown Eastside, to identify how scholars understand non-normative homes in the Downtown Eastside as abject. Finally, I argue that across the literature, SRO hotels and their residents are neglected and marginal. Despite a growing body of literature, current approaches are limited by their lack of engagement with how family structure interacts with a suite of coincidences of race, sexuality, gender, class, and nationality to create different housing realities. A queer lens provides an alternative approach to the study of the Downtown Eastside and a mechanism for understanding how housing policy is created to benefit heteronormative family structures.

2.1.1 Framing the SRO

Despite being an important part of urban life for many, SRO literature is relatively sparse, as their prevalence has declined by over one million units in roughly the last half century (Bevil, 2009). Despite transient occupants, historians were able to research SRO hotels through the emergence of SRO districts (Bevil, 2009; Groth, 1988, 1994). These districts often appeared around areas where single men would work in the urban core, often in lumbering, manufacturing, or other manual labour occupations (Eckert, 1979). Many of these single men would have few contacts both within and outside of the hotels due to the nature of their work and generally not

being from the area (Eckert, 1979). Although the demographics of SRO residents are dependent on their geopolitical urban contexts, many of the residents have never married and have low rates of higher education.

SRO units are primarily concentrated in the urban core of large cities, and therefore subject to policy shifts in urban economies (Bevil, 2009). With the dawn of Fordism and the rise of suburban North America, SROs and their residents faced challenges as investment of the urban core declined, because "the benefits of living downtown were overshadowed by the desire to have a detached house and a yard in the suburbs -- to achieve the American Dream" (Bevil, 2009, p. 12). The shift from urban to suburban-oriented housing policy, investment, and infrastructure was marked at federal, state and provincial, and intra-urban levels. Two notable federal housing acts in North America are the National Housing Act and the GI Bill (Flanagan, 1997). These policies indicated a transition to suburban-oriented housing policy, which benefited some residents of SROs, while leaving many others homeless (Bevil, 2009). Bevil (2009) argues that SRO "rehabilitation for middle-class housing has the effect of pushing poorer residents out of the city center, and possibly into the streets" (p. 55). Noting this, a number of scholars have focused on the conversion of SRO housing to alternative forms of housing such as apartment complexes and tourist hotels (Rollinson, 1991).

Many of these districts appeared across North America, such as in New York (Rossi, 1990), Seattle (Rusch, 2013), Chicago (Rollinson, 1990), Los Angeles (Linhorst, 1991), San Francisco (Davidson et al., 2003; Hahn, Kushel, Bangsberg, Riley, & Moss, 2006), and of course, Vancouver (Shannon, Bright, Gibson, & Tyndall, 2007; Strathdee et al., 1997). Within these cities, SRO districts comprised a "service-dependent ghetto" (Rollinson, 1991, p. 457), or an area in which residents were highly dependent on state-based social services, especially for

health and welfare programs. Although in many of these contexts SRO hotel districts developed around heterogeneous populations and by the mid-twentieth century they largely shared "the common characteristics of welfare status, absence of primary families, and common close living facilities under the power a landlord-manager" (Shapiro, 1970, p. 68).

Recently, there has been a growing trend to discuss sub-populations living in SROs such as writers (Alschuler, 1995), women (Knight et al., 2014), LGBTQ+ people (Plaster, 2012), and transient workers (Ross & Sullivan, 2012). In fact, Bevil (2009) notes that "much like women in hotels, who felt liberated by an absence of family duties, the homosexual community, particularly gay men, found in the SRO hotel, a sense of liberty that allowed them to express their sexual identity" (pp. 34-35). Despite declines in SRO units in the latter half of the twentieth century, gay men in particular found SROs an important attribute of urban housing stock as the hotels fostered unique interdependent communities and an affordable and transient lifestyle, centered in the hotel districts' restaurants and bars (Bevil, 2009). This practice helped stimulate the gay rights movement across North American cities in the 1960s, and onward (Bevil, 2009). The gay community's attraction to SROs coincides with faith-based organizations' and charities' dormitory-style housing in urban cores as a way to reduce social ills and provide housing for the morally degenerate (Bevil, 2009).

2.1.2 Housing Vancouver's marginal communities

The development of an SRO hotel district in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside was similar to that of many other North American cities, as it was centered around the working-class male migrant demographic in the urban core (Lazarus, Chettiar, Deering, Nabess, & Shannon, 2011). As the urban geography and economy of Vancouver has changed like many other North American

cities, SRO hotels and their residents in Vancouver are discussed as marginal and neglected. Scholarship on the SRO hotels in the Downtown Eastside has primarily focused on the dire conditions that residents live in, paying particular attention to health and race. Research has identified SROs in the Downtown Eastside as 'unhealthy' in a multitude of ways, from the presence of vermin (Knight et al., 2014), to fostering a food insecure environment (Miewald & Ostry, 2014). Mental health and addiction have also featured prominently in scholarship on SRO hotels (Corneil et al., 2006; Knight et al., 2014; Lazarus et al., 2011; Linden et al., 2013; Somers et al., 2013).

These health concerns have been discussed in a larger context of institutional neglect. Liu and Blomley (2013) argue that the creation of the SRO district and its economic and health disparities has perpetuated a "cycle of increasing disrepair" (Linden et al., 2013, p. 560). They analyzed newspaper discourse of the Downtown Eastside and found the language to be highly medicalized, criminalized, and socialized, contributing to the discursive creation of a "zone of degeneracy" (Jiwani & Young, 2006, as cited in Liu & Blomley, 2013, p. 121) or "space of criminality" (England, 2004, as cited in Liu & Blomley, 2013, p. 121).

Race has also been a focus of scholars with respect to health and the decline of the Downtown Eastside. Geographer Kay Anderson (1987) writes extensively on the formulation of Vancouver's Chinatown in the Downtown Eastside. She critically analyzes the public discourse and policy context of Chinatown to argue that the imposition of racial categorization on residents of Chinatown in its origins (around 1886-1920), was used by those in power to justify disinvestment and curate (through discourse and policy) Chinatown as a place of 'social ills', particularly as they related to health, housing, and wealth (Anderson, 1987).

Scholars have also written about race and gender in SRO hotels and the Downtown Eastside with respect to Indigenous women's activism, oppression, and rights (Collard, 2015; Culhane, 2003; Pratt, 2005). Pratt (2005) argues that the Canadian way of framing Indigenous people in cities is often as transient, as though they are "en route to their legislated 'camp', which is the Indian reserve" (p. 1059), rendering them as non-residents and distinct from citizens of Vancouver. Undoubtedly, Indigenous women are neglected in policy and discourse, particularly related to health and safety (Benoit, Carroll, & Chaudhry, 2003).

Although not often discussed explicitly in the context of SRO hotels in Vancouver, scholars have identified health and housing as particular concerns for LGBTQ+ populations. In fact, the bulk of literature on LGBTQ+ people in Vancouver has centered around AIDS (Brown, 1995; Rasmussen & Brown, 2002; Strathdee et al., 2000). Because gay men were viewed as "biological carries and their spaces epicentres" of HIV and AIDS, scholars have focused on questions on the sanitization of gay and queer spaces (Brown, 1995, p. 169). Queer spatialization in Vancouver has been discussed specifically with respect to housing stock, as

> housing is also what drew definite boundaries between male and female gay spaces as women were less able to afford West End housing, or raise their families there, while gay men could afford the more central location apartments, which also suited them better (in terms of their typically smaller households). (Bouthillette, 1995, p. 137)

It is notable that Bouthillette (1995) does not engage with LGBTQ+ people and SROs or the Downtown Eastside, but instead the consideration of differing LGBTQ+ lifestyles in selection of neighbourhood and housing stock.

Relatedly, geographers have also discussed sexuality through analysis of sex work and housing in Vancouver. Ross (2009, p. 185) has identified that the sanitization of the West End is also associated with the displacement of sex workers who refused "to confine … sexuality to the heterosexual, monogamous, nuclear family." Later, Ross (2010) argues that this logic was

mobilized to evict many sex workers in the West End and the Downtown Eastside in the lead up to the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver. In particular, SRO housing has played an elevated role in the narrative of the Downtown Eastside as Vancouver's "red-light" district, as it has often created more dangerous and risky situations for sex workers (Lazarus et al., 2011).

2.1.3 Mega-events and the decline of the SRO hotel

Like scholarship on other North American SRO hotel districts, the Downtown Eastside has been studied in changing political economic contexts. I argue that the literature on the Downtown Eastside and these mega-events expresses a decline in the quality and quantity of SROs in Vancouver. Mega-events, such as Expo 86 and the 2010 Olympics are primary foci of the existing scholarship on the dynamism of the Downtown Eastside. Kristopher Olds (1995), an urban geographer, writes on the loss of housing in Vancouver before, during, and after Expo 86. He identifies SRO hotel conversion from residential to commercial use, rent increases, and poor tenancy rights, as major contributing factors to the increasing neglect of communities in the Downtown Eastside (Olds, 1995). After Expo 86, the land that Expo was held on was sold to foreign real estate speculation investors, spurring the idea of "Vancouverism": an urban planning and economic development strategy coupling the slender glass skyscrapers with "neoliberal taxation policies and cutbacks in public services" (Edelson, 2011, p. 806).

More recently, scholars have discussed the role of the 2010 Olympics on the socioeconomics of the Downtown Eastside, particularly in the context of neoliberal housing policy. An example of such a policy was the Vancouver Agreement, signed in 2000, aimed to triangulate municipal, provincial, and federal government policy to prepare Vancouver for the 2010 Olympic Games (Bornstein, 2010). Resulting from the Agreement, neighbourhoods such as

the Downtown Eastside, saw sidelining of their housing and welfare needs for "redevelopment" of low-income and industrial areas through the construction of the Athletes' Village (Bornstein, 2010). Despite including future "affordable housing" in the Athletes' Village, Edelson (2011), argues that after becoming a city financed from foreign investment beginning from the sale of Expo 86 lands, Vancouver continues to promote neoliberal governance policies that encourage foreign wealth investment under the guise of community (re)development. Vancouver created a "glocalization" (Robertson, 1995), or global-local approach to policy and planning, which established Vancouver as an "image-creation machine" (McCallum, Spencer, & Wyly, 2005, p. 29, as cited in Nelson, 2010, p. 137), branding Vancouver as a global city across scales of governance. With respect to SROs specifically, Pentifallo and VanWynsberghe (2015) analyze not only the historical political and planning context of neglect that Vancouver's SRO hotels are situated in, but also discuss the lasting influences of the Olympics on SRO housing, such as changing SRO bylaw policies which were intended to protect extant SROs residents. Moreover, in the lead up to the Games in Vancouver landlords would exploit a number bylaws and regulations in provincial and municipal housing policy such as SRO bylaws, the *Assistance Shelter Act*, the *Residential Tenancy Act*, and numerous others, to raise rents, evict residents, and criminalize impoverished tenants and the homeless (Chan, 2014; Kennelly & Watt, 2013).

The changing landscape of the Downtown Eastside has also prompted scholars to center on class conflict in the SRO hotel district (Ley, 1996; Smith, 2003). In his book *Unsettling the City: Urban land and the politics of property*, Nick Blomley (2004) discusses the conflict between residents (many of whom live in SROs) and land "owners". He articulates that the current ownership model is enshrined in British Common Law and privileges the individual wealthy white owner, as opposed to alternative models of ownership that are more collective or

rooted in Indigenous land claims (Blomley, 2004). Across a multitude of political and economic contexts, scholars continue to argue that SRO hotel residents and the Downtown Eastside more generally are subject to disinvestment.

2.1.4 Domesticities in the Downtown Eastside

Although the political and economic landscape of the Downtown Eastside and Vancouver have changed over time, discussions of home and domesticity have remained a constant focus in the academic literature of the neighbourhood. Indeed, scholars have examined elements of home in the archive: before Expo 86 (McKay, 2003; Murray, 2011; Sommers, 1998) and after (Mitchell, 2004), and across these studies scholars find that residents of the Downtown Eastside are held to different expectations of home and are often rendered abject. Sherry McKay (2003) discusses housing and architecture in Vancouver from the perspective of domesticity. She argues that the condominium, high-rise apartments, and other forms of housing in the post-war era, were built for a specific kind of domesticity that sorted out gender, class, and ethnicity, into something that she calls "urban housekeeping" (McKay, 2003). Specifically, she analyzes the areas of McLean Park in Strathcona (an East Side neighbourhood), and Vancouver's West End as "impoverished areas" and how they were created for a certain demographic: "Strathcona was associated with the harried housewife overwhelmed by her domestic location; the West End was characterized by the 'little old lady living in genteel poverty" (McKay, 2003, p. 14). She also posits that norms of housekeeping in Vancouver are racialized and privilege the heterosexual family, as "zoning was applied to prevent the immorality of mixing – of mixing industry and residence on the urban scale and of mixing family and lodgers on the domestic scale. The non-family members of this community would be expelled to dormitories" (McKay, 2003, 23). Because of the housing stock

and quality, the heterosexual nuclear family is not representative of the Downtown Eastside (Robertson, 2007).

Relatedly, scholars have discussed the role of residents of SRO hotels in the Downtown Eastside as abject or in surplus. Karen Murray (2011) argues that the late sociologist and planning figure in Vancouver, Leonard Marsh, identified the importance of the "two-parent, heterosexual, male-breadwinner family" (Murray, 2011, p. 13). She argues the Vancouver Agreement sidelined the realities and needs of residents in the Downtown Eastside, in lieu of cleaning and sanitizing the area in preparation for the 2010 Olympic Games (Murray, 2011). Indeed, she identifies that residents of Vancouver's East End are abject, where "neighbourhood lives were 'wasted'… rendered disposable, 'excessive,' and 'redundant', governed in the temporal fixity of their disadvantage" (Murray, 2011, p. 49). Sommers (1998) critically evaluates the gendered components to both the domestic and public. His analysis focuses on the mid-to-late twentieth century Downtown Eastside (1950-1986), in which he identifies a transformative period for the symbol of the Downtown Eastside from the abject figure of damaged masculinity to "the aging, retired resource industry worker" (Sommers, 1998, p. 300). Sommers (1998) understands the Downtown Eastside as a place of abject masculinity, as "skid road" signifies the male failure to produce the respectable, suburban, family man that the state desires (Ehrenreich, 1983).

Scholars have also situated discussions of 'home' in the larger context of Vancouver planning and housing policy. Katharyne Mitchell (2004) writes on the particular role of neoliberal policy agendas in Vancouver, highlighting elements of race and the home. She discusses the increasing role of privatization and development of property rights in Vancouver,

and how it has manifested through "monster homes" in the neoliberal era (Mitchell, 2004). Notably, she identifies how the home

> stands not only as a metonym for the nation, but also for a set of ideas associated with domesticity and the natural order of human relations. These ideas are generally employed in relation to gender but contain implicit meanings that are profoundly racialized and link histories of colonial empire to contemporary struggles over space and design. (Mitchell, 2004, p. 64)

For Mitchell, the idea of the home in Vancouver is grounded in an overarching national project. Indeed, urban planners have touched on planning agendas and the national project as well, noting the particular histories of redlining and racialized mortgage industries in Vancouver (Lauster, 2016), as well as bylaws and the regulation of kinship and families in housing policy (Beasley, 2019). Mitchell (2004) differs from McKay (2003), Murray (2011), and Sommers (1998), in that she approaches the study of home from the context of empire and nation building, however, she continues a narrative that the home and domesticities are a focal point of analysis in Vancouver.

2.1.5 Context and Literature Conclusion

Across each of these bodies of literature, it becomes apparent that SRO hotels and their residents are neglected through policy and discourse. SRO hotel districts are located in North American urban cores, often where single men needed affordable housing. In the literature, the neglect of SRO hotels is juxtaposed with the rise of the single-family house. In particular, gay men were residents of SRO hotels, as they were affordable and allowed for a more transient lifestyle. Scholars discuss the development of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside in a similar manner to other North American SROs, however they pay particular attention to elements of health and racialized communities. Although not necessarily living in SRO hotels, LGBTQ+ individuals face difficulties in housing access due to the agenda of "sanitizing" queer spaces. Scholars have

focused on the mega-events of Expo 86 and the 2010 Olympics as factors in the changing housing contexts for marginalized residents, and the decline of quality and quantity of SROs. Even in changing sociopolitical contexts, scholars have focused on domesticities and homemaking in SRO hotels and the Downtown Eastside, arguing that non-normative family structures are abject.

Despite a critical and expansive body of scholarship on studies of SRO hotels and housing policy in Vancouver, the extant research is limited by the era of study and theoretical approach. Many studies of SRO hotels in the Downtown Eastside are limited to a particular era, such as urban renewal, or the 2010 Olympics. Accordingly, my research provides an archival analysis of planning documents, newspapers, and other materials on the Downtown Eastside's SRO hotels from the early-mid twentieth century to the present, to understand how housing policy has changed over time. Moreover, my analytical framework of heteronormativity provides an original contribution to the literature on the Downtown Eastside, as I combine the literatures of race, sexuality, health, and sanitization to understand marginalized residents as rendered extranational. Overall, my thesis seeks to build on and interrogate the central premise of the literature discussed: SRO hotels and their residents are abject and continue to be neglected by government actors. My analysis of heteronormativity differs from approaches centered primarily on race, sexuality, or masculinity, as I argue that non-normative family structures are rendered extranational and disposable.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

By focusing on SRO hotel housing policy and notions of home under a queer lens, this portion of the chapter discusses my analytical framework of heteronormativity and its contribution to the

study of housing. I first describe the common understandings of heteronormativity in the context of queer studies. I then argue for a broader understanding of heteronormativity which frames the concept as not just about a binary between the heterosexual and the homosexual, but a complicated suite of interacting traits. Following this, I describe the particular applications of this broader understanding of heteronormativity in the contexts of homemaking and relationships to property, arguing that they pay particular attention to the intricate ways policies are crafted to disadvantage those who do not subscribe to heteronormative family structures. In an era of increasing LGBTQ+ acceptance and an increasing diversity of acceptable familial dynamics, I discuss a few of the recent deviations of heteronormativity to argue that they interact with potential national projects. Finally, I conclude that heteronormativity is a fruitful framework for analyzing housing policy and discourse because it requires an analysis of a multitude of demographic attributes as well as interpersonal relationships.

2.2.1 Heteronormativity

Queer theorists advance the concept of heteronormativity as a mode of power that enforces socio-political norms and values. Indeed, numerous queer theorists have analyzed heteronormativity and approached it from an interdisciplinary perspective as "an ideology that promotes gender conventionality, heterosexuality, and family traditionalism as the correct way for people to be. Heteronormativity, then, is the implicit moral system or value framework that surrounds the practice of heterosexuality" (Oswald, Blume, & Marks, 2005, p. 143). Others have written on heteronormativity through the perspective of gender conventionality (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009) and on "doing gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Scholarship on heteronormativity, under this interpretation, has also focused on the globalization of 'gay-

friendly tourism' (Waitt, Markwell, & Gorman-Murray, 2008), as well as on educational policy in the Canadian context (McGregor, 2008).

2.2.3 A broader heteronormativity: migration and legal studies

Although many scholars understand heteronormativity as the power relationship associated with gender and sexual binaries, geographers have also written on heteronormativity in a broader sense. Geographer Natalie Oswin (2010, p. 257) makes a case for a more encompassing and critical approach to heteronormativity: "I turn to queer approaches that understand heteronormativity not as a universal policing of a heterosexual-homosexual binary, but as the geographically and historically specific coincidence of race, class, gender, nationality, and sexual norms." Going beyond the queer subject, an analysis from the lens of heteronormativity should provide a critique as to how sexuality is more broadly, "in concert with ideologies of race, gender, class and nationality (to name but some)" (Oswin, 2010, p. 258).

This broader understanding of heteronormativity as a form of critique has been used by numerous scholars in examining policy landscapes. For instance, 'queering' migration or understanding how heteronormativity has influenced migration policy and the realities of migration, has played an increasingly important role in migration studies (Luibhéid, 2008; Luibhéid, 2011; Tsujimoto, 2014). Luibhéid (2008) argues that migration policy is heteronormative because it is predicated on marriage, which cuts across sexual identity, gender, and racial norms. Luibhéid (2011) later writes on Irish immigration and citizenship policy, examining heterosexuality as an integral part of the "state-building processes, projects, and ideologies" (Luibhéid, 2011, p. 180). In this discussion, she expands heteronormativity to not only encompass queer subjects, but those who do not fulfill the neoliberal Irish state agenda: the

childbearing migrant women, the poor and working class, and the unmarried (Luibhéid, 2011). She further argues that this framework has discursive and material effects on and for the non-heteronormative, as they face greater difficulties in immigration law and paths to citizenship (Luibhéid, 2011). Moreover, migration can be thought of as heteronormative because it amplifies heteropatriarchal norms as "codified in marriage and family laws determining inheritance of property and citizenship claims" (Peterson, 2014, p. 608). Building on the work of migration studies, Brandzel (2005, p. 179) also discusses how citizenship is used to create and curate a certain kind of heteronormalized citizen, since "promoting and naturalizing heterosexual marriage as the primary institution of American domestic life, the state can not only produce heterosexuality as the norm but also produce heteronormativity as inextricably linked to a properly gendered, racialized, and sexualized citizenry." Brandzel (2005) elaborates that race, class, and even consumption norms are a part of heteronormativity which seeks to reproduce the normative American who owns their home, goes shopping for groceries at the supermarket, and has good schools for their children. Oswin (2010), Luibhéid (2008; 2011), Brandzel (2005), and others critically engage with a broader interpretation of heteronormativity and queer theory.

2.2.4 Queer geographies of home and queering property: a heteronormative approach

In the context of queer housing concerns, a number of scholars have written specifically on questions of queer housing rights, advocacy, and needs (Hiramoto & Shi Ling Teo, 2015; Hopkins, Sorensen, & Taylor, 2013; Kottorp, Johannson, & Rosenberg, 2016). Most notably, Oswin (2010) makes explicit reference to the study of heteronormativity and the home. In her research on the Singaporean family, Oswin (2010) identifies that a specific and heteronormative image of the modern family is perpetuated by state agendas through Singapore's Housing

Development Board. Building on the work of migration and citizenship scholars, she argues that 'domestic' refers to both the one's dwelling and to citizenship (Oswin, 2010). This creates a heteronormative family not only through a regulation of queer bodies and rights, but through a regulation of *queered* subjects as well, such as "the single mother, the migrant worker, the unfilial child, and many others" (Oswin, 2010, p. 256). She analyzes Singaporean policy as both heterosexist as well as exclusionary for those who cannot conform to the image of a family nucleus, and because of this they are not able to attain certain tenancy rights and are thus rendered queer by the Housing Development Board (Oswin, 2010).

Oswin (2012) builds on these arguments by identifying that in Singapore population decline was a concern even with state-promoted narratives of heteronormative marriage and procreation, so the government opened the door to immigration. However, immigration policy is still largely confined to heteronormative notions of marriage, family, and progress, as identified in the migration literature (Oswin, 2012). Oswin (2012) also identifies that there are binaries in the division of foreign labour between 'foreign workers' such as low-wage domestic service and construction workers, and 'foreign talent' or wealthy and high-skilled labourers. She argues:

> The exclusion of 'foreign workers' is a function of patriarchal, racialized, and elite cultural logics to be sure. It is also a function of heteronormativity. For while those migrants who fall under the category 'foreign talent' are invited into the national family to help reproduce the nation, those who are characterized as 'foreign workers' are excluded from Singapore society and rendered permanently extranational. (Oswin, 2012, p. 1635)

Although Oswin's analysis is in the context of Singapore, the framework of heteronormative housing agendas can be applied to other geographies that may work to promote a certain image of heteronormative, wealthy, nuclear, heterosexual families.

Oswin's approach to heteronormativity and the family can be situated in a larger discussion of critical geographies and queer geographies of home and domesticity. Phil Hubbard

(2008) discusses the importance of identifying heteronormativity as omnipresent, across geographies, scales, and time. In the context of home geographies, this is aptly adapted by Nowicki (2014), Pilkey (2014), and McKeithen (2017), who write on queer and non-queer identities under the heteronormativity of home, elderly gay domesticities, and the intimacies of crazy cat ladies, respectively.

2.2.5 Heteronormative variations: homonormativity, homonationalism and queer futures

Scholars have expanded understandings of heteronormativity, by engaging with critical discussions of race and nationality. Lisa Duggan (2002), writes on a new *homonormativity*, or a discussion of post-equality LGBTQ+ politics engaging not only in discussions of the heterosexual and the homosexual, but also questions of race and wealth, amongst others. Duggan (2002) writes on the ways in which the neoliberal era has increased rights and materialities for some gay and queer people but has left others behind. In this discussion, she argues that it is important to reflect on the rhetoric and practice of neoliberal politics to understand normativity within the LGBTQ+ community, in which the white, wealthy, and cis are privileged over the non-white, poor, and trans (Duggan, 2002).

Contributing to this critical approach, Jasbir Puar (2007, 2013) discusses homonationalism as a way in which gay-friendliness is used to justify American exceptionalism and imperialism across the world. “Pinkwashing” of human rights abuses and war crimes of Israel, the United States, and others, becomes a heuristic to mobilize militaristic endeavors in countries deemed dangerous to queer people (Puar, 2007). Homonationalism has also been utilized by scholars to discuss settler-colonialism of North America, as settler formations have colonial agendas that define sexuality and sexual politics under Eurocentric norms, which is

juxtaposed with Indigenous sexualities (Morgensen, 2010). More recently, homonationalism is discussed in the context of the "gay-friendly" national and international project of the 2012 London Olympics, an event which tapped into mainstream LGBTQ politics in an enterprising fashion to deem certain sexual cosmopolitanisms as desirable, and others as excluded (Hubbard & Wilkinson, 2015).

Similarly engaged to the concepts of nationalism is the idea of queer temporalities and reproductive futurisms. Edelman (1998, p. 21) argues that the child is at the nexus of contemporary political discourse, in which we "do" things for the child, as the figure of the child "has come to embody for us the telos of the social order and been enshrined as the figure for whom that order must be held in perpetual trust." Edelman (1998) goes on to discuss examples in popular culture that display this underlying logic, such as newspapers, art, theatre, literature, and more. Indeed, he articulates how queer sexualities threaten such a logic, as it endangers the very order of normative time and futurity, and that queer theory should stand outside those reproductive futures and outside the cycles of reproduction, understanding the "societal lie" (Edelman, 1998, p. 29) of progress. By disidentifying with the future, or the "death drive", Edelman (1998; 2004) marks a transition in notions of temporality, in queer theory (Oswin, 2012). The call to reject reproductive futurisms is amplified through a hostile national project toward LGBTQ+ subjects, as well as the failure of progress narratives to attain queer rights. To Edelman, queer politics should have "no future".

2.2.6 Theoretical contributions and conclusions

The framework of heteronormativity provides us with a suite of analyses from which to analyze the role of domestic expectations. Although heteronormativity has been discussed in several

ways, Oswin (2010), Luibhéid (2011), and others' framing of heteronormativity as a suite of traits including race, sexuality, gender, and class, amongst others, is useful in employing a subjectless critique. Under this framework, one can understand how policies on tax, migration, or citizenship can be understood as heteronormative and privileging the heterosexual nuclear family. This is particularly true in the context of housing, in which legal relationships of marriage, citizenship, and family dictate housing access and affordability and can be underpinned by a heteronormative logic.

In this thesis, I build on the theoretical framings of Oswin (2010), Luibhéid (2011), and others, to analyze the role of heteronormativity in SRO housing policy and discourse in Vancouver. In my empirical analysis, I provide a Canadian context for the framing of heteronormativity in queer geographies in which I articulate the unique ways that city, provincial, and federal governments interact to curate a heteronormative family and housing infrastructure. Furthermore, I document how heteronormativity manifests differently in changing political and economic contexts. I provide an original analysis of five *queered* figures in SRO hotels and the Downtown Eastside to understand how heteronormative planning and policy agendas have adversely and differentially affected them. As LGBTQ+ rights have increased in popularity, questions of homonormativity and homonationalism have become increasingly important in dissecting power and capitalist state agendas. I mobilize these theories with respect to the decline of SRO hotels to understand 'gay-friendly' neoliberal events and markets as contributing to a capitalist and homonormative or homonationalist agenda. Ultimately, heteronormativity and critical queer approaches provide a framework that allows one to interrogate not only how LGBTQ+ subjects are rendered queer, but also those who do not fit into

normative domesticities.

2.3 Methodological practices

In this section of the chapter, I discuss how I collected and analyzed my archival materials. I first discuss the documents I read and analyzed, as well as where I collected them. Then, I discuss how I queer the archive by paying attention to power and normativity in the archive. Next I discuss the mobilization of my methodological approach, critical discourse analysis, by arguing that it is the most transparent and efficient way to analyze critical archival data, as it requires an integration of textual analysis, discursive analysis, and social analysis. I conclude with my ethical considerations for the project.

2.3.1 Materials collection

In order to address the gaps in urban geography and queer geographies literatures that I have identified, I utilized an archival qualitative methods approach. I collected and analyzed material from a variety of sources to address the complex realities of changing policy landscapes in the Downtown Eastside. After establishing my research questions and settling on a topic and area of interest, I investigated potential archival sources. I familiarized myself with the Downtown Eastside and Vancouver through academic sources and knew that I wanted to first engage with what was currently going on in Vancouver's housing crisis, and the way it was manifesting in the Downtown Eastside, in particular. I began my materials collection by interrogating the housing crisis through various media sources, such as *The Vancouver Sun, The Georgia Strait, The Globe and Mail,* and *The Province,* amongst others. This preliminary collection allowed me to

understand the contemporary discourse and planning context of housing in the Downtown Eastside.

From there, I proceeded with archival research, focusing on acquiring legal and government documents that pertained to housing policy and the Downtown Eastside. These broader contemporary sources, like their media counterparts, were often available online, allowing me to have a grasp of the current and recent state of the material and discursive contexts of housing and planning policy in the Downtown Eastside, prior to beginning my fieldwork. Following this, I continued to work further back in the archive through a triangulated process of engaging with scholarly literature, media sources, and government documents. Indeed, this type of archival research justified an iterative process that was not always linear in chronology, theme, or source. Often, I found myself reading a scholarly source, returning to government documents that were mentioned, only to find myself reading a newspaper article cited in the government document.

Although I did extensive research online, the historical nature of my project required time in the physical archive to acquire and analyze materials. In Vancouver, I examined archival materials at the Downtown Eastside Special Collection, the Vancouver Public Library, and the City of Vancouver Archives. The Downtown Eastside Special Collection is located at the Carnegie Branch of the Vancouver Public Library, in the heart of the Downtown Eastside. This collection has a unique thematic assortment of documents that are pertinent to the Downtown Eastside, and thus this project. The location of the Special Collection also allowed me to take field notes and examinations about the Downtown Eastside and its geographical context in Vancouver. The Central Library of the Vancouver Public Library houses the Newspaper Clippings collection that was particularly helpful for this project, as I was able to investigate not

only articles about the Downtown Eastside, but other relevant themes and events to this thesis such as Expo 86. The City of Vancouver Archives is where I collected the bulk of my archival materials for this project, as it is home to the former BC Gay and Lesbian Archives, the City of Vancouver fonds, the Margaret Mitchell fonds, which contains documents on East Vancouver, the City of Vancouver Archives pamphlet collection, and the City publications collection, amongst others.

2.3.2 Queering the geographical archive

After acquiring such a temporally and thematically rich set of materials, I returned to my theoretical objective: queering and spatializing the archive. By 'queering' the archive, I do not mean the common interpretation of identifying LGBTQ+ subjects in the archive (Marshall, Murphy, & Totorici, 2014), rather I seek to situate the archive in a political context to understand if and how heteronormativity is operationalized in the making of the Downtown Eastside. In this thesis, queer theory is a tool to aid in digesting the complexity of the familial dynamics in housing policy and discourse. Therefore, I attempt to attend "more to the interlocking structures of normativity, power, and kinship than modes of sexual or gender identification" (Hanhardt in Arondekar et al., 2015, p. 223). This curation also requires a particular attention to the way in which national projects and expectations of class and capital are interwoven to curate familial and domestic norms in the archive. A uniquely queer geographical approach requires a construction of a geographical and spatialized archive (Withers, 2002). Queering the archive and queer geographies provides a comprehensive methodology, and theoretically engaged approach to question our epistemological understandings of normative structures.

2.3.3 Critical discourse analysis

Under the theoretical and methodological framing of queering the archive I employed a critical discourse analysis to analyze the documents and sources I collected in my research. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a qualitative method conducted on existing sources (Toolan, 1997). Fairclough (1992, p. 12) defines critical discourse analysis as the process of understanding "how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief, neither of which is normally apparent to discourse participants." Scholars often poorly explain their CDA methodologies, however, they often agree that it is a critical examination of text, discursive practices, and/or social practices in qualitative data sources (Toolan, 1997; Widdowson, 1995). Unlike other qualitative methods, CDA does not engage directly with human subjects, therefore sampling in CDA is limited to extant data sources, such as archival research. Data used is social and/or linguistic, therefore sources sampled are often textual, such as interview transcripts, policy documents, and advertisements (Lees, 2004; Widdowson, 1995). Scholars also may choose to sample policy documents for a CDA to analyze the importance of language and social constructions in the creation of legislation (Jacobs, 2006).

I utilize a Faricloughian approach to CDA which is three-pronged and includes a textual analysis, discursive practice analysis, and social practice analysis (Lees, 2004). In the textual analysis, I examined the vocabulary, grammar, and structure, of the texts to dissect any themes that may be present across categories of interest (Lees, 2004). Secondly, I looked at the discursive context of the texts, and how they are linked to other texts, which is particularly important for CDAs of policy documents (Lees, 2004). The final step in Faircloughian analysis is examining the social context of the text (Lees, 2004). Faircloughian CDA requires an iterative

approach that would examine a document, refer to other documents and sources to situate each other in a socio-policy context, and ultimately link them to each other laterally and chronologically to create a complex web of policy and planning discourse across a variety of documents and themes associated with the Downtown Eastside and SRO housing. Although the vast majority of the sources analyzed are textual documents, I also analyzed other media, such as videos, photos, and diagrams in policy reports.

Queering the archive also requires a unique approach to CDA. Despite its use in critical geography, CDA methodological practices are rarely explained (Lees, 2004). Feminist approaches to CDA often combine Faircloughian and Foucauldian approaches to understand social and discursive productions of gender and sexuality (Lazar, 2007). I build on these approaches that center gender and sexuality, as well as a queer discourse analysis (Leap, 2012), to analytically queer the archive in a practice that goes beyond the LGBTQ+ subject to question the broader structures of normativity.

To convey the complexity of these findings, a textual representation (such as this thesis), is often the primary mode of representing archival materials and findings (Greckhamer & Cilesiz, 2014). To ensure rigour in representation, researchers should include guiding questions and important sociohistorical information of the sources used in the CDA (Janks, 1997). Researchers should not assume that language is transparent, therefore in representation (orally or written) researchers must provide the full context of the archival materials (Greckhamer & Cilesiz, 2014). I do this by providing a history and social context for some of this thesis' most important documents and authors, as well as providing full citations for all documents used so readers can return to the full context of the archival documents, if desired.

Critical discourse analysis is a strong method for researching discursive and social elements of qualitative sources. Widdowson (1995) argues that as we transition to a communications-oriented society, CDA is increasingly useful as our lives are evermore shaped by discourse. CDA is also useful for researchers who wish to engage with literary components of qualitative sources such as language, juxtapositions, layout, and sequencing (Janks, 1997). Despite the usefulness of CDA, it is often criticized for its emphasis on interpretation, as opposed to analysis. Widdowson (1995, p. 169), argues that "it is itself a critical discourse and as such it is interpretation, not analysis." Similarly, Jacobs (2006) argues that the method often reduces everything to discourse when it may not be appropriate. CDA varies in its definition (let alone interpretation) from researcher to researcher, therefore it can be difficult to implement a uniform CDA in one project (Toolan, 1997). For the archival materials and theory used in this thesis, I believe that CDA is the strongest method of analysis in order to capture the rich discursive history of housing and planning policy documents that I analyze. However, this analysis is still subject to my own interpretations and sampling. I attempted to combat the concern of the inappropriate reduction to discourse by continually resituating the archival materials and analysis in a way that also engages with the material conditions and practices described in corroborating sources.

2.3.4 Ethics and positionality

The role of ethics in archival research and CDA is notably different than other qualitative data analysis. CDA does not engage directly with human participants, therefore informed consent is not necessary, but ethical considerations remain. There is little written on the ethics of CDA, however it is important to reflect on how to ethically represent and write about qualitative data

sources. The mere process of writing about how the CDA was conducted is not only important for rigour, but also for being clear on how researchers use certain documents or sources and what frameworks they use to analyze those sources (Janks, 1997). To address these ethical considerations, I attempt to center the concerns of marginalized residents at the forefront of my analysis, and contextually situate and explain the documents I work with to accurately represent the perspective, source, author, and institutions affiliated with the archival materials.

Articulating my positionality to my research is also integral to the ethical considerations with archival materials collection and qualitative research, more broadly. Engaging in a critical reflexivity and analysis of positionality is important in qualitative geographic research, regardless of location, participants, and methods used (Berger, 2015). Berger (2015, p. 2) describes critical reflexivity as the

> turning of the researcher lens back onto oneself to recognize and take responsibility for one's own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation.

The "situatedness" Berger (2015) discusses is a reflection of the researcher's positionality. Describing one's positionality is not only a practice of rigour, it is necessary to understand how one's multiplicity of identities carry bias and predetermined epistemological understandings (Berger, 2015; Gergen & Gergen, 1991).

Indeed, I seek not to provide a laundry list of identities, but rather an understanding and critique of how my various identities influence the research process. Although different identities are more salient in different research contexts, gender, race, age, and sexuality are common identities that geographers engage with, in critically reflexive exercises (Mullings, 1999; Rose, 1997). These identities are constitutive of power and access in fieldwork and are constantly dynamic (Mullings, 1999). Although not often discussed with archival materials collection,

positionality still affects the collection and analytical process. My position as a queer individual was integral to the project selection and framing, as I seek to analyze the archive under the lens of heteronormativity. This has its benefits, as I am particularly interested in, and thus pay close attention to, notions of heteronormativity in the archive. Being a white man and graduate-student certainly also play an integral role in the way I analyze archival materials, as it can potentially limit my scope and ability to analyze other perspectives.

Ultimately, in this thesis, I aspire to critically evaluate norms and values expressed in policy and discourse on housing in the Downtown Eastside. In practice, this requires balancing the idea of "speaking against" and "speaking for" certain communities (Bradshaw, 2001). In qualitative geographic research, we largely work to support, and give voice to, marginalized populations (MacKenzie, Christensen, & Turner, 2015). However, in my research I am often engaging with the idea of "speaking against" neoliberal policies and discourse. To critically evaluate the changing discursive and material conditions of housing policy in the Downtown Eastside, I am required to critique government and planning institutions, to understand when and how an underlying heteronormative logic in their practices, may occur.

3.0 HETERONORMATIVITY AND PLANNING THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

The history of SRO hotels and rooming houses in Vancouver is extensive and dynamic. From their origins in the late nineteenth century, SRO hotels and rooming houses have been integral elements in discussions of city planning and development. The vast majority of these units are now, and historically have been, situated in the Downtown Eastside, an area that has received substantial scholarly and public discourse (Damon et al., 2017). In this chapter, I build on and diverge from critical discussions of SRO hotels in the Downtown Eastside to argue that heteronormativity has been a present ideology (tacitly or otherwise) in the planning narrative of Vancouver and the Downtown Eastside's future. First, I situate the Downtown Eastside in a larger planning narrative of housing policy in post-war Canada, discussing the relevance of the National Housing Act and other pertinent policies to the juxtaposing narrative of single-family houses and SRO hotels. Next, using planning documents, newspapers, and City reports, I argue that planning discourse promoted the clearance of non-normative housing to act on this national narrative mandate. I further identify a marked difference in planning policy and discourse with the onset of neoliberalism in the era of Expo 86 and continuing through the 2010 Olympic Games, where heteronormativity is operationalized through neoliberal policy. Finally, I conclude that heteronormativity continues to operate at multiple scales of governance to promote the heteronormative family.

3.1 Creating a national housing narrative and the genesis of Canadiana

To understand the changing narrative of heteronormativity in planning policy and discourse in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, it is necessary to situate the city in a national narrative of planning which prioritized the single-family house. In 1938, the Canadian federal government

passed the National Housing Act (NHA) to provide a stimulus for the economy and promote homeownership (Oberlander & Fallick, 1992). The NHA, based on the American NHA[1], was created to nationalize housing policy and incentivize low-cost rental housing. However, local governments did not want to forego taxes on low-cost rental projects (a requisite of the plan), nor did they want to follow the rental and household income maximums (Oberlander & Fallick, 1992).

Due to the lack of provincial and local support for low-income housing, and Ottawa's unwillingness to assume financial risk for low-income developments, not a single project was approved. Additional components of the policy that provided more assistance to low-income families were also not taken up by local governments due to concerns over financial responsibility[2] (Oberlander & Fallick, 1992). The national policy narrative of supporting housing *ownership* (as opposed to previous iterations providing rental assistance) was nevertheless nationalized when the NHA was coupled with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in 1944, with a primary mandate to incentivize homeownership and managing mortgages. This was largely popular due to increasing suburbanization and to provide WWII veterans with more and better housing, notably the single-family house. Indeed, a preference for the single-family house was pervasive across post-war geopolitical contexts which saw the rise of the suburb and the decline of the SRO hotel (Bevil, 2009).

The creation of a Canadian national housing agenda thus both failed to support low-income and rental housing and endorsed single-family home ownership. I argue that the NHA and the single-family house have evoked a narrative of "Canadiana": *owning* a large suburban

[1] The American NHA was first passed in 1934 by President Roosevelt.
[2] The third part of the NHA provided tax incentives to the small homeowner but was also little used due to the agreement that the municipality would furnish the lots, even though the federal government would pay for it (Oberlander & Fallick, 1992).

single-family house, with multiple bedrooms to fill with children. Setting the ideal as homeownership of single-family houses located in the suburbs not only privileges that type of housing, but also the heteronormative standards associated with it. By heteronormative, I do not mean strictly a heterosexual-homosexual binary, but rather a suite of traits associated with the Canadiana ideal including gender, race, nationality, and class, in addition to sexuality (Oswin, 2010), often culminating in the white, heterosexual, nuclear family. Notably, I do not intend to condemn the acquisition of appropriate and affordable single-family housing which young families with children (and others) deserve, rather to indicate *why* some are allowed to have this housing, while others are neglected. The NHA and supporting national policies[3], have not only shaped the materialities of single-family housing in Canada, but also the materialities of non-normative housing, such as single room occupancy (SRO) suites and rooming houses.

3.2 Leonard Marsh and the heteronormativity of urban renewal

In Vancouver, SRO hotels and rooming houses were primarily concentrated on "skid road", or what is now known as the Downtown Eastside. Although known for its derelict housing today, the Downtown Eastside was once home to a working-class community largely employed by industries affiliated with the City's thriving logging and maritime industries (Kovacs, 1965; McCallan & Roback, 1979). The term "skid road" was used to describe an area of extreme neglect and disinvestment and originates from logging communities in Vancouver and Seattle around the turn of the twentieth century, where loggers and labourers used rods to skid logs to a mill (Marsh, 1950). A unique attribute of skid road was its departure from the increasingly

[3] For supporting policies refer to the *Dominion Housing Act* of 1935, the 'Canadian G.I. Bill' (Lemieux & Card, 2001), and other welfare policies of the time.

common single-family home planning, as it was characterized by SRO hotels and rooming houses. Like SROs in other North American cities, SRO hotels specifically often had at least eight or ten tenants sharing bathroom facilities, and were rented on a nightly, weekly, or monthly basis as temporary lodging for loggers and other seasonal agricultural workers (Vancouver Community Legal Assistance Society, 1971).

The narrative of the Downtown Eastside as a place of non-normativity begins with the framing of the area as "skid road" and discourse on the City's "slums." In his influential report *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood,* Leonard Marsh (1950) describes the need to revitalize the slums of the Strathcona neighbourhood, situated in today's Downtown Eastside. Marsh was a professor and social researcher "known as an architect of the Canadian welfare state" (Wilcox-Magill & Helmes-Hayes, 1986, p. 49) and centrally involved in the slum clearance movement of the mid-twentieth century. Slum clearance and the razing of low-income neighbourhoods was a popular planning agenda across North America (James, 2010; Kaplan, 1963; Paterson, 2009). Marsh was trained at the London School of Economics, and later worked as the Director of Social Research at McGill University from 1930 to 1941, primarily researching economics and unemployment during the Great Depression (UBC Archives, n.d.). Following this work, Marsh published the *Report on Social Security for Canada* (1943), an important work highlighting the need for progressive social welfare policies. He later joined the University of British Columbia's (UBC) School of Social Work in 1947 (UBC Archives, n.d.). While at UBC, he wrote *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood* (1950), and saw the creation of the Urban Planning Department at the University that same year (Murray, 2011).

Marsh's (1950) report covers a wide array of social concerns surrounding housing and community in Vancouver's Strathcona neighbourhood, with particular emphasis on family and

home. He discusses families in the context of 'broken families' and 'normal families', describing Strathcona as having "a fairly large number of 'broken families' i.e., widows or widowers with dependent children (a few of whom are living on mothers' allowances); and a few households made up of members other than the normal family group" (Marsh, 1950, p. 9). Marsh further notes that, "The latter are principally married couples with or without children, living with other relatives, such as grandparents, uncles and aunts, etc., but there are a few special cases, e.g. brothers or sisters living together" (Marsh, 1950, p. 9). Marsh's work has been critically evaluated from the perspectives of class, race, and family, but the element of heteronormativity has yet to be interrogated in his seminal text, *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood* (Murray, 2011).

A heteronormative logic underpins Marsh's (1950) framing of Strathcona. Firstly, he identifies that 'broken families' are those that are home to a widow or widower, indicating that a "full" family requires a two-parent household. Furthermore, he identifies that there are households consisting of families other than the "normal family" group, such as childless couples, and living arrangements between siblings or other family members. It is evident that his "normal family group" is the nuclear family: a two-parent household with children. In this framework, not only are queer couples (or singles) rendered not normal, but so are others who are do not fulfill the requirements of his "normal family group" such as single-parent households (queer or not), childless couples, and single-person households.

Rendering the area legibly *queered*, Marsh understands Strathcona to be a place unsuitable for "family" living. The rooming houses and SRO hotels, traditionally housing the seasonal male workers, were not a place for a "normal" family to reside. He notes that families with children who are living in rooms (presumably in rooming houses), should find "adequate alternative accommodation without delay, since not only the housekeeping room as such, but the

district itself is entirely unsuited for family living" (Marsh, 1950, p. 26). He further elaborates that, "of 38% of families who do not have a 'home of their own': (owned or renter), nearly half are in boarding houses, and for the rest -- the worst housed of all -- more than a quarter are in cabins" (Marsh, 1950, p. 9). Marsh makes his stance clear: Strathcona, and "skid road" more broadly, is not a place for families, or rather what he deems to be a legible family. Moreover, he indicates that those who live in boarding houses or cabins are those without a "home of their own." This renders those living in boarding houses or cabins as discursively home-less, per Marsh's interpretation of a home.

Despite the imposed material infrastructure of many single-family houses in Strathcona, residents managed to occupy them in unanticipated ways. The rooming houses of Strathcona and skid road are "for the most part houses originally built for single families which have been converted to multiple occupancy" (Marsh, 1950, p. 15). The intentional use of Strathcona's housing stock was for single-family dwellings. With an increasing number of 'broken family' and non-'family' households, there was a need to convert the spaces, often resulting in crowding and poorly done conversions because of the lack of City and developer support (Marsh, 1950). These poorly done conversions denote that despite the implementation and intention of producing Strathcona as a place for acceptable family living, the residents made it "unsuitable", indicating a relationship between housing, "homes", and "normal families". The district is discussed as non-heteronormative not only discursively, but also materially as a place that physically transformed legible "homes" (such as single-family housing) into a non-normative home with makeshift walls and rooms: a place unfit to reproduce the "normal family".

Ultimately, Marsh (1950) advocates for a clearance of the "slum" neighbourhood. Certainly, the neighbourhood did have serious concerns to be addressed: housing affordability,

fire hazards from poor infrastructure, sanitary concerns due to overcrowding, and more (Marsh, 1950). Marsh notes that following these concerns, "Reconstruction is the only answer to conditions such as have been described. There is no case for patchwork, or piecemeal renovation" (Marsh, 1950, p. 35), further elaborating that perhaps there are some parts of the neighbourhood that could be retained, but it would be "far cheaper to pay compensation" (Marsh, 1950, p. 35). Marsh's advocacy for better housing is well-intentioned, as he accurately notes the concerns of the housing. However, he fails to address why it was that the City had allowed the neighbourhood to disinvest in this community to such an amount that they must raze the neighbourhood. Perhaps, razing is justified to Marsh because he identifies skid road as "the heart of decay which spread from the centre like a cancer…" (Marsh, 1950, p. 1). The pathologization of skid road is something that Marsh argues must be prevented in order to save the city. Despite the poor conditions, Marsh identifies three reasons for needing to reconstruct the neighbourhood: the need for community, the inefficiency of the grid street system, and the economy of a new multiple dwelling project. A product of his time, training, and socio-policy context, Marsh advocated for a planned community on a "neighbourhood" street design, as he believed it to be less "hazardous" in a new car-based society[4]. Additionally, he notes that many residents select to live in Strathcona due to their nearness to work, therefore a number of them do not travel by car. It becomes apparent that Marsh was concerned primarily with quantifiable facts and popular planning, rather than embracing community needs.

Marsh's call to raze the neighbourhood of Strathcona is grounded in a heteronormative logic, in which he understands the housing and residents as being in a cyclical relationship of the failure to (re)produce Canadiana. I build on Sommers' (1998) analysis of the Downtown Eastside

[4] Recent studies have identified that safety and health effects are more positive for grid street patterns, as opposed to loops or a more suburban pattern (Marshall, Piatkowski, & Garrick, 2014; Rifaat, Tay, & de Barros, 2012).

as a place of abject masculinities, but moreover an abject (and failure to produce), heteronormative Canadiana. Residents of boarding houses and cabins are rendered "home-less", as they do not live in the deemed ideal home, nor do they own that home. Moreover, many of Strathcona's occupants are legibly *queered* as well. By this, I do not mean that residents are necessarily queer in the identarian sense, but rather they are rendered as surplus, or even "cancer", to the national (housing) project (enshrined by the NHA and the CMHC), unable to reproduce the image of the ideal heterosexual nuclear family and the homes they should live in.

3.3 Acting on discourse: The materialization of heteronormative policy

The effects of Marsh's *Rebuilding a City* (1950) are long-lasting in the planning narrative of Strathcona and the Downtown Eastside. Following Marsh's report, the Vancouver Housing Association (VHA) conducted a survey of rooming houses in the downtown area of Vancouver. They tended to follow the findings and suggestions of Marsh, noting that the "flimsily built" housing east of Burrard was the worst in the city, and that all families with children should find "accommodation elsewhere as soon as possible" (VHA, 1951, p. 1b). The need to address the "spread" of non-normative housing was urgent to the VHA, as they noted that rooming houses should be confined to an area zoned for that purpose (VHA, 1951, p. 3). To be sure, the narrative of "family" and housing was codified in bylaws such as the Zoning and Development Bylaw 3375 (passed in 1956), which identifies that dwellings can be used for only one family. Per this bylaw, the family is defined by legal relationships such as blood, marriage, or adoption[5] (Pablo, 2017). Housing and the 'home' are predicated on legal relationships that are underpinned by a heteronormative logic. In an era prior to marriage equality, not only does this bylaw inherently

[5] Alternatively, up to three unrelated individuals living together may constitute a household.

exclude queer families, but a suite of families and individuals who, to the City, are not codified as legal and legible.

The narrative of skid road as an area of neglect and *queered* Canadiana failure was expanded upon by a local governmental body to be viewed as a geography that is threatening to the norms of the City's larger image. In 1957, the Vancouver Planning Department released the *Vancouver Redevelopment Study*, which advocated for razing neighbourhoods bordering False Creek (including Strathcona), for the purpose of "slum" clearance. In light of this study, between 1961 and 1967, the City created plans to demolish much of Strathcona and surrounding areas, acting on the order of Marsh (City of Vancouver Planning Department [VPD], 1957).

The language and policy following Marsh and the redevelopment plan continue the slum clearance approach, operating under the assumption that they are saving the city from blight and the 'social ills' of the Downtown Eastside. The Vancouver City Council approved of the recommendations listed in the study, resulting in the construction of multiple housing projects in urban renewal, such as McLean Park[6], throughout the 1960s (Housing Centre Community Services Group [HCCSG], 1995). By as early as 1961, at least three thousand people had been displaced, due to Marsh's recommendations (Beasley, 2019). The loss of housing is well-illustrated in the CMHC and City of Vancouver produced short film *To Build a Better City*[7], which builds on Marsh's narrative of skid road as a "cancer". The film highlighted the need to raze skid road as it is "dying board by board" and that "blight is death to a city" (CMHC & City of Vancouver, 1964). The urgent language of the CMHC and the City calls for redevelopment of

[6] The McLean Park Rental Housing Project was to serve low-income households in the Strathcona neighbourhood. Other projects included Skeena Terrace and Raymur Place.
[7] *To Build a Better City* was a production by the City of Vancouver and the CMHC and is available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FY5I8h1lJjs. A transcript of the film is available at the City of Vancouver Archives in Box 925-E-02 fld 11.

the area to launch the neighbourhood into the future and secure the "health" of the city. Continuing Marsh's narrative, SRO hotels, rooming houses, and their residents are viewed as unhealthy, and remnants of the past. The aspirational future elicited in policy and discourse has an overwhelming preference for the single-family house.

Shortly after the release of *To Build a Better City*, the City of Vancouver Planning Department (VPD) released "Downtown -- Eastside: A Preliminary Study" (1965), in which the social deviancy of the neighbourhood is highlighted. W.E. Graham, the Department's director at the time, argues in the report that it was apparent "to planners that recognition of the social characteristics of the area must precede any workable physical plans" (VPD, 1965, p. 4). He further notes that skid road is characterized by "family-less men" (VPD, 1965, p. 13), and that "one of the myths of skid road is that it is a closely-knit colorful community of human derelicts. This is not true -- at least in Vancouver" (VPD, 1965, p. 26). Graham, and the Planning Department, understand the people of skid road and their lack of "family" to be a problem that is a precursor to the addressing neglect of the physical housing itself. Scholars at the time even noted that prior to being on skid road, these individuals had friends and families (Kovacs, 1965). In the context of Graham's emphasis on the individual, the "death" and "cancer" articulated in *To Build a Better City* (1964) and *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood* (1950), respectively, can be understood as not exclusively a concern of housing but a pathologization of the 'social ills' associated with the non-normative families or individuals. A diffusion of these lifestyles would be detrimental to the progress narrative associated with urban renewal; only razing the neighbourhood could solve these problems.

The urban renewal movement sweeping many cities of North America (Castells, 1977), left Vancouver SRO hotel residents facing mass evictions, particularly in the Downtown Eastside

area. Between 1970 and 1994, there was an average loss of 227 SRO units every year, the worst being in the 1970s (HCCSG, 1995). These evictions primarily came from the enforcement of fire codes and sanitary bylaws, as many units and buildings were not up to code or safety standards (HCCSG, 1995). The City and the hotels rarely had alternative housing lined up for residents, resulting in far more homeless people during this time. In order to combat the urban renewal agendas, the Downtown Eastside Residents Association (DERA) was born. They fought to reframe the narrative of "skid road" as the "Downtown Eastside": a long-standing community deserving of rights and support[8]. Since its origins, DERA had a tumultuous relationship with the planning department. The Social Planning Department (SPD) Director, Johnathan Baker, even blamed DERA for the loss of rooms, because they requested that the safety and fire bylaws be enforced (Coffin, 1974). The hotel owners insisted that they could not keep up with both inflation and municipal bylaws (JD Clark Consulting, 1978). Unfortunately, as the majority of housing policy at the time was regulated by the CMHC, hotel owners and their residents were not eligible for CMHC's home-improvement program, the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), as only homeowners were eligible at the time (The Province, 1976). Without the assistance of the RRAP and other policies, the city instituted greater planning measures to involve the community for neighbourhood improvement. However, this too was a farce, as bodies such as the Local Area Planning and Citizens Advisory Committees were "nothing more than rubber stamps" to allow the City to proceed with the developments they already intended to do (Davies, 1976, p. 4). Libby Davies (1976, p. 4), a Downtown Eastside

[8] The Downtown Eastside Residents Association was operational from 1973 to 2010, with Bruce Eriksen, Libby Davies, and Jean Swanson as founders (amongst others). See Beazley, Loftman, & Nevin (2018) or Smith (2003) for more scholarly information.

activist and future Councilmember, writes in the neighbourhood newspaper (the Downtown East), that

> if privately controlled development doesn't strangle the neighbourhood first, carefully planned studies will do the job. The only difference is that with Local Area Planning, local residents often plan for their own eviction and inevitable disintegration of the neighbourhood to make way for other more profitable kinds of development.

The "more profitable kinds of development" Davies likely alludes to are single-family homes, and condominiums. Indeed, Davies sentiment of Vancouver's progressive façade is supported by the City of Vancouver's actions (and lack thereof), such as when they passed the Five-Year Plan[9], which intended to triple housing allocation in the district, and then also shortly after would reject a bid to build a 26-unit project where 13 single-family units were (Abotsway, 1975).

In retrospect, Leonard Marsh too, understands the orientation of housing policy to privilege that of the single-family house. Indeed, he argues in a later text, *Communities in Canada* (1970), that "The suburban society was built around the family group" and that what differentiates it from "urban society" was its "single interest of establishing a home for the family" (p. 118). He understands that a suburban consciousness requires a sense of upward mobility, and superiority, as new suburbanites left people behind in the city whom "by and large did not own houses" (Marsh, 1970, p. 119). Owning a single-family home is not only a sign of "having moved up socially" (Marsh, 1970, p. 119), but also fulfils the primary agenda of suburbanization and housing policy. In this evolving policy context, the reifying process between policy and practices operates within a dialectic of the family structure and the physical structure. The heterosexual, home-owning, nuclear family was a requisite for suburban life (and by extension housing policy encouraging such developments), as

> almost everything the new suburban resident found himself doing, within the suburban setting and in the world outside, was related to the needs of the family -- sodding the

[9] The Five-Year Plan was a housing and planning agenda for the DTES meant to increase housing allocation.

> front lawn, fencing the backyard, building a recreation room, shopping for furniture, kitchen appliances, and other household accessories, attending to the needs of children, and, taking precedence before all, earning sufficient income to pay off the mortgage and other debts and to meet the recurring charges of the home. (Marsh, 1970, p. 118)

The curation and maintenance of the physical home, through investments of capital, time, and care, not only maintains the house, but the Canadian aspirational *home*, which is only attainable by wealthy, often white[10], heterosexual couples with children.

Race in particular is an integral element of Canadiana. The normative assumptions of homeownership and the single-family home are enshrined in a property regime that is inherently settler-colonial and privileges private ownership (Blomley, 2003). Certainly, the creation of the Canadian empire is predicated on housing policy that reflects the privileging of white settler wealth (Mitchell, 2004). In the era of neoliberalism, empire and property is catalyzed through accumulations of capital and urban entrepreneurial projects, such as Expo 86 (Harvey, 1989). Throughout the decades, the "home" in Canada serves as a symbol for intended order and the nation (Mitchell, 2004). A disruption in this order, be it architectural such as an SRO hotel, or demographically, such as Chinese immigrants, signifies not only deviation from expected gender roles but a rupture in class and race, as they relate to the nation and Canadiana.

Noting this, the narrative of housing policy took a stark departure from previous iterations which centered around slum clearance and eradication of non-normative housing (and their occupants), to one that centers on legal and technical frameworks to render the Downtown Eastside as queer, and outside the protection of government policy. The Landlord and Tenant Act (LTA) was the policy that outlined the rights of tenants and landlords, for the province.

[10] See Harris & Forrester's (2003) "The Suburban Origins of Redlining: A Canadian Case Study for more information on redlining and race in Canadian housing politics." See K.J. Anderson's (1988) article titled "Cultural hegemony and the race-definition process in Chinatown, Vancouver: 1880-1980" for more information on race and neighbourhood creation in Vancouver.

Residents of SRO hotels, entrenched in a narrative of transiency, were not legally defined tenants as they are not living in a rental property, but a "hotel" and are thus governed under the Innkeepers Act (City of Vancouver Council,1987). Bruce Erikson[11], the president of DERA, made this clear when he argued that people living in the hotels live there on a permanent basis, and that SROs are not just hotel rooms for tourists and transients (The Province, 1976). In fact, the average length of residence in the area was thirteen years, one of the most "stable" neighbourhoods in the entire city, after Dunbar[12] (VPD, 1982). Why is it then, that residents of the Downtown Eastside, and their housing, are rendered as "transient" and outside the care or protection of the City?

Although the City never explicitly addresses the concerns of DERA on the issue of transience, I argue that that perceived transiency is a discursive heuristic to support and validate the eradication of non-normative housing, such as SRO hotels and rooming houses. The lack of protection and rights allowed hoteliers to easily increase rent without a percentage cap and even evict tenants. Jean Swanson, long-time Downtown Eastside resident and activist, and current City Councilor, wrote in the Downtown East that residents of the Victoria House[13], were faced with a 118% rent hike (Swanson, 1975, p. 4). Perhaps those of the Downtown Eastside "need the protection of the Landlord and Tenant Act most of all" (Davies, 1975, p. 1), but they are neglected. There is an obvious material effect of rendering residents of SROs as non-tenants (i.e.

[11] Bruce Eriksen was a long-time housing and social activist in the Downtown Eastside, where he worked to improve living conditions for residents in the neighbourhood, particularly amongst SRO hotel residents and bylaws on health and safety. He later became a City Councilor where he continued his advocacy. For more information on Mr. Eriksen please refer to Records of Alderman Bruce Eriksen at the City of Vancouver Archive: https://searcharchives.vancouver.ca/eriksen-bruce.

[12] Dunbar-Southlands is a neighbourhood in the southwest area of Vancouver and is mostly comprised of single-family houses and is also the home territory of the Musqueam Indian Band. Today, it is home to tree-lined streets and large mansions.

[13] The Victoria House was a rooming house built in 1897 and originally served gold-seekers during the Klondike gold rush era. Today, it operates as the Victorian Hotel, serving tourist populations and offering rooms well over $200 a night. It is located in the Victory Square area at 514 Homer Street.

not being able to secure housing rights), but there is a more subtle discursive narrative as well. The exclusion of SRO residents from a definition of "tenant" ironically renders them permanently transient: a "resident" that is viewed as temporary, regardless of how long they have resided in their homes or the area. This makes residents of SROs not just discursively non-residents, it also makes them surplus to the City, and more broadly extranational to the narrative of Canadiana.

3.4 Mega-events and neoliberal housing policy: A changing narrative

The framing of the Downtown Eastside as outside of the care of protection, and in surplus to the nation, is perhaps best exemplified by Expo 86. One of the world's largest international mega-events, cities from all over the world bid to host the Expo or the World's Fair[14] and assert their importance as a global city. Just two decades prior, Montreal, Canada's largest city at the time, hosted Expo 67[15]. Leonard Marsh, documented Expo 67 in *Communities in Canada* (1970), in which he described the event's message as "come and have fun", but also that "without realizing it, we also said, come and see how civilized we can be. This particular manifestation of 'Canada' seemed infectiously, irrepressibly healthy. If Confederation was in danger, it sure didn't look that way down there!" (Marsh, 1970, p. 149-150). Marsh sets the stage of the "Canadian" Expo: the future of the Canadian nation.

[14] The World's Fair or the Expo is an annual international exhibition intended to display achievements and pride of various countries where they host a pavilion. The term Expo has been used since 1967 and continues to be used today. For more information on the Vancouver Expo please refer to Ross & Staw's (1986) article "Expo 86: An Escalation Prototype", Ley & Olds' (1988) "Landscape as spectacle: world's fairs and the culture of heroic consumption", and Olds' (1988) "Planning for the housing impacts of a hallmark event: a case study of EXPO 86."

[15] The Montreal Expo was in 1967 and had a large international attendance. The organizers focused extensively on futurity (a theme that later Expos, such as Expo 86, would incorporate). For more information on Expo 67 in Montreal please refer to Anderson & Gosselin's (2008) "Private and public memories of Expo 67: a case study of recollections of Montreal's World's Fair, 40 years after the event", Jansson's (2007) "The Production of a Future Gaze at Montreal's Expo 67" and Kenneally & Sloan's edited volume (2010) *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir*.

Building on the legacy of Marsh and the Montreal Expo, Expo 86 was Vancouver's plan to create a brand and future for the city. Although Expo 86 was framed as "Tomorrow's Calling"[16] and that "the future's ours to share," not all residents were privy to the future that the Expo imagined (Donaldson, 2016). At the beginning of the 1980s, residents of the Downtown Eastside became concerned about the role of the mega-event in "revitalizing" the neighbourhood and raising rents (Maitland, 1980). Ted Droettboom, an assistant director of planning, argued that the Expo could "impose strong inflationary pressure on Vancouver's already scarce and expensive rental housing" (Maitland,1980, A18). The concern came not only from the pressures of becoming a global city, but also from the "high-level" foreign visitors who would be attending the Expo, and investing capital into the City, as those tourists and visitors would pay top dollar for accommodation (Maitland, 1980). Noting the damage of the Expo on low-income housing in Knoxville, TN (the location of the previous Expo[17]), the Expo chief and Premier both called for no price gouging (The Province, 1982). The appeal to "high-level" foreign visitors, who could (and would) occupy Vancouver's Downtown Eastside hotels, while residents of the SROs would be displaced, is alarming. Attracting foreign capital, something Vancouver later made an integral component of its neoliberal brand (Ley, 2017), resulted in the practical preference for "high-level" foreign visitors over the residents of hotels, who had extremely limited capital. Vancouver's emphasis on the Expo as the future, or "Tomorrow's Calling" is a discursive sign of what and who is meant to be in that future. Foreign wealth and high-income tourists are needed

[16] "Tomorrow's Calling" is a lyric in Expo 86's theme song "Something's Happening Here" (written by Michael Koren and sung by Nancy Nash). The video and song are available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLx8ke04drQ.

[17] Estimates indicate that between 1,000 and 1,500 people were evicted in Knoxville, TN due to "redevelopment pressures associated with Expo '82" (Olds, 1998, p. 5). For more information see Olds' (1998) "Urban Mega-Events, Evictions and Housing Rights: The Canadian Case."

to not only afford Expo 86, but to "revitalize" the Downtown Eastside, and contribute to a more "civilized" Canada, which Marsh noticed in Expo 67.

Conversely, residents of the Downtown Eastside were excluded from the idea of a future the Expo prescribed. Many of the homes of SRO residents were eliminated in lieu of something more promising for the narrative of the Expo, futurity, and a civilized Canada: the high-income tourist. The effects of the Expo and City Planning on SRO housing began well before the Expo actually occurred, through the conversion to tourist hotels. According to Jim Green, landlords and hotel owners tended to upgrade cheap rooms to "cash in on the Expo boom" (The Province, 1984a, para. 1). Years before the Expo began, evictions were easy for hotel owners, as tenants had no legal protections under the LTA[18] (The Province, 1984a). The City seemed to be aware of the problem, as they and the Expo coordinators, planned to integrate low-cost housing into their plans to minimize eviction and turnover (Sarti, 1984). Despite some concerns, the City didn't seem overly worried. Alderman Marguerite Ford noted that the "West End is more likely to find there are people coming in who are associated with Expo," as opposed to the Downtown Eastside (The Province, 1984a, para. 7). Without doubt, Alderman Ford's understanding of the West End fitting Expo aesthetics, and thus the "future," and the Downtown Eastside as outside the purview or influence of Expo, is indicative of who is rendered as a contributor to the future, and who is not. Certainly, this is underpinned by a larger logic of heteronormativity, which prominently features wealth as a component of Canadiana, and ignores the criticism by Downtown Eastside residents, mobilizing a language of civility and revitalization to raze the district of its ills in favour of a wealthier demographic.

[18] LTA did not cover residents of SRO hotels, as they were governed under the Innkeeper's Act, which did not require a notice of eviction. For more information see the Raffery Baker's (2016) CBC article "Expo 86 evictions: remembering the fair's dark side": https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/expo-86-evictions-remembered-1.3566844.

The more subtle (neo)liberal agenda of Vancouver's housing policy, which privileges the tourist and the wealthy, became more evident when the City and Expo 86 eliminated their low-cost housing agenda. This enraged residents of the Downtown Eastside in particular, and they argued that the City and Expo were "selling out Vancouver's poor, elderly, and handicapped" (The Province, 1984b, para. 2). Interestingly, Alderman Ford's prediction occurred inversely, in which the developers who wanted to convert West End apartments "would face stiff opposition from city hall" (Banks, 1984, A15), as it would be like "asking for a retail store in a single-family neighbourhood." On the other hand, according to city planner Ronald Howard, "the major threat from Expo will likely be directed at tenants for rooming houses and residential hotels throughout the downtown core, who do not have the same protection from the conversion as people living wets of Burrard Street" as there is not "change-of-use" needed for hotel owners (Banks, 1984, A15).

By March of 1986, a survey of hotels and rooming houses revealed that 26 hotels had evicted all or some tenants for the Expo (Social Planning Department, 1986). During this time, DERA called for a boycott of these hotels, such as the Patricia Hotel[19]. In response to DERA, the attorneys of the Patricia Hotel argued that they are within full legal rights to "evict its residents without notice" (Swadden, 1986, p. 3). Indeed, the Province and the City did not support the DERA protest, and sided with the hotel owners, resulting in at least a net loss of 400 low-income housing units (Linden et al, 2013). A New York Times article (Martin, 1986, p. 10) identified that a man who had been living in the Metropole Hotel for 29 years, had been evicted due to the

[19] The boycott of the Patricia Hotel was called by DERA leader, Jim Green, who organized demonstrations after the death of Olaf Solheim, who was evicted during the lead up to the Expo. For more information on the death of Mr. Solheim and the boycott of the Patricia Hotel, please refer to Chapter 3, "Lethal Heroin, Killer Coke, and Expo 86," of Campbell, Boyd, & Culbert's (2009) *A Thousand Dreams: Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and the Fight for Its Future.*

renovation of hotel rooms to make way for tourists, and Olaf Solheim, an 85-year-old retired logger, died shortly after his eviction.

The tension between new wealthy tourists to the Downtown Eastside and the permanent working-class residents was heightened through government discourse which continues to articulate that the Downtown Eastside is surplus. Capitalizing on oppressive housing policy used to evict long-time residents of hotels through legal loopholes, British Columbia Premier William Bennett argued that this was a "once in a generation chance to redevelop what has become a seedy slum" (Martin, 1986, p. 10). Bennett's language is a continuation of the narrative of Marsh: the need to rid the Downtown Eastside of its original residents. The word 'seedy' is defined as "sordid and disreputable," as well as "unwell" ("seedy," n.d.). Indeed, Bennett's statement is couched in the logic of the City and the CMHC via *To Build a Better City* (1964), in which the Downtown Eastside is framed as unhealthy, or unwell, and in *exception* to the otherwise thriving metropolis. Perhaps the "surplus-ness" of the Downtown Eastside is best exemplified by Canadian economist and advisor to the Social Credit Party[20], Michael Walker, who noted that it would "save everyone a lot of trouble if they all were put on busses to the Kootenays"[21] (Glavin, 1986). Walker quite explicitly articulates that the residents of the Downtown Eastside are not only surplus and unwanted, but a hindrance to the City. In addition to an exclusion of urban citizenry, this is also a logic of heteronormativity continuing the

[20] The Social Credit Party (SCP) was a political party in British Columbia that was popular (holding the legislature in all but three years) from its breakout in 1952 until 1991. The SCP was a right-wing social conservative party that prioritized the reduction of social services and increased individualism. Michael Walker is the founder of the Fraser Institute, a conservative think tank that promoted lower taxes and fewer social programming. For more information on the SCP please see Hak's (2004) "Populism and the 1952 Social Credit Breakthrough in British Columbia." For more information on Michael Walker his role in Vancouver's development please see Larry Lintz' *Vancouver Sun* piece (2016), "Yin and Yang of B.C. political battles honoured with Order of Canada citations": https://vancouversun.com/news/national/yin-and-yang-of-b-c-political-battles-honoured-with-order-of-canada-citations

[21] The Kootenays are a region of southeastern British Columbia, around several hundred kilometers from Vancouver.

narrative of SROs and their residents as antithetical to the single-family house and nuclear family of Canadiana.

Following the Expo, the City returned to the legal question of what constitutes a hotel and who deserves tenancy rights. In a legal ruling on Temporary vs. Permanent Accommodation[22] (1987), City Council established that a hotel is intended to be "used as temporary accommodation for tourists or transients" (Hayes, 1986, p. 3). This logic perpetuates the narrative that residents of SRO hotels are transient (as they are called by legal documents), which the City could use to prevent community input on long-term planning processes. The provincial government "staunchly refused to extend tenancy rights to hotel residents," which was influenced by hotel owners who can make more money off of their tourist counterparts (DERA, 1989, p. 49). In a correspondence lobbying the City, Frederick G. Higgs, Executive Vice-President of the British Columbia Hotels' Association (BCHA)[23], wrote that "Hotels have been and are the foundation for Vancouver's tourism economy. Visitors and residents need to know where they are sleeping at night" (1986, p. 3). Ironically, on the topic of evictions, Higgs also argued that "the whole question has been frankly overblown" (Martin, 1986, p. 10). Higgs and City Council curate a narrative of the Downtown Eastside and SRO housing in a heteronormative framework which operates in more tacit and "legal" ways than the language of Marsh. The preference for tourists as a more integral component in the fabric of Vancouver than actual residents, demonstrates that housing and family structures are not only important components of heteronormativity, but of capital and class as well. The acquisition of the single-family home is

[22] The City Council passed an amendment Bylaw No. 3575 (a zoning and development bylaw) in 1987 to prevent the commercial use of residential properties as tourist or temporary lodging, however, SRO hotels are still governed as hotels under this bylaw as well. For more information see Box 086-A-06 fld 02 at the Vancouver City Archive: https://searcharchives.vancouver.ca/planning-housing.

[23] The BCHA has operated since 1917 and lobbies on behalf of the hotel industry in British Columbia.

certainly a question of geography, family structure, and race[24], but also one of capital, as the heteronormative family should be one that can afford to own a house. Administrators believed that the Expo would bolster the market and increase single-family homeownership for the wealthy at the expense of lower-income single-family homes and renters (Vancouver Courier, 1984).

This left residents of the Downtown Eastside with limited options for housing, resulting in many turning to the streets and their street families (DERA, 1989). The residents of the Downtown Eastside managed to create an alternative "housing" structure which placed an emphasis on the street as a communal "living room" (Masuda & Crabtree, 2010). Those living in rooming houses of the Downtown Eastside during and after the Expo lived in houses that were originally constructed as single-family houses but were then shared by several families (DERA, 1989). Residents of the Downtown Eastside continue to subvert planning agendas, similar to the ways Marsh identified, making heteronormative housing structures into non-normative housing (i.e. rooming houses) by converting them to multi-family use, and thus no longer desirable and therefore "worthy" of razing, redevelopment, or "revitalization".

In the aftermath of the Expo, some tourists continue to stay, as city and provincial policy targeted foreign wealth through neoliberal policy. This was particularly notable after the return of Hong Kong to China[25], resulting in an extreme wealth exodus from the former British colony, to Vancouver (Schaefer, 2016). In fact, Canada even courted these individuals through the

[24] Race and racism have played an important role in housing in Vancouver, and suburbanization is no exception. Often non-white families face difficulties in access to single-family housing in the suburbs (though with increasing immigration and changing wealth dynamics, the situation is evolving). For more information on race and suburbanization in Vancouver see Ray, Halseth, & Johnson's (1997) "The Changing 'Face' of the Suburbs: Issues of Ethnicity and Residential Change in Suburban Vancouver."

[25] The United Kingdom returned the administration of Hong Kong to mainland China in 1997, which prompted an exodus of wealthy Hong Kong elites, many of whom arrived in a Commonwealth counterpart on the Pacific Rim, Vancouver. For more information see David Ley's (2010) *Millionaire Migrants: Trans-Pacific Lines*.

Business Immigration Programme (BIP). Li Ka-Shing, a Hong Kong expat and one of the richest individuals in the world, bought the former Expo lands for $320 million, which he developed with many condo buildings (Proctor, 2016). Although housing stock increased, little was done for those living in low-income housing. Residents also faced greater pressures from the rising real estate economy, which has only intensified over the last twenty years (Wallstam & Ellan, 2013).

The Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) of 2002 marked the neoliberal policy agenda of the provincial and municipal government. The RTA, passed in 2002 by the British Columbia Parliament, detailed the relationship between landlords and their tenants[26]. Although a number of concerns have been brought forward by tenants' rights groups[27], I will focus on the idea of "renoviction". A term coined by Heather Pawsey, a housing activist and professor, renovictions are when housing is renovated in order to prompt eviction of the residents, culminating in higher rents (both from the renovations, and also the ability to remove tenants from their leases)[28]. The renovictions, often for unnecessary repairs, were allowed under the RTA so long as the renovation required the rental unit be vacant (RTA, 2002). The RTA also reified that residents living in "accommodation occupied as vacation or travel accommodation" are excluded from the benefits of the RTA and the new era of tenancy rights (RTA, 2002). Importantly, the RTA was also passed at a time when the province was cutting funding for the Legal Service Society, and the closure of the Vancouver Rental Tenancy Office (VRTO) made the arbitration process more difficult for tenants (City of Vancouver Housing Centre, 2004). These seemingly subtle and

[26] The RTA was passed on November 26th, 2002 and is still in effect today. The act can be accessed here: http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/02078_01.
[27] Renters rights organizations have brought up concerns such as retroactive rent increases, landlord influence over inspections, and pet regulation, amongst others.
[28] Heather Pawsey coined 'renoviction' as portmanteau of renovation and eviction, an increasingly common occurrence in Vancouver and deserving of the term. Pawsey was a resident of an apartment complex facing concerns of renoviction, the Seafield Apartments.

neoliberal alterations to housing policy operate differently than the more overt discourse of Marsh but continue to have the effects of deprioritizing non-normative households.

The RTA was created during the time of the Vancouver Agreement, a multi-governance agreement intended to revitalize the Downtown Eastside. The Agreement, a triangulation between municipal, provincial, and federal governments, was created in 2000 for a five-year term, and was renewed in 2005 to ready the area for the 2010 Olympics (Western Economic Diversification and Canada, 2010). The Vancouver Agreement (VA), has been studied as a scalar analysis of government policy and coordination (Murray, 2011). The Agreement was vague and occasionally displayed mismatched agendas between governments that did not always prioritize SRO hotels and their residents (VA, 2007). In fact, the City described that

> the majority of the residential hotels are classified as hotels which are defined in the Zoning and Development By-law as premises providing temporary accommodation… which implies occupants have another place of permanent residence. However, for most SRO residents, it is their only residence. The hotels are typically providing residential rental accommodation, not transient accommodation (Manager, Housing Centre, 1997, para. 18).

Here, the City acknowledges that most of the hotels are providing residential accommodation, yet that is not reflected in municipal policy which argues that discursively they are not "permanent" residents of the area, which also renders them home-less. The language employed in this review is strikingly similar to that of Marsh in 1950, in which those who live in SRO housing do not have homes, as they are unable to reproduce that heteronormative standard of the domestic, despite being long-term residents. However, slum clearance as argued by Marsh is not mobilized by the City in the same way in the twenty-first century, as slum clearance takes the form of *redevelopment* and the need to prepare the area for the next up-coming mega-event: the 2010 Olympics.

The 2010 Vancouver Olympic bid, operated by the Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC), was the sequel to Expo 86. Similar to the language surrounding Expo and the Downtown Eastside, Ference Weicker & Company (2003, p. v), argued on behalf of VANOC that the Olympics were "unlikely to induce landlords to convert inner-city housing units (particularly SROs) to tourism lodging because the primary demand is for higher-end furnished units," as there was "not a financial incentive for landlords to convert housing units to tourism units" (p. 34). And like Expo, this was not actually the case, as more than 700 had been evicted prior to even securing to games (The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions [COHRE], 2007). The lack of middle-income housing continued to put a strain on an evolving Downtown Eastside, which in the twenty-first century continued to experience polarizing wealth effects exacerbated by the Olympics, an event intended for the wealthy (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010).

VANOC and the City intended to prevent evictions by implementing policies and promoting sustainability agendas, however, these proved to only perpetuate housing inequity. Like the Expo, VANOC and the City indicated a commitment to low-income housing with an "Inner City Inclusive Statement" and a Homeless Action Plan to create affordable housing following the games (City of Vancouver Housing Centre, 2004; COHRE, 2007). Indeed, statistics were skewed on the actual number of affordable housing units[29], and SRO units continued to decline at an assumed loss of 85 units per year (Paulsen, 2007). The reduction of SRO units during this time still operates in an economy that not only prioritizes "permanent" housing in the unique context of the Olympics. Like Expo and *To Build a Better City*, the

[29] Monte Paulsen (2007) of the Tyee argues that there was a double counting of the 250 units of athlete housing at False Creek, and also that preexisting units were counted as affordable housing developed for the Olympics. He argues that the City also took credit for projects that had been halted on funding until the time in which they could be counted towards affordable housing for the Olympics, and that shelter beds were included in the data. For more information see "Olympic Partners Said to 'Fudge' Housing Claims": https://thetyee.ca/News/2007/06/28/OlympicHousingClaims/.

Olympic bid was focused on "cleaning up" the neighbourhood through the implementation of various acts and policies[30] to make the local economy appealing to tourists and foreign wealth (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010).

Perhaps the most poignant signal of commitment to housing was the passage of the Single Room Accommodation (SRA) Bylaw, which would prevent the conversion of SRO hotels to tourist hotels. The City would charge a $5,000 fee for each unit that would be converted (Chief Housing Officer, 2015). As the Olympics approached, the rate changed from $5,000 to $15,000, and more recently gone up to $125,000, a rate that was closer to the replacement of a unit (Chief Housing Officer, 2015)[31]. This has accumulated more than $1.3 million in fees since the bylaws passage in 2003, although it is not always invested back into SRO unit preservation (Lee, 2015). Unfortunately, the SRA Bylaw had great limitations as it did not support tenant relocation, nor could it prevent rental increases. The continued agenda of mobilizing seemingly "progressive" policies to support non-normative housing, non-traditional, and legibly *queer(ed)* families and individuals operates under a distinctly different narrative from that of Marsh, which centers on (neo)liberal agendas, rather than more explicit socially conservative and suburbanization policy and discourse. Building on Luibhéid (2008, 2011), I argue that in the neoliberal era, the inner workings of housing policy operate within a tacit framework to ensure heteronormative outcomes. The minutiae of welfare and housing policies in the time of the Olympics continue to be underpinned by a heteronormative logic at the detriment to residents of

[30] The most notable of these policies is the *Assistance to Shelter Act* which was used to clear homeless people (and those who spent time on the streets) from sight. This was enacted by the Vancouver Police Department. For more information see Jules Boykoff's (2011) "The Anti-Olympics."
[31] For more information on the timeline of the SRA Bylaw see the City of Vancouver's Policy Report (2015) titled: "SRO Actions and Propose Single Room Accommodation By-law Amendments": https://council.vancouver.ca/20150707/documents/rr2.pdf.

SRO hotels through an absence of assistance and continued eradication of SRO hotels, to great city profit.

In a larger municipal context during the late twentieth and twenty-first century, the rise of Vancouver's status as a global city and a real estate economy that emphasized high density building is known as 'Vancouverism' (Beasley, 2019). Vancouverism emphasizes the role of the condominium, which contrary to popular belief, is not a physical structure, but rather a legal classification of private property (Harris, 2011). Following the conclusion of the Expo, Canadian cities, and Vancouver in particular, faced intensified gentrification[32]. The neoliberal tax policies not only encouraged the development of major high-income condo projects, but also culminated in a reduction of the social services offered by the province. The policies also contributed to a stagnation of low-income housing funding, which prevented the province from building any new units between 2001 and 2008 (Edelson, 2011). These condo projects helped "meet the demand for owner-occupied units" in the Downtown Core, as well as supported "the revitalization of heritage buildings" (Johnson, Edelson, & Kloppenborg, 2005, p. 19). The City's brand for more palatable areas of the Downtown Eastside, such as the up-and-coming Gastown, were key sites for the creation of condos which proved integral to the promotion of heteropatriarchal and settler-colonial values associated with ownership and property (Blomley, 2004). Although this process is not in valuing the single family house, it echoes capitalist notions that are entrenched in heteronormativity such as ownership, inheritance, and wealth, amongst others. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the extreme wealth necessary to own a condo and thus reproduce the neoliberalized modern city Vancouverism aims to promote.

[32] For more information on gentrification in Canada and Vancouver in the 1990s see David Ley's (1994) "Gentrification and the politics of the new middle class."

3.5 Conclusions

Today, housing policy and practices in Vancouver remain heteronormative through the expansion of renovictions and continued support for the traditional single-family house at multiple scales of governance. The language of Marsh continues to operate today, as City Councilor Kerry Jang noted her concern for increasing social housing in the Downtown Eastside creating a 'ghetto' (Kane, 2013). The nature of both the housing and the residents continues to operate as exceptional to the City of Vancouver and as a district "tailor-made to house a permanent population of addicts" in which residents and their housing are mutually constitutive of the failure to reproduce the ideal citizen (Hopper, 2014, para. 29). The more recent discourse on housing and life in the Downtown Eastside by local officials deviates from Marsh and the planners of the mega-events due to the changing socio-political contexts that more urgently prioritize a liberal brand of Vancouver that is global, accessible, and livable (McCann, 2013). However, the discourse still mobilizes a heteronormative logic, at the federal level, which centers around the razing of SRO hotels without adequate plan for investment and relocation, and a continuation of the housing policies that support a single-family housing such as CMHC mortgage policies and bylaws on family.

Most notably, the narrative that heteronormativity "imbricates suburbia as the site of the reproductive heterosexuality" (Bain, Podmore, & Rosenberg, 2018, p. 3) is omnipresent in today's policies. In a policy report for the CMHC, Oberlander and Fallick (1992, p. 4) identify that

> federal policies found their ultimate manifestation in the pervasive shape and size of suburban Canada, readily identified by the detached single-family home in fully serviced and well laid-out subdivisions forming clusters of suburbs that expanded radially from the traditional urban core.

Oberlander and Fallick (1992) note that the "ultimate manifestation" of federal housing policy was the single-family home, intended to expand suburban development and "settle" land. The single-family home is not only a symbol of suburbanization policy and the omnipresence of heteronormativity, but also a metaphor for Canadiana and Western expectations of domesticity and gender, and as a heuristic of the settler-colonial state. The failure to meet the heteronormative progress narrative of Canadiana embodied in owning a single-family house, being married, and having children has stark consequences for not only queer individuals but also a host of intersecting and differing demographics.

The planning discourse around SRO hotels and the Downtown Eastside has evolved with changing socio-policy contexts in Vancouver, but the underlying notion of heteronormativity has remained constant. In the early twentieth century, planners discussed the need to create suburbs and promote single family housing, which in turn became reflected in national, provincial, and local policy. The triangulation of these policies created a dominant narrative of Canadiana and the heteronormative ideal, enshrined in a national discourse and codified in supporting policy. At the local level, planners acted on this mandate to reduce housing that did not fit this norm, in efforts to displace and dilute non-traditional families and their housing. As Vancouver's brand evolved with the planning of Expo 86, there was a marked change in SRO housing policy and approach. Heteronormativity remained present but more covert, operating through bylaw loopholes and neoliberal policies that appeared inoffensive or even beneficial on the surface, but undermined SRO affordability, quality, and access in lieu of the 'future': the wealthy tourist and the condominium. The Olympics operated under a similar logic to Expo but relied even more heavily on a liberal brand of affordability, access, and quality that often ironically culminated in SRO unit loss. In this chapter, I have discussed the element of heteronormativity as a tacit (and

occasionally explicit) pervasive planning ideology across time in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Although I identify this phenomenon as a spatial and geographical question of this neighbourhood, heteronormativity in policy and discourse does not affect all demographics, individuals, and families universally. Particular figures face the brunt of problems such as the single mother, the aging industry worker, the racialized minority, and the queer individual, amongst others.

4.0 QUEERING THE RESIDENTS OF THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

Situated in the complex and evolving narrative of Vancouver's housing policy, heteronormativity adversely affects particular residents. I build on the narrative discussed in the previous chapter by elaborating on its effects for particular figures. The imposition of 'normal' and 'broken' families manifests itself in skid road and the Downtown Eastside through several figures such as LGBTQ+ residents, racial minorities, youth, the working single mother, and the aging bachelor. In this section, I use Marsh's (1950) framing of families, along with supporting discourse in city planning documents, academic texts, and other archival materials, to understand certain figures of the Downtown Eastside as outside the ideal of heteronormativity, by practicing alternative domesticities and family structures. Conclusively, I reframe heteronormativity as a suite of complex and interacting demographic and other attributes that center not only on sexuality, but gender, race, family structure, and class as integral components to a subject-less queer critique. I use this framing to understand evolving urban policies and discourse for particular figures in the Downtown Eastside.

4.1 LGBTQ+ Residents

Although under-covered in the studies of the Downtown Eastside, LGBTQ+ residents have played a central role in the discourse of deviancy and degeneracy of the area. It is integral to situate queer people in the narrative of the family that developed in the mid-twentieth century in order to understand their antithesis to Canadiana, which is embodied in domestic standards of the discursive and material 'home'. The middle class ideal of living in a "bungalow in the suburbs, with a picket fence, car, garage, and host of mass-produced products, and mother staying at home while father provided the economic well-being" became a standard for Canadian families

(Warner, 2002, p. 32). Notably, a national project that promoted the heterosexual nuclear family[33] and its necessary housing structure, was a requisite for the development of Canadiana. In this structure, there is no place for sexual and social deviants, rendering LGBTQ+ individuals and families outside of the aspirational family structure of Canadiana. Not only did this condition a compulsory heterosexuality, it created a socio-political context within and beyond housing policy to curate the ideal citizenry through social and material reproduction of the heterosexual nuclear family.

As the single-family home rose to clear preference in national and local housing policy, those who did not need, or could not acquire, a large single-family house faced disinvestment and neglect, LGBTQ+ residents included. The rooming houses and SRO hotels of the area fit the need and cost for many queer people, who often lived alone or without "family" (in the way that urban planners and policy makers, such as Marsh, understood them) (Bevil, 2009; Rollinson, 1990). Rooming houses and SRO hotels were appealing due to their low cost, single occupancy nature, and the ease of anonymity and mobility that were often a requisite for LGBTQ+ people in mid-twentieth century, to assuage safety concerns (Sibalis, 2004). This is certainly true in Vancouver, where LGBTQ+ residents of the Downtown Eastside continue to face discrimination in housing (Lyons et al., 2016), health care (Collins et al., 2016), and more. There was a sense of homosociality[34] in the lumbering and logging industries whose workers featured prominently on skid road, where single men often took on traditionally feminine roles in the domestic sphere. The district was likely home to more gay individuals and couples due to the over-representation of men and their abject failure to (re)produce the ideal heteronormative family (Sommers, 1998).

[33] For more information on the national housing agenda please refer to Oberland & Fallick (1992), and the first two pages of the previous chapter.
[34] For more information on homosociality see Sharon R. Bird's (1996) "Welcome to the Men's Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity."

The LGBTQ+ individual as a queered figure, unable to fulfill the duties of the Canadiana family, is perhaps a more obvious example of being non-normative but nonetheless integral to the development of the Downtown Eastside as a legibly *queer(ed)* space. In fact, the erasure, and attempted erasure of queer families and individuals was particularly present in skid road, as "police were then told to search all beer parlors, cafes, and rooming-houses in the Skid Road area frequented by homosexuals" (Vancouver Sun, 1962, p. 29). Undoubtably, the attempt to eradicate gay men from the area, is in effort to eliminate 'abject masculine failure' (Sommers, 1998), due to both deviancy from sexual norms and expected familial obligations.

The discourse of eradication used in the Vancouver Sun article (written in 1962) draws comparison to that of the urgent call made by the CMHC and the City of Vancouver in *To Build a Better City* (1964). *To Build a Better City*'s (CMHC & City of Vancouver, 1964) call to address the dying and decaying Downtown Eastside as a place from which social illness diffuses and the neighbourhood becomes a point of concern for the spread of non-normative housing. LGBTQ+ people have often been framed as a fear for the literal pathology of diseases and illness (Giami & Perrey, 2012), especially in Vancouver (Strathdee et al., 2000). Notably, Arnie Myser (1964, p. 15) writes in the Vancouver Sun, that venereal diseases (VD) were on the rise in the mid-1960s due to the "homosexual element," but that

> If VD could be confined to these groups, the problem would be manageable. But there is, the view of public health authorities, a very real danger that the epidemic will burst its bonds and sweep through segments of the population which so far have escaped.

Indeed, the medicalization of LGBTQ+ individuals, coupled with their threat to the order of Canadiana, placed them as an antithetical figure to planning and housing agendas, as they represented a marked failure of legible domesticities. Resultingly, it was necessary to confine

LGBTQ+ to a specific geography[35] in order to not "infect" other individuals who are not medicalized or seen as a threat to the success of the national Canadian project.

The fear of homosexuality, and the confinement of the queer figure to a particular geography justifies the "sanitization"[36] of housing in those areas, as exemplified through urban renewal processes in Vancouver which were completed under the guise of "cleaning-up" derelict areas of neglect (Marsh, 1950). In a newspaper article titled "Bring back Gassy Jack's," (Cocking, 1967, p. 6) a police officer, writes on the area as "that cauldron seething with the dregs of humanity!" and "that running sore of infection and filth where lesbians and homosexuals cavort in year-long Halloween! That prison yard for alcoholics! That greasy sump which swallows Indians wholesale[37]!" In this alarming framing of the Downtown Eastside, Cocking (1967) identifies the area as an unsanitary prison for sexual and racial minorities and calls for a return to a more desirable era of Gassy Jack[38], the namesake of the Downtown Eastside's Gastown. The framing of the Downtown Eastside as a place of "infection and filth" is of particular note, as Cocking (1967) continues the narrative of Marsh (1950), and the CMHC and City of Vancouver (1964) by highlighting the Downtown Eastside as a site of failure to the otherwise 'healthy' Vancouver. He notes the particular importance of gays, lesbians, and "Indians" as agents of social "infection." The language of health is mobilized in the context of the city to discuss what is normal (i.e. urban renewal), to justify redevelopment of this decaying area, which "because of its effect on the city's future, it was decided to launch a 20 year

[35] This geography would include the Downtown Eastside, as well as the West End, and likely Yaletown.
[36] The language of sanitization was often used in urban renewal processes, particularly to raze "infected" gay areas. For more information see Johan Andersson's (2015) "Wilding' in the West Village: Queer Space, Racism and Jane Jacobs Hagiography."
[37] In this quote, Cocking uses the "Indians" to refer to the Indigenous community in the area
[38] A former bar owner, and the namesake for Gastown, Gassy Jack was an Englishman who traveled west for the gold rush. A call for the era of Gassy Jack, is a call for an unabashed settler-colonialism, in which continue to see sexual and racial minorities as extranational.

redevelopment program" (CMHC & City of Vancouver, 1964). Importantly, Strathcona, the featured neighbourhood of *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood* (Marsh, 1950) is the "most suburban of the Downtown Eastside communities" (North Sky Consulting Ltd., 2007, p. 12), making it more worthy of redevelopment and "saving" from the diffusion of social ills and non-normativity of the Downtown Eastside.

Indeed, the narrative of homosexual degeneracy in the Downtown Eastside continues to operate in the larger structures of contemporary planning, as discourse and planning practices change to represent a more (neo)liberal policy agenda, building on the mid-century work of Marsh. The advent of mega-events, such as Expo, also prompted the removal and mistreatment of transgender sex workers in order to "sanitize" the city and create a "world class city" (Zomparelli, 2011). Indeed, this narrative is in line with that of Marsh (1970) and the Vancouver Planning Department which sought to solidify Vancouver as a global city. Indeed, the Olympics planning paralleled a similar logic, and resulting in anxiety for residents who feared gentrification, homophobia, and transphobia (Zomparelli, 2011). Theses anxieties were derived from planning policy focused on "cleaning up" and clearing the streets, such as the *Assistance to Shelter Act*, which operated under the guise of providing a greater police presence to homeless individuals in the acquisition of shelter (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010). However, it also operated as a neoliberal policy that was meant to protect the image of the city as free of deviancy and non-normativity, including sex work, the homeless, and trans people more broadly.

Although Vancouver prides itself on being one of the most livable cities in North America (McCann, 2008), this evidently is not always the case for LGBTQ+ individuals. The onset of neoliberal policy that contributed to the contemporary housing crisis has been particularly troubling for LGBTQ+ individuals. Indeed, gay male couples and single parents

faced higher rejection in housing applications than their coupled and heterosexual counterparts (Brydon, 1983; Noel, 2011). Interestingly, areas that had a higher concentration of single parents already, such as Vancouver's East Side (the larger area in which the Downtown Eastside is situated), saw higher rates of discrimination against gay male couples and single parents, in contrast to the West End (Noel, 2011). However, in the West End, working LGBTQ+ and single women face concerns of renovictions due both to class and the larger discourse of sanitizing the area (Ross, 2010). The study discussed by Ross (2010) chalks up this discrimination to moral objection and economic marginalization, but heteronormativity is operating here in a more sinister way. Areas that are affordable, such as the East Side, are only available to those who are rendered more likely to reproduce the family, while the West End is available to more single women and gay couples, but only those of a particular economic status.

The changing housing ecology of the Downtown Eastside in particular highlights a future for *some* LGBTQ+ subjects, but not all. The shelter system of the Downtown East and the rest of Vancouver operates in a heteronormative manner, as well. Queer and trans couples whom not only face discrimination in the process of acquiring a home, also face fears of separation should they be evicted from their homes and in search of a shelter, as not all shelters are trans friendly (Lyons et al., 2016). For some, SRO hotels were the only viable to option to remain together, despite their derelict and dirty conditions. In contrast, wealthy LGBTQ+ residents have looked to the Downtown Eastside's up and coming Gastown, and draw comparisons to New York's Meatpacking District, a site of gay gentrification (Yoon & Currid-Halkett, 2015). Indeed, one new resident identified that the district still "has that 'bad neighbourhood reputation,' but it is being lived more and more by regular people" (Robert, 2010, para. 12). The resident's framing of new residents as "regular" draws striking parallels to that of Marsh nearly seventy years prior.

There is an underlying assumption that the "regular" is of wealth. The unique tension that LGBTQ+ residents of past, present, and future in the Downtown Eastside can be characterized through a dichotomization of heteronormativity and a *homonormativity*. Newer and wealthier LGBTQ+ residents, while not contributors to the heteronormative Canadiana project, are still contributing a more neoliberal *homonormative* agenda characterized by "progressive" and liberal policy that favours wealthy LGBTQ+ citizens.

The LGBTQ+ figure as a failure of expected Canadiana norms is perhaps best identified by Cocking's (1967, p. 6) use of the term "dregs of humanity." The word "dregs" holds particular importance in the framing of housing and communities in the Downtown Eastside as surplus and extranational. The word 'dregs' means "the most worthless part or parts of something," or "the remnants of a liquid left in a container, together with any sediment" ("dregs," n.d.). Indeed, Marsh (1950, p. 3) also uses this term describing Chinatown as housing the "dregs of the population." Understanding 'dregs' not only as worthless (per the first definition), but also as 'remnants' (per the second definition) is useful to understand these communities (LGBTQ+ individuals, and racial minorities), as not only as discursively "worthless" to the image of Vancouver, but also as in surplus or remnant to Vancouver, and Canadiana more broadly. Queerness is surplus to the state as it is unable to (re)produce the heteronormative family for the state (biologically and socially). This (re)production harkens to not only a norm of familial expectations, but also one of class and reproduction, from which the nation (and in this case the city as well), is grounded in capitalism. Notably, this renders not only LGBTQ+ subject as "queer" but racial minorities who are viewed as in surplus or "worthless" to the national project as well.

4.2 The Racial Minority Figure

In addition to the LGBTQ+ resident, racial minorities can also be understood as *queered* figures with respect to heteronormative familial values and the promotion of Canadiana. Indeed, I noted that Indigenous peoples, under the framework of dregs as surplus, can be understood as extranational to the Canadian project. Further, this indicates that race is an integral component to Canadiana, and thus heteronormativity. As Oswin (2010) identifies, heteronormativity encompasses a suite of complex positions and situations beyond simply sexuality, such as race.

In the context of Vancouver, the racialization of the hotel housing market is noticeable amongst the Downtown Eastside's Indigenous communities, who face discrimination and neglect from landlords and the City. The Leslie Butt of the City of Vancouver (1991, p. 22), noted that Indigenous populations in the Downtown Eastside "have poorer health status, and have greater difficulty finding a place to live than other residents," which means that some Indigenous residents are forced to move frequently to find landlords who are willing to rent to them, with 35% moving in the last six months from the report (Butt, 1991). This statistic unjustly frames Indigenous people as hypermobile at best, or more likely, unreliable tenants. One man notes that, "I get turned down at hotels because I'm an Indian[39]" (Butt, 1991, p. 23). Perhaps framing Indigenous communities as mobile and not worthy of a "stable home situation" comes from a history of forcible displacement of Indigenous communities across Western Canada to Vancouver (Lawrence, 2004), where they are subjected to "slum hotels" lacking the most basic of utilities, such as bathrooms or kitchens (Benoit et al., 2003). As many scholars of SRO studies in both the Downtown Eastside and other areas of North America have noted, this makes achieving proper nutrition on a low-income nearly impossible (Miewald & Ostry, 2014). In

[39] "Indian" is the term used by this individual describing their own identity, in the City of Vancouver report.

Vancouver, this is exacerbated amongst Indigenous communities, as homelessness and at-risk households have increased in recent years (Schatz, 2010).

Although the discourse around Indigenous issues has certainly changed, the underlying logic that is used to justify policy continues to obfuscate material concerns with platitudes. The mid-2000s saw a rise of the "No Olympics on Stolen Land" movement (O'Bonsawin, 2010; Sykes, 2016). Members of the St'at'imc and the Secwepemc Nations made an official submission to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) explaining human rights violations that VANOC and governments were proposing. They aptly identify the poignant neoliberalism in the planning of the Olympics as they argue that

> Canada prides itself as one of the countries with the highest living standards….the same is true for Vancouver being declared the city with the best living standard in the world, our people are the poorest in it, many living on the East side under deplorable social and economic conditions." (The Elders, Land Users and Native Youth of Sutikalh and Skwelwek'welt, 2002)

Ironically, British Columbia's official tourism is "The best place on Earth." The framing of livability standards and the tourism slogan can be understood as willfully ignorant, or more likely, distinctly mobilized to render Indigenous communities (and others) as exclusive from the framing of the potential citizen, tourist, or investor. This is not only a settler-colonial logic, but a heteronormative one that is enshrined in and mobilized by Canadian property law norms. Law functions as a heuristic for endeavors of Canadiana, which culminates in dispossession of Indigenous land and codification of objectives which enshrine norms, such as the NHA. However, the ramifications of Canadian property law are not solely linked to the violence of dispossession (Blomley, 2003). In the Downtown Eastside, the narrative of planning and law as a means of enforcing normative values operates violently through neoliberal policy which enforces policing and sanitization of public space (Blomley, 2003).

Notions of cleaning up public space are mobilized by political figures to attract wealthy tourists. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Social Credit Party Advisor Michael Walker called for moving residents of the Downtown Eastside to the Kootenays in 1986. More recently, BC Liberal Party Housing Minister Rich Coleman continues this logic as he identified that "the eventual answer for the homeless of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside is relocation to another BC Community. Towns in the Fraser Valley and the Interior offer a better chance at an escape from the addiction cycle that leads to homelessness" (Bermingham, 2007, p. A6). To be sure, the affordable housing discourse of the 2010 Olympics mirrored the neoliberal framing of unfulfilled promises as some of the new housing units that Gordon Campbell announced were merely refurbished shipping containers (Bermingham, 2007). Although not exclusively Indigenous issues, the justification for removal by the City and Province is certainly grounded in the framing of Indigenous communities as rural and hypermobile.

The narrative of Indigenous people as hypermobile is used to both frame them as undesirable tenants as well as contributing to the larger narrative that residents of SRO hotels are not permanent and therefore undeserving of tenants' rights. The narrative of the Indigenous figure as unable to create a "stable" home (a requisite for *owning* a home and reproducing Canadiana) operates under the assumption that Indigenous communities and urban spaces are exclusive, in which people assume that Indigenous people are in route to a designated territory (Pratt, 2005). This can be mobilized to disadvantage Indigenous residents as well by not even counting them in urban population reports (Social Planning and Research Council of BC [SPARC BC], 2003). The miscounting and racist framing makes some unable to create a legible home in the eyes of the dominant narrative. There is an alarming irony in the inability for Indigenous communities to make "home", when the City of Vancouver is built on unceded

Indigenous territory by settler-colonists who imposed their ideologies of not only law and policy, but also of home, domesticities, and a suite of norms and expectations that fit into a broader Canadiana (Blomley, 2003). Certainly, the element of the physical housing stock plays a role in the ability to curate a legible home as well, with many Indigenous residents of the area living in "hotels" without amenities that would only be a requisite for permanent living. The methodological practice of "counting" or documenting homeless people operates in a fashion which misrepresents homelessness for some Indigenous peoples, as some live in homes that go above the allowed occupancy (which, is entrenched in Western heteronormative notions of kinship, as well) and fear that being documented as a resident there will result in a fine (SPARC BC, 2003). As Marsh (1950) noted, people living in the Downtown Eastside not in single family houses, are not living in "homes"; over fifty years later, this appears to be the continuing narrative.

Other racialized minorities also hold a significant presence in the Downtown Eastside and are often situated in a discussion of health and housing, such as the Chinese community. Marsh (1950) discusses that housing in the Chinatown portion of Strathcona, is "unfit for habitation" (p. 30). He also argues that, "It is well known that Chinese, like the Native Indians[40], are particularly susceptible to tuberculosis, whether because of constitutional weakness or poor living conditions or both" (Marsh, 1950, p. 30). Marsh understands that both one's race and their housing conditions constitute one's health, in which the white single-family home is sanitary or fit to live in. Not only were Chinese immigrants banned from the country[41], a very clear indication from

[40] Marsh (1950) uses the term "Native Indian" to refer to the Indigenous community living in the Downtown Eastside.

[41] During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the US and Canada passed Chinese Exclusion Acts (in 1882 and 1923, respectively. The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 (referred to at the Chinese Exclusion Act) effectively ceased immigration Chinese immigration to Canada, which was already heavily regulated by the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 (including a head tax). For more information on Chinese Exclusion Acts in North America,

the Canadian government that Chinese people are outside of the nation, but policies across North America were enacted to more thoroughly regulate SRO units and lodging houses to prevent the diffusion of disease where many Chinese immigrants lived (Durning, 2012). Interestingly, regulations were often not imposed in other housing contexts that were also of higher density such as ships, barracks, prisons, etc. The policies were "racism in public-health clothing" (Durning, 2012, para. 13).

The removal of SRO units and lodging houses also indicates the rise of urban renewal and a formal planning mechanism over "informal mutual assistance practices of Chinese residents" (McKay, 2003, p. 25). This logic is similar to the one employed by the medicalization of LGBTQ+ people in the Downtown Eastside as well, which understands racial and sexual minorities as not only agents of disease but more broadly threats to the order and health of the City and the City's housing. Lee (2007, p. 391), captures the underlying sentiments of Marsh that justified these policies when writing on the history of Strathcona as not meeting the "middle-class, Western ideals of heterosexual married couples and their offspring, living as single units in detached houses surrounded by lawn." These ideas, she argues, contributed to the National Housing Act (NHA) policies that encouraged governments to study ways to redevelop the city (Lee, 2007). Certainly, part of this discussion stems from the neglect that SRO hotels and rooming houses were subjected to, but it also is derived from the association of the housing with its residents and their practices. The overcrowding of homes, and the conversion of single-family homes to rooming houses, renders the area "unsanitary" due to misuse, or rather different use, of housing stock and infrastructure that does not properly ascribe to a heteronormative family structure.

refer to Sarah M. Griffith's (2004) "Border Crossings: Race, Class, and Smuggling in Pacific Chinese Immigrant Society."

The spatialization of Chinatown, once a fear and concern of xenophobic governments, has more recently become an asset to the neoliberal project of contemporary Vancouver. Across its tourism industries and city branding initiatives (Affolderbach & Schulz, 2017; VanWynsberge, Derom, & Maurer, 2011), Vancouver touts itself as one of the most welcoming and liberal cities in North America (Kennelly, 2015). Today, Chinatown serves as a prime example of liberal multiculturalism, as the City's revitalization strategy situates Chinatown as "for everyone" (City of Vancouver, 2012, p. 15). Indeed, the City's revitalization strategy takes a stark departure from the explicit racism of Marsh, identifying it as a cornerstone of the city: "As one of the original ethno-cultural communities in Vancouver, Chinatown epitomizes the core value of contemporary Canadian society – cultural diversity" (City of Vancouver, 2012, p. 8). Not only is Chinatown a geography included in Canadian society, but in fact embodies the "core value." Cultural diversity is a key heuristic for contemporary neoliberal capitalism in Vancouver, as Chinatown has a unique diversity to "attract businesses, investors, residents, and visitors" (City of Vancouver, 2012, p. 23). Rather than identifying gentrification and eradication of SRO units in Chinatown, the city argues that "under favourable economic conditions for the development of market residential, there have been a number of new market housing projects underway" (City of Vancouver, 2012, p. 33). In 1998, SRO units used to comprise over half of the housing, in 2012 it was just 37% (City of Vancouver, 2012, p. 33). Certainly, VANOC and the Olympics were a factor in the return to the discourse of sanitizing the area to make it palatable to a wealthy international audience. Notably, "until 2003 middle-class families considered Chinatown an inconvenient place to invest and dwell. In people's perception this part of town was not safe, clean and family-friendly enough" (Maschaykh, 2018). The architectural and demographic transition of Chinatown is reflective of heteronormative neoliberal values

which prioritize the wealthy and their desired housing. The narrative of Chinatown has changed from one of xenophobic exclusion, to one characterized by (neo)liberal planning agendas that more tacitly remove Chinese working class residents from the area, which is couched in discourse of "market conditions" and "revitalization". Despite this marked change in the planning narrative, heteronormativity continues to underpin urban planning agendas in Chinatown which understands original residents of the area as non-normative and uncontributing members to the Canadiana project.

Often neglected in the context of race and the Downtown Eastside, are the former "Japantown" and Hogan's Alley. Like the United States, Canada participated in the forced removal of Japanese Canadian communities to internment camps during WWII, resulting in the extreme loss of Japanese Canadian properties, often never returned to their owners (Masuda & Crabtree, 2010). Although some returned, many Japanese Canadian residents did not return to the area, due to zoning changes which transformed the area into a derelict industrial zone from the thriving community it once was (City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1982). Another often forgotten community in the Downtown Eastside, and Vancouver more broadly, is Hogan's Alley. Once home to Vancouver's Black population, Hogan's Alley was framed as "unsavory alleys" by Marsh (1950) and was thus razed as a part of urban renewal projects, such as the Georgia Viaduct[42]. Through the erasure of these neighbourhoods[43], and the omnipresent racism in national and local policy, we can understand them, and their residents, as surplus to the heteronormative Canadian project. The removal of Japantown and Hogan's Alley in the mid-

[42] The Georgia Viaduct was a highway project in Chinatown and Hogan's Alley in Vancouver during the 1960s and was halted due to successful community protest. Unfortunately, significant damage was already done to Hogan's Alley and Chinatown communities. For more information see Ken MacKenzie's Thesis (1980) "Freeway Planning and Protests in Vancouver 1954-1972" and Rhodri Windsor Liscombe's (2011) "A study in Modern(ist) urbanism: planning Vancouver, 1945-1965."

[43] This erasure extends into the academy as well, as little work has been done on Hogan's Alley or Japantown, outside of Masuda & Crabtree (2010).

twentieth century are situated ripely in the era of the urban renewal narrative promoted by Marsh and others.

The racial minority individual and family are discursively *queered* figures in the Downtown Eastside, due to their exclusion from the future of Canadiana. Indigenous, Chinese, Japanese, Black, and other communities, have each uniquely experienced a particular disinvestment through policy, and disdain in public discourse. Through a combination of their geography and housing, and their racial minority status, these communities have been rendered expendable and worthy of razing during the process of urban renewal.

4.3 No Place for a Child

Highlighted throughout discussions of family, housing, and redevelopment is the role of the child in skid road and the Downtown Eastside. Despite this point of grave concern identified by Marsh and others, few scholars have engaged with discussions of children and rooming houses or SRO hotels, which is "no life for a kid" (Butt, p. 21). Although usually discussed as an exception to the demographics of skid road and the Downtown Eastside, children and young adults are significantly present in the neighbourhood (Robertson, 2007). Their exceptional status is, at least in part, due to their role in contributing to the biological and social reproduction of 'family', a concept which skid road itself is exceptional to, in the context of the rest of Vancouver. Noting this, many of the families that have children living on skid road or in the Downtown Eastside and surrounding neighbourhoods are 'broken' families (per Marsh): those that are not the heterosexual, two-parent and child(ren) household. Marsh (1950) notes that skid road is not a place for children, as it is riddled with those contributing to social ills and deviancy (such as

LGBTQ+ residents). In line with larger North American discourse and policy[44], Marsh (1950) and his successors place the child at the forefront of their socio-political discussions of neighbourhood redevelopment and planning for the "future". The narrative promotion of the single-family house is a prescription for families to have children to fill the space and rooms within those houses to literally reproduce the nation.

We need not look further than the instances of the socio-physical infrastructure of rooming houses and SRO hotels to understand that the future is not for *all* children. Residents of the area have even described that they have more difficulty finding places to live with their children, than without, due to the additional person fees in many rooming houses and SROs (Kraus & Woodward, 2007). Moreover, a number of transition houses will not accept teenage boys, in particular, making mothers with teenage boys forced to "decline service or be separated from her son" (City of Vancouver Housing Centre, 2004, p. 36).[45]

Correlatingly, this renders the Downtown Eastside as not only no place for children, but no place for the future. Certainly, this situates well within the framing of the Downtown Eastside as outside of the care of investment in housing with respect to futuristic mega-events, as discussed in the previous chapter. Perhaps the prioritization of the child above all else, is not an apolitical child, but rather a child that is privilege to a certain family structure and geography (amongst other characteristics). In a uniquely geographical approach, we can understand the state's ability to (re)enforce this order across space, as the Downtown Eastside is a place of 'broken families' and heteronormative failure. Seemingly in the Downtown Eastside, children

[44] In "The Future is Kid Stuff: Queer Theory, Disidentification, and the Death Drive" Lee Edelman (1998) articulates that children and the future of the child have been at the forefront of American policy (i.e. doing things *for* the children).

[45] The increasing number of single fathers and trans individuals in the area have also been facing difficulties with receiving housing in transition houses (City of Vancouver Housing Centre, 2004).

are not viewed as a catalyst for social and political reproduction, but rather a continuation of problem which needs to be eradicated.

Perhaps the most apparent example of this futureless child in the Downtown Eastside is the figure of queer youth. In a report for Human Resources Development Canada titled "No Place Like Home: Final Research Report on the Pridehouse Project", Suzanne de Castell and Jennifer Jenson (2002) discuss the need for queer youth housing in Vancouver. They identify that uniquely queer youth, "whether self-asserted as 'queer' or as assigned by others," are far more likely to be neglected in the service provision (de Castell & Jenson, 2002, p. 3). Queer youth in Vancouver have turned to the streets in search of community, sexual partners, or prostitution as a means of survival (de Castell & Jenson, 2002). At the provincial level, income assistance has undergone restructuring to where

> Youth now have to prove that they have been living independently of their parents for 2 years before being eligible for assistance. Youth who cannot return home, but have not been independent for 2 years, will now represent a class of citizens without a social safety net. (de Castell & Jenson, 2002, p. 19)

De Castell and Jenson's (2002) observation has an elevated concern, when considering the role that family plays in welfare access. In order to be eligible for welfare one must be independent or at "home" (i.e. at their parents), a more tacit endorsement for queer youth to possibly remain in dangerous situations at home, where the child *should* be, rather than providing services for queer youth.

It is also notable that the narrative set forth by Marsh continues for children and youth of the Downtown Eastside that occupy other identities which are not viewed as for the future, nor fulfilling the ideal heteronormative family. According to a report by the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development (2016), 49% of youth (23 and younger) are

"Aboriginal"[46]. A number of survey respondents noted that they live there because of the "sense of belonging" (p. 39) in the Downtown Eastside. The lack of support for Indigenous youth fits into a larger narrative of which children successfully reproduce the nation and which are read as "extranational" (Oswin, 2012).

Noting these "political" children who are not privy to policy privilege, the prioritization of the child is readily displayed by Marsh (1950) and others, through a condemnation of the physical infrastructure and understanding the Downtown Eastside as not socially conducive to a "good home atmosphere." Marsh (1950, p. ix) argues that 20% of single-family homes, 41% of rooming houses, and 56% of apartment buildings are devoid of any backyard for children to play in. He further quotes the City Social Service Department, which in discussing the areas residents, notes:

> Many are deserted wives or widows with children, who have gravitated towards the central area of the city. Bad housing, lack of playgrounds, coupled with racial mixtures in this area, means that large numbers of young children are living side by side with undesirable associates. (Marsh, 1950, p. 25)

Here, the City of Vancouver readily identifies that "young children", who are indeed the future, are living proximate "undesirables". Not only does this identify the emphasis placed on the child and the need for them to escape, but it also displays the flagrant racism of city planning and discourse. The child for which the future is intended, is a particular child that lives in a unique geography and is of a heteronormative family.

In a socio-political era that has become more open to urban housing and arrangements other the single-family home, children and youth face a unique tension between planning for the "future" and the Downtown Eastside as a place of exceptional past. Today, there remains a

[46] "Aboriginal" is the classification term used by the Ministry of Children and Family Development's 2016 report.

significantly lower ratio of children in the Downtown Eastside than in the rest of the city (British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2016). Despite a national and local narrative of children as the future and doing things "for the children", welfare and housing policy puts youth (ages 16 to 18) in uniquely precarious situations as they cannot receive income assistance, which often makes SROs a requisite due to the ease of access legally, logistically, and financially (de Castell & Jenson, 2002)[47]. Indeed, the increasing homeless youth face violence and neglect due to neoliberal neighbourhood policing policies in the Downtown Eastside (Kennelly, 2015). The onset of Olympic planning brought the discourse of neighbourhood beautification and sanitization of the forefront (Kennelly, 2015). Like other groups, homeless and "street" children and youth were "given bus tickets out of the city" to places like Chilliwack[48] (Kennelly, 2015, p. 14). This discourse mobilized displacement of children, all of whom were poor, and many of whom were racial and sexual minorities.

Children as urban dwellers in housing that is not the single-family house, continues to be antithetical to the Canadiana project. The protection of children is central to Canadian housing policy (Lauster, 2016). However, protection of the child is not apolitical, but rather uniquely for the middle-class suburban child. Courts continued to "view apartments as a challenge to the 'private' and 'residential character of detached house neighbourhoods," which placed children living in non-normative housing as in business contracts with their landlords, as opposed to deserving of rights and protections, regardless of the material conditions they live in (Lauster, 2016, p. 20). Indeed,

[47] Youth must also prove that they have been living independently of their parents for two years to be eligible for income assistance, and those who have not are without the social safety net, which can culminate in homelessness, especially for LGBTQ+ and low-income youth (de Castell & Jenson, 2002).
[48] Chilliwack is located about 100km southeast of Vancouver, proximate the Washington border. It is known for having one of the year-round warmest climates in Canada.

> in modern North American cities, when we think about children, we generally assume they will be living in detached homes, ground-level townhouses at best, located within a modest-scale setting, usually in the suburbs. If we think about families in apartments, we usually assume they have no choice – we assume they are of very modest income, perhaps single parent households. (Beasley, 2019, p. 215)

Certainly, the terrible housing conditions for many in the Downtown Eastside are not just for any, including children. However, the inherent framing of the Downtown Eastside as a place that is dangerous for children is underpinned by a heteronormative logic which understands the heterosexual nuclear family as safe, secure, and worthy of raising children, while 'broken' families are dangerous, threatening and an inappropriate family structure.

4.4 The Single Mother

In order to understand the role of children in heteronormativity and policy in Vancouver, one must understand the non-normative figure of the single working mother. Despite the lack of coverage on or prevalence of women in media and discourse of the Downtown Eastside and skid road, their presence is significant. In 1987, 18% of the population was reported as female (Butt, 1991). Although this number is much smaller than the number of men who reside in the area, they play an important role in labour and contributing to non-normative domesticities. In fact, one survey revealed that of the nine families surveyed, eight were headed by single mothers (Butt, 1991, p. 20).

Skid road and the Downtown Eastside, due to its small living quarters in SROs and rooming houses, brought domesticities, that were traditionally private, into the public. Similarly, women and single mothers' role in the labour economy of skid road and the Downtown Eastside brought domesticities, albeit non-normative ones, into the public sphere. Existing outside of the material and metaphorical domestic space, single mothers are *queered* figures by being unable to

fulfill their necessary duties as a sole caregiver to their children and maintain the "home" -- integral components to producing the 'normal' and heteronormative family. This family and labour structure are at odds with the understood roles of women at the time.

In the era of mega-events and (neo)liberal policy actions, working and single women and mothers in the Downtown Eastside continue to be framed as *queered* figures and extranational. Changes to income assistance and welfare policy have made it more difficult for working class families to receive income aid, as now single parents are expected to work when their child reaches the age of three, as opposed to the previous age of six. Women who don't subscribe to traditional roles face the worst effects of these policies, as they must have children and be employed to receive some income assistance programs. In particular, women without children are also considered the "invisible homeless" as they are more likely to either live in sub-standard accommodation such as SRO hotels, with friends, or emergency shelters (SPARC BC, 2003). Women continue to account for a small percentage of the Downtown Eastside's population – under 20% (Butt, 1991). The academic and public discourse of the Downtown Eastside often discuss it as a place not for women, and that the women who live there are often outside of traditional expectations of Canadiana (Pratt, 2005; Collard, 2015). Women are positioned as "reproducing the state and nation through their childbearing, mothering, and work in the home" (Luibhéid, 2011, p. 188). This is certainly the case in contemporary Canadiana, which continues to render women of the Downtown Eastside outside this sphere of womanhood as unfilial mothers, and outside the familial homes of social (re)production (Sommers, 1998; Pratt, 2005; Robertson, 2007; Knight et al., 2014). Although not necessarily nominally queer, the single mothers and labourers of skid road are legibly such as they bring the private sphere to the public, transgressing heteronormative values of labour and childrearing by participating in economic

reproduction of the state (a traditionally masculine role), rather than the biological and social reproductions associated with traditional domesticities.

4.5 The Aging Bachelor

Perhaps the most visibly prominent figure in the Downtown Eastside, the aging industry worker is not only an example of abject male failure, but heteronormative ineptitude. Due to skid road's history in the logging and maritime industries, the district was, and continues to be, heavily populated by single men (North Sky Consulting Ltd., 2007). At the time of Marsh's study, to recent, many of these men are "old age pensioners, and the income is from war veterans' allowances, workmen's compensation, or some meagre savings" (Marsh, 1950, p. 12). These men, confined to a strict budget dictated largely by various social services, were relegated to "converted houses, tenements, or cabins" or "men boarding or lodging with private families" (Marsh, 1950, p. 13), in which the latter pay for a furnished room and the former live in an SRO, which occasionally had a stove. In fact, at the time of Marsh's study, two thirds of tenants in SROs were single men, occasionally two men living together (VHA, 1951).

The conversion of single-family houses to rooming houses and the rise of SROs, often for single men, made skid road and surrounding areas a particularly masculine space (Sommers, 1998). However, this masculinity was a "damaged" masculinity, "represented by the figure of the derelict" and marked the "deterioration of the central-city landscape" (Sommers, 1998, p. 287). The poor and aging industry worker was not only framed as "damaged" but also as a failure. In an analysis of masculinity in the Downtown Eastside, Sommers (1998) describes skid row as making "the edge of respectable masculinity, and its occupants cast a grim shadow over the archetype of the professional, suburban-dwelling, family man, an ideal that was being actively

promoted as the outcome of natural and normal male development" (Sommers, 1998, p. 289). The archetype of man Sommers (1998) articulates is one that subscribes to and promotes heteronormative life through the reproduction of the 'normal' family, in 'suitable' housing for that family (the suburban single-family house, which is privileged in the national housing agenda). The failure to perform a legible masculinity to law and policy, is a failure to perform Vancouver's ideal citizen, justifying "a rationale for urban renewal" (Sommers, 1998, p. 287). Sommers (1998, p. 290) further elaborates that

> If the paragon of masculinity embodies an ability to relate to and support a family, as well as more traditional competencies in the workplace and male-oriented leisure activities, then the skid-row derelict, who was by definition single, inebriated, familyless, homeless, and only marginally employed, was surely a failure on all accounts.

The embodiments Sommers (1998) describes are not only integral to masculinity, but in reproducing the heteronormative state. In this sense, we can understand the aging bachelor as a legibly *queer* individual. Here, I juxtapose the successful "family man" with the aging industry worker, who both have contributed to the economy, yet one is rendered expendable and surplus, while the other is privileged in discourse and policy. The aging bachelor is unable to reproduce the nation and the ideals of Canadiana. Returning to my framing of skid road as economically and geographically isolated and an exception to the socioeconomics of Vancouver, it becomes apparent that the aging bachelor was an integral contributor to economy and industry, but not valued as he does not reproduce the heteronormative image of the nation.

No doubt, Marsh's (1950) plan is an early manifestation of the need to make proper domesticity in an effort to dispel the lack of "normal citizens living private households" (Bogue, 1963, p. 4 as cited in Sommers, 1998, p. 290). In the context of private domesticities, the isolation that single men in SROs experience was highlighted as a point of major concern (Sommers, 1998). This isolation was a barrier to male success and reproducing a 'normal

family'. The uniquely masculine, albeit non-traditionally masculine, nature of skid road possibly made it home to gay and queer relationships. Scholars have discussed how the logging industry in particular is not conducive to producing a heteronormative family as they offered "little chance for marriage, a fixed household, [and] child rearing", and women's "prescribed roles as child bearer, domestic worker, a and moral leader for the family were structurally impossible in this booming industry" (Murphy & Urquhart, 2010, p. 44). The aging bachelor is the antithetical figure to heteronormative Canadiana. The aging bachelor and his SRO unit can be understood as symbols of the past, economic distress, abject masculine failure, and geographic isolation, while the single-family house and its owner is framed as the future of Canadiana, economic prosperity, successful social and biological reproduction.

4.6 Conclusions

Building on the framing of Oswin (2010), Luibhéid (2008; 2011), and others, I identify the *queered* subjects of the Downtown Eastside. I argue that the LGBTQ+ residents, racialized minority communities, (queer and racialized) youth, the single working mother, and the aging bachelor are rendered "queer" by the state. By this, I mean they are unfit characters for the heteronormative family, and not necessarily nominally queer. I argue that despite being an obvious contender, LGBTQ+ residents are integrally *queered* residents, who are often under-discussed (if at all) in the context of the Downtown Eastside (Ross, 2010). Following, I discussed how the Downtown Eastside is not only articulated through a pathologization of poverty, but a pathologization of social ills and housing practices that are threats to Canadiana and the heteronormative nuclear family. This is exemplified through my second figure: the racial minority, whom is rendered surplus as well. Race also plays an integral role in understanding the

Downtown Eastside as no place for children, and understanding "the child" that is at the forefront of policy is a particular political child which is antithetical to the Downtown Eastside, as SRO hotels and rooming houses do not produce a "future" for children. Following, I identify the single working mother in the Downtown Eastside as a subversion of expected family norms and domesticities. In the instance of the aging bachelor, I build the work of Sommers (1998), who understands the Downtown Eastside as a place of abject masculinity, and further argue that there is a heteronormative ineptitude.

Importantly, each of these figures I have identified are not exact and siloed but interacting and complicated which creates a multitude of realities and narratives of geographies of the Downtown Eastside. Indeed, integral to an analysis of heteronormativity and the figures I present is the element of class and capital. Although critical material analysis is sometimes disjointed with queer analysis, the analytical framework of heteronormativity requires an understanding how a suite of demographics constitute Canadiana (in this instance), and class and capital are omnipresent factors in housing policy and discourse. Each of the figures I present, is situated as oppositional to the Canadian national project, as codified in housing policy and mega-event agendas which prioritize the international wealthy tourist as the "backbone of British Columbia's tourism industry" (Sorensen, 1983). The logic of capital and wealth as a factor in heteronormativity is exemplified by Marsh, who identifies the "heterosexual two-parent family" as a "consumption machine" (Murray, 2011, p. 12). Today, this translates to not exclusively (though primarily) the heterosexual nuclear family in the single-family house, but to other agents of capital who reside in condos, which have taken an increasing role in an era of high-density urban (re)development (Harris, 2011). The constitution of prevailing understandings of domesticities render particular figures who often live in SRO hotels as outside the proper

heteronormative family. Ultimately, the neglect these figures are subjected to in the Downtown Eastside is a result of the particular privileged heteronormative domestic expectations enshrined in Canadiana.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis, I have argued that heteronormativity is a working logic in the practices and language surrounding SRO hotels in the Downtown Eastside, which uniquely affects particular individuals and communities. In Chapter 2, I analyzed literature on SRO hotels in North America and Vancouver to argue that they are framed as areas of neglect. I also analyzed the literature on Vancouver's SRO hotels in the context of the changing political economy, to argue that mega-events have led to the demise of the quality and quantity of SRO hotels. I examined the scholarship on domesticities in the Downtown Eastside to find that SRO hotels and their residents are rendered abject. Across the literature, scholars argue that there has been a decline in the quality and quantity of SRO hotels. I posited that my research provides an original contribution by discussing how familial norms are entrenched in housing policy and discourse through the lens of heteronormativity. Following this, I discussed my conceptual framework of heteronormativity as a tool for subjectless critique of law and policy and as a way to provide astute analysis of family and home. Finally, I discussed my methodological approaches and argued that CDA is a useful method to queer the archive.

In Chapter 3, I argued that heteronormativity is a constant in the chronology of housing policy and SRO hotel removal in the Downtown Eastside, despite a constantly changing political economy and socio-policy context. I situated the Downtown Eastside in a broader national housing context to understand how narratives of housing, family, and national values were imposed in post-war Vancouver. Following this, I discussed the role of heteronormativity and urban renewal, paying particular attention to Leonard Marsh's (1950) *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood* and its classification of families and housing. I then identified how the discourse and ideas of Marsh were mobilized by the City of Vancouver through the creation of their urban

renewal programs, which razed parts of the Downtown Eastside, as residents and SRO hotels were rendered exceptional to an otherwise prosperous and healthy Vancouver. The narrative of the Downtown Eastside took a departure with Expo 86, as conversations of revitalization and reinvestment of the area were discussed as business and tourist opportunities, promoting the conversion of SRO hotels to tourist hotel use. I argued that these conversions are situated in a larger framing of Expo 86 as the "future", and the Downtown Eastside as the past, juxtaposing the investments, which often benefited the heteronormative tourist or wealthy investor, with the evictions of SRO hotel residents, who are rendered discursively home-less. This framing is continued through the 2010 Olympics bid, which also coincided with a more comprehensive neoliberal policy agenda, as characterized by the RTA of 2002 and the SRA Bylaw of 2003, which sought to protect SRO residents, but in reality, did little to prevent their displacement. Despite a changing political economic context, urban planning and housing policy in Vancouver and the Downtown Eastside continues to neglect non-normative residents in SRO hotels.

In Chapter 4, I built on the analysis made in the previous chapter by identifying key demographics that are abject residents, rendered "queer" or unable to reproduce the aspirations of Canadiana: the wealthy, white, heterosexual nuclear family. I firstly identified the LGBTQ+ community as a group that is not only nominally queer, but as extranational due to their failure to successfully reproduce Canadiana biologically nor through the ownership and occupation of a single-family house. I then discussed how racial minorities are rendered outside the national project, and are thus non-normative, as they often curate homes that are not legible to the state for a multitude of reasons including alternative ownership models and different familial structures. Next, I argued that the child, and in particular queer youth and youth of colour, are seen as abject in the Downtown Eastside, as they are confined to a geographical area that

represents “failure” and the past, as opposed to their counterparts in suburban single-family houses who are viewed as the future of the national project, as they reside in more child-friendly and family-friendly environments. Lastly, I identified the working single mother and the aging bachelor as key figures in the Downtown Eastside, as they represent ‘broken’ families (per Marsh), and thus deviate from familial and gender expectations, making them extranational and outside the heteronormative ideal. Finally, I conclude that these figures are examples of those experiencing the realities and implications of a heteronormative policy structure.

This research not only has implications for studies of the Downtown Eastside, but for queer theory and urban geography, more broadly. In this thesis, I applied queer theory to the study of discursive and material effects of housing policy. I uniquely engaged with urban and political geographical contexts to provide a perspective that is an urban queer geography, as well as a political queer geography. Importantly, this work has contributions to the larger study of urban geography, and urban studies more broadly, as queer theoretical analysis is often under-utilized in the discussion of urban policy. Although this is only one case study of queer theory in urban geography, heteronormativity should be more broadly implemented as an analytical tool in the discussion of policy formation and implications.

Additional research of the aims and ideas in this thesis could be explored from different geographical, scalar, and thematic contexts. For example, one could look at the role of heteronormativity and narratives of family and citizenry in other cities with a significant SRO hotel history and presence, such as Seattle (Rusch, 2013), San Francisco (Hahn et al., 2006), Los Angeles (Linhorst, 1991), and New York (Rossi, 1990), amongst others. Alternatively, one could examine how heteronormativity materializes in specific levels of governance, such as the municipal, provincial, or federal level. Additionally, one could use heteronormativity as a

framework from which to analyze other phenomena in public policy and beyond, such as healthcare, immigration, education, or other social welfare programs.

Beyond its academic contribution, this thesis is significant in highlighting the continued neglect of, and disinvestment in, SRO hotels and their residents. Although a number of scholars have identified the need for investment in the Downtown Eastside community (Blomley, 2004; Robertson, 2007), the significance of having secure and affordable housing cannot be overstated. I find this of particular importance in contemporary Vancouver as (neo)liberal policies can look progressive on the surface but have a more insidious effect on the realities of working-class individuals and their communities. Noting this, I do not necessarily advocate for SRO hotels as the solution to housing inequality, rather I seek to highlight *why* such housing is neglected while subsidies and investments in single-family housing continue (Lauster, 2016). As I have discussed, SRO hotels house a number of non-normative residents who are often unable to fulfill the duties of "Canadiana" and the white, heterosexual, nuclear family. A more just Vancouver would not only reinvest in SRO hotel units to keep at-risk communities in their homes, but also invest in housing that is healthy, appropriate, and affordable for a multitude of family dynamics and structures -- not just the nuclear family and the lone SRO resident.

Beyond particular policy action, a radical restructuring of the conceptualization of "family" and "home" is a requisite. As argued in this thesis, heteronormativity operates in tacit and crafty ways having a range of effects from permeating the public narrative to affecting housing stipends and tenancy law. In order to consider an alternative Vancouver in which legibly queered residents can enjoy the privileges of housing security and affordability, one must actively interrogate epistemologies often underpinned by heteronormativity such as those of the

home and the family, and consider alternative models of ownership, kinship, and residence, that are not predicated on the essence of Canadiana.

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