Healing and homecoming: Identity and community narratives of returns and reconnections among queer and trans diasporic Filipino/a/xs in Montréal

by

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Abstract

This dissertation is a qualitative study grounded in participatory action research (PAR) approaches through Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan* (Filipino/a/x talk-story). This study aimed to document and analyze how gender identity and sexuality relate to migration and diasporic experiences among LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs based in Montréal, Québec, Canada, and their forms of community action and solidarity. The study aimed to expand on queer diaspora and migration, critical Filipino/a/x and queer of colour organizing theories, and contribute to the possibilities of more transformative participatory research methods and social and community work. *Kuwentuhan* is a culturally responsive method grounded in Filipino/a/x epistemologies in which stories are told from collective perspectives. Photovoice as a participatory method uses photography to illustrate the narratives of communities who are often excluded from policy decisions that impact their lives. To redress extractive power relations in research, these methods aim for the participants and community to be meaningfully involved in the research process.

This research study involved a staged process of community feedback, workshops, an art exhibit, individual and group feedback interviews and field notes. Through a combination of participant and researcher-led thematic analysis, this study illustrates how LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in the diaspora navigate normative and discriminatory arrangements and imagine transformative meaning and action shaped by interwoven histories of colonialism in the Philippines and in Canada. The seven queer and trans Filipino/a/x participants' diasporic subjectivities involve continually returning and reconnecting to cultural, ancestral, linguistic and transformative meanings and actions. Through these reconnections, they seek to empower and heal themselves and others through renewing and reimagining home, belonging, intimacies, collectivity, and, especially, *kapwa*. *Kapwa* is an inner spiritual and emotional connection to others and the natural

world, thus a reconnection to oneself. The study contributes a notion of seeding *kapwa* as a queer

and decolonial epistemological and ontological questioning of hierarchical and exclusionary

forms of being and knowing and reconnections to alternative possibilities through homing

(homecoming) practices. Homing involves communities constellating queer diasporic narratives

of home and belonging toward more transformative meaning and relations of care and action,

which occurred through the *Kuwentuhan* method. This study adds to the ongoing relevance of

postcolonial, transnational, queer and trans, and feminist theorizing around the lives of queer and

trans racialized and Filipino/a/x communities. Researchers, educators and social and community

workers can co-construct methodologies and ethics toward homing processes by focusing on

decolonial cultural, historical and social specificities of queer diasporic groups related to their

regions, diversities and transnational experiences.

Résumé

Cette thèse est une étude qualitative fondée sur des approches de recherche-action participative (RAP) par le biais de Photovoice et de *Kuwentuhan* (histoire parlée Philippines). Cette étude visait à documenter et à analyser la façon dont l'identité de genre et la sexualité sont liées à la migration et aux expériences diasporiques des LGBTQ+ Philippins/a/x basés à Montréal, Québec, Canada, ainsi que leurs formes d'action communautaire et de solidarité. L'étude visait à développer la diaspora et la migration queer, les théories d'organisation critiques des Philippins/a/x et des queers de couleur, et à contribuer aux possibilités de méthodes de recherche participative et de travail social et communautaire plus transformatrices. Le *Kuwentuhan* est une méthode adaptée à la culture et ancrée dans les épistémologies Philippines, dans laquelle les histoires sont racontées à partir de perspectives collectives. Photovoice est une méthode participative qui utilise la photographie pour illustrer les récits des communautés qui sont souvent exclues des décisions politiques qui ont un impact sur leur vie. Pour remédier aux relations de pouvoir extractives dans la recherche, ces méthodes visent à impliquer les participants et la communauté de manière significative dans le processus de recherche.

Cette étude de recherche a comporté un processus échelonné de retour d'information de la part de la communauté, des ateliers, une exposition d'art, des entretiens individuels et collectifs de retour d'information et des notes prises sur le terrain. Grâce à une combinaison d'analyses thématiques menées par les participants et les chercheurs, cette étude illustre la manière dont les LGBTQ+ Philippins/a/x de la diaspora naviguent dans les arrangements normatifs et discriminatoires et imaginent une signification et une action transformatrices façonnées par l'histoire entremêlée du colonialisme aux Philippines et au Canada. Les sept participants queer et trans philippins/a/x ont des subjectivités diasporiques qui impliquent de retourner et de se

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reconnecter continuellement à des significations et des actions culturelles, ancestrales, linguistiques et transformatrices. Les subjectivités diasporiques des sept participants queer et trans philippins/a/x impliquent un retour et une reconnexion continus aux significations et actions culturelles, ancestrales, linguistiques et transformatrices. Grâce à ces reconnexions, ils cherchent à s'autonomiser et à se guérir eux-mêmes et les autres en renouvelant et en réimaginant continuellement le foyer, l'appartenance, l'intimité, la collectivité et, en particulier, le *kapwa*. Le *kapwa* est un lien spirituel et émotionnel intérieur avec les autres et le monde naturel, ce qui permet de se reconnecter à soi-même. L'étude propose une notion d'ensemencement du *kapwa* en tant que questionnement épistémologique et ontologique queer et décolonial des formes hiérarchiques et exclusives d'être et de savoir et de reconnexion à d'autres possibilités par le biais de pratiques de *homing*. Le *homing* implique que les communautés constellent les récits diasporiques queer du foyer et de l'appartenance vers une signification et des relations de soins et d'action plus transformatrices, ce qui s'est produit par le biais de la méthode *Kuwentuhan*. Cette étude s'ajoute à la pertinence actuelle de la théorisation postcoloniale, transnationale, queer et trans, et féministe autour de la vie des communautés queer et trans racialisées et philippines/a/x. Les chercheurs, les éducateurs et les travailleurs sociaux et communautaires peuvent coconstruire des méthodologies et une éthique pour les processus de *homing* en se concentrant sur les spécificités culturelles, historiques et sociales décoloniales des groupes diasporiques queer liées à leurs régions, à leurs diversités et à leurs expériences transnationales.

references to enter the program, apply for various funding and grant opportunities, and provide me with guidance and advice along the way. To the founders and members of the *Filipino Canadian Social and Community Workers Network* who made this process feel less alone and continue to imagine a more inclusive and transformative area of study and practice.

To those scholars and scholar-activists I cited, and the bearers of knowledge and stories who were not cited yet influenced this process, whether presently living or not, thank you for your teachings across time and space. I acknowledge that the bearers of this knowledge are often in the community, while academia, in many ways, can be exclusionary to those securing, protecting and sharing the knowledges that may help our societies transform. I have sought to hold these values and critical reflections close to the ethics of this study and other academic spaces that I engage with.

To those kin and *kapwa* at *Kapwa Centre* and beyond who checked in on me consistently, or briefly, provided spaces for reconnection, and provided snacks and groceries when I was positive for COVID-19 and in isolation. To those I shared strained laughs and struggles with as we sought to remain intact in our circles of care, build mutual aid structures and plan organizing strategies amid a worldwide pandemic and far-reaching systems of oppression.

To my caregivers, including my parents and grandparents (otherwise known as, Oma and Opa, and Lolo and Lola), whether we were close or only spent brief times together. To my siblings, and other chosen or distant family and ancestors who are present or in the past and future, who have shown me lessons about perseverance, healing, cultural safety and intergenerational knowledge. Especially to my siblings, Vanessa and Rebecca Stol, who are constants in my life. To my mother, Estefania Dulay Colting, who is a beacon and a bearer of hope.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Envisioning queer and trans Filipino/a/x contributions to queer of colour and Filipino/a/x organizing

Building knowledge about queer of colour organizing in Canada requires studying specific social and local contexts through transnational approaches and analyzing regional, geographical, historical, political, and economic relations to queerness, nationalisms, and the state (Bacchetta & Haritaworn, 2011; Bain, 2017; Walcott, 2009, 2010; Ware, 2017). Emerging literature advocates for documenting, remembering and recounting histories and experiences of social change from the perspectives of queer and trans racialized communities in Canada. This body of knowledge resists historical erasure and informs ongoing organizing and social movement efforts (Brown, 2020; Diaz et al., 2018; Gentile et al., 2017; Lee, 2019; Haritaworn et al., 2018; Walcott, 2009, 2010; Ware, 2017; Wilson et al., 2016).

Literature highlights how queer of colour communities experience multiple forms of discrimination from their own or other racial, ethnic, national or LGBTQ+ communities (Bain, 2017; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Lee, 2012; Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004; Sadika et al., 2020; Wong, 2012). Further, the experiences of LGBTQ+ activism and organizing by racialized communities on a global scale within LGBTQ+ and social movement studies are limited, even as identity-related factors in social movement participation are more studied (Labelle, 2019a). Literature in Canada requires more documentation and analyses of these lived experiences and narratives to inform inclusive and transformative activist, organizing and social movement efforts (Haritaworn et al., 2018; Labelle, 2019a; Gentile et al., 2017).

This documentation and analyses contribute to redressing how social work research, practices and policies in Canada have limited understanding of and responsiveness to the realities

of queer and trans racialized communities, which has implications for access to life-promoting services and supports (Cox et al., 2022; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Lee & Brotman, 2013; Ryan et al., 2008). There is a need to address the limited capacity of social, health and immigration services and systems to be responsive and inclusive of diverse queer and trans racialized communities (Lee, 2019; Ryan et al., 2008; Wilson et al., 2016).

This study contributes to the literatures on queer of colour and Filipino/a/x community organizing, social movements and social work that have called for a more transformative praxis, which includes critiquing the limits of state-sanctioned and neoliberal rights-based discourses and regimes (Gentile et al., 2017). This liberatory praxis helps us trace and re-imagine what this future may look like. As Haritaworn and colleagues, (2018) suggest:

> QTBIPOC [queer, trans, Black, Indigenous, people of colour] communities prefigure alternative futures and propose alternative models for sharing space that seek to leave no one behind… May they inspire a permanent readiness for the marvellous. May they help us imagine otherwise. (p. 21)

Inspired by these scholars and activists, this study highlights how the lives, meaning-making and imaginings of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs of the diaspora add to and expand liberatory and transformative praxis. To do so, this study draws from queer diaspora and migration theories in dialogue with critical Filipino/a/x studies in Canada to foreground analyses of the intersections between gender, sexuality, migration, diaspora, nation- and empire-building, colonialism, imperialism, and transnationalism (Coloma et al., 2012; Diaz et al., 2018; Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016; Velasco, 2020).

1.2 Key terms: Queer of colour and Filipino/a/x

In this section, I provide an overview of the terms queer of colour and Filipino/a/x as key concepts of this study. These terms are signifiers of groups of identities shaped by historical and socio-cultural contexts and analyses and link identity to broader systems. I refer to queer of

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colour communities and queer and trans racialized communities interchangeably, yet both aim to encompass the diversity of these communities in contexts of power, history, and agency in identity choices and possibilities. Queer of colour communities also encompasses queer and trans Filipino/a/x communities.

1.2.1 Queer of colour

The term queer in this dissertation is understood as an identity category and as an analysis (Luibhéid & Chávez, 2020; Lubhéid, 2008; Somerville, 2020). Queer is a continuously contested and evolving term. However, queer has been reclaimed over time and is now considered an umbrella identity category denoting all constructions of gender identity and sexual orientations that are considered non-normative in society, while engaging with complex political, social, cultural, ethical, historical, and theoretical contexts and questions (Luibhéid & Chávez, 2020; Somerville, 2020). The terms within this umbrella may include lesbian,[1] gay,[2] bisexual,[3] transgender,[4] heterosexual,[5] cisgender,[6] Two-Spirit,[7] and other linguistic and cultural identifications and meanings.

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[1] Most commonly includes women attracted to women.

[2] The term can denote different attractions but most commonly refers to men attracted to men.

[3] This term often involves attraction to more than two genders.

[4] Transgender "may include a gender identity that differs from the sex assigned at birth; a gender expression that differs from that conventionally expected of people according to their bodily sex; and/or a desire for alteration of the body's sex/gender characteristics" (Enke, 2012, p. 19).

[5] Most commonly refers to normative relations of women attracted to men or men attracted to women.

[6] Refers to those who have always identified to the gender identity that they were assigned at birth (Serano, 2007).

[7] Two-Spirit refers to Indigenous people who hold different roles and identities along the LGBTQ+ spectrum as well as "heterosexual people who have a unique place on the gender continuum, and who are seen to have a more expanded view of the world, as a result of their ability to mediate between, and see through the eyes of both sexes" (Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004, p. 31). However, like other terms identifying gender and sexuality, Two-Spirit or Two-Spirited is not accepted by all Indigenous peoples with one of the main challenges being that it may limit very diverse histories and traditions of Two-Spirited people to one category (Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004). Rather than a sexual orientation, it refers more to a gender identity and a role, such as spiritual roles and community responsibilities which were prevalent before periods of colonization (Driskill et al., 2011; Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004). Driskill (2010) states that Two-Spirit "was chosen as an intertribal term to be used in English as a way to communicate numerous tribal traditions and social categories of gender outside dominant European identities" (p. 72).

I use the terms LGBTQ+ or queer to refer to all these possible identity formations, which are not exclusive of languages and meanings that are not English, colonial, Western or legible by States, nations, or dominant epistemologies. These diverse identifications draw attention to analyses of normative and non-normative arrangements and regimes of power, knowledge, and control while acknowledging that some may choose not to identify through these terms or concepts (Enke, 2012). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual, among other identifiers, can be described as sexual orientations,[8] and trans (transgender or transsexual) or cis (cisgender or cissexual) can be described as gender identities (Lee, 2019).

While identifications to trans or transgender are often included in the term queer, Trans Studies critique that queer as an overarching identity category may not engage thoroughly and thoughtfully with the meanings, theories, and lives of trans and gender non-conforming peoples, given that queerness has been more relegated to lesbian, gay and non-conforming sexualities (Luibhéid & Chávez, 2020). Enke (2012) describes transgender as:

> …the name of a social movement that insists on the right of all people to determine for themselves their own personal and legal gender statuses…an ever expanding social category that incorporates the broadest possible range of gender nonconformity for the purposes of movement building, organizing, and social service recognition…an identity that some people embrace for themselves. (p. 18-19)

Lee (2019) demonstrates how queer and trans people with precarious immigration status have different relationships to the word "queer" and different contexts to consider in how they choose to define themselves about their ethnicity, nationality, or experience of racialization.

In this dissertation, the use of the term queer as an identity and analytic method seeks to be inclusive of the diversity of gender nonconformity and trans people. However, this study may

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[8] Enke (2020) explains that: "Sexual identity (or preference) has to do with sexual, erotic, and/or emotional attractions, interests, and orientations. For each person, sexual identity may have nothing or everything to do with gender identity and body type. Like all people, trans people may be gay, bi, lesbian, straight, asexual, pansexual, queer, and so forth; similarly, people across all sexual identities may or may not be trans" (p. 20).

not be able to capture the need for deep engagement with the differences and heterogenous lives and power arrangements facing queer *and* trans peoples. I thus seek to continuously identify and recognize evolving and diverse understandings of queer, trans and the broad range of LGBTQ+ realities in their histories and contexts.

Queer of colour or queer and trans racialized communities used in this dissertation will attempt to speak to and through the vast and diverse group of those who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ and who identify as Black, Indigenous and/or people of colour, or those who experience racialization. Queer of colour denotes a broad identity group and an analytic that takes seriously racism and processes of racialization in the construction of naturalized and normative identity categories in contexts of power, knowledge, and control (Somerville, 2020).

HoSang and LaBennet (2020) explain the lineage of the construction of race and racialization as important concepts and analytics shaping present cultural studies in the U.S. The authors review how over time some scholars have challenged whether race should persist as an analytic category given it may legitimize the notion of a stable or fixed human difference or existence; however, other critical race scholars have argued that the extensive perpetuation of racialization in organizing societies such as the U.S. means that racial identity should not be disregarded. The authors state that "In contrast to static understandings of race as a universal category of analysis, racialization names a process that produces race within particular social and political conjunctures. That process constructs or represents race by fixing the significance of a 'relationship, practice or group' within a broader interpretive framework" (p. 202).

Racialization should thus be analyzed in how the historical, social and political context fixes or naturalizes race through different approaches to understanding and interpreting that figure. For example, Franz Fanon's work of analyzing the social construction of race through

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processes of racialization and dehumanization shows how racial oppression and colonialism operate in U.S. empire-building through racial formations, such as constructing Asians as threats to the nation and racial terror of Muslim and Arab bodies during post 9-11 securitization (HoSang & LaBennet, 2020). In this paper, I draw from racialization as an analysis of the relations of power, domination and hierarchies that are produced in different historical, social and institutional contexts to invisibilize, subjugate or hypervisibilize certain worldviews, bodies or experiences over others. I focus on the construction and processes of racialization related to the experiences of Filipino/a/xs in Canada and associated constructions of gender, sexuality, nation, and diaspora, alongside other categories in the matrices of power and domination (Hill Collins, 2000).

These theories also highlight the underpinning logic related to the constructions of a state-sanctioned respectable and normative citizen which shape a national identity. The theories help explicate how historically, and contemporarily, nation-building relies on maintaining immigration controls, neoliberalism,[9] and exclusionary "Othering" practices to reify a national identity and global capitalist economic expansion (Duggan, 2002; Puar, 2007). The Canadian nation and state maintain a hierarchical settler society through forms of discriminatory legislation and discourse in immigration and border regimes, as well as associated social and institutional relations (Thobani, 2007). These mechanisms of regulation and control construct who is a "worthy" and non-threatening citizen, impacting the life chances of groups facing marginalization, including racialized and Indigenous peoples (Bauder & Breen, 2023; Lee, 2018; Thobani, 2007).

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[9] Neoliberalism as a dominant structure, system and ideology of human progress and governance in modern society advances individualized, free market attainment and accumulation of wealth, which critical queer scholars state relies on patriarchal nuclear family and heterosexual norms perpetuated through regulatory mechanisms and social order of the public and private (Kinsman, 2017; Smith, 2015).

This study will also explore the possibilities of decolonial solidarity praxis stemming from the multiple forms of discrimination and dispossession facing queer of colour communities from local to global levels, the settler colonial context of Canada, and the forms of resistance to coloniality (Morgensen, 2010, 2012). Settler colonialism in the Canadian context involves the ongoing dispossession of lands and disruptions of the cultural continuity of Indigenous peoples through mechanisms of force, regulation and domination in which settlers and their governments maintain claims to territories (Coulthard, 2014; Driskill, 2010, 2016). Decolonization is a process and praxis that seeks to undo settler colonial and colonial logics, relations, and hierarchical power arrangements in all domains of life (Coulthard, 2014; Wolfe, 2006).

The interrelatedness between gender and sexuality, settler colonialism and decolonization inform theorizing and practice around current organizing, social movement, social service, and social policy advocacy efforts in Canada (Diaz et al., 2018; Lee, 2018; Morgensen, 2010, 2012; Smith, 2010; Yee et al., 2014). Moreover, studies focusing on queer of colour organizing in the Québec region consider the historical, geographical, social, and political context regarding race, nationhood, diaspora, migration and queer of colour realities (Chbat et al., 2023; Labelle, 2019b; Lee, 2012; Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004; Wong, 2012, 2013).

1.2.2 Filipino/a/x

Using Filipino/a/x throughout this study refers to the gender and sexual diversity that exists in the Filipino/a/x diaspora, in part as critique and resistance to the construction of dominant cisgender, binary and patriarchal gender norms through colonial and Western histories and standards (Diaz et al., 2018). While the term is continually contested, questioned and expanded on by academics and community members, using this identifier invites questions on the influences of empire on identity formation and acknowledges transforming social

constructions across space and time. Following critical Filipino/a/x studies' authors, rather than

cementing a static, naturalized or recognizable identity within a nationalized state-sanctioned

framework, this study seeks to respect cultural identities as historical, evolving and agentive

decisions in meaning-making and unmaking (Coloma et al., 2017). Throughout the paper,

Filipino/a/x is primarily used. However, the paper may also use Filipino, Filipina or Filipinx to

respect how the term was cited by the participants or other sources that are cited. However, the

social, historical and analytic questions and influences around the term are maintained in this

dissertation regardless of the variation used.

Filipino/a/x acknowledges diasporic identity formations and evolutions of cultural

concepts, languages and experiences that have been influenced by the globalized dispersion of

Filipino/a/x communities and diverse engagements with social, political, and economic contexts.

Vast diversities in cultural experiences and relations to the Philippines persist in diasporic

Filipino/a/x community formations (Aguila Jr., 2015) especially considering the archipelago is

made up of seven thousand islands with three main island groups (Luzon [North], Visayas

[Central], Mindanao [South]) and vast regional and local differences (Bonifacio, 2013).

While I will primarily refer to Filipino/a/x diaspora to include all those with Filipino/a/x

heritage originating from the Philippines, including first-, second- or third-generation

immigrants, I may also differentiate diaspora from migrants. The use of the term migrant in this

study will refer to "anyone who has crossed an international border, without making distinctions

based on people's state-conferred legal statuses" (Luibhéid & Chávez, 2020, p. 8). Rather than

reinforcing categorical types of migrants, this study follows queer migration scholarship that

examines how power and knowledge shape the differentiation of migrant categories, delimit the

rights they are granted or denied and influence the forms of "surveillance, discipline, normalization and exploitation to which they will be subjected" (Luibhéid, 2008, p. 186).

Filipino/a/x scholars are quick to point out that the U.S. has been a centre of inquiry in Filipino/a/x studies, in part because of the emphasis on U.S. imperialism and diaspora-making in the migration and identity formation of the Philippines (Coloma et al. 2012; Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016). This dissertation surfaces visibilities beyond the U.S. centre and hegemonic discourses surrounding notions of a normative and respectable citizen in the settler colony of Canada. The Filipino/a/x diaspora in Canada is an important area of study as the Philippines remains a top country of origin among immigrants (see section 3.2.1 for an overview of the history of migration from the Philippines to Canada). Their experiences and cases can shed light on intersections of global migration, histories of colonialism and imperialism, and inclusions or exclusions into nation-building historically and presently (Coloma et al., 2012; Coloma, 2017). These socio-political and systemic conditions have effects on Filipino/a/x diaspora identity and group formation, community organizing, social service and social welfare access, and related social policies that require attention and interrogation (Alcaraz et al., 2021; Diaz et al., 2018).

1.3 Research questions and objectives

Within the Canadian and Québec settler colonial contexts, Filipino/a/xs have a rich history of contributions to community organizing and social movement building (Diaz et al., 2018; Coloma et al., 2012; Tungohan, 2017). A growing yet limited body of literature about Filipino/a/xs in Canada has been documenting the participation of Filipino/a/xs in migrant women's and domestic worker activism, organizing, and social movements (Pratt & Migrant BC, 2018; Tungohan, 2012, 2013, 2017), as well emerging literature addressing LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x diasporic experiences of engaging with and organizing political, cultural, and social

groups (Diaz et al., 2018). Beyond focusing on organizing, there still exist major gaps in research that explore the theory and lived realities of LGBTQ+ identifying Filipino/a/xs (Diaz, 2015; Diaz et al., 2018; Farrales, 2017; Pino, 2019) amid growing studies around Filipino/a/xs in Canada, but primarily outside Québec (Alcaraz et al., 2021; Alcaraz et al., 2022; Bonifacio, 2013; Coloma & Pino, 2016).

Indeed, no known study has documented the identity and community experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in Québec as well as their contributions to broader movement building. To address this gap and advance theory and practice (praxis) on queer of colour organizing and social movements, Filipino/a/x studies, queer diaspora and migration studies and social work practice and related policies, the research questions that inform this study include:

1. How do gender identity and sexuality interact with the migration and diasporic experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in Montréal, Québec?

2. In what ways and why do LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs of the diaspora build social and community groups, organizations, support, and resources locally and transnationally?

3. In what ways and why are forms of solidarity and unity understood and enacted in building these social and community groups and organizations?

Questions also remain around how gender, sexuality and diaspora-making regarding settler colonial contexts can reify colonial thought, processes and practices (Morgensen, 2011, 2012). My study thus explores how queer and trans Filipino/a/xs' engagement in meaning-making within community organizing re-entrench and/or re-imagine colonial and settler colonial relations. I aim to engage with critical Filipino/a/x studies and critical diaspora and migration studies, their considerations with colonialism, and how they merge with or diverge from queer of colour theories.

Building on these intersecting areas of study, this dissertation thus aims to contribute to documenting queer and trans racialized experiences and the Filipino/a/x diaspora through the narratives of queer and trans Filipino/a/xs. The objectives of this research are to:

(1) Contribute empirical research on the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs of the diaspora in the context of Montréal, Québec, Canada.

(2) Explore the interactions between LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x diaspora, social, political, and economic contexts and institutions, and how they participate in and develop local and transnational communities.

(3) Interrogate dominant research methodologies and expand the possibilities of community-based and participatory research methods.

(4) Provide practical recommendations to engage with more responsive and transformative social work practice and social policy, and grow skills and support among community groups, organizations, and movements.

1.4 Expanding PAR through queer of colour and Filipino/a/x epistemologies and ontologies

To address these questions and objectives, this study combined methods that have drawn from participatory action research (PAR) approaches through Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang 1999, 2006) and *Kuwentuhan* (Filipino/a/x talk-story) methods (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014, 2021). The methods re-tell and analyze queer and trans Filipino/a/xs individual and collective stories of identity and community organizing in the diaspora. PAR aims for social and political change by fostering the re-sharing and documenting of the experiences of groups facing exclusionary or marginalizing barriers or conditions and focusing on their meanings and lived realities (Cerecer et al., 2013; Kindon et al., 2007). PAR processes seek to address power

imbalances between researchers, academic institutions, and communities to have the priorities of the communities under study at the centre of the research agenda (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014).

Kuwentuhan, a form of cultural storytelling, recognizes cultural understandings and relations in which Filipino/a/x individuals tell stories through a collective understanding of the self (Francisco-Menchavez, 2021). The engagement with the cultural notion of *Kuwentuhan* opens epistemological and ontological questions about the dominance of individualized and Western constructs in meaning-making and research practices (Gutierrez et al., 2023; Pino, 2023). This critical storytelling approach re-explores decolonial epistemologies and ontologies and emphasizes the embodiment of non-hierarchal relations, reciprocity, cultural continuity, and connections for those often marginalized from knowledge production and dominant discourses (Gutierrez et al., 2023).

With historical roots in feminist, critical race and queer theorists, these PAR approaches challenge more mainstream research practices that can perpetuate extractive power and research relations to, instead, commit to the involvement of the research participants throughout the research process to aim for social justice and action (Cerecer et al., 2013; Fine et al., 2021; Francisco-Menchavez, 2014). Indeed, scholars call for queer of colour historical and present narratives to be documented in ways that forefront the voices and lived realities of the community itself (Brown, 2020; Ware, 2017; Wilson et al., 2016).

The PAR approaches and methods of art and cultural production used in this study have possibilities to aim for social change in both the methods and the mobilization of the findings (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014, 2018; Gutierrez et al., 2023; Lee, 2012). Research on queer of colour organizing in Canada has reflected this use of art and cultural productions with orientations toward community-engaged methods. I will aim to have a systematic approach to

documenting their narratives through these PAR qualitative methods to add to the existing queer

of colour organizing literature that weaves art, personal narratives and conversations with

participants or organizers throughout the text (Lord, 2020; Bain, 2017).

Further, cultural representations of queer and trans Filipino/a/xs coming from their

perspectives on their diversities and histories in Canada may counter dominant and

homogenizing narratives. Co-creating cultural productions around their lives can support

imagining and working toward more transformative organizing and movement-building

possibilities (Coloma et al., 2012; Diaz et al., 2018). As part of my PAR approach, both

Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan* studies use a form of cultural production to surface narratives under

or misrepresented in knowledge production and policy- or decision-making impacting the lives

of the participants and their communities.

In addition, rather than these movements being "objects of study" (p. 42), I aim to engage

with an ethics of knowledge production that interacts in a longer-term relational process with

knowledge generated by and with communities and their movements (Choudry, 2015, 2019).

While I attempt to interrogate the limitations of dominant research methods and engage with the

nexus of scholarship and activism, I will also question the limits and concerns of PAR within this

study to engage with authentic participation, social justice, and more liberatory approaches

(Appadurai, 2006; Francisco-Menchavez & Tungohan, 2020; Sandwick et al., 2018; Torre &

Ayala, 2009).

1.5 LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs and social work literature

Social work research, practices and policies in Canada demonstrate limited understanding

of and responsiveness to the realities of queer and trans racialized communities (Cox et al., 2022;

Lee & Brotman, 2013; Ryan et al., 2008). Research shows that queer and trans racialized

communities have been excluded from or negatively impacted by gentrification, social services, and governmental policies at local, regional, national, or international levels (Brochu-Ingram, 2015; Haritaworn et al., 2018). The migration and diasporic experiences of Filipino/a/xs demonstrate that they navigate social welfare, health, and settlement services and systems, often facing barriers to access and support (Alcaraz et al., 2021; Coloma & Pino, 2016). However, the specific inclusions, exclusions, and experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in local contexts, and even more broadly, queer and trans racialized communities, have not been thoroughly addressed in social work literature.

Further, frameworks of transnationalism, globalization,[10] neoliberalism, capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism, including politics of dispossession, dislocation and recognition are included in analyses of queer and trans Filipino/a/xs and critical Filipino/a/x studies in Canada, yet their specificities, distinctions and contextualization have not been thoroughly examined (Diaz et al., 2018; Tungohan, 2017). Therefore, addressing theory and practice at the intersection of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x and social work research will need to account for local and global issues of displacement and Filipino/a/xs socio-political histories in Canada and transnationally.

An important avenue for social work interventions in working with LGBTQ+ migrant and racialized communities include advocacy support to prioritize social justice and to engage directly with their lived experiences and perspectives (Lee & Brotman 2011, 2013), yet addressing these broader historical and systemic issues through advocacy is often less prioritized in social service delivery. The methods and findings of this study contribute to potential models for culturally responsive approaches and epistemologies in social work research and practice. As

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[10] I follow Lowe (2020)'s definition of how "Globalization is a contemporary term used in academic and nonacademic contexts to describe a late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century condition of economic, social, and political interdependence across cultures, societies, nations, and regions precipitated by an unprecedented expansion of capitalism on a global scale" (p. 126)

social work in Canada still grapples with responding to diverse LGBTQ+ racialized and migrant needs and experiences, including work toward decolonizing social work education, research, policy, and practice, this study may further these inquiries and practice changes (Lee & Ferrer, 2014; King et al., 2023).

1.6 Overview of dissertation chapters

There have been marginal strides and challenges to understand and document the historical contributions and lived realities of queer of colour communities in the context of LGBTQ+ and other community organizing and social movements, social work, and related policies in Canada. Therefore, this dissertation draws from queer diaspora and migration theories and critical Filipino/a/x studies to expand and critique LGBTQ+, Filipino/a/x diaspora and community organizing theorizing and practice by placing at the fore queer and trans Filipino/a/x experiences and meaning making in the context of Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Chapter 2 addresses the conceptual and theoretical orientations of the dissertation. I consider the potential growth of critical Filipino/a/x studies in Canada and this study's use of literature on Filipino/a/x diasporic subjectivities. I introduce the main theoretical frameworks used in this study from an emerging area of queer diaspora. I then turn to the intersections of critical Filipino/a/x studies and queer of colour organizing theories. Lastly, I introduce organizing and movement-building frameworks beyond rights-based discourses, implicating the roles of social work through the limits and depoliticization of non-profit organizations within movement-building. Chapter 3 historicizes and contextualizes the Filipino/a/x diaspora in Canada and LGBTQ+ organizing and movement-building by presenting the dominant discourses, and alternative narratives to these discourses. These narratives re-share studies documenting lived experiences of queer and trans racialized and Filipino/a/x communities in

these areas of study. The chapter ends with a contextualization of the current study site, including key demographics gathered at governmental and institutional levels that help provide a picture of the socio-political environment of Filipino/a/xs and LGBTQ+ peoples in Montréal and Canada overall.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology of this study. The sections include the naming of my epistemological and ontological standpoints and social position in constructing this PAR project. I address how this study adapts Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan* methods in a framework of PAR for the historical, socio-political and cultural experiences of queer and trans Filipino/a/xs in Montréal. The chapter then describes the overlapping phases of the project, integrating references from the field notes which help explain the process.

Chapters 5 through 7 address the findings of the study. Chapter 5 "On homecoming: Returns and reconnections" addresses the first research question on the relations between gender, sexuality, migration and diaspora in terms of identity and community. This chapter presents an overarching theme of the multiplicities of meanings, negotiations and navigations in continually constructing and renewing home through queer Filipino/a/x diasporic subjectivities of returns and reconnections. Chapter 6 "On returning and reconnecting to *kapwa*" focuses mainly on the second research question on community and organizing praxis and begins to address the third question on solidarity praxis. *Kapwa* in this study emerges as the centre of re-growing intimacies, relations and visibilities based in returning to decolonial, cultural, linguistic and ancestral epistemologies and ontologies. Chapter 7 "Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan*: On grassroots returns to relationalities" focuses on the feedback on the research process. Growing from grassroots groups involves different scales of change, including ongoing critical reflexivity, long-term relationship building, and re-sharing narratives of home, belonging and identity.

Chapter 8, the Discussion, shares the major findings and limitations of the study. The findings return to empirical, conceptual and theoretical frameworks, especially around postcolonial, feminist, queer diaspora, and critical Filipino/a/x studies. The findings focus on homing practices and desires, decolonial epistemologies, and relational ethics. Chapter 9, the conclusion, summarizes the main findings of the study and future study possibilities. The conclusion shows how this study makes unique contributions to theory, research, and social and community work and movement-building.

Chapter 2: Conceptual and Theoretical Orientations

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the conceptual and theoretical orientations of this dissertation

beginning with literature that helps to frame Filipino/a/x diaspora in Canada. The chapter then

provides the approach of viewing the concept of "queer" as an analytic, and then how queerness

expands on and intersects with diaspora and migration studies. The primary theoretical

frameworks used in this study within the emerging area of queer diaspora are reviewed,

including evolving frameworks within queer of colour critique. I then consider how critical

Filipino/a/x studies and queer of colour organizing theories merge in this dissertation, including

the gaps that this study addresses. The chapter ends with the orientation of moving beyond state-

sanctioned rights in activism, organizing and movement-building.

2.2 Conceptualizing the Filipino/a/x diaspora in Canada

This research study engages with queer diaspora and migration studies alongside a more

recently growing area of critical Filipino/a/x studies largely based in the U.S. and emerging in

Canada. Manalansan and Espiritu (2016) describe how their anthology addresses this growing

area of study, which this study seeks to add to in the Canadian context:

> the papers in this volume struggle to engage and assess the legacies of imperial power
> and its ideas, and redirect the trajectories of American empire by creating a set of critical
> optics to frame ongoing intellectual engagements with the exigencies of colonialism and
> postcolonialism, as well as the contemporary challenges of transnationalism,
> globalization, and diaspora. (p. 2)

These intellectual engagements thus invoke scholars to reconsider how ideas have been formed

and acted on through historical and critical approaches, in other words, engaging with

epistemological and ontological inquiries. I consider what Aguila (2015) calls the "continuing

past" that occurs in Filipino/a/x diaspora identity-making that is not altogether distinct from

homeland Filipino/a/xs: "Tracing the evolution of Filipinoness, I argue that colonialism still influences our identity-making efforts. Resistance to essentialist (often stereotypical) conceptions of cultural identities remain tied to the old World Order" (p. 58). Analyzing and visibilizing Filipino/a/x identity and community today thus requires an understanding of the influences of this "old World Oder" and how it is re-made in postcolonial and diasporic contexts, addressed in more detail in Chapter three, section 3.2.

Diaspora is a contested term and evolving concept across time, place and space with new questions arising amid wider and increasing dispersals of Filipino/a/xs in the context of globalization (Aguilar Jr., 2015). As Aguilar Jr. (2015) notes, scholars have theoretical and methodological concerns about who is defining diaspora, who may lay claim to this group and "What 'unique characteristics' do diaspora possess?" (p. 444). Diasporan concepts have been drawn on by groups to further representations from their perspectives that have otherwise been mis-conceptualized or not recognized in dominant scholarship on diaspora (Aguilar Jr. 2015). However, one of the contradictions in seeking a broad-based identity is that the approach of reifying a "diasporan identity" may risk homogenizing or entrenching stereotypical framings (Aguila, 2015; Coloma et al., 2012).

Aguilar Jr. (2015) suggests that the Filipino/a/x diaspora can be analyzed through five non-static and dynamic dimensions to highlight the diversities and historical basis of Filipino/a/x experiences, not necessarily based solely on identity markers, but based on *collectivity*. I follow some of the tenets of analysis of Aguilar Jr.'s (2015) work on conceptualizing Filipino/a/x diaspora, who states that their study is primarily concerned "with the diasporic collectivity, constructed and imagined" (p. 444). Aguilar Jr. used a five-point framework to compare the dominant discursive fields in the Philippines and the U.S. that have largely shaped the landscape

of Filipino/a/x diaspora research while encouraging a decentering of a binary US/Philippines

understanding of Filipino/a/x diaspora:

> a) population dispersal from an original homeland, real or imagined;
> b) a process of diasporization (related to displacement, and forced or coerced separation from the homeland);
> c) ongoing relationship with the homeland, nurtured by collective memory or mythology;
> d) idealization of return to the homeland
> e) self-awareness or collective consciousness that is intergenerational and interrelated to coethnics and compatriots within the diaspora. (p. 440)

Different scholars of the Filipino/a/x diaspora agree that a unified identity cannot capture the

Filipino/a/x diaspora (Aguila, 2015; Aguilar, Jr., 2015). Aguila (2015) also highlights notions of

collectivity, historical and socio-political factors, as well as the diversity in intergenerational

experiences and migratory statuses. One main contribution to the diasporan experience is the

different social and economic statuses held by individuals and impacting generations, often tied

to state-led migrant trajectories and access to citizenship status (Aguila, 2015).

Further, Aguila (2015) draws from *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino psychology)

developed by Dr. Virgilio Enriquez to conceptualize Filipino/a/x diaspora. In the 1970s, Dr.

Enriquez developed *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, also known as liberation psychology, to challenge

Western-based knowledge that dominated the Philippines' education systems through American

imperialism. Dr. Enriquez and colleagues promoted revisiting Indigenous wisdom in forming

Filipino/a/x epistemologies and ontologies. Aguila (2015) points to *kapwa* re-visited by Enriquez

(1997) as an ongoing defining element of Filipino/a/x diaspora identity in which the self is

viewed as a collective and merged with others. Aguila (2015) additionally focused on the

emergence of digital technology as a growing feature of Filipino/a/x diasporic identities which

may "serve as bridges between material and virtual existence – embodying and symbolizing the

location-dislocation of diasporic communities" (p. 80).

These studies on Filipino/a/x diaspora illustrate multilayered and evolving historical, cultural, social, political, economic, geographic and transnational dimensions shaping diverse Filipino/a/x diasporan subject formations, particularly in an era of technological advancements and globalization. These understandings also reflect critical Filipino/a/x literature which suggests that the global political economy and migration out of the Philippines is entrenched in histories of imperial and neoliberal labour migration systems related to conditions of impoverishment in the Philippines (Rodriguez, 2010). In Canada, visibilizing and conceptualizing the Filipino/a/x diaspora accounts for these histories of Filipino/a/x migration through labour export, socio-political and socio-cultural factors, as well as how communities themselves challenge and redefine misrepresentations in the Canadian nation and state (Coloma et al., 2012).

McElhinny and colleagues draw from the concept of "spectres of (in)visibility" to highlight that visibilizing (and visualizing) the experiences of Filipino/a/xs should have a critical orientation toward how visibility can further entrench and make hypervisible stereotypes of Filipino/a/xs, thus contributing to the "misrecognition and alienation of the diverse experiences and histories of Filipina/os in Canada" (Coloma et al., 2012, p. 5). These representations can further homogenize their difference in relation to dominant groups in Canada, particularly to those identified as white.

These hypervisible imageries and associated discourses become legible in social and political processes, entrenched in the public imagination, and perpetuated through the national imaginary of the *Other* in the construction of the Canadian nation, such as: "victimized nanny, selfless nurse, problematic gangster youth" (Coloma et al., 2012, p. 5). The authors suggest that these images influence the meaning and identity-making of Filipino/a/xs in Canada, requiring disruption and redefining: "'The images haunt' processes, representations, and agentive

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experiences of being and becoming Filipina/o Canadians, and how we can disrupt and intervene in the prevailing themes of the spectral figures that have come to define the lives of Filipina/os in Canada" (Coloma et al., 2012, p. 5).

Coloma and colleagues (2012) offer a few approaches to resist cementing a normalized and homogeneous Filipino/a identity in the national imaginary. These strategies include refusing the naturalization of an imagined Filipino/a figure by emphasizing the social construction of this identity, framing politics around issues rather than identities to suggest alliance-building, and to analyze through transnational and postcolonial politics and theories. Of particular importance to the sanitization of Filipino/a/x identity toward the representation as homogenized and submissive subjects are the colonial and imperial histories that have and continue to influence relations to sexuality, gender, diaspora and migration at identity, community, and structural levels (Diaz et al., 2018).

In line with questioning the homogenization of visibilities, this study explicitly aims to challenge misrecognition, stereotypes, and erasure of the queer and trans Filipino/a/x diaspora, amid dominant framings and exclusion in the documentation of LGBTQ+ organizing and diasporic lived experiences in Canada. This study will thus seek to make legible and surface the diversities and the historical and socio-political bases of Filipino/a/x diasporic lives centred on queer and trans experiences, meanings, and social actions. However, this study is not only about visibilizing the experiences of queer and trans Filipino/a/xs of the diaspora. I also seek to unveil practices and imaginings that resist state-sanctioned and liberal frameworks of hierarchical and exclusionary power arrangements around identity, belonging and relations, further linked to global imperial projects.

2.3 Queer as an analytic

The growing body of literature on queerness and queer of colour experiences speaks to its origins as a fluid, evolving analytical frame and term that has expanded to look at sexuality as intersecting with race, gender, class, nations, states, and diaspora (Gentile et al., 2017; Somerville, 2020). Queer as an analysis recognizes and critiques the production of normative arrangements and contexts in which heterosexual or cisgender experiences are privileged, as well as notions of stable, fixed, or naturalized identity categories. Queer as an analytical tool engages with resistance to and challenging of binary or normative relations, processes, practices, and institutions that have excluded and marginalized LGBTQ+ forms of family, reproduction, intimacies, marriage, relationships, divisions of labour and identity (Cohen, 1997; Lee, 2018; Luibhéid, 2005; Manalansan, 2006).

As Somerville (2020) describes, "To 'queer' becomes a way to denaturalize categories such as 'lesbian' and 'gay' (not to mention 'straight' and 'heterosexual'), revealing them as socially and historically constructed identities that have often worked to establish and police the line between the 'normal' and the 'abnormal'" (Somerville, 2020, p. 198). Rather than a fixation on identity politics, queer as an analysis locates the processes of "sexual subject formation" (Somerville, 2020, p. 200) and the historical and cultural contexts in which normative and non-normative sexualities are produced and disciplined. As Enke (2012) aptly puts it: "Gender, and also sex, are made through complex social and technical manipulations that naturalize some while abjecting others" (p. 1).

Terms such as heteronormativity seek to locate the normative and non-normative arrangements in discourses, institutions and social and cultural contexts that produce the privileging of heterosexuality while recognizing that heterosexuality also involves diverse sexual

and gendered arrangements with differential power and privileges (Cohen, 1997; Somerville, 2020). Heteronormativity is described as "the practices and institutions that legitimize and privilege heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and 'natural within society'" (Cohen, 1997, p. 440). Heterocisnormativity happens through the interconnection of cisnormativity and heterosexuality (Lee, 2019). Cisnormativity refers to social institutions and practices that privilege and perpetuate the gender binary as a societal norm while subjugating and erasing the experiences of trans people (Bauer et al., 2009; Serano, 2007).

Queerness also recognizes the agentive experiences of individuals in making meaning of self-identifications or being attributed identifications, across time, space, and context. Queerness calls attention to the limits, possibilities, and legibility of these identifications within contexts of power, statehood and social and institutional pressures and norms. Luibhéid and Chávez (2020) describe the complexities and perhaps un-capturability of queerness within one identifiable term, timeframe, or spatial recognition, as the term transforms, recognizes diversity and non-universality, and is not essentialized. Rather, the term queer should be historicized and involve an analysis of "geographies of power" (Luibhéid & Chávez, 2020, p. 8). These arrangements produce differential treatment, access and recognizability among regimes of power, knowledge, and control.

The term has taken on different meanings in social and political movements, as well as academic discourses since the rise of global gay liberation movements in the 1970s (Somerville, 2020). The use of the term queer as an orientation and strategy in the 1980s in political movements sought to redress and combat exclusionary and oppressive discourses and histories from non-LGBTQ+ peoples and from LGBTQ+ movements which aimed for assimilation into dominant and liberal modes of inclusion (Somerville, 2020). Although same-sex marriage was an

ongoing rights-based struggle among activists aiming for legal recognition, some queer activists questioned and contested whether marriage and nuclear family arrangements and institutions should have material and social privileges attached to this construction in the first place (Duggan, 2002, 2003). In this dissertation, using queer as an organizing and political analytic engages with these tensions of difference, recognition, and exclusion, yet will position in line with theorists and activists advocating for a more liberatory potential beyond state-sanctioned frameworks of inclusion, assimilation, and accommodation.

2.4 Queering diaspora

Critical queer, trans, feminist and diaspora scholars have contributed to queer and trans diaspora and migration scholarship that merges analyses of queerness, sexuality, migration and diaspora and challenges how racialization, patriarchy and heterocisnormativity become entrenched in narratives, policies, and systems (Luibhéid 2008; Luibhéid & Chávez, 2020; Manalansan, 2006; White, 2013). Queer diaspora and migration studies have evolved to serve as a powerful analytic tool to interrogate processes and practices that produce discrimination and marginalization in relation to different constructions of identity, power relations and historized contexts around sexuality, citizenship status, race, gender, geography, class, and abilities (Luibhéid & Chávez, 2020). Throughout the dissertation, I will refer to queer diaspora and migration theories to capture this evolving and emerging area of scholarship, which includes evolutions in queer theory and queer of colour critique.

For this dissertation, I focus on the literature in queer diaspora and migration scholarship that engages with transnational, feminist and postcolonial theories, in particular how these theories interrogate dominant notions of national belonging, home, identity and queerness. Critical Filipino/a/x studies and theorists, especially in the diaspora, have demonstrated the

importance of drawing from these frameworks to understand and expand on queer and trans

diasporic Filipino/a/x lives and futures toward a more transformative and liberatory approach

(Diaz et al., 2018; Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016; Velasco, 2020).

2.4.1 Resituating home: Transnationalism, feminism, postcolonialism and settler colonialism

Concerning the development of queer diaspora critique, this area of study engages with

notions of temporal, spatial, transnational, fluid, and embodied subjectivities connected to

displacement and movement in which home is constantly being reclaimed and reconstituted.

Fortier (2002) questions notions of home and belonging drawing from queer diaspora critique,

describing how diaspora "constitutes a rich heuristic device to think about questions of home,

belonging, continuity and community in the context of dispersal and transnational networks and

connection" (p. 406). Queer diaspora critique problematizes notions of home and identity that are

bounded to a particular territory in the movements of migration for LGBTQ+ peoples. The

theories engage with multiple desires, affect, intimacies, locations, lived experiences and

contexts in which queer subjects navigate, imagine, remember, and re-establish connections to

belonging, culture/ subculture and identity (Fortier, 2002; Gopinath, 2005, 2020).

Transnationalism stems from postcolonial feminist, Third World feminist and women of

colour theorists whose critiques expand beyond nationalistic and state identifications and border-

making. Transnationalism became central to queer diasporic critique in contexts of globalization

and displacement (Manalansan, 2003). This analysis brings into question notions of identity,

home, belonging and movement that have been largely de-contextualized through dominant

notions of linear and static movement toward a home, related to a particular nation, and a

presumable heterosexual and domesticized family or origin (Ahmed, 2020; Fortier, 2002, 2020;

Gopinath, 2005, 2020; White, 2013).

I take up this scholarship that resituates home through a queer diasporic optic and re-considers the notion of homing desires and practices (Ahmed, 2020; Hsu, 2022). Ahmed and colleagues (2020) illustrate that both micro processes and macro processes are important sites of analysis in re-considering homing processes, as the ground-breaking work of Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) and others theorizing around border zones and *mestizo* identities have shown that:

> The greatest movements often occur within the self, within the home or within the family, while the phantasm of limitless mobility often rests on the power of border controls and policing of who and who does not belong… processes of homing and migration take shape through affective and bodily experience in broader social processes and institutions where unequal differences of race, class, gender and sexuality, among many other relevant categories, are generated. (p. 5)

Following Ahmed and colleagues (2020), a primary site of analysis among homing desires, processes and practices in contexts of migration, displacement and power regimes are the changes that occur *within the body*. The relations and remaking of the meaning of relations and structures that surround these affective and bodily experiences are also important sites of resituating home. I also draw from Stoler's (2006) notion of intimacies of empire as a critical domain of linking these bodily and relational movements, changes and desires to broader historical and contemporary contexts of colonialism, postcolonialism and modernity[11], who states how:

> Colonial authority depended on shaping appropriate and reasoned affect (where one's sympathies should lie), severing some intimate bonds and establishing others (which offspring would be acknowledged as one's own), establishing what constituted moral sentiments (family honor or patriotic duty); in short, colonial authority rested on educating the proper distribution of sentiments and desires." (p. 2)

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[11] Sze and Wayee Chau (2020) describe some of the key features of modernity in relation to colonialism and global capitalism: "The nature of nature under Western modernity was (and remains) marked by violent and racializing processes of European colonialism and global capitalism, just as contestation over the nature of nature is central to efforts to dismantle that legacy today. In Europe, Enlightenment uses of the term "nature" were built on an older system of hierarchical classification known as the Great Chain of Being… The chain codified a set of binaries between nature and culture. Nature was associated with the body, the feminine, the nonwhite, and the primitive. Culture was associated with the mind, the masculine, the white, and the civilized" (p. 178)

Gopinath (2005) suggests how within these historical colonial and postcolonial frames and power regimes shaping what is considered normative and non-normative in relation to nationality and belonging, queer diasporan subjects are rendered as "impossible subjects." As this study engages with photography and cultural production through a queer diasporan optic, I draw from Gopinath's (2018) re-visitation of the possibilities of "queer diaspora aesthetic practices" as an alternative and counter to the influences of colonial modernity within and surrounding the body:

> Imperial, settler colonial, and racial regimes of power work through spatial practices that order bodies and landscapes in precise ways; these regimes of power also instantiate regimes of vision that determine what we see, how we see, and how we are seen… The legitimacy and authority to rule and regulate particular populations has been inextricably linked to the concomitant power to visually survey these populations and the landscapes they inhabit. The targets of this surveilling gaze are consigned simultaneously to both hypervisibility and invisibility. An abiding legacy of colonial modernity is its institution of a way of seeing, and hence knowing, that obscures the interrelation of imperial, racial and settler colonial projects as they produce racial, gendered, and sexual subjectivities… A careful tending to (and attention to) the aesthetic—and to queer visual aesthetic practices in particular—enables and demands that connections be made between fields of thought, geographic areas, and temporalities that would otherwise not be grasped readily through standard disciplinary approaches. (p. 7)

Gopinath's (2018) notion of queer aesthetic practices to redress the making of impossible subjects is thus also a questioning of the logics that inform how we know what we know, what we see as truth and how we act on these knowledges – questions of epistemological and ontological orientations. The aesthetic practices of queer diaspora taken together with intimacies of empire within homing processes can serve as analytics that "open the way to a different apprehension of time and space, history and memory, that counters those instantiated by colonial modernity and its legacies" (Gopinath, 2018, p. 12). Gopinath (2005) considers how the visual and sensorial fields are a portal to alternative ways of understanding and reconstructing the past. This "portal" is accessed in this study through the methods of cultural production and the

intimate collective space of meaning-making as a group in exploring memories and representations of identity, community, migration and home.

Further, this study draws from the work of Hsu (2022) who considers the role of constellating stories among trans and queer Asian and Pacific Islander diasporic groups. These narrations serve as possibilities to re-make and re-imagine notions of home and belonging centred on relationalities. As the participants in this study make meaning across their stories through Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan*, the process and their stories may identify these sites of homing toward enacting more transformative systems of care, support and belonging. Homing is not straightforward, but a ground-up practice amid contradiction and collaboration of re-imagination and renewed forms of relating:

> For diasporic subjects without a physical place of return, homing can be both movement toward and creation of such shelter—a narrative mapping that establishes the grounds for communities to come together. Through homing, QTAPI [queer and trans Asian and Pacific Islanders] locate and create alternative intimacies and belongings in defiance of our structured isolation, composing foundations for ground-up, relationship-driven collaboration. As homes transform with each departure and arrival, homing enables storytellers to trace and affect the evolution of the spaces and relations that constitute family/home. Refusing any static homeland, homing instead explores locations, communities, and nations as combinatory formations (re)made through the narratives we tell… constellation names a knowledge system based in relationality. (Hsu, 2022, p. 10)

Postcolonialism has also been critiqued for whether it is a useful analytic in the context of the U.S. and Canada as the framework may displace the need to continually interrogate colonial processes, practices and relations that remain intact in different forms in U.S. and Canadian contexts (Driskill, 2010). Nationhood and sovereignty are important for the self-determination, resistance, and cultures of Indigenous communities in the U.S. and Canada (Lee-Oliver et al., 2020; Driskill, 2010, 2016). As Ahmed and colleagues (2020) take up in elaborations on questions of migration, home and belonging: "How can movement or staying put be a form of privilege that 'extends' the reach of some bodies, for example when the movement of some takes

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place through 'fixing the bodies of others' ([as cited in] Ahmed 2000), or when staying put takes place through displacing others?" (p. 5). Being recognized and striving for belonging within a national community, state, or identity formation in movements and migrations may contribute to the categorization, essentialization, dispossession or exclusion of others.

Understanding queerness and analyzing queer of colour organizing contends with the historical context of colonialism and imperialism which employs gender and sexuality as forms of domination in nation-building in Canada and at a global scale, further discussed in the next section. Manuel (2017) describes how colonialism "has three components: dispossession, dependence and oppression" (p.19). Dispossession refers to the theft of lands of Indigenous peoples, dependence involves mechanisms of control over all domains of life to prevent the re-capture of lands and abilities to be independent, and oppression is ongoing processes and practices of subjugation to the dominant groups, settlers, and colonizers (Manuel, 2017). These militaristic and state-sanctioned social and institutional mechanisms of power, control and subjugation are considered projects of empire-building and occur at a global scale (Coloma, 2017). Wolfe's (2006) seminal text distinguishes settler colonialism by specifying that the logic includes the elimination of Indigenous peoples as central to Western modernity with different manifestations depending on the context, including whether this elimination includes genocide and the production of racial regimes. Settler colonialism includes the ongoing expansion of new frontiers and governmental processes to reify settler colonial rule, such as the deployment of racialized labour exploitation and enforcement of expulsion and exclusion through immigration and border regimes (Wolfe, 2006).

Lee (2018) proposes that any organizing that engages with the lives of queer and trans racialized peoples to resist racism in Canada can merge both anti-racist and anti-colonial politics.

These politics would engage thoroughly with how the empire-building of British and French settlers that established the superiority and dominance of white and Western personhood was supported by heterocisnormativity embedded in the processes (Lee, 2018; Morgensen, 2010, 2012).

Arrivals of European settlers to the territories now known as Canada, already protected by Indigenous peoples, sought to suppress, reorganize, and regulate diverse Indigenous ways of knowing and living through gender, sexuality, marriage, family, and relations (Lee, 2018; Luibhéid, 2005; Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004). Morgensen (2010) has even referred to the production of "settler sexuality" through colonization as "a white national heteronormativity that regulates Indigenous sexuality and gender by supplanting them with the sexual modernity of settler subjects" (p. 106) as a part of this modernization and supposed progress of superior governance and personhood.

Articulations of queer of colour realities and theories have more recently re-centred the need to link settler colonialism to queerness to continuously inform settler colonial and queer studies, as well as activism and organizing praxis (Lee, 2019; Lee-Oliver et al., 2020; Luibhéid, 2005; Manalansan, 2006; Morgensen, 2010, 2011, 2012). This area of study that connects settler colonialism to power structures of gender and sexuality seeks to "displace the epistemic frame of settlers and enhance theory of the relationality of indigenous and settler subjects in colonial situations" (Morgensen, 2012, p. 3). Morgensen (2010) suggests modern sexuality became methods of regulation and control to further produce settler colonialism and settler subjects through naturalization and conquest. These logics perpetuate hierarchical arrangements of normative and non-normative bodies and subjectivities, and the production of life and death through governmentality and subjugation. Merging these areas of studies involves analyzing how

racialized queer and trans lives are regulated by distinct nation-state formations and afforded (or

restricted) life-giving mechanisms to re-produce settler colonialism. These inquiries can assist

with orienting queer studies and queer formations toward denaturalization of settler processes.

2.4.2 Homonormativity, homonationalism and homotransnationalism

Racialization, sexualization and processes of normalization and power through state and

empire-building projects are engaged with prominent theories in queer of colour organizing of

homonormativity (Duggan, 2002) and homonationalism (Puar, 2007). A less studied concept in

queer of colour organizing, which I seek to engage with here, is what Bachetta and Haritaworn

(2011) consider homotransnationalism. Homotransnationalism analyzes the transnational

circulation of a white, neoliberal homonormative subject-citizen, and how governmentality and

state-sanctioned force demobilize, discipline and contain the "threat" of racialized and sexualized

others to advance global imperial projects.

Duggan (2002) describes that a neoliberal privatized logic relies on the heteronormative

family form and low-wage labour, which are promoted as desirable and validated by the state,

constructing a worthy and respectable citizen. Neoliberal sexual politics involves a new

homonormativity of "…a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions

and institutions but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilized

gay constituency and a privatized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption"

(Duggan, 2002, p. 179). Intimate, affective, economic, and public life are reorganized and

regulated around state recognition, accommodation, and consumerism, with political action

speaking toward an imagined depoliticized and domesticized gay public. Thus, Duggan's

theorizing sets the stage for understanding that the neoliberal order is maintained with the help of

a state-sanctioned fixed and assimilated white homosexual national minority. These neoliberal sexual politics have influenced LGBTQ+ social movements (see Chapter three, section 3.3).

Homonationalism builds from these notions of homonormativity in the context of the war on terror in the post-9/11 context. The state recognizes and sanctions a certain subject as appropriate for the imagination of the nation and hypervisibilizes racialized and sexualized "Others" in the interests of global empire-building (Puar, 2007). In this framework, the form of homosexuality that is sanctioned works in concert with whiteness as the dominant form of global superiority that keeps the empire-building project of the U.S. intact, thus disciplining and controlling populations deemed "Others" or threats to national security through technologies of governance. Queer identifications to the nation-state become complicit in rendering certain white, homosexual bodies as naturalized, normative, and protected from state terror, further demobilizing them from more transformative politics. Racialized bodies are read as sexualized and terroristic threats worthy of imposed state violence and containment (Morgensen, 2010).

In the Canadian context, a seminal text of Thobani (2007) draws from homonormativity to examine how the state, as in the organized political government body in Canada, aims to "fix" and "stabilize" (p. 23) subjects in relation to "Others" (p. 4). Thobani's main concept of exaltation refers to the continuous establishment of a human being representing the worthy national subject that becomes a member of a particular kind of community, thus perpetuating a constant "Othering" of those deemed less worthy to the nation and strangers to the community. Thobani described how historically the "subject-as-citizen" (p. 7) constitutes the main figure in building the Canadian nation in which human beings are categorized into Canadians, Indigenous peoples, and immigrants. These subjects are hierarchically ranked through their respective legal and socio-cultural status in the Canadian state with differential access and naturalization of their

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citizenhood. These critiques are reflected in literature around queer of colour organizing that connect resistance and notions of belonging to state-sanctioned white, Western, hetero-cis-normative constructions of who and what is considered respectable to be accepted as a human worthy of existence, protections, safety, space, and inclusion in the Canadian nation (Haritaworn et al., 2018; Lee, 2018; Valverde, 2016).

Overall, rather than perpetuating a view of queer identity that assimilates into dominant nation-state formations and normative power regimes across borders, queer diaspora scholarship highlights transnational understandings of queerness, home and belonging that are remodelled and transformed by those in different cultural, social, and historical contexts. These theories turn to a questioning of the logics that shape exclusionary modes of relating and constructing a normative subject-citizen in contexts of displacements, dispossession, and dislocations.

2.5 Critical Filipino/a/x studies and queer of colour organizing theories

In the past few decades, the literature in Canada that focuses on diaspora organizing in the Filipino/a/x community has grown, analyzing factors of migration, gender, race, class, sexuality, historical, transnational, and geopolitical contexts (Aguila et al., 2018; Coloma et al., 2012; Coloma, 2017; Diaz et al. 2018; Tungohan, 2012, 2013, 2017). Discussed more thoroughly in Chapter three, conditions of labour migration impact generational, familial, and transnational experiences between and within the different countries involved in a migratory experience (Francisco-Menchavez, 2018, 2020; Pratt & Philippine Women Centre of B.C., 2012). This research has largely concentrated on the production and impacts of family separation through these immigration regimes, such as transnational caretaking, and transnational family influences on migration decisions (Francisco-Menchavez, 2018, 2020; Pratt & Philippine Women Centre of B.C., 2012). Analyses from the lives of LGBTQ+ peoples, experiences across generations, and

other forms of Filipino/a/x diaspora organizing in Canada are less studied. While some Filipino/a/x community organizing research focuses on regions, such as the Prairie provinces (Bonifacio, 2013), British Colombia (Pratt & Migrante B.C., 2018; Pratt & Philippine Women Centre of B.C., 2012) and Alberta (Alcaraz et al., 2022), the region of Québec remains understudied.

Filipino/a/x community organizing literature often recognizes the systemic and socio-political conditions in which the Philippines economy depends on labour migration out of the country, treating citizens as commodities, and linked to histories of imperialism and ongoing neoliberal policies (Rodriguez, 2010). Tungohan (2012) argues that racial hierarchies and gender stereotypes contributed to the recruitment and shift in the make-up of domestic workers in the 1980s in Canada to primarily Filipina migrant women under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) (see section 3.2 for more discussion of this program) through the transformation of federal immigration policies. These stereotypes included viewing Filipina women as submissive and less active in challenging existing political orders. However, these stereotypes are easily countered as Tungohan's research shows that they became involved in directly influencing policies through domestic worker organizing. Their organizing challenges dominant narratives that focus on these workers as victims or as experiencing a simple trajectory of oppression, rather, they participate politically as active agents within labour migration, workplace, and immigration systems (Bonifacio, 2013; Pratt & Migrante B.C., 2018). Even as these narratives are surfacing, their organizing narratives and experiences remain understudied in the Canadian migration and Filipino/a/x studies context (Coloma et al., 2012).

Tungohan (2013) engages with an analysis of labour migration between the Philippines to Canada through a gendered and feminist lens in which "[m]igrant-receiving countries facing

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labour shortages in female-dominated industries such as manufacturing, nursing and care work recruit women who are facing unemployment in migrant-sending countries" (p. 40). The chain of care assumes that there is a linear path of affect and bodies that are displaced from their biological families and their children in poorer countries to then take on the domestic, familial, and affective labour which helps advance First World women's liberation. In turn, this drains the poor country of this maternal care, love, and wives. These labour export and immigration regimes thus manage gender and sexuality in the national and international political economy through the recruitment and retention of domestic workers (Francisco-Menchavez, 2018).

Manalansan (2008) contributes an additional queer and trans perspective to the feminization of labour migration by interrogating the dominant global care chain paradigm enclosing the experiences of domestic workers. Manalansan states how this chain of care paradigm is conceptualized as a gendered process based on "the deployment of normative conceptions of care, love and other emotions" (p. 1). Through drawing from cultural, film and theoretical productions of queer and trans Filipino/a/x lives, Manalansan compels scholars to question and expand this global paradigm based on the realities of queer and trans peoples whose lives and decisions demonstrate "a series of conflicting and diverse bonds between labor, emotions and corporeality that do not line up neatly in terms of gender binaries and normative family arrangements" (p. 5). This line of questioning through queer and trans analyses and lives helps deconstruct the normative arrangements underpinning labour migration discourse in Filipino/a/x migration literature, as well as broader migration discourses that are limited in incorporating sexualized analyses alongside race, gender, and class.

Similar to queer of colour organizing theoretical frames, this work draws from analyses that view the organizing of domestic workers as beyond liberal inclusion and accommodation in

existing rights and state-sanctioned discourses. Both state imperatives and discourses of maintaining worthy and desirable citizens to global neoliberalism and capitalism are intertwined and reinforce the labour migration of Filipino/a/xs out of the Philippines (Parreñas, 2001; Rodriguez, 2010).

A recent text highlights the gaps in Canadian literature on Filipino/a/x migration and diaspora that employs queer and trans analyses and focuses on their lived experiences that can help inform social, material, and political change and justice (Diaz et al., 2018). These theoretical positionings strike many similarities to broader queer of colour organizing. Diaz introduces the theoretical engagements and practice of the book stating that it "de-territorializes queer of colour critique from its normative geographic and topographic locations. It moves beyond the United States to map the confluences of sexuality, gender, nationhood, and race" (p. xviii). The collection of works of artists, scholars, activists, and organizers in this text highlights the ongoing work being done to challenge and resist the historical and current representations of "Canadian multiculturalism's myopic disciplining of difference, inclusion, and tolerance" (Diaz et al., 2018, p. xvii). These theoretical currents invoke questions that interrogate liberal inclusion into nation-building historically and presently to perpetuate inclusion, exclusion and rights discourses that do not hold the complexities of queer and trans Filipino/a/x lives and broader systemic and global contexts. Settler colonialism, Two-spirit and queer and trans Indigenous studies in relation to queer and trans analyses in the Filipino/a/x Canadian migration context is not thoroughly addressed (Diaz et al., 2018).

Queer and trans analyses can help deconstruct the normative arrangements underpinning labour migration discourse in Filipino/a/x migration literature (Manalansan, 2008), as well as broader migration discourses that are limited in incorporating sexualized analyses. For example,

Velasco (2020) focuses on the Filipina queer diaspora in the U.S. drawing from queer diaspora analyses to address a gap in the literature on "queer engagements with nationalism as a form of anticapitalist and anti-imperialist resistance" (p. 7). Filipina American representations of the Philippines nation have a role in both perpetuating and questioning heteronormative and masculine characteristics associated with the nation (Velasco, 2020). Velasco (2020) suggests that the Filipina diaspora and nationalisms can include a feminist and queer imagination. Velasco forefronts the forms of U.S. imperialism and neocolonialism in a structure of capitalist globalization, using a historical perspective of the U.S. empire being further built through the gendered and sexualized labour of Filipina/os. Manalansan (2008) and Velasco (2020), while focusing on the U.S., call for deeper and more complex engagements between transnational feminist and queer diaspora critiques of global labour migration, diaspora, nation(s), empire-building and politics of liberation. This centering of queer and trans realities can help expand the implications for organizing and social movement praxis surrounding Filipino/a/xs with transnational diasporic experiences amid globalization, neoliberalism and settler colonialism.

2.6 Queer and trans activism, organizing and movements beyond state-sanctioned rights

This dissertation follows recent works addressing activism, organizing and movement-building engaging with critical queer diaspora and migration studies that move beyond liberal state-sanctioned rights,[12] reform, and nation-building (Gentile et al., 2017; Luibhéid & Chávez, 2020). Recent literature documents clearly how under themes of activism and resistance outside

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[12] See Parikh's (2020) explanation of the traditions, limits and critiques of liberal state-sanctioned rights. The author explores how through having both legal and extra-legal meanings and implications in modern society, the idealized "rights-bearing subject" is one constructed and not afforded to all:

"…the liberal vision of society and government crucially depends on a laboring body, animated by reason and operating within a market economy, for its conception of the human person… Subjects who do not meet the criteria of the self- possessed individual because they are considered incapable of self-sustaining bodily labor or independent rational thought and consciousness occupy diminished forms of citizenship or are excluded from it altogether" (p. 206).

or in critique of a solely state and rights-based focus within queer diaspora and migration

scholarship, there is emerging research on topics more relevant for concrete realities relating to

racialization, sexuality, migration and displacement (Gentile et al., 2017; Luibhéid & Chávez,

2020). Since the 1960s, the gains through organizing around legislative changes in LGBTQ+

movements strengthened protections for some but revealed exclusions and gaps in the

implications and implementation of these changes for many who were and are racialized,

(im)migrants, face precarious citizenship status, are sex workers, transgender or do not fit into

this state-sanctioned map of rights and protections that offer reforms and concessions (Gentile et

al., 2017; Wright, 2017). Multiple movements of feminist, women's rights, anti-racist, anti-

colonial, anti-war, gay and lesbian liberation, and union organizing and labour rights occurred

simultaneously with both merging and diverging agendas and practices over time (Haritaworn et

al., 2018). In LGBTQ+ organizing specifically, there was eventually a centering of a dominant

narrative and prioritization that aligned with neoliberal and state accommodation tactics

(Haritaworn et al., 2018; Kinsman, 2017).

To aim to contribute to praxis that "leaves no one behind" (Haritworn et al., 2018, p. 21),

this dissertation focuses on community organizing and social movement praxis that represent a

transformational politics beyond recognition by the state and identities that re-entrench

essentialized, normative, and naturalized categories. While not dispensing of the importance of

identity-based activism in understanding and undoing hierarchies of power and regulatory

mechanisms of control and domination (Irving & Raj, 2014; Tremblay, 2015), these activists,

organizing and movement approaches will aim to ensure identity-based practices of social

change have a "social and historical basis" (Gentile, 2017, p. 12). Further, as these politics seek

to denaturalize these categories and power arrangements, decolonial praxis would re-imagine and

deconstruct organizing and movement-building that reinforce settler colonial and colonial logics and practices (Gentile et al., 2017; Lee, 2018; Walia, 2014).

Two-Sprit and Indigenous organizing have already revealed the gendered and sexualized processes of colonization as well as clear resistance to such structures, stating that deconstructing heteropatriarchy as a colonial process is central to decolonization for all (Driskill, 2010; Morgensen, 2012). A more liberatory and decolonial politics denaturalizes "gender, sexuality, race and nation" in distinct settler colonial regimes to understand how domination structures social life and to reimagine, recall and critically and creatively engage with knowledge, power, and embodied practice (Morgensen, 2012).

Decolonization has been considered "queer" in theory and practice in how this ongoing multifaceted process aims to dismantle and re-construct how society is understood and the social and institutional relations that perpetuate power hierarchies (Lee-Oliver et al., 2020, p. 29). Decolonial praxis entails diverse engagements with nationhood, sovereignty, and borders, and is not generalizable across different contexts and communities (Driskill, 2010).

Authors have stated that for Indigenous peoples, rights to land, nationhood, sovereignty, reclaiming culture and resistance to dispossession are important areas of decolonial praxis, while at the same time dismantling national formations and border regimes are prominent in migrant justice social movements (Coulthard, 2014; Lee-Oliver et al., 2020). Decolonization may involve non-Indigenous queers studying and re-dressing these colonial histories and normative and naturalized power arrangements at various scales by the direction of and in relationality with Indigenous peoples, such as forming coalitions (Gentile et al., 2017; Morgensen, 2010). These analyses may study and practice how queer formations reinforce, de-construct or remain in contradiction with producing settler colonialism, which otherwise may continue to entrench more

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hidden nationalistic and normative desires for "Native roots and settler citizenship" (Morgensen, 2010, p. 124). Coulthard (2014) describes that:

> Any strategy geared toward authentic decolonization must directly confront more than mere economic relations; it has to account for the multifarious ways in which capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy, and the totalizing character of state power interact with one another to form the constellation of power relations that sustain colonial patterns of behaviour, structures, and relationships… shifting our attention to the colonial frame is one way to facilitate this form of radical intersectional analysis. (p. 14)

Coulthard (2014) goes on to specify that such interacting forces have specific power effects, which becomes the site of analysis in totality. In the contexts of the U.S. and Canada, Driskill (2010) names decolonization as "ongoing, radical resistance against colonialism that includes struggles for land redress, self-determination, healing historical trauma, cultural continuance, and reconciliation" (p. 69). Thus, decolonization has context specificity while remaining an evolving frame and process in which communities themselves are radically reimagining futures, resisting colonialism, and re-forming structures of power and domination.

While community organizing straddles different areas of studies and disciplines (Christens & Speer, 2015), activism, organizing and movement-building in this dissertation will follow alternative and "ground-up" visions of building social and institutional relations and infrastructures that navigate contradictory and complex conditions toward addressing the root causes of social problems (Choudry et al., 2012; Jeffries & Ridgley, 2021; Walia, 2014). While organizing often occurs in local or place-based contexts to broaden participation in social change activities, transnational activism, movements, and frameworks reach scales and visioning beyond material and imaginative borders and their systems, often around shared struggles (Choudry et al., 2012; Wright, 2017, 2018).

I will also follow the critiques and conceptualizations of Choudry and colleagues (2012) who distinguish between activism and organizing. The authors explain the limits of solely

focusing on activist strategies that often involve a small group of people with shared viewpoints who are not directly impacted by the issues as they act toward social change. Rather, organizing involves building power through mobilizing a widening base of people directly affected by the issues toward longer-term movement-building required for sustained social change and alternative societies.

Organizing and movement practices also risk being coopted into the existing neoliberal, capitalist and state-sanctioned schemes of professionalization, recognition, management, funding, and governance models that have been critiqued as "nonprofitization" (Choudry et al., 2012). Nonprofitization of social welfare can be understood as state services being transferred to community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which often uphold neoliberal approaches of state and capital interests through partnership models between civil society, the government, and the market (Choudry et al., 2012).

These models and practices can depoliticize and demobilize oppositional struggles and establish a veneer of unity, lacking conflict and contradiction involved in social and political organizing (Choudry et al., 2012; Joseph, 2002). Constrained to local level service provision, geographical boundaries and place-based mechanisms of community responsibility and social control, expansive and global organizing and movements that address overarching forces of capitalism, globalization and oppression can be limited in nonprofitization frameworks (Choudry et al., 2012).

Deploying the positively regarded concept of 'community' in organizing practices can reinforce the same hierarchical power arrangements and liberal, universalized or nation-state led notions of identity that contribute to discipline, exclusion, and homogenization (Joseph, 2002; Walia, 2014). As Walia (2014) notes "Enacting a politics of decolonization also necessitates an

undoing of the borders between one another" (p. 11), calling attention to the in-group community organizing dynamics that require analysis and action toward more transformative relations.

Surfacing narratives of activism, organizing and movements that aim for transformational change can be considered a political act to ensure the erasure and misrepresentation of practices in "subaltern communities" are revealed and drawn from in the historical present to inform activist and organizing practices (Haritaworn, et al., 2018, p. 4). This study approaches organizing from longer-term, broad, and everyday movement-building in alternative visions and actions that aim to ultimately address the root causes of social problems. The study thus explores how the meanings and practices of queer and trans Filipino/a/xs in Montréal around identity and community escape or re-shape the containment of naturalized identity categories and state-sanctioned liberal and normative power arrangements that sustain logics of dispossession and exclusion.

Chapter 3: Tracing and Contextualizing the "Continuing Past"

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature regarding the historical context relevant to queer and trans Filipino/a/xs in Montréal, Québec, and their identity and community organizing experiences. The sections provide key historical laws, policies, social processes and relations that may influence the narration of the participants' stories and contexts in the present. The chapter begins with the Philippines' history of colonialism, nation-building and identity formation that have been shown to connect to diaspora formations, especially the late 1900s period of labour migration from the Philippines to Canada. The chapter then shifts to the more recent past of LGBTQ+ discourse in social and political movements and the limits, tensions, and implications of dominant and transformative politics that persist in contemporary contexts in Canada. These dynamics are then presented in the context of Québec's LGBTQ+ movement discourse focused on the formation of Québec's values, nation-building and positions toward intersections of race, gender, and sexuality. Finally, queer and trans Filipino/a/x organizing literature in Canada as a growing area of research is provided to return to the present study. The last section aims to further contextualize the time and place of the study, reviewing relevant demographics and the COVID-19 pandemic context.

3.2 The "continuing past" of the Filipino/a/x diaspora

The term Filipino was originally given only to Spaniards who were born in the Philippines until the fall of the Spanish regime toward the end of the 1800s (Quilop, 2006). The Spanish and American colonization periods in the Philippines shaped and re-shaped over time the meanings, discourses and relations around Filipino/a/x identity, family, and community, with global labour and economic relations being key factors in their interactions with Western norms

and, eventually, their institutionalized labour migration to Canada (Bonifacio, 2013; Coloma et al., 2012). Due to the entrenchment and colonial relations between the U.S. and the Philippines, research on empire-building, labour migration and diaspora among Filipino/a/xs has been a significant area of study in the U.S. (Coloma, 2016).

These scholars argue that the Philippines archipelago remains a neocolony to the U.S. following the legacy of their colonial rule at the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, even though the Philippines became a Republic and gained political independence in 1946 (Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016). A dominant narrative of freedom granted by the U.S. is often perpetuated around the Philippines independence in 1946. However, this post-World War II independence is otherwise critiqued through the notion of "the white man's burden" in which the colonial master of the U.S. was benevolently giving over control of the Filipino/a/x people and the archipelago, whom U.S. administrators considered as inferior and whom they had protected and saved toward their liberation (Bonifacio, 2013, p. 26). These colonial histories have and continue to shape social, political, and economic relations, in a way that some argue fails to promote genuine progress and development in the Philippines (Bonifacio, 2013; Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016). The "continuing past" refers to how these colonial relations have impacted the present context of global migration, and diasporic subject-formation of Filipino/a/xs (Aguila, 2015).

In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan landed on the islands that today make up the Philippines as the first European of Spain to "claim" them (Arcilla, 1998). As a result, the Philippines is named after Philip II, the Spanish King. The Philippines name as a nation and identity has been a site of contestation by peoples subjugated by colonizers and as a symbol of struggles for freedom,

nation-building and national identity[13] (Quimpo, 2000). For four centuries, the archipelago was a colony of Spain, becoming a key military location for imperial and colonial interests and a part of the Spanish galleon trade from Manila to Mexico to European markets (Bonifacio, 2013; Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016). The native residents – called *Indios* by the Spaniards until the late 1890s, when they were then called Filipinos – were already involved in international markets and trade, then becoming seafarers, often mistreated, and forced labourers in Spanish shipyards during the galleon trade (Mercene, 2007). This history of Spanish rule involved "a blatantly racialist policy in their colonies. Their treatment of *indios*, whom they regarded as belonging to the 'primitive' and 'inferior races' and as fit to be enslaved or subjugated, is already well known to present-day Filipinos" (Quimpo, 2000, p. 8). The Spaniards sought to establish the inferiority of Indigenous populations and hierarchically categorized and differentiated the population based on bloodline, in which *indio* and black people fell to the bottom (Quimpo, 2000).

Society continued to be re-structured through Western formations and ideologies around racial, gender and class differences. Interactions with Western nations were furthered through a growing elite political class, the *Illustrado,* who were able to send families to universities in Spain (Bonifacio, 2013). In addition to military capabilities, the Spaniards brought Christianity to the peoples of lowland areas (while the southern areas remained dominantly Muslim) in which Spanish friars re-shaped local relations and promoted an ideal role of women in society. They aimed to dismantle the *barangay* (village) system led by *datus* (local chieftains) in favour of a centralized and hierarchical system (Bonifacio, 2013; Quilop, 2006).

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[13] Quimpo (2000) describes "national" through the conceptualization of Anthony D. Smith "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by at least some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation.'" Quimpo states that for peoples of Asia and Africa throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries anti-colonial struggle became a dominant form of nationalism.

In the late 1800s, the economy developed with a middle class of Spanish and Chinese *mestizo* (mixed Filipino heritage) (Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016). Resistance to Spanish rule and a rising Filipino nationalism with calls for decolonization grew until the first Philippine Republic was established on June 12, 1898, with the help of supposed American allies in the context of the Spanish-American War (Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016). At the end of the Spanish-American War, the Philippines colony was sold by Spain to the U.S. for 20 million dollars through the *Treaty of Paris* (Bonifacio, 2013), along with Guam and Puerto Rico.

Manalansan and Espiritu (2016) describe how the 1900s involved development in areas of transportation, education, health, politics, and communication, including a U.S. system of public education in English, while also further entrenching economic dependency, racial hierarchies, and "colonial patronage politics" (p. 3). Japanese occupation during the Second World War led to a second Philippines Republic which was then reoccupied by the Americans after the war. This period is considered the time of the growth of a post-colonial national context, including experiences of deep poverty, political corruption, indebtedness to foreign rule, and economic instabilities (Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016). In contrast to Spanish colonialism, the Americans used the education system to define Westernized gender roles, which have been critiqued as failing to redress gender disparities and perpetuating Western values and models of the family (Bonifacio, 2013).

In the times of anti-colonial struggle throughout the 1900s, the Philippines was faced with authoritarianism, a communist insurgency waging war for decades, and an ongoing struggle of the Muslim minority (Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016). While the new Republic of the Philippines formed principles of a representative democracy, judiciary process and rule of law, Bonifacio (2013) describes how: "Philippine democracy is an evolving experiment… it remains

unable to ensure its citizens optimal freedom to exercise rights and promote social security" (p. 27). These authors also illustrate that a culture of opposition has been commonplace in the archipelago. Both the Filipino elite political leaders and the masses of Filipino peasants and workers had been engaged in social, economic, and political struggle and resistance over time and into today.

3.2.1 The labour export program and migration from the Philippines to Canada

Manalansan and Espiritu (2016) assert that: "[migration] has always been a crucial element in the making of the Philippines and of the Filipino overseas communities" (p. 4). Beginning with the labour export policies of the Marcos regime of the 1970s, the global export of migrant labour is now a key feature of the Philippines economy (Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016; Rodriguez, 2010). The Philippines' economy depends on international labour migration, treating citizens as commodities whose remittances pay back accumulated foreign debt (Rodriguez, 2010). Migrant labour export has become a national and international management strategy in which governments, and corporations, seek to maximize migrant remittances toward national development (Henaway, 2023; Rodriguez, 2010). As Henaway argues, migrant remittances play a key role in maintaining global capitalism in which countries such as the Philippines and other labour export-dependent countries draw from migration and remittance strategies:

> as a valve to release pressure upon governments unable to provide critical services, employment and basic infrastructure for their populations. Families are dependent on the work of migrant labour, and employers of migrants manipulate this dependence along with the workers' precarious status… they oblige developing countries to maintain their import dependence and advance the profitability of advanced capitalist countries where migrants go to work. (p. 31)

These migration management schemes are thus highly contested as maintaining foreign economic dependency, perpetuating conditions of poverty, restricting national liberation and

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producing exploitative conditions for migrant labourers and their families (Henaway, 2023; Rodriguez, 2010).

In Canada, the known documentation of the migration of Filipino/a/xs shows that it has happened in different waves. There was a stark increase in Filipino/a/x immigration from pre-1961 (215 total) to the periods of 1961-1970 (9,090 total) and 1971-1980 (42,875 total) (Kelly, 2006). These increases reflected in part Canada's immigration regulations in the 1960s in which education and skills in selecting independent immigrants replaced explicit preferencing of European and U.S.-based immigrants, specifically changing to the 'points system' of 1967 (Kelly, 2006). In addition to the changes in immigration regulations in the 1960s, McElhinny and colleagues (2012) attribute this period of increase in Filipino/a/x migration to Canada to underdevelopment and poverty in the Philippines leading to overseas migrant labour, and the role of U.S. imperialism in positioning North America as an aspirational migration goal.

Fast forward to today, according to the 2021 census of Canada, 957,355 or 2.64% of the total population of Canada have a background with Filipino/a/x heritage (Statistics Canada, 2023). Among this population, most live in Ontario (363,655 total) compared to the other provinces and territories, such as Québec (44,880 total). However, most Filipino/a/xs settle in urban centres. In Montréal, 39,020 individuals have Filipino/a/x heritage, sixth on the list of cities, with the city of Toronto in the province of Ontario at the top (Statistics Canada, 2023). Filipino/a/xs are now second in the top countries of origin among those who are migrants in Canada, rising from 588,305 (7.8% increase) in 2016 to 719,580 in 2021 (8.6% increase). The Canadian census also shows that the national Filipino language of *Tagalog* is the fourth highest of the non-official languages (neither English nor French) spoken most often at home (Statistics Canada, 2023).

While the census categories provide a picture of the distribution and dispersion of

Filipino/a/xs in Canada, authors contend that the national constructions of multiculturalism

through racialized and cultural classifications in census data uphold state interests in pluralism

and tolerance. These classifications have been critiqued as serving to homogenize and

hierarchize racial formations. As McElhinny and colleagues (2012) explain, legal and census

categories in Canada that delineate "visible minorities" have been critiqued as language that

naturalizes[14] white hegemony as it "hypervisibilizes and homogenizes people of colour.

Ideologically, 'visible minority' status is often collapsed into immigrant status, which renders

racialized groups as outside of the nation" (p.6). Census categorizations must be a site of further

analysis around the construction of a national imaginary to the exclusion and erasure of those

deemed unrecognizable to the state, such as a disproportionate representation of Filipino/a/xs

holding temporary or precarious immigrant status. This study thus questions normative

constructions around identity and migration in Canada that perpetuate an exclusionary state-

sanctioned subject-citizen, in addition to resistance and alternatives to these narratives.

McElhinny and colleagues (2012) provide a different overview of the labour migration of

Filipino/a/xs to Canada since the 1950s, in which the first wave involved landed immigrants who

received permanent residency and who were mainly professionals filling shortages in certain

fields, including nurses, doctors, and lab technicians. Many of these migrants arrived through the

U.S. after the expiration of their visas. Into the 1970s, there was a change in job profiles as more

clerical, manufacturing and service workers arrived. A new family reunification category in 1978

allowed the first wave of immigrants to sponsor family members.

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[14] Being conferred rights and privileges within the state as a natural member of the national community, often referred to as gaining Canadian citizenship. Naturalization as an analytic shows the differential treatment, inclusions and exclusions, within national identity formations constructing who is a deserving and worthy of citizen or national community member.

In the 1980s another shift occurred, as the Marcos era labour export policy was enacted and Canada's government recruited migrant workers through the Foreign Domestic Movement Program (later in the 1990s called the Live-In Caregiver Program [LCP] and widely known as the domestic worker program). Since the 2000s the LCP has been placed under the TFWP. These labour export and migration regimes shifted the profiles of Filipino/a/xs toward lower paid, precarious jobs considered low-skilled or unprofessional (Eric, 2012). Eric (2012) described how different Filipino/a/xs faced various forms of precarity related to their citizenship statuses, such as those entering with temporary status versus landed immigrants. These political and economic conditions over time have contributed to the growth in a working-class profile of Filipino/a/xs in Canada, many of whom are de-skilled as they hold professional degrees and skills yet are not able to work in their field (McElhinny et al., 2012). They have also been a higher proportion of women, demonstrating gender inequities in de-skilled jobs in Canada.

Situations of abuse, discrimination and exploitation have been documented in Canada from these migration programs, especially the situation of domestic workers. Domestic worker experiences and organizing based on these situations of discrimination and abuse have been informing social and policy advocacy, changes, and social movement efforts (Bhuyan et al., 2014; Pratt & Philippine Women Centre of B.C., 2012). Given the large number of migrants and the migratory conditions and concerns from this program, much of the Filipino/a/x migration and diaspora literature in Canada has focused on those coming to Canada through the domestic worker program (Coloma et al., 2012).

Recent studies in Quebec's immigration system have demonstrated cases of exploitation by recruitment agencies of domestic workers (Larios et al., 2020), as well as exclusions from occupational health, safety, and rights through paid domestic workers employed by individuals

and families (Teeple Hopkins, 2017). Across Canada, research shows that their exposures to abuse, exploitation and coercion relate to power dynamics created through the structure of the program itself (Bhuyan et al., 2018). Precarious immigration status, often directly tied to their employer, can cause fear of deportation in seeking rights and protections as well as employer coercion of this precarity (Bhuyan et al., 2018). As Bhuyan and colleagues (2018) discussed, the *live-in* component can also create conditions of over-work for minimal pay and the coercion of movement, mobility and even access to food security.

These analyses highlight how in the global neoliberal political economy, ongoing reformist and state accommodation politics in Canada would be limited in responding to how both sending and receiving states perpetuate exclusion and oppression through their labour migration policies, employment industries and immigration contexts. More questions can be raised about intergenerational, socio-cultural and identity formation experiences in the diaspora, and in what ways communities survive, live, and resist amid these power structures from local to global levels. The centering of queer and trans realities can help explore implications for diaspora, organizing and social movement theories and practices in combination with these historical, transnational and migratory analyses.

3.3 Remembering queer of colour organizing histories: Unsettling dominant state-sanctioned LGBTQ+ discourses and praxis

Remembering historical contexts that have shaped queer of colour organizing and conditions unveil changing processes and practices of state-sanctioned inclusion, exclusion, and normalization, while illustrating the often-excluded documentation of the existence and resistance of queer and trans racialized communities (Gentile et al., 2017). LGBTQ+ organizing is limited in its theorizing and applications by centering the experiences of white, middle- or

upper-class people, who are often cisgender, gay men, and excluding the narratives and conditions of racialized peoples (Awwad et al., 2016; Bain, 2017; Brown, 2020; Greey, 2018; Walcott, 2009, 2010; Ware, 2017; Wilson et al., 2016). Since the 1960s there have been major rights and legislative gains at federal and provincial levels in the protection of LGBTQ+ peoples in large part from activists and movements, which may be lauded as advancements (Gentile et al., 2017). However, historical and critical analyses suggest that state-centred and rights-based liberal frameworks of organizing and movement-building disenfranchise and marginalize the narratives and experiences of diverse queer of colour communities and others facing compounding conditions of oppression (Wright, 2017, 2018).

Re-narrating these histories from excluded perspectives disrupts hegemonic discourses that often perpetuate the status quo, and recentre social transformation as an avenue to inform contemporary social issues that challenge dominant discourses (Brown, 2020). In addition, expansions of queer of colour critique illustrate that remembering queer of colour communities in Canada requires an integrated analysis of relationships between normative arrangements, empire-building, and settler colonial logics (Lee-Oliver et al., 2020; Lee, 2018).

3.3.1 The limits of state accommodation and neoliberal interests

Despite gains in LGBTQ+ rights, dominant neoliberal discourses, structures and practices plagued the post-World War II context of organizing, including mechanisms of discipline and regulation. Cohen (1997) describes how in LGBTQ+ organizing of the '80s and '90s, mainstream gay and lesbian politics were more focused on being accommodated and reintegrated into dominant structures. These politics were later seen as supporting the underpinning structures that *reinforce* the oppression of LGBTQ+ peoples rather than striving for more transformative changes that would address the underlying structures impacting inequities, exclusion and

injustices. Emerging queer theories challenged organizing around a homogenized view of a broad-based identity of "queer" that could enclose the lived realities of all queer people into an existing dominant discourse and structures (Cohen, 1997). Cohen suggested coalition work that focused on understanding individual relations to power, which would better oppose dominant norms and foster more transformational political work.

A dominant historical event remembered in the Canadian struggle for LGBTQ+ rights was the first large LGBTQ+ public protest in Canada on Parliament Hill in 1971 called *We Demand,* coordinated by Toronto Gay Action (TGA) (Gentile et al., 2017). Gentile and colleagues (2017) describe that the event aimed to oppose the Criminal Code reforms of Bill C-150 of 1969 as privatizing and only partially decriminalizing queer sexualities and not addressing the daily realities of discrimination against LGBTQ+ peoples. Scholars critique these legislative changes as creating an allowance for same-gender sexual practices for "private" adults defined as twenty-one and over (Gentile et al., 2017). Thus, these changes excluded and isolated young people and furthered mechanisms of regulation, surveillance, and punishment of practices in the public sphere through adult and youth separations.

These activist formations and other gay liberation groups that formed globally were sparked by the Stonewall Riots in 1969 and the Compton Cafeteria Riot in 1966, both of which were led by transgender women of colour largely opposing police brutality and state repression (Bain, 2017; Gentile et al., 2017). However, the lack of acknowledgment and misinterpretations of the central role of Black transgender women and women of colour facing policing, surveillance and state repression has been critiqued by scholars as a continued suturing of queer bodies to whiteness and the lack of integration of anti-Blackness and Black women's lives into LGBTQ+ dominant narratives and organizing (Bain, 2017). This lack of historical

documentation and misrepresentation reflects a broader historical forgetting and an impetus for remembering specific queer of colour narratives of activism and lives from the voices of communities themselves (Ware, 2017).

While movements in the 70s and 80s struggled to define public and private life and what they would mean for gay equality or liberation, there was an eventual shift to ending the surveillance and criminalizing in public life while desiring private sexual freedom and public visibility in institutions (Duggan, 2002). Some scholars position the increasing public visibility and institutions of LGBTQ+ peoples as a part of the logics behind an era of expanding neoliberalism (Kinsman, 2017; Smith, 2015). Even as struggles for social programs and rights for workers were gained post-World War II, there was a continuous push for cutting back on social programs through this neoliberal logic (Kinsman, 2017). Further, this period saw continued bath raids by police and regulation of sexualities across different provinces (Smith, 2015).

Endeavours for legislated rights and access to institutional and state-sanctioned accommodations contrast with many concrete needs and realities of queer of colour communities. An era of neoliberalism and increasing globalization further marginalized groups already facing precarity and regulation by the state, as the 1970s involved re-shaping of citizenship and borders through banners of state security and expansion of "free trade and regional and international agreements to strengthen capitalist globalization" (Kinsman, 2017, p. 140). These relations between a neoliberal and global gay citizen incorporated into state and capital interests and accommodations reflect literature on concepts of homonormativity and homonationalism (Duggan, 2002; Puar, 2007). For example, at a local level, Haritaworn and colleagues (2018) bring the perspective of the urban space supporting a racialized and colonial

logic in which the Gay Village shifted to this neoliberal interest of capital accumulation, thus displacing many racialized and colonized communities nearby to make way for white- and middle-class interests, governance, and ownership. Accommodation in institutional and state-sanctioned public and private arrangements perpetuated further normalization of regulatory and exclusionary mechanisms and failed to respond to multiple forms of oppression.

3.3.2 Responding through the creation of social programs, support and resources

Canadian literature on queer of colour organizing is not only concentrated in social movement studies but spans different disciplines and fields of practice. This diversity shows the importance of practice-based professions in understanding the influence of organizing and, movement theorizing and practice on access, equity, and justice. Studies have explored critical theories and social movements around Black Lives Matter (BLM) Toronto to examine white supremacy in Canada's LGBTQ community as having implications for community psychology (Furman et al., 2018) and the importance of the Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC) narratives in HIV/AIDs movements to highlight exclusionary social policies and services (Wilson et al., 2016). These histories of organizing document how discrimination and exclusion from mainstream services were an impetus for queer of colour communities to advocate for and develop specific programs, support and resources.

Brochu-Ingram (2015) discusses how while legislative and institutional advances occurred at the government level due to LGBTQ+ activism and further pushes over the decades by feminist, anti-racist and decolonial activism, getting resources for service programs that engage with these multiple and complex experiences were still very minimal. Focusing on queer infrastructure in local LGBTQ+ community development in Vancouver city and the suburbs in the province of British Colombia's Lower mainland, Brochu-Ingram (2015) discusses how

gentrification of jobs and affordable housing pushed LGBTQ populations to other

neighbourhoods and municipalities, but differential access and exclusion still occurred. In the

1970s in Vancouver, the author traces a wide range of culturally specific groups formed to make

space, visibility, and articulations of the unique experiences of LGBTQ+ South Asians,

Indigenous peoples, Chinese Canadians, and African Canadians. They continued to need to

advocate for more social programs and support spaces into the 2000s.

The ability to challenge exclusionary and oppressive regimes at institutional and

legislative levels and to develop spaces and options for different LGBTQ+ individuals and

communities was further constrained by the structures of organizations and their relations to

governance and funding in Canada. Pushing through legislative changes by drawing from

lawyers, civil servants, tax incentives and urban-based institutions allowed some organizers with

access and organizational capacities, such as Egale (Equality for Gays and Lesbians

Everywhere), to reach federal-level politics, thus prioritizing more dominant and mainstream

desires for social change (Smith, 2015). These legal challenges led to Charter challenges in the

1980s and subsequent legal battles for same-sex marriage and adoption in various Provinces

(Smith, 2015).

Other challenges to community organizing include that there have been limited incentives

from a federal level for smaller grassroots and non-profit organizations, barriers in language,

issues of the diverse provincial jurisdictions across Canada, and contentions around settler

colonialism of Canadian nation-building (Smith, 2015). Creating and advocating for initiatives

led by and for the community from a grassroots level, which may espouse more transformational

politics, was thus more difficult to attain due to structural constraints. However, as shown, these

groups continued to respond to the needs of their communities in areas of social, health and political inclusion and transformation.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic was a crucial time for Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ+ organizing, as well as broader LGBTQ+ communities, with organizations and funding revealing contradictions of who gets funded and why. These histories also showed the global dimensions of LGBTQ+ experiences and a narrative that continued to centre on white gay men (Depelteau & Giroux, 2015; Wilson et al., 2016). While this area of research emerges as a gap, the existing research is important for illustrating how different levels of funding and organizational support exclude certain identities and experiences with real ramifications for life-promoting services, support, and protections. HIV/AIDS activism history told from the perspective of BIPOC disrupts a dominant narrative of HIV that may be viewed as an issue of the past with services and support gained by activism led solely by gay men (Wilson et al., 2016).

AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs) by and for people of colour had to create spaces of support and culturally specific services that were tailored to their realities of, for example, mass incarceration of BIPOC that worsened HIV transmission (Wilson et al., 2016). In the context of this dominant narrative, HIV/AIDS service and advocacy organizations saw defunding and de-prioritization in their budgets, which impacted local, national, and global funding throughout the 1990s to 2000s (Wilson et al., 2016).

These groups worked from community-based responses and collective action around prevention, education and support amid an increasing crisis of HIV in the 1980s, such as the Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS) out of 1989 organizing of the Gay Asians of Toronto and Gay Asian AIDS Project, the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP) also in 1989, and the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP) in 1987 (Wilson et al., 2016).

The formation of these groups and organizations reflects an overall need to respond to intersecting forms of oppression and politics of resource and funding distribution shaping access and equity. The formations also show a need for community-based responses that re-imagine support and resource systems shaped around multiple historical and global factors contributing to marginalization and oppression.

3.3.3 Re-imagining more inclusive and transformative LGBTQ+ politics

The literature in this section builds on the possibilities of alliance-building and re-imagining the standpoint for organizing to begin from the position of compounding and intersecting forms of oppression and historical, socio-political and transnational contexts of social movements.

Scholars contend that activist interventions should focus on the violence of enforcement, detention, and deportation systems as *connected* to LGBTQ+ politics and organizing (Luibhéid & Chávez, 2020; Wright, 2017). Wright (2017) re-examines organizing around the experience of a gay refugee who was rejected by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) in Canada and faced deportation. These analyses foreground the construction of who is considered a recognizable citizen in the immigration and refugee regime, interconnecting sexuality and migration. The campaign and its critiques confront the limits of organizing for rights and accommodation within the existing state system through the experience and ongoing production of precarious status and exclusions in refugee protection.

Wright's (2017) text also draws attention to the importance of a historical approach in understanding and organizing around the political context in constructing a recognizable, legible, and respectable citizen. LGBTQ organizations historically were working toward legal equality in the immigration system amid the reorganization of the immigration and refugee regime post-

World War II, which led to increasing precarity in labour and migration (Wright, 2017). The

three broad categories of workers, refugees, and family class members were reorganized, while

LGBTQ+ organizing began to focus on family reunification struggles. The issues of organizing

around the family class from a struggle of "binational same-sex couples" (p. 251) and inclusion

of spouses toward a rights-based focus of gaining access to citizenship diverged from the

struggles in migrant justice that centred on processes of illegalization and precarious status in

queer migration (Wright, 2017). The perspectives of undocumented peoples and migrant justice

organizing provide alternative paths for transformation from their concrete realities, as well as

the work of groups that cross-cut different issues that queer of colour communities may face.

Wong (2012) similarly brings the perspective of contending with multiple forms of

oppression in organizing that does not fit into state narratives and the national imagination of a

respectable citizen. The author describes the case study of the formation of GLAM (Gay and

Lesbian Asians of Montreal) in the context of Québec, which is a province known in dominant

discourses as more advanced in the rights and protections of LGBTQ+ peoples. Québec

constituted legal rights for non-heteronormative sexualities in 1977 and allowed same-sex

spouses in 1999, in addition to a cultural and social environment which draws many LGBTQ

peoples to Montréal (Wong, 2012).

However, Wong (2012) describes how another story exists of conservatism and counter-

protests regarding both LGBTQ+ and racial inclusion. While some constituents in Québec saw

these LGBTQ+ rights laws as being imposed on them, there was also a political context of

racism and xenophobia through political figures deploying the threat of visible religious attire

such as turbans, skullcaps, or veils as harmful to gay rights. These narratives and racist rhetoric

erase racialized and Muslim LGBTQ+ experiences and bolster a state-sanctioned national

imaginary of sexual freedoms associated with the supposedly advanced modern subject of white queer bodies (Bilge, 2012). GLAM was developed to help create a space of belonging and acceptance for people who identify as Asian who were figuring out their sexualities but faced challenges in forming a community identity across sexual, ethnic, and racial minority experiences in Québec tied to their diverse histories and transnational experiences in their countries of origin (Wong, 2012). Their organizing example shows the multiple layers of oppression facing queer and trans racialized communities in the regional and historical context of Québec.

Labelle (2019b) found that participation of queer of colour communities in and out of mainstream LGBTQ+ movements and forming groups based on LGBTQ+ racialized experiences in Montréal were influenced by both identity-related and structural processes. While discrimination was a major catalyst for joining existing LGBTQ+ organizations, launching new initiatives or joining groups based on racialized experiences intersecting with other factors of class and gender, for example, was related to exclusion within white, male-dominated cisgender LGBTQ+ movements.

Carving out these spaces of belonging, resistance and diverse histories in contexts of exclusion and state-sanctioned discourses relates to the literature surrounding the shift of Pride Celebrations or Pride Parades (Pride), a main event to celebrate LGBTQ+ peoples worldwide. Pride began from the global gay liberation movements in the 1970s on injustices related to gender, sexuality, race, and class. Authors describe that Pride Parades have shifted to a more corporatized and exclusive event, especially in urban centres in Canada (Bain, 2017; Greey, 2018; Labelle, 2019b; Lord, 2020).

This analysis of Pride as a site of inclusion and exclusion of LGBTQ+ peoples reflects ongoing critiques in queer of colour and diaspora theorizing of a binary construction of whiteness attached to queer bodies and people of colour attached to heterosexuality (Bain, 2017; Greey, 2018). In creating spaces centred on LGBTQ+ identity, queer of colour organizers navigate exclusion and challenges coming from inside LGBTQ+ movements, their own racial or ethnic communities, as well as other experiences related to gender or class. Bains' (2017) book chapter draws from conversations with LGBT Black activists who organized against racism inside the LGBT movement and against homophobia in their communities. The chapter describes how dominant discourses related to queerness were solely describing white gay men, while blackness and diaspora were viewed as male heterosexuals tied to nationalist discourses. These discourses position Black queer women's bodies as "troublesome for the nation" (Bain, 2017, p. 84).

In the face of this lack of representation and responsiveness to the realities of the diversity of the Black diaspora, Bain (2017) describes the creation of a coordinating committee, Blackness Yes, in 1999, whose members continued to form events and spaces by and for the Black queer diaspora. Blockorama was specifically created by members of the Toronto Black Women's Collective in the late 1980s to make the lives of Black lesbians visible, resist the dual narrative of being attached to both "desire and repulsion" (p. 87) and continue to build spaces to express erotic Black diasporic queerness in addition to other social and political issues. Bain (2017) asserts that Black queer life in Canada is not tied to strictly national discourses but draws from transnational politics across borders to build locally. These examples and analyses from different racialized groups and identities navigate multiple and specific histories and forms of

belonging and exclusion in relation to state policies, transnational relations and nation-building, jurisdictional issues, and colonization in constructing who does and does not belong.

Indigenous organizing brought a perspective of linking the issues that they were facing to colonization with holistic responses to health education and healing (Wilson et al., 2016). These approaches contradicted the dominant structure of responses that did not understand the impacts of colonization and the interconnected factors impacting health. These groups spanned local to international scales, including the activist group Indigenous Peoples Task Force in 1987, the forming of global alliances such as the International Indigenous Working Group on HIV & AIDs and the Native Youth Sexual Health Network (Wilson et al., 2016). Two-Spirit people specifically made space during the epidemic to bring the narrative of sexuality, health, identity, spirituality, and discrimination from their perspectives and re-instating their public and political roles as community caretakers, healers, teachers, and activists to educate people about HIV/AIDS (Depelteau & Giroux, 2015). A few of these initiatives that remain today include the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (Vancouver) and the Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy (OAHAS).

Meyer-Cook and Labelle (2004) describe the beginning of the modern Two-Spirit movement in the 1960s through the Gay American Indians (GAI) organization in San Francisco, sparking research on gender and identity from Indigenous perspectives. The authors describe projects developed by and for the Two-Spirit community, which responded to HIV/AIDs educational support and fostered community through small social groups who did crafts in the summer of 1997, sold them at Pride and then marched in the Parade in Montréal.

These groups formed to respond to specific challenges of discrimination in their communities on-reserve and the experiences of moving from the Indian reserve system to urban

cities. Moving to the urban centre still led to discrimination as Indigenous and racialized peoples. However, the groups provided shared spaces for healing and gathering while navigating the fears of being public at Pride, along with the joys of having this presence and visibility (Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004).

A historical approach to understanding experiences of exclusion and resistance can help understand how and why queer of colour communities grow and participate in community and grassroots groups in relation to their identities and experiences of migration, diaspora, gender, and sexuality (Wright, 2017). The late 1900s in Canada into the 2000s have been documented as representing gains in the framework of rights and equality, which may be lauded as advancements. Dominant narratives have painted a picture of Canada and specific urban cities or provinces as "safe havens" for LGBTQ+ peoples (Haritaworn et al., 2018; Lee, 2018; Smith, 2015). Lee (2018) discusses how a framework of global rights positions Canada as the pathway of escape from "repression to liberation" (p. 201), yet how the everyday realities of queer and trans migrants who face experiences of deportation, detention, and undocumentation disrupt this picture of safety and protections. These analyses can also identify resource gaps and possibilities for services and programs that address contextual and intersecting issues at multiple scales.

Further, transformational politics respond to the limits identified by queer of colour organizing theorizing and practice in which being re-incorporated into state-sanctioned and liberal discourses of LGBTQ+ identity and related advocacy in social work and social movements can re-entrench exclusion and discrimination.

This dissertation responds to a main theme in the literature that suggests the importance of transformational politics in community organizing alongside formations of identity and belonging with diverse relations to nations, states, histories of colonialism, and transnational

contexts. These discourses also included affective and social dimensions of a sense of joy, safety and healing in the face of oppressive conditions and power dynamics.

3.4 Homonationalism and Québec's LGBTQ+ discourse

The province of Québec's context reflects homonationalist logics that serve to regulate, discipline, pathologize and even criminalize racialized and migrant populations for their supposed sexual and gendered deviance, furthering the association of whiteness and neoliberal sexual politics as respectable and worthy of life-giving rights in the national imaginary. LGBTQ+ activism, community organizations and social movements in Québec do not escape these logics altogether, as they have been shown through a few studies to reify this homonationalist rhetoric, practices, and relations (Labelle, 2019a, 2019b; Huang, 2014; Wong, 2013), contributing to the formation of alternative activist, organizing and movement groups and organizations based in racialized experiences (Labelle, 2019a, 2019b). Huang (2014) found that these dominant framings and arrangements can be re-entrenched in the rhetoric and practices of mainstream LGBT organizations in Montréal, which reinforce homogeneity, stereotypes of moral backwardness of racialized communities, and exceptionalism in Québec (Huang, 2014). Yet, there remains a gap in studies assessing this context that merges an analysis of gendered, sexualized, and racialized politics and relations alongside LGBTQ+ community organizing and social movements in Québec.

In many ways, Québec's LGBTQ community organizing and movement-building dominant discourse and documented history mirrors the Canadian context of exceptionalism in promoting safety and rights for LGBTQ+ peoples while continuing to erase, exclude and misrepresent the lived realities and discourses of queer and trans racialized peoples (Chbat et al., 2023; Labelle, 2019a, 2019b; Huang, 2014; Roy, 2012; Wong, 2012). Even as recent

advancements have been made regarding LGBT+ migrant and racialized peoples, such as a provincial action plan to fight homophobia and transphobia (2017-2022), overlapping experiences of marginalization still exist in Québec embedded in a historical and socio-political context (Chbat et al., 2023).

Studies in Québec have shown that LGBTQ+ racialized peoples interface with multiple overlapping challenges related to racism, cisheterosexism, and exclusion across social, political and economic dimensions (Chbat et al., 2023; Wong, 2012, 2013). Québec's government rhetoric through legislative documents and discourse has historically been shown to associate homophobia with immigrant or cultural communities, as well as their immigration services, thus sustaining "gayness as whiteness" (Roy, 2012, p. 85). Roy (2012) found through analyzing the imagery and representations in Québec's mainstream gay magazines perpetuates this construction of a white or lighter-skinned, able-bodied, youthful, muscular and "preferably 'out'" gay subject (p. 185). Roy notes that "the Québec gay subject appears as tolerant and open-minded, while queer immigrants appear as liberated beings learning to free themselves from the homophobia of their community of origin" (p. 185).

These exclusionary reproductions of the respectable gay subject-citizen reinforce the moral backwardness and "Otherness" of unrespectable racialized or immigrant communities in the formation of a Québec identity, reflecting the logics of Canadian homonormativity, homonationalism, and exceptionalism described earlier (Bilge, 2012). Racism, xenophobia, sexual nationalism, and Québec's national imagination intricately tied to religious and racial codes collude to reproduce the threat of sexualized and racialized "Others," which becomes a regulatory and disciplinary mechanism in the moral, social and political order of the nation (Bilge, 2012; Wong, 2013).

As a highly contested space around linguistic, religious, cultural, sexual and gender diversity, Québec's dominant discourses both highlight and erase its settler colonial context. Québecois French nation-building and the colonial histories of French Québec in relation to Indigenous peoples and their struggles against British settlers can be considered as underpinning homonationalism (Huang, 2014; Wong, 2013). Notions of home, belonging and identity are embedded in the construction of an exclusionary nationhood and national imaginary in Québec, which legislates an attachment to the Québec nation and its value codes over Canada's (Labelle, 2004; Stasiulis, 2013).

Labelle (2004) provides an overview of key historical periods in building the Québec nation and state. Firstly, Labelle notes that "Mohawks, Cree, Algonquin, Huron/ Wendats, Innus, Abénaqus, Naskapis, Mimacs and Malecites nations were living at the site of present-day Québec" (p. 40). Before the official creation of Canada through the 1867 Confederation, French European settlement and colonization began in 1663 in Québec city, when King Louis XIV of France named this new French colony "La Nouvelle France" (New France) (Labelle, 2004).

French settlers had established a sense of collective nationality and identity that both accepted a nationhood of *Canadiens* promoted by the French regime and brought together different regional identities from France, while English speakers identified themselves with a British identity until Confederation (McRoberts 1997 as cited in Labelle, 2004). British conquest led to the transformation of la *Nouvelle France* into the Province of Québec in 1763, which later became divided into Upper and Lower Canada. Subsequently, the region was merged into the Provinces of Canada and absorbed into the Dominion of Canada in 1867. The French-speaking *Canadien* had to shift to a *Canadien Français* (French Canadian) identity, which today is mostly termed *Québecois* and includes different origins.

Critical authors of Québec's identity and national formation through analyses of racialization, colonialism and settler colonialism argue that a dominant discourse which frames a celebratory and dual French resistance and nationalism in the face of English domination is predicated on the erasure, misrepresentation, and presumed absence of racialized and Indigenous experience (Benhadjoudj, 2022; Hobbs, 2008; Cornelier, 2017). Austin (2010) draws from the works of prominent Québec political and resistance texts to show how the historical national mythologies of Québec appropriate from racial resistance struggles, specifically Black Power movements. These power narratives of the founding of Québec are presented as "a tale of innocence and victimhood that conveniently omits the colonization of indigenous peoples, the practice of slavery and racial exclusion" (Austin, 2010, p. 19). However, historical accounts of negotiations between Québec and Indigenous peoples reinscribe Québec as a settler colony as the province enacted dispossession to preserve Québec sovereignty, refuting scholars who argue the illegitimacy or absence of Indigenous struggles for sovereignty in the history of Québec nationhood (Hobbs, 2008).

Québec's history of nation-building as a French speaking minority in struggles with British empire-building, and ongoing provincial struggles for sovereignty and linguistic identity in a dominant English language Canada, has contributed to the prioritization of French-speaking immigrants and preservation of a national identity, thus rejecting and discriminating against many other often racialized and minoritized groups (Chbat et al., 2023; Labelle, 2004; Stasiulis, 2013).

Stasiulis (2013) argues that neoliberalism colludes with communitarianism in constructing citizenship in which racialized bodies and immigrants must take the responsibility to adjust and adapt their morals and behaviours toward the nationally proclaimed progressive

values of a unified Québec. These politics of exclusion and inclusion have been shown to draw from narratives of racialized, normalized, and modernist gender and sexual freedoms in the realm of equality and rights to reify a white, Christianized and settler colonial context in constructing the respectable citizen (Bilge, 2012; Huang, 2014; Wong, 2012, 2013).

Extending this analysis to this dissertation has historical specificity of a renewed *Francisation* of immigration and nationalist discourses centering the importance (and disappearance) of French language in the integration and tolerance of immigrants in Québec (Gouvernement du Québec, 2023). Through my findings, I may consider in what ways are gendered and sexualized freedoms still deployed as regulatory mechanisms to preserve neoliberal subject-citizens and reinforce logics of homonationalism in Montréal. Otherwise, I will explore what other frameworks arise in the narratives of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x in the context of Montréal to extend this limited body of research.

3.5 Queer and trans Filipino/a/x organizing in Canada

The current state of the literature around Filipino/a/x organizing in Canada shows predominance around migrant worker, particularly domestic worker, organizing and social movement literature. This literature helps illustrate the gendered and racialized diasporic experience and regulation of Filipino/a/xs in Canada (Alcaraz et al., 2022; Pratt & Migrante B.C., 2018; Pratt & Philippine Women Centre of B.C., 2012; Tungohan, 2012).

Diaz and colleagues (2018) reveal in their work on the lives, analyses and organizing experiences of queer and trans Filipino/a/xs in Canada that there are organizations and groups operating from politics seeking change at multiple levels of governmental policies as well as addressing the conditions that lead to the displacement of Filipino/a/x migrants in the first place. These dynamics in organizing reflect queer of colour organizing inquiries and contestations over

time in which state accommodation and reformist politics can be in contradiction with transformational political aims and theorizing.

The text documents individual activism and groups among LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x communities that formed around shared politics, culture, migration and belonging, such as the formation of *Babaylan* in 1993, a feminist collective of queer Filipinas (Aguila et al., 2017). Those interviewed in the *Babaylan* group shared about social change and organizing that relates to historical understandings of colonialism, navigating social and institutional racism and homophobia, learning to care for each other, and creating spaces of belonging, love, and solidarity. These group formations reflect other initiatives, actions, and groups from queer of colour communities whose work involves a range of scales of change, including building affective connections to disruptive strategies to formations of community programs and supports. Queer and trans Filipino/a/x community work often does not neatly become categorical in addressing direct political activism over another form of community intervention, but rather the formations integrated politicized lived experiences with notions of identity, belonging, support, and collective action. In addition, the *Babaylan* group demonstrates a shared politics beyond their own communities in aiming for solidarity with other groups facing marginalization.

Various authors' contributions also show links between imperialism in the U.S. and systemic racism, sexism, and gender-based violence (Diaz et al., 2018). In the chapter titled "Militarism, violence and critiques of the neoliberal state" (p. 243), the interviews with various organizations and activists highlight the case of Jennifer Laude, a transgender Filipina woman who was killed by a U.S. military serviceman, then charged and prosecuted with her murder while he was stationed in the Philippines. Anti-imperialism solidarity that unites across different groups as an organizing framework, as linked with issues of gender identity, sexuality, race, and

class, is suggested by these authors to recognize these relations between the Philippines and the U.S.

These beginning contributions to documenting community organizing and social movements among LGBTQ+ Filipino/axs in the Canadian diaspora reflect existing frameworks in queer of colour organizing literature by recognizing the macro systems of neoliberal and colonial structuring of state-sanctioned regimes, as well as micro relations in socio-cultural contexts that aim for belonging, safety and support. This study will address a gap in this documentation to further unveil dynamics and possibilities of transformational politics through the meaning-making of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in Montréal.

3.6 Contextualizing the study site: Demographics and COVID-19 context

In this section, I provide some key statistics and social indicators captured by municipal, regional and federal governments and organizations to contribute to contextualization of the study site and the experiences of Filipino/a/xs in Montréal, Québec, Canada. In particular, the study site took place within the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood, often referred to in proximity to "Plamondon" (a cross-section of two main streets in the north sector where the Plamondon Metro is located on the corner). This section aims to provide a piece of the picture of the conditions facing many Filipino/a/xs who live in or transit through Montréal, the gender and sexuality indicators at the time of the study, and the harrowing influences of the COVID-19 pandemic on Filipino/a/x and other essential workers and racialized communities.

3.6.1 Montréal Filipino/a/x and racialized demographics

Montréal (the Island of Montréal) is the second largest city in Canada and the largest in Québec, a province of Canada. As of the 2021 Census of the Population by the Government of Canada, the city of Montreal had a population of 1,762,949 (Statistics Canada, 2023). Since

1996, almost 20 years ago, the population has nearly doubled from 1,016,376. In 2021, expanding to include the suburbs and wider population center (Census Metropolitan Area [CMA]), the population is 4,291,732. Residents of Montréal from the wider population center were accepted into my study as these residents move between the city and outskirts, and vice-versa.

The 2021 Census shows a rise in racialized groups (titled visible minority groups in the survey, yet they note that they are shifting language publicly to 'racialized') to 737,510, or 37.6 percent of the population in Montréal. Those who identified as Filipino/a/x were recorded as numbering in 33,365 (1.7%) in 2021 in the city of Montréal. However, these statistics do not account for the possible undocumented population or those that may categorize themselves as multiple visible minorities or as South-East Asian. City of Montréal statistics also show that the immigrant population has been steadily increasing, showing rates of 463,730 in 1996 to 652,730 in 2021 (Ville de Montréal, 2024b). Strikingly, non-permanent residents, meaning those with temporary immigration status such as temporary workers, international students, and visitors, rose from 63,055 in 2016 to 138,240 in 2021. The largest immigrant population in 2021 originated from Haïti (48,570 – 7.4%) and from Algeria (44,925 – 6.5%), with France and Morocco close behind. The Philippines as the country of origin was 24,940 (3.8%) of the immigrant population in 2021. This demographic picture of Montréal illustrates a racially diverse metropolitan area with rising immigration from specific Global South countries, in addition to a vast increase of non-permanent residents.

My study primarily took place in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood, which was strategically chosen as it is a neighbourhood where many Filipino/a/xs live or spend time at some point in their transition or settlement in Montréal. According to a territorial analysis by

Centraide of Greater Montréal from 2018-2019, Côte-des-Neiges was the second most populated neighbourhood on the Island of Montréal, totalling 99,045 (Centraide of Greater Montreal, 2022). The North sector of the neighbourhood, further from downtown and from institutions like hospitals and universities, where the Immigrant Worker's Centre (IWC) is located, has had major recent immigration with double the number of total and recent immigrants than the South sector. The north sector, compared to the South sector, has more immigrants, allophones, racialized groups, and families with children. The neighbourhood overall has a higher proportion of immigrants compared to Montréal (52% versus 34%), with 83% of the population born outside of the country or with at least one parent who is an immigrant compared to 58% Montréal-wide (Centraide of Greater Montreal, 2022).

The Filipino/a/x community make up 14%, or one of eight of the population, while a wide diversity of Black, Arab and South Asian communities also live in the neighbourhood (Centraide of Greater Montreal, 2022). A greater proportion than the Montréal average speak neither French nor English as their first language (46% versus 33%). Unfortunately, the poverty rate (based on low-income status) is also greater than Montréal, affecting nearly one in three in the neighbourhood (30% in Côte-des-Neiges versus 21% Montréal wide). Poverty affects children aged 0 to 5 years old (29%) and seniors (29%) to a higher extent than the Montréal rate as well (Centraide of Greater Montreal, 2022).

3.6.2 Gender identity and sexuality demographics

Records from Statistics Canada census surveys in 2018 show that 4% of the total population in Canada identify as 2SLGBTQ+, about one million people (Statistics Canada, 2021). Among these numbers, one-third were between the ages of 15 to 24. The Canadian Community Health Survey from 2015 to 2018 showed that 1 in 4 of the 4% of the population

identified as gay men (255,100), 1 in 7 as gay or lesbian women (150,600) and a much higher

number of bisexual women (332,000) compared to bisexual men (161,300) (Statistics Canada,

2022). More recently, the Government of Canada and various LGBTQ+ rights organizations

celebrated being the first country to collect Census data in 2021 on transgender and non-binary

people with the aim of capturing gender diversity in the country at a population level to better

respond to their realities (Egale Canada, 2021).

Overall, the Census shows that 100,815 people (0.33%) of the population reported

identifying as transgender or non-binary, distinguished as 59,460 being transgender and 41,355

being non-binary (Statistics Canada, 2022). While providing a better national portrait of

transgender and non-binary existence through reported numbers, Egale Canada (2021)

recognizes some of the limits of these census categories as not including intersex and promoting

an ongoing binary notion of male and female as sex/ gender indicators in some of the

2SLGBTQ+ reports. The survey did show, however, that the experience of gender is diverse and

evolving, especially when participants were given the option to describe their own gender and

indicate the most relevant term through a "write-in" response under the general term of non-

binary people (Statistics Canada, 2022). Through these non-binary responses, 70.5% wrote in as

identifying as non-binary, 7.3% identified as fluid, 5.1% as agender, 4.1% as queer, 2.9% as

gender neutral, 2.2% as Two-Spirit, 1.3% as neither man nor woman and 1.1% as gender non-

conforming.

Differences in age groups and urban versus rural centres also exist, with almost two-

thirds of those who self-reported as transgender and non-binary people being under the age of 35.

In other words, transgender and non-binary people were more likely to be in younger

generations. Some geographic locations show a much higher proportion of transgender and non-

binary people than others, becoming even higher when focused on the proportion among young people in certain regions. For example, 1 in 100 people of those aged 15 to 24 years in Nova Scotia and British Columbia are transgender or non-binary. Québec and Saskatchewan have the smallest proportion of identified transgender or non-binary people at 1 in 400 people, however, Montréal was included as one of the higher regions for this population.

Transgender and non-binary people are also more likely than cisgender people to live in urban centres, showing proportions of more than 92% for non-binary people compared to 73.6% of cisgender men and 74.3% of cisgender women. Interestingly, the largest proportions in urban centers were Victoria (BC), Halifax (NS) and Frederiction (NB), noted as having population increases and significant higher education students. Three areas in Québec had the lowest proportion, Drummondville, Saguenay and Trois-Rivières, which also have smaller proportions of young people than the national average possibly affecting these rates (Egale Canada, 2021).

The 2021 Census of Population also aimed to capture some statistics about same-gender couples and transgender or non-binary couples, showing that about 1 in every 250 couples includes one or more transgender or non-binary people (Statistics Canada, 2022a). While these definitional categories presume a two-person couple and have limitations in the possible familial configurations, they show that in 2021, 95,435 (1.1%) were same gender couples while 32,305 (0.4%) were transgender or non-binary couples out of the total 8.6 million couples (defined further as living in private households). Possibly a reflection of younger ages, transgender (32%) and non-binary (26%) populations had a lower proportion of living in a couple compared to the cisgender population (47%). In Québec, there were 27,950 same-gender couples and 4,985 transgender or non-binary couples of the 1,834,095 couple-family households.

These demographics show one part of the picture of the age differences, geographic locations and gender and sexual diversity that exists at a population level in Canada and in the regions regarding 2SLGBTQ+ groups. However, these statistics are still limited at more regional or local levels and in considering the wide range of diversity that exists including the multiple identities and experiences overlapping for different individuals. Other social indicators, such as housing, mental health, access to health care, exposure to violence, employment, and resilience are also important factors in shaping 2SLGBTQ+ well-being concerning instances of discrimination, exclusion and lower life satisfaction (Government of Canada, 2023). The private household category could be a major limitation for younger 2SLGBTQ+ individuals or for others without a private household, skewing their representation in these statistics. Specifically, their participation could be impacted by the fact that discrimination persists in access to stable housing, with discrimination based on actual or perceived gender identity, especially transgender and Two-spirit peoples reporting the highest rates of housing-related discrimination (Government of Canada, 2023).

3.6.3 Beginning to visibilize multilayered effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

This study took place in a context of emerging from a few years of the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Montréal and worldwide. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are still becoming known. In Québec, the confirmed cases had reached one million by April 10th, 2022, since the first reported case on February 27th, 2020 (Institut national de santé publique du Québec [INSPQ], 2022). By April 21st, 2022, Quebec reached 15,000 virus related deaths (INSPQ, 2022). It was only on June 1st, 2022, that Québec removed its state of emergency (Global News, 2023). By the time my data collection started, many public health measures that had been put in place were no longer in effect, including wearing personal protective equipment

(PPE) in the form of medical masks and restrictions on the number of people gathering indoors (known as social distancing) (INSPQ 2022). As vaccinations and their campaigns for the virus amped up throughout the two years, the number of cases and deaths declined, with various surges over time (INSPQ, 2022).

Québec province stood out among Canadian provinces with disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 infections in 2020 (Dalexis & Cénat, 2020). In Montréal, geographic demarcations show the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 cases on low-income racialized neighbourhoods housing high numbers of first-generation migrants holding frontline jobs (Cleveland et al., 2020; Vitale, 2022). Amid rising anti-immigrant and xenophobic attitudes during the COVID-19 pandemic (Esses & Hamilton, 2021), this research shows how factors of racialization and the global political economy increased the vulnerabilities of those with precarious immigration status and with essential worker roles to coronavirus outbreaks with even more limited access to rights and services (Alcaraz, et al., 2022; Dalexis & Cénat, 2020; Istiko et al., 2022; Suva et al., 2022). Indeed, Statistics Canada (2020) reported how age, immigration status, race and sexuality were some of the important factors impacting the stark decrease and differences in life satisfaction in Canada, which met some of its lowest levels during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those between 15 and 29 years of age vastly declined on their rates of life satisfaction (from 72% in 2018 to 26% in June 2020), more than older groups. There was a major decrease in life satisfaction among immigrants compared to Canadian-born individuals, especially among those from Asia. Immigrants were more likely to report a fear of being targeted by unwanted or intimidating behaviours during the pandemic as people judge them as putting others' health at risk, again, particularly those from Asia (41% of immigrants from Asia compared to 17%

Canadian-born individuals). Those with fears of being targeted during COVID scored lower on life satisfaction (Statistics Canada, 2020).

Further, the existing vulnerabilities of 2SGBTQ+ communities put them at greater exposure to socio-economic impacts during the pandemic. 2SLGBTQ+ communities were twice as likely to experience homelessness and have lower resources and incomes than non-LGBTQ individuals, have poorer rates of mental health and experience rising incidences of hate crimes (Statistics Canada, 2020). These statistics indicate the harrowing impacts of COVID-19 on those in more precarious positions who face overlapping and multiple barriers and exclusion, especially showing the fears and lower life satisfaction among racialized Asian communities and immigrants related to the pandemic.

Filipino/a/xs globally faced these multilayered experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic with great losses to our communities. Sadly, the first health care worker to die from COVID-19 in Québec was a Filipina, Victoria Salvan, who worked in a long-term care home and was on the brink of her retirement (CTV News, 2020). At a global level, studies are beginning to show the experiences of Filipino/a/xs who were disproportionately affected by precarity and vulnerabilities, especially among migrant workers and essential roles during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as home care workers in the U.S. (Nasol & Franscisco-Menchavez, 2021), domestic workers and seafarers (Banta & Pratt, 2023), and non-status migrant workers in Alberta, Canada (Alcaraz et al., 2021). At the same time, some of their strategies of care, organizing and resistance have been identified amid these structures of racialized exclusion, displacement, and precarity (Colting-Stol, 2022; Nasol & Francisco-Menchavez, 2021).

As the resultant impacts of the pandemic are still being documented, gathered, and analyzed, this context provides a backdrop and context to this study that may impact the

participants' involvement, meanings, and negotiations in relation to migration, identity, gender, sexuality, and community organizing. This context shows heightened vulnerabilities among immigrant, racialized communities, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities, and fears of anti-Asian behaviour in associated health-related risks to this community. In my finding's chapters, I will consider how the COVID-19 pandemic may be involved in their stories as they express them.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide detailed explanations of the methodology of this study beginning with my epistemological and methodological standpoints, the theories of participatory action research (PAR), and my use of Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan* with queer and trans Filipino/a/xs in Montreal. I then provide detailed accounts of the methods of data collection, analysis and dissemination and mobilization of the findings. A few of these latter sections incorporate field notes that describe and reflect on the research process, which are analyzed further in the findings and discussion.

For several years, I have been involved in grassroots movements and community organizing with a common thread of migrant justice, youth, and LGBTQ+ wellbeing, and anti-colonialism. Throughout academia, and still to this day, I have been in search for "a scholarly home" as a queer mixed raced Filipina woman living on Turtle Island, also known as Canada. As Batac (2022) puts it, I have been navigating the liminal spaces and disciplinary interconnections of diaspora scholarship. I have been questioning my responsibilities and solidarities within my multiple positionalities to redress issues of oppression and aim for transformative possibilities in each of the sites of my work: social work practice, organizing, teaching, and research.

In the early phases of the design of this research project and my doctoral studies I was entangled in webs of contradictions, tensions and questions around ethics, ownership, power, and control in the research process that stems from an institutional space: Should I be the one studying and repeating these realities? What are my roles and responsibilities to move resources between the university and community? What if I inadvertently entrench the same social, economic, and political orders or normative arrangements and logics that dispossess and oppress

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my own and other communities? What ethics are needed to move forward real change and action to influence wellbeing, especially among those facing the most barriers to livelihoods, participation, and self-determination? Still today, these activist-scholar questions persist and plague critical and participatory research critiques, discussions, and evolutions. Simultaneously, these questions highlight a necessity of reflexivity on epistemological and methodological approaches that may advance more liberatory discourses (Lee & Léon, 2019) and seek to co-create ongoing relational and messy learning and action *with* communities through research (Cahill et al., 2010; Choudry, 2010).

I attempt to align this research with movements in social work in Canada that call for social work education to recognize, redress and altogether transform processes, practices and pedagogies that reinforce racism, colonialism, and settler colonialism historically and contemporarily (Baskin, 2018; Blackstock, 2007; Lee & Ferrer, 2014; Fortier & Hon-Sing Wong, 2019). As Hill Collins (2000) states: "The level of epistemology is important because it determines which questions merit investigation, which interpretive frameworks will be used to analyze findings, and to what use any ensuring knowledge will be put" (p. 252). White and Westernized epistemologies and ontologies have been prioritized in social work practice, research, and education, which has perpetuated colonial nation-building, harm, exclusion and invisibilization of the life frameworks and knowledges of Indigenous and racialized peoples (Blackstock, 2007; Lee & Ferrer, 2014).

In contemporary contexts, scholars have argued that the rise of neoliberalism and neoliberal policy has become a regulatory mechanism of exclusion to social welfare access based on individualism and able-bodiedness (Lee & Ferrer, 2014). These logics shape and further entrench site-specific systems of domination in which this "neoliberal racialized line continues to

determine those deserving versus undeserving of entry into the colonial nation building project"
(Lee & Ferrer, 2014, p. 13). These systems of domination relate to the production of knowledge
around how and in what ways interventions are studied, tested, reproduced, and applied among
communities (Blackstock, 2007). The role of power in how knowledge is produced, which and
whose knowledge is viewed as the *truth* and legitimate, and the methodologies used to produce
knowledge thus requires ongoing interrogation to unveil processes of exclusion and dominance,
including the standpoint and positionalities of the researchers themselves (Hill Collins, 2000).

4.2 Epistemological and methodological standpoints

Considering research processes as potentially reproducing sites and systems of
domination, I have sought to build an ethics of accountability (Hill Collins, 2000) and to
mobilize the liberatory potential of PAR (Torre & Ayala, 2009). Naming these standpoints can
involve being explicit and continuously reflexive of the ways in which my position influences
the research process and my epistemological stance in relation to the participatory process (Lee
& Léon, 2019). In forming my research process, I have been inspired by and have sought to
follow the legacies of scholar-activists, particularly queer and trans, critical race and migration,
feminist, and Filipino/a/x scholars, who have been delineating the social responsibilities and
solidarities of our positions within academia in terms of relations to our communities,
documenting our histories, and the transformative (im)possibilities in our entanglements with
displacement and dispossession (Fine & Torre, 2019; Francisco-Menchavez & Tungohan, 2020;
Lee & Léon, 2019). I follow scholars who engage with the intersections of scholarship and
activism to question power and knowledge, and in what ways research may become a site of
justice, social action or even injustice (Choudry, 2019; Fine & Torre, 2019; Francisco-
Menchavez & Tunoghan, 2020; Sandwick et al., 2018; Torre, 2009; Tungohan, 2020). They seek

to de-centre expert and professional knowledge toward the voices of people facing forms of oppression to then transform these conditions (Cahill et al., 2010; Torre, 2009).

To explore alternatives to this re-entrenchment of power hierarchies within knowledge production, I have considered deeply in my study the historical entanglements and social and power arrangements of the Filipino/a/x diaspora in Canada in my theoretical orientations, methodological approaches, and analyses.

The study questions I have developed have been influenced by my own position and my ongoing dialogue with academic and community members around how I might contribute to Filipino/a/x, migration, and LGBTQ+ communities as a scholar-activist. My own mother immigrated through the domestic worker program to Canada, while my father's parents came to Canada from the Netherlands after World War II. My standpoint in this research process thus enters as someone who has benefitted as a settler at the same time as growing in a multiracial low-income household that navigated historical displacements, cultural discontinuities, power issues, and socio-economic exclusions.

In the Westernized education system, I did not learn about histories of exclusionary immigration regimes and colonial nation-building in Canada and the conditions of displacement globally. There was little to no education in my Catholic school upbringing outside of patriarchal and cis-heteronormative understandings of family, gender, and sexuality. Higher education slowly opened questions for me about the limits of knowledge production, albeit often centering on liberal and Western discourses with racialized experiences as an identified gap in the conclusion, a universalized experience based on racial categories or left out altogether. I did not see a single text about Filipino/a/x experiences through my psychology and social work degrees until I sought out Philippines focused scholars and met Filipino/a/x scholars in my Ph.D. social

work program. However, what I did hear in conversations between colleagues were familiar tropes and stereotypes of Filipino/a/x nannies.

I credit community organizing and social movements in exposing me to "on-the-ground" knowledges of the root causes of poverty, displacement, and exclusion, including the gendered, sexualized, and racialized processes of these systems of domination. I am inspired by how social movements create new and evolving knowledge every day outside of educational institutions – learning and action continuously in process on the ground (Choudry, 2019). This project arose out of my accountability to change systems of domination and oppression enacted on my own communities, which is interconnected to learning how to enact solidarity to change the privileging and benefitting of settlers and other privileged bodies and worldviews over others.

I became invested in decolonization on Turtle Island and globally in learning from Indigenous Filipino/a/x activists touring across Canada who came from my mother's original homeland region in the Philippines, the Cordillera. They were spreading awareness and advocating for the Canadian government to prevent injustices and violence from Canadian mining companies on Indigenous peoples alongside the Philippine's state and military factions (Zoledziowski & Gutierrez, 2020). I participated in actions through social movements seeking accountability and national liberation from foreign extractive industries – in which I witnessed LGBTQ+ identified people link struggles of gendered and sexual oppression to anti-imperial and anti-colonial causes (Rappler, 2020).

Alongside other Filipino/a/x scholars largely based in the diaspora, I follow a lineage of re-visiting epistemological and ontological questions surrounding the meaning-making of Filipino/a/x identity, values and culture, yet turning to queer diasporic narratives and possibilities of re-interpretation. I explore whether an ethics of *kapwa* paired with relational accountability

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can serve as a site of critical reflection, reclamation, resistance and reconnection in the face of historical and contemporary colonial subjection and power regimes in localized contexts with global relations. In navigating everyday encounters and intentional community, pedagogical or research engagements, I propose and take part in an ongoing questioning through reflexive practice of epistemological, ontological and political engagements: *What effects, roles and responsibilities does the diaspora have in Filipino/a/x subject-formation and possibilities of re-interpretating cultural values and ethics toward liberatory praxis?*

Importantly, *kapwa* stems from a particular Filipino/a/x language of *Tagalog* and is not altogether translatable to English. While the term may not encapsulate the diversities of languages, meanings and histories of people originating from the Philippines, ethnographers have shown that ethnic groups across the Philippines have similar notions of the concept, yet understood through local languages (Solitario, 2022). As explored in the discussion section, I follow Remoquillo's (2023) re-interpretation of *kapwa* in practice as "a feeling of an inseparable, spiritual connection to others in community" (p. 8).

Kapwa as a *Tagalog* term (a present-day dominant national Filipino/a/x language) was a concept before Spanish colonization used in tribal and animist contexts (Reyes, 2015). Reyes (2015) considers how these concepts were then transformed through the mixing of Southeast Asian and Spanish traditions, and then further being further theorized through scholars challenging American academia and its traditions, which became known as *Sikologiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology). These scholars of Filipino psychology challenged the hierarchization of Westernized psychology over Indigenous and localized knowledges, seeking to re-orient toward decolonial, liberatory and Indigenous forms of healing, religiosity and politics, among other concepts (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). Another academic

conceptualization of *kapwa* is through "Filipino Virtue Ethics" which can be understood as togetherness with the other person, reflecting collectivist over individualistic values (Reyes, 2015).

Based on the research and my experiences in movement-building and Filipino/a/x community, I have centred decolonization in building from and in conversations with Indigenous, critical Filipino/a/x and queer diaspora scholars in these ethics and accountabilities. In seeking to enact and study decoloniality in a settler colonial context, queer diaspora research can explicitly incorporate these teachings and ways of being and knowing throughout the PAR process. This research process is historicized and contextualized to the community, in this case incorporating Filipino/a/x epistemologies and ontologies through *Kuwentuhan* and *kapwa*, discussed in more detail in the next few sections, and the historical and interconnected relations to place and land, which is at once local and global (Tuck & Mackenzie, 2015).

As an emerging academic seeking to merge scholarship and activism, I am cognizant of the power dynamics involved in different positions in academia, including differential levels of job security and the social locations of scholars themselves. These positions have differential power to produce knowledge claims that may be reinforcing of the logics of domination and oppression. Within the institution, as a Ph.D. candidate aiming for relational and non-extractive research processes on lived experiences, there are institutional constraints and normative power arrangements that I must contend with. I often engage with other colleagues who may be underrepresented and seeking to speak back to dominant discourses in their academic and practice fields. Positions that are non- or pre-tenure track have less stability and security in academia compared to those holding tenure. Yet, all these positions are expected to produce on fast and "unforgiving" paces, less attuned to the tempo of relationalities, PAR and even

reproducing a gendered disadvantage for those doing the bulk of "care work" (Francisco-

Menchavez & Tungohan, 2020, p. 263). The limits (and potential openings) of the university

space in seeking to establish an ethics of relational accountability has been one of ongoing

negotiation in terms of my identity, resource access, and positions tied to communities (further

elaborated on in the Discussion chapter).

4.3 Participatory action research (PAR)

PAR processes that use cultural production with a political aim has potential to apply and

document qualitative methods and approaches that can question and disrupt issues of power,

relationalities, and accountability to community's priorities around actionable change. Stemming

from feminist principles, PAR considers that research participants are the experts on their own

lives (Cerecer et al., 2013). They are considered to have power to transform their own conditions

through making meaning of and collectivizing their individual experiences and forming

strategies for political action (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014, 2021; Francisco-Menchavez &

Tungohan, 2020). PAR can involve partnering with participants to define reciprocal goals,

collaborate on the methods and democratize decision-making toward social and political change

(Francisco-Menchavez, 2014).

Rather than social movements being "objects of study" (Choudry, 2015, p. 42), I have

aimed to engage with an ethics of knowledge production that interacts in a longer-term relational

process with knowledge generated by and with movements. Cahill and colleagues (2010) note

that PAR stems from "a feminist praxis of an ethic of care" in which the research centres

relationships and responsibilities by "working with rather than for communities" (p. 407). These

authors note that "PAR is a response to exploitative research practices of outsiders who have

used communities as laboratories" (p. 362), in ways that communities themselves have not actually benefitted from the results of the studies.

This nexus between the university and community rejects modernist notions of neutrality and objectivity to work through and maintain reflexivity around the power structures involved in knowledge production from the social location of the researcher to the co-creation of research design to knowledge mobilization (Cahill et al., 2010; Choudry, 2019; Francisco-Menchavez, 2021; Kindon et al., 2007; Lee & Léon, 2019; Tungohan, 2020). This participatory interaction and analysis of power dynamics are sought after by scholar-activists to (possibly) resist and refuse the university as a site of neoliberal, colonial and state-capital interests of profit-making and commodification of knowledges in the margins, but at the same time may not altogether escape these logics, confines, and co-optation (Cahill et al., 2010; Choudry, 2019).

As Francisco-Menchavez (2021) notes, the emphasis and attractiveness in how many studies have deployed PAR as a form of empowerment to integrate "hard-to-reach" isolated immigrant or other communities can stifle the transformative potential of PAR. Rather than reflecting participation of working *with* communities, participation may re-entrench and reinforce forms of tokenism and supposed consultation (Cahill et al., 2010). Just as notions of community and unity may mask the differences, conflict and hierarchies within movement-building, participation may reproduce inequalities when a group of techniques are prioritized over relationalities (Cahill, 2007; Cahill et al., 2010).

Francisco-Menchavez and Tunoghan (2020) highlight the notion of a "protracted" research process of PAR that challenges the timelines of university institutions. PAR processes engage in critical consciousness raising, mutuality, and collective action in ways that continuously analyse theory and practice and go beyond the production of an output or outcome

(Cahill et al., 2010; Choudry, 2019). The process of learning and action are ongoing and continuously exchanging, consider power, politics, and context and, ideally, expand toward justice aims through a widening and deepening base of movement-building and solidarity (Choudry, 2019). As Francisco-Menchavez (2021) notes in drawing from *Kuwentuhan* and PAR alongside migrant workers who incorporate the collective story of others into their own: "the political potential in PAR presents itself when migrant workers recount their own experience and begin to understand those individual stories are part of a larger story of forced migration, labor export policy, and low-wage work" (p. 1). Thus, individual and collective action and social change may occur within the process of PAR itself and expand beyond the bounds of the project outcomes.

To further these ethics of accountability and challenging of modernist and Westernized approaches, this study also engages with Torre and Ayala's (2009) description of PAR's liberatory potential described as *entremundos* (between worlds) through Anzaldùa's concepts of *Mestizaje*. This approach involves resistance to traditional research spaces through loosening control of research processes, moving between individual, social and systemic levels of analyses, attending to collectivity, hybridity, moments of *choques* (shocks), and multiplicity in lived experiences and identities. Hybridity involves researchers being more open among research teams and participants about their different identities, relations to communities, power, privilege, experiences and vulnerabilities beyond insider and outsider binaries which often frames the affiliations of the research to the community they are researching.

Moments of *choques* entails attuning to potential transformation that may occur in situations of conflict to move toward deeper knowing and, even, healing, recognizing that these storytelling spaces are open to risks and challenging emotions. Multiplicity accepts the diversity

of knowledges and epistemologies contrary to dominant singular and universalizing narratives and experiences. Research may be designed in ways that aim to name and de-construct these power hierarchies and the rigid contours of the research space, and engage with navigating and expanding on relationalities, difference, collectivity, and conflict.

This study is grounded in these PAR approaches through Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan* methods with the aim of documenting, analyzing and mobilizing identity and community organizing experiences among queer and trans Filipino/a/xs in Montréal. In addition, this study aims to examine the transformative potential of these PAR approaches through Filipino/a/x epistemologies. Through centering their lived experiences, the study aims to contribute to more inclusive and transformative social and community work and longer-term movement-building, if possible, within and outside of academia.

4.4 Adapting Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan* methods among queer and trans Filipino/a/xs

PAR processes typically arise from a particular group or community identifying a research topic alongside researchers. Photovoice is considered a PAR approach, which aims to enable participants to express their own views on issues and strengths surrounding themselves and their communities using the cultural production of photographs (Sutton-Brown, 2014; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 1999, 2006). The process aims to promote critical dialogue as a collective as participants share the meanings of their photos, considered an accessible avenue to help reach relevant policymakers to aim for concrete action (Sutton-Brown, 2014; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 1999, 2006).

Kuwentuhan as a research method has recently been elaborated on in the Filipino/a/x diasporic context as a culturally responsive, decolonial, and non-extractive approach among Filipino/a/x communities (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014, 2021; Gutierrez et al., 2023; Pino, 2023).

The cultural notion and method of *Kuwentuhan* recognizes how storytelling in the cultural and transnational context of Filipino/a/xs focuses on individual experiences as intertwined with "others" and the value of belonging to a larger community (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014). The engagement with the cultural notion of *Kuwentuhan* opens epistemological and ontological questions and possibilities of disrupting Western constructs in meaning-making and research practices to more meaningfully embody non-hierarchal relations, cultural continuity, and connections to culturally based knowledges (Gutierrez et al., 2023). The *Kuwentuhan* process can also include telling stories around shared food as a natural and cultural way to elicit discussion on individual or community issues that could make the findings more representative of their experiences, thus enhancing validity (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014). This study adapted Francisco-Menchavez' (2014) use of *Kuwentuhan* as a method through a PAR approach with migrant workers and migrant worker organizations, which I combined with Photovoice.

These combined methods also seek to support the participants in recognizing their own power and avenues for collective social and political action through relating across their individual experiences, thus building more collective power (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014, Lee, 2012). In the case of my research project, queer and trans Filipino/a/x diasporic lived and community experiences have been shaped by similar histories of induced migration within the generations of their families, as well as gendered, sexualized, and racialized experiences in diaspora, community and organizing contexts. Straddling these histories, cultural and socio-political contexts, as articulated in chapters one to three, the political potential of PAR may arise in this study through incorporating educational discussions on the theoretical engagements between Filipino/a/x migration, gender, sexuality, and colonial and imperial histories in the data collection processes, especially in the workshops. The workshops are the main project phase for

story-sharing and gathering, during which participants create art and cultural productions. Like Francisco-Menchavez (2014, 2021), I included some educational components in my presentations during the workshops on Filipino/a/x migration, and queer and trans diaspora research in relation to decoloniality and queer Filipino/a/x futurisms (explained further in the Findings and Discussion sections).

The methods may also provide possibilities for enhancing emotional, practical, and social support among the participants, as well as fostering their own roles as potential cultural producers and community organizers in the creation process (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014; Lee, 2012). The use of art and cultural productions is a theme throughout queer of colour organizing literature as possible forms of social change and collective consciousness raising through visibilizing undocumented or mis-recognized narratives and stereotypes. Co-creating cultural production with the community may show their diversities, complexities, and multiple desires (Cahill et al., 2010; Francisco-Menchavez, 2021). Co-creating cultural production can be deployed as an empowering and resistance strategy to hegemonic discourses, erasures, and limiting productions of narratives of lived experiences of queer and trans racialized communities (Diaz et al., 2018; Lee, 2012).

While both methods follow a similar staged process, I remained open to moments of "choques" described by Torre and Ayala (2009) in which moments of conflict or difference may create liberatory openings and widen transformative acts within and beyond the research process. I loosened control of the process toward the collective learning, desires and possibilities occurring by attuning to their relationalities, their told stories and my own reflexive practice through field notes. I also sought to make explicit the confines of my accountabilities as a researcher, Ph.D. student, and community member.

Considering my accountabilities and involvements in the Filipino/a/x community, including having many relations with LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs, I requested feedback on the initial project idea from community members identifying as LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs through a Montreal-based arts, storytelling, and cultural Filipino/a/x community group, *Pulso ng Bayan* (Pulse of the People/Nation in *Tagalog*). This grassroots collective by and for the Filipino/a/x community aimed to gather and share stories in multi-method formats (e.g., visual arts, photography, interviews, online cartographies) by Filipino/a/xs in Montréal on concepts of home, migration and intergenerational resilience for the future.

This group was not established through affiliations to funding bodies or universities guiding the goals and activities, rather the group came together based in their shared interests and skills in artistic and storytelling processes to document and share unheralded Filipino/a/x stories from their own community. The group's identities and collective and non-hierarchical formation and approach was an appropriate space to ask about the design and purpose of the project as it was reflective of the community organizing frameworks I was seeking to document in this dissertation. The members of the group, including myself, have experience with arts-based facilitation and co-creation, which would also bring a community-based perspective on the use of the Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan* storytelling methods in our community.

The feedback was informal and collected in our regular collective meetings before the study began. With permission from the entire group, we also used the *Pulso ng Bayan* social media platforms to promote the study workshops and exhibit. This ongoing engagement with *Pulso ng Bayan* throughout and after the study is an example of how my study is *a part* of ongoing community building outside of the university environment. These relations continue despite the end of the study process, suggesting a longer-term relational process beyond the

confines of the study methods and, following Torre and Ayala (2009), expanding outward toward collective purposes, processes, and outcomes.

I also incorporated field notes as a form of reflexivity and to incorporate learning and action into the research process so that I may adapt the research process itself to the evolution and reflections of the collective discussions. These field notes and critical reflexive practice helped me attune to the embodiment of collectivity and relationalities, the multiplicities of stories and lived realities, and the movements between individual, social and broader political analyses (Torre & Ayala, 2009). These notes also aimed to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings by providing an additional data source in which I explore my roles and limitations in establishing the meaning of the stories, reflect on the research process, and how the participants have been impacted by the telling and re-telling of stories (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

4.4.1 Participants and recruitment: Who are we un-becoming

I met with one of the participants to describe the project and sign the consent form individually as the participant could not join the first workshop. As I was describing the methods of Photovoice, this participant opened a moment of questioning: *In what ways could a static image represent an identity or a practice that was in constant transformation, evolution, and transition?* This questioning opened a possible moment of "choques" (Torre & Ayala, 2009) in which the participant's reflections on the Photovoice method itself created ongoing reflexive practice for me in how identity and representation through this photographic method of cultural production could escape and re-shape static notions of identity, meaning, community and, altogether, question the time and space of the project itself. If the project was to take seriously a queer and trans diaspora and decolonial analysis in the method, the process would question static

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and naturalized constructions of identity explicitly, and even the linearity of time, space, movement, and mobility that a research process might suggest.

We discussed the possibilities of how the photograph could capture this transformational and evolving understanding – reflecting the embodiment of queerness. As Latz (2017) notes in their analysis of the temporality of photographs used in photovoice in which photos are captured in a moment in time: "the *person* who took the photographs may not be the exact same *person* who narrates the photographs" (p. 82). The meaning of the static or material photo may change through lapses in time so being able to re-count the story of the photo in proximity to when it was taken, as well as providing support for participants' memory-work to narrate the meaning of the photograph, are important considerations (Latz, 2017). I considered for my process how these potential shifts in meaning reflect the evolution of identity, representation, and the plethora of factors, in addition to the self, that influences the narration of these stories. I asked how the cultural understanding of *Kuwentuhan* may resist modernist and Westernized notions of time in the research process.

I open the section on participants (un)becoming of who they are, including through their identifications within this study, by referring to this moment as it shows that participants deeply question their own representations of themselves. The moment shows the need to make explicit the ongoing transformation and evolutions of identities that are limited in static demographic questions and questionnaires. As mentioned, in addition to a self-attributed identity, queer as an analysis recognizes and critiques the production of normative arrangements and power regimes in which heterosexual or cisgender experiences are privileged, as well as notions of stable, fixed, or naturalized identity categories (Luibhéid & Chávez, 2020; Lubhéid, 2008; Somerville, 2020). Therefore, in revealing these representations provided by participants at the time of the data

collection, it is important to consider how they make meaning of their identities throughout the research process, how society constructs these identities, and the ongoing evolution of these meanings beyond the project itself – as they construct who they are (un)becoming in an ongoing process. While these identity markers can reveal lived experiences, they are embedded and evolve across time and space within socio-political contexts, affective experiences, power arrangements, and histories.

4.4.2 Participants' identifications

This study recruited a diversity of individuals who identified as LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in Montréal and surrounding areas using purposive sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2016) to select the specific group who identified within the study parameters. As suggested by the original creators, Photovoice should include seven to ten participants in total (Wang, 1999, 2006). I recruited from a range of informal and formal networks using a poster and a simple infographic with more details about the study (see Appendix A). The poster was posted on the social media platforms Instagram and Facebook, shared with existing community connections, and circulated through Filipino/a/x and LGBTQ+ groups and organizations, such as *Pulso ng Bayan*, AGIR (*Action LGBTQIA+ avec les immigrant.es et réfugié.es*) and the *Centre Communautaire LGBTQ+ de Montréal* (LGBTQ+ Community Centre of Montréal). The poster was also posted in different locations across Montréal, including in Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood restaurants.

Ten participants initially expressed interest in the study through recruitment. Two interested participants removed themselves from the study at the time of sending the consent form, for a total of eight signed consent forms. One participant removed themselves from the study after the first workshop. Therefore, seven individuals completed the research process. Individuals who contacted me expressing interest in the study received a detailed infographic

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explaining the study purpose, honorarium, workshop dates and interview options, as well as possible options for translation and the voluntary nature of the study. A few days before the first workshop began, I sent an e-mail to all participants who had previously confirmed the consent form to be signed and sent back to me, as well as travel, venue, and logistical details. No participant expressed a need for childcare or language interpretation.

Two art exhibit attendees were also recruited to provide feedback on their experiences in the art exhibit and on the emerging themes that I reviewed with them in the interviews. I emailed all those who had signed up on the sign-in sheet at the art exhibit to be contacted for an interview about the exhibit. These two attendees responded and signed consent forms during their interviews.

The participants who completed the study according to how they shared their information are provided in the Findings section. They shared this information only after we discussed the consent form (see Appendix B for the various consent forms) including confidentiality in the first workshop. As queer and trans peoples, experiencing ongoing forms of "coming out" and the violence, stigma and/or challenges associated with identifying publicly or visibly as non-normative in sexualities or gender is still prevalent in society. These dynamics were considered in the ethics and consent process of this study in terms of individuals sharing their names and personal information, as well as being visible at the art exhibit, in their photographs or in the mobilization of the findings after the study.

As further discussed in the Findings chapters, visibility and invisibility occurred as forms of empowerment, resistance, community and struggle, often simultaneously, which could be reproduced in this study as their stories and names are circulated. I made concerted efforts to critically reflect on these notions throughout the process with careful attention to resisting the

stereotyping, stigmatizing or misrepresentation of their desires and visibilities. While not addressed in the feedback interviews, this cultural production process as a collective and group could have provided more assurance in taking this risk of being visibilized in this study together.[15]

I had hoped to reach beyond my existing networks through these various channels and organizations, especially to recruit different ages and generations. I remained aware that many cultural communities participate through word-of-mouth and their informal networks rather than following mainstream and formal organizations. The limited time to recruit participants, accompanied with the trust required to have participants from the LGBTQ+ community effectively "come out" through the project, may have also led to the participants who joined already having a connection with me, whether directly or indirectly through others.

In addition, the promotional materials were not translated to Filipino/a/x languages, such as *Tagalog, Visayan* or *Ilocano*, which could have limited understanding of the study or trust in participating. However, the trust that I have with existing networks in the LGBTQ+ community and among Filipino/a/xs may have facilitated the ability to recruit the existing participants who completed the entire study *despite* the limited time to recruit them and the dedicated time to complete the study. These participants expressed a sense of commitment to participate in and complete the study as evidenced in their ongoing participation in the study in each component, and feedback in the individual and group interviews.

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[15] As discussed in the findings, the notion of collectivity and a "web of relations" in which groups become better able to navigate hostile environments and processes of healing together was important in being able and willing to express and visibilize nonnormative desires and representations.

4.5 Compensation

In total, participants received $100.00 honoraria for their participation in the workshops, $125.00 for the art exhibit, and $25.00 for individual interviews. Art exhibit attendees also received $25.00 honorarium for interviews. Participants received a large, printed copy of up to three of the photographs, along with frames, which they selected to be showcased in the art exhibit. In consideration of implementing a community research project that would take time and resources of the participants, covering some of their material needs could enhance access to the workshops, interviews and the art exhibit. In each of the four workshops, participants were provided with a meal and with a two-way STM metro pass (the public transportation system) in each session for those who needed them. They were also provided with reimbursement for transportation to and from the art exhibit. The total compensation and reimbursements came in part from additional funding received after the workshops and art exhibit, subsequently approved through an ethics amendment. This funding also enabled retroactive honoraria payments to members of *Pulso ng Bayan* of $50.00 each for their time consulting on the research project in its initial phases of the design.

4.6 Data collection and analysis in process, moments and movements

The PAR data collection and some of the analysis procedures took place over the course of 15 weeks from July to October 2022. In total, there were four two-hour workshops (with participant photography between workshops one and two), one art exhibit of four hours, five individual participant feedback interviews, two art exhibit attendee feedback interviews and one group feedback interview/ celebration session of two hours. Latz (2017) discusses how studies that have implemented and documented Photovoice refer to the original creators, Wang and

Burris (1997) and Wang (1999), but that there has been much flexibility in how the studies are done. Oftentimes, researchers combine different methods for data collection and analyses.

Below is a table summarizing the procedures for each stage in the research process to help understand the combination and application of these two methods, while adapting some of the process to the needs of participants and the institutional setting. While some adjustments were made to include additional arts, culture or educational components, the overall original structure and content was maintained.

Table 1: *Overview of the Photovoice and Kuwentuhan methods combined*

Stage	*Kuwentuhan*	Photovoice	Combined process and adaptations
Description	Filipino/a/x "talk-story" with the use of food or cultural production	Photography used often in a workshop series or interviews, and art exhibit	Clear partnerships in which participants are involved in all stages of the research process was adapted to informal and formal feedback in partnership with the community group *Pulso ng Bayan* and informally with community members on the design of the study. Semi-structured individual and group interviews were offered to participants to provide feedback on the research process at the end. Ongoing learning and action after the formal group feedback session continues in community.
Recruitment	Consultations with Filipino/a/x community groups on capacities to participate, unknown number of participants recommended.	Seven to ten participants recommended, often with an advisory community including policymakers and community leaders.	Rather than a direct advisory committee or partnership to conduct recruitment, various methods were used to recruit the seven participants including the community group *Pulso ng Bayan* helping with promoting the study. Other LGBTQ+ and Filipino/a/x groups and individuals also shared the study. The poster was circulated online and in various Filipino/a/x shops and other locations across Montréal.
Data collection	Various numbers of meetings and workshops. Sharing cultural food provided in informal	Usually there is a workshop series and an art exhibit to share the policy	Four workshops were conducted combining cultural and popular education components and following the qualitative open and selective coding procedures elaborated on by

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	settings is possible. Popular education sessions on Filipino/a/x migration to induce systemic understandings of migrant processes. Co-created cultural production could be used to collect and analyze stories and develop policy recommendations.	recommendations and photographs.	both methods. Field notes were added to the study, especially after recruitment, the workshops, interviews, and the art exhibit. Other additions included individual and group feedback sessions, and feedback interviews with two art exhibit attendees, and a closing celebratory and feedback group session.
Workshop 1	Educational discussions on the realities of Filipino/a/x migration co-facilitated with a community organization, along with introductions to the process, ethics, and consent.	The methods and procedures are explained in detail. Some studies have a skill-building session on photography. There should be a group discussion on cameras, power, and ethics and on how they may photograph the research question. Participants are given two weeks to take photographs, journal about them and send one or two to the researcher.	Most of the content of the Photovoice procedure was followed, however, prompted reflection questions to foster a greater sense of connection, comfortability, and ease among participants was included. The environment was set up in ways that reflect a community picnic which often takes place in the Filipino/a/x community – *Banigs* (mats) in the centre of the room, food to share, art supplies to create and ground one-elf and various check-in questions throughout the process. A Filipina community photographer joined this session to practice and gain skills sharing stories through photography. Informal and formal discussions about Filipino/a/x experiences tied to systemic analyses was constant.
Workshop 2	Open coding: Group discussion on a wide range of themes based on the cultural production.	Individual photograph sharing and journaling using the SHOWeD questions (What do you see here? What is actually happening here? How does this relate to Our lives? Why does this strength or issue exist? What can we do about it?)	I combined the SHOWeD questions, with some adaptations, educational discussion on queer and trans Filipino/a/x Canadian literature, and the open coding procedure in discussion on the common issues and themes. The open coding involved a period of reflection time and using post-it notes individually, which were then displayed collectively. The coding also involved a collective collage-making activity created during the storytelling as a reflection option.
Workshop 3	Skill-building session on arts and	Educational discussion on	A member of the Filipino Indigenous Peoples Organization of Quebec

	cultural work in organizing and advocacy co-facilitated with a community individual or group. Selective coding: Group discussion on combining the multiple themes into broader categories.	creating recommendations for social and political action.	(FIPOQ) facilitated an interactive arts and cultural session on one of the objectives of the research on solidarity, unity and decolonial understandings of gender and sexuality in the Philippines. The group discussion debriefed on the individual stories from Workshop 2 and a debrief of the session with FIPOQ. Selective coding involved using the post it notes from the last workshop combined with the reflections from this workshop.
Workshop 4	Planning for potential advocacy tools and cultural production as ways to mobilize the findings.	Developing recommendations for social and political action using the analysis from the previous workshops Begin planning the photo exhibit and other ways to mobilize the findings.	This session became another educational discussion about decolonization and "queer Filipino/a/x futures," as well as an arts and culture workshop in which one of the participant artists used Artifical Intelligence (AI) software *MidJourney* to co-create digital images around imagining queer futures from a transformative perspective.
Art Exhibit	Presentation of the co-created cultural production and the advocacy recommendations.	Showcase of the photographs as well as advocacy recommendations presentation and feedback from the attendees.	Five weeks after the final workshop, a catered art exhibit was held, including the photographs on display, readings by the participants of their stories, a performance, and open space for community groups to share their initiatives. Attendees signed up to a mailing list and indicated whether they would be interested in being interviewed, which was used to recruit attendees for feedback interviews on the art exhibit.
Interviews	No clear addition of feedback interviews.	No clear addition of feedback interviews.	Participants were offered optional interviews to provide feedback on the research process and the emerging themes. Five participants were interviewed. Several weeks after the exhibit and interviews, six participants joined a group interview to receive group feedback, celebrate the project, and

			close the workshop and art exhibit process.
			Two interviews with art exhibit attendees to give feedback about the emerging themes and the exhibit were conducted.
Data analysis	Adapted qualitative thematic analysis of open and selective coding in partnership with the participants.	Analysis of the theories, issues and themes arising in collaboration with the participants during the second and third workshops.	The data analysis involved adapted qualitative thematic analysis used by Francisco-Menchavez (2014) of open and selective coding, which reflects some of the Photovoice analysis in collaboration with participants during the workshops. Researcher-led open and selective coding of the recorded workshop transcripts, interview transcripts and field notes was then conducted.
Action, dissemination & mobilization	Advocacy tools identified by participants and/or the partner organization are developed and delivered to target audiences. Action occurs throughout the process as participants become co-creators of knowledge and solidarity occurs across the participants (Francisco-Menchavez & Tungohan, 2020).	Advocacy tools are potentially created for targeted practice or policy change and are delivered to target audiences.	The discussions on policy recommendations focused mainly on participants' desires to continue relationship-building in community with some action steps identified that are reflective of a longer-term community organizing and relational process. The emerging themes have been presented in online sessions, receiving feedback from participants who attended. The methods and emerging findings have also been presented in academic and community spaces, including an interview with the Filipino Canadian news channel, *OMNI*, based in Toronto and with *Kapwa Centre's* (a by and for Filipino/a/x youth organization) radio show. Through receiving feedback from participants on the process, the action dimension of PAR also occurred throughout the process.

4.6.1 The workshops

In July and August 2022, I adapted and combined the stages of Photovoice (Wang, 1999, 2006) and *Kuwentuhan* methods (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014) which each involve a series of workshops in which data collection and analysis occur simultaneously. Four in-person

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workshops were held, which were designed in early 2022 and implemented using a *Workshop and Art Showcase Planning and Facilitation Guide* (see Appendix C). Each workshop had a "loose" plan with the objectives, timeframes for facilitation, materials needed, prompt questions and options for skills, education or discussion written out in the guide. As a community organizer in the Filipino/a/x community, I had been donated the space of the IWC in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood of Montréal to conduct the workshops. This space was selected because it is the neighbourhood on the Island of Montréal with the highest number of Filipino/a/xs (see section 3.6.1). The neighbourhood is widely known within the Filipino/a/x community for its Filipino/a/x-owned grocery stores, restaurants, and businesses.

The IWC is also less than one-minute walk from the Plamondon Metro station, making it easily accessible by public transportation, including various bus stops and parking locations nearby. In addition, the IWC is a landmark in the city, especially among Filipino/a/xs, for advocating for migrant worker's rights through casework, campaigns, and solidarity with other organizations. I had used the community rooms free of charge to join and conduct various community organizing initiatives for migrant justice, rights, and Philippines-related campaigns for a few years. I was hoping that, like the effect of a familiar and natural environment to do *Kuwentuhan* sessions with Filipino/a/xs in one of Francisco-Mechavez's (2014) studies, this space and neighbourhood could offer more comfort and familiarity to discuss and explore Filipino/a/x identity and community. At the same time, I was cognizant of how people have different relations to notions of Filipino/a/x and community spaces, and the ways in which an LGBTQ+ gathering might have another effect of being difficult and emotional to join. The individual and group feedback sessions would be an opportunity for participants to reflect on this workshop process, space, and place.

Workshop one. Following the original creators, the first workshop involved an introduction to the project and the methods in more detail, and discussions about consent, ethics, power, and photography (Wang, 1999, 2006). In sharing about the project and the methods, the presentation included some educational information about the epistemological and theoretical approach of the study in understanding labour migration, settler colonialism and queer diaspora. These educational pieces were included at the beginning of each of the workshops, or for a longer portion of the workshop in the case of the session with the Filipino Indigenous Peoples Organization of Quebec (FIPOQ) in Workshop three.

To build more notions of community and trust in the group, who would be sharing potentially intimate and emotional details with seven people, the first workshop was opened with the question: "What does building community look like in this space together?" The participants had already been given journals to keep to themselves, and some of them used their journals to draw or write reflections on this question to share with the group. This form of "check-in" and "check-out" reflective questions was continued throughout the process to build ongoing relations in the process and be more aware of how the participants were processing and experiencing the workshops to be more conducive for safety.

The session then involved affirming and discussing their signed consent forms and consent forms for humans they wish to photograph (see Appendix C) as well as limits to photographing identifiable children. I had created and had available social, psychological and community resources for LGBTQ+, Filipino/a/x and migrant groups. There were also printed grounding techniques based on trauma awareness resources used in social work in the case that their experiences telling stories resulted in distress or re-traumatization.

With the aims of building community alongside community artists, photographers, and groups in the research process and fostering skill-building with participants (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014), a Filipina community photographer was involved in the first workshop who helped with the discussion on ethics and how to tell stories through photographs. They also held an interactive exercise in which the participants told stories through photographs in their cellular phones. We then went outside (on a beautiful sunny day) and took photographs in the surrounding area.

The participants, one by one, shared about why they took these photographs and received feedback from the photographer and the other participants. These stories already began to elicit themes for the data analysis. The session was recorded beginning from the photography session, after the participants had completed the consent forms. The participants were provided with the timeline of two weeks before the next session to take, reflect on and send the photographs to me via e-mail.

The participants were told that they would discuss the meaning of one or two important photos to the whole group following the questions "SHOWeD": What do you See here? What is really Happening here? How does this relate to Our lives? Why does this situation, concern or strength exist? What can we Do about it? (Wang, 1999, 2006). I had also added the additional question: Why did you take this photograph?

Workshop two. The second workshop combined more educational discussion, the sharing of the individual photographs and their stories, and the beginning of open coding through group discussions on the individual stories. While having educational discussions on labour migration between Philippines to Canada was relevant for a *Kuwentuhan* PAR study with migrant workers (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014), this process included content from queer and

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trans diasporic literature in Canada, such as chapters from Diaz and colleagues (2018) and Manalansan (2008). This content integrates sexuality, Filipino/a/x, and migration studies in the diaspora from micro- and macro- analyses, thus, aiming to connect individual, social and systemic analyses (Torre & Ayala, 2009) in the discussion about the photographs relevant to their lives and histories.

After going through the first session and wanting to ensure the participants could have an artistic and grounding space to share and process oftentimes emotional and difficult stories, another co-creation of cultural production was added to the second session involving one of the participant artists using collective collage-making. The collage would be used to assist with the group discussion as we analyzed and debriefed on the individual stories shared through their photographs. The participant helped introduce the collage-making exercise in which multiple magazines and various artifacts were in the centre of the room.

As participants shared their individual stories regarding their photographs presented on PowerPoint, other participants cut out and placed on a mat different images, words and artifacts that arise for them as they reflect on the stories told to create a collective collage. Some participants shared poetry from past experiences, some had followed the questions, and some had said they chose to do "free writing" to reflect on the photographs.

After the participants shared about their individual photographs, the open coding procedure involved finding common themes, theories, and issues in a group discussion, combining the analyses of Francisco-Menchavez (2014) and Wang (2006), and an open reflection on the collages we had created. These collages depicted below were also discussed in the third workshop to open the session. I called these two collages "I see myself in each of you," quoting one of the participants, Maria-Lorraine, in our debriefing of the second workshop – a

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beginning reflection on the reconnections and recognitions being made within and between the

participants.

Figure 1: Two collages representing collective stories from workshop two titled 'I see myself in each of you' (Maria-Lorraine). Images were produced by Vicente (participant artist), 2022.

Workshop three. The objectives of the third workshop were to provide participants a

space to learn skills on using arts and cultural work as forms of advocacy and organizing, to

develop overarching categories based on the multiple themes identified in the previous workshop

(selective coding), and to begin to develop recommendations for social and political change. To

begin the session, the two collages developed in the previous session were presented, and a

prompt question was provided: "What is one thing you see here that relates to our stories?" This

question reflected the analysis of broader themes from the SHOWeD questions that helps to

create a collective story, while providing a prompt for participants to begin to reflect on the

themes across the stories. I also included discussion and sharing of resources about active

listening, breathing and grounding techniques, and reminders about power, privilege and providing content warnings if their stories or reflections discuss death, violence, or abuse.

These components were included due to the previous workshop in which there were heightened emotions toward the end of the story sharing due to sensitive content and participants relating to each other across their experiences. The session was opened with a reflection on what resources and strengths we draw from within ourselves and each other as we share and collectivize our experiences. My field notes and participant reflections on these opening questions will be included in the analyses of the workshop processes in the Findings section.

For this session, a member of the FIPOQ facilitated an interactive arts and cultural session on one of the objectives of the research on solidarity, unity and decolonial understandings of gender and sexuality in the Philippines. For the educational discussion portion, I read some scholarly excerpts about decolonization and the realities of advocating as settlers and/or migrants in Canada in contexts of displacement from Luibhéid and Chávez (2020). The components of the workshop were dynamic, involving music, presentation, discussion, and dance. Here is an excerpt from my field notes a few days after the third workshop describing the session:

> Jayson opened our session with musical instruments from different Indigenous groups in the Cordillera, firstly an Indigenous dance familiar to me as I've tried to get the rhythm on multiple occasions at family gatherings. Three different beats for three different gong style metal instruments. We then move in a circle with these three different beats showing unity. While the dances are gendered, using an eagle as the shape with your arms, a later explanation talks about how the dancers change the gender roles in the dance to better understand the different perspectives. He then demonstrated a few other instruments, made from materials from the homeland. Bamboo. Wood. Metals. A flute-style instrument you play by using your nose. Jayson then shared two PowerPoint presentations, one showing the areas and peoples in the Cordilleran mountains and then another that almost struck home for a lot of people, based on the feedback and questions afterwards. Jayson spoke about LGBTQ+ peoples from pre-colonial and colonial times. The session drew from resources that have been tough to find, books that have been placed in cities outside of the Philippines on display. The lead roles and vast diversity of

genders and sexualities across the Philippines, many terms that just totally disrupt a gender binary, a patriarchal and heteronormative society. Mythologies depict the wide array of gender representations. I was struck especially by the ways that lessons about gender and sexuality come from nature – nature being SO queer, nature being a cycle, circular, transformative, resilient, a storyteller, a place we heal and grow and ground. The bamboo being flexible in the wind, shapeshifting to its environment.

The field note then goes on to discuss the unnatural feeling of transitioning from this session as participants were expressing feelings of deep reconnection, interest, and appreciation in these teachings. They expressed a sense that they had been gifted missing or dislocated knowledge of their ancestors and culture. With the time constraint of the workshop and the workshop goals, I had used large sheets with overarching themes the group had been discussing and gave them sticky notes to add to the underlying themes that I had noted down in the previous workshops. The participants were told they could add to, question, or change any of the posted themes. However, as I had reflected in the field note, the sense of learning, growth and emotionality in the workshops were emerging as an important part of the process to adapt to:

> What is generating from the process, the connection, the learning, the dialogue, seems to be taking over a bit the building up of the themes from the photos. How to integrate this emerging desire with the research process? The movement and collective potential feels great in this moment. The check-out question seemed to be the right amount of introspection and collective connection – what is one thing you appreciate about yourself and about the group? A growing of embracing ourselves and our connection to others, and, especially, nature.

This third workshop illustrates a potentially transformative moment in which Torre and Ayala's (2009) model of attuning to moments of "*choques*" and liberatory openings, as well as loosening control of the research process, was generated. Rather than enforcing a strict research and workshop chronology of time and space through my power as the researcher, I attempted to adapt and reflect on the potentials for opening to the desires, questions, affective and relational moments in the research process.

Workshop four. The final workshop was initially planned to include transforming the broader themes established through selective coding into potential recommendations for social and political change, as well as beginning to plan the art showcase and develop other ideas to mobilize the findings (Latz, 2017). However, again, as will be analyzed and reflected on in the findings, in adapting and attuning to a mutual learning process in PAR in which the research is tied to and in conversation with the broader collective, a few participants challenged the notion of recommendations in our organizing context as aligning with reformist strategies that could reinforce cis-heteronormative, patriarchal, and exclusionary logics underpinning practices and policies.

Potential concrete actions for change following these workshops were discussed more in the feedback interviews and sessions. The field notes I wrote a few days after the final workshop describing these tensions, the community setting and the detail of the workshop illustrate how this research process is not only tied to the scale and scope of a confined institutional university space:

> This final workshop was a bit harder to re-adjust to. Of course, I have the plan of what it would look like, but a cumulation of three workshops and several weeks of learning, listening, absorbing, adapting, had me thinking through deeply what prompts we would answer, what has been left unaddressed around the research questions, what space needs to be made to process the previous workshops, what is the level of energy and connectivity that has seemed to be there at the end of the last one. Who missed certain sessions and may have different awareness of the conversations we've had. What needs to be better summarized and discussed. And then there's the in the moment learning and adapting that occurs.

> Ironically, the final weekend of the workshop was Pride weekend in Montreal. Group chat on group chat were forming all week about where people (mostly Filipino/a/x LGBTQ+ groups) would be meeting for the parade, what events people wanted to go to, what reactions, responses and energies people were experiencing throughout the week. I got this sense that my workshop was considered by the community as a part of the pride weekend.

The field note then goes on to reflect on the ways in which Montréal is often a place seen as a "gay mecca" on a global scale, which can erase and privilege certain bodies and experiences over others. I reflected on how the Pride parade has been critiqued as a growing consumerist, neoliberal and exclusionary space (see section 3.3.1 for research literature addressing these critiques of Pride parades). These reflections on the community context influenced the ways in which I considered the workshop space. The field note further builds on the questioning of the participants of the notion of policy recommendations, similar to the historical literature that questions state-sanctioned and institutional discourses as potentially limiting the transformative possibilities regarding undoing systems of oppression. The Pride parade context thus invoked further critical reflection on the ways in which this project could simultaneously re-entrench and/or contribute to longer-term movement-building from a liberatory approach. The focus in this final workshop on re-imagining queer futures and possibilities for social change was thus well positioned as a cumulation of the teachings and stories the group had been exposed to, and a sense of integration with movement-building outside of the research space.

The session began with excerpts from Diaz and colleagues (2018) on queer horizons and the formation of the LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x group, *Babaylan* in the 1990s in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Two days before the session, one of the participants suggested doing an Artificial Intelligence (AI) queer Filipino/a/x futurisms workshop, which would use imaging generated from on-the-spot words and concepts that someone feeds into the online tool. An option of four images is then created, drawing from this bot's images. The person can then select one of these images to enhance. The participant, Andi, presented about Afrofuturisms, an artistic, aesthetic, and cultural practice and school of thought that merges technology and creativity to reimagine possible pasts and futures of liberation through diasporic culture. Andi presented their

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inspirations and processes among queer and trans Filipino/a/x communities in their artistic practice before describing how this AI tool could assist with imagining queer Filipino/a/x futurisms. My field note reflects on the usefulness of this tool and the ensuing reconnections that occurred in this final workshop:

> This portion seemed to excite the participants, the power of technology and innovation to create images unseen before. Creating an image of the future on the spot that challenges and undoes what might be limiting our imaginations – beyond funding, beyond state measures, beyond present thoughts. In the middle of this session, someone was standing in front of the projector and had one of the AI generated images projected on their body. All of a sudden the workshop turned into a photoshoot, with playing, encouraging, snaps and appreciation of each person who went up to get their picture taken. As we generated the images, the energy seemed high. The connection seemed undeniable.

The closing of the workshop involved showing the images that had been created one by one, and then a sharing session based on a few prompt questions. The questions included looking back at things that were ignited in us, that we would let go of, that we would carry forward with us, and that we still wanted to do together as a group. In the field note, I expressed a sense of relearning about the importance of transitions as some participants were taken aback at the beginning of the session that it was the last one. I had also reflected on honouring the desires of participants in how they would like to continue connecting or not to.

These field notes show how events and movement-building occurring outside of the research project space informed my interactions and reflections on creating the space with the participants. The occurrence of the major Pride event for LGBTQ+ rights which has been critiqued as reinforcing exclusionary logics, particularly privatizing and supporting a neoliberal and state-centred agenda of LGBTQ+ inclusion, had me further opening to questioning notions of recommendations that could re-entrench similar reformist or neoliberal systems.

The final workshop which turned into a loud and boisterous celebratory (and queer) space in which we re-imagined the visibility of our bodies through an unexpected moment of play with

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technology, further reinforced the need for methods to escape traditional bounds and remain loose toward these collective reconnections and community-led representations of the self and each other. The political potential of such moments of reconnection occurring in the encounters between individuals and groups in storytelling and cultural production processes are discussed in the Findings and the Discussion sections.

4.6.2 The art exhibit

Following the Photovoice procedures (Wang, 2006), the art exhibit often includes the participants' stories displayed through the photographs, presentations and feedback on advocacy recommendations, and targeted audiences that can influence change based off the recommendations. The art exhibit took place five weeks after the final workshop. The planning for the art exhibit, such as the catering by Dre Mejia (a Filipino caterer) and the venue in downtown Montréal, began at the same time as the workshop processes. I drew from emerging themes from our analysis to shape the agenda of the four-hour event and included aspects of research literature and the emerging themes in my facilitation of the event. The plan of the event was also meant to foster more connections between participants, attendees, community groups, organizations, and other academics or decisionmakers.

The event would give an opportunity for the participants to potentially gain skills and experiences in presenting their stories. Finally, the presentation of the themes and the stories themselves would aim to mobilize the emerging findings to inspire action, change or a wider sense of community. In addition, there was a sign-up sheet available for interested attendees to sign-up to a mailing list for further updates from the project, and a question of whether they would be interested in being interviewed about the art exhibit.

I sent e-mail invitations to several social and community organizations that are focused on one or multiple populations or causes, including LGBTQ+, migrant and diaspora and youth. I sent invitations to various City Councillors, specifically in the Filipino/a/x neigbourhood of Côte-des-Neiges. I invited specific scholars and distributed the poster through McGill's School of Social Work mailing list. I used online platforms to distribute the poster, including *Pulso ng Bayan* and informal networks and individuals. Hard copies of the poster were posted at McGill University, and other neighbourhoods around Montréal as time allowed. The invitation included a registration link, which led to almost 90 registrations.

Throughout the four-hour evening, there were most likely over 100 attendees who came and went or stayed for the presentations and performances. Many of those who registered signed in at the front desk. A childcare worker was involved in helping with accessibility for caregivers, and a volunteer was involved in registration. The building had an elevator for physical accessibility and washrooms available. Again, my field notes described and reflected on the event, written three weeks after, which I titled *Queerness in process, queerness in action*. The field note displays how the space was intentionally constructed to invite even more collective participation from the attendees, as well as adaptations to the cultural and queer experiences of Filipino/a/xs. I also reflected on how this event engaged with some of the meanings and themes that arose in the stories of the participants:

> The energy at the art exhibit was palpable. Again, I was keen that the set-up of the room would tell some sort of story. I imagined how the participant would walk through…
>
> I wanted there to be somewhat of a long dining table, such as a *kamayan* [Filipino/a/x communal meal using banana leaf with rice, meat and vegetables all along the top, as people use their hands to eat together] experience, in the middle of the room. I had a community poem (which didn't end up being a story, more of random words on a page) and nametags when entering. A queerstmas tree with small tags that people could write "What would you tell your young queer self?" and then hang it up as a form of memory-making and reflection.

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The first pictures straight ahead were of the face of Koko from *Beyond America* and *Spain* and then the camera – wanting this sort of sparking of an idea of perception and of the complexity of the humans one is about to see through the photo of Koko. When exiting, this would also be the photo they may see last – returning to history, to identity, to the human face of the project and their many facets beyond the narrative that may be dominant or imposed on someone from others (whether a State, community, nation). We are choosing to be perceived during this event, but this visibility is also a privilege. To be out and queer is a privilege – as one of the participants mentioned in their story.

The figure below of the art exhibit program shows the components of the event. The event included time for photography viewing, a presentation on the project and the main themes, story-sharing and performance from the participants, and an opening of the space to attendees for discussion on community connection, action and futures. This program was printed at the event and shared on the online registration platform.

Figure 2: Art exhibit program and registration information. Image created by Stol, 2022, with the image in the background from the AI queer futures activity in Workshop 4.

4.6.3 Individual and group feedback interviews and celebration

The participants were offered the option of an individual interview of 30 to 45 minutes to provide their feedback on the workshop and art exhibit processes (see Appendix D for the semi-structured interview guides for workshop participants and art exhibit attendees). This process is not identified in the Photovoice or *Kuwentuhan* processes I followed; however, the addition would enable an analysis on the participants' experiences with the processes to establish insights and recommendations for practice, enhancing the research around these methods, and/or replication of these methods in the future. Five of the participants opted to do individual interviews. Two art exhibit attendees also completed interviews of 30 to 45 minutes.

In line with the goals of the project to enable ongoing community-building, I also held a final group feedback interview session involving food in a community space in which we would debrief on the entire process together. Six participants joined this final celebratory session, with participants welcome to bring an individual with them who they wanted to celebrate with and who they trusted to be involved. One of the participants had a drag performance occurring right after the group session. As we completed the group discussion, the participant came out in their drag attire, as we all clapped, cheered, and took photos during the playful, mock performance. These moments continue to illustrate the ways in which the group process moves beyond the confines of the research process as our relationalities potentially grow in these moments, connected to wider LGBTQ+ diasporic community experiences.

4.6.4 Data collection and analysis within and beyond the workshops

The data collection included multiple sources: recordings and transcriptions from the workshops and the individual and group interviews, and field notes about the process. One of the main data sources were the individual stories that the participants shared alongside their

photographs in response to the research topic and questions. The participants provided a typed copy of their stories about the photographs and/or told their story based on reflection notes, with one participant sharing a poem that they had written in the past.

Another main data collection source included the group discussions about these photographs to establish a collective story. Importantly, the group discussions during the workshops were considered as data analysis procedures, in which coding occurred alongside the participants through our discussions about the photographs and their stories. In reflecting back on the process, the interviews and the group feedback session also involved data analysis, as the participants shared themes and possible actions for change based on the stories and the process.

The open and selective coding procedures in *Kuwentuhan* from Francisco-Menchavez that I employed were adapted from traditional qualitative thematic analysis (Charmaz, 2006). The data analysis procedures occurred in two ways: (1) researcher and participant-led open and selective coding procedures through group discussions within the workshops based on the participants' storytelling through cultural production of the photographs, prompted reflections and other arts-based productions in the workshops; (2) researcher-led thematic analysis expanding on the open and selective coding done with the participants by combining all data sources (recordings and transcriptions of the workshops, interviews, and group feedback session, and field notes).

After the final group feedback session, I conducted the researcher-led thematic analysis with the assistance of the qualitative software NVivo to organize the themes established through open and selective coding and conduct memoing. There were some challenges faced in recording the group discussions, as my initial recording device in the first few workshops was unfortunately not fully capturing all the statements well. I then purchased a better recording

device that reaches across a room and moved the device periodically closer to the participants. If some moments were not captured due to participants moving around for discussion, I would write down observations later in the field notes. However, most of the discussions were well recorded with some missing phrases.

The analysis was guided by queer and trans diaspora, Filipino/a/x diaspora, community organizing, and social movement theories and concepts described earlier. I looked for the historical period and social, political, economic, and geographic contexts that relate to gender identity and sexuality throughout their migration and diasporic experiences. The analysis included illustrating why, when, and how they participated in community groups or organizations, what sorts of institutions, resources, and policies they interacted with, and their experience in accessing and in resisting these resources and policies. I also analyzed for whether and how they had enacted or participated in forms of solidarity and unity, especially related to displacement and dispossession.

Given I continued the data analysis after the closing session, these analyses would not be entirely "completed" in collaboration with the participants as often done in Photovoice and in PAR studies (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014, 2021). These adaptations were made because of the requirements of the Ph.D. program in which writing a dissertation was one outcome of the process, as well as the inability to sustain a fully partnered PAR project given my institutional timeline and resources as a student.

In addition, the flexibility and experimentation with Photovoice procedures remains an ongoing feature of these creative and PAR methods, while recognizing resource capacities (Latz, 2017). To conduct the data collection and analysis beyond the workshops, I recorded the workshop sessions, the interviews and the group session with on-the-spot transcriptions using

McGill University's end-to-end encryption software Microsoft Teams (MS Teams), approved by McGill's REB. I stored the recordings with their related transcriptions and all other thesis material in the McGill University Microsoft 365 OneDrive.

To complete the transcriptions to reflect the recordings, I listened to all the recordings and reviewed the existing transcriptions from MS teams to ensure they were as correct as possible. In the first round of listening to and correcting the transcriptions, I wrote memos to reflect on the themes we had begun to establish in the workshops and related them to a more thorough listening of the stories through the recordings and reading of the initial transcripts.

After the transcriptions were completed to the best of my ability, I then conducted another open coding procedure of the transcripts, which included my field notes imported into NVivo. I separated the themes arising into categories based on the two main research questions, and the sub-question, the workshop process, and the art exhibit attendees and art exhibit participants' feedback. However, I remained cognizant in my analysis, descriptions of codes and memoing that the research questions and analyses of the workshops, interviews, and art exhibit processes are interrelated.

Drawing from thematic analysis through the first layer of coding, I had categorized the participant quotations into over-arching themes and sub-themes with less attention to creating broad themes. The purpose of the open coding is to create a wide number of themes (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014). After this open coding procedure, I then went through the codes and the associated quotations one-by-one, conducting selective coding to create more specific themes with sub-themes. I then finalized the selective themes according to the three categories, with mainly one layer of sub-themes and a few with two layers of sub-themes. I continued to review

the themes until there was little overlap, while acknowledging the interrelated nature of the analysis and the findings.

4.6.5 Action, dissemination and mobilization

Photovoice and the *Kuwentuhan* study I followed involves the mobilization of the findings through the formation of advocacy tools and recommendations targeted to specific audiences in collaboration with participants, which can support the *Action* piece of PAR. These recommendations are a common element of Photovoice in which the researchers and participants plan formats to share the stories and recommendations to policymakers who may have been involved throughout the entire project (Latz, 2017; Wang, 2006).

This project was different, as policymakers were not included in the project on an advisory committee. Following Photovoice and the *Kuwentuhan* procedures, I had originally planned to aim to produce advocacy tools which would be identified by the participants to present at community events, forums, and academic conferences. If I was able to obtain resources, I would also be able to help realize these advocacy tools. However, throughout the process, a few participants challenged the notion of recommendations and reformist strategies, illustrating a common tension in community organizing and social movements. Through reflecting on their perspectives and stories, I began to shift the language of recommendations to social, political, and collective action and change that occurs through a longer-term relational process.

As discussed in the final group feedback session and in some of the interviews, continuing to build relations and the conversations that we had begun in this project were viewed as next steps to add to more spaces and empowerment for queer and trans Filipino/a/xs to further contribute to community and organizing spaces in the long run. As I discuss later from a

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decolonial approach and an ethics of *kapwa*, trust and participation in organizing may be a longer-term process of reconnection and rebuilding within oneself and in relation with others. Thus, the action piece of this project became a site of questioning and reflection around the mobilization following this project. In line with these approaches, some social and community actions were identified that illustrate participants' interests in shorter term actions that could be taken to contribute to these longer-term processes.

Some scholars consider whether action is not only about the mobilization of findings that may occur after research data collection, analysis, and writing but also an ongoing process that occurs throughout all stages of the research and extends beyond it (Francisco-Menchavez & Tungohan, 2020). As mentioned, I included feedback interviews on the workshops and the art exhibit, which enabled me to analyze how the action dimension occurs throughout the process. In the researcher-led thematic analysis, I identified how the findings added to existing organizing and social movement praxis, prioritizing a relational and transformative approach. In addition, the participants desired for their stories to be shared in multiple formats, whether through zines, a website or other cultural production tools.

Since the end of the celebratory group feedback session, I have been able to present about the methods and the emerging themes in an online session while I was a Visiting Scholar at the University of Texas-Austin, Austin, Texas, United States, in the Latina/o Studies Department with international attendees as well as several study participants who attended. I received questions and feedback in this session that helped to inform my emerging findings, offering further validation for my study findings.

I continue to present about the methods and emerging findings in academic and community spaces which may contribute to awareness-building and advocacy around this under-

and mis-represented subject. For example, I was able to receive various travel grants from McGill University to conduct a workshop on these methods and emerging themes with the University of Philippines-Baguio in Benguet, Philippines, in collaboration with their Centre for Gender Studies (*Kasarian* Studies in Tagalog). I was also interviewed on the Filipino Canadian news channel OMNI News based in Toronto and on the *Kapwa Centre*'s (a by and for Filipino/a/x youth well-being organization in Montréal) radio show about this study. Along with the participants, I am an active member of *Kapwa Centre* in which we have been attending and conducting arts, cultural, movement and solidarity-based community initiatives and events through decolonial and inclusive approaches, often centering queer and trans Filipino/a/x young people.

The number of people who attended the art exhibit and the different sessions I have held demonstrates an interest and awareness in this subject and the stories that have been too often invisibilized, hypervisibilized, stereotyped or misrepresented (Coloma et al., 2012). Mobilizing these stories will be an ongoing process through this dissertation and its completion, as well as future academic and non-academic engagements. I will continue to seek resources to mobilize their stories, including a zine and other in-person, online and artistic formats, as I continue the conversation and organizing strategies alongside this community. At the same time, the relationships and reconnections that had been forged throughout the workshop process, as analyzed in the discussion, are perhaps beyond the scope of this research writing process.

4.7 Ethics and funding

The study received approval in 2022 from McGill University's Research Ethics Board (REB) for Research Involving Human Participants, as well as an approved amendment in the Fall of 2022 (REB File Number: 22-03-084). The study received funding from May 2021 to May

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2024 from Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Joseph-Armand

Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship (CGS) Doctoral Scholarships. The study was awarded

the Tryna Rotholz Annual Creative Award for Social Group Work Practice from the School of

Social Work Project Awards at McGill University for the year 2021-2022 for applicants showing

potential contributions to creative social group work practice.

I applied for and received funding from Quebec Public Interest Research Group (QPIRG)

McGill's and QPIRG Concordia's monthly Discretionary Funding, which are small grants

supporting community-based social change and educational events focused on groups facing

barriers and marginalization. I also received funding from PhiLab (Canadian Philanthropy

Partnership Research Network) student research grants at Université du Québec à Montréal

(University of Québec in Montréal—UQAM) provided through SSHRC Partnership Grants,

which supports student projects that show partnership with organizations and potential to

mobilize findings in the philanthropy sector.

Chapter 5: Findings I – On Homecoming: Returns and Reconnections

5.1 Introduction and participant demographics

This chapter explores the first research question around how gender identity and sexuality interact with the migration and diasporic experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in Québec. Before turning to these results, this section will present how participants described themselves. The demographics I asked of them included their name, age, gender identity and sexuality, immigration status, region of origin in the Philippines and/or Filipino/a/x identity. Confidentiality around how they wish to disclose identifiers through this dissertation was respected.

Their responses varied, including omitting some of the identifiers in the list or expanding on other identifiers – as I had told them, all variations were accepted. I decided to "loosen control" of the ways they shared their identifiers. This decision was in part because of the political act of resisting state-sanctioned or institutional narratives that may enclose, categorize or stereotype identities, rather than meaning-making by individuals themselves who are often excluded, misrepresented or erased from dominant discourses.

There are potential limitations of not having access to information about the generation of immigration, or the citizenship status in analyzing policies and historical migration and diasporic contexts. However, I have prioritized the ways participants may or may not associate to outside categories of first-, second-, or third-generation immigrants, and the implications of these categorizations in limiting self-identifications. Each individual participant brings evolving, historical, socio-cultural and political identities, whether affiliated to different regions, ethnicities, Indigenous groups, nationalities, pronouns, gender identities and/or sexualities.

Throughout the paper, at times, I use their first names only or their first and last names to refer to them for clarity and flow of the paper.

(1) d.l.c. nardo, 33 years old, pansexual, non-binary, Ilocano

(2) Andi Vicente, 34 years old, queer, non-binary, Canadian citizen, Ilokano, Isneg

(3) Veronica Jane Bertiz, 27 years old, lesbian woman, 1.5 generation Filipina, immigrated to Canada at the age of 11 years old as a dependent of her parents through the Federal Express Entry program for Skilled Workers

(4) Jon Marvin Reyes, 25 years old, queer, gay, homosexual, first-generation immigrant, Permanent Residency holder through sponsorship as a dependent of his mother

(5) Koko, 34 years old, Demo, non-binary, queer, first-generation immigrant, Canadian citizenship with undocumented family elsewhere

(6) Maria-Lorraine Caluya, 24, she/they, non-binary pansexual, second generation, Canadian citizen/ Permanent Resident, from Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines

(7) JB Guzon, 30 years old, she/her, lesbian, Canadian citizenship, born in Manila, Las Piñas, Philippines

5.2 Homecoming (or Coming Home)

This chapter is centred on an overarching theme of "homecoming" (or coming home), returns and reconnections. While the themes across chapters are displayed as distinct, it is important to note that they are also interconnected. This first theme specifically overarches and connects across the questions. Homecoming focuses on a notion of reconnection and return to cultural, ancestral, land-based, and linguistic knowledges, as well as evolving notions of belonging, family, bodily, affective, intimate and aesthetic experiences around gender identity, sexuality, the self and relations with others and their environments. As d.l.c. expressed in their

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feedback about the workshops, the reconnections to self and others in the spatial and temporal

encounters with this group of queer and trans Filipino/a/xs felt like a sense of "coming home."

Maria-Lorraine's photograph and story show these overarching themes of desires of

reconnection, rooting and returning amid the experience of instability and lack of belonging

produced through disconnection from queerness and being Filipino/a/x in the diaspora and the

relation to ancestral teachings. The possibilities of return and transformation regrow in the places

that may have seemed dislocated and disconnected:

Figure 3: Maria Lorraine's first photograph from the individual
storytelling workshop

So that was when I took a walk at a park, Centennial Park, and it's a really, really big park with a nice walking path. And this is a picture of a tree that had fallen from the roots and in that little area over there where the roots come off, somebody who made like a shelter. And I thought about this in a way where like… it feels like as a Filipino and as queer, we're so disconnected from our roots because when I started reading about our ancestors, I saw that we celebrated our different genders… And now I feel like I'm walking on this, this, this tree trunk where I'm about to fall because I don't feel like I belong. And I kind of wanna go back to where the roots are in that shelter (Maria-Lorraine).

5.2.1 Growing self and community legibilities amid normative arrangements

Homecoming for many of the participants involves growing and navigating an

acceptance and understanding of the self amid normative constructs and conditionalities that

perpetuate exclusion and discrimination. These conditions or norms described by the

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participants, which I call normative arrangements in reference to queer analyses, impact the perception of oneself and contributes to familial and community experiences of trauma, unacceptance, and a lack of access to institutional resources and protections. Participants' stories reflected how these normative arrangements influence how they are perceived by others, how and whether they want to be perceived, and the ways in which they navigated being made, or desired to be made, invisible and visible in their diverse and evolving experiences.

As opposed to these dominant normative arrangements that can make the participants' bodies, desires, and worldviews illegible to social and institutional contexts, there is the possibility to grow legibility from one's own self and from community understandings and meanings. To transform these limited meanings and relations shaped around exclusionary norms, participants explored, for example, possibilities to visibilize experiences in ways that highlight context, nuance, diversities, and the many regions in the Philippines and in the diaspora with pre-colonial and colonial realities, discussed throughout the next few chapters.

Homecoming in the face of unacceptance, discrimination and conditionalities. Most of the participants told stories about their own and witnessing of others' unacceptance, exclusion, and discrimination from family, other social relations, or institutional structures, including violent rhetoric and action toward their bodies and experiences as LGBTQ+ peoples or as migrants.

JB Guzon shared a poem, unaccompanied by a photograph, written in 2008 called *Expectation* in response to an experience of hate and exclusion toward her from a family member. The poem illustrates the experience of out-casting and discrimination from within their family as they tried to be who they were more openly around their sexuality. They described the harm this inflicted on them in fighting with and against these familial and societal expectations.

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JB related the unacceptance of LGBTQ+ peoples, through religious justifications of exclusion, to

the violence and exclusion experienced by other racialized peoples historically. They shared

about the hypocrisy in people using religious or state-sanctioned ideologies around acceptance

and rights to justify violence toward people. For example, they related the use and creation of the

ideologies in legal and governing texts, which are meant to protect people, to justify the slavery

and oppression of Black people. The relation between oppressive ideologies used against various

groups reflects a sense of solidarity and rejection of these exclusionary logics and norms that

construct a respectable and worthy human. JB shared their full poem in written and verbal form

during the workshops and at the art exhibit (see Appendix E: Individual participants' stories for

the full poem). Here is an excerpt from the poem:

> You ask me how I can love a woman. I am appalled by the question and confused at the
> notion. Of how a person could criticize the devotion to a man
> or a woman, and question my motives of why I have chosen... as though I have a choice,
> to live this most unforgiving fate. I am stuck between the
> boundaries of love and hate, accepted and out casted; honour and disgrace. Some hide
> their face as strangers and close ones discriminate. I lose my
> place as I fight through this hate. My fate awaits in the hand of who? Society's
> expectations, or my family's reputation?
> (JB Guzon)

Andi similarly reflected on how these exclusionary norms and conditions are embedded

in state-sanctioned structures, yet through the discourses and interpretation of legislation and

policies in immigration and refugee systems. They reflected on the experience of LGBTQ+

narratives being illegible in the process of the immigration and border regimes that define the

inclusion and exclusion criteria for refugee claimants, particularly in the exclusion of the

intersecting realities of queerness and class:

Figure 4: Andi Vicente's first photograph from the individual storytelling workshop

I took and chose this photo because it reminded me of an experience that a community member had during their refugee claim hearing. The board member had asked what the community member did with their partner, what kind of dates they had, how they celebrated their birthday. The community member told them that they took their partner for some coffee and dessert at Tim Hortons. The board member scoffed at this answer, claiming that the relationship wasn't real because the dates weren't well thought out enough or special. The community member responded to the board member so genuinely, that they both had to work their double shifts and that they couldn't afford to spend money even on special occasions because they were both saving up to potentially sponsor their children. In a lot of ways it is a class privilege to be out and live openly queer/gay/trans. It's a double-edged sword. To flee a country that does not accept you only to settle in a country that accepts you conditionally. I've sat in the seat as an observer for hundreds of LGBTQIA+ refugee claim hearings and wondered, would I even pass? Would they accept my histories? Am I not queer anymore because I'm in a currently monogamous partnership with a white cis/het person? Am I wearing the right shoes, clothes, tattoos, adornments that would convince people that I am queer? Am I going to the right parties and events? What if I couldn't afford all that? If I was naked, would they still believe me? (Andi Vicente)

Like JB, they brought broader systemic exclusions and violence toward others as a reflection on their own experience. Andi also reflected on how their own body and experiences would be read, mis-read and/or unable to be supported within dominant expectations and norms that provide these life-giving protections.

"We're not consumable": Homecoming as re-shaping and existing outside of normative arrangements. Amid these exclusionary and normative arrangements shown through participants' observations and experiences of disconnection and discrimination, participants also spoke about other worlds and meanings that exist or that they return to in response. In their

everyday interactions and participation in community initiatives, they also actively sought to re-shape these normative arrangements and contours to make themselves and their communities legible, but on their own terms.

A few participants, including d.l.c. and Koko, reflected on the ways that state-led, colonial, and exclusionary discourses serve to categorize, generalize, and decontextualize experience and bodies to make these experiences more consumable.

Specifically, d.l.c. explored how funding and services using "top-down" definitions and regulation of identity and community produce violence and exclusion rather than community "ground-up" meanings and needs to shape access to resources. d.l.c elaborated that these structures and logics make it difficult to sustain on-the-ground initiatives:

> … the thing with being in this society in like the western society is they keep flattening you, so you're more consumable. And we're not, we're not consumable… And then the thing is, when we're put in a box, it's just so much easier to take advantage and categorize and like, you know, we're gonna give grants to just these people, you know what I'm saying? We're gonna give grants because you've said the words that we want for the diversity box. You know, it's just really demeaning, and it takes away the nuance of what our culture is like, you know, and then also the intersection of all the cultures that we are part of. We're from the Philippines, but I'm not, I'm not Tagalog, I'm not Moro, I'm Ilocano. You know and how does that change my story versus another person's and still be valid, right? I feel like… every time there are more narratives it's just better… (d.l.c. nardo)

d.l.c. considered how within the Filipino/a/x community, there are already skills and resources and a vast diversity, but funding and resource allocation by the State and institutions can serve as gatekeepers and regulatory bodies that limit the possibilities of more transformative and diverse community actions and meanings. They later discussed the importance of a "bottom-up" approach in which the community themselves are the "resource" as they develop skills and have agency to grow supports from their own self-led needs and meanings, rather than legibility toward the "beholder" of the funding and resources.

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Some of the participants refer to the context of Québec and the influence of normative arrangements, especially the impact on migrant families. The places, spaces, and temporal arrangements that they navigate in Montréal and Québec fail to reflect the lived experiences of immigrants and their families, who are expected to adapt to the restrictive constraints on their bodies and experiences. In the session on learning photography skills in the first workshop, Maria-Lorraine shared a photo she took to help practice photo-storytelling after going outside in the Plamondon neighbourhood area (in Côte-des-Neiges), where the workshops took place. In this example, Maria-Lorraine recollected a common experience among Filipino/a/x migrant families of completing paperwork in liminal spaces, which occurs intergenerationally:

> I took a picture of the lady that was in the stairs earlier because she seemed like she was filling out important documents. And it also represents how we manage our time in a sense where we don't have any. So yes, we're gonna sit down on the steps of a place to fill out an important form. Cause we don't have the time for it. And, and this area where she's, where she's sitting is also an area that, like you said, is very Filipino community area… and right next door is where we send money. So it was just very representative of Filipino culture in Quebec and Montreal that I resonated with that I see my mom, I see my mom do this. I've seen myself do this. (Maria-Lorraine)

The normative and dominant arrangements of time and space in Montréal, Québec constrain or exclude the needs and experiences of immigrant families. In Maria-Lorraine's example, they refer to the gendered experience of a mother.

Through this exercise in the first workshop, d.l.c. took a photo of the environment in Montréal to make meaning of how queerness for them transformed a sense of uncertainty and not feeling rooted in Québec, represented by the roadblocks of the detour signs in the physical environment. Instead, they began intentionally rooting themself in community work and finding constant possibilities in the in-between spaces of the detour signs:

> I took a picture of the all the detour signs, and it was just gonna be that, and then, AC [the community photographer facilitator] stood in between and looked really sheep-ishly at me. So I took a picture, but I feel like… the signs are very, like Montréal, you know, very

Québec. Everything is kind of uncertain and that's kind of how I feel like with, just all the detours that you go in life and also in, in Québec and me here in Canada is like, seems like you can go any which way and doesn't ever feel like I'm rooted. It's not until recently here in Montréal that I've like had to intentionally root myself. To community work… and then like once I started realizing that I'm queer, like all those detour signs just keep popping up and all these like constant possibilities and what could happen and stuff like that. (d.l.c. nardo)

Maria-Lorraine's and d.l.c.'s stories also showed that the migratory and queer selves and experiences are not distinct, they are interwoven into spaces and places of meaning and making a sense of home in these in-between spaces.

Participants discussed different scales of seeing the constant possibilities and abilities to act toward re-shaping these normative and exclusionary arrangements. Some of the participants explored the privileges of having certain access or being able to be visible in a way that are more accepted. Others expressed the challenges and desires of seeking to build better relations when many people are still trying to heal from violence or harm. Some expressed frustration in the difficulties in challenging colonial and exclusionary logics and practices in their relations with others. For example, Veronica described the challenges and importance of being able to find space to navigate the desire to find oneself and a world beyond from what was "made for us by the colonizers." For Veronica, seeking to "deviate away from this" is sometimes responded to as comical by others. In contrast, looking for meaning beyond these logics is related to a constant search to find who one is in a space of disconnection from the homeland: "… we're constantly finding a space for us to be who we are, and our identity, while also trying to grasp that we are from the island" (Veronica).

Overall, participants desired to see and find compassion between each other in healing from and understanding the roots and causes of harmful and violent relations and structures. This was especially expressed in finding reconnections to family and social relations to build better

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relations, shown through this quote by Koko, who felt a sense of responsibility and a desire to root in empathy and compassion toward unity:

> You know, I understand your emotion and the frustration because I am too, but also I am at this point where I want to be, like, I'm also a person living in North America, and if I was someone of like, sex as a woman presenting a bit more masc I probably wouldn't have that chance… I'm trying to see more like the unity behind it as far as like, we all have to go back, we all have like our own journey, you know? So I mean, I'm trying to like be more empathetic, I guess, and compassionate. (Koko)

d.l.c. reflected on the difficult impact of colonization on one's ability to navigate internal and social worlds amid normative arrangements and expectations as one attempts to become more authentic to oneself as a queer person:

> it's hard, you know, cause it's like once you come out or you, you know, you come out to yourself and then now you have expectations of like, you know, but I'm queer, I'm trans. Like, you know, I'm like, how are people gonna think about me having a baby? Or like, even like the expectations of everybody else. It's like, you know, it's really so difficult. And the thing is, too, one of the things that I hate so much about colonization is that it really robs us of our intuition. (d.l.c.)

Even in "coming out" to yourself or becoming more legible to oneself, the social expectations and historical influence of colonialism restricts the ongoing authentic expression and needs of oneself in relation to others. The quote also highlights the importance of reproduction, parenting, caregiving, and familial relations in re-growing more inclusive and transformative worlds.

One participant provided a specific lens on the hardships and the transformations that occur through the norms, roles and expectations enacted on bodies and experiences regarding reproduction, gender identity and raising a child. As Andi, who presented a photo of their child, stated in sharing this experience about the impact of navigating these societal expectations regarding parenting, gender, and sexuality: "Your body is not your own." The story of the photo shows that even with raising a child alongside queer and trans chosen family and environments that encourage self-acceptance, there are ongoing societal expectations, norms, and exclusions

that gender-diverse children and non-binary, queer parents experience with specificity to their dynamics together. Andi also experienced deep self-reflection and expressed a sense of growth in learning from their child and in navigating the tensions and spaces of dominant societal expectations. These experiences reinforce the need for acceptance of gender and sexual diversities with the nuance of the impacts on those who are reproducing and their potential experiences of a deep sense of disconnection from one's own body. Andi also highlighted how they attempted to make choices to reclaim and make themselves visible on their own terms in an ongoing and relational process. This photo is of Andi and their child, accompanied by an excerpt from the story (see Appendix E for the full story):

Figure 5: Andi Vicente's second photograph 'a photo of my child' from the individual storytelling workshop

… having a biological child, giving birth, chest feeding and having a white cis het partner has caused my own gender dysmorphia to spiral to fall, deeply, to drown sometimes. The way that you are perceived, the expectations of you, your body is not your own. It's always someone else's. And reaffirmation public displays, posts of queerness are not for others. They are for myself. They are for the part of me that still doubts that I can be queer, that I'm allowed to be. I've come out to many people, strangers in diversity equity training workshops, Facebook acquaintances, some family members by accident. But the process of coming out to myself has been a process, it is still ongoing. (Andi)

Navigating and healing from the hostility of social and political environments shaped around exclusionary and dominant colonial norms and expectations requires more inclusivity of the caretakers, children and intergenerational impacts of gender identity and sexuality.

Finding home through navigating the visibility and invisibility shaped by colonial narratives and normative arrangements. Participants explored how these constraining norms

and narratives that impact the self, family, and community need to be shed, re-considered, and re-shaped, especially in how they contribute to the homogenization of diversities and categorization of identities and experiences. In Koko's photovoice, they experienced the photography process itself as an interrogation of how one wants to be seen, how others see them, and what underpins the "lens" (of the "beholder") through which they are made visible or invisible. They related this (in)visibility to looking beyond the colonial narrative of Filipino/a/x identity shaped by histories of colonialism from Spain and America. The photography process helped Koko to "question the idea of how I want to be and who" (see Appendix E for the full story):

Figure 6: Koko's first photograph 'beholder' from the individual storytelling workshop

Figure 7: Koko's second photograph 'beyond spain and america' from the individual storytelling workshop

beyond spain and america

> And for me, I think in our culture we're very, we're proud to be resilient. We're proud to have gone through 330 years of Spanish colonization and then American colonization. And we're proud to have gone through that. But we don't take the time to be sad. We don't take the time to like just acknowledge it. And I think that for me is kind of this idea to allow ourselves to crack so I can come and, to be naked is hard. (Koko)

Koko re-considered how transforming identities shaped by colonization includes recognizing and healing from the impacts of these colonial narratives and structures, rather than solely focusing on the more visible resilience narratives based on surviving these histories. For them, these narratives needed to be made visible through accessible texts to have renewed understandings of identity and belonging. In the final workshop of imagining queer futures, Koko further elaborated on this notion of "to be naked" in terms of breaking away from homogenizing narratives and restrictive roles and expectations in society that are often made visible as the dominant narratives.

Visibility and invisibility came up across participants and across the themes as a contextual and multilayered experience in terms of how and in what ways individuals have a choice or desire to be seen or recognized, and by whom. For example, Veronica spoke about the Plamondon area where many Filipino/a/xs live, and how the community experiences it is as "our

space" even though there is no physical marker. In the first workshop, during the photography skill-building session, they shared about the photograph they took in the space of the Plamondon area where there are indicators of being a more low-income and working-class neighbourhood represented through the time of the day in which crowds of people are coming back from work at the public transit metro station.

Maria-Lorraine's photovoice and description portrayed the invisibilities of certain ways of living and being that are more community-centred or considered at the "bottom-order" and, simultaneously, ways that these spaces generate a sense of home and safety. From her lens, the presence of the community escapes these hierarchical logics in which it is masked from view, as it becomes unexpectedly visible and as she contemplates a sense of home and meaning within that space, connecting oneself to the physical space (see Appendix E for the full story):

Figure 8: Maria Lorraine's second photograph from the individual storytelling workshop

… how does this relate to our lives? It feels like there are these established businesses and there's what's hidden inside and the people who are at the bottom order, and the people who seem to struggle a little bit more than what you would've expected if you thought about the business itself… so that really caught my eye in the picture and I felt a sense of home when I passed by and I felt like I wanted to walk through there rather than go through the businesses or the arts, because that felt safer, even if there was nobody around. (Maria-Lorraine)

As expressed throughout various participants' stories, certain ways of being that transgress a norm can make someone, or a place or space, hypervisible, not necessarily by choice. Simultaneously, the presentation of someone's stories or bodies, or an environments' spatial and

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physical arrangement, can invisibilize their existence, diversities and experiences when viewed

through these dominant normative arrangements.

Throughout the stories, the participants revealed constraints of homogenizing or creating

binaries around individual experiences based on stereotypes, assumptions, or logics of exclusion

which limit choices of how and when one can be seen, and if they want to be seen. Visibility and

invisibility can co-occur and requires reflecting on safety and abilities to navigate the harms and

ongoing process of visibilizing oneself. The choice to visibilize oneself can be constrained by the

dominant norms and expectations surrounding one's own body and experiences. Andi shared

about the contradictory and constrained experiences of navigating visibility and invisibility

through a photograph they took in the first workshop exercise. They considered the potential

invisibility related to the views of others toward their partnership or having a kid, and the

different priorities of navigating invisibility due to homophobia from others. At the same time,

they can be "very visible" in their presentation with some people, resulting in a constant

navigation and some agency to be visible yet within the constraints of discrimination and

exclusionary norms and expectations. For Veronica, through a lens of advocacy, visibility is a

way to showcase the diversities of lived experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in Montréal at a

transnational scale which helps reveal their existences and escapes the rigid contours of having to

choose being "Bakla"[16] or "Filipino." They state that the stories from these workshops show that

they can have a multitude of experiences and identities.

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[16] Pino (2017) in their exploration of older Filipino gay men intimacies in Canada defines *Bakla* as "a Filipino term for a queer man that also applies to nonnormative gender and sexual identities and practices" (p. 165). The term has been used by participants for the most part to refer to their diverse nonnormative genders and sexualities. See Diaz (2015) and Manalansan (2003) for further discussion on the critiques, evolutions and contextual manifestations of the term.

Both d.l.c. and Veronica spoke about this visibility being a way to support others to feel

more able or ready to reconnect to this part of themselves but at their own pace. As participants

discussed, visibilizing Filipino/a/x and LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x experiences through different art

mediums opens the possibility for others to see themselves reflected and then reach out. d.l.c.

also related this sense of invisibility to the political and economic structures of the labour export

program, again linking the historical, social and systemic processes of migratory experiences as

interwoven with queerness and who and how one can or cannot be seen:

> … it's like we're all just searching for each other and it always feels like we, like, I don't
> know, you're always finding somebody and so it's really important to. Like every single
> one that comes out is just a beacon for other people. Right? Because it always feels like
> we're invisible, even though we're everywhere. Like, whenever I travel around the world,
> there's always Filipinos, because we've been so distributed through like the labour export
> program. But … what is it that makes us always so invisible in Canada? (d.l.c.)

d.l.c. nardo expressed this as a notion of "being a beacon for others" who are navigating similar

questions and confusions around identity and culture. Accessing these stories and recognitions

among others is often unexpected. This unexpectedness speaks to the ways that alternative or

parallel narratives to the dominant construction of the social and life worlds of Filipino/a/xs,

including LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs, are hidden or masked. These alternative narratives that exist in

in-between spaces, as mentioned earlier, may instead reveal the limits of the existing order and

the potentials of transformative possibilities.

Two of Jon Marvin's photographs elaborated on this ongoing sub-theme of recognizing,

visibilizing and celebrating the diversities and beauty of the LGBTQ+ community to reject and

re-form the popular stereotypes and misrepresentations that are perpetuated through media and in

cultural production. For Jon Marvin, being given space to represent and celebrate these

diversities can open us to "be something else." While this something else is not yet named by Jon

Marvin, the opening of possibilities allows for a present and future not yet imagined or returned

to. In the second photograph, Jon Marvin discussed how and why LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs, or

Filipino/a/xs generally, transform competitive or degrading social relations by focusing on

"words of affirmation," reflecting the importance of change occurring at the site of social

relations and intimacies:

Figure 9: Jon Marvin's first photograph 'FIREWORKS: THE BEAUTY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY' from the individual storytelling workshop

And yeah, so this one is a firework. I took this, in Pied au courant, this is hosted by Italy, I think. But so I think it's just beautiful because, you know, like fireworks, you know, ever since I got here in Montreal, like the fireworks festival is something that I really look forward to seeing every year. Exactly two years ago, you know, like for the past two years, it's not because of COVID, but thankfully, you know, it happens again. And yeah, so just like fireworks, I think that our community, the LGBT community is very beautiful and colourful, especially when we are given space, you know, just like Kuya mentioned earlier, we are more than comedies. We are more than beauty queens. We are more than, you know, we are more than fireworks. Like we can be something else, right? And only if we are given space we can turn out beautiful. Just like that. (Jon Marvin)

Figure 10: Jon Marvin's second photograph 'YOU GO GIRL: WORDS OF AFFIRMATION' from the individual storytelling workshop

And this one I was walking to pick up my sister from work and it just says, you go girl. Right. it's just nice cause um, I think this is also a problem, with the community as well, especially for, you know, that really adopted traditional, you know, practices. Like we tend… there's a lot of emotions like, jealousy or… there's a lot of comparison. Oh [says a phrase in Tagalog that is not audible] like she's better than this, than that. And I think, that's something that we're missing in the community and that's something that we need to work on... So I think you go girl is like a word of affirmation and we can change that by starting spreading these words of affirmation… thank you. (Jon Marvin)

Everyday homecoming: Re-making a physical space for home. The possibilities of re-shaping and escaping normative arrangements are also reflected in how a few participants sought to construct and be creative in their living spaces and places to grow into themselves and access material needs related to their queer and Filipino/a/x cultural experiences. They were able to grow a physical home in which they were able to learn to accept and express themselves more authentically. Their stories also acknowledge the familial, relational, and larger systems that influence their ability to find and navigate this space. Jon Marvin expressed in their story and photograph how important this living space is, which he constructs as his home to discover himself amid challenging norms and expectations:

Figure 11: Jon Marvin's third photograph 'HOME: MY PLACE OF DISCOVERY' from the individual storytelling workshop

… in the first session I talked about how, I value so much my apartment cause I live alone. I started living alone back last year. I decided to move out from my family because I thought I needed to. I really needed it because, you know, it's when I, you know, explored myself. Like I really liked my personal space and yeah, so this pictures like, you know, home – my place of acceptance and discovery... as a Filipino, I guess, especially, from, you know, traditional family, it's very hard, it takes a lot of courage to tell your parents, oh, I need to move out, right? And that really helped me personally… because, you know, just like I said, it's where I discovered myself. It's where I discovered I'm a proud queer… coming from a very conservative family, I'm the only man in the family. They expect a lot from me, especially, you know, raising a family, raising, you know, having a girlfriend, which I don't want to because I'm gay. (Jon Marvin)

These points highlight the role of the gendered expectations around biological and heteronormative families and temporal normative arrangements, as well as expected cultural living arrangements regarding living within the family home.

Veronica also chose a photograph to tell a story about the everyday feelings and experiences with her partner in their home, again drawing importance to space as a place to explore, discover and learn about the interconnections of Filipino-ness, queerness, and self-acceptance in relation to others. She discussed the meaning behind the various daily acts they partake in to stay connected – the in-between time – even when they do not have much time at this stage in their lives. She made meaning of the "semi-organized clutter" and arrangements of their living space, reflecting on how many do not have much privilege in terms of housing. The objects in the space that fill the wall represent the contributions of others and the relationships

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they have with others, speaking to a notion of collectivity in how their home is built and the

meaning made about it. These objects, the spatial arrangements, connections to others, and

affective and bodily experiences interact in this place to invoke an openness to being oneself (see

Appendix E for the full story):

Figure 12: Veronica's photograph 'Mahal' from the individual storytelling workshop

I want to capture what I was feeling in a picture. This is a typical night for me and [M]. She is preparing her lunch for the next day. I just got back in from smoking on the balcony. We are in the moment of our lives where we are both interns and about to enter the "real" world of adulting. We have been very busy lately that the kitchen is the place where we talk/hang a lot while doing some chores...

Behind M, you can see in the background a semi-organized clutter in the kitchen hutch handmade by her dad…

This whole image just invokes openness to who I am. This is taken in our kitchen with my live-in partner. This place is home to many of my Firsts. This place is where I feel me. This place is a place of discovery of my Self. This place, the place where I am my authentic, is a space I shared with M. I wish for everyone to experience this inner understanding of one's Self. I wish for my queer *Kapwa* to have a safe space for guidance in their self-discovery. Lastly, I wish they get to feel the freedom I feel being comfortable in my own skin. Filipino, Queer and proud. (Veronica)

Veronica expressed a sense of empathy, compassion, and

collectivity for others through their own ability to understand and

feel free in expressing oneself. They extended the same care to

their queer *Kapwa*, illustrating the possibilities of unity and interconnectedness through the

freedom experienced in oneself internally.

5.2.2. *Belonging and healing through reconnections and unmasking coloniality*

Belonging and healing for the participants was being able to express oneself

authentically, be accepted holistically, and hold views of the interconnections between all things,

human and non-human, rather than in fragmented or disconnected ways. They desired

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transformative change for all others, not just themselves. Reconnections and unmasking coloniality refer to themes of relating to nature and the ways colonialism has disrupted access to knowledges of ancestral and cultural teachings that have otherwise celebrated the diversities of gender and sexuality. This quote refers to pre-colonial lessons and acceptance of gender fluidity, represented through the cultural term of bamboo, provided in the third workshop by Jayson from FIPOQ:

> … in the pre-colonial times there's no social stigma. Like it's understood that it's part of nature, that it's nature…before in the… precolonial times… they said that it's a blessing because… gender fluidity is a strength. It is a strength. Why? … Cause in the term *bayoging*, it's actually a term from the bamboo, the Hawaiian bamboo. So the bamboo is the one of the strongest material used in the indigenous people in using the houses. Cause during the typhoons, the hurricanes, the last tree to fall down is the bamboo. Bamboo is flexible. Even if the wind goes, it doesn't fall down cause it follows the wind. It bends, it's soft. But it bends, so that the character they put in the word *bayog, bayok, bayoging*. (Jayson)

In response to Jayson's presentations, one participant shared that in growing up in the Philippines, especially in the urban centre, these Indigenous and cultural ways of knowing about gender identity and sexuality, along with the other cultural teachings provided by Jayson, were not taught and were even looked down upon in their familial and social settings. Through this workshop of having access to this knowledge from someone from an Indigenous community in the Philippines, this participant expressed a sense of reconnection and gratitude: "for these stories, for our stories to like come from you when you're, you're telling this to us in a workshop just feels more like affirming and validating. So we just wanna like, thank you…" This moment of reconnection in the workshop itself for this participant illustrates the making of place and space to access these knowledges alongside community members, as well as the invocation of one's own history and transnational relations to the Philippines.

At the same time, reconnecting to a more authentic being and self and unmasking learned

conditions and constructs around gender identity and sexuality was expressed as a difficult and

contradictory process by Koko, specifically in desiring to reclaim their queer and non-binary

identity in a modern societal context. Koko related this process to lacking knowledge of these

cultural ways of knowing in trying to reconnect to an understanding of historical, linguistic, and

cultural meanings and teachings embedded in a broader disconnection from ancestral teachings

around gender and sexuality. This reflection also highlights the ways that queer Filipino/a/xs in

the diaspora adapt and respond to their surroundings to be made legible:

> I know, like me personally, I'm trying to reclaim my identity as queer, non-binary person
> and like allowing myself to come into this. But there's always resistance with my family
> because how I present and how I feel while existing in modern society is very, like, it's
> conflicting. And the easiest way for me to kind of tell my family is like, I'm *bakla*. But
> there's a history behind that, that you have to be like, born masculine or male. Like is
> there, is that the term that people use back in the day to kind of, I guess, express this idea
> of like gender fluidity? Like is or is that, is Bakla really just associated to more feminine
> people? (Koko)

This contradictory and transformative space of re-learning about identity and culture is

also represented in how participants question dominant notions of belonging at the same time as

they seek to find more belonging in ways that help heal from exclusionary and colonial ways of

being and knowing, as JB said: "when I think about belonging, I picture nature because you

don't really belong to anyone in a sense." These notions of belonging escape a static, human-

centred and extractive relationship to others and the natural world. These reconnections to

cultural, linguistic, and ancestral knowledges and ways of being help build an imagined "web of

relations," a concept shared by participant d.l.c., to grow resilience in navigating hostile social

and political environments. In the collective discussion following the presentation of the

photographs and individual stories, d.l.c. expanded on the daily practice of drawing from

ancestral presence and teachings from a decolonial understanding of the world:

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I personally have been trying to do a lot of ancestral work. I write in the mornings and something that I've been thinking about is like the circularity of time and how I can access my ancestors and they can access me at any time. And so my point of view of time as the future and ahead of me is also like there are Indigenous groups that have the future behind them. So, just trying to find the little bits of liberation and freedom that I can, and like no matter the scale, even if the scale is like between two people, that matters so much. (d.l.c.)

These scales include holding on to relations in moments that foster reconnections that un-do harmful practices, as well as explicitly larger actions. Maria-Lorraine similarly related to this notion of ancestral reconnections fostering an ability to navigate the challenges within and surrounding oneself:

Yeah. That's really where I'm at. I have such a struggle being stable within who I am in myself. And I've just recently started to think about my ancestors and every opportunity that come into and I'm like, oh, my ancestors are here with me. This is, this is what my ancestors wanted. You know what I mean? (Maria-Lorraine)

Through d.l.c.'s sharing of their three photographs, the story behind them and the collective discussion afterward, many descriptions from their story illustrate this main and overarching theme across various participant stories (see Appendix E for the full story):

Figure 13: d.l.c. nardo's three photograph series from the individual storytelling workshop

Gardening for me has always been a reconnection. My grandmother had a garden and so did my mother and I'm sure many ancestors before. My father's side of the family are farmers in Pangasinan. Touching soil is a form of reconnection, a recollection…

In this system we are born in, living in Indigenous pathways is a queer thing. Honouring Indigenous people and their knowledge, and treating the land right is a queer thing. Yet queer to me, when not seen through the sterile gaze of colonialism is a return. Not a doctrine of discovery, but a return. Queer as in you were always part of us before you were de-contextualized from the Earth, othered for your "value" rather than for who or what you are. Queer as in whole. Queer as in inventive. Queer as in encompassing constant transformation, especially with my changing desires. Queer not just an aesthetic but a way of being, a way of breathing. Everything in this world is shapeshifting and everyday I spend with my hands in the soil is a reminder of the beauty of our capacity to transform. Noone ever said transformation would be a clean affair. But it helps to feel held, to feel cared for, the dirt under your nails is full of life. (d.l.c.)

The place of return of gardening opened the bodily experience of reconnecting and remembering ancestors through caring for the land as well as recognizing the settler's role in being in relationality with the original caretakers of the land, which others expressed as helping to "feel more grounded to who you are" (Veronica). The lessons from valuing the earth and each other outside of compartmentalized, fragmented, and individualized notions of value and time can be fostered in these spaces and places of reconnections. As these participants shared, queerness involves intentionally being in messiness and the shapeshifting experience of transformation.

Healing from colonial trauma and relations. The participants overall alluded to these dominant ways of knowing and being as re-informing trauma and difficult relationships within families and across social relations, specifically the effects of the colonization of Spain and the U.S. in the Philippines and similar colonial relations reproduced in Canada. As I had shown earlier, Koko specifically considered how much of the dominant story of the colonial relations in the Philippines is one of celebration while reflecting on how Filipino/a/x communities have not yet had the space and time to grieve and heal from the harms of this colonization. Intergenerational and familial ruptures, remembering, and reconnections were an important part

of most of the participants' stories at some point in their sharing, particularly around difficulties

with biological families and others within the community. For some, these difficulties involved

facing a lack of acceptance within their biological family, such as the feeling of having to choose

being Filipino/a/x or gay, or even more explicit discrimination and violent rhetoric. However, as

Koko expressed, these relations are also experienced in other social settings. Koko desired to

work toward re-building more holistic understandings of oneself and each other rather than

accept the norms and roles that constrain and restrict diversities:

> Like, there's so many variations with within queerness. When I hang out with my white
> queer friends, they don't get my Filipino identity. When I hang out with Asian like queer
> friends, they don't understand my gender. So it's like all these, these things, you know?
> And, I think we just need more openness and we need to keep pushing those boundaries
> of true acceptance and stop gatekeeping this identity of queerness, cause our main goal is
> to just exist as humans with nature, which is the most joyous thing that like we can ever
> have. Like we live on a planet for goodness sakes. (Koko)

For a few participants, these relations also pointed to possibilities for growth, transformation and

learning depending on the nature of the relationship. In discussing how it can be very difficult to

work through these ruptures in familial and other relations due to trauma, d.l.c again reiterated

the story of rooting and returning to the nuance of embodying being both Filipino/a/x and

Canadian as well as explicitly learning about the effects of colonization and the possibilities of

transforming colonial language and worldviews at different scales:

> Western science is all about is categorizing things, right? And so understanding that like
> I'm not a racial identity, I'm racialized, is kind of like a decolonizing way of doing things
> is because a lot of the ways that we saw stuff like, my ancestors saw stuff was that it's
> like an ongoing process. So it's the verb of something rather than like what it is already.
> So I think like, even this idea of like decolonizing our language, and learning our learning
> Tagalog or like Ilocano or whatever language your family comes from is you really learn
> the way that we think or the way that our ways of thinking have been taken over by the
> colonizers...
>
> Like every single second you're out in the world, you're changing…. Like our ancestors
> went through so much and like, we're going through the same thing, but we have a web of
> them behind us, right? And in front of us. So like, I remember, there was this meditation

that I was doing, and they said, close your eyes and imagine, um, your parents' hands on your shoulders, and then behind your parents, their parents on their shoulders, and then like on and on and on and on. And then you see this giant web like just holding you. (d.l.c.)

For Koko, transforming these realities involves unmasking roles and expectations to experience co-existence with each other in nature. When I began to talk about potential practice and policy recommendations rooted in community-building, as Koko alluded to earlier, they considered that transformation begins from healing, which should occur before building:

> What stuck out to me when you're talking about neighborhood and community infrastructure. When I think of infrastructure, I think that the root of it is the south. So a lot of like queer future for me before we can like build, we have to heal. And I think a lot of the, the blueprint of what needs to be in the future starts with like… breaking away. This is my own personal experience is like just roles, whatever roles there are in life and expectations… getting closer to like the true role that we have in nature, which is existence, coexistence within, you know, the world around us, which is just accepting the multitudes of who you are as a human being. (Koko)

For these participants, building a new queer future requires an un-layering of the roles and expectations that contribute to "hurt" and making relations not inclusive, including the layers of trauma. As d.l.c had expressed, re-learning decolonial linguistic and cultural teachings and actively relating to ancestral presence can serve as a "compass" amid hostile and conflicting environments.

Homecoming overall refers to how participants discussed that accessing linguistic, cultural, and ancestral teachings and learnings may serve to unmask coloniality and find places of return toward healing and belonging in identity and community formations. Returning involves unmasking the layers of coloniality producing exclusionary and discriminatory ways of being and knowing and building on these resilient structures at different scales in the present. Participants escaped and re-shaped these norms in seeking to reconnect or return to a sense of

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home, an authentic self, and right relations with others and the land on which they occupy, while in constant transformation and connection to the homeland.

Homogenized, stereotypical and forced narratives and norms, at times related to exclusionary conservative and Christian ideologies, become embedded in social and institutional relations, even leading to discrimination and violent rhetoric between family members and social networks. Recognizing and finding spaces and places to affirm and accept the multiplicities in meanings and diversities of experiences of Filipino/a/xs and of those identifying as LGBTQ+ is a way that participants have sought to navigate these challenges. These normative arrangements and forms of healing are especially related to family, relations with other Filipino/a/xs, and intergenerational experiences as a parent or in thinking about past ancestry and future generations.

Chapter 6: Findings II – On Returning and Reconnecting to *Kapwa*

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the second and third research questions which ask: In what ways and why do LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs of the diaspora build social and community groups, organizations, support, and resources locally and transnationally? In what ways and why are forms of solidarity and unity understood and enacted in building these social and community groups and organizations? The findings draw from across the workshops, feedback interviews and the group feedback/ celebratory closing session. However, these findings largely pull from the third and fourth workshop and the feedback interviews and session in which the prompt questions focused on re-imagining and enacting queer futures that build from the themes we had explored in the individual and collective storytelling processes.

The overarching theme is directly related to participants' references to *kapwa* as a cultural way of knowing and being, and a practice that disrupts exclusionary and colonial ways of being and knowing explored in the first section. Based on the workshop discussions and experiences, reconnecting to *kapwa* is a decolonial process that engages again with other worldly possibilities through collectivity and building better relations with land and others toward a sense of "communal liberation." Across many of the participants, seeking to care for oneself is intricately related to caring for and enacting liberation for all people in doing social and community action.

6.2 Belonging and being who we are: "We rice and rise together"

Why the participants build community, support and resources is related to the theme within homecoming of unmasking the colonial and exclusionary relations, structures, and systems to re-construct and return to a sense of belongingness, understanding and acceptance of

oneself in relation to others, the natural world, and across individual differences. The quote by Veronica in their feedback interview of "we rice and rise together" refers to the collectivity required to be able to navigate these dominant systems, using many different strategies and actions alongside others to re-imagine and return to otherworldly possibilities. The use of "rice" together refers to the necessity of this life-giving sustenance in the Philippines, which relies heavily on rice in the agricultural export economy, while rice is a main staple of Filipino/a/x diet. Veronica provided feedback on the workshops that feeding the participants was an example of a way to honour people's basic needs in community building to further contribute to community work. d.l.c. also discussed the importance of feeding each other in community work as opposed to state-sanctioned or institutional funding, grant or requests for consultation that often exclude these basic forms of sustenance in their spaces. These "top-down" spaces reflect a more extractive model of relations with communities.

The participants often express the notion of belongingness and being who we are together through affective experiences in their encounters with others – the notion of *kapwa*. In discussing what a queer future would look like through a transformative lens, a few participants shared the bodily affect and emotions associated with being who one is in relation to others. In this environment, "coming out" would not be relevant, as the other world would be just the way things are. Maria-Lorraine described the emotionality in this future:

> I feel like I see a future where we don't have to get our palms sweaty, your heart beats faster. When we talk about it anymore, we don't get nervous about the subject anymore, and when we feel comfortable just being ourselves without even having to talk about it, it's just normal. (Maria-Lorraine)

JB also described this future return to an implicit openness and understanding rather than as a sense of apprehension or fear in expressing one's sexuality:

What I see in the future, more openness…. more understanding and mostly you don't need to come out, you just need to just be yourself without feeling the fact like, oh shit, do I need to say 'her?' She's my partner, or should I need to say to my wife… More openness, acceptance. (JB Guzon)

Koko focused on expressing present feelings of being seen and safe in connecting with people across their stories during the workshops and the view that these meaningful connections that foster love are "rooted in intimacy." Feeling seen and seeing oneself in others as sources of healing, belongingness and reconnection to community was expressed by a few participants throughout the workshops and feedback interviews:

I feel seen, you know… I thought it was like, oh my God, it's gonna be too much sometimes. I mean, everyone is an individual on their own and everyone is on their own journey and you never know, you know, always trying to just stay true to where I'm at and, I think, this case has been really for the hour that I've been here, feels very safe and it feels really wonderful to see everyone's experience and where they are in their own journey. And although in like different stages, I think it's, it's really beautiful, and share similarities of just wanting to belong, you know? And, I think I just really appreciated everyone stories. I have been craving this intensity and I feel like a lot of times you say it comes from like just the… relationships, so friendships. I think for me at least, the biggest form of love comes from community that is rooted in intimacy. (Koko)

Veronica similarly expressed how being able to grow and evolve outside of the dominant structures and toward "who we are" involves building relationalities within the community to be able to navigate exclusionary relations and systems:

…it's basically compilation of what we all said, but like what I actually said as well, like to have a safe space, like that's why we build this type of community and then to have an openness and… to not feel burden of pressure to come out. I just am. So, that's just our story, just in this room and how we want us to evolve in growth. And the hopes would be that we, we don't need to, how do you call it? Feel all of these feelings. Just because we're trying to discover our sexuality and hide because the majority of the dominant society is not accepting of who we are. So, we want us to evolve outside of that one. And for us to do that, we need to build the community where we can lean on each other and grow to each other and affirm and validate our, our feelings and to be able to grow who we are and then guide each other from our own journey of our sexuality and our expression. And then on top of that, we want to add in like more root into nature and be more calmness. (Veronica)

d.l.c. expanded on these relationalities after another participant expressed the ability in certain groups of queer Filipino/a/xs to not have to perform scripts that take away from oneself, which would usually involve fear and discomfort. d.l.c. suggested that expressing this authentic self takes strength and risks that can be made easier by knowing there is a group to provide support and affirmations:

> Also a good way to practice like, if there's anything that you want to stand up for yourself for in the, that world…you can like, kind of gather that strength from your group of like, this is what normal is. I'm gonna try to take a little bit of it to that world and like, stand up for myself in little ways… and like take risks because, you know, you have this group to, to kind of like fall and understand… (d.l.c.)

6.2.1 Homecoming through seeing yourself reflected

Participants discussed how individuals find or can generate more possibilities for community building and action when they have been able to see themselves and their experiences represented in others or in popular representations. In other words, a sense of feeling seen by others fosters reconnection to community. As Filipino/a/xs have carried out homecoming in different localities because of their transnational re-locations, being in proximity in these different places and spaces can invoke a myriad of memories, affect, action and forms of belonging. As noted earlier, while some participants viewed the invisibility of Filipino/a/xs as invoking a need to visibilize often homogenized or erased experiences, the perception and experience of visibility in relation to belonging within the Filipino/a/x community can involve multiple experiences at once: disconnection, reconnection, fear, or desires to express oneself authentically. These "messy" proximal encounters may be unexpected and occur in everyday life.

JB experienced an unexpected encounter with Filipino/a/x food, speaking to a notion of reconnection and return to community and a sense of belonging occurring beyond the bounds of their place of immigration in Montréal:

Figure 14: JB's photograph from the individual storytelling workshop

…we went on our vacation. And I took a snap of this when I was in Aruba, I took this picture because it's like a sense of belonging where I didn't expect to find a community out in the Caribbean slash [inaudible] islands where they were so welcoming and nothing brings everyone together like food. I had a halo-halo there. Like your Tita's [Tagalog term for Filipin aunt, regardless of biological relation], you know wherever we go no matter who you come across, a Filipino family still asked me to come and see them and get food, more than you want… but it stands out near the port I went to and it stands out. I didn't expect to have community there. And there's food, Filipino food: "Hey food, my food." I was so happy to have halo-halo [with] other Filipinos outside… where you're out there travelling and you know, [you find] someone like you. (JB)

JB related this encounter and positive affective connection to the Filipino/a/x cultural worldview of how being a *Tita* and recognizing another Filipino/a/x can mean an invitation to eat together and join community, reflecting the notion of *kapwa*.

Building on the reconnections and returns that occur in places and spaces to foster a deeper sense of who one is, Veronica expressed her initial feelings of insecurity and perception of being judged in being visibly queer in a Filipino/a/x restaurant in Montréal. Eventually, she turned this fear of being seen and the associated sense of vulnerability into strength and empowering other "baby queers" who may relate to Veronica's visible representation of the self:

it's a place where I grew up…. so, there's something about…. doing the Photovoice in that area where I was really afraid to go with M the first time at [Filipino/a/x restaurant name removed]. When [Filipino/a/x restaurant name removed] was not big. It was like small, and when M and I came in there, it was like everyone was staring at us. I already had short hair and I can feel that there was some sort of like people watching us, but now,

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I would go there and get like some [inaudible name of a Filipino dish] I don't care. I don't care anymore. You know, like you see me like this and you think I'm gay, well, I am gay, like I'm not hiding it. So like, because of that vulnerability, it kind of strengthen me. To be who I am and to also kind of like show a representation to all of the baby queers who's like staring me down. I'm like, I can see you staring bro. Like I know, okay. And yeah, it's just empowering to do that. And that was reaffirmed and reaffirmed and reaffirmed every time we go through a workshop. (Veronica)

For Veronica, the possibilities of empowerment in visibility were reaffirmed during the Photovoice workshops, especially in how the workshops took place in the same neighbourhood as this experience, where they grew up for a part of their childhood. As Veronica empowered herself to be visibly non-conforming in various places, she connected this feeling to how representation could be an opening for others who are navigating and learning about their sexuality or gender identity and expressions.

Some of the participants described turning this feeling or experience of finding or seeing oneself in others to a desire to replicate and build further spaces and possibilities for others to have similar experiences of reconnection, yet choosing to do so outside of dominant or exclusionary norms:

And it's like the visibility in a way, like choosing to be to make ourselves visible to other people who are searching for us, like as beacons, not as like, you know, popularizing, *ube*. You know what I mean? It's like, it's about, collecting each other and like finding each other… rather than like exploiting and becoming mainstream or whatever. Capitalist bullshit. (d.l.c.)

When discussing future community actions, Veronica perceived that visibilizing the diverse representations of queer Filipino/a/xs in Montréal is important to show the existence of these diverse realities which can help break open rigid gender and sexuality norms and roles. This visibility can show to those who are still not "out" or are struggling to affirm their identity that they can come to these spaces when they are ready. Veronica further considered the importance of informal conversations to unpack and learn about terminologies and concepts of

gender identity and sexuality for those whose languages and meanings differ, especially for those

new to Canada. These conversations would seek to open more possibilities regarding identity and

re-shape norms rather than reinforcing more restrictive binaries and concepts.

6.3 Possibilities in worldviews of abundance and collectivity

Abundance and collectivity are related to returning and reconnecting to cultural notions

of seeing oneself in relation to all others and acting in abundance alongside others to build

together rather than to extract or compete. This abundance and collectivity were shown in the

Filipino/a/x cultural expressions of reconnecting and constructing a sense of belonging and

community through sharing food in JB's story above. Despite not being a biological family

member, JB was invited to "get more food than you want" when encountering a Filipino/a/x

family at their restaurant while on vacation. This experience illustrates the sense of self-in-other

of *kapwa* in which caring for the other's sustenance is a given.

Further, participants explored how their embodiment of queerness expands and opens

possibilities toward these worldviews. When exploring the question of queer futures in

Workshop 4, Koko described "collective liberation" as "my personal liberation through my

queerness. I see it through others who feel like outsiders like me." When discussing why we

build community, d.l.c. expanded on these concepts in relation to being Filipino/a/x and queer

through *kapwa*. They discussed the interconnection of queerness to *kapwa* and being Filipino/a/x

as holding worldviews of transformation and abundance not only around gender identity and

sexuality but in relation and connection to all others and surroundings:

> And so like, being with other queer folks, it's just like understanding that being in a state
> of transformation is fine, and it's actually a lot more healthy and free than it is the way
> that people are, you know, living their day-to-day lives like in the status quo … so I feel
> like that's why we build, because we see that possibility not just for ourselves, but like for
> everybody. Cause you know, you mentioned communal liberation, right? Like, that's
> what we want because I feel like a lot of possibility we can also see in other people not as

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ourselves. And so I think that's what, um, connects my queerness to *Kapwa* and like my Filipinoness. (d.l.c.)

In reflecting on the community organizing among Filipino/a/xs, Maria-Lorraine described the interconnection between individuals taking care of their own selves, such as honouring their bodies and what they need, to taking care of their community. Again, the notion of *kapwa* arose in this discussion as driving the desire to take more care of oneself, as this care generates more possibilities to work with and build with others. Possibilities of learning about and acting in solidarity and in liberatory struggle with others can stem from queer embodiment and worldviews that expand from abundance, interconnections with others, and the desire to return to spaces, places, and actions of care for oneself, thus caring for community.

6.4 Multiple scales and forms of change

As explored in the homecoming process, the participants expressed experiences of or witnessing other people's unacceptance and discrimination among family, social networks, and broader societal systems. The participants expressed a multiplicity of responses to these experiences internally and externally to adapt to or, otherwise, seek to change the social and systemic dynamics that perpetuate these logics and experiences of marginalization. Building from the previous sub-theme of growing who one is and shifting to worldviews of abundance and collectivity alongside others and the natural world, there are different scales of how this change may occur.

These scales of change can include, as mentioned, making a zine to visibilize the nuance and diversity of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs and illustrate their existence amid erasure, or holding informal conversations in the park around food to unpack identity and unmask coloniality. Some participants, in their feedback interviews, expressed interest in more sessions to reconnect to pre-colonial understandings of gender identity, sexuality, and cultural specificities, similar to the

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session by Jayson from FIPOQ. In gathering and sharing these lived experiences, Veronica expressed it as a form of disruption to the status quo and the conditions of exclusion: "for me… my goal is to represent and to let other people know that like you cannot erase our identity. We have been here, so this is your proof. If you wanna follow your rule book of having truth, there's a lot of proof now." These acts may also serve as beacons for others to see themselves, reconnect to one's identities, and expand toward further community action.

I had shared with participants an analogy of a fountain with different shoots of water to demonstrate different forms of participating in and enacting social change, which then pool in the bottom of the fountain as the wider, longer-term movement. From d.l.c.'s perspective viewing change through a lens of abundance and collectivity requires revolutionary change. Reformist policy and advocacy changes can restrict more transformative changes when based on underlying logics of cisheteronormativity and patriarchy:

> You mentioned water ways about that project, but just I keep thinking about like, you know, the cisheteropatriarchy system as like the damming of the water ways and once you release that, like everything's abundant again and like you can't own water. It's just like, it's constantly flowing and like that's why gender fluidity is what we call that, right? So it's just… realizing how abundant life and everybody in the world is, and I know it's like, I'm like trying to put it back together with like policies and stuff like that, but it's just like we can add, we can try to, we can win as many of these like political stuff as we want, but if people are still thinking the same way, it's just gonna be back and forth and back and forth. So it's kind of like revolutionary work, you know, to actually have this sustained. You know, and it's all connected to everything, right? It's connected to borders, it's connected to coloniality, like it's, you know, all of that together. (d.l.c.)

Indeed, a main theme was unmasking the colonial narratives and logics that can influence social relations and institutional arrangements from familial to social to political systems including local to transnational levels. As Veronica and Andi discussed in the group feedback session, LGBTQ+ peoples, specifically those who are queer and poor, are still criminalized in the Philippines. These participants discussed how there is an ongoing struggle for sex education,

bringing to the fore the different social-political power dynamics in the Philippines and the ongoing transnational approach in discussing community action.

6.4.1 Intentional relationships to land and original caretakers of the land

A thread throughout the discussions around identity, decolonization and community building included learning and intentionally acting to undo settler colonialism, highlighting the need to have right relations with the land and original caretakers of the land. As highlighted through d.l.c.'s storytelling, self-discovery in the diaspora through returning and re-rooting amid experiences of dislocation, disconnection and displacement is not about the doctrine of discovery, which has led to ongoing settler colonialism but about understanding how the histories of one's ancestors and current relation to lands exist in these historical entanglements. d.l.c. reflects on the participants' stories about their queerness as being rooted in multiple processes of decolonization:

> … that's one of the things that, I heard about everybody's story today too, is like our queerness is rooted in decolonizing. You know, it's like there's not just decolonizing in terms of the way our ancestors have been decolonized, but how we're like in the process of like active colonization in Turtle Island. (d.l.c.)

d.l.c. asked how we can build from our communities' knowledges and wisdoms in processes of dislocations and reconnections to be accomplices with Indigenous peoples in their fight here.

Koko reflected on learning from a professor about how experiences of dislocation inform the need to reconnect to lands in relation with Indigenous peoples of the land:

> …what she said to me kind like really hit and she's like, people that live in the diaspora don't know how to like, dwell, you know, like we don't know how to be in a place cause we've just been moving around so much. So, advice that she kind of says to the best thing you can do is to get to know the land here as of now, because we can't, like, I think it would be performative, you could just like go to an Indigenous person and be like, 'Hey, I want to be an ally.' You have to like make relationships. You know, and for that to like organically happen. Like you have to build relationship to the land that is here… it almost feels like this existential question, you know how can you truly be an ally without being

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performative? And, like, sometimes it just comes down to intention. But sometimes as we know, the ally is not enough. (Koko)

These reflections relate to the overarching theme of returning to *kapwa,* which centred relationalities through the cultural notion of seeing oneself as a wider collective. Returning and reconnecting to *kapwa* acknowledges that forms of collectivity and community building are already inherent to ancestral, cultural, and linguistic knowledge among the diaspora, in deep connection to the social and systemic conditions and histories in the Philippines.

Queerness connects to *kapwa* and Filipino/a/x identity as seeing transformative possibilities for all others, not just oneself, as oneself is interconnected to others and the natural world. Some participants considered visibilizing LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x diversities to support others in growing their own self-acceptance at a pace that works for them. Participants overall desired for the visibilization to be an intention and a choice in ways that disrupt dominant norms. Decolonization, queerness and Filipino/a/x experiences are viewed by many of the participants as interrelated or rooted in each other. The ongoing process of decolonization involves the need to be in right relations with the land and Indigenous peoples.

Chapter 7: Findings III – Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan* Process: On Growing Grassroots Returns to Relationalities

7.1 Introduction

This chapter primarily addresses the third and fourth research objectives: (1) Interrogate dominant research methods and expand on community-based and participatory research method possibilities; (2) Provide practical recommendations to engage with more responsive and transformative social work practice and social policy and grow skills and support among community groups, organizations, and movements. The findings come primarily from the five individual feedback interviews with participants, the group feedback and celebratory session, and the two interviews with the art exhibit attendees, as well as my field notes about the research process.

However, the findings in this chapter also build on the individual and collective stories from the workshops. In addition, during the workshops themselves, I had integrated prompt questions for check-in and check-out, during which participants at times shared feedback on their experiences in the workshops. Similar threads are seen throughout the workshop discussions and the exhibit, while the participants' reflections during the interviews naturally include expanding from and on the knowledge and stories shared across the workshops and the exhibit.

Overall, the feedback shows that this Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan* approach has elements in the process that reflect community building in action. The findings speak to possibilities in this intentionally constructed space as a place of return to grow *kapwa* and collectivity as described in my findings. As Maria-Lorraine said in the debrief of the second workshop in sharing their individual stories, "I see myself in each of you," showing their reconnections and recognitions among the collective. Some of them spoke about the possibilities of collectivity and

healing that arise through different mediums of cultural and artistic production and expression. They expressed the importance of spaces and meanings that can focus on the specificity of queer Filipino/a/x diasporic experiences, who have distinct histories of colonialism and legacies of colonial thought and relations. The specificities of individual stories being heard and seen can foster a deeper sense of affective connection across diverse individuals, expanding possibilities for solidarity and compassion.

7.2 On collective (re)imaginings, (re)telling, and communal "monumentation"

This sub-theme speaks to the earlier theme of homecoming around growing and constructing self and community legibility as a parallel narrative and otherworld of socialities, diversities, multiplicities, and more transformative communal belonging. Collective (re)imaginings refer to this intentional invocation of growing and grounding in the meaning from the community itself through a collective process, in which some state fostered a sense of *kapwa* in the group through affective bonds to each other in the storytelling. Koko used the analogy of how the workshops "planted seeds" among the participants, revealing that the impact of the workshops may be felt or experienced beyond the process itself as other conditions help grow these seeds. Their narratives present the growing, re-telling, and documenting of a queer Filipino/a/x diasporic collective imaginary. Veronica, in their feedback interview, invoked the importance of disrupting dominant visibilities and representations given the material and bodily manifestations of colonization and visibilizing decolonial stories as forms of empowerment:

> Well, because we grew up hoping to be white. We grew up wanting to, you know, use papaya soap a lot to just like really make our skin lighter, like very, very physical things. It's because that's the representation we believe is the best. Like, that's the representation that we believe will get us through longer, that's a representation we believe will secure us financially. Right. And so to disrupt that is very empowering. (Veronica)

d.l.c. described this process as reflecting the importance of "writing ourselves into history" and a "monumentation" to those who have been erased and excluded from historical documentation and narratives:

> It would be good just to kind of commemorate it because we also need to be seen and heard and felt and to be in the canon, you know. The amount of times, like as a person who goes to like alternative libraries and like love zines and stuff like that, like those are super important…. and when you find something so niche, like just because it's not widespread doesn't mean that it has no meaning, right? Like even one person can look at it and like just change their life, and it's just super important to have that available. (d.l.c.)

Meaning is not just reduced to the number of people who have access to the stories and to the most generalizable experiences but to the quality and impact of the experiences in accessing these stories.

7.2.1 *"Getting rid of the fish bone" through relationalities*

Participants expressed a sense of collective accountability and responsibility to the process of sharing a space as a group in ways that foster these reconnections to oneself and each other and respect the intimacies and emotionality in the stories. Maria-Lorraine expanded on the process of collective sharing among Filipino/a/xs, relating to their past of growing up in a more conservative neighbourhood of Filipino/a/xs and now being around a group who are willing and able to discuss the issues in their communities. They reflected on how the collective storytelling process enabled those who may have been more "shy and reserved about talking about it" to see that in how others shared, there is a possibility to discuss it openly. They also stated that sharing is done in a way that is mindful of the feelings and differences of others. The process had a sort of collective understanding amid complicated stories and feelings that "we all understood each other in some way. There was never a way of taking something in a bad way, there was always room to understand" (Maria-Lorraine).

Koko similarly shared that the individual and collective storytelling process allowed for a sense of "unlayering" of oneself, especially in seeing the photographs and stories of others, which helped move the group toward being more vulnerable. Being able to share collectively about the stories and provide their own interpretations, from Koko's perspective, was "a big basis of feeling safe in our group and feeling more like a sense of kinship, of *kapwa*, you know, to each other." This sense of vulnerability – of *kapwa* – generated in the group was a theme across a few participants in the group feedback discussion. In the group feedback discussion around unmasking and unlayering the performativity and protections in certain spaces, the group related the vulnerability to the Tagalog saying "*Tanggalin ung tinik ng isda*" or "getting rid of the fish bone." In other words, as Veronica described, a "sigh of relief of not having your guard up anymore," or as d.l.c. described it: "You just kind of loosen up… now I can breathe."

For d.l.c., it was also the specificity of being in a space of recognition and feeling of "coming home" through the intersection of being both queer and Filipino/a/x. In some spaces, there can be a sense of trepidation within and outside of the Filipino/a/x community in explaining or presenting one's nonnormative genders and sexualities. In this group, there was a feeling of being in the "same boat," even among strangers. Veronica went on to explain how this vulnerability translated into strength and affirmation of who she is:

> …when we think about vulnerability, we kind think of it more negatively like, ah just like protect yourself. But when we had our like every week, and we have an actual session today, we kind of like reclaim how it feels to be vulnerable with everyone. And for me, it was more of like empowering to be vulnerable… for me, it kind of translated more into strength. Into strength of who I am. And the fact that, like, we're so comfortable within each other, it was like a relief, you know… And every week, there's like a different like theme, right? And every week, it's not only that we're vulnerable, that we're open to each other, but because it's open, we add more things to it. And that's why, for me, it was like transformation. Not in a sense that it's like it's transform by my identity as a Filipino refers to myself more of [inaudible]. So, yeah, coming out of it was more of like, well fuck ya, I'm queer Filipino, you know. And, it's also very symbolic to do it at Plamondon, right? There's something about it; it's a place where I grew up. (Veronica)

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As Veronica noted, participants related this growing vulnerability to the consistency in the workshops in being able to continuously expand reconnections to *kapwa* and to deepening and re-affirming one's acceptance and understanding of oneself connected to the stories of others. Veronica spoke about how in not having been exposed to many Filipino/a/x queer stories, having this intentional space, particularly in the third workshop with Jayson, was a space of affirmation through being given the "time to actually just digest the whole thing." Having this intentional space was considered more conducive to learning for Veronica than a common avenue of having access to some stories on social media, wherein there is less time to "digest" the stories. d.l.c. related this consistency to the need to grow relationships and depth in understanding each other.

d.l.c. discussed how these longer-term engagements countered "top-down" research and funding that often serve to contain identity and experience to trauma narratives and lack sustainability in supporting the ongoing needs and reconnections to community. These reflections challenge again the notion of policy recommendations that often signify the end of the Photovoice process, while, instead, this PAR process can link to the ongoing community and movement-building in which relationalities go through their "ups and downs" and respond to needs in contextual and transformative ways:

> It's not about the everyday living; it's not about like the actual long-term needs of the community as we grow together, right, because that's not sustainable in academia. But like, as a community, we can figure that stuff out for… with ourselves and like as we continue to see each other. So that's just a thought, like separating the, you know, the aspect of archiving, to the actual, like the continuation… because I don't know how many times I've been in like kind of groups that are like contained based on identity, and then most of the time it stays there. There's no depth. Like it's just, it's a relief to find each other in that way, but then like I never see them again or like it become, it just doesn't sustain, you know, and there's all you knew about them was like the traumas, and that's it. You know, you don't go through the joys and the ups and downs… or even the banal things, right? (d.l.c.)

However, important to the context of this study, the PAR process differed from common photovoice methods by being more focused on exploring identity as connected to community and changing exclusionary and colonial ways of being and knowing rather than on recommendations for action based on the stories, elaborated on further in the Discussion section.

7.2.2 "A space to be caught": To be seen, heard and have options in affirming spaces

Participants related having these options and consistency in spaces specifically to the exclusion of queer people, as well as the context of newcomers. In the group feedback discussion, d.l.c. described how "within queerness in this world, we sometimes don't get the option to have certain things and certain personalities." Andi related to the notion of having the options:

> I think consistency is comforting. I ran an LGBTQ newcomer group, and sometimes we had people show up, and sometimes you don't, but people knowing that it's there, that it's an option, is so important. And if they can show up, cool, and if you can't, that's also cool. The space is still there for you. (Andi)

Veronica also expanded this option to the specific experiences of immigrants, such as herself, who may desire to see others who understand their struggle regarding the difficult transition of learning a new language and then trying to navigate self-identification among different pronouns or other gender of sexuality concepts. Several participants suggested that having an ongoing drop-in or an identifiable person who is a "source of space for them to open the door," as Veronica explained, can provide this sense of safety, comfort and access to support and resources. d.l.c. explained that these sessions can be informal, art-based, or even self-led, with repetition to have somewhere to go and deepen relationships – "a space to be caught."

A few participants in their feedback interviews spoke specifically about how the collective storytelling process expanded and affirmed their meanings and understanding of self

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and in relation to others. Maria-Lorraine expressed a deep sense of change by being able to have

a space to consider questions and find peace in different things:

> I think it changed a lot of it because I was finally around people that were like me or part of the LGBTQIA plus community… it changed the way I viewed myself. It made me question a lot more things but also find peace in a lot more things. Find peace in not knowing. Sometimes find peace in and like just being me. Just just being and seeing another being and them being a being… like finding ways to honour other people more when you don't know how they wanna identify. If they wanna identify if they even wanna talk about it, whether they're out or not. Everything. (Maria-Lorraine)

Andi shared feedback that while the workshops were less of a space to expand their learning or

skills, they considered the space to be one of reaffirmation:

> …because I have familiarity with some of you guys, it was more like the space to have like reaffirmation… sometimes I like undervalue that, like that reaffirmation and like, oh yeah, like we can create like this kind of space together… reaffirmation of like how you present and then how you want to be seen or whatever is like, is powerful. A lot more powerful than we give a lot of credit for. I think that was like created in like every kind of activity that we did, and I felt that reaffirmation… (Andi)

Veronica added how the research process helped them add to their approach to *kapwa* in

community-building in aiming to be more trauma- and violence-informed in considering the

histories and individual processes of others and the empowerment in forming a self-identity:

> … because I know Filipinos who are queer, and some even told me that, like, [they] will never come out because parents are deeply homophobic… just that very rigid expectation of [them], you know, like to be the care provider to like, you know, at this age you need to have children because you need to keep on the bloodline of, you know, those kind of things. So I definitely feel more, I guess more trauma-informed and violence-informed… but also try to help them navigate… how they self-express. So how they self-identify and then try to be there, I guess, just to be there as someone, you know, my DM [direct message] will be open. Maybe I won't be able to, like, reply to you right away, but to not lose them… and I think it's very empowering to know who you are, how you self-identify, maybe physically, you can't do it yet because you are physically threatened. Your security is not the best. But to know that you can and to know that there are people that you can access in the same space as you. Again, empowering. (Veronica)

> For Koko, the impact of the workshop was felt and reflected on much beyond the

workshop itself, as they mentioned in their feedback interview that it re-shaped their meaning in

relation to their identity. Specifically, in learning directly from someone who has Indigenous

wisdom and knowledge to share, they felt more able to understand how their ancestors celebrated

them, which helped them step into their non-binary trans identity:

> … I'm very grateful to you and all the work that you put into that. Cause it was the first
> time I've entered a space where I felt like a lot of my identities were seen and heard and
> acknowledged, you know, through a non-colonial, non-Western lens. So, just that in itself
> allowed me, I think to just, again, like peel another like layer of these, you know, like
> masks, and protection that I wear… I'm trying to perhaps, for lack of better words, but
> like decolonize like my mind, body and soul, and through this workshop, I'm realizing I
> can't do it alone. You know, like, we really absolutely need the support of the community
> and like the affirmation of someone who like has had experience, you know, and can like
> affirm that like, this is what our ancestors have done, are doing… and I think that really
> opened up a part of my like identity and like thinking about the construct of gender. And
> like, I think about it all the time, and I'm like, you know, I've like stepped into like my
> non-binary trans identity, like fully with both feet since definitely that workshop because
> I'm like, my ancestors celebrated me (Koko).

d.l.c. also related to the experience and importance of the collective aspect of storytelling among

queer Filipino/a/xs and how these stories expanded their worldview. They experienced new

learning and re-connections through hearing and seeing the stories directly from others, which

escape limited narratives of these lived experiences:

> I think it was really crucial to do this as a group… I don't know how much would've
> come out of me if I didn't have all these other people and learning about them and just
> kind of like being in the same soup with them, you know, and like feeling the feels and…
> hearing their stories because I don't know I do believe that queerness is a lot bigger than
> my own experience, and so I just want to hear everybody else's experience, especially as
> Filipino folks… It just like highlights a lot of about my life too that I didn't, I kind of took
> for granted, you know, like housing... or just feelings of belonging or like with your, even
> with your specific family, I think it's important to actually see that or hear that from them.
> And it's so generously too, like they were, there were some like conversations that were
> very tender... it felt really good… I've been in enough Filipino communities, but like to
> be in a space as Filipino queers together, it's a whole different thing (d.l.c.).

As expressed in earlier findings, opening space for these collective re-imaginings and cultural

production to tell the multitude of stories can be sites of reconnection, re-affirmations and

belonging that re-shape and find other worldviews outside of dominant norms.

7.2.3 Cultural production as expanding meaning-making and healing across time

Participants expressed different ways that the photography and cultural production process throughout the workshops impacted them or (re)opened possibilities of meaning-making, self-expression, and artistic reconnection. Providing various options for self-expression through the facilitation of the photography workshop by a community photographer, the use of music, dance, and pre-colonial teachings from FIPOQ, the collage-making and the AI workshop by the participant were cited as helpful for participants to express certain aspects of themself, to help ground and re-affirm themself in one's meaning-making, or to foster a space of healing.

Koko considered the strong emotional connection across individuals that could be fostered through sharing specificities in individual stories and being able to relate through an intimate bond formed through the story:

> … being like very specific about your experience makes someone be like, I don't have that experience, but as a human being, I've been through a similar experience… So I think being very like vocal about your specific experience and like defining your experience, whatever it is, without shame or guilt or like whatever. Then someone else can actually be really, truly empathetic, you know what I mean? And compassionate, because it's like you're not being empathetic and compassionate because, like, we're in a woke culture and you feel like you have to be, it's cause you're actually relating to the person, and not feeling expected to relate to them because you feel bad. (Koko)

They go on to reflect how people sharing their stories opens the possibility for others to maybe "feel a little more comfortable talking to this person because they've also gone through that [or] I really like their art style and [it] talks to me in a certain way" (Koko). Koko's description reflects a sense of mutuality and solidarity not based in performativity but growing from empathy and compassion. Storytelling for them fosters reconnections within the self and between people.

As the participants reflected on the process of doing the photography and the cultural production in the workshops, they showed that these parallel narratives or other worlds are often constructed in the meaning-making of everyday moments. However, the intentionality and

invitation of pointed prompts through cultural production can unveil these narratives and meanings and incite further reflections on one's own life. Through this process, there is intentional reconnection and "monumentation" of one's own identities, histories and meaning-making, whether through a daily act or re-visiting art from the past, such as JB's choice to re-share her poem from 2008. d.l.c.'s expression of themself came out naturally, as they just lived their life and was able to connect these daily acts captured through their photography to their queer worldview and embodied reality:

> I just lived my life and took photos, and it wasn't until, like, maybe, a few days before the due date that I looked through my phone, and I was like, oh yeah, this is it because queerness is just my life… it's not like what people who hate queer people think is like our whole lives that we, it's our hobby and like it's all we talk about. You know? It's like, no, we just live our life. And so looking at the photos, when I saw the garlic photos that I took already, it kind of made sense… it kind of goes well with the content as well of like, feel like queerness is natural inside me, and being part of nature and like, you know, nothing that's separate from myself. (d.l.c.)

As discussed in earlier findings across participants around agency in visibility and invisibility in the Photovoice process and beyond, Koko questioned how the fixedness of a photograph could misrepresent their embodied practice and lifeworld, which is in constant transformation. They reflected deeply on how to represent what it means to claim queer Filipino/a/x identity in a space and desired to be authentic in their representation:

> We evolve every single second. So I was like, how can I portray something and feel like I'll still be proud of it when I look back at it, you know? I think I just had to really be like, well, in this particular moment, what does it mean to be in the space to be with these people and to claim these experiences of like being, you know, queer Filipinx, and how can I capture that?… There's that quote that I read to the class, and that really made me feel emotional because it was, it really spoke to me about, like, you know, this photo was a lot about identity, and there was one line that said like, you know, we strive to have an identity that's outside Spain and America, and like, it's very, very true, especially for me as someone, you know, who experiences this in the diaspora and all of my experiences is always in this like constant transient phase. I just like felt really touched by it, and I was like, I don't know, I just took my phone and took a selfie, and I was like, you know, whatever… but not with the thinking of, oh, this is gonna be my piece, you know? (Koko)

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Koko's questioning highlights how the Photovoice process itself can be approached from a queer and decolonial lens in questioning the visibilization of modern identities. Similar to d.l.c., Koko chose their photograph in an everyday moment of doing their regular acts in which they lived and sought out ways to reconnect to identity and community. Koko also described that the debriefing process was an important part of the storytelling about the photographs, as the talk-back provided space for interpretation from the lens of the participant, which is not as common in art exhibits.

For Maria-Lorraine, doing the photography process "got me back in touch with taking pictures again, and that was really emotional for me." Veronica shared how the language in modern Filipino society toward being an artist or creative can be looked down upon, but they expressed that these various avenues of expression used in the workshop show the importance of "creative outlets" and having the tools to share their feelings. For Veronica, she stated the collage-making and cutting of the magazines "was very therapeutic for me." Indeed, Andi elaborated in the group feedback session on how the different mediums of artistic expression were helpful vehicles to express these narratives:

> I like the different ways that we can express our narratives… I think that's really cool. I haven't really seen that in academia, so I appreciate you providing the space to do that. For us to do that. Because I can't express certain things like one way or like a specific kind of way, so like being able to say different things throughout the different mediums is cool. (Andi)

d.l.c. similarly commented on how they liked that the project came from the Filipino community itself, as oftentimes these academic spaces are made by "experts" from a top-down approach. While an LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x community group or organization did not identify the research questions, d.l.c. is referring to my social position with this community, as in the project came from someone identifying with and active in the Filipino/a/x community. In being asked about

what about this process made it a form of healing for some, d.l.c. shared that the tools that people were given, such as photography, journals and other "hands-on stuff," can support people in different ways in healing especially "when you can set an intention to something and then follow it through" (d.l.c.).

Maria-Lorraine also reflected on how the healing aspect for them was being in a group and meeting people who are accepting of who they were and have an understanding that "we're going to be the way we are and we're gonna come back to who we are." For Maria-Lorraine, they shared that they were not used to seeing people who look like them that accept them, and that they were able to create a connection with others which will manifest later in how the relationships develop. They expressed that in "every person that I met, I found something that I'm inspired by… similarities that make me feel like I could be like that, that I could be inspired by" (Maria-Lorraine).

Meaning through cultural production and the collectivity generated through the storytelling for this group was an important avenue to generate this sense of kinship, *kapwa* and reconnection to who one is. At the same time, *kapwa* and relationalities within the group were intentionally co-created. As the group debriefed in one session with the prompt "Say one thing you appreciate about yourself and one thing you appreciate about the group," Jon Marvin expressed a saying in Tagalog that represents the sense of collectivity in being in the same space and seeking to listen to people's stories:

> I appreciate everyone's, you know, everyone's open-mindedness to not just listen but also digest everyone's stories. I know it takes a lot of courage for us to share personal information. In *Tagalog*, we say it is *lahat ng tao may pinagdadaanan* like everyone has [their] own story, everyone is going through something, but we're here together, you know, as a community to tell our stories and to really listen and to digest everyone's, you know, respective stories. (Jon Marvin)

Again, these linguistic and cultural nuances show the teachings that already exist and further grow *kapwa* and collectivity. The collective nature of the storytelling process and the multiple tools provided to visibilize their diversities and forms of expressions were also instruments to grow a sense of intimacy, safety, and non-performativity within the group. The photography process itself was shown to be a site of deep reflection when prompted through a lens of queerness, while still being contested in how this visibilization may restrict the view of bodies, experiences and artistic practices that are in constant transformation.

7.4 Future iterations and action: On growing from grassroots options and access

Most participants in their feedback and discussions of future iterations and actions desired to continue the conversations from these workshops through accessible and regular options, diverse mediums of expression, and multiple forms of documenting and visibilizing these and other stories around gender identity and sexuality.

Some participants considered the importance of making connections between LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x stories across Turtle Island and the Philippines, to spread the stories further and learn transnationally. Participants expressed the need for future iterations of these sorts of workshops that can be adapted to how different groups would like to see them implemented. Maria-Lorraine suggested engaging young people regularly in schools with these sorts of workshops and topics to begin to grow self-discovery as well as acceptance of others at younger ages, specifically by using art.

Intergenerational conversations and spaces were also mentioned by participants, particularly in engaging more with younger generations but also in learning from Elders who have and continue to face similar issues. While having recommendations directly to change policy were challenged, forms of programming and popular education stemming from the ideas

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and structures "on-the-ground" were considered and shared. For example, participants generally accepted the idea of having regular programming and a sort of "drop-in space" open to all and adapted to different people's material and emotional capacities. The space would pay attention to relieving pressure of expressing oneself in a certain way or the sense of readiness of community members to reconnect to certain community spaces or discussions. It would also aim to be made accessible to different financial or time commitments.

Along with other participants, Veronica provided feedback that rather than this research project ending, the conversation could continue through more informal spaces to be able to understand the nuances and diversities of identifying within the LGBTQIA community. Veronica added the importance of unpacking gendered English terms and concepts, when in Filipino/a/x languages there are gender neutral pronouns, and creating more safety and spaces for those who do not feel safe enough or able to express their identities. She also added the ongoing theme of unmasking coloniality and disrupting dominant norms around heteronormativity through conversations and public representation. She offered that these discussions in informal spaces could address queer relationships and queer parenting, for example, as well as sharing about the pre-colonial learnings around queer people who were seen as leaders, which she considers as very empowering to hear when this identity is often "Othered".

Offering options for different mediums of expression as reflected in the workshops and expanding on them was another theme across participants in their discussions on future actions and programming. Koko expanded on this point that individuals have different ways of processing information and different capacities to participate, so drawing from diverse tools to diffuse messages, such as documentaries and shorter video clips, could improve access. Koko considered the idea of re-imagining visible narratives through repurposing the tools of media and

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communication and reclaiming the digital space that can perpetuate dominant and exclusionary stories and propaganda. Koko reflected on building an alternative or parallel narrative that is resistive and grows another visibility based in humour to disrupt dominant stories of trauma and despair to engage young people and learning from the homeland to the diaspora.

While creating spaces and avenues for expression, whether in-person or online, were mentioned as part of the process of reconnecting to oneself and each other, the participants commented that people are at different capacities for these reconnections both physically and emotionally. d.l.c. shared about the need for repetition in being able to show up to a space to build a sense of safety and relationality: "as much we create space, the people have to take the risk every time they come." d.l.c. described this vulnerability in being willing to take the risks together as "perfect alchemy." They stated that over time the "strings get strengthened," as in people start to understand what makes a space or place safer for others in moments of riskiness.

Veronica described a sense of a space for reparations or as a "tester" for those who have received violence or exclusion physically or mentally about who they are from their own community and have decided to respond by "[turning] their backs" on their cultural community. They may be more reluctant to "re-commit" to a space and community in which they have experienced this unacceptance. Co-constructing these spaces of safety and healing opens more possibilities to reconnect.

Participants explored the impact and power of storytelling and documentation of these stories. A few participants expressed the power of having access to a project or option which may not seem as significant or impactful due to limited numbers of attendees or another factor. From another perspective, the event or zine or information can "mean everything to that one person" (Andi). d.l.c. mentioned how continuing the documentation and visibilization of such

stories is also about being able to "keep the conversation going" across time and space. d.l.c. described this archiving as a form of "time traveling" and "writing ourselves into history," showing the ways that historical documentation and visibilities escape the linearity of time by being shared across generations, which may challenge histories not written by communities themselves or often excluded altogether. They suggested how some documentation, such as zines or PDFs can "live longer" than other modes such as websites, to contribute to the archiving and "monumentation" of these histories.

d.l.c. added another layer of growing grassroots capacities within the community beyond funding, fragmented support, and charitable models to build ground-up knowledge, resources and spaces based on the needs of the people:

> We have the information. It's not like I'm learning any of this from like schools or you know, we're looking for it ourselves, we're teaching ourselves, we're finding our own histories, and it's just that if we want it to be sustained, we need the support from the top because they have the money and the funding, that's it. We don't need them to find somebody. We already have each other, we know who the experts are. We don't need experts… (d.l.c.).

d.l.c. reflected on building capacity within the community toward "maintenance" and holistic approaches, which includes the need to have more robust groups, collectives, and community. d.l.c. and I discussed in their feedback interview the prioritization of long-term change through grassroots spaces. In these spaces, community or collective members can be considered as equal, but have different skill sets and may get specific training to be the "go-to" person for a particular skill, such as conflict resolution. d.l.c. shared how much of the current organizing can have high turnover if not focused on retaining people in a holistic way, especially amid structures lacking funding and not adapted to trauma-informed practices that account for "colonial mentality and Filipino psychology." d.l.c. referred to a new organization made by and for the Filipino/a/x youth community in Montréal – *Kapwa Centre* – a nonprofit that could have regular programming and

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space to talk and learn from others, provide access to knowledge about culture and books, and do popular education, while receiving funding to build internal resources and spaces. They discussed the limitations and restrictions of being "beholden" to funders and grants that are often not sustainable in responding to community needs, in which "it always feels like piecemeal when I'm looking for grants… A lot of us have to cater to it and change what we're working on so we can get that money" (d.l.c.).

Participants referred to the need for compensation rather than continuing "to make do" which Veronica said often occurs in the Filipino/a/x community given the constrained resources. Veronica expressed that this project could be the start of building among LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs because it shows that these sorts of spaces can happen, even "in the heart of the Filipino community… people were compensated, people's primary needs were met, secondary needs were met, and then there's even an aftercare is what I call it" (Veronica). At the same time, the participants had already expressed that the impact of this project may manifest later, as reconnections to each other occurred and discussions were had about what it means to be together and to be oneself.

7.5 Workshop process: On loosening control toward relations and reconnections

In this section, I draw mainly from the participants' feedback, different moments in the discussions throughout the workshops, and my field notes about the workshops to analyze what dimensions and factors of the workshop process were most important for the purposes of the PAR design and to the main themes presented earlier in this chapter. Drawing from Torre and Ayala's (2009) concept of loosening control of scientific rigour toward collective needs and outcomes, the workshop process showed the need to prepare for and attune to the evolution and moments of relations and reconnections occurring throughout the process. In attuning to oneself

as a researcher tied to the collective, the process thus requires preparing for and constructing trauma-informed and peer support principles, many of which I have learned through community organizing and development practices.

The findings illustrate that aspects of the process which were trauma-informed, fostered reconnections and healing, and grew intimacies among participants are related to co-creating a space that recognizes the histories and socialities among queer and trans Filipino/a/xs from the local to transnational level. As shown earlier, the intimacy and emotionality that many participants experienced in connection with each other, in co-constructing a space of *kapwa* and collectivity, were important elements of the action of this research process. The multiple tools for cultural production provided space to process, express and re-imagine oneself, community and transformative possibilities. Co-constructing this space and considering the facilitation process required that I, as the researcher, relate to and foster a space which can pay attention to this community's queer diasporic lives and diversities.

Early on in designing the workshops, I planned to intentionally integrate aspects of my community organizing and social work experience into the process, as well as preparing for what will manifest from the workshops that are unplanned, as I had noted in my field notes. My field notes from throughout the planning, processing, and adapting of the workshops reflect how I considered how to "loosen control" toward the evolving needs and collective outcomes in the process. While considering access, safety, confidentiality, and "risk" are a part of the formal ethics process, being attuned to the evolving relationalities in the process and my accountabilities to the wider community and collective sought to expand these arrangements toward greater inclusion and mutuality. After the second workshop, I wrote reflections on how I had prepared to attune to and incorporate community-building in the process:

I had thought through each facilitation item, question, slide, set-up, prompt, potential answers and thoughts of participants, flow of the session, admin and logistics details, things that could be adapted or taken out if time was an issue, but the priority items as well. Years of doing group workshops in all kinds of settings, paid, unpaid, grassroots, community health centres, academia – has taught me that flexibility, adaptability, environment, and mindful presence are very important to creating an experience for the participants. Creating and building community in the process is an ongoing priority in this project – how are we forming connections, what will manifest from the workshops that are unplanned, what skills can be planned for but also what can I just let go and see what takes form?

In addition to researcher, I consider myself a facilitator in this space as I construct a container for the group, or a "sandbox." Within that sandbox there is room to play, grow, get a little messy as the sand spills over edges even though there is a barrier to contain it. I had hoped that as the community-building practices and processes occur, such as reflection prompts on how we could build community in this space, there would be more trust built among participants in the group as these questions would invoke a sense of relational accountability across all of us.

The need to understand and integrate the experiences of trauma, which many related to colonial pasts and structures, and diversities of relations with the Filipino/a/x community and other relationalities in place, was shown through the emphasis across participants on building spaces that recognize individual readiness to be vulnerable and understanding that relationships take time. As Koko expressed in entering the workshop space, they had their guard up, similar to many other spaces they enter, a reaction they say is "trauma-based." They questioned the notion that claims of safe spaces can be enacted immediately:

> …felt like I had to almost prove my Filipino identity and prove my queerness… it was challenging for me to show up in the space like as myself. I thought that was really interesting because, you know, in a lot of community organizations, when there's like all these labels, it's supposed to make you feel safe… I guess it just made me realize that relationships do take time. (Koko)

Koko further shared that even though there is a basis of experiences and identity, there is no monolith in this identity and there is "a lot of nuance in how we exist."

Maria-Lorraine similarly shared that coming into the space, they were nervous and anxious in feeling like they were not knowledgeable or grown into their queerness enough to be there: "there was a position I felt like I needed to be in, or like a certain way I needed to act if I was going to be a part of this… and then through this I realized I didn't have to be or act or do anything specific to be who I am." Maria-Lorraine further stated that: "a really good thing for me was not having to feel like I needed to look a certain way to be queer."

Even with ethics approval around safety and risk, these reflections further the need for explicitly acknowledging and unveiling diversities in identity and shaping a space through building relationalities when in a group setting that can specify diverse queer Filipino/a/x experiences and histories. The participants' reflections also bring questions to how these community projects are promoted with labels of safety or of identity that in themselves do not inherently mean there will be a sense of community or acceptance.

A few participants discussed the centrality of providing food in the workshops as representing and challenging institutional norms that alienate community-building and cultural needs. For Koko, sharing Filipino food contributed to opening more vulnerability to "crack outta my shell," as they put it, given their experiences growing up in predominantly English and white neighbourhoods and feeling ashamed of sharing Filipino food because of outside judgments, such as others disliking the smell of their food. In their feedback interview, d.l.c. aptly discussed the limits of academia in terms of the lack of relational accountability to community and the collective and the ways this workshop process integrated some basic community-centred principles to re-shape norms of individualism and extraction:

> Well that's the thing, like academia as an institution is like meant to separate you, like individualize people, right? Like you're working towards your own goals and then your name being on top of the paper and you know, stuff like that. And so even something as little as being able to fund food for the meetings. I've felt that in art institutions where I've

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had to beg them to give us money to feed people. It's like, what do you think this is? We're creating community and belonging. We need food. Something as little as those things. Right. That's why, you know, that was one of the things too. Food is important to me. And so whenever I came to the sessions and there was food ready for me, it was like, thank God. Like there's another thing I can check off my list like for today, you know, like to just go there and eat…I know these institutions don't really think about and cause it, there's a like a form of like extractivism that they want from their quote unquote "subjects". And so yeah, it's, I think it's really important to have that communal feel to it.

The participants reflected generally on how their participation was influenced by the accessibility of the workshops in terms of their material and emotional needs. Veronica reflected that food was a necessity to be met through the workshops, as well as having been given compensation and allowing for flexibility with the timing, while still trying to help the workshops be on time. When it comes to time, and the different priorities and needs community members have within and outside of the research process, Maria-Lorraine suggested more notice in advance of the workshops with more specific details about workshop content.

Through the interviews and self-reflections, the main theme was that unplanned dimensions of these workshops manifested through the relations and reconnections that grew in these encounters, in particular moments. These relations had already spilled over to further community reconnections and action beyond this project and were considered as a part of ongoing relational building as they would carry these reconnections forward into other spaces and actions.

The final workshop was an example of the looseness of the research process in responding to the growing intimacies and reconnections, and how these encounters provide space for fluidity in representing the self and in being able to "shapeshift" in terms of embodiment of queerness and visibilities of identities. When the PowerPoint projection of the AI photographs we had co-created was displayed across a participant's body in the front of the room, there was an eruption in play, performance, snaps, claps and laughter as each person took turns in front of

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the projection and others (queerly) reaffirmed their agency through noise and humour in the participant's presentation and choice to visibilize themself. d.l.c. reflected on this workshop in how this moment is a metaphor for "who the people were in that space":

> … I liked how open it was. Like there was like a program, but like we kind of just talked and… would do what we felt like doing or, you know, it was very open. So that was nice because, like, for example, the AI workshop was like, it turned into photography Jacqueline: I was like, this seems to be going in an okay direction. Let's just do it …it was a good metaphor for… who the people were in that space, you know like we can just shift and like move and transform in whatever ways. There's no rigidity in terms of like the schedule or what needs to be done. Like no form of control in terms of the space… aside from, of course, safety and stuff like that. (d.l.c.)

This moment in the workshop represented the embodiment of the alterity and in-betweenness of the spaces we had been discussing through our individual and collective stories. The abilities to move, be flexible and transform with the needs and affect of the group re-shaped the contours of the institutional and normative time-space of rigidity, control, and linearity. The moment also reflected the use of cultural production to invoke imaginative encounters of inclusion and transformative realities when the group is attuned to the possibilities that occur in-between the program, agendas, and institutional or research-specific outcomes. The space enabled a re-imagining and a loosening of control over our collective encounter in space, time, and through our bodily and affection reconnections.

The AI process and tool itself which was used to visibilize possibilities of queer Filipino/a/x futurisms, which seeks to unveil parallel narratives of histories, presents and futures that have otherwise been dominated by trauma, subjugation, and control. Re-imagining narratives with the AI tool aimed to move toward the existence of and possibilities in resistance and otherworldly narratives. The co-creation of these images had never been conceived of before, as the AI text prompts provided by the participants merged images based on inputted algorithms of publicly available images to create a selection of unique images.

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While the constraints of these algorithms exist through their human creation, the manipulation of these tools for the purposes of co-constructing parallel narratives from individual and collective imaginations of transformative futures demonstrates the ways in which cultural production becomes an avenue for imagining and visualizing self and community legibility. The use of this technology became even more multilayered and complex, showing our complex desires and moments of imagination, as we drew from our bodily presence and the tools we were given to queer and re-shape the normative use of the tools, the space, and our visible representations.

As explored throughout this section, navigating the PAR process within the constraints of the institution toward considering collective needs and outcomes involves attuning to relations growing between participants in their consistent meetups, intentional community-building processes in the workshops, and reconnections to a sense of self as integrated with ancestral, cultural, and communal teachings and togetherness. The researcher requires a willingness and capacity to forge spaces for relationalities to be questioned and transformed, with specificities to the histories and socialities of the group and the relations to place.

7.6 Art exhibit feedback: On "[lowering] the hurdles toward engagement"

The feedback on the art exhibit was included in the interviews with the individual participants and in the group feedback session, as well as with two attendees of the art exhibit. While the art exhibit did not receive as much discussion regarding feedback, the experiences of the art exhibit attendees provided a different lens on the project while reflecting some of the themes discussed with the participants. For example, the two attendees who were subsequently interviewed identified as having lived experience with the LGBTQ+ community and different

first-generation experiences with migration to Canada. Each of them had also accessed or participated in community organizations in their homelands and/or other countries.

The main theme in the feedback from the few participants who discussed the exhibit in their interviews was the experience of sharing intimate parts of themselves regarding queerness. For Veronica, the experience was quite moving and empowering in being able to share one's truth and story when oftentimes those who are immigrant, queer and racialized are socialized not to speak their truths or talk about who they are:

> I think that that's the space where it touched me a little bit more when I was speaking compared to my activist speeches. So I think it's because I'm talking about myself with people who dare to listen to me, about who I am… and it's my first time talking about queerness, too, in front of everyone else. So it was like I was intimidated, but then, like, I took my time, took a big, big breath before, like, starting it, and so I'm just like, okay, this is it. People want to hear. I mean, I know people want to hear me, but it was a different feel when I went in front of everyone, and everyone's just anticipating for me to listen to, compared to, like, let's say, 'defund the police'… So it's very empowering to be able to tell our stories, it's very empowering to do it in my own way, and it's very empowering that there were people in there who's there to support me and listen to me to understand… (Veronica)

Similar to the discussions in the workshops that revealed how vulnerability strengthens a sense of empowerment, for Veronica, the ability to escape the social expectations of hiding who one is was a source of empowerment.

For d.l.c. they were able to share intimate parts of themself in front of attendees who they have different relations with, including "coming out" to certain individuals that they do organizing with. Rather than having to have a "long conversation about what it means… they could just hear my story…", taking some of the pressure off. This intimate individual storytelling in which queer and trans diaspora, immigrant, and racialized communities, among others who have been excluded from dominant discourses has potential to, again, grow a greater inner sense of empowerment in oneself while fostering reconnections to others.

Art exhibit attendee, R (pseudonym), a fellow Ph.D. student, reflected on how they were most moved by the participants' told stories, stating, "…contextualization that they were doing, and their reflections not just on the photographs, so like their own personal stories, but also what the group had come to mean to them." R related to the ways in which diasporic and migrant spaces can separate identities, and how the care fostered in a space such as the workshop process has potential to "lower the hurdles toward engagement" through empowerment in being who they are and reconnecting to others, thus further enabling them to join collective action. R reflected on how the project helped with unalienating people to challenge normative logics through building clearer support systems, especially in relation to the bureaucratic process of the IRB.

By drawing from their own experience in similar activist and organizing spaces in their homelands, R related to the challenges of creating healthy bonds toward deeper and longer-term relationship-building in movements. R reflects on the potentials of focusing on an ethics of care and spaces of healing within movements to add to collective action:

> And I think it felt from watching the participants on like how they spoke, it was like really clear that it was like a space [of] healing… and perhaps one of the few spaces in which both of these identities were treated with the same level of care…. I think there are a lot of, like, speaking as myself, like a person from like different… the current community [referring to diaspora], and then there's also the, you know, my gender and sexuality. Like very rarely do the two meet… and it has to be a deliberate thing. And so I think that kind of space and effort to, like, I guess it's still playing around in identity politics, but I think it has more like that potential for healing for is still is, I think, really useful, especially to, in terms of like integrating people into wider collective action… (R)

R's reflections are similar to some of the participants' discussions around the need for deeper and longer-term relationship-building to forge webs of relations and supports in speaking back to systems: "sometimes trying to force it too quick to like – I know the problems are pressing, but also trying to like force it might just create more strife than success in that sense."

R shared that the model that was developed through this research process could be replicated by other communities of colour and Filipino/a/x diaspora communities, as it has the potential for "healing and grounding." They also shared that the message can continue to be relayed in different mediums, such as documentary film, or other more mobile mediums depending on the desires of the participants. In terms of how the art exhibit impacted them or helped them grow relations with other community groups or spaces, they expressed that as a fellow Ph.D. student, it helped them reflect on how "the work that we do in these spaces impacts the communities we come from." They shared that they were able to develop more intimacy with one of their other Ph.D. colleagues around identities.

They reaffirmed that this sort of research process has the potential to be replicated as it can provide a deep sense of meaning, care and empowerment for participants grappling with exclusion and identity struggles. Their overall reflections and feedback on the exhibit have similarities to the participants' discussions about approaching organizing and spaces from a holistic lens toward deepening relations, thus widening collective action.

In the interview with art exhibit attendee D (pseudonym), a community member with experiences of accessing LGBTQ+ refugee services, they emphasized their perspective and approach to one of the main themes of the exhibit around redressing colonialism through paying attention to nuance, context, history of a place and the cultural, religious, and ideological positions of different nation-states and the people. They spoke about questioning the individualist notion of "we're here, we're queer" that is present in many Westernized contexts, suggesting instead that progress and freedom look different everywhere for different people. In particular, they described how the binary notion of "black and white" does not exist in their

analysis of these contexts, stating that "everything is very fluid for me… 50 shades of gray," saying that "the older I got, everything is more gray."

D related their reflections about requiring contextual, historical, and complicated layered histories to the ways that people who are settlers and immigrants, despite their hardships of culture and adapting to new cultures, support and live in colonization. They also related to participant stories around what it means to choose between religion or LGBTQ identity, stating that people often have to let go of the family or religion or other aspect that does not accept them in order to "love ourselves in a way, not being selfish, but it's more like it's important to be alive in a way. Like you have to survive your own self first, and then you help others…" While this discussion centred more on reflections on the content and concepts that arose in the art exhibit around colonialism, settler colonialism and notions of queer survival and nation-state progress, they re-affirmed the diverse perspectives and relations to colonialism, gender identity, and sexuality that could be further addressed and explored in future iterations of the project.

Regarding the program and display of the exhibit, D reflected on how the exhibit was more about compassion than presenting a wide range of photographs displayed, which is how museums are usually presented. They suggested for future iterations to have a guided tour where the photographer can describe the reason behind it as the audience moves through the photographs. Some of their future suggestions included presenting traditional dances and folk songs and Filipino/a/x and LGBTQ Filipino/a/x movies with discussions. They related the visualizing of LGBTQ experiences to addressing taboo topics in certain societies. They also suggested addressing a multitude of topics related to history, immigration, the Philippines, culture, and the experience of migrants. When discussing what these findings may mean for making actionable changes on these topics, they suggested that services in Montréal that support

the intersection of migration and LGBTQ+ experiences need to be more integrated and offer more legal services and spaces for a diversity of generations and specificities of LGBTQ+ refugees.

In this chapter, the findings show how, through the workshops, providing many different options for cultural production and engagement with artistic practices to tell and express stories, many participants experienced an openness to vulnerability. This affective and social reconnection has potential to transform into empowerment, reaffirmations, strengthening intimacies and a sense of *kapwa* and healing. The participants generally desired that the conversations continue, offering insights into how these collective spaces should be grown from the ground up, strengthening grassroots capacities and skills. These spaces and future iterations also foreground decolonial positions and relationalities in place. Visibilizing and documenting these experiences is an ongoing theme, yet in ways that re-imagine and enact our relationalities, unmask colonial relations, and re-grow collective imaginations of belonging and homecoming.

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 Introduction

Drawing from queer diaspora and critical Filipino/a/x studies, this dissertation focused on documenting and challenging the exclusions and misrepresentations of queer of colour identities, and their community organizing and social movement experiences through LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x lived experiences and meaning-making in Montréal, Québec, Canada. Through the participants' narratives, this study challenges state-sanctioned dominant discourses in LGBTQ+ organizing and social movements in Canada which have excluded the narratives and experiences of queer and trans racialized communities (Bain, 2017; Brown, 2020; Diaz et al., 2018; Gentile et al., 2017; Labelle, 2019; Lee, 2019; Haritaworn et al., 2018; Walcott, 2009, 2010; Ware, 2019; Wilson et al., 2016). This study adds to an emerging body of literature that documents and advocates for the histories and experiences of social change from the perspectives and lived realities of queer of colour communities to resist historical erasure and to inform ongoing organizing and social movement efforts from more transformative approaches (Brown, 2020; Diaz et al., 2018; Gentile et al., 2017; Lee, 2019; Haritaworn et al., 2018; Walcott, 2009, 2010; Ware, 2017; Wilson et al., 2016). This study also adds to the growing area of Filipino/a/x studies in Canada which has begun to unveil and focus on queer and trans Filipino/a/x realities and analyses (Diaz, 2015; Diaz et al., 2018; Farrales, 2017; Pino, 2017).

This research combined participatory action approaches (PAR) of Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang 1999, 2006) and *Kuwentuhan* (Filipino/a/x talk-story) (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014, 2021) to surface and analyze the narratives of a diversity of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs, and examine the following research questions:

1) How do gender identity and sexuality interact with the migration and diasporic experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in Montréal, Québec?

2) In what ways and why do LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs of the diaspora build social and community groups, organizations, support, and resources locally and transnationally?

3) In what ways and why are forms of solidarity and unity understood and enacted in building these social and community groups and organizations?

I received initial feedback on the research project from members of the grassroots Filipino/a/x storytelling collective *Pulso ng Bayan* (Pulso of the people/nation). I recruited seven participants identified with the LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x diaspora in Montréal. The study involved four workshops, five individual feedback interviews, one group feedback interview, an art exhibit, two art exhibit attendee interviews and field notes, adapting components of Photovoice and *Kuwenutuhan* together (refer to Table 1 for an overview of the combined methods). I expanded on the open and selective coding procedures of Francisco-Menchavez (2014), which was adapted from traditional qualitative thematic analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Following collective analysis in the workshops with the participants, I expanded on these findings with thematic analysis of the recordings and transcriptions of the workshops and interviews in conjunction with the field notes. Following other queer diaspora and critical Filipino/a/x scholars, I analyzed the findings based on an understanding of the social and historical construction of identity (Coloma et al., 2012).

The study's main findings reflect the literature grown from queer of colour communities showing how they faced and resisted multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion from social to institutional levels (Bain, 2017; Brochu-Ingram, 2015; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Haritaworn et al., 2018; Lee, 2012; Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004; Sadika et al., 2020; Wong, 2012). Yet, the

historical research also shows how these communities sought to challenge state-sanctioned logics and dominant exclusionary practices, to celebrate, visibilize, and make spaces for diversities, and to aim for more transformative changes (Bain, 2017; Lee, 2012; Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004).

The participants in this study similarly were confronted with and navigated exclusionary and dominant norms, with a focus on the ways these norms influenced their fissures and disconnections in relations with family, community, their natural environments, and within themself. Importantly, their narratives show their historical and ongoing transnational relations with the cultural and socio-political context of the "continuing past" of colonialism in the Philippines and its manifestations in the present (Aguila, 2015). This study thus grows and supports the minimal queer of colour organizing research that exists in Canada, which suggests the importance of studying social and local contexts with transnational approaches and analyzing the geographical, historical, social, political, and economic relations to queerness, nationalities, and the state (Bacchetta & Haritaworn, 2011; Bain, 2017; Walcott, 2009, 2010; Ware, 2019).

Navigating, remembering and building from worldviews in alterity to these systems of domination included reconnections and returns to decolonial relationalities and ancestral and cultural epistemologies and ontologies in their everyday or collective meaning-making of home, belonging and identity. This study thus engages especially with postcolonial, queer and trans, transnational and feminist theorists, who have named these processes as homing practices (Ahmed et al., 2020; Hsu, 2022). One of the most important sites of transformative change for these participants was homing practices *within the body*. These changes are especially fostered through re-growing intimacies and relationalities – an ethics and embodiment of *kapwa*.

This study also suggests that through decentering extractive and Westernized methodologies and focusing on accountability and relational ethics, *Kuwentuhan* methods and

kapwa ethics among queer and trans Filipino/a/xs can support healing, returns and reconnections within the process of cultural production and collective meaning-making (Gutierrez et al., 2023; Francisco-Menchavez, 2014, 2021; Torre & Ayala, 2009). I built from Torre and Ayala's (2009) description of PAR as *entremundos* (between-worlds) through Gloria Anzaldùa's concept of *Mestizaje.* Torre and Ayala's notion of liberatory PAR involves resistance to restrictive and modernist research notions to instead aim for loosening control of research processes, broadening individual to systemic analyses, attuning to collective processes and outcomes, and recognizing hybridity and multiplicities in meanings, power, and diversities. As I loosened control of the research process and attuned to relationalities and collective accountabilities, the process provided a space for community and social action to begin to form.

This dissertation makes a unique contribution to the literature and practice as the only known study focused on surfacing the lived identity and community organizing experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in Montréal, Québec, Canada. The study expands notions of home and belonging among Filipino/a/xs in Canada, contributing to diaspora and migration studies and critical Filipino/a/x studies through queer and trans decolonial notions of return and reconnections, named in this study as homing practices and seeding *kapwa*. Community organizing and movement-building praxis among Filipino/a/x and LGBTQ+ communities can learn from their collectivized notions of identity and communal liberation, in which community care and healing from colonial relations and structures regarding gender, sexuality, race and class are emphasized. This study also contributes to more transformative research methodologies through decolonial epistemologies based on cultural approaches that have been otherwise marginalized from dominant discourses, including methods and ethics of *Kuwentuhan* and *kapwa* among queer and trans Filipino/a/x and broader Filipino/a/x communities.

8.2 Queer and trans Filipino/a/x diasporic homing practices based in decolonization

The major findings from this study engage across the research questions focused on the participants' "homing" practices and desires, citing Hsu (2022) and Ahmed and colleagues (2020). Through diasporic narratives, homing can help us to imagine and expand the bounds of possibilities in community and can be a practice that seeks to build an ethics that "prioritizes sheltering and caring for those made vulnerable by narratives of displacement" (p. 9). This homing (or homecoming) process through the notion of *returns* in various spaces pays deep attention to the current *place* from a transnational and historical perspective in remembering and seeking to reconnect to a notion of home, whether the homeland or the places, spaces and affect that re-make home. Homing also involves navigating interlocking forms of oppression that produce exclusionary forms of being and knowing in these places. I merged the findings from the workshops and exhibit and the feedback on the process, as the research process also became a site of queer diasporic *returns.* This study's findings follow queer diaspora scholarship, which engages with transnational, transforming, contextual and regional affiliations with queerness and diaspora in different places, spaces and connections to returns (Ahmed et al., 2020; Walcott, 2009).

This study illustrates the ways in which queer diaspora subjects may imagine a possible ethical orientation of speaking back, building, and archiving alternative narratives within their marginal and nonnormative positions in the *in-between*, every day, and mundane spaces, places, and interactions which they occupy and experience as queer diaspora (Walcott, 2009). The findings challenge universal and modernist notions of queer bodies and experiences that have been shaped by assimilatory, homonormative, colonial and exclusionary logics impacting social and institutional arrangements, with an emphasis in this study on the possibilities of

relationalities. The findings also build on emerging critical Filipino/a/x and queer Filipino/a/x literature (Coloma et al., 2012; Diaz et al., 2018) in which community work and organizing approaches and politics continually link individual struggle and agency to systemic and historical analyses of empire in constructing migration and diaspora.

The participants' stories reflect a notion of historical entanglements referring to the effects and ongoing presence of histories of colonialism and imperialism in the Philippines, considered a postcolonial context, as well as settler colonialism in Montréal, Québec, and Canada more broadly. They also related their stories to the global context – a transnational approach – in how they make meaning of themselves as a migratory and diasporic subject with nonnormative genders and sexualities, how they relate to others, and why and how they seek or build community. Across multiple participant stories is the consideration of notions of visibility and invisibility in terms of how and in what ways power, privilege, oppression, and choice operate through the construction of normative arrangements and conditions that are placed on bodies and experiences.

The participants perceived that these conditionalities make certain bodies and experiences more accepted, legible, illegible, hypervisibilized or invisibilized in relation with others and in institutional or systemic processes and practices, including popular or mainstream representations. These dominant norms relate to the power regimes of social relations and institutions which manage and regulate diverse and transforming bodies and lives in terms of culture, class, racialization, sexuality, and gender. Having the agency to choose how one wants to be seen and drawing from frameworks of queerness, decoloniality and collectivity to grow self and community legibility are some ways that participants formed other worlds that escape and re-shape dominant, normative and exclusionary framings of bodies and experiences.

Reverberating across the themes within *homing* and in *seeding kapwa*, discussed later, is that growing from this other world accepts that there is a multiplicity of possibilities that already exist and that are in constant transformation outside of dominant norms. Homing and seeding *kapwa* from this framing escape the linear and universal notions of modern human progress, rather, the participants orient to reconnecting and returning to holistic, abundant, collective and decolonial worldviews to inform present and future imaginings and action. Some participants explore a notion of an *in-between* time and space in a world where many bodies and material realities are constrained and unsupported by dominant colonial and capitalist constructs and conditions.

The participants reflect on community organizing praxis through their understandings of identity as intertwined with community, and how their community building and engagement in their everyday and organized actions are interrelated with their queer and cultural worldviews. The main findings speak to the need for identity and subject-formation to be viewed and engaged with as tied to collective processes, action and relations – a return and reconnection to *kapw*a. The study also reflects historical narratives of queer Filipino/a/x organizing that engage with affective and holistic approaches to constructing peer support, spaces of healing, and challenging exclusionary logics and practices in Canada that span transnationally (Aguila et al., 2017).

In addition, even though there was attention paid to references to the COVID-19 pandemic, the participants did not discuss this context as relevant for the research questions during the study. However, there was no explicit prompt or question in the facilitation guide or the interview questions on this topic. Thus, no theme emerged addressing the potential impacts or influences of COVID-19 on their identity and community meanings and actions at the time.

The concept of homing primarily addresses the first research question in exploring the relations between gender identity, sexuality and migration among LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in Montréal, while *seeding kapwa* is intimately related to homing in response to the second question on community organizing and solidarity praxis.

8.2.1 Conceptualizing homing among queer and trans diasporic Filipino/a/xs

I add to queer diaspora and critical Filipino/a/x literature a notion of everyday and transforming practices of co-constructing homing through decolonial *reconnections* and *returns* among queer and trans Filipino/a/x diasporic individuals. These returns and reconnections focus on their historical, cultural and socio-political experiences, and in reflections on how their being and knowing (or their un-becoming) is continually reconstructed across time and space, in an in-between time that re-grows more transformative possibilities.

Many of the participants referred to the ways that state and nationalistic logics, displacements and religious ideologies, shaped through Philippines' histories of Spanish and American colonization, have categorized, fragmented and contained their identities and their abilities to relate to places and others. One participant contributed a reflection on the hierarchization of bodies marked by these colonial histories in which Indigenous practices were viewed as lesser than modernist modes of being and knowing. A major theme in changing these colonial realities is unmasking the ways that colonial histories have re-shaped and limited access to ancestral cultural and linguistic knowledges, especially containing and regulating ancestral and cultural acceptance of gender and sexual diversities. Thus, queer and trans Filipino/a/x diasporic homing desires and practices, as a part of their identity and community meaning making, are uniquely shaped by their historical, cultural and socio-political positions in

dislocation, displacement and diverse forms of reconnecting and returning to the homeland, reflecting the notion of a continuing past (Aguila, 2015).

Engaging with the participants' narratives in their storytelling and through the methods in which they discuss the importance of visibilities, invisibilities and (il)legibility of bodies, and affect and experience follows Gopinath's (2018) growing conceptualization of "aesthetic practices of queer diaspora." The participants explored how this (il)legibility depends on the "beholder" and the power regimes in a context in which participants negotiate and maneuver through how they desire to be seen their hypervisibility, or their incapability of being seen. For many of the participants, homing referred to their returns and reconnections through the *body* in their minor, everyday, intimate and affective encounters with others, reflecting Stoler's (2006) notion of intimacies of empire as a critical domain of analyzing how:

> colonial authority depended on shaping appropriate and reasoned affect (where one's sympathies should lie), severing some intimate bonds and establishing others (which offspring would be acknowledged as one's own), establishing what constituted moral sentiments (family honor or patriotic duty); in short, colonial authority rested on educating the proper distribution of sentiments and desires." (p. 2)

For members of the queer Filipino/a/x diaspora in this study, the photographic and storytelling process began to unveil these queer intimacies, desires, affect, and identifications.

The intimate encounters and identifications among queer Filipino/a/x diasporans shaped by the continuing past of colonial and state-sanctioned structures and relations in the Philippines, and then the confrontations with Western and colonial and settler normativities in Canada and Québec, reflect what Bachetta and Haritaworn (2011) consider *homotransnationalism*. Through these findings, I suggest that the narrated experiences of the participants reflect homotransnationalism at the site of relationalities and embodied experience – in which they witness or experience how intimacies, affect, and desires have been marked by colonial histories,

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contemporary manifestations, and the logics of homonormativity and homonationalism circulating transnationally. Homotransnationalism extends homonormativity and homonationalism to view how border- and national identity-making power regimes are embedded in a transnational circulation of policies, practices, relations, affect, and desires. Thus, homotransnationalism arises in this study as a relevant analytic for how the participants experience the normative queer subject-citizen through localized, intimate and affective embodied realities influenced by transnational relations.

The participants narrations of identity and community formation directly and indirectly reflect how their intimacies, desires and meanings of the self, have been influenced by an ongoing exchange historically and presently through the effects of centuries of colonialism from different foreign empires and nations, and rising globalization and migration out of the Philippines though labour export programs (Manalansan & Espiritu, 2016; Rodriguez, 2010). They relate their feelings of dislocation and instability within oneself, such as Maria-Lorraine's reflections on never feeling stable within oneself or Koko's and d.l.c.'s reflections on queer diasporans ongoing search for reconnections in a context of displacement, to the disruptions and discontinuities that colonialism produces at a global scale – from the Philippines, within Canada and in Québec to elsewhere. The participants' discussions were deeply reflective of the dominant norms of gender, sexuality and racialization that circulate transnationally supported by nation-states, through a historical lens, especially across their relations and within their own bodies.

I re-consider returns through queer and trans Filipino/a/x diasporic meaning-making in which they narrated and experienced interwoven histories of colonization, power dynamics and relations that influence ongoing re-negotiations and perceptions of identity, community, and other transformative possibilities through reconnections and reclamation in their everyday. As

d.l.c.'s statements reflected, the workshops became a site of re-imagining these homing desires and practices, as they described succinctly in decolonial terms: "not a doctrine of discovery, but a return." In other words, homing practices occur not through naturalized settlement toward a normative citizen-subject, but in returning and reconnecting to decolonial ways of knowing and being from one's specific positionality, which centre on relationalities.

The participants' stories illustrate how their returns and reconnections within their homing practices have a multiplicity of meanings that cannot be homogenized to dominant LGBTQ+ or diasporic narratives. Queer and trans diasporic homing practices in this study adds to dominant diaspora literature that is theorized around symbolic or physical returns to the homeland after forced displacement, oftentimes a binary and linear logic of return (Aguilar Jr., 2015). In addition, dominant diasporic theories have been challenged in the ways that they purport that the migrant condition involves mainly linear movements of re-settling in a new safer and stable destination (Fortier, 2020). My findings thus build on the literature that considers how notions of home, family and belonging are a constant unmasking and co-construction of new meanings in places and spaces, reflecting queer diaspora, transnational feminist, and postcolonial engagements (Ahmed et al., 2020).

In considering returns in the homing process as an ongoing reflection and questioning, *queer diasporic returns* may help re-imagine, for example, the queer notion of returning to a static heteronormative "home" of the past after being displaced due to violence or harm from the biological family that does not accept one's nonnormative gender identity or sexuality (Fortier, 2020). For this group of participants, unmasking colonial notions of identity, home and belonging amid power regimes re-imagines the common narrative of "coming out" often understood as an individualized self-identification process. Instead, coming home/ homecoming

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is an ongoing *collective* process and involves a *diversity* of returns through ongoing and renewed meaning-making in relation to identity, home and belonging – reflecting their queer Filipino/a/x worldviews and embodiment. Participants continuously renew, embody and return to decolonial and ethical practices of belonging, being (ontologies), and knowing (epistemologies) in relation to and with others and the natural world embedded in reconnections to ancestral, cultural and linguistic teachings – *seeding kapwa*.

Homing in this study involves place-making in geopolitical and localized environments influencing identity and community formations, considering intersecting power regimes and entangled histories and arrangements shaped around class, gender, sexuality and racialization. Queer and trans Filipino/a/x diasporic returns to otherworldly possibilities are a re-orientation to an ethics and embodied practice of *seeding kapwa*, in which relationalities become an ongoing basis of building community and examining exclusionary and colonial ways of being, knowing and relating. I suggest that social and community work can co-create collective imaginative processes to de-construct colonial power regimes, and settler colonial national imaginations in these homing and place-making practices attuning to in-between and alternative possibilities in everyday moments, community organizing contexts, and pedagogical and political engagements. Co-constructing places of return involves re-constructing meaning making through storytelling, imaginations and creativity around identity and belonging to seek to identify and embody more ethical, decolonial and relational spaces of belonging, as demonstrated in the workshops.

8.2.2 Returning to the body, the affective, the intimate and the aesthetic

Two main sites of analysis arise in these participants' stories of how they embody or live through the notion of the continuing past and normative and exclusionary arrangements influencing their homing practices and desires. The stories shared in the findings chapters speak

to experiencing intimate and affective ruptures within oneself and in relation to others through

hierarchical and colonial ways of being and knowing – an important site of the continuing past

being *within the body* (Stoler, 2006). Secondly, their stories reveal the ways in which spectres of

invisibilities (the hauntings of often identity-based stereotypical, homogenizing and

hierarchically organized ways of seeing, desiring to be seen, and relating to others) perpetuate

queer diasporic bodies as impossible subjects (Gopinath, 2018). These spectres reflect the eyes

of a "beholder" (Koko) around what makes a body and its affect, intimacies and aesthetics

(il)legible. As queer diasporans re-imagine and embody homing practices, these analytics are

useful to identify sites of (un)belonging and the perpetuation of power regimes and settler

colonial nation-building projects that arise in the *intimate* – in how we care for and/or exclude

each other and how see each other and/or are limited in seeing oneself or others beyond the

contours of normative arrangements.

As a few participants discussed in the workshops and in their feedback interviews, the

storytelling encounters in the workshops were spaces of vulnerability that enabled, for some,

previously ruptured intimacies to re-grow connection. These spaces contributed to affect and

sentiments of re-affirmation and empowerment and furthering possibilities to engage in

collective action. In other words, the workshops embodied *places of return*. These intimate and

"minor" everyday manifestations of dislocations, conditions, containment and regulation of

bodies, identities and difference were expressed through, for example, a participant relating to

the Filipino/a/x diasporan subject being "starved for an identity" (Koko) amid ongoing

dislocations and disconnections. Others expressed these manifestations as "never feeling stable

within myself" (Maria-Lorraine) as a queer Filipino straddling multiple and ongoing sites of

unbelonging and seeking to find a "shelter" through the re-construction and return to a sense of

"home." Otherwise, these intimacies of empire that circulate transnationally arose in the experiences of queer parenting and reproduction in being confronted with cis-heteronormative and patriarchal norms and expectations, for one participant, producing a sense of "your body is not your own." For others, they experienced or perceived fissures and ruptures within their biological, familial and community relations based on unacceptance and illegibility of their gendered and sexualized bodies, desires and expressions.

The participants' experiences reflect a combination of hidden, masked as well as more overt forms of the ways in which "colonial intimacies are first and foremost sites of intrusive interventions" (Stoler, 2006, p. 4). These intimacies of empire are circulated and re-distributed in renewed and ongoing forms from homeland to diaspora and elsewhere, facing multilayered colonial influences of the past and present places tied to their arrivals and departures in relation to lands and geopolitical environments. These transnational circulations of intimacies of empire from the homeland to diasporic embodied realities reflect how homotransnationalism works through the body and through structures. For example, as explored in Andi's story about IRB experiences, homotransnationalism can be seen in the entrenchment of homonormative exclusions in immigration and border regimes that re-produce structural violence and colonial power regimes against queer and trans migrant bodies (Lee-Oliver et al., 2020). However, this study shows the ways in which the intimate and affective experience of and within the body are prominent in navigating these relations and structures of (un)belonging through empire.

These intimacies of empire were also shown in how participants engaged with notions of visibilities and invisibilities within the actions in the workshops and in their storytelling, which can be related to Gopinath's (2018) notion of "queer aesthetic practices." The (il)legibility of gendered and sexualized bodies, desires and expressions were not separate from racialized,

migratory and classed dimensions for the participants. Gopinath (2018) also considers these "unruly visions" an epistemological question. These constrained visual fields mask the workings of imperial, racial and settler colonial projects, in other words, how truths are constructed.

The photography, storytelling and other creative and artistic expressions, using body, affect and intuition to co-create a collective space, opened reconnections to these queer visual aesthetic practices and re-shaped intimacies of empire in the process itself and in their storytelling. The participants' stories explored (il)legibilities through their photographs in their relations with others based on normative and colonial bodily, temporal and spatial arrangements. As mentioned, one participant discussed the illegibility within the institutional processes and practices of the IRB for refugee claimants seeking protection based on gender identity and sexuality. While supporting many refugee claimants seeking to attain protection from the federal government through the immigration and refugee regime, Andi witnessed how a queer couple's renderings of their sexual intimacies as well as being "queer and poor" were unrecognizable from the view of those adjudicating on the authenticity of a refugee claim based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The workshop process through the visual and interpretative field of photography and storytelling invited a remembrance for Andi of experiences in which their notions of homing were expanded or re-shaped through unmasking the workings of colonial and exclusionary logics embedded in the immigration and refugee regime. Andi perceived that the queer aesthetics and subjectivities were unable to be seen and were policed by the IRB member as the couple were seeking legibility and recognition within the system. Andi reflected on their own queer intimacies, desires and legibilities through the impossibility of the gendered, sexualized and,

importantly, classed subjectivities to be recognized by state-sanctioned policies in their own story.

From this example, the nonnormative queer body and their intimacies are regulated and managed by the eye of the "beholder" and the associated power regimes dictating the authenticity, respectableness, and threat to the nation of the queer citizen, furthering processes of "Othering" through the colonial border regime. Gopinath (2018) considers how these aesthetic practices can be a re-visualization of alternatives and archival moments in the present spatial, temporal and affective arrangements:

> The aesthetic practices of queer diaspora, in other words, disrupt the normative ways of seeing and knowing that have been so central to the production, containment and disciplining of sexual, racial, and gendered bodies; they do so, crucially, through a particular deployment of queer desire and identification that renders apparent the promiscuous intimacies of our past histories as they continue to structure our everyday present, and determine our futures… (p. 7-8).

As Veronica discussed in making visible queer and trans Filipino/a/x desires, intimacies and lives in the Montréal diaspora, these multiplicities of stories, meanings and visibilities are "proof" of existence amid dominant regimes of truth that may seek to erase or deny their existences. Co-constructed spaces such as the workshops may re-visit past registers of queer intimacies shaped by colonial relations and attune to their influence on everyday minor moments and relations. These queer aesthetic practices can aim to re-form colonial power regimes toward legible queer intimacies and desires in the localized communal space.

As a practice of homing, these collective processes can re-shape and question the workings of homotransnationalism, or forms of colonial modernity, and seek to re-imagine how we see, what we see, how we want to be seen and what we know to be true. As Wong (2013) discussed in their study with racialized, ethnicized and colonized allosexual activists in Montréal, these activists negotiated and strategized around dominant power regimes, even among queer

spaces, that often reinforce homonormativity and homonationalism. Similar to this current study, the participants in Wong's study re-narrated, re-imagined, and enacted in their everyday, through memories, emotions, and stories of past forms of family, belonging and alternative structures, possible relational and transformative futurities. Growing self and community legibilities in the localized communal space in the everyday can help re-locate futurities and imaginations that unsettle dominant, cis-heteronormative, assimilationist and state-sanctioned forms of belonging, which are circulated transnationally.

8.2.3 Time, space, place, and unearthing the contours of colonialism in the present

In the workshops, homing practices of renewed belongings and healing were revealed as participants both discussed and, for some, began the process of unmasking colonial and exclusionary normative arrangements influencing their visual and sensorial registers. In addition to challenging relations to nation-state identifications and affiliations, participants drew from past, presents and future memories, stories and possibilities in discussing their identity and community formations, escaping the linearity of modern timescales embedded in colonial modernity and instead gesturing to the circularity of time and space. For example, a few participants discussed past experiences of struggles in having to choose between binary identity formations (Filipino or queer, or Filipino or Canadian).

Some participants related this "flattening" and categorizing of identity to the containment of queer, sexualized and racialized bodies by nation-state and institutional formations, reflecting homonormative logics of the respectable state-sanctioned gay subject-citizen. As mentioned, the participants' representations of their bodies and identity experiences confront power regimes of a place and the construction of subject-formations circulating from the Philippines to the diaspora and elsewhere, across time and space. Unmasking colonial modernity shaped by the continuing

past in the Philippines regarding their gender, sexuality and Filipino/a/x affiliations also engages with diasporic identifications and containment of identities in their place-making in new regions and nation-state formations, as well as the historical entanglements across places they encounter.

Participants would at times refer to the specificities of the geopolitical space shaped around capitalistic and exclusionary spatial and temporal normative arrangements. For example, Maria-Lorraine referenced their photograph of a woman sitting in the stairs in the "Filipino neighbourhood" to complete documents relating to the administrative and bureaucratic maze of the migrant experience in Québec—the migrant subjectivity involving creating an in-between time and space in a place where there is "no time." Homing reveals these ruptures and fissures of unbelonging, including their intergenerational embodiment, and points to the re-arrangements of space, time, place, affect and material realities that diasporic subjects must navigate and seek to re-build an alternative sense of the past, present and future. Places of return could otherwise manifest, referring to the participants' discussions, holistic, collective and abundant worldviews that re-shape the contours of these fragmented and exclusionary identity formations and experiences.

Importantly, homing consists of a multiplicity of meanings in remembering, reclaiming and reconnecting to interwoven narratives that shape everyday moments and are re-shaped in various encounters of arrivals and departures in spaces and places. For some in this study, homing involved a physical place and distance from the childhood or biological familial home as attached to exclusionary gendered expectations. For others, they represented homing through a sense of belonging in kinship with others with whom one can see oneself reflected. Even more so, for others, it could be a combination of experiencing oneself as intimately tied to all things

through reconnecting to land-based knowledges, and finding returns in experiences of healing from colonial and Western "masks" that have haunted one's being and knowing.

These places of return for the participants were at times unexpected encounters, for example, in recognizing cultural food, a sense of kin abroad fostering a feeling of reconnection or seeing oneself reflected in the alternative stories of zines or other cultural production. An overarching theme was that returns in the participants' stories involved intimate and affective reconnections to another's story or transforming feelings of exclusion in Filipino/a/x-specific places into a renewed sense of self-expression around one's nonnormative sexuality, gender identity or even cultural identity.

These stories and narratives weave together existences of nonnormative and culturally based sites of belonging, and of unbelonging, which can be mapped and unmapped to find the sites in the in-between or in alterity to dominant power regimes and the effects of colonial modernity. Homing is not necessarily tied to one identity or the other, but the embodied affect and reconnection experienced through the encounter or through the longer-term engagement and constructing of a relation, space and/or place. Participants, such as Veronica, experienced homing through re-building a sense of empowerment in spaces where at one time she may have felt fear and trepidation, while d.l.c. reflected on homing through an experience connecting to the soil and the land to heal and to revisit one's position in acting in right relations with the original caretakers of the land. For most, homing amid places of return is a "constellation" of interwoven narratives and a constant process and navigation of spaces that draw from past, presents and futures, escaping modernist linearity, binary logic, or static notions of home and belonging. Belonging and healing for this group were especially related to returns to decolonial cultural,

linguistic and ancestral ways of being, knowing and relating around gender, sexuality and Filipino/ax identity.

8.2.4 Reconnections to decolonial ancestral, land-based, linguistic and cultural knowledges

The discussions by many participants reflect the theme of ancestral, linguistic and cultural reconnections based in decolonial ways of being, knowing and relating to others. These reconnections help establish a "web of relations" (d.l.c.) to navigate hostile environments – illustrating Hsu's (2022) homing practice in which "ancestor veneration is premised on continued intimacy between the living and the dead" (p. 116). Hsu builds from scholars and activists whose knowledges and truths have been relegated to the marginal and erasable, stating that:

> many minoritized authors and creators have adapted and reinvented ancestral practices to address historical erasures that denied them knowledge of their pasts and their communities… Through a communal focus, ancestor veneration becomes a means of locating rhetors along a continuum, answerable to predecessors who enabled their lives and responsible for a future where subsequent generations can find connections." (p. 117)

These reclamation and re-storying practices of queer and trans lineage escape colonial modernist and Westernized practices of dislocation from queer and trans ancestral knowledges, as well as diversities and kinship structures. According to Hsu, queer and trans lineages move beyond patrilineal and biological notions of belonging and family. These ancestral venerations came out in the ways that participants discussed their returns to ancestral and decolonial knowledges, as well as their interactions with cultural production in the workshops, reinforcing healing and belonging for the participants in their homing practices.

Similar to Maria-Lorraine's and d.l.c.'s discussions of drawing from ancestral reconnections as a present-day practice, Koko expressed a transformation in reclaiming their trans and non-binary identity through access to ancestral knowledges of gender and sexuality

through the workshop with FIPOQ. In the final workshop, as the group re-imagined queer Filipino/a/x futures using AI, Andi presented a lineage of queer and trans as well as Filipino/a/x representations, aesthetics and practices that have inspired their cultural production to assist with the co-construction of our collective imaginative process. Thus, returns manifest through sites of decolonial and relational engagement in accessing ancestral and cultural knowledges around gender and sexuality that have been erased through colonialism, imperialism and dominant power regimes. The encounters with queer Filipino/a/x narratives, aesthetics, and lineages, and the growth of intimate and affective reconnections through storytelling, support the re-arrangement of normative exclusionary practices in relations and the questioning of regimes of truth that underpin dominant and exclusionary logics.

Through the historical and socio-cultural specificities of queer and trans Filipino/a/x diaspora, the notion of return for this group of remembering, re-claiming and reconnecting to decolonial queer belonging and home is taken up through the practice of collective imagination. These collective imaginative processes can involve mapping a constellation of stories that critically unpack power regimes, historical entanglements of places, and sites of (un)belonging within these regimes. In these intentionally constructed and everyday sites, homing practices can help navigate, re-shape, and unveil the intimacies of empire and queer diaspora aesthetics. Collective imaginative processes, such as the cultural production and collective storytelling in these workshops, may re-grow decolonial legibility of queer and trans Filipino/a/x bodies, affect, desires and material realities. Opening possibilities and spaces for collective imagination centering *kapwa* and relationalities through the co-construction of shared meanings, as demonstrated through cultural production and artistic practices, can help constellate interrelated narratives and experiences toward more transformative futures.

8.3 Seeding *kapwa* as a return to embodied practice and ethics

In this section, I engage with the findings of returning and reconnecting to *kapwa* as well as the findings about the Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan* process. Underpinning both are the theories and practices of *kapwa* and how this connects to relational accountability. This section speaks to the second and third research questions around why and in what ways LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs of the diaspora grow and engage with social and community groups locally and transnationally, and their forms of solidarity and unity in creating these supports, organizations and resources. Through the findings, I suggest that in constructing this research process that draws from PAR methods through Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan* with LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs, an ethics of *kapwa* and relational accountability can be centred in all aspects of the research process. These ethics re-consider how research approaches can be integrated in longer-term movement-building, community, and collective action, particularly among and with Filipino/a/x communities.

I explore whether an ethics of *kapwa*, as a place of return among Filipino/a/x of the diaspora in homing practices, can orient community and social action, and research and pedagogical practice, with an emphasis on relationalities. These ethics build on Torre and Ayala's (2009) notions of expanding outward toward collective needs and outcomes, and the ethics of accountability (Hill Collins, 2000) in which researchers engage with their multiple community and institutional affiliations toward unpacking and undoing power relations and inequalities.

The main analytic themes arising among the participants of intimacies of empire and queer aesthetic practices amid homing processes aid in shaping an ethics of *kapwa* as they enable

analyses of the effects of colonial modernity and settler colonial contexts – in which these Filipino/a/x epistemologies are revisited.

For some participants, they directly stated the ways that their queerness and Filipino/a/x identities are interrelated through *kapwa*, which for them is decolonial and interconnected to others and the natural world. Their identities are thus already interrelated with community and the collective, but some specify that these relationalities need to be intentionally embodied and practiced. These reflections suggest the importance of unveiling queer aesthetic practices in registering and re-shaping sensorial effects of colonial modernity in building relationalities: "the queer optic instantiated by these practices brings into focus and into the realm of the present the energy of those nonnormative desires, practices, bodies and affiliations concealed within dominant historical narratives" (Gopinath, 2018, p. 8). Seeding *kapwa* draws from this queer optic, which is also decolonial, toward reconnection, reclamation and remembering historicized power regimes that may be masking alternate embodied practices and intimacies. An embodied ethical orientation of *kapwa* can support re-growing these relationalities in the present and futures through homing practices.

This section also shares some of the methods and practices of growing from the ground-up within grassroots and relational meaning-making to enact different scales of change that respond to diversities, histories and intimacies of empire in encounters. These embodied practices and strategies for change focus on the ways that everyday moments and intentionally constructed spaces can continually renew decolonial meanings and actions and contribute to healing. Cultural production, visibilizing and "monumenting" (d.l.c.) these narratives are possibilities to contribute to mapping and unmapping sites of (un)belonging, and places of return, through a continual revisiting of ethics of *kapwa* and relational accountability. In the site

of research and academia, through an ethics engaged with collective outcomes and processes, the action and mobilization of a research process occurs within and expands beyond the PAR process with an emphasis on accountability to social movements (Choudry, 2015). However, in navigating various power dynamics and regimes, including social and institutional relations and engagements, the PAR process does not escape the ethical challenges and constraints when it comes to partnership and accountability toward collective action and social movements.

These ethics could support unmasking the historical entanglements of colonial and imperial displacements and dislocations and the power regimes and arrangements in a place or region, specifically the relationalities with others, land and the natural environment. Read as decolonial and queer, seeding *kapwa* is not about a biological and naturalized settling on other lands, often related to violent dispersal, as the dominant diasporic narrative. While not aiming to discard the legacies of a diasporan search for identity, safety and protection amid often violent displacement (Aguila, 2015), seeding *kapwa* is, rather, agentive decisions and an embodied practice which enact and envision decolonial places of return. These practices accept heterogeneity, evolution, circularity and denaturalized identities in narratives, relationalities and re-constructions of home, family and belonging.

Hsu (2022) states how collective meaning-making, or what I refer to as collective imaginations in this study, is reconnected through the (un)mapping and shared meanings across stories that speak to how we may attune to and navigate heterogeneous relationships and responsibilities:

> I map constellations of life stories, assembling individual narratives into broader networks of shared meaning. Like the connections we plot in the night sky, rhetorical constellations can act as homing guides for those forging life trajectories without charters. Each constellation is only one possible configuration among infinite permutations, but it draws meaning from the connections we agree upon. Rhetorical

constellations are not about declaring a singular truth but about listening for and accommodating a multiplicity of relationships and responsibilities (p. 11).

These processes of constellating a multiplicity of narratives and relationships reconnect to and re-claim decolonial ways of being and knowing through cultural and historical specificities and the responsibilities attached to the places and land one inhabits. Filipino/a/x who have been displaced and dislocated can collectively constellate sites of (un)belonging to return to embodied practice through decolonial and relational belonging, being, and knowing. These contextual and historicized ethics of *kapwa* through decolonial and collective homing processes support the re-construction of relational accountability. Participants, researchers, educators and social and community workers may engage with their positionalities, map power regimes and arrangements to unearth colonial modernity in the past and present and seek to embody practices of *kapwa* and relationality. As Walia (2014) had stated, decolonization "grounds us in gratitude and humility through the realization that we are but one part of the land and its creation and encourages us to constitute our kinship and movement networks based in our shared affinities as well as responsible solidarities" (p. 12).

Thus, seeding *kapwa* is a philosophical engagement within oneself and in relation with all things in ways that centre newly co-constructed ethics of solidarity praxis in all sites we inhabit and travel through. I reflect here on Morgensen's (2015) explorations of constructing relational solidarities in politics by "speaking not only of what we (think we) know but also of how we came to know it will help us forge politics and knowledges that can answer the struggles of our time" (p. 315). These political and pedagogical engagements to forge solidarity praxis thus invoke questions of how and in what ways knowledge systems are built in relation with others to re-construct relationalities, within regimes of truth and power shaped by colonialism. These questions speak to relational accountability, particularly by academic institutions that often

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become viewed as the purveyors of what is considered truth and knowledge in colonial modernity (Hill Collins, 2000). Mapping constellations of life stories that have been erased, mis-represented and under-documented with a queer diasporic optic may contribute to the re-making of more transformative and decolonial ways of knowing, being and relating.

8.3.1 Healing and homing: Re-making ways of knowing and being through Filipino/a/x epistemologies

Homing practices among queer diaspora draws from their narratives and storytelling to co-construct renewed relationalities in different sites by analyzing and re-imagining colonial and exclusionary thought, being and solidarities. I suggest that when focused on relationality within regimes of power and knowledge and relations to particular lands, places and contexts, the cultural notion and re-interpretation of *kapwa* in these sites may help re-evaluate thought and action toward more collectivized and transformative politics and relations. By drawing from the participants' meaning making around *kapwa* and their embodied practices told through stories occurring within and outside of this study, *kapwa* ethics may have the potential to question and re-shape truth and action in community and research sites. *Kapwa* can signal to decolonial epistemologies and ontologies centred on relationality.

Through the intimate bonds being re-grown in the workshops, some of the participants were able to feel this interconnectedness to others, a sense of *kapwa*, or already considered *kapwa* as a guiding framework in finding alternative and healing paths through their queer Filipino/a/x identities and worldviews. For the participants, an ethics of *kapwa* through a queer optic is about communal liberation – being able to see and feel, through the body and intimate encounters, the marginality and struggles within others and seek to care for oneself as a project tied to the collective and to these growing relationalities.

The participants' narratives reflect Remoquillo's (2023) re-interpretation and exploration of *kapwa* as a move from cultural value to embodied, affective and relational reconnection within Filipino/a/x identity-making, which becomes extended to the collective through *kapwa*. Remoquillo defines the intertwined concepts of these Filipino/a/x values: "Loób refers to one's 'relational will' towards another, or kapwa. When in practice, kapwa can be more accurately understood as a feeling of an inseparable, spiritual connection to others in community" (p. 8). As a researcher working within their own Filipino/a/x community, Remoquillo challenges often dominant notions of *kapwa* or other Filipino/a/x virtue ethics that may presume a unified identitarian peoplehood. They follow Manalansan's efforts to re-consider how any monolithic notion of a national character or identity becomes "a particularly 'Filipino' problematic character flaw, an ingredient for a putative national personality trait, and a collective feeling caused by some deficiency or lack" (Manalansan, 2022, p. 364).

Like these authors, the findings of this study consider an epistemological approach in which these terms can be productively drawn from with attention to contexts and agency. Remoquillo (2023) states how their research takes:

> a more inquisitive lens that reframes kapwa as an emotional positioning, and not a cultural value. Kapwa can therefore be more accurately described as a search for oneself in another in response to feelings of isolation, confusion, and disconnection from one's Filipinx/o/a identity. (p. 7-8)

This framing of *kapwa* reflects more closely the participants' embodied, intimate and affective reconnections, re-affirmations and seeding of *kapwa* among others as described through their stories and in their feedback with the methods of this project. As several participants had noted, the ability to be vulnerable and be "seen" by others in this co-constructed space opened possibilities for re-claiming and re-affirming identities and worldviews, while seeing the multiplicities and diversities among different bodies and life experiences. The participants also

spoke about how in previous reconnections to oneself and others by finding visibilities of Filipino/a/x, and seeing solidarity through these encounters, they have sought to be a beacon for others, further expanding the constellation of narratives that re-shape and reconnect to meanings and feelings of identity, belonging and solidarity.

Based on the participants' and historical analyses of Filipino/a/x identity formation, decolonial ethical practices may re-shape and resist colonial subjugation and power regimes, and reform solidarity through relational accountabilities. These ethics can be embodied in everyday practices, moments and encounters to the creation of cultural production and visibilizing diversities. The intimacies of empire is an important analysis to help re-grow the connections from the continuing past of colonization through the affective and intimate within the body, as seeding *kapwa* can be considered through the lens of emotional reconnections in the search for oneself based on dislocation and disconnection. In intentionally constructing spaces to visibilize these places of return and reconnection, trauma-informed principles and healing practices based in the historical, cultural and socio-political specificities of this group are some of the strategies which can evolve from an ethics of *kapwa*. The theme of healing regarding emotional and traumatic colonial and relational histories arose in different senses for the participants.

A few participants spoke about a sense of disconnection and trauma which affected them in joining community spaces, for example, one participant shared how among "white queer friends, they don't get my Filipino identity. When I hang out with Asian queer friends, they don't understand my gender." These relations are affected by the containment and contradictions in differences of identities and bodies in a diasporic context, while Koko expresses a need "to stop gatekeeping this identity of queerness, cause our main goal is to just exist as humans with nature." These disconnections in intimacies and the desires for returns were also reflected in

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some of the feedback on the workshops. Some participants initially questioned themselves in terms of whether they would look queer or Filipino/a/x enough or feel safe enough to navigate a potential lack of acceptance and trauma in the workshop space.

Considering interconnections between trauma, interpersonal ruptures, and histories of colonialism and colonial violence are important considerations in Filipino/a/x research on colonialism, identity and healing in the diasporic context in North America (Desai, 2016; Strobel, 2016). Desai (2016) proposes a "critical kapwa pedagogy" drawing from Filipino/a/x American experiences and the ways that re-visiting *kapwa* can help redress and heal from the effects of the colonialism, focused on the roles of educators who can help co-construct these spaces of healing:

> Critical Kapwa pedagogy is about individuals and communities coming together to heal themselves. It is about reviving and rearticulating the most fundamental indigenous Filipina/o value of *kapwa* –a deep connection with and commitment to community. Critical Kapwa is about revolutionizing ideology, epistemology, and spirituality in order to combat the daily manifestations of the residual hegemonic trauma in our lives, families, and communities caused by colonization. It is also about seeing and building connections between people, cultures, places, environments, history, and spirituality. The three pillars—Humanization, On Becoming Diwa(ta), and Decolonizing Epistemologies—intersect with one another to destroy hegemonic ideological structures that perpetuate colonial domination while they also empower the individual to operate outside of those hegemonic ideological structures. (p.37)

The three pillars have many similarities to the findings of this study through the ways in which places of return in the homing process as guided by *kapwa* ethics aims to identify, de-construct and re-construct the effects of colonial relations and systems and structures in various domains of the body, knowing, and being. As the author describes, *Humanization* through *kapwa* is the process by which there is an analysis of various perspectives to unmask the impacts of oppressive ideologies. *On Becoming Diwa(ta)* occurs through returning to a view of the self in a holistic manner that heals the connections between mind, spirit and body.

Decolonizing Epistemologies aims to draw from Indigenous spirituality and ideology, not through replication and misappropriation, but toward renewals of Filipino/a/x understandings "in order to serve as a counter-hegemonic narrative for survival" (p. 37). *Kapwa* ethics, and seeding *kapwa*, through homing processes reflects especially the practices of decolonizing epistemologies. This process involves deeply questioning knowledge, power, structures and systems and then working with community and collectives utilizing healing tools to re-imagine a sense of being and self-hood in relation to all things and within the self, reflecting the two other pillars. For this study, the findings focus on *kapwa* ethics within decolonizing epistemologies framed from the place of affective and intimate influences of empire as well as queer diaspora aesthetics, the visual and sensorial registers shaped by colonial modernity, which can help orient a co-construction of spaces of reclamation, reconnection and healing. Different actions and sites of change were identified by the participants that can be acted on in the short-term to foster their desires and perspectives of decolonial and longer-term healing and relationalities within movement-building, beginning from the lessons learned from the PAR approaches in this study.

8.3.2 Kuwentuhan and PAR approaches as sites of healing, homing, and return

An ethics of *kapwa* in Filipino/a/x research and practice that grew out of the findings relates to the use of Torre and Ayala's (2009) liberatory and critical PAR. The researcher, educator, or community or social worker carrying out PAR methodologies, or other community-engaged or social action research methods, attunes to the relations and reconnections occurring in the research process alongside potential collective needs and outcomes. An ethics of *kapwa* also attunes to relational ruptures, fissures and trauma that may be carried and re-produced throughout research and social work environments based in experiences of colonization or other forms of oppression and discrimination. These ruptured relations may be addressed through

Torre and Ayala's notion of moments of "choques" in which conflict produces possibilities for transformation. Given the sensitivity of these contexts, PAR sites may require trauma-informed practices as highlighted earlier, as well as the notion of loosening control to respond to these evolutions in needs and collectivized processes. Culturally responsive approaches that take decolonization and queer racialized experiences seriously in their ethics of practice need to have room for these processes of transformation, collectivity and trauma processing occurring in PAR and other community-engaged methods.

One participant discussed how healing should occur before the building of infrastructure in community, allowing the community to grieve and unmask layers of colonial histories that impact their bodies and relations. The components of the workshops themselves were considered as sites of healing, in which a few participants specified that the multiple tools of cultural production and the intimacy and reconnections to each other through the workshop spaces were forms of healing. The collective process of *Kuwentuhan* and the accompanying cultural production is a possibility to foster these reconnections, incorporated with multiple tools to express, process and re-imagine relations and structures built from exclusionary and colonial modes of being and knowing. As d.l.c. had mentioned, expanding a web of relations, including ancestral reconnections, can provide more possibilities to take risks of vulnerability to have places to "be caught" by others in learning to navigate, disrupt and resist internal and external colonial and exclusionary thought, relations and structures. This web of relations reflects Koko's assertion in their feedback interview that this learning "cannot be done alone."

The use of *Kuwentuhan* combined with cultural production through PAR, inspired by Francisco-Menchavez (2014), similarly found that the affective and intimate reconnections between participants as they shared individual stories made space for their cultural ways of being

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and knowing. Their collective understanding and meaning making helped open possibilities for social action. These reconnections across stories formed the basis for a return to express and embody cultural notions of collectivity and set the stage for political action. Out of Francisco-Menchavez's (2014) PAR process grew a domestic workers support network, dispelling the idea that PAR is only about reaching out to "hard-to-reach" communities, and that it can rather lead to "an increase in social cohesion" (p. 89) for their population group of migrant workers facing isolation. However, these ethics and actions will need to be integrated into the study over and above simply elevating the voices of those marginalized, requiring intentional educational components, follow-up and further engagement.

This study re-affirmed that the combined design of *Kuwentuhan* and cultural production, or the Photovoice process alongside other forms of journaling, AI visualization, and collage-making, opened the growth of relationalities for the participants. We were intentionally making space for the multiplicities of stories and meanings.

This study further extended these findings in how many of the participants found the space of the workshops to foster healing and re-affirmations through the reconnections to knowledges and seeing oneself in others, the basis of *kapwa*. Gutierrez and colleagues (2023) published novel research after the data collection of this study that establishes the foundational elements of *Kuwentuhan* as a research method, building on the works of Francisco-Menchavez and other critical Filipino/a/x scholars and calling for further research to add to their "recipe" of *Kuwentuhan* as a research method. As Gutierrez and colleagues (2023) assert, *Kuwentuhan* is a research method that disrupts Western and hierarchical constructs of research sites and considers how *kapwa-tao* (fellow human being) provides the ontological orientation of the method. In focusing on storytelling and narrativity with undocumented students, Gutierrez asserts:

Researchers and practitioners need to understand undocumented students' narratives do not exist in a vacuum. Rather, individual narratives, when talking story with another individual, are part of a larger constellation of stories or a collective story of one's own people shaped by broader sociopolitical and historical contexts. (p. 1)

The site of research for social and community workers has potential to deeply engage with these decolonizing epistemologies, as identified by Desai's Critical Kapwa Pedagogy, rooted in Filipino/a/x psychology and drawing from *Kuwentuhan*'s ontological orientations in the methods. The PAR research site can both unsettle and unmask colonial knowledge systems and power regimes, while crafting renewed decolonizing methods and knowledge systems that respond to cultural, historical and social specificities of Filipino/a/x in the diaspora (Gutierrez et al., 2023). In addition, as Francisco-Menchavez and Tungohan (2020) assert, the action piece of PAR extends beyond the dissemination of findings but is rather embedded within the research process alongside community with potential to strengthen social cohesion and collectivity toward social and political action.

Gutierrez and colleagues (2023) called the *Kuwentuhan* research method centred on *kapwa-tao* as "coming home to each other," not only for the participants but for the Filipino/a/x researchers as well. They position *Kuwentuhan* as critical storytelling methods in qualitative research and decolonial methods, especially among Filipino/a/x American scholars to orient toward Indigenous Filipino/a/x consciousness and modes of being in research. They analyze in what ways *Kuwentuhan* humanizes research with undocumented Filipino/a/x students, in contrast to the often extractive and exploitative relationalities built from colonial and Western notions of scientific research conducted *on* people marginalized from these systems.

The first element of the *Kuwentuhan* method delineated by Gutierrez and colleagues (2023) involves collective storying and memorying: "Kuwentuhan gives access to tapping into a collective memory about the struggles, resistance, and strength of Filipinos within the diaspora"

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(p. 85). This collective memory reflects d.l.c.'s description of "monumentation" in which communities themselves write themselves into history and grow legibilities through the lens of the community's historical, social and cultural positions. As highlighted in other conceptualizations of *kapwa* and the reconnections fostered between participants, the *kwentos* (stories) were a part of their desire to "heal—to know and understand that they were not alone… Kuwentuhan is a method of discovery—a process of discovering self, discovering others, and discovering the world" (Gutierrez et al., 2023, p. 86).

I describe this notion of discovery within this research site as places of return through the homing process of constellating stories. Yet again, these places of return are not discoveries of the self in settling uninhabited territories and the modes of belonging within nation-state frameworks, but toward the memorialization of often lost and misrepresented heritages, bodies and identities through dislocation and dispossession. For the participants, healing occurred through cultural production and through seeing each other as diverse queer and trans Filipino/a/x, with re-connections to ancestral teachings and knowledges.

Gutierrez and colleagues' (2023) *Kuwentuhan* method also questions truth, power and knowledge, an epistemological turn to co-producing knowledge and an ontological engagement with participants through *pakikipagkapwa*, meaning non-hierarchical treatment of others as *kapwa-tao* regardless of "role, status, or income" (Enriquez, 1989 as cited in Gutierrez et al., 2023, p. 86). As Koko mentioned in their storying, healing and empowerment in community occurs through ridding ourselves of the roles and expectations we wear, toward this notion of oneness with others and the natural world. In this study, I attempted to embody these relationalities of non-hierarchies through my own positionalities with the community, while

being aware of the power dynamic of being a purveyor and rhetor of their narratives within a university's constraints.

At the same time, my positionality within the community and ongoing engagement with this population in Montréal allowed me to engage in a deeper analysis and attuning to our humanization, theorizing and realities based on similar historical and socio-cultural experiences. Gutierrez and colleagues (2023) have identified the researcher's cultural connection in their own *Kuwentuhan* methods as "cultural intuition" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, as cited in Gutierrez et al., 2023, p. 82). Cultural intuition grows from sources of personal experience, existing literature, professional experience and the analytical research process. Incorporating critical reflexive practice as a researcher regarding relational accountability can include reflections on the proximities or distances to this cultural intuition as an ongoing (un)learning process.

The queer and trans *kwentos* of this study and my own cultural intuition as the researcher relates to the final element of their proposed foundation for *Kuwentuhan*, a generational language "passed down from our ancestral wisdom guided by Sikolohiyang Pilipino" (Enriquez 1976, 1985, 1992 as cited in Gutierrez et al., 2023, p. 87). This element consists of the ability to speak *Tagalog* and understand the linguistic nuances of *Kuwentuhan* or not speak *Tagalog* but still embody the practice and nuances of *Kuwentuhan*. Language is not necessary for the process, rather the ways in which talk-story passes down knowledge through collective memory of communal resistance and cultural intuition. At the outset of this study, I was cognizant of my own limits in engaging with these culturally responsive research processes, as a second-generation immigrant who does not speak the national language of *Tagalog*, my mother's own native languages of *Ibaloi* or *Ilocano*, nor the local dialects through which participants may desire to express themselves. Through this form of cultural intuition and *Kuwentuhan*, I have

since learned a renewed meaning around the value of my roles and responsibilities in this notion of re-sharing generational language through this research process.

For this study, queerness, gender noncomformity and other nonnormative desires and experiences were an important part of the space and *kwentos*, especially in naming ancestral lineages, struggle, resistance and strengths of queer and trans Filipino/a/x worldviews from pasts, presents and futures. As the researcher, the cultural intuition I aimed to embody included a queer and trans diasporic optic (Pino, 2023). This interpretation and linguistic nuance include an embodied practice of indirect communication, as *Kuwentuhan* is travelling across generational "ways of knowing and being with others" (Gutierrez et al., 2023, p. 88). Thus, *Kuwentuhan* is also about a way of being with the other while talking story. The authors draw from *pakikiramdam*, meaning a shared inner perception, which looks in practice like emotional sensitivity rooted in "communal care and consideration" (Gutierrez et al., 2023, p. 88).

These notions of generational language were expressed in this study as participants shared their feedback on the workshops being a space of vulnerability and self-expression in safer and more secure ways that fostered a sense of kinship and *kapwa*. As noted in the findings, Jon Marvin directly quoted a *Tagalog* saying to reflect this generational language, also cited in the findings section: "In Tagalog, we say it is *lahat ng tao may pinagdadaanan* like everyone has [their] own story, everyone is going through something, but we're here together, you know, as a community to tell our stories and to really listen and to digest everyone's, you know, respective stories." Other participants felt this communal care through having food available to them at the workshops, or this sense of the Tagalog saying: "*Tanggalin ung tinik ng isda*" (getting rid of the fish bone). Their embodied ways of relating through *Kuwentuhan* and a sense of *kapwa* – an

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interrelatedness and perception of the inner self with others – opened a space for vulnerability and relationalities to re-grow.

In the workshops, we were undoing and re-learning our ways of being with others through linguistic and embodied practice, carrying across this collective memory in the cultural productions produced and the moments shared within the process – this dissertation aiming to be a part of this generational language. My own cultural intuition and *Kuwentuhan* process was also informed by fostering a space and storying of community memory, recognition and reconnection through a lens of seeing this queer diasporic narrative as legible, historicized and contextual.

Conducting PAR alongside queer diasporic communities with multilayered displacements and dislocations from the self requires an unpacking of the researcher's sources of being and knowing in relation to community. Through unveiling and acting toward these relational accountabilities, the research site may co-produce more transformative knowledge-making processes. Queer and trans *Kuwentuhan* based in an ethics of *kapwa* is a call to provide these spaces and places of return with decolonial epistemological and ontological emphasis.

Importantly, like relational accountability, Gutierrez and colleagues (2023) purport that researchers and practitioners must be accountable to ongoing education about cultural nuances, and sociopolitical discourses impacting participants facing marginalization, as well as critically reflecting on their positionality and the power dynamics surrounding their relationships with the participants and different racial and ethnic groups. As I have suggested in this study, these relational accountabilities can be extended to queer and trans Filipina/o/x diasporic histories and sociocultural specificities in localized or regional contexts, as much of the critical Filipino/a/x research has grown from the U.S. A recent study by Pino (2023) explored *Kuwentuhan* method or *kuwento* as an intergenerational queer and decolonial qualitative research method with older

queer Filipino/a/xs in Canada, showing the possibilities in expanding the recipe of *kuwento* and engaging across generations. Reflective of my own and other *kuwento* studies in diaspora, Pino illustrates how this method disrupted dominant Westernized systems of knowledge production as the approach enabled intimacy and connection among intergenerational queer diasporans, especially through Pino's own social positioning within the community.

Turning to the novel methods of this study, extending *Kuwentuhan* methods paired with Photovoice PAR approaches contributed to re-growing narratives and imaginings within constellations of stories of (un)belonging, identity and community. With the guidance of Photovoice procedures, I was enabled to construct a space and method of inquiry for the participants' individual and collective stories and meanings to be co-created through photographs. PAR principles guided the navigation of protocols and accountabilities, while *Kuwentuhan* and my own experience with this community, facilitation, and movement-building provided a space for cultural intuition to be an embodied practice of ethics and relationalities, considering queer and trans diasporic *kwentos*.

Constellating narratives through *Kuwentuhan* in ways that centre *kapwa* ethics as the ontological orientation may move research practices and methods, and even social and community work practice and pedagogy, toward humanization, *diwa(ta)* and decolonizing epistemologies. In addition, the specificities of this group, through their queer and trans understandings of (non)normative arrangements and power regimes, may further inform decolonial epistemologies based in realities of gender identity and sexuality among Filipino/a/x diasporic studies, adding to the recipe of *Kuwentuhan* and PAR methods.

8.3.3 Growing grassroots ethics of kapwa

In addition to the research space and site as potential for "coming home" through these constellations of stories centred on *kapwa* ethics, ongoing spaces of reconnection that deepen relationships over time (such as having regular drop-in spaces for queer Filipino/a/x) were named as possible places of return that could expand webs of relations and de-construct intimacies of empire. Making spaces for re-learning decolonizing epistemologies guided by *kapw*a ethics to return to worldviews and ways of knowing and being that are holistic, abundant and relational, in the words of Koko "should not be done alone." These places of return, accompanied with *kapwa* ethics that serve as healing processes, can be expanded upon to, as one art exhibit attendee said, lower the hurdles toward engagement and grow collective action among queer diasporic groups. Growing from these grassroots spaces to add to potential collective and social action in seeding *kapwa* occurs outside of the hegemonic and oppressive ideologies, again, denoting an otherworldly or in-between space of the dominant narratives, systems and structures.

As discussed in the findings, grassroots community-building must contend with what can be called, in citing Koko, the eyes of the "beholder" – referring to those who manage and govern resource distribution and funding for smaller grassroots projects and groups. Participants challenged the ways that institutional models, whether in research or in art project grants, can fragment and categorize identities toward notions of diversity reflected in the neoliberal and capitalist sense of the respectable and worthy subject-citizen. Homonormativity is reflected here, as these neoliberal models manage short-term needs and compartmentalize experiences toward the disciplining and managing of certain subjects (Duggan, 2002), rather than responding to longer-term needs and engagements, holistic experiences and identities, and issues of accessibility and capacities in spaces.

In other words, requests for consultation and project inputs and outcomes can be extractive instead of an ethics of relationality and accountability (Gutierrez et al., 2023). The participants discussed the need for transformation and relationship-building in the grassroots rather than solely naming static and reactive policy reforms. These discussions reflect a similar theme in queer of colour organizing that navigates limits of policy reform and neoliberal accommodations within the settler state over unmasking and undoing the logics that underpin hierarchies, power regimes and exclusion (Smith, 2015).

An ethics of *kapwa* and relational accountability may assist with navigating these power regimes and contexts and orienting toward an analysis of grounding decisions and actions in accountabilities based in historicized and contextual relationalities. Analyzing the settler colonial context and specificities to place, land, and environment (Tuck & Mackenzie, 2015) can assist with actions that resist the re-enforcement of settler homonationalism (Morgensen, 2010). Hsu's (2022) use of the concept "constellating home" around the concept of homing, especially their analysis of ancestral veneration, can be drawn from in diasporic community organizing and social movements alongside the analytic of "constellation of power relations" (Coulthard, 2014, p. 14) to further engage with settler colonialism in this study's notion of places of return.

These concepts may further inform an ethics of *kapwa* and relational accountability around solidarity praxis shown through the analysis of this study's methods and among Filipino/a/x, and other queer and trans diaspora communities aiming for more liberatory projects, practices and imaginings. As one of the exhibit attendees noted, the design of this project could be replicated and adapted among other diasporic communities. Aiming to not reproduce these logics involves being able to see how knowledge-making, actions and their contradictions further naturalize modern gay citizen subjects within a settler colonial nation (Morgensen, 2010). Queer

diasporic returns to self and collectivity in research and community sites may unpack the historical contexts shaping desires for belonging to and assimilating toward a disciplined subject within the neoliberal and colonial state.

Places of decolonial, queer and diasporic returns that ignite reconnections and reclamations may be some of the tools toward re-thinking solidarity praxis in the grassroots, similar to Morgensen's (2015) reflections on solidarity praxis: "In this moment of engaging solidarity, thinking queerly can highlight how our acts articulate many forms of coloniality— those named, and those left unnamed – even as questioning identitarianism can return our critical attention to the relationships across differences that solidarity demands" (p. 310). *Kapwa* ethics among this group re-centres the historical and cultural specificities of queer Filipino/a/x in ways that re-trace and aim to dismantle relations that re-produce isolation, confusion and disconnection – toward the intimate and emotional reconnections of *kapwa*.

Being grounded in grassroots ethics of *kapwa* would implicate one's own identity formation and relation to notions of belonging and home in decolonial and diasporic reflexive practice to return to more relational and accountable ethics. In these sites of return, which grow from the grassroots, researchers, educators and social and community workers may use collective processes in unveiling and un-doing intimacies of empire drawing from the various storytelling and cultural production tools and actions mentioned earlier. These constellations of stories may re-locate decolonial relations and systems and their potential points of unity in differences.

8.4 Contradictions and limitations of PAR and this study

Developing a longer-term and slower process of relational engagement, along with an advisory committee of community leaders and members, was not possible for this project, but is usually involved in PAR (Wang, 1999, 2006). However, I contend that given my long-term

relational engagement with this community in Montréal, I was able to have a cultural intuition, and strong iterative reflexive process around ethics and accountability, as discussed in the previous section. I have had a capacity to maintain these relationalities alongside the production and dissemination of this dissertation. Since the beginning of this project, I have continued to stay involved with LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x community action and organizing. These relations reflect what PAR scholars have discussed in aiming to construct and examine a more liberatory potential of these methods, as Cahill and colleagues stated (2010): "our research develops from a place of concern and caring for people who are close to us in our classrooms, our neighbourhoods, and our community" (p. 407). These research approaches challenge the distant, objectifying and often Westernized and colonial gaze toward people facing marginalization, including racialized communities (Gutierrez et al., 2023; Hill Collins, 2000).

Regarding the participants, the sample size of seven to ten individuals was selected due to the suggestions of the original creators of Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997). As mentioned, I paused recruitment when ten individuals expressed interest; however, two of them declined to participate close to the first workshop while another individual removed themselves after the first workshop. Thus, there was no longer time to recruit additional participants, and the lowest suggested number had already been met. In reflecting on the total sample of seven individuals, the smaller group size enabled more time for individual storytelling and for others to analyze and expand on each other's themes toward collective stories. As a researcher managing the entire process, focusing on seven individuals and their group dynamics was likely better than a larger group so I could better attune to ethics, relations and reconnections occurring in the process, as well as potential emotional challenges. If the group were to be larger, additional researchers or research assistants should be considered.

As discussed, this study aimed to recruit a diversity of LGBTQ+ identifying Filipino/a/xs living in Montréal. Originally, I had considered recruiting based on differences of gender identity, sexuality, immigration status, age, education or employment to capture a range of experiences within LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x communities. However, as recruitment began it became clear that likely due to the project being an artistic process and communicated through channels familiar to a particular generation, as well as word-of-mouth and trust being important components in recruiting communities for research, individuals expressing interest to participate came from social networks and community groups that I was already involved in or aware of. As time was limited due to the dissertation process, recruitment was not as thorough in finding older ages, for example, which may have added other themes to the discussion. However, the project findings centred on arts-based and cultural community organizing were enriched by most of the participants having familiarity with these practices.

PAR studies such as Photovoice or other approaches often require relationship-building and longer-term processes, but with the institutional requirements for a dissertation there was not as much flexibility to expand the timeline of recruitment. However, for this project, the relationship-building was already present as I had been doing community organizing among LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in Montréal for a few years. PAR researchers should remain aware of and articulate their institutional requirements to the community. I have been attentive to how future studies can expand on this study through different generations or immigration statuses. In continuing the conversation of the findings in community settings, I am also able to ensure the timelines around re-sharing the findings are not strictly around degree requirements. In these conversations, we can discuss the limits and potentials of this study and of what we may need in terms of missing voices or perspectives to inform other research or community projects.

In the same vein, this study does not purport to represent LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs living in Montréal or a wider diasporic group or region. While identity was an entry point for joining this study as a participant rather than a social or political issue, categorizing, stereotyping or homogenizing the heterogeneity and diversity of experiences within identity-based groups have been highlighted by the participants and through the literature as facets of exclusionary "Othering" practices in constructing a state-sanctioned national imaginary (Coloma et al., 2012).

Additionally, identities of queer and trans or Filipino/a/x are considered as transforming and fluid subjectivities with social and historical bases and even as analytical frames and approaches (Gentile et al., 2017; Luibhéid & Chávez, 2020). Even as concepts such as *kapwa* and *Kuwentuhan* are explored in this study, there are multiplicities of meanings and wisdoms from the Philippines, within and across regions and contexts, and circulating at global scales that can relate to returns and reconnections amid homing practices.

This study did not, however, have an in-depth engagement with the power dynamics and arrangements that exist in these transnational relations between the Philippines and the site of this study in Montréal, Québec, Canada, or elsewhere. This study focused more on the continuing past of colonialism and colonial modernity. However, participants and this research discuss the importance of an analytic engaging with power, place and land, which has implications for differential power arrangements across nations in the circulation of ideas, visibilities, affect and politics. This study began to discuss, for example, the ways in which class influences the experience of safety and security regarding gender and sexuality in the Philippines and within immigration regimes in Canada, as well as differential access and socio-economic experiences depending on citizenship status.

Factors of immigration generations or citizen statuses were not thoroughly analyzed in this study. This study differs in the participants from other *Kuwentuhan* and PAR studies that I have cited which focus on immigration status issues such as undocumentation among Filipino/a/x students (Guiterrez et al., 2023) or Filipino/a/x migrant worker experiences (Francisco-Menchavez, 2014). Without a particular focus on a social or political issue, the identification of particular social or political actions may have been more difficult to attain, while some suggestions for action were still discussed. However, our studies have similarities in understanding and unveiling influences of the historical, social, political and economic context of the Philippines and diasporic and transnational embodied experiences.

As identified in the third research question and the theoretical and conceptual orientations of this study, solidarity praxis and the context of settler colonialism in Canada were examined in this study through the participants' narratives. However, this question was not as thoroughly addressed in the discussions in the workshops or interviews as opposed to the first two research questions. These objectives aimed to redress and further decolonial orientations and discussions across queer of colour critique, anti-colonialism, anti-racism, anti-Black racism, and queer and trans Indigenous and Two-Spirit narratives to redress the complicities and dominance of settler, Western and modern queer narratives (Driskill, 2010; Morgensen, 2010, 2011, 212), while seeking to build what some in queer studies have called coalitional politics toward more transformative change (Gentile et al., 2017; Morgensen, 2010).

As highlighted in Chapter two, section 2.4.1, on queering diaspora, and Chapter three, sections 3.3.3 and 3.4, on transformative LGBTQ+ politics and Québec's LGBTQ+ discourse, the narratives and histories of queer and trans Indigenous and Two-Spirit peoples in the context of queer of colour and LGBTQ+ organizing has been critiqued as exclusionary and further

marginalizing of their realities and theorizing (Driskill, 2010; Morgensen, 2010, 2011, 212).

While the workshops included questions, a few prompts and facilitated educational sessions

around solidarity and Indigenous peoples, particularly focused on the Philippines, the lack of

time to thoroughly engage with these discussions likely contributed to the focus being on the first

two questions.

Scholars have also delineated the lack of inclusion and understanding of anti-Black

racism and diversities of Black experiences in dominant LGBTQ+ discourses in Canada (Baines,

2017), in which scholars have advocated for documenting these histories from one's own

communities' perspectives (Ware, 2017). The complicit histories of Canada in constructing the

nation through slavery and settler colonialism with Indigenous and Black communities require

deep engagement in solidarity and collective actions (Lee, 2018; Walia, 2014). Even while this

study addressed decolonization through some of the main findings, future studies or community

actions that build from this dissertation should focus more on the roles of Filipino/a/x solidarity

in the context of diasporic settlement, including the experiences of Indigenous Filipino/a/xs.

A limit and challenge of PAR designs, such as Photovoice, is how these approaches can

continue expanding and understanding the scale and scope of the impact and longer-term

engagement that may be needed based on the identified actions of the participants. Some

participants mentioned that the impact and actions stemming from this study will likely manifest

beyond the scope of the project. Generally, the participants desired to continue the sorts of

conversations that we had throughout the research process and the different forms of cultural,

artistic and technological productions. In addition, even as the participants identified potential

knowledge mobilization and future action strategies, I did not at the time have capacities to fully

lead more informal spaces for these conversations or to continue and/or help create drop-in

spaces. However, in a community-building fashion, these actions would not be the sole

responsibility of the researcher but instead would consist of the sharing of roles and

responsibilities through collective action and processes.

As mentioned in the findings, around the same time that this study was being done, a new

non-profit organization by and for young Filipino/a/x communities in Montréal was launched

called *Kapwa Centre*. This organization, with which I am involved, has since been providing

ongoing spaces for artistic, cultural, solidarity, and anti-racist conversations, events and

initiatives, including and often centering LGBTQ+ identifying Filipino/a/x members. For

example, they have been holding monthly drop-in art spaces by a Filipino/a/x art collective,

called *Ka Collective*, as well as monthly "Kapwa Walks" as spaces of reconnection, healing and

wellbeing within community. This organization, considered as *by-and-for* the Filipino/a/x

community, reflects some of the grassroots and *kapwa* ethics that I have been discussing. The

organization is largely centred on relationalities and recognizing the impacts of colonization on

identity and community formation. It is through this organization that I continue much of the

LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x community-building and strengthening of relationalities, while relearning

modes of knowing and being. I have been grateful to be on this journey with many of the

participants also engaging with and outside of *Kapwa Centre*.

I also acknowledge that, even as I have aimed for accountability to community in this

research process, this dissertation is not the most accessible form of knowledge sharing for all

community members. As PAR design often entails, participants contribute to making decisions

around how and in what ways the findings may be mobilized for different audiences within the

resource capacities of the project (Latz, 2017). I intend to follow up on these adaptations of this

dissertation to re-share the findings more concertedly with community audiences.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a summary of the main findings and contributions of this dissertation study in response to the research questions and objectives. I address how this study makes theoretical and research contributions to critical Filipino/a/x studies in Canada, queer diaspora and migration studies and PAR methodologies. The section then summarizes this study's contributions to social and community work and social movements, thus providing practice, scholarly, pedagogical and policy considerations in various fields.

Through conducting participatory approaches of Photovoice and *Kuwentuhan* with seven LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs of the diaspora in Montréal, Québec, Canada, this study analyzed how gender identity and sexuality relate to their migration and diasporic experiences as well as how and why they engage with social and community formations and solidarity praxis. The study drew from queer diaspora and migration, critical Filipino/a/x and queer of colour organizing theories to add to the marginal research on this group's lived experiences and expand on these areas of study through their perspectives. I also aimed to challenge dominant research methods and have practical and transformative actions within and beyond the study methods.

The main findings regarding the first question analyzing the relations between gender identity, sexuality and migration are that the participants' bodily and relational experiences are influenced by a continuing past of diverse and regional histories of colonialism and imperialism in the Philippines (Aguila, 2015). The participants' homing desires and practices (Hsu, 2022) reflect heterogeneous narratives of unmasking, re-shaping and re-growing one's understanding of one's body and self, as well as surrounding relations and structures in the in-between spaces of everyday and institutionalized power regimes, normative colonial arrangements, and

transnational circulations of their bodies and desires. Practices of homing, occurring through places of return, as illustrated by the participants in this study, are circular, non-linear and fluid movements. These findings reflect queer and trans, postcolonial and feminist engagements with migration and diaspora and a focus on regional politics, desires and affiliations (Ahmed et al., 2020; Bachetta and Haritaworn, 2011; Ware, 2019). The participants continually remake and question notions of home in relation to identity as they are confronted with and experience forms of dislocation, (un)belonging, (il)legibilities and violence through these histories and their nonnormative bodies, desires and displacements in different spaces and places.

The participants' experiences of queerness and Filipino/a/x identity are interwoven with a wider collective and community – a notion of *kapwa*. An exploration or engagement with queer and trans Filipino/a/x identity is thus inextricable from community and collectivity and vice-versa. They express *kapwa* especially through their intimate and affective reclamations and reconnections to kinship, collectivity and holistic and abundant worldviews. These reconnections occur in the "in-betweens" of colonial, extractive, individualistic and neoliberal relational and structural formations that they have experienced or witnessed internally and externally. Homing practices involve constellating their individual and collective narrations to (un)map sites of (un)belonging amid power regimes and exclusionary forms of being and knowing toward more liberatory relations and structures. While there is a diverse array of homing practices for the participants, a main theme in this group centres on desires and actions toward returning to decolonial, ancestral, land-based, cultural and linguistic ways of knowing, being and relating, which I call *seeding kapwa*.

This study suggests seeding *kapwa* is a return to evolving embodied practices that may be enacted through an ethics of *kapwa* and relational accountability based in decolonization. Co-

constructing an ethics of *kapwa* aims to collectively unmask, question and dismantle histories and contexts of colonial thought, actions and systems (Strobel, 2016) and re-build more responsible solidarities centred on decolonial relationalities. An ethics of *kapwa* relates to emerging critical Filipino/a/x studies that have re-visited decolonial epistemologies and ontologies (Desai, 2016; Gutierrez et al., 2023; Remoquillo, 2023). Seeding *kapwa* through ethics is a philosophical engagement and critical reflexive practice around questioning how and why we know what we know, the power regimes that shape truth and knowledge, and our actions and decisions to turn toward relational accountability because of these truths (Hill Collins, 2000). *Kuwentuhan* (Filipino/a/x talk-story) method combined with the cultural production of Photovoice and PAR processes emerged as a site of homing and of healing through a return to intimate and affective reconnections to *kapwa*. The cultural production and storytelling were accessible and meaningful avenues for processing, relating across, and expressing different stories to collectivize, reclaim and reconnect to *kapwa*, furthering forms of healing and homing.

Through collective imaginative processes, such as storytelling and cultural production, there is the possibility to visibilize the diversities, heterogeneity, continuing pasts and transnational experiences and strengths of our communities toward more collaborative and relational reconnections. The emerging area of critical storytelling in which *Kuwentuhan* methods can be placed (Gutierrez et al., 2023) can centre *kapwa* ethics and relational accountability, which I suggest can be translated to sites of research, practice and pedagogy. Researchers, educators and social and community workers methods and ethics can become sites of return through homing practices and desires by focusing on the cultural, historical and social specificities of this queer and trans Filipino/a/x diasporic group or adapted to other diasporic groups with a lens to their differences, regions, diversities and transnational experiences (Pino,

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2023). The participants' homing desires and practices involve grassroots and collective spaces and places untied to neoliberal and capitalist funding and resource models. These homing practices unearth interwoven and often masked colonial histories and power regimes, renew relationalities based on decolonization, and preserve these collective memories and stories.

9.2 Theoretical and research contributions

This study reveals and adds to the ongoing relevance of analyzing across feminist and postcolonial theories in queer and trans diaspora and queer of colour organizing, as well as emerging critical Filipino/a/x studies expanded to the Canadian context. As critical Filipino/a/x studies emerges in the Canadian context, integrating and spanning across various fields, this study contributes an understudied lens based on lived experiences from queer and trans Filipino/a/x of the diaspora of a particular region, thus *homing* in on their history and context. This study adds to theorizing about their identity and community formations and experiences through a notion of homing, returns, and reconnections addressed in Filipino/a/x diaspora identity subject-formation.

I focus specifically on an ethics of *kapwa* and relational accountability related to these returns that merge questions of being, knowing and relating toward more transformative social and community action. These returns highlight how colonial and imperial projects of past and present are embodied and re-constructed through the body and sensorial fields – the affective, the intimate and the aesthetic. Homotransnationalism, intimacies of empire and queer aesthetic practices were relevant theories to the transnational and historical circulation of colonial and imperial modes of being, knowing and relating centred on sexuality, gender identity, racialization, class and context for these participants. These concepts influence a constant (un)making of who they are (un)becoming through embodied practice as they arrive to and

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depart from places, continuously re-shaping their meaning-making in remembrance of pasts and re-imagining futures – a circularity across time.

This study also contributes to theorizing about and the practical application of the PAR approaches used in this study, which can be extended to future PAR studies. In particular, I add the lens of queer and trans Filipino/a/x in Montréal – who have specific multilayered and embodied displacements, dislocations and confrontations with historical and contextual normative arrangements and power regimes related to gender identity, sexuality, racialization and class (Pino, 2023), furthering the recipe of *Kuwentuhan* methods. As Gutierrez and colleagues' (2023) formulation of *Kuwentuhan* methods suggests, a researcher's cultural intuition regarding their sources of being and knowing in relation to community may contribute to a more meaningful and humanizing research process that resists extractive and colonial approaches. My study adds to PAR research methods and offers for educators, social and community workers and organizers engaged with Filipino/a/x, an ethics of *kapwa* as an urgency to co-construct these places of return based in decolonial epistemological and ontological theoretical and practical approaches – including community members themselves as researchers and knowledge producers.

This study also reinforces relational accountability, especially for researchers and educators, as requiring critical reflexive practice which names and re-dresses power dynamics in relations between one's own community and academic institutions (Lee & Léon, 2019). I add that researchers, educators and practitioners using PAR approaches through culturally responsive methods of *Kuwentuhan* consider their potential as sites of return, homing, and even healing for queer and trans Filipino/a/x and other diasporic racialized groups. Future Photovoice and PAR

approaches should consider relationalities in the PAR process and may provide an array of tools for cultural and artistic production.

9.3 Social and community work and social movement contributions

This study contributes to social and community work practice and pedagogy through the theorizing and methods of this study regarding the co-creation of collective imaginative processes to deconstruct colonial and Westernized power regimes and normative arrangements, as well as settler colonial national imaginations in homing and place-making practices. While social and community workers, other direct practitioners and educators may intentionally construct, alongside Filipino/a/x and other diasporic communities, these decolonial places of return, an ethics of *kapwa* and relational accountability can extend to everyday moments, encounters, and collective action. Important to the roles of social and community workers, and community organizers in social movements engaging with queer and trans Filipino/a/x, are how identity and embodied experiences are viewed as integrated with collective and communal liberation. Therefore, social and community action that seeks to engage with seeding *kapwa* may consider shifting understandings of identitarian politics as already collective and community praxis.

Co-constructing spaces *with* queer and trans Filipino/a/x or other queer and trans diasporic and racialized communities should also involve approaches of healing and communal care through an understanding of their specific continuing pasts, colonial modernity, exclusions and discrimination that have shaped trauma experiences and responses. As other queer and trans Filipino/a/x collective and organizing spaces have shown, growing from these grassroots spaces has involved orientations toward peer support, healing and systemic analyses of historical, transnational and oppressive ideologies and practices (Aguila et al., 2017).

This study adds to the community organizing and social movement literature around the cooptation of longer-term, global and grassroots organizing and movement practices through NGOs being depoliticized, professionalized and managed based on neoliberal and capitalist state models of governance, known as "nonprofitization" (Choudry et al., 2012). Social and community workers advocating for more transformative and grassroots resources or funding models, and funders and policymakers themselves, should resist perpetuating fragmented identitarian-based projects that fail to recognize socio-cultural experiences of how identities and praxis are connected to wider communal liberation and movements that are longer-term and relational based. These models may instead accept community members' own legibilities of their experiences and forms of understanding impact and change. These grassroots spaces and resource distribution are constructed, managed and grown from the views of the community – including their desires to grow collective monumentations to document, make visible and remember often erased or forgotten histories. The narratives of "subaltern communities" that have been erased or mispresented through dominant discourses are crucial to the survival, growth and longevity of social and political movements (Haritaworn et al., 2018, p.4).

9.4 Future studies

There is a need to continue growing queer and trans diaspora scholarship and critical Filipino/a/x scholarship, related to the historical, socio-cultural and political specificities of queer and trans Filipino/a/x subject-formation connected to community praxis. Research which homes in on trans and gender non-conforming ways of being, knowing and living requires more emphasis and particularities. Queer of colour organizing literature also speaks to conducting research from the standpoint of illegalization, criminalization and detention to further de-

construct homonormative, settler colonial, and exclusionary rights-based discourses around citizenship regimes.

This study did not focus on precarious or undocumented status. However, through decolonial, queer diaspora and critical Filipino/a/x analyses, the theoretical orientation was attuned to identity and community organizing praxis within these broader systems and histories of exclusion and marginalization. This study also did not focus on a specific immigration generation, such as first or second generation, which could be pursued in future studies.

Future studies may focus more on generational experiences related to migration status or migratory trajectories or other familial, kinship or migratory experiences, such as Pino's (2023) analysis of *kuwento* in re-narrating intimacies of older Filipino/a/x gay men. Even as I had maintained the questions of identity and community broad for the participants, the participants viewed the openness to diversities of representations and experiences in the group as a strength.

This dissertation also aimed to draw from an analysis of settler colonialism and settler homonationalism (Morgensen, 2010) to examine solidarity praxis within social and community formations, resources and support. Given the strong focus on the first two research questions, which could be related to the limited time we had in the workshops, the third question on solidarity praxis was not addressed as in-depth, pointing to future study and community work possibilities.

However, solidarity praxis began to emerge in how critical Filipino/a/x and queer diaspora theorizing can continue to orient to decolonial epistemologies and ontologies which question and unveil power regimes, placemaking and homing practices of (un)belonging within and across empire(s). I suggest that future studies re-emphasize the relations between queer and trans analyses and experiences, land, water, dispossession, diaspora and settler colonialism.

These lines of inquiry may include questions such as: How can decolonial queer and trans diasporic returns contend with potential settler homonationalism to resist the disciplining and subjugation of racialized and sexualized bodies that further settler colonial, neoliberal and global imperial projects? These questions include not only interrogating the displacement of Filipino/a/xs and the experiences of Indigenous Filipino/a/xs but the dispossession of Indigenous peoples on whose land they may arrive and depart from. Therefore, I continue to ask: How do ongoing claims for identity *and* community recognition, whether through homing processes that (un)map (un)belonging and seek to grow relationalities, or through re-interpretations of cultural and ancestral values, further the displacement, (il)legibility, or liberatory possibilities of other communities and of natural environments?

9.5 Author's concluding remarks

As Gutierrez and colleagues (2023) mentioned in their recent academic work on the foundational elements of *Kuwentuhan* methods with undocumented Filipino/a/x students, this research process can be an experience of coming home (or homecoming) for the participants and the researchers alike. As I conclude the writing of this dissertation and continue my reflexive practice on ways of being, knowing and (un)becoming, as well as the sense of *kapwa* I have been building with Filipino/a/x communities in Montréal, and elsewhere, I have become more attuned to questioning myself and my relations with the outer world in constructing notions of community and carrying out actions toward social or political change. This dissertation has potentially produced more questions for me about identity, home, belonging, nationhood and region than answers. In other words, this dissertation process has emphasized for me the non-conclusion of this conclusion, as this dissertation has become multiplicities of openings and of returns for me – a homing process.

Even as I complete the production of this dissertation, I still question the impossibilities of breaking the barriers of the university site. I wonder, where will kapwa *ethics* or other cultural or ancestral returns and reconnections that I experience lead me next? I hope this dissertation and other works that stem from it can continue the generational language of embodying a practice of healing and relationality that can be passed across and within community and collective, whether in written, spoken, visual, affective, organized or other forms. Even as this recipe may have some missing ingredients, involve some contradiction and complications, and need some adjustments – some salt, pepper, vinegar or even *patis* – I hope it can feed and seed *kapwa*, collectivity and longer-term relational movements.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Poster for recruitment

Appendix B: Consent forms and confidentiality agreements

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Participant Consent Form – Workshop Participants

Title of Project: Queer Kuwentuhan: Filipino/a/x snaps, stories and social change in the diaspora

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Purpose of the Study

You have been invited to participate in a research study on Filipino LGBTQ+ migration and community involvement in Quebec. The study aims to use photography, arts and culture to better understand the individual and community experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino migrants and diaspora. The findings will also be used to advocate for social change and policies that represent their experiences.

This project is being led by:

Researcher:
Jacqueline Stol, PhD Candidate
School of Social Work, Faculty of Arts
McGill University
Tel: 613-218-0428
E-mail: Jacqueline.stol@mail.mcgill.ca

Supervisor:
Dr. Jill Hanley
School of Social Work, Faculty of Arts
McGill University
Tel: 514-398-7070
E-mail: Jill.hanley@mcgill.ca

Study Procedures

In agreeing to participate in this study, you will be involved in <u>four workshop sessions</u> (this includes one week of taking photographs and journaling), <u>one art showcase</u> and <u>one optional individual interview</u>. The workshops will take place at a community organization located in the city of Montreal. The following are the research activities and timeframes:

- **Weeks 1 to 2 – July 2ⁿᵈ to July 16ᵗʰ**
  - Workshop 1 (3 hours) – Introductions to the project and learning photography and writing skills [Week 1]
  - Taking photographs for one week and writing journal entries to be used to tell your story in the workshops and in the art showcase (3 hours) [Week 2]
- **Weeks 3 to 4 – July 17ᵗʰ to July 31ˢᵗ**
  - Workshop 2 (3.5 hours) – Educational discussions on Filipino migration and sharing about the photographs [Week 3]
  - Workshop 3 (3 hours) – Educational discussions on arts and cultural work and on social and political change based on the storytelling [Week 4]
- **Weeks 5 to 10 – July 31ˢᵗ to September 10ᵗʰ**
  - Workshop 4 (3 hours) – Closing discussions and beginning to develop advocacy recommendations [Week 5]
  - Preparing for your art displays at the art showcase (3 hours) [Weeks 6 to 10]
- **Week 10 or 11 – September 10ᵗʰ to 17ᵗʰ**
  - Art showcase event (4 to 5 hours) – Displaying your photographs and having community

- community discussions at the event which will be open to the public
- **Weeks 10 to 13 – September 10th to October 1st**
  - Optional individual interview (30 to 45 minutes) – An optional interview for providing feedback on your experience in the research process which will be used to improve the workshop and art showcase for future use

  Would you like to be contacted to be interviewed after the art showcase event?
  Yes _____ No _____

Recordings

During Workshops 2, 3 and 4, select discussions will be audio recorded. This will include group discussions about the photographs, what the photographs mean to you and the group, and how these findings can be used as recommendations for social and political change. The optional individual interviews will also be audio recorded. These audio recordings will be transcribed by the researcher and kept in a secure online platform. The transcriptions will be used by the researcher to help finalize the results and the recommendations. All personal identifying information will be taken out of the transcriptions and replaced by pseudonyms.

During the art showcase, a videographer will document the event and/or interview various attendees and participants about their experience in the project. This documentation will be used only for educational and advocacy materials, such as presentations.

Compensation

You will be provided with an honorarium of up to $75.00 for your participation in the workshops and the art showcase. You will receive $25.00 after the second, third and fourth workshops in cash. You will not receive the honorarium if you withdraw before it is due. Any payment due before you withdraw will not be withheld. You will also be provided with the original and the enlarged copies of the photographs that are used for the art showcase after the event.

Confidentiality

Given the project includes an art showcase open to the public, your confidentiality will be limited when it comes to your identity being associated to the photographs, the final results and recommendations. You may choose to not attend the art showcase, and instead use a pseudonym in the art display for confidentiality. You may also choose to use a pseudonym for the transcriptions of the audio recording. If you choose a pseudonym, it will be used in all materials that are made public, including any advocacy materials developed based on the recommendations and in all dissertation writings and publications.

During the workshops, participants will share many personal experiences. You will be expected to maintain confidentiality about the details of these stories shared by the participants unless they are identified in the results and recommendations shared through the dissertation, the art showcase, and the advocacy materials. These findings and recommendations will be determined during the workshops and provided back to you during the writing process. Any

personal experience that you wish to share at the art showcase itself is at your own discretion.

The audio recordings, the transcriptions of the recordings and the photographs will be securely stored on McGill University's protected OneDrive database. Only the researcher will have access to this database, unless there are assistants to help with transcribing or with analyzing the data. In this case, this data will be kept confidential among the research team.

Other limits to confidentiality include duty to disclose about suspected child abuse or neglect, or where there is reason to suspect imminent serious harm to the participant or others. The researcher will be obliged to contact appropriate authorities.

Photographed
You may choose to take photographs of people for the study. However, you may not take photographs of minors (under the age of 18). If you are using photographs that would identify humans, you will need to get consent from those people using the Photography Consent Form.

Voluntary Participation
Participation is voluntary and you may decline to take part in any part of the procedure. You may also withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason. You should not experience any disadvantage or reprisal for withdrawing. If you choose to withdraw, your information will be deleted, unless you give permission to use the information or if it has already been made public. You may also choose to change your personal identifying information to use a pseudonym at any time prior to publication. You may retract any portion of the individual information you provided during the study from the dissertation and the results that are reported, prior to publication.

Potential Risks
While there are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this research, you may experience emotional or psychological distress caused by the experiences you and others share during the workshops or at the art showcase. You will be provided with a list of social and psychological support resources during the first workshop.

The art showcase will be made available to the public, so there is a high chance that if you use your personal identifying information your privacy with those who attend or who learn about the results of the study will be impacted. While there should not be repercussions to you through sharing the findings and recommendations, you should consider how your involvement may impact your relationships and access to resources.

Potential Benefits
Through participating in the workshops, the art showcase and the interview, you will potentially gain skills in photography, arts and culture, research methods, and advocacy and event planning. You will be involved in addressing the gap in research and documentation about the experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x migrants and diaspora in Canada. You will also be contributing to advocacy recommendations that may be used as educational tools for community leaders and decision-makers in social services and social policies to help make services, supports and social movements more representative of the lives of LGBTQ+ Filipinos and migrants.

Dissemination of Results
The photographs and advocacy recommendations will be shared publicly at the art showcase event. You will be involved as a workshop participant in helping to decide how the overall results will be disseminated. This may include a video, a PowerPoint presentation, graphics and/or verbal presentations at academic and community events. A video will be produced from the art showcase which will be distributed publicly. The aim is to help spread the results to relevant academic, research, community, political and service provision leaders so they can take action on important social and policy changes. The dissertation will also be used for academic publications.

Questions
If you have questions about the study, you can contact the main researcher, Jacqueline Stol, at 613-218-0428 or at Jacqueline.stol@mail.mcgill.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the Associate Director, Research Ethics at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca citing REB file number _____

Do you consent to be identified in the video recording from the art showcase?
Yes _____ No _____

Do you consent to have your name used in reporting?
Yes _____ No _____
If you prefer to use a pseudonym, identify it here: _____

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. To ensure the study is being conducted properly, authorized individuals, such as a member of the Research Ethics Board, may have access to your information. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Photography Consent Form

Title of Project: Queer Kuwentuhan: Filipino/a/x snaps, stories and social change in the diaspora

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Purpose of the Study

You have been invited to be photographed for a research study on Filipino LGBTQ+ migration and community involvement in Quebec. The study aims to use photography, arts and culture to better understand the individual and community experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino migrants and diaspora. The findings will also be used to advocate for social change and policies that represent their experiences.

This project is being led by:

Researcher:
Jacqueline Stol, PhD Candidate
School of Social Work, Faculty of Arts
McGill University
Tel: 613-218-0428
E-mail: Jacqueline.stol@mail.mcgill.ca

Supervisor:
Dr. Jill Hanley
School of Social Work, Faculty of Arts
McGill University
Tel: 514-398-7070
E-mail: Jill.hanley@mcgill.ca

Person(s) in photograph

I agree to have my photo taken for the purposes of this project only. I grant permission for the photographer and the researcher to use the photograph(s) for any materials that are about the research study, including any reporting, video or PowerPoint presentations, graphics, academic publications, and educational and advocacy materials. I understand that I can request to have the image altered to make it less identifiable, including blurring the face or surrounding items and changing the name associated. I understand that I can withdraw the use of my personal identifying information and/or the image(s) at any time, for any reason, up until the image is made public.

I agree to have my name associated to the image(s):

Yes _____ No _____
If yes, please provide name to be used: _____

I would like to be provided with the information associated to the image(s) before they are published publicly at the art showcase and in other material:

Yes _____ No _____
If yes, please provide phone number and e -mail: _____

Please note that the photographers may not upload data to any cloud platform that has not been approved by the Principal Investigator of the project, Jacqueline Stol.

Questions
If you have questions about the study, you can contact the main researcher, Jacqueline Stol, at 613-218-0428 or at Jacqueline.stol@mail.mcgill.ca.

Name: (please print) _____

Signature: _____   Date: _____

New Interview Participant Consent Form

Title of Project: Queer Kuwentuhan: Filipino/a/x snaps, stories and social change in the diaspora

Purpose of the Study

You have been invited to participate in a research study on Filipino LGBTQ+ migration and community involvement in Quebec. The study aims to use photography, arts and culture to better understand the individual and community experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino migrants and diaspora. The findings will also be used to advocate for social change and policies that represent their experiences.

This project is being led by:

Researcher:
Jacqueline Stol, PhD Candidate
School of Social Work, Faculty of Arts
McGill University
Tel: 613-218-0428
E-mail: Jacqueline.stol@mail.mcgill.ca

Supervisor:
Dr. Jill Hanley
School of Social Work, Faculty of Arts
McGill University
Tel: 514-398-7070
E-mail: Jill.hanley@mcgill.ca

Interview Process

In agreeing to participate in this interview, you will be involved in one interview undertaken by Jacqueline Stol. An interpreter will also be present to translate from Tagalog to English, if needed. The interview will be between 30 and 45 minutes in-person at a location that suits you, or online. If you agree, I will digitally record the interview using Microsoft Teams so that it can be transcribed. If the interview takes place online, you will be provided with a link to a McGill University Microsoft Teams meeting and will need Internet access. To join the meeting, you are recommended to be in a quiet location and to use a computer (laptop or desktop), cell phone or tablet with a built-in microphone on the device. You will be asked to join the meeting by downloading the application or using your web browser and can choose to keep your video camera on or off during the interview. Although all reasonable precautions are taken, there is always the possibility of third-party interception when using communications through the internet.

Voluntary
Participation is voluntary and you may stop your involvement in the interview at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw, your information will be deleted, unless you give permission to use the information. You have the right to skip or not answer any question, as you prefer. You may retract any portion of the information you provided during the interview from the dissertation and the results that are reported, prior to their publication.

Confidentiality
Your personal identifying information, such as your name or organization affiliation, will not be shared with anyone besides the researcher unless you agree otherwise. If you want your participation to remain confidential, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym that you choose, or assigned to you, in the

transcriptions of the interview and in any reporting of the study. All efforts possible will be made to ensure you are not identifiable by the information you provide and that is shared through the study.

Potential Risks
While there are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this interview, you may experience emotional or psychological distress caused by some of the questions. You will be provided with a list of social and psychological support resources before the interview starts that you may contact to discuss your reactions.

Potential Benefits
Although you will receive no direct benefits, you will be involved in addressing the gap in research and documentation about the experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x migrants and diaspora in Canada. You will also be contributing to advocacy recommendations that may be used as educational tools for community leaders and decision-makers in social services and social policies to help make services, supports and social movements more representative of the lives of LGBTQ + Filipinos and migrants.

Dissemination of Results
The study results and advocacy recommendations may be distributed through a video, a PowerPoint presentation, graphics and/or verbal presentations at academic and community events. The aim is to help spread the results to relevant academic, research, community, political and service provision leaders so they can take action on important social and policy changes. The dissertation will also be used for academic publications.

Questions
If you have questions about the study, you can contact the main researcher, Jacqueline Stol, at 613-218-0428 or at Jacqueline.stol@mail.mcgill.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the Associate Director, Research Ethics at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca citing REB file number _____

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. To ensure the study is being conducted properly, authorized individuals, such as a member of the Research Ethics Board, may have access to your information. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

>   Do you consent to be audio recorded during the interview?
>   *Yes _____ No _____*
>
>   Do you consent to have your name used in reporting?
>   *Yes _____ No _____*
>   If you prefer to use a pseudonym, identify it here: _____

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Consent Form – Facilitators

Title of Project: Queer Kuwentuhan: Filipino/a/x snaps, stories and social change in the diaspora

---

Purpose of the Study

You have been invited to participate as a facilitator in a research study on Filipino LGBTQ+ migration and community involvement in Quebec. The study aims to use photography, arts and culture to better understand the individual and community experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino migrants and diaspora. The findings will also be used to advocate for social change and policies that represent their experiences.

This project is being led by:

Researcher:
Jacqueline Stol, PhD Candidate
School of Social Work, Faculty of Arts
McGill University
Tel: 613-218-0428
E-mail: Jacqueline.stol@mail.mcgill.ca

Supervisor:
Dr. Jill Hanley
School of Social Work, Faculty of Arts
McGill University
Tel: 514-398-7070
E-mail: Jill.hanley@mcgill.ca

In agreeing to participate in this study as a facilitator, you will be involved in <u>one workshop session</u> focused on photography, arts and culture in understanding the experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipinos in the diaspora. The workshop will take place at a community organization located in the city of Montreal. The workshop you are facilitating will take place on _____ for a duration of _____.

Field Notes
During your workshop facilitation, the researcher will be taking notes of the general content of your presentation and the participant discussions. These notes will be used only for the purposes of analyzing how the workshops contributed to community-building and to further understanding the participant experiences of community building in Montreal during the data analysis. The facilitation and the discussions will not be audio-recorded or transcribed. However, your material may be discussed during the recorded discussions with the participants.

Compensation
You will be provided with an honorarium of _____ for the facilitation of this workshop. You will receive the amount in cash after you are completed the facilitation of the workshop. You will not receive the honorarium if you withdraw before it is due. Any payment due before you withdraw will not be withheld.

Confidentiality
You may choose to use a pseudonym in all notes produced from the workshops that refer to your facilitation. If you choose to use a pseudonym, it will be used in all materials that are made public, including any advocacy materials based on the recommendations and in all dissertation writings and publications.

During the workshops, participants will share many personal experiences. You will be expected to maintain

confidentiality about the details of these stories shared by the participants unless they are identified in the results and recommendations shared through the dissertation, the art showcase, and the advocacy materials. These findings and recommendations will be determined during the workshops and the portions in which you are included will be provided back to you during the writing process.

The audio recordings, the transcriptions of the recordings and the photographs will be securely stored on McGill University's protected OneDrive database. Only the researcher will have access to this database, unless there are assistants to help with transcribing or with analyzing the data. In this case, this data will be kept confidential among the research team.

Other limits to confidentiality include duty to disclose about suspected child abuse or neglect, or where there is reason to suspect imminent serious harm to the participant or others. The researcher will be obliged to contact appropriate authorities.

Voluntary Participation
Participation is voluntary and you may decline to take part in any part of the procedure. You may also withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason. You should not experience any disadvantage or reprisal for withdrawing. If you choose to withdraw, your information will be deleted, unless you give permission to use the information or if it has already been made public. You may also choose to change your personal identifying information to use a pseudonym at any time prior to publication. You may retract any portion of the individual information you provided during the study from the dissertation and the results that are reported, prior to publication.

Potential Risks
While there are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this research, you may experience emotional or psychological distress caused by the experiences you and others share during the workshop. You will be provided with a list of social and psychological support resources during the workshop.

The art showcase will be made available to the public, so there is a high chance that if you use your personal identifying information, your privacy with those who attend or who learn about the results of the study will be impacted. While there should not be repercussions to you through sharing the findings and recommendations, you should consider how your involvement may impact your relationships and access to resources.

Potential Benefits

Through facilitating this workshop, you will potentially gain skills in photography, arts and culture, research methods, and advocacy planning. You will be involved in addressing the gap in research and documentation about the experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/xs in the diaspora in Canada. You will also be contributing to advocacy recommendations that may be used as educational tools for community leaders and decision-makers in social services and social policies to help make services, supports and social movements more representative of the lives of LGBTQ+ Filipinos and other migrant communities in the diaspora.

Dissemination of Results
The photographs and advocacy recommendations will be shared publicly at the art showcase event. Other methods may include a video, a PowerPoint presentation, graphics and/or verbal presentations at academic and community events. A video will be produced from the art showcase which will be distributed publicly. The aim is to help spread the results to relevant academic, research, community, political and service provision leaders so they can take action on important social and policy changes. The dissertation will also be used for academic publications.

Questions
If you have questions about the study, you can contact the main researcher, Jacqueline Stol, at 613 -218-0428 or at Jacqueline.stol@mail.mcgill.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the Associate Director, Research Ethics at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca citing REB file number 22-03-084.

> Do you consent to have your name used in reporting?
> *Yes _____ No _____*
> If you prefer to use a pseudonym, identify it here: _____

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to this Confidentiality Agreement. Agreeing to this form does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. To ensure the study is being conducted properly, authorized individuals, such as a member of the Research Ethics Board, may have access to your information. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Facilitator's Name: (please print) _____

Facilitators's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: Workshop and art showcase planning and facilitation guide

WORKSHOP & ART SHOWCASE
PLANNING & FACILITATION GUIDE

PROJECT TITLE:
Queer Kuwentuhan: Filipino/a/x snaps, stories and social change in the diaspora

DRAFT
March 27, 2022
Final Version

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:

The purpose of this document is to provide the researchers and supporting facilitators a detailed step-by-step guide in planning for and facilitating the stages of this Photovoice and Kuwentuhan research project.

STRUCTURE:

This document is structured into the four stages of the research project including the weeks of each stage. Among the stages, there will be sub-sections describing the workshop sessions and other activities of that stage. The objectives, time and resources required are also listed.

Before the workshops and art showcase begin
- Recruit participants
- Have an interpreter and childcare available if possible
- Have initial consent from participants
- Book rooms for all workshops and the art showcase
- Provide a schedule, travel information and other important information to the participants ahead of time
- Check and prepare to implement latest COVID public health guidelines

Stage 1: Introductions and Photography Skills [Weeks 1 to 2]

Workshop 1 - Project Introduction & Writing & Photography Skills

Objectives:
- Participants should have a clear understanding of the project purpose, methods and their rights as participants in the project

- Participants should be provided with the materials and initial skills to take photographs and do journaling for the project
- The group should develop initial ideas around how to capture the main research questions

Time:
- 3 hours for workshop
- 1 hour for set-up and take-down

Resources:
- Room booking scheduled and directions/ transportation support sent to all participants
- Venue for the art showcase should be completed or in progress
- Metro/ bus vouchers and/or travel tickets for rural participants
- Extra copies of consent forms
- Cameras (if online, drop off cameras prior to the workshop))
- Projector, laptop and speaker capabilities for presentations & recording
- Journal templates (hard copy and/or online)
- Markers, pencils, pens, paper and other objects for creating during the presentations
- In-person: snacks and drinks

Facilitator(s):
- Researcher
- Writing & photography facilitator

Workshop plan:

Topic	Facilitator(s)	Main Points & Activities
Project Introduction (20 minutes)	Researcher	Deliver a PowerPoint Presentation - Introduce the facilitators - Ask the participants to introduce themselves and include an icebreaker activity - Explain the purpose of the project & research questions - Describe the methods in detail - Answer any questions from participants
Consent Forms (10 minutes)	Researcher	- Ask participants to take out their consent forms, or provide them with a new copy - Review the consent forms in detail - Answer any questions regarding consent - Ask participants to sign if they agree
Photography skills: Ethics & power (15 minutes)	Researcher and Photography Facilitator	- Hand out cameras unless distributed beforehand - Conduct a skill-building session around photography, which may include understanding basic photography good practices (e.g., reviewing photos, their techniques and interpretations), testing the cameras and understanding their mechanics

		- Discuss issues of power and ethics:
		    o The responsibility and power of a photography in taking pictures of human subjects and surroundings
		    o The importance of consent and returning pictures back to those photographed
		    o Other ethical concerns participants may have in photography process

Journaling & Writing (15 minutes)	Researcher and Writing Facilitator	- Hand out or show online the journals
		- Conduct a skill-building session in journaling, which may include practicing writing based on a prompt, learning some of the basic principles of reflective journaling in response to photographs, and sharing our initial writing to each other
		- Explain and/or discuss with the participants the different ways in which they can explain the story of the photograph in their writing (such as 'free writing' about the image)
		- Explain that they may use the prompts from the group discussion to journal:
		    o Why did you take this photograph?
		    o What do you see here?
		    o What is really happening here?
		    o How does this relate to our lives?
		    o What can we do about it?

BREAK (15 minutes)		
Realities of Filipino Migration facilitated by Migrante or PINAY Quebec or a similar organization (45 minutes)	Researcher and/or community organization	Before the session: - Have a preparatory call with the community organization facilitator about the project purpose, resources, time, facilitation support, and content of the presentation - Ensure there is time during the session for question and answer - Ensure that the facilitator will maintain confidentiality by not associating the experiences shared through personal identifying information without expressed consent of the participant During the session: - Support the community organization in facilitating for the workshop, including with PowerPoint and video capabilities or other materials if needed - Have a group discussion on what they learned from this workshop in relation to their own individual experiences, especially to incite critical discussion on the roots of the issues and/or strategies to build community

Group Discussion (30 minutes) [This session will be recorded]	Researcher	- Notify participants that this session will be recorded Facilitate an open-ended discussion based off the question: - In what ways can we capture our experiences of migration and the LGBTQ+ community? - In what ways can we capture our experiences of being a part of community, building resources, social support and organizing throughout migration? - Explain and/or discuss any of the terms from the questions that require clarity from participants - Explain and/or discuss the importance of their own interpretation of the terms and the questions in photography

Closing & mingling over food (30 minutes)	Researcher	- Summarize the discussions and activities of the session
		- Invite participants to eat food while we have a closing discussion
		- Explain the next steps:
		   o Participants will have two weeks to take photographs and write in their journals about the photographs and then to send the images to the researcher at least two days before the next session so that they can be printed
		   o The participants should select three to five photographs that they will bring to the next workshop with written journal descriptions that they feel are most significant to the research questions
		- Have a check-out question for each participant to answer, for example, answer one or all of the questions:
		   o Head - what are you thinking about what we've discussed today?
		   o Heart - what are you feeling about what we've discussed today?
		   o Feet - what are you going to do with what we've discussed today?
		- Provide time for participants to have informal chats with their food and answer any remaining questions about the process

Photography & Journaling **[until the end of Week 2]**

Objectives:

- Participants will be given two weeks from the end of the workshop session to take photographs, journal about their photographs and e-mail these photographs to the researcher
- The participants should select only three to five photographs to send to the researcher for group discussion in the next session
- The researcher will enlarge and develop the photographs and bring them to the second workshop session

Time: approximately two hours per week (the researcher should call to check-in on the participants after one week)

Resources:
- Cameras
- Journals

Stage 2: Group Discussions [Weeks 3 to 4]

Workshop 2 – Educational Discussion & Kuwentohan [Week 3]

Objectives:
- Participants and the researcher should develop themes, issues or theories across their individual stories that help develop collective stories (open coding procedure)
- Participants will learn about how their individual experiences relate to broader systemic processes through global migration and the political economy

Time:
- 3 hours for the workshop
- 1 hour for set-up and take-down

Resources:
- Room booking scheduled
- Metro/ bus vouchers and/or travel tickets for rural participants
- $50.00 cash honoraria for each participant
- Participants to bring their journals
- Researcher to bring printed and enlarged photographs
- Projector, laptop and speaker capabilities for presentations & recording
- Markers, pencils, pens, paper and other objects for creating during the presentations
- Sticky notes or a chalk board
- Ask the community organization if they require any additional resources to bring
- In-person: Food, drinks and snacks

Facilitator(s):
- Researcher
- Filipino community organization (e.g., Migrante Quebec or PINAY Quebec)

Workshop plan:

Topic	Facilitator(s)	Main Points & Activities
Introductions & Welcome Activity (15 mins)	Researcher	- Have participants re-introduce their names, pronouns and one thing they enjoyed over the past two weeks (or a similar question) - Facilitate an ice-breaker activity for all participants, such as a mindfulness, yoga or music exercise

Individual photograph sharing and journaling (1 hour 30 minutes) [This session will be recorded]	Researcher	- Notify participants that this session will be recorded
		- Invite each participant to select and discuss one or two important photos and share the meaning behind the photographs based on their journal entries and facilitation questions for a maximum of ten minutes each (the facilitator may adapt the questions depending on the content of the sharing):
		    o Why did you take this photograph?
		    o What do you see here?
		    o What is really happening here?
		    o How does this relate to our lives?
		    o What can we do about it?
		- Explain that other participants may begin to draw or write about the themes, issues, strengths or theories that arise from the sharing of the photographs while others are speaking
		- Give participants time to reflect on, through journaling or another medium the common themes, issues or theories that arose from across the collective stories based on the following question
		    o What was similar across people's experiences as they shared their photographs?

BREAK (15 minutes)		
Building our collective experiences (1 hour) [This session will be recorded- Open Coding procedure]	Researcher	- Notify participants that this session will be recorded - Invite a participant to begin discussing about collective experiences based on their journal reflections or reflections on the previous sessions' photographs - As the participants share around common issues, themes and theories, the facilitator may summarize or extend their analyses in order to clarify the main common themes - The facilitator or support facilitator may use sticky notes or a flip chart to write the themes and start to organize them based on their similarities, for example, support from online friends may be grouped together with other comments about online community

		- The themes do not need to be categorized or narrowed down too much, as the next workshop session will focus on finding overarching themes

Closing & mingling (30 minutes)	Researcher	- Summarize the discussions and activities of the session
		- Confirm and distribute $50 honoraria to each participant
		- Explain the next steps:
		    o Participants should bring their journals to the next workshop in one week's time and may elaborate on further reflections during the week around relations across people's stories
		- Have a check-out question for each participant to answer, for example, answer one or all of the questions:
		    o Head - what are you thinking about what we've discussed today?
		    o Heart - what are you feeling about what we've discussed today?
		    o Feet - what are you going to do with what we've discussed today?
		- Provide time for participants to have informal chats with their food and answer any remaining questions about the process

***Workshop 3 – Arts & Culture Skill-building & Kuwentohan* [Week 4]**

Objectives:
- Participants will learn skills on using arts and cultural work as forms of advocacy and organizing
- Participants and the researcher will develop overarching categories based on the multiple themes identified in the previous workshop (selective coding process)
- Participants and the researcher will begin to develop recommendations for social and political change

Time:
- 3 hours for the workshop
- 1 hour for set up and take-down

Resources:
- Room booking scheduled
- Metro/ bus vouchers and/or travel tickets for rural participants
- Participants to bring their journals
- Researcher to bring photographs

- Projector, laptop and speaker capabilities for presentations & recording
- Markers, pencils, pens, paper and other objects for creating during the presentations
- Sticky notes, chalk board or flip chart
- Ask the community organization if they require any additional resources to bring
- In-person: Food, drinks and snacks

Facilitator(s):
- Researcher
- Filipino community group/ organization (e.g., Pulso ng Bayan)

Workshop plan:

Topic	Facilitator(s)	Main Points & Activities
Introductions & Welcome (15 minutes)	Researcher	- Have participants re-introduce their names, pronouns and one thing they reflected on over the past three weeks (or a similar question) - Facilitate an ice-breaker activity for all participants, such as a mindfulness, yoga or music exercise
Arts and cultural work in organizing and advocacy (45 hour)	Researcher and/or Filipino community organization	Before the session: - Have a preparatory call with the community organization facilitator about the project purpose, resources, time, facilitation support, and content of the presentation - Ensure there is time during the session for question and answer - Ensure that the facilitator will maintain confidentiality by not associating the experiences shared through personal identifying information without expressed consent of the participant During the session: - Support the community organization in facilitating for the workshop, including with PowerPoint and video capabilities or other materials if needed - The session will be interactive in engaging with how arts and cultural work, such as media, film, oral and visual methods, can be used in organizing for social and political change historically and currently - Have a group discussion on what they learned from this workshop in relation to our collective story and how we may use our Photography for social and political change
BREAK (15 minutes)		
Building our collective	Researcher	- Notify participants that this session will be recorded

experiences (45 minutes) [This session will be recorded - Selective Coding procedure]		- Using the visual flip chart/ sticky note board from the last session, review the themes, issues and theories that we categorized to represent our collective experiences - Invite participants to begin grouping the multiple themes into broader categories with the help of the facilitator, e.g., informal support networks may be an overarching theme for online LGBTQ groups and connections with friends who have migrated. As the participants group the themes and issues together, the facilitator may summarize or extend their analyses in order to clarify the broader categories
Social & political change (30 minutes) [This session will be recorded]	Researcher	- Develop a collective understanding of social and political change to help frame the discussions around recommendations for action - Ask participants to contribute to a framework for mapping out social and political action which may include social/ community groups, organizations/ institutions and broader laws/ policies in Canada and in the Philippines (link these areas of social and political change to the discussions about Realities of Filipino migration which identify the connections to the political economy) - Begin to brainstorm about how the broader categories we discussed could present an opportunity for a recommendation toward a community group, organization and/or policy

Closing & mingling (30 minutes)	Researcher	- Summarize the discussions and activities of the session
		- Explain the next steps:
		   o The next workshop will be the closing discussions around how these findings may be used toward social and political change and what they have meant to us as a group
		- Have a check-out question for each participant to answer, for example, answer one or all of the questions:
		   o Head - what are you thinking about what we've discussed today?
		   o Heart - what are you feeling about what we've discussed today?
		   o Feet - what are you going to do with what we've discussed today?
		- Provide time for participants to have informal chats with their food and answer any remaining questions about the process

Stage 3: Closing – Advocacy & Art Showcase [Weeks 5 to 10]

Workshop 4 - Closing discussions: Advocacy planning [Week 5]

Objectives:
- Participants and the researcher will develop initial recommendations for social and political change to be presented at the art showcase
- Participants and the researcher will begin planning the art showcase and develop other ideas to mobilize the findings
- If public health restrictions allow, we will celebrate the end of the workshops with the guest facilitators who joined the workshops and gather final reflections

Time: 3 hours

Resources:
- Room booking scheduled
- Metro/ bus vouchers and/or travel tickets for rural participants
- Participants to bring their journals
- $25.00 cash honoraria for participants
- Researcher to bring photographs
- Projector, laptop and speaker capabilities for presentations & recording
- Markers, pencils, pens, paper and other objects for creating during the presentations
- Sticky notes, chalk board or flip chart
- In-person: Food, drinks and snacks

Facilitator(s):
- Researcher

Workshop plan:

Topic	Facilitator(s)	Main Points & Activities
Introduction and Welcome (15 minutes)	Researcher	- Have participants re-introduce their names, pronouns and one thing they reflected on over the past three weeks (or a similar question) - Facilitate an ice-breaker activity for all participants, such as a mindfulness, yoga or music exercise
Social and political change (1 hour) [This session will be recorded]	Researcher	- Notify participants that this session will be recorded - Present and summarize the overarching themes that we developed in the last workshop - Based on the discussion about a framework to map out possibilities for social and political action, use flipchart, a board and/or sticky notes to help categorize the

		recommendations that we identify throughout the discussion
		- Go through each of the broad categories and their sub-themes, and identify possible areas for action in discussion with the participants
		- For example, if a broad category includes the use of informal support networks to understand community resources for LGBTQ+ peoples, a recommendation may be for service providers to distribute more information about migration-related options and legal issues among community groups and networks
BREAK (15 minutes)		
Art showcase & mobilization planning (30 minutes)	Researcher	- Present the concept of the art showcase and develop a collective understanding of mobilizing the findings - Provide a framework and examples to help map out the intended audiences and potential tools that may be developed to reach the intended policy and decision-makers, e.g., PowerPoint presentations, pamphlets, media, community event displays, and/or graphics - Based on the initial recommendations, discuss with the participants how we may best reach the intended audience, e.g., the recommendations may involve inviting social service workers to the art showcase and providing them with pamphlets about the recommendations - Discuss with the participants some art showcase examples, and creative ideas that we may implement to show our photographs, promote the showcase and invite specific community members/ leaders and policy-/ decision-makers - Present an overview of the timeline and potential tasks of the art showcase, including the venue, date and time - Ensure that participants are aware that they will be able to keep the photographs at the end of the art showcase

Closing discussion & celebration (1 hour)	Researcher	- Summarize the discussion and activities of the session
		- Summarize the overall project objectives and findings developed over the past four sessions
		- Distribute the cash honoraria to participants
		- Have a reflection discussion for each participant to answer based on the past four sessions, e.g.:
		   o What is one thing you learned about yourself in this process?
		   o What is one thing you learned about others in this process?

		○ What will you take with you as you move forward from these sessions? - Present the next steps, including the plan for the art showcase, how the findings will be used for the Dissertation and for ongoing mobilization of the findings - Answer any questions related to the process and the next steps moving forward - Participants will be encouraged to have food, listen to music, mingle and discuss informally amongst themselves	

Art showcase planning **[Weeks 6 to 10]**

Objectives*:
- The researcher, along with any paid or voluntary support, will carry out all the logistics of art the showcase, including developing an event plan and program, printing and purchasing all materials for the event
- The researcher will develop a communications plan and promote the event on various online and in-person platforms
- The researcher will ensure communication among all participants who will display their photographs, recruit and orient potential speakers, deliver and confirm guest invitations, and confirm media presence
- The researcher will recruit and coordinate volunteers for the day-of the event, including providing orientation and delegating tasks
- The researcher will develop a video and/or creative presentation for the advocacy recommendations
- * These tasks may be carried out in-between the workshop sessions based on the time of the researcher, especially developing the plan for the art workshop

Time: ~40 hours

Resources:
- Printing services for communication materials (e.g., poster & flyer, program, other promotional material, signage)
- Graphic design program (e.g., Canva)
- Online and in-person promotion (e.g., social media platforms, news articles, poster and flyer distribution on and off-campus)
- Video development software

Facilitator(s):
- Researcher
- Facilitation support

Art showcase **[Week 10 or 11]**

Objectives:
- Participants will display and share their individual and collective stories through photographic displays and possible in-person engagement with attendees
- Participants and the researcher will present and gather feedback on the advocacy recommendations for social and political change
- Attendees will include specific target audiences who may share and help implement the advocacy recommendations, and thus will be provided with multiple options to engage with the research and its findings

Time:
- 4 hours for the event
- 4 hours set-up and take-down

Resources:
- Venue booked (aim to have a the photographs be on display to the public for an ongoing period of time)
- Metro/ bus vouchers and/or travel tickets for rural participants
- Participant recruitment form for interviews
- Consent forms for pictures or videos taken
- Photograph displays & decorations
- Printed programs, signage, posters
- Printed graphics of the advocacy recommendations
- Projector, laptop and speaker capabilities for presentations & recording
- Markers, pencils, pens, paper, flip chart and other objects for attendee engagement
- Photographer and videographer
- In-person: Food, drinks and snacks

Facilitator(s):
- Researcher
- Art showcase volunteers

Art showcase plan:

Topic	Facilitator(s)	Main Points & Activities
Opening (30 minutes)	Volunteers, Participants & Researcher	- Welcome attendees informally at a sign-in table and orient them through the photograph displays, including the program - Have food and drinks available for attendees (following public health protocols) - Have signage available to help guide the attendees
Welcome & introductions (15 minutes)	Researcher & Participants	- Introduce the research project objectives and outcomes, the participants and 'thank yous'

		- Provide a brief orientation to the photograph displays, the room set-up, activities and potential involvement in interviews
Advocacy Recommendations Presentation (15 minutes)	Researcher & Participants	- Present a video or other visual presentation of the advocacy recommendations - Explain the world café model to think about concrete ways to apply to the recommendations amongst the attendees

Attendee Discussions (30 minutes)	Researcher, Volunteers & Participants	- Use the model of world café to have participants tour in groups for ten minutes each at a display of a few advocacy recommendations and discuss:
		   o What are some challenges to applying this recommendation in your community and/or work context?
		   o How do you think this recommendation could be applied in your community and/or workplace?
		- Have a volunteer take notes of the discussions
		- Have a volunteer notify participants when the 10-minute timeframe is complete and to move to the next section/ display of the recommendations

Closing of the discussions and program portion (15 minutes)	Researcher	- Ask the community, social service workers, leaders and policy decision-makers to share some ideas from the discussions on how to implement the recommendations - Close the programmed part of the art showcase and invite participants to continue engaging with the art and to bring the recommendations to their communities/ organizations/ policymakers
Art displays (2 hours 15 minutes)	Researcher, Volunteers & Participants	- Keep the displays up for attendees to engage with the art, ask questions, and connect with other community organizers, leaders, service providers and policymakers

Stage 4: Feedback & Advocacy Recommendations [Weeks 10 to 13]

Objectives:
- The researcher will gather feedback from the participants on their experiences in the research process and from various showcase attendee on the advocacy recommendations and the event itself

Time:
- ~10 hours (depending on the number of participants and attendees who choose to get involved)

Resources:
- Room booked and/or Zoom application
- Metro/ bus vouchers and/or travel tickets for rural participants
- Consent forms
- Computer and/or recorder

Facilitator(s):
- Researcher

Individual interviews

See the Individual Interviews Guides.

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Workshop Participants

PROJECT TITLE

WRITTEN BY

DATE
Drafted February 18th

NOTES FOR INTERVIEWER

This semi-structured individual interview protocol is a guide for conducting the interview process. Semi-structured assumes that the questions may be adapted or added to by the interviewer as the interviewee responds, such as asking clarifying and elaborative questions. Below is a guiding script that can be used to introduce the project and ask the interview questions.

The interviewer should bring:
- Printed copies of this protocol
- A reliable recording device
- Printed consent forms
- Printed resource lists
- Bus/ metro vouchers
- Childcare support if needed
- Interpretation support if needed

INTRODUCTION

- Welcome and thank the participant
- Re-introduce self and my role in the project
- Provide a copy of the consent form to the participant
- Provide the cash honorarium and have the participant sign the receipt
- Review the consent form with the participant, gather their signature and provide them with a resource list
- Assign a pseudonym to the participant if needed

Project Overview
- This project aims to capture the community-building experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x migrants and diaspora from their own perspectives to archive, share and use the findings to further social and political change.

- The project also aims to build on research approaches, especially the Kuwentohan and Photovoice methods, that involve participation of the community itself and social and political action.

Interview objectives
- This interview aims to gather feedback on the participants' experiences in the research process to better understand how the methods impacted the participants and how they may be strengthened and used in the future.

Resource List
- If the participant has not yet received the resource list from earlier in the project, briefly review the list and its purpose.

EXPERIENCE IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Workshop Sessions

1. What was your experience like in the workshop sessions?

2. Did you gain or build on any skills from participating in these workshop sessions?
   a. If so, can you explain how you developed them and how will you use these skills?

3. Has anything changed for you in what you know about LGBTQ+ Filipino migration and community building?
   a. If so, can you explain how you learned new things and how they have impacted you?

4. What about the workshop sessions would you change? What would improve them?

Art Showcase & Advocacy Recommendations
1. What was your experience like in preparing for and being at the art showcase?

2. Did you gain any skills from participating in the art showcase?
   a. If so, can you explain how you developed them and how will you use these skills?

3. What are your hopes for what will be done with the advocacy recommendations?
   a. How do you see them being shared and used?

4. What about the art showcase would you change? What would improve the process?

OVERALL EXPERIENCE

1. Has this experience contributed to your own connections and involvement in the community currently? If so, how?

2. Do you see benefits of this sort of research process to be used or shared in the future?

3. Do you have any other feedback for any part of this research project, even beginning from the recruitment phase to this interview process?

CLOSING

- Thank the participant
- Ensure they have metro/ bus voucher if needed
- Ensure they have the appropriate contact information about the study
- Ask them how they would like to be followed up with about the project findings:
    o Provided a copy of the final paper

Provided invitations to presentations, events and other mobilizations

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Art Showcase Participants

PROJECT TITLE

WRITTEN BY

DATE
Drafted February 18th

NOTES FOR INTERVIEWER

This semi-structured individual interview protocol is a guide for conducting the interview process. Semi-structured assumes that the questions may be adapted or added to by the interviewer as the interviewee responds, such as asking clarifying and elaborative questions. Below is a guiding script that can be used to introduce the project and ask the interview questions.

The interviewer should bring:
- Printed copies of this protocol
- Printed copy of advocacy recommendations
- A reliable recording device
- Honorarium receipt & cash
- Printed consent forms
- Printed resource lists
- Bus/ metro vouchers
- Childcare support if needed
- Interpretation support if needed

INTRODUCTION

- Welcome and thank the participant
- Re-introduce self and my role in the project
- Provide a copy of the consent form to the participant
- Provide the cash honorarium and have the participant sign the receipt
- Review the consent form with the participant, gather their signature and provide them with a resource list
- Assign a pseudonym to the participant if needed

Project Overview
- This project aims to capture the community-building experiences of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x migrants and diaspora from their own perspectives to archive, share and use the findings to further social and political change.

- The project also aims to build on research approaches, especially the Kuwentohan and Photovoice methods, that involve participation of the community itself and social and political action.

Interview objectives
- This interview aims to gather feedback from community leaders and service providers on their participation in the art showcase and the advocacy recommendations so that the recommendations may better be applied and mobilized in social services, social policies and community organizations.

Resource List
- If the participant has not yet received the resource list from earlier in the project, briefly review the list and its purpose.

ART SHOWCASE

1. What was your experience like in the art showcase?
    a. What about the art showcase was useful in sharing the project's findings?
    b. Did the art showcase help you build more meaningful connections with community members, service providers and/or policy decision-makers?

2. Did the art showcase help you learn anything new or build on your knowledge of LGBTQ+ Filipino/a/x migration and community-building?
    a. What did you learn and how did the art showcase help you learn it?

3. What about the art showcase would you change?
    a. What would improve the showcase to better share the project's findings and advocacy recommendations?

ADVOCACY RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide a copy of the recommendations to the participant and some time to review the list.

1. What are your thoughts about these recommendations?
    a. Do you see them as practical recommendations that can lead to concrete changes?
    b. Is there anything you would change about them to make them more practical to be used in your community and/or work context?

2. What are your hopes for what will be done with the advocacy recommendations?
    a. How do you see them being shared and used beyond the art showcase?
    b. Do you see yourself using them in your community and/or work context and how?

CLOSING
- Thank the participant

- Ensure they have metro/ bus voucher if needed
- Ensure they have the appropriate contact information about the study
- Ask them how they would like to be followed up with about the project findings:
    o Provided a copy of the final paper
    o Provided invitations to presentations, events and other mobilization initiatives

Appendix E: Individual participant stories

JB Guzon's poem: Expectation

You ask me how I can love a woman. I am appalled by the question and confused at the notion. Of how a person could criticize the devotion to a man
or a woman, and question my motives of why I have chosen... as though I have a choice, to live this most unforgiving fate. I am stuck between the
boundaries of love and hate, accepted and out casted; honour and disgrace. Some hide their face as strangers and close ones discriminate. I lose my
place as I fight through this hate. My fate awaits in the hand of who? Society's expectations, or my family's reputation? With every beat of my heart,
my soul is pumped through every vein in my body. Soon, it consumes me completely. To change that part of me is to cut my wrist and let my soul
pour out, until I become a nobody because society desires me to be somebody, anybody other than me. I am in a war, a war I did not choose to fight.
Your hypocrisy is exasperating. Your ignorance is obvious to everyone but you I thought love knew no limitations, and it had no set of laws to abide.
It is left for open interpretation and I will live by mine. You tell me it is against the bible and my judgement day shall come. I tell you what is love by
others will be hated by some.

If God was as loving as everyone claims him to be, then why would he create a bubble, the bubble that excluded me. People see the bible the same
way the politicians read the constitution and made it justified when we enslaved the blacks. While the government sat their lives slither away. As
men with eyes of rage and hearts of stone left the victim forsaken. And still had the audacity to claim they were a devoted Christian. The nation has
weakened, minds poisoned, love questioned, voices stolen. Lives broken. The churches are a better justification for your ignorance. I, along with the
most, will stand. Hand in hand, we shall not be moved. And there is absolutely, positively nothing they can do. No law, no preacher. and no violent act
could sway my heart.

I've got all I need in this beautiful life of sin.
So let the judgements, the hate, the names, begin.
(JB Guzon)

Andi Vicente's story from their second photograph 'a photo of my child'

I've learned and continue to learn so much about my own gender identity through C [name changed to an acronym for confidentiality]. C is very lucky to be surrounded by and grow up with queer and trans chosen family. The first few years of their life was living above a Chinese restaurant, karaoke bar owned by gay siblings and a drag Queen chef. So they generally are encouraged to be themselves. The older they get, the harder it gets. Between five and seven is the age range where many children learn the foundations of what it means to and how to present their gender identity based on their sex assigned at birth. This means that this age, these kids absorb, mimic, and mock those who deviate because they're rewarded by society to follow the majority rule . At seven C has already experienced bullying of some kind because of how they present and behave on three occasions, that we know of. C experiences all these things, even though they have a supportive community and family, there is so much more to be done. Um, having a biological child, giving birth, chest feeding and having a white cis het partner has caused my own gender dysmorphia to spiral to fall, deeply, to drown sometimes. The way that you are perceived, the expectations of you, your body is not your own. It's always someone else's. And reaffirmation public displays, posts of queerness are not for others. They are for myself. They are for the part of me that still doubts that I can be queer, that I'm allowed to be. I've come out to many people, strangers in diversity equity training workshops, Facebook acquaintances, some family members by accident. But the process of coming out to myself has been a process, it is still ongoing (Andi).

Koko's story from their two photographs 'beholder' and 'beyond spain and america'
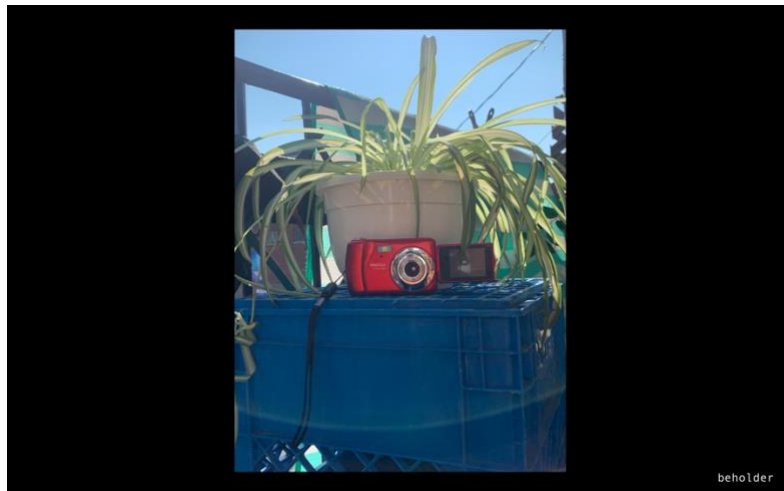
…so for me, when I think about queerness and community, I believe tied to identity and whose lens is it anyway, so I found it interesting. This is the tool that's supposed to capture my experience and I don't know it, it's not mine… first I took this photograph, I liked the composition of the colours.

It was like, blue, red and... I thought it was so, like fun to just look at the lens will keep at, so just asking the question… being perceived is something that I think about, like this feeling of like, I want to be seen, but I also don't wanna be seen by anything… and is it a machine, the algorithm or is it people and what kind of people?

… yeah, like I guess just taking a moment to kind of question the idea of how I want be and who.

That brings me to the second. So this one, the previous one is called um, beholder, and this one is called Beyond Spain and America.

And I kind of wanted to get vulnerable because for me in our community we don't do that enough and like true community. So I getting choked up… I feel like true, true community is about me. And this particular moment happened after reading this book called The Ancient Way Behavior and it's about like indigenous, there was a slide that said Filipinos are starved for an

identity. And for me, I think in our culture we're very, we're proud to be resilient. We're proud to have gone through 330 years of Spanish colonization and then American colonization. And we're proud to have gone through that. But we don't take the time to be sad. We don't take the time to like just acknowledge it. And I think that for me is kind of this idea to allow ourselves to crack so I can come and, to be naked is hard (Koko).

Maria Lorraine's story from their second photograph

Why did I take this picture? Um, because it, it caught my eye. I was walking by a bunch of buildings that were established businesses and this was like, you know, when you have, you see an alley between established businesses, it's usually like garbage and things like that. I looked in and into what I thought was going to be just an alley. And it was, it was a little community. It was the like people live there, hang their clothes there, people play basketball there. And it was, it was different from what I had expected because it was surrounded by businesses.

Uh, how does this relate to our lives? It feels like there are these established businesses and there's what's hidden inside and the people who are at the bottom order, and the people who seem to struggle a little bit more than what you would've expected if you thought about the business itself… so that really caught my eye in the picture and I felt a sense of home when I passed by and I felt like I wanted to walk through there rather than go through the businesses or the arts, because that felt safer, even if there was nobody around (Maria-Lorraine).

Veronica's story from the photograph 'Mahal'

I want to capture what I was feeling in a picture. This is a typical night for me and [M]. She is preparing her lunch for the next day. I just got back in from smoking on the balcony. We are in the moment of our lives where we are both interns and about to enter the "real" world of adulting. We have been very busy lately that the kitchen is the place where we talk/hang a lot while doing some chores.

There are moments when I would just be in the kitchen accompanying her. We just talk. We talk about our day, and the tasks we've done during our internship. Kinds of stuff we've read/seen from our phone. It's catching up. We've been busy with our respective lives throughout this summer. So her preparing her lunch and me smoking out is both our down time from the eventful day we had.

Behind M, you can see in the background a semi-organized clutter in the kitchen hutch handmade by her dad. The microwave behind was given to me by a close friend's mother who is deeply religious. When she found out that I was moving, she offered to give this microwave to me even with the knowledge that I will be living-in with a woman. I guess, it's okay to be a lesbian for her as long as it's not one of her children. That microwave is one of the appliances we had when we moved in. It fit perfectly in the shelf that M's dad gladly brought up in our home. He was happy that his work will be given another life.

On top of the fridge, you can see our attempt to become a green thumb. We're still working on it. We're not good a taking care of the plants. But you can also see how we separated them individually to propagate. We had more luck coz they look so much better.

I think it's representative of my relationships with other people. They're all tailored to who they are. It's kinda like a customization to their needs.

This whole image just invokes openness to who I am. This is taken in our kitchen with my live-in partner. This place is home to many of my Firsts. This place is where I feel me. This place is a place of discovery of my Self. This place, the place where I am my authentic, is a space I shared with M. I wish for everyone to experience this inner understanding of one's Self. I wish for my queer *Kapwa* to have a safe space for guidance in their self-discovery. Lastly, I wish they get to feel the freedom I feel being comfortable in my own skin. Filipino, Queer and proud (Veronica).

d.l.c. nardo's three photograph series story

Gardening for me has always been a reconnection. My grandmother had a garden and so did my mother and I'm sure many ancestors before. My father's side of the family are farmers in Pangasinan. Touching soil is a form of reconnection, a recollection. Yet it is also an inquiry, especially being a settler on this land. How can I be in proper relationship with this land and honour the act of reciprocation? How can I hold space for the truths: that the violence, the genocide, the severing caused by colonization between Indigenous people and the land is the same on-going act that allows me to be here. How can I be in right relationship with the land's stewards that have loved it and cared for it for so long? You see, relating to one thing is relating to everything that touches it. The hold that roots have with the soil is the same hold I return to. The cycle that I partake in when I tend to these plants; planting them, watering, tending, pulling, eating, releasing.

In this system we are born in, living in Indigenous pathways is a queer thing. Honouring Indigenous people and their knowledge and treating the land right is a queer thing. Yet queer to me, when not seen through the sterile gaze of colonialism is a return. Not a doctrine of discovery, but a return. Queer as in you were always part of us before you were de-contextualized from the Earth, othered for your "value" rather than for who or what you are. Queer as in whole. Queer as in inventive. Queer as in encompassing constant transformation, especially with my changing desires. Queer not just an aesthetic but a way of being, a way of breathing. Everything in this world is shapeshifting and everyday I spend with my hands in the soil is a reminder of the beauty of our capacity to transform. Noone ever said transformation would be a clean affair. But it helps to feel held, to feel cared for, the dirt under your nails is full of life (d.l.c.)