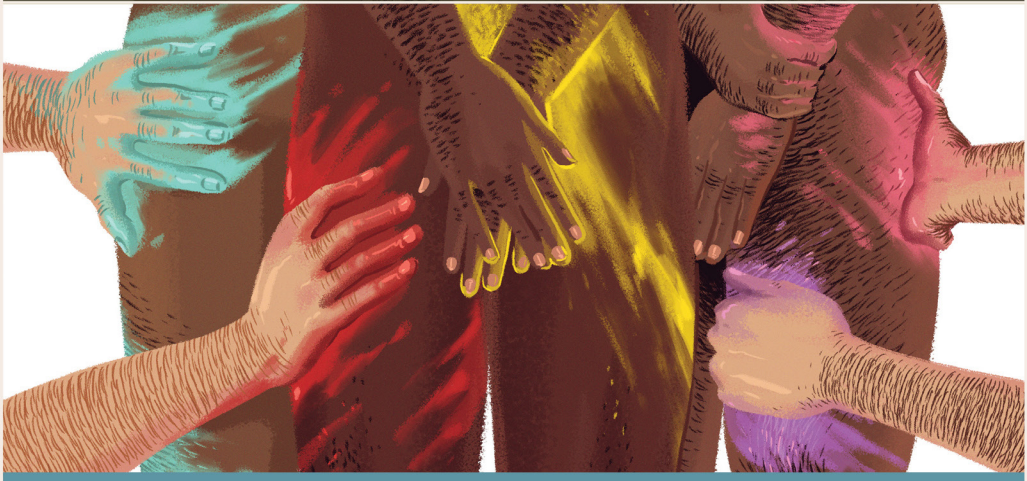
Racism and Gay Men of Color

Living and Coping with Discrimination



SULAIMON GIWA

FOREWORD BY C. WINTER HAN

Racism and Gay Men of Color

Critical Perspectives on Psychology of Sexuality, Gender, and Queer Studies

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Racism and Gay Men of Color

Living and Coping with Discrimination

Sulaimon Giwa
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Foreword

Racism and Gay Men of Color: Living and Coping with Discrimination

In late November of 2014, *Slate* published a tongue-in-cheek article by Mark Joseph Stern entitled "I'm Grateful to Be Gay—Otherwise I Might Have Been a Horrible Person." He shared with readers that he was grateful for *not* being straight, as not being straight meant that he did not have to worry about birth control or to have to pepper his speech with "dude" and "man." Stern then argued that the reason to be grateful for *being* gay, rather than simply *not being* straight, was that being gay led him to experience dehumanization and hate, providing him with an inherent "empathy for the underdog." Being gay, the author continued, "it is basically impossible for [me] to become one of these people,"[1] that is, people who fail to see the various injustices in the world, including racial injustice.

Rather than an isolated observation, Stern's musing alludes to a belief widely held among White gay people, particularly White gay men, that they cannot, because of their personal experience of being on the receiving end of hostility, engage in similar acts toward other marginalized people. Take for example, Dan Savage's claim, after the passage of California Proposition 8 in 2008, that there are only a "handful of racist gay White men out there" compared to the "huge numbers of homophobic African Americans."[2]

Yet what history has taught us is that the experience of social injustice is hardly an antidote to the perpetuation of it. While it is certainly true that victims of oppression can become champions of social justice, it is also possible that those who experience hostility can become even more abusive toward others. And while Stern and Savage might want to believe that gay communities are immune from racism, as this book demonstrates, it is often the case that White gay people engage in egregious acts of racism against gay people of color.

On the problem of racism, the "gay community," rather than being a racial haven, is repeatedly found to be only marginally better—if at all—than the larger society in which it sits. If anything, decades of social science research demonstrates that gay people of color, particularly gay men of color, experience high rates of racism within gay communities, and do so in intimate and personal ways where their very worth as human beings is constantly negated. This book adds to that discussion in meaningful and insightful ways, tracing the experiences of racism among gay men of color in Canada. While gay men of color's experience of racism has received considerable attention in the United States, this book is the first to provide a comprehensive look at such experiences in Canada and offers a challenge to the belief that Canada is allegedly more progressive than the United States in terms of racial acceptance.

In White settler countries, be it the United States, Australia, or Canada, gay people of color are routinely denied entrance to gay establishments, denied leadership roles in gay organizations, rejected as potential sexual partners or fetishized even when they are "desired," and—in the worst of cases—actively barred from gay spaces and neighborhoods. What makes matters worse is that there is evidence to suggest that members of LGBTQ communities are more aware of issues of racism than their heterosexual counterparts.[3] Yet this awareness doesn't seem to translate into action.[4] Instead, when gay men and women of color point out racism in gay communities and attempt to address these issues, they are met with White resistance and denial. Apparently, for these White gay men (and women), racism is a problem, just not within gay communities. While a much larger percentage of gay people are willing to admit that racism is a problem for society, many fewer are willing to admit that the problem is close to home.

As this book demonstrates, such experiences of racism are more nuanced and complex within gay communities than in nongay communities, and perhaps much more intimate as well. Rather than take racism as a given, the author does a wonderful job of teasing out the nature of racism within gay communities and reminds us that we need to think about this issue contextually. Rather than think about racism, Sulaimon Giwa urges us to think about racisms, and the multiple ways that different types of racism impact our everyday lives.

Likewise, the impact of such racism is also nuanced depending on the source. For gay men of color, experiences of racism from White gay men may be even more detrimental to their sense of well-being than experiences of racism from within the larger society. Racism that gay people of color experience within gay communities is much more intimate, personal, and immediate. And for some, it is unexpected. Precisely in the way that some White gay men come to believe that being gay immunizes them from being

racist, some gay men of color believe—or at least hope—that such experiences would make White gay men less likely to engage in overt racist acts than their heterosexual counterparts. Like White men, they enter gay spaces with the expectation and hope of an embrace. When those expectations and hopes are swatted, it hurts. It hurts specifically because they too have bought into the mythology that such spaces were spaces where they can bring their true selves, their whole selves, and be valued for themselves.

Not surprisingly, many scholars have attempted to examine the impact that such experiences of racism can have on gay men of color. In this vein, much of the previous work on these experiences was on the various ways that they impact gay men of color's health and health behaviors, particularly in relation to HIV risk behaviors. Given the devastation that HIV/AIDS can wreak, this focus is completely understandable and much needed. It has offered valuable insights about ways to combat rising rates of HIV risk behaviors and infections, particularly during a time when so little has been known about why HIV rates were increasing among men of color beyond stereotypical conjectures. Yet, at the same time, such a focus has had the unintended consequence of creating a narrative of desperation and deficit, whereby gay men of color's sexual behaviors come to be seen as pathologies, even when those behaviors are no different from White men's behaviors. Clearly, what is needed is a way to move beyond this deficit model in order to offer a much more complete picture regarding the experiences of gay men of color.

Despite consistent and routine experiences of racism, gay men of color are not victims. Rather, they challenge and confront gay racism in a multitude of ways. As Sulaimon Giwa demonstrates in this book, gay men of color use a variety of tactics and draw on a variety of resources in order to build rich, complex, and rewarding lives despite the high levels of racism they experience. Examining the many ways in which gay men of color in Canada challenge and confront the racism that they experience, the methods they employ, what works and doesn't work for them, as well as how they come to choose between such methods, Sulaimon Giwa offers much needed insights regarding how members of these groups can be supported and what service workers, families, and friends can do to address racism in gay communities.

There is much that readers with various interests will gain from this book. For those interested in learning more about the rich and complex lives that gay men of color live, Sulaimon Giwa offers a lively discussion that delves deeply into their everyday experiences, both in and outside of gay communities. This is an exceptional book that spans a wide breadth and depth of previous and contemporary literature about queer people of color and the impact that race, racism, and heterosexism have on their lives. Doing so, the author manages to unearth important themes in the lives of gay men of color in Canada and provides an excellent discussion of these findings. For those

interested in policy, advocacy, or practice, the book offers solid suggestions on how to collectively challenge and confront racism in gay communities. This book will surely add to the growing literature on race and sexuality and provide much needed insight regarding these topics that go beyond just the experiences of gay men of color to help everyone think through the ways that various marginalized groups overcome challenges and build meaningful lives.

—C. Winter Han

NOTES

1. Mark Joseph Stern. "I'm grateful to be gay—Otherwise I might have been a horrible person," *Slate*, November 26, 2014, https://slate.com/human-interest/2014/11/im-grateful-to-be-gay-because-otherwise-i-might-have-been-a-horrible-person.html.
2. Dan Savage, "Black Homophobia SLOG," *Stranger*, November 5, 2008, slog.thestranger.com/2008/11/black_homophobia.
3. Andrew Flores. "Yes, there's racism in the LGBTQ community. But there's more outside of it." *The Washington Post*, July 7, 2017. www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/07/07/yes-there-is-racism-in-the-lgbtq-community-but-not-as-much-as-outside-it/.
4. Preston Mitchum. "A new survey claiming that LGBT people are less racist misses the reality of racism in the queer community." *Slate*, July 25, 2017. slate.com/human-interest/2017/07/are-white-lgbt-people-really-less-racist-than-their-cisgender-straight-counterparts.html.

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The stories of the participants in this book are mine and those of countless other gay men of color who, each day, find the strength to survive the experience of racism. They showed courage and bravery in their willingness to speak so publicly about their own experiences of racism and their coping responses to it. This book would not have been possible without their selfless contribution. I owe a great debt of gratitude to you all for your patience, optimism, and inspirational attitude. Thank you all for your trust in me. I hope that the words written in these pages accurately and richly describe the stories you individually and collectively shared with me.

Thanks must go to the series editors (AJ Jones, Damien Riggs, and Rebecca Stringer) for their vision and support of this critical scholarship. They have created a much needed intellectual space for scholars like me to have a voice on important issues that touch our personal lives and the lives of men from communities to which we belong. My deepest gratitude and appreciation to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback and to Kasey Beduhn at Lexington Books, Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, for her unrelenting encouragement and belief in the potential that the book represented. This book exists because of you! I also want to send a special and well-deserved shout-out to Mary Anne Carswell for her superb editorial services; your attention to detail helped to improve the clarity of my ideas and writing. In the process, I found my voice. Thanks, as well, to Robert and Cynthia Swanson and Eric and Doreen Anderson for their excellent work on the index.

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the sacrifices you made for me to reach the mountain top of my academic career, I am forever indebted to you. The past 17 years together have been nothing short of incredible; the journey has been filled with many ups and downs. Through it all, we have remained strong and steadfast in our conviction that everything will work out. I look forward to many more years of love, happiness, and life-long memories.

Introduction

RACISM AND GAY MEN OF COLOR

What is the nature of gay men of color's experience of racism in Canada, and how do these men cope with it? This book seeks to answer this question by highlighting the embeddedness of racism in gay men's communities and by challenging the disease narrative about gay men of color. Drawing on critical race theory (CRT), racism is defined here as the expression of race prejudice and social and institutional power, which result in a system of power and privilege for White people and discrimination and oppression for people racialized as non-White (i.e., people of color; Feagin & McKinney, 2003). In short, the book questions the lack of a concerted effort to address racism head on.

While studies on HIV/AIDS with gay and bisexual men of color in the United States suggest a high prevalence and incidence rate (Centers for Disease Control, 2019), it is not clear how the observed ethnoracial inequities in that country may apply in Canada. Race/ethnicity information for HIV, at a national level, has varied or not been collected systematically (Haddad et al., 2019). The lack of a coordinated and sustained reporting on race/ethnicity information for HIV cases in Canada means that our understanding of the problem is limited or partial. Although insights from American and available Canadian studies are important, due to the potential endemic nature of the disease among this population, the enormous attention paid to HIV/AIDS has been to the detriment of other critical considerations such as the social oppression of racism (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012). The HIV/AIDS deficit focus has obscured an understanding of how gay men of color respond to racism, rendering them unknowable. Focusing on racism rather than on this deficit model allows the modes of resistance and resilient strategies used by

gay men of color in the face of racial adversity to be discerned, and the men to be known.

As an exploratory investigation into how gay men of color cope with racism, this book adds another dimension to an understanding of the men's marginalization in gay communities. It looks at individual and group assets and strengths in an attempt to push past the deficit focus of other research. This approach is critical for identifying unique capabilities and interventions for vulnerable individuals, who may require support in dealing with their experience of racism.

Because gay men of color must deal with multiple forms of oppression, knowing how they respond is important for building knowledge that can inform practice and research. Gay men of color belonging to ethnoracial groups experience minority stress (Meyer, 1995, 2003a) due to their doubly stigmatized identities: they face heterosexism within their cultural communities, and racism in predominantly White gay men's communities (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012). They contend, daily, with negative societal views and attitudes about their sexual orientation and racial identity. This book begins to fill a gap in Canadian literature by focusing on the ways that Canadian gay men of color resist oppression every day, as evidenced in their strategies for coping with racism in gay men's communities. The study on which this book is based revealed various coping strategies gay men of color used to mitigate the impact of racism, showing how the men's resolve to withstand and overcome experiences of racial adversity is unshaken.

In general, the majority of research about gay men has focused more on the American experience, and on the accounts of White, middle-class, gay men than on their racial/ethnic minority counterparts (Greene, 1994; Harper, Jernewall, & Zea, 2004; Icard, Longres, & Williams, 1996). Similarly, by far the major proportion of current Canadian research on gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans (GLBT) people[1] focuses on the experiences of White men and women and in cases where the experiences of people of color are considered, they are often examined from a deficit perspective.

Previous Canadian research has established that racism exists within predominantly White GLBT communities (Crichlow, 2004). Yet little if any empirical research has explored how GLBT people of color in general, and gay men of color in particular, respond to this difficult life challenge and experience. Identifying their strengths in coping and navigating hostile cultural spaces that are indifferent to their experience constitutes a shift away from extant deficit scholarship, and can be informative as to the group's resilience in the face of adversity. This book hopes to contribute to the conversation on how gay men of color negotiate and survive everyday experiences of racism.

An uneasy alliance—between mostly White academics and neoliberal funding regimes—has, arguably, served to undermine an analysis of the

needs of Canadian gay men of color. The resulting funding schemes maintain a degenerative discourse about the vulnerable population at the center of this research. Pedagogical and epistemological interventions into the configurations of race and sexuality discourse in Canada are needed as a counternarrative to such prevailing dominant, stock stories of infirmity—reliance on the HIV/AIDS discourse, for example—that may shape and constrain understanding about the fullness of life experience among diasporic and nondiasporic gay men of color.

A recent shift in scholarly attention within the social sciences has also focused on the strengths and resilience of GLBT people to societal oppression of homo/bi/trans-phobia (Bariola, Lyons, & Lucke, 2017; Kwon, 2013; Meyer, 2003b; Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2014). This strengths-based focus has been instrumental in informing policy, research, and practice. Nevertheless, when gay men of color are included in mainstream GLBT research, rather than emphasizing the strengths and resilience of this group, a deficit-based model focuses on their perceived risks and weaknesses, such as their failure to achieve positive integration of their racial/ethnic and sexual orientation identities, or their increased susceptibility to HIV/AIDS. Gay men of color are depicted as "having substantial and continuous difficulties" (Akerlund & Cheung, 2000, p. 1). The dominance of HIV/AIDS as the main entry point into debates about diversity-based inequities has obscured the complexity of oppression that gay men of color experience.

Within the deficit literature, the tendency has been to portray gay men of color as victims. Their depiction as perpetually struggling to integrate their multiple social identities—their race, sexual orientation, and religion, among other categories of oppression—gives the impression that they do not have positive resources and support in their lives. This deficit view, in effect, obscures understanding of how gay men of color cope with and thereby resist experiences of hardship, such as racism. However, in this book, these portrayals are revealed as a narrow interpretation and reading of the complex lives of gay men of color, eschewing the men's strength and fortitude in surviving everyday racism and failing to consider variability in assets for dealing with the realities of racism-related stress.

There is clearly a need for more empirically based research on the varied experiences embodied by gay men of color, research that goes beyond the current disease/deficit focus pervasive in academic literature. A consequence of this practice is a denial of the saliency of race and how racialization operates as a fundamental organizing principle in mainstream White gay men's communities. This gap in knowledge and the call for more comprehensive research about the lived experience of gay men of color propel my investigation of how these men negotiate experiences of racism through exploring their coping responses to race-based discrimination. Scholarship is needed that

centralizes race, racism, and racialization in research and theory for and about this group in order to better understand resilience among gay men of color. That is what this book intends to do. Emerging from my doctoral research, it is the first book to investigate—in considerable detail—the systemic effects of racism and the survivorship experience among gay men of color.

REFLEXIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY IN THE RESEARCH

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

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

Once seated, we were presented with the menus and dinner specials by our waiter. Almost immediately, I began to notice the uncouth manner in

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

At one point, both my partner and I observed that we received far less attention than the other patrons. I felt this was due to my presence in the space, as my partner had received favorable treatment from the outset. We were not the only interracial couple in the room; some White/East Asian couples were also present. But we were by far the most visible. My skin's dark complexion brought into sharp focus the visibility of our partnership amid the mostly White-skinned crowd. In addition to the uninviting demeanor of both the host and waiter toward me, their rude behavior made for a negative dining experience for my partner.

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

I tell this story to provide some insight into the background and sociocultural baggage I bring with me to the writing of this book. The experience of overt and covert discrimination acts as a daily reminder of my otherness, my difference from the dominant White gay culture. Powerful and visceral as they are, I had to take care, however, to not let my feelings overshadow the experience and narratives of participants discussed in the book. Researchers working within the phenomenological convention are encouraged to "bracket" or suspend their own subjectivities—their past experiences, assumptions, views—so that they can give primacy to the voices and experiences of their research participants (see Ashworth, 1996; Giorgi, 1994). Although I agree that it is important for researchers to be aware that

their past or current knowledge, experience, and assumptions can impact on the research process and findings, I follow J. A. Smith (2004) who, writing from within the hermeneutic tradition of phenomenology, rejects the notion of bracketing in favor of a more holistic approach that neither devalues nor makes irrelevant the experience and understanding of the researcher. Like J. A. Smith and others writing from within this tradition, moreover, I question the desirability and indeed the appropriateness of bracketing, since disembodied bracketing undermines an intersubjective construction of the life-worlds. Finlay (2009), for example, argued that "[an] explici[t] relational approach to phenomenological research is . . . seen to emerge out of the researcher-coresearcher relationship, and is understood to be co-created in the embodied dialogical encounter" (p. 13). In line with this thinking, my belief is that researchers need to be critically self-aware of their own subjectivity and to use this consciousness in re-examining taken-for-granted assumptions about their perspectives, methods, and procedures when seeking to explore participants' lived experience.

WHO ARE THE GAY MEN OF COLOR?

In this book, gay men of color are men who are not Caucasian in race or White in color and who do not identify as Indigenous (which includes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people). Groups represented by gay men of color may include Black, South Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Latin American, Southeast Asian, Arab/Middle Eastern, West Asian, Korean, and Japanese. In Canada, the term visible minority (Statistics Canada, 2017) is widely used to refer to individuals belonging to these racial and ethnic groups, but the term has come under criticism for being outdated, for several reasons. Due to immigration patterns in some Canadian cities, such as Toronto and Vancouver, visible minorities are the majority, and sometimes visible minorities may not be visually discernible from the majority White group. The term has also been censured for generalizing: that is, the effects of advantages and disadvantages do not accrue equally for visible minorities; some groups are economically advantaged while others are not. Also, the term does not seem to meet the needs of different racial and ethnic groups; there is a tendency to group all visible minorities together as if they were all the same. The lack of specificity about the groups concerned may undermine the importance of targeted actions for addressing group-specific needs. The Ontario Human Rights Commission (2005), for example, has suggested the term "racialized people" as a replacement.

These concerns notwithstanding, words and terminologies are inseparable from the people using them and the social contexts in which they are used,

such that no amount of tinkering will achieve the results of reengineering people's attitudes (Pinker, 2016). What is important is to change people's negative mindset toward racial and ethnic groups. Otherwise, an accepted term today may not be accepted tomorrow, if the same negative attitudes continue unabated. As a gay man whose family immigrated to Canada from Nigeria, I use the term "gay men of color" neither to be pejorative nor to avoid discussion about the complexities of race and racism, which are at the heart of this book, but to signal my interest in the experiences of gay men who are not White by race or ethnicity. Similarly, this book does not consider the experiences of Indigenous gay and Two Spirit men.

Gay men of color living in Canada are not a homogenous group. Some were born and raised here. And, like me, some immigrated with their parents who wanted a better life for their children. Still others were forced to flee their country of origin, seeking refuge in countries such as Canada. Although Statistics Canada does not collect data from newcomers about sexual orientation that would allow an enumeration of their numbers, some data exist about gay men who applied for and obtained asylum. Between 2013 and 2015, gay men comprised the largest number of applicants for asylum, with a success rate of 72 percent (Rehaag, 2017). The top three countries from which applicants originated were Nigeria, Cameroon, and Jamaica. Applicants from Nigeria were granted asylum at a success rate of 63 percent, Cameroon at a success rate of 74 percent, and Jamaica at a success rate of 65 percent (Rehaag, 2017).

Although none of the gay men of color in the study for this book came to Canada as asylum seekers or refugees, four (31 percent) were born in Canada and nine (69 percent) were not. Of the foreign-born, three had lived in Canada for a period between 1 and 3 years, and six for 10 or more years. The majority of them—10 or 77 percent—identified their sexual orientation as gay or homosexual, while other participants reported as queer, same-gender-loving, and other (one each). Participants were Christian (5; or 38 percent), Buddhist (2; or 15 percent), or other (6; or 46 percent). Also, all of them identified with their (or their parents') racial and ethnic background. There were four Black men, four East Asian men, three South Asian men, and two Arab/Middle Eastern men. They ranged in age from 21 to 46 years; the Black group had an average age of 32; the East Asian group had an average age of 29.5; the South Asian group had an average age of 34.3; and the Arab/Middle Eastern group had an average age of 31.

Not surprisingly, these men were highly educated: eight reported themselves as college or university graduates (62 percent), four said they had completed postgraduate degrees (31 percent), and one reported having a high school diploma or GED (8 percent). This level of education corresponds with a 2011 Statistics Canada study, which reported that second-generation

visible-minority men were the second most educated people in Canada, behind visible-minority women (Chui & Maheux, 2011). The study found that among visible-minority men and women of prime working age, 41 percent and 50 percent, respectively, had a university degree. By contrast, 21 percent and 27 percent of White men and women, respectively, held this credential (Chui & Maheux, 2011). The main predictor of success for visible minorities was that one of their parents was an immigrant with high expectation for their children's educational attainment (Chui & Maheux, 2011).

The labor force participation rate for gay men of color in the current study was relatively high: nine (or 69 percent) were employed full time; two (or 15 percent) were employed part time; and two (or 15 percent) were self-employed. One participant described his employment status as "student." Correspondingly, reported personal and household income was highest for five (or 38 percent) of the participants, who indicated earning $60,000 or more per year. Two participants (15 percent) said that they earned incomes of $50,000 to $59,000. An additional two participants reported incomes of $20,000 to $29,000. Each of the four remaining participants confirmed their earnings to be in the low to medium income brackets—less than $10,000 or in the combined ranges of $10,000 to $29,000 and $30,000 to $49,000.

By far, the majority (11 or 85 percent) of gay men of color reported that their race and ethnicity were the primary sources of discrimination or harassment they experienced in the gay men's community of Ottawa, followed by verbal harassment (three; or 23 percent), discrimination based on age (four; or 31 percent), disability (two; or 15 percent), and language proficiency or immigration status (two; or 15 percent). They also said that they were more likely to rent (six; or 46 percent) or to own their own homes (four; or 31 percent). Further, many self-disclosed their relationship status as single (seven; or 54 percent) relative to those in a committed monogamous relationship (four; or 31 percent), domestic partnership (one; or 8 percent), or other (one; or 8 percent). An almost identical number of men answered Yes and No to recreational drug use: six (or 46 percent) said they had used drugs and seven (or 54 percent) said they had not. Finally, although 11 (or 85 percent) of the men self-reported a negative HIV serostatus on their last test result, two (or 15 percent) reported as HIV positive. Most HIV tests were reported taken in the past six-month (seven; or 54 percent), between 7 and 11 months (four; or 31 percent) or between one and two years (two; or 15 percent).

RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY

To explore the nuanced themes of racism within the gay men's community of Ottawa, a cross-sectional, qualitative study was designed, and participants

recruited. Respondent selection was based on purposive homogenous sampling of participants with insight into the particular experience being researched (Creswell, 2003). Thirteen self-identified gay men of color participated in audiorecorded focus groups and individual interviews, which were then transcribed verbatim. Unless otherwise instructed, participants' names and other identifying information have been removed and pseudonyms have been used throughout the book. The former interviews were held at Opinion Search, a wheelchair-accessible venue centrally located in downtown Ottawa. The latter interviews occurred at several places around town: the Ottawa Public Library, Pink Triangle Services, and Centretown Community Health Centre. The participants all consented to take part in the study, which required and received ethics clearance. An honorarium of $30 was paid to each participant to cover any costs associated with their participation in the study. Overall, the men shared their experiences of racism, its influence on their identity development and level of ethnoracial and gay community connectedness, and context-specific strategies employed to cope with racism within the gay men's community of Ottawa.

Recognizing that the field of race studies is diverse and complex, spanning a huge number of disciplines, methodologies, contexts, and populations, the research topic that formed the basis for this book emphasized the generation of socially constructed knowledge and an interpretive approach to social reality known as relativism. The ontological position of relativism holds that reality is the result of individual interpretation and social construction (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005); it does not exist in an objective, verifiable form. By extension, this book takes a broadly inductive and coconstructed approach to knowledge production, with particular attention paid to the subjugated knowledges of gay men of color, which are believed to be valid and legitimate in their own right. Given these ontological and epistemological positions, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), an approach with roots in health psychology, was used to explore participants' coping strategies and explicate the qualitative relationship between race-based discrimination and well-being.[2] IPA aligns with the emancipatory aims of the book's theoretical approaches and overarching theme of social justice, by centralizing the voices of gay men of color as a necessary site of knowledge production. The IPA method of analysis combines the data-driven inductive approach with the deductive a priori themes of problem- and emotion-focused coping from the stress and coping literature (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which emerged as relevant during the process of engaging with the data. As such, the IPA-based research analysis will help readers understand the everyday experience of racism faced by gay men of color.

Also informing the book are minority stress theory, stress and coping theory, and queer critical theory. Minority stress theory describes stressors

experienced by stigmatized and minoritized groups, which are unique, chronic, and socially based (Meyer, 2003a). These stressors are the result of stigma, discrimination, and prejudice, all of which contribute to mental health problems. Stress and coping theory posit a person-environment interaction, a transaction between the stressor and one's cognitive construal of it based on primary and secondary appraisals (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In a primary appraisal, people assess the stressfulness of an event. In a secondary appraisal, they learn what can be done about that stressful event if it surpasses the social and cultural resources they have to cope with it (Krohne, 2002). In this view, effective coping is dependent on the congruence or goodness of fit between the perceived stressor and an individual's coping strategy, as mediated by personal appraisal of the stressful event. Problem- and emotion-focused coping are the most commonly identified behavioral and cognitive strategies for managing stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Queer critical theory—*queer crit*—with its concern for a nuanced examination of race and sexual orientation and other forms of oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013) is a distinct subfield of CRT scholarship. Queer crit extends CRT's analysis of race and ethnicity to include nonheteronormative discourse. A microtheoretical perspective, queer crit emphasizes that identities are multiply inflected, and must therefore be theorized in noncompartmentalized fashion—for example, race/racism cannot be examined in isolation from sexual orientation and vice versa (Misawa, 2012). This last point connects to the idea of intersectionality, a term coined by the race and feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to describe the multiplicative effects of intersecting oppressed and privilege identities, such as race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, among other different experiences.

Considering that the question and aim of this research and book was to gain an understanding about the experiences of and coping responses to racism among gay men of color, a qualitative method of inquiry was judged most appropriate. The efficacy of qualitative methodologies as the means for researching the multilayered and complex experiences of GLBT people of color has been well documented. American and Canadian research that has looked at the experience of stigma and discrimination related to race and sexual orientation, for example, point to the value of qualitative research with this population, particularly among men of color who have sex with men (MSM).

Despite this recognition, however, according to a study from the United States, while much knowledge has been gained over the years about the experience of MSM of color with racism and homophobia, "less is known about how members of these groups mitigate the impact that racism and homophobia can have on their lives" (K.-H. Choi, Han, Paul, & Ayala, 2011, p. 153).

The continuing omission of the narratives of gay men of color is not innocuous; it fits the broader White romanticism of racism as an ahistorical phenomenon. This book's focus on the narratives of gay men of color provides a counterstory to the dominant, stock stories propagated about race and racism in gay men's communities. Confronting the normality of these stock stories decenters Whiteness, revealing an underlying racist ideology and amounting to an act of resistance to a hegemonic system of White supremacy (C.-S. Han, 2008b; Lipsitz, 2011; Wise, 2010). Whiteness can be understood as a "set of assumptions, beliefs, and practices that place the interests and perspectives of White people at the center of what is considered normal and everyday" (Gillborn, 2015, p. 278). The term connects with White supremacy, which in CRT parlance denotes the subtle and penetrating force of power exerted in everyday actions and practices that shape opportunities and chances for White people (Ansley, 1997).

Enabling the expression of subjugated knowledge or truths often denied to gay men of color about their experience of racial discrimination shows how racism continues to be a problem in contemporary life and gay culture (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Misawa, 2012). The centrality of experiential knowledge contained in narratives such as those in the study on which this book is based provides a foundation from which dominant, stock stories can be contested. It offers an irrefutable account of the lived experience of gay men of color, a reality that racially conscious and unconscious White gay men may choose to ignore or be slow to understand.

This study brought together multiple voices of gay men of color for the realization of a collective voice that could be used to challenge racism and discrimination. Ultimately, at the core of the study's focus on racism is a belief in social justice and emancipatory ideals, focused on replacing inequitable patterns of power and privilege with more just and equitable social relations, in which racism does not dictate the conditions of social life, and gay men of color are no longer marginalized.

The book will be useful for researchers, academics, activists, students, health and social service providers, and anyone interested in GLBT issues, especially as they pertain to the intersection of race and sexuality. Educators, researchers, and academics in the fields of gender and sexuality studies, health and community psychology, race and ethnic relations, sociology, social work, postcolonial studies, critical race and Whiteness studies, and cultural studies would find the book appropriate for instruction in their courses. The book will also be helpful in the practice of the helping professions and provide a strengths-based resilience framework from which allied health and social care professionals can work to address issues relevant to this population.

CHAPTERS OUTLINE

A general perspective on racism as experienced by gay men of color sets the foundational context of the book. In chapter 1, the impact of racism on gay men's identity and health is discussed. Drawing mainly from critical theory and health psychology, the book's conceptual and theoretical influences provide a nuanced way of exploring the lived experiences of gay men of color through centralizing a race-based point of view. An integrated model is presented, linking racism, health outcomes, and coping actions for gay men of color. This approach makes visible the ways in which the minority stress of racism literally gets under the skin to undermine one's health.

Two succeeding chapters cover many aspects of racism in gay men's communities and how it is produced in current Canadian culture. Sexual objectification and sexual racism, particularly as these affect gay men of color, are emphasized. Nitty-gritty details are presented of how and where racism is experienced in the gay community of Ottawa, from dating practices to racism in platonic relationships, at work or in social contexts. The narratives of gay men of color are heard and acknowledged as sources of knowledge.

Here are the crucial sites where gay men of color reported experiencing racism, revealing how racism and White supremacy function in gay men's communities and online, reproducing a homogenized White space in which gay men of color are positioned as outsiders looking in, or as vessels for the fulfillment of White men's sexual fantasies. The chapter argues that racism is embedded in the social fabric of gay men's communities and is found to manifest at individual, cultural, institutional, and systemic levels.

The unappealing underbelly of racism is illustrated in full force in chapter 4, where White fear and denial come to the fore along with in-group racial resentment and the racialized politics of desirability. Here, the book's commitment of centralizing the knowledge and voices of gay men of color is attended to, as a counternarrative to the dominant stock stories of White gay men, in order to inform understanding about the materiality of racism. Gay men of color provide insight into their understanding of the contributing factors to racism in gay men's communities, thereby revealing the deeply rooted internalized cultural superiority, White fragility, and denial of racism that structure their daily lives.

Curious about what works for gay men of color? Coping strategies are the focus for chapters 5 and 6. In accounts of strength, resilience, and hope, the participants reveal their emotion-focused engagement and disengagement coping strategies, and problem-focused engagement and disengagement coping strategies. The participants' various strategies are examined revealing which work best for them, which do not, and how they choose between them. Communication, expression of emotions (especially anger), and spiritual

practice are examples. Participants pointed out that support, whether formal or informal, was something they all needed to deal with the effects of racism.

Chapter 7 acts as a meeting point, where the significance of the findings is discussed and new insights into the coping strategies used by gay men of color to deal with racism are considered. The chapter also focuses on issues, action plans, and implications for practice in the allied health and social care professions. The book ends with a call to action: a more intentional and sustained focus on the issue of racism in gay men's communities is needed.

A VISION FORWARD

My hope is that the narratives of these gay men of color will touch you, the reader, and perhaps open your eyes to what has been in front of you all along. Racism exists in the interstices of reality, but that does not make it less real. Some readers know this already; others do not; and perhaps all need to have this stated here, out loud and out in the open. With this book in hand, readers will have the means to parse racism when they see it; to see it for what it is, and not back away from it. The knowledge imparted by this research is not dangerous, except to the extent that any new way of looking can be threatening. It is my hope that knowing more fully the insidious reach of racism, and having it spelled out in the narratives of the gay men of color in this book, will help us all move forward in the best way.

NOTES

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

In using the term *GLBT*, I want to be clear that a GLB identity refers to a person's sexual orientation, defined in terms of who a person is emotionally and sexually attracted to. The "T" (transgender) speaks to gender identity, not sexual orientation; it refers to gender identities not consonant with the sex assigned to a person

at birth. A transgender person may identify with any sexual orientation, including heterosexuality. However, because a transidentified person's gender-nonconforming behavior and expression blur the line between dominant gender norms of masculinity and femininity, their inclusion in GLBT is often meant to be inclusive of their place within the broader sexual minority community. Although I refer to transgender people in my choice of initialism, my intention is not to mislead or inaccurately suggest that the book is inclusive of the experiences of this population, since none of the research participants identified.

2. This is one of the first published studies in Canadian literature to apply the theoretical and methodological approach of IPA to exploring the impact of racism on the lives of gay men of color, with the exception of Giwa and Greensmith's (2012) study, which focused on the perceptions of race relations and racism among gay and queer social service providers of color in Toronto, Canada.

Chapter 1

Contextual and Conceptual Foundations of Racism in Gay Men's Communities

The Racism-Health-Coping Connection

As an ultimate expression of power based on racial advantage or privilege, racism shapes the collective understanding of people and assigns maligned members to the periphery of the White-dominant group imaginary. This ideological and cultural expression of difference and inferiority is sustained by agencies of socialization, through which stereotypical beliefs, attitudes, and values about people of color (and others with stigmatized identities) become further entrenched. In practice, racist attitudes may be manifested directly or indirectly to undermine the self-worth and dignity of targeted groups.[1]

Despite the growing body of empirical and theoretical literature on racism in gay men's communities in Canada, key questions remain unanswered about how gay men of color survive—and, indeed, thrive—in the face of the racial adversity they live with every day. In this chapter, I begin to map out the logic of racialized norms that render gay men of color a footnote to the operation of power within gay men's communities. I consider how racism affects the lives of gay men of color and present an integrated conceptual model for theorizing about racism in an intentional way. This is a necessary intervention to the deficit-based perspective of much of the extant literature about the lives of gay men of color. And, as will be shown in later chapters, the resistance and resilient response strategies they use enable an accurate and balanced account of the impact of racism on their lives to be reconfigured—an account in which gay men of color are not victims but active agents in resisting their oppression.

WHAT'S RACISM GOT TO DO WITH HEALTH AND WELL-BEING?

In Canada as elsewhere, racism permeates social life; it is not aberrant—in contemporary society, it is ingrained (Aylward, 1999). Racial discrimination is rooted in structural inequalities, and power and social rewards are unevenly distributed on the basis of socially constructed racial classification.[2] In this way, racism serves to "create and reinforce oppressive systems of race relations whereby people and institutions engaging in discrimination adversely restrict, by judgment and action, the lives of those against whom they discriminate" (Krieger, 2003, p. 195).

Racism has three main categories: individual, institutional, and cultural (J. M. Jones, 1997). In individual racism, a single person of color is subjected to different treatment. Institutional racism targets members of vulnerable social groups (e.g., racial or ethnic minorities) for the purpose of denying them parity of participation in society's political, economic, and cultural life. Cultural racism concerns the pedestalization of the dominant White group's cultural heritage and practices as superior to those of subordinated racial others. (See chapter 2 for more on this theme.) Regardless of the categories at play, all can have general adverse effects on health and well-being.

Current understanding about racism's impacts on health points to its importance as a public health issue in Canada (Canadian Public Health Association, 2018). Anecdotally, racism impacts the lives of gay men of color in many ways. However, little if any research has sought to explore this connection in a meaningful way. Available research has, for the most part, focused on the general population of racial and ethnic minority groups. Extrapolating from these findings suggests that racism may adversely impact the health and well-being of gay men of color and warrant further examination.

Impact of Racism on the Health of Racial and Ethnic Minorities

An important consequence of the power differential salient to racism's production is that it results in disparate outcomes for oppressed racialized groups in critical health-related domains.[3] Many studies connecting racism and adverse health consequences have been conducted in the United States. Among American racial minority populations, racial discrimination has been seen to lead to unfavorable mental and physical health conditions.[4] These include negative mood and depressive symptoms;[5] development of cardiovascular health conditions, including hypertension and coronary artery disease;[6] and increased health problems related to cigarette and tobacco use, exposure to and use of multiple substances, and alcohol use and dependence.[7]

There is a dearth of Canadian research on the impact of racism on the health status of visible minorities.[8] The fact that Canada, unlike the United States, does not consistently record the race or ethnicity of people in its care registry data contributes to the problem.[9] Despite this constraint, the limited existing evidence suggests that race and racism may play a key role in the creation of racialized health disparities; further, some evidence points to racial and ethnic differences in morbidity (e.g., see Gupta et al., 2002).

It is interesting to note that research examining health-related impacts of racism on racialized populations in Canada often begins from the standpoint of recent immigrants (Khan et al., 2015), a problematic category that fails to distinguish between two groups of immigrants—immigrants from European countries and those from non-European countries. As well, the term overlooks the fact that, since 2001, over 75 percent of immigrants to Canada have belonged to a visible-minority group (Nestel, 2012). Nonetheless, this population is said to enjoy good health, compared to Canadian-born members of racialized groups; but their health deteriorates the longer they stay in the host country, in a phenomenon known as the "healthy immigrant effect" (Chen, Wilkins, & Ng, 1996; McDonald & Kennedy, 2004; Newbold, 2005).

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

Research has also indicated a relationship between self-reported racism and impaired psychological functioning among racialized groups in Canada. Respondents in such studies have reported feelings of suicidal ideation (Lovell & Shahsiah, 2006; Soroor & Popal, 2005); anxiety and low self-esteem (Soroor & Popal, 2005); and symptoms of depression (Soroor & Popal, 2005). In the area of physical health, where certain types of diseases have been linked to specific racialized populations, research showed that Canadians of South Asian descent were more prone to developing coronary artery disease (Gupta et al., 2002) and to have higher prevalence of diabetes.[10]

Likewise, compared to individuals of European or White origin, an elevated incidence of liver and cervical cancer was reported among Asian immigrants (McDermott et al., 2011). Further, evidence showed that Indigenous peoples and people from HIV-endemic regions of the world—namely, Black people of Caribbean and African descent—had much higher rates of HIV/AIDS infection (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2014).

Racism may play a role in why racial and ethnic minorities delay accessing health care services (Ben, Cormack, Harris, & Paradies, 2017). Perhaps influenced by past experiences of racism in the health care system, they may put off or fail to seek health services for unmet needs. These include services relating to mental health,[11] cervical cancer,[12] breast cancer screening,[13] and cardiovascular and diabetes-related health conditions.[14] Other research suggests that racism can impact a patient's satisfaction, level of trust, quality of health care interaction, and willingness to follow medical advice or recommendations (Adegbembo, Tomar, & Logan, 2006; Van Houtven et al., 2005; Williams & Mohammed, 2009). In addition, racial discrimination on the part of health providers may result in a lack of preventive health care for racial and ethnic minorities, which can affect health care–related outcomes (Kanengoni, Andajani-Sutjahjo, & Holroyd, 2020).

Of course, these problems are not limited to racial and ethnic minorities only. Indigenous peoples in Canada and in other parts of the world have been found to experience systemic racism and discrimination when accessing and using health services (Indigenous Health Working Group, 2016), with sometimes tragic results. For example, when 45-year-old Manitoban Brian Sinclair went to see a family physician, he was referred to the province's most comprehensive hospital, the Winnipeg Health Sciences Centre. There, he waited for 34 hours without receiving any attention. Having been ignored, left unattended, and uncared for by health care staff, Sinclair succumbed and died—from a treatable bladder infection (Boyer, 2017). His case is a reminder of the way in which stereotypes and discrimination about Indigenous peoples, such as the view of them as "drunken Indians," help to maintain health inequity between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians.

Notwithstanding the studies discussed earlier, most adopted population or community-based studies feature data infrequently disaggregated by race, such as in the case of the label of *immigrant* being used in reference to White and non-White immigrants alike. There is a need for systematic collection of race-based data: "Disaggregating data based on race is important because it helps to make the impact of racism and racial discrimination visible and thus allows us to address the root problem" (Randall, 2007, p. 187).

A corresponding gap is that such research uses a predominantly heterosexual referent group; less attention is paid to nonheterosexuals. Like Randall, Cochran (2001) pointed to the importance of researchers directly

assessing for and disaggregating data based on same-gender sexual behavior or sexual-orientation identity. The lack of clarity or breakdown of individuals in this domain makes it difficult to determine the scope or severity of the health-related issues of nonheterosexuals compared to heterosexuals. As some research on lesbians' and gay men's mental health suggests, having this information could guide health practitioners in providing targeted services to meet the needs of their diverse service users (Bieschke, McClanahan, Tozer, Grzegorek, & Park, 2000; Cabaj & Stein, 1996).

The Nexus of Racism and Health and Well-Being for Gay Men of Color

For gay men of color, regardless of the form in which racism gets expressed, the cumulative and long-term effects of racial discrimination can diminish quality of life. Racism-related stress can lead to deleterious health conditions, including poor mental and physical health (Han et al., 2015; Meyer, 2003a, 2003b; Ro, Ayala, Paul, & Choi, 2013). The association between racism and negative health finds support in scholarship suggesting that the experiences of gay men of color differ considerably from those of nonminority gay men (e.g., Boykin, 2005; Han et al., 2015; Jackson, 2000). These differences can be traced to a fragmentation of identities among gay men of color, who often feel compelled to choose between identifying with either their sexual or racial identities.[15]

Identity

Two decades ago, Conerly (2001) asked: "Are you Black first or are you queer?" The perspectives of the diverse gay men of color described in this book provide a measured response to the question: responses to the question will vary. Some participants held both identities equally central to their self-concept. For others, however, the decision to identify with either their sexual orientation or their racial identity was influenced by the heterosexism and racism found in their communities of color or in the GLBT community in which the question was asked.

When considering the impact of racism on their social identity and self-identification, several participants in the study expressed something similar: all forms of oppression are interconnected. Navigating multiple social identities in this context is therefore necessarily complex. Participants' reported experiences of racism neither pushed them toward their ethnoracial communities nor obliged them to identify more or less as gay or as someone of color. One participant expressed a sense of struggle and difficulty with compartmentalizing his identities, due to the awareness that they were intricately connected.

There was some indication, however, that heterosexism in communities of color might have influenced the decision of some gay men of color to identify more with their sexual orientation than with their racial or ethnic identity. In general, the experience of racism in the Canadian cultural context appears to have led others to identify more with their racial or ethnic identity. These varied responses suggest that several factors—including racism, self-concept, heterosexism, and cultural context—influence self-identification.

A fragmented (nonintegrated) identity poses a threat to a person's self-concept and can be detrimental to health and subjective well-being. Health-related outcomes of racism may be exacerbated for those situated along multiple axes of stigmatized identities, such as gay men of color. Improved health outcomes are associated with an integrated identity—that is, the interconnectivity of an individual's various identities (Meyer, 2003a).

Research shows that gay men of color encounter difficulty integrating their racial and sexual identities due to external pressures associated with each—that is, heterosexism within ethnoracial minority communities and racism in gay men's communities.[16] Nevertheless, in analyzing race-based discrimination, the social context of gay men's communities in contributing to this conflict must be taken into account. This consideration can contribute to an understanding of racism as a unique predictor of negative mental and physical health outcomes.

Mental Health

Only a few studies have directly examined the relationship between gay-related racism and negative mental or psychological health outcomes among men of color who have sex with men. For example, Diaz, Ayala, Bein, Henne, and Marin (2001) found a high prevalence rate of symptoms of psychological distress in a probability sample (N = 912) of Latino gay and bisexual men recruited from three cities in the United States. Seventeen percent of the men in the study expressed thoughts of suicidal ideation; 44 percent reported feelings of anxiety; and 80 percent reported experiences of subthreshold disorders such as depressed mood. Among the social discrimination measures investigated (including homophobia, poverty, and racism), racism in the context of a gay community was found to negatively influence mental health and to be directly related to low self-esteem: 26 percent of participants reported discomfort in spaces primarily attended by White gay men, and 62 percent reported having been sexually objectified because of their race or ethnicity (Diaz, Ayala, Bein, et al., 2001).

Ibanez, Marin, Flores, Millett, and Diaz (2009) conducted another three-city probability study, in which they asked Latino gay men (n = 911) about their experiences of general and gay-related racism. Supporting Diaz et al.'s

(2001) findings, Ibanez et al. found that those who had darker skin color and Indian or African/mixed-race features reported more racism in both general and gay-specific contexts than those with lighter skin or European-looking features. Thirty-six percent reported having experienced general racism; another 58 percent indicated they had experienced gay-related racism. Variations in reporting of racism might have reflected differences in the items measured under the general racism subscale, such as "being hit or beaten up," and in the gay-context racism subscale, such as "feeling uncomfortable in a White gay bar; being turned down for sex." A salient conclusion of this study was that men who had experienced frequent episodes of some form of discrimination reported lower self-esteem, a factor known to predict depression (Schmitz, Kugler, & Rollnik, 2003).

A similar phenomenon was observed in Szymanski and Sung's (2010) cross-sectional study involving 144 Asian American lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) persons. In their findings, the more that experiences of racism were reported in race-related dating and interpersonal relationship problems in LGBTQ communities, the higher were the respondents' levels of psychological distress. Such reported problems included prejudice or rejection due to one's race or ethnicity and being subjected to sexual objectification.

In 2013, however, Choi, Paul, Ayala, Boylan, and Gregorich (2013) investigated the impact during the previous year of experiences of sexual orientation and racial discrimination on the mental health of racially and ethnically diverse MSM in Los Angeles County, California (n = 403 African American; n = 393 Asian and Pacific Islander; n = 400 Latino). The study corroborated previous research in its finding that higher levels of discrimination were associated with psychological distress. It also advanced previous research in finding that the forms and sources of such discrimination were distinctively correlated to mental health across the different ethnoracial groups. For example, in the part of their study that focused on racism, Asian and Pacific Islander MSM were more likely to identify the mainstream gay community as the primary source from which they encountered racism. However, the opposite was true for African American and Latino MSM, who reported having experienced more racism in the general community than in the gay community. In this regard, a positive association was found between the past-year experience of racism within the general community and depression. Based on their data, the authors cautioned that the experience of general racism may have adverse generalized psychological effects on all gay men of color, not only on African American and Latino MSM. Yet, with respect to racism in the mainstream gay community, this experience of discrimination was positively related to anxiety among Asian and Pacific Islander MSM. This association was not statistically significant for African American MSM or Latino

MSM. According to the authors, this difference may have to do with how racism in the gay community was manifested, where sexual partnership and desirability were hierarchized (in descending order) from Whites to Latinos, Blacks, and Asian and Pacific Islander men (Choi et al., 2013).

Choi et al.'s (2013) finding of a positive relationship between general racism and depression is consistent with an earlier observational cross-sectional study (Graham, Aronson, Nichols, Stephens, & Rhodes, 2011) that explored factors influencing depression and anxiety among 54 Black sexual-minority men. Experiences of racial discrimination and harassment in the general-public context, outside of the GLBT community, were found to negatively affect psychological health. For example, 30 percent and 33 percent of the study participants screened high for depression and anxiety respectively, exceeding numbers found in the general population. Moreover, while 95 percent of the participants had experienced discrimination and harassment at least once, of those who had experienced it in the previous year, 44 percent stated it was because of their race; another 52 percent also reported being victims of similar discriminatory practices and behaviors in public places, including retail venues, the criminal justice system, entertainment venues, religious and educational institutions, places of employment, and in the context of receiving medical services.

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

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

Brennan et al.'s (2010) population-based, cross-sectional study assessed the independent effects of sexual orientation on the health status and risk behaviors of heterosexual, bisexual, and gay Canadian men. In the mental

health domain, and when confounders were controlled for, gay men were 3.1 times and 2.4 times more likely to report mood or anxiety disorders than heterosexual men; they were also 4.1 times and 6.3 times more likely to report lifetime suicidality than heterosexual men.

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

Physical Health

Very little research exists on the physical health disparities that gay men of color experience in relation to racism. In one study that investigated self-rated general health and physical pain and impairment among Two Spirit American Indians and Alaska Natives (n = 447), the measurement of self-reported racial discrimination was positively correlated with higher odds of physical pain and impairment and a fair or poor assessment of general health (Chae & Walters, 2009). Moreover, among participants who reported a high level of self-actualization—a positive self- and group-racial-identity attitude—the study found a weak association between race discrimination and general health; the opposite was true for those with low levels of self-actualization. These findings suggest that higher levels of self-actualization may help to curtail poorer health and physical pain and impairment as well as buffer against the impact of racism.

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

Some other studies[17] have examined the role of social oppression, including factors that promote risky behaviors, such as poverty and financial

hardship, homophobia, anti-immigrant discrimination, and racism. These have implications for the physical health and well-being of gay men of color. For example, Han's (2008a) research showed that Asian and Pacific Islander gay men were at risk for unsafe sexual behaviors due to sociocultural factors related to the experience of racism and an inequitable negotiation of the sexual division of power. This may have increased their chances of assuming the submissive, bottom role in sexual interactions, putting them at risk of exposure to the acquisition and transmission of HIV. Similar findings of the relationship between racism and unsafe sex practices were obtained in studies with different populations of nonheterosexual and gender-nonconforming men of color.[18]

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

Taken together, these results add to the limited published research on racism and health among men of color who have sex with men. However, it is notable that many of the reviewed studies are cross-sectional and cannot be used to establish a cause-and-effect relationship due to their temporal design. This limitation might be addressed through a longitudinal field research method, to determine the direction of causal relationships between variables. Overall, more research is needed to elucidate the pathways by which the social stressor of racism may affect physical and mental health outcomes for gay men of color.

MAKING CONNECTIONS: AN INTEGRATED CONCEPTUAL MODEL LINKING RACISM WITH COPING ACTIONS AND HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR GAY MEN OF COLOR

Conceptual models designed to be applicable to the general population of GLBT people may offer insight into the potential pathways by which gender and sexual prejudice–related events affect health and coping. However, it is important to remember that these models may have been developed with the experience of White GLBT people in mind. Although this focus is not a problem in and of itself, it is noteworthy that only through extrapolation can

these models be used to hypothesize the relationship between various social categories of minority stressors—such as racism—and health and coping outcomes for gay men of color. In fact, existing conceptual models overlook the multiple, marginalized identities of gay men of color, and the different sites where their experiences of racism materialize. As a result, the group's experiences are viewed through the perspective of *heterosexual* people of color. Learning how to counter the deficit-based model requires introducing other models and other perspectives into the picture. One such, an integrative model, is presented here (figure 1.1).

The model reflects the elements comprising—and underscores the interconnection of—the stress and coping process, illustrating the pathways by which racism impacts coping and health outcomes. Integrating insight from queer crit (Misawa, 2012) and minority stress theories (Meyer, 1995, 2003a), it follows to some degree the transactional model of stress and coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984) to explicate potentially synergistic relationships between external environmental demands and internal individual or group responses for dealing with presenting stressors. Importantly, it highlights major systems of interlocking oppressions in the lives of gay men of color.

Of particular importance is the model's racism component. Till now, this component has been inadequately explored in the Canadian academic literature. Minority stressors, followed through the entire illustration, centralize the

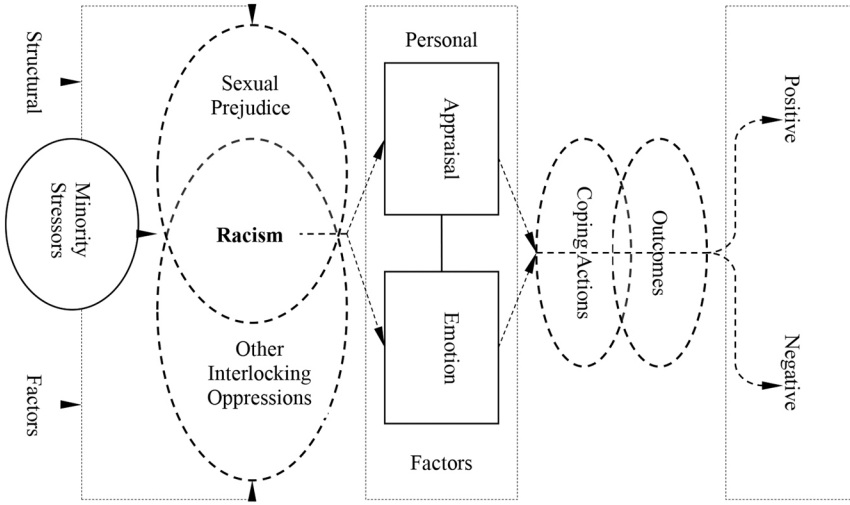

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Pathway through Which Racism-Related Minority Stress Impacts Coping and Health Outcomes: From Minority Stressors to Appraisal and Emotion, Coping Actions, and Health Outcomes. *Source:* Author.

issue of racism as an important risk factor for stress among gay men of color. In this way, it reflects the centrality of race in the trajectory of this book.

MINORITY STRESS: ACCOUNTING FOR STRESS-RELATED EXPERIENCES OF RACISM

The psychosocial stress that originates from a person's stigmatized social identity or minority status is referred to as *minority stress* (Brooks, 1981; DiPlacido, 1998; Meyer, 1995, 2003a). Minority stress arises out of the clash of value systems between majority and minority groups (Meyer, 1995; Mirowsky & Ross, 1989; Pearlin, 1989), where minorities have little social power or influence. This clash leads to conflict in the social environment, requiring minority group members to adapt, since the stress produced can affect physical and mental health outcomes (Dohrenwend et al., 1992).

Stressors include events, situations, and conditions that pose a threat, challenge, or harm to one's psychosocial well-being. Discriminatory actions or bias related to sexual prejudice—that is, negative attitudes or assumptions made about a person based on their sexual orientation (Herek, 2000)—racism or racial discrimination, and other intersecting forms of oppression become social stressors in the lives of gay men of color. These stressors are conceived as interrelated structures, each reinforcing the other.

Minority stress has three main characteristics: It is unique—stigmatized groups experience it *in addition to* general life stressors. Rooted in relatively stable oppressive sociocultural structures, it is chronic. And it is distinguished by socially mediated processes that go beyond the individual target of oppression to include institutional and structural mechanisms of social order (Meyer, 2003a). Stress processes can be objective or subjective.

Objective minority stressors "do not depend on an individual's perceptions or appraisals—although certainly their report depends on perception and attribution" (Meyer, 2003a, p. 676). They are marked by the risk of real or perceived violent and nonviolent behaviors, targeted at actual or assumed members of a stigmatized group. Sexual minorities, like members of other stigmatized groups, must contend with negative societal attitudes related to their minority status (Meyer, 1995). Gay men living in a predominantly heterosexist society experience chronic stress due to sexual stigma, and this stressor contributes to negative mental health outcomes (Meyer, 2003a).

An individual may or may not identify with a minority status. However, if perceived by others as belonging to a stigmatized minority group, that individual may become a victim of external prejudices and stereotypes perpetrated against members of that group. Because objective minority stressors do not require one to identify with an assigned minority status, they can be

objectively observed and measured. In this way, these stressors can be viewed as external to the individual.

Subjective minority stressors depend on how people perceive stressful events and are related to an individual's self-identification with a minority identity. Because of variations in the meaning and evaluation people ascribe to themselves and different parts of their identities, no one's subjective experience of minority stress is going to be the same. An individual who identifies strongly as gay may experience significant stress related to sexual stigma. The opposite may be true for someone who identifies more with, say, his racial/ethnic background and less with his sexual orientation.

Individuals vary in their response to stress, just as the types of stressors they face as members of a stigmatized group also vary. The experience of racism is not uniform; different racial groups are subjected to negative stereotypes specific to their social group. Stressors may be acute or chronic, specific to a particular event or situation, or appear as a general life event or daily hassle.

Some objective and subjective minority stressors follow.

INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA AND RACISM

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

Internalizing homo/bi/trans-phobic stereotypes and prejudices begins long before individuals are aware that they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or trans. The point at which they begin to apply these labels to themselves signals an identity shift; this is where, together with an internal sense of shame, they "also begin to apply negative attitudes to themselves, and the psychologically injurious effects of societal homophobia takes effect" (Meyer, 1995, p. 40). Even if GLBT people manage to achieve a strong sense of sexual and gender identity, internalized homo/bi/trans-phobia is not likely to be overcome; it is apt to endure throughout various life stages.[19] The socialization of GLBT people in heterosexist environments, and their continued exposure to events prejudicial to same-sex orientation and gender identity, contributes to this

reality. These factors make internalized homo/bi/trans-phobia an intractable problem, with the potential for minority stress and a negative impact on mental health and well-being (Herek, Cogan, Gillis, & Glunt, 1998; Meyer & Dean, 1998; Rowen & Malcolm, 2003).

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

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

PERCEIVED STIGMA

The expectation of rejection or discrimination for something outside of one's control (e.g., sexual orientation or race) can be anxiety-provoking for people affected by stigma and labeling. Stigma can be understood as a negative stereotype associated with people assigned marginal status in society (Goffman, 1963). Such individuals may be said to possess undesirable characteristics resulting in them being treated differently. They may develop an increased awareness of being labeled and stigmatized in their interactions with others. The constant worry about experiencing stigmatization in the future, combined with the expectation of rejection, produces chronic stress:

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

For GLBT people, vigilance might entail hiding or concealing the fact that one is not heterosexual, in order to minimize the likelihood of social rejection and violence. In this way, concealment can operate both as a coping mechanism and a barrier to formal and informal social support networks and resources (Meyer, 2003a). However, the effort required to maintain secrecy around one's sexual orientation and gender identity is chronic and constant, since vigilance necessitates the "exertion of considerable energy and resources" (Meyer, 2003a, p. 41). The weight of concealing a stigmatized identity for reasons of discrimination, rejection, or fear of negative evaluation from others can be stressful, with the potential for adverse effects on mental and physical health (Meyer, 2003a).

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

The aforementioned discussion raises some interesting questions. If a gay person can conceal his sexual orientation, but a gay person of color cannot hide his skin color, how would this affect his perceived stigma? Would a gay man who visibly belongs to a racial minority group experience discrimination or prejudicial treatment in the same way as someone who passes? In response to these questions, it is important to understand that race- or racism-based discrimination and sexual prejudice are two sides of the same coin. Both are symptoms of systems that subjugate and dehumanize target groups, while advocating the superiority of another (often a perceived majority) social group. As Lorde (1983) has reminded us, we need to be mindful of the danger of a hierarchy of oppression and victimization; this is not a useful marker for an analysis of power relations. Such a hierarchical perspective undermines a comprehensive analysis of the relationship of power. This point notwithstanding, a gay person's perception of stigma would be affected by the concealment of his sexual orientation, in that he would be protected externally from the social discrimination of sexual prejudice. If one's oppressor were unable to discriminate based on a stigmatized social identity, the target would

be spared the experience of oppression. However, as already mentioned, the personal or internal implications of such concealment could have health-related implications.

In the case of a gay man of color unable to hide his skin color, his perception of stigma would be heightened due to the experience of blatant/overt or subtle/covert racism. Blatant or overt racism is an observable form of racial discrimination directed at racial groups defined as non-White (i.e., calling a Black person the N-word). Subtle or covert racism, by contrast, is indirect or hidden (i.e., being ignored, ridiculed, or treated differently because of one's skin color). This is everyday racism, which may seem insignificant, but it is substantial in effects, especially when repeated over and over again (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986; Essed, 1991). Since an opportunity exists for the oppressor to stigmatize on the basis of an identifiable identity, he is able to discriminate against the target on this ground. The clear targeting of the victim by race is what makes this account different from the example of a concealable identity. What this response also reveals is that a gay man of color who visibly belongs to a racial minority group would experience a different level of oppression from someone who passes, for the reasons already discussed—because the decision to pass is one that someone with a visibly dark skin is unable to exercise.

DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE

Because of the negative attitudes and stereotypes associated with nonheterosexuality and being a person of color, GLBT people who self-identity with either or both of these minority positions may experience rejection, violence, and real or vicarious discrimination (Meyer, 1995). People with stigmatized identities may be the recipients of aggravated occurrences of prejudiced events across various social contexts.[20] Thus, GLBT people may encounter the loss of support from private and public social systems—family, friends, and religious organizations—leaving them vulnerable to emotional and psychological distress that might negatively influence their perception of the world and contribute to feelings of inferiority and self-denigration (Garnets, Herek, & Levy, 1990; Meyer, 1995).

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

> Perhaps the most critical aspect of antigay violence and discrimination is its meaning within the context of societal heterosexism and minority oppression. . . . Prejudice events have a powerful impact more because of the deep cultural meaning they activate than because of the ramifications of the events themselves. (Meyer, 1995, p. 41)

The example of racial discrimination and bias against gay men of color illustrates this point. In the gay male culture where White men have cultural currency, online bigoted messages such as "Not into Asians" or "No native chopstick users" become acceptable means to denigrate men who are not White, in the guise of personal preference (Han & Choi, 2018). Such overt expressions of racial hostility make possible the explicit rejection of gay men of color by White gay men as sexual or romantic partners.

Structural discrimination also manifests in the form of double carding (Han, 2007; Ramirez, 2003; Ridge, Hee, & Minichiello, 1999), where gay men of color—unlike like their White counterparts—are required to show multiple identifications for entry into gay bars or nightclubs. Perhaps more profound than the painful effects of racial discrimination itself, these racially discriminatory messages and episodes communicate a cultural sense of nonbelonging. Gay men of color are repeatedly and continually reminded (both overtly and subtly) of their nonmembership and exclusion. The combination of racism-related life events and social marginalization can pose a threat to a person's self-concept and heighten sensitivity for future exposure to discrimination and violence.

COPING AND OVERCOMING ADVERSE EFFECTS OF RACISM

Individuals and groups confronted with racism employ different strategies to actively resist or manage race-based discrimination and stigmatization. Only a few researchers have explored racism-related coping strategies among gay men of color (e.g., Bryant, 2008; Choi et al., 2011; Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004). In subsequent pages, I consider the unified, interdependent perspectives of *appraisal* and *emotion* on adapting to and coping with racism-related stress. This consideration can be informative when evaluating and categorizing racism-related encounters and their significance to an individual's or group's well-being. Appraising the effectiveness of context-specific coping strategies, such as problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping, can help develop interventions aimed at helping individuals and groups—such as gay men of color—navigate experiences of racism.

Appraisal and Emotion

Appraisals and emotions are crucial to the coping experience. A perception of discrimination related to one's minority status leads to primary and secondary cognitive appraisals of the event. Primary appraisal refers to an assessment of the significance of a stressor along three scales: not important, good, or

stressful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), stressful situations elicit conditions of harm or loss (as an example, the person has already sustained some kind of damage or setback due to the stressful circumstance); threat (focuses on the potential in a situation for future harm and loss); and challenge (emphasizes potential in a situation for gain or growth).

An experience is appraised as stressful when a psychological stress response is produced. At this point, secondary appraisal becomes relevant. Secondary appraisal concerns what can be done once an event has been appraised as taxing or exceeding one's social and cultural resources to cope (Krohne, 2002; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Under a secondary evaluation, a gay man of color, for example, must decide how best to respond to the presenting situation of racism. Co-occurring with this process, emotions are elicited, once it can be established that a given situation or event has significance to the individual's self-concept and well-being. Unimportant episodes are the least likely to engender an emotional response. In this sense, emotions function as adaptive mechanisms, requiring that one move beyond understanding of one's own personal situation into action, so as to bring about change.

Resilience

A situation for which there exists effective coping is less likely to be perceived as stressful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), thus engendering resilience. Resilience is characterized by a flexibility in response to changing situational demands and an ability to bounce back from negative environmental risk experiences and forward into transforming negative experiences for positive ones (Block & Block, 1980; Rutter, 2006; Scott, 2013; Ungar, 2008). In bouncing back, a return is made to normal or the way things were, whereas to bounce forward marks one's adaptive capacity or transformation. For example, an individual or group may anticipate—and prepare to respond to—racism (see Manyena, O'Brien, O'Keefe, & Rose, 2011; Mitchell & Harris, 2012; Scott, 2013). When circumstances change, resilience alters; hence, anyone can learn and develop resilience (Rutter, 1987).

Viewing gay men of color as resilient or as having the ability to cope with racism and its associated setbacks can counteract deficit perceptions but it can also shift the full weight of the oppression onto their shoulders and away from a structural analysis of the problem. When these individuals fail to exercise effective coping during periods of stress or adversity, their perceived absence of resilience or superior coping strategies is judged as personal failure. In a similar manner, gay men of color may be characterized as passive casualties of oppression, with little or no control over their situation.

This victim stance carries the risk of pathology. Those who lack effective coping or are less resilient may be seen, implicitly, to be at fault for the stress they experience. Yet stressful events or situations are taxing in and of themselves, regardless of one's resiliency or ability to cope. Thus, the conceptual model proposed in this chapter adopts a structural-level analysis of stress, wherein the stress-inducing environment becomes the target of intervention.

Coping and Social Support

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

This concept of coping borrows from and contributes to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress and coping theory, in which stress is posited as a person-environment interaction; stress is inherent in neither the situation nor the individual who experiences it. Rather, it is a transaction between the stressor and one's cognitive construal of it, based on primary and secondary appraisals, as mentioned earlier. In this view, effective coping is dependent on the congruence or goodness of fit between the perceived stressor and an individual's coping strategy, as mediated by personal appraisal of the stressful event.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identified two main categories of coping responses to stress: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping.[21] Problem-focused coping is more adaptive to stressors that are within the control of the individual; they are amenable to change. This kind of coping emphasizes the source of stress in order to eliminate or decrease its negative impact on the individual, who is actively engaged in adaptive behaviors aimed at stress adaptation. Likewise, it is concerned with future-oriented strategies, such as proactive or preventive coping. As a dynamic coping response to stressful events, problem-focused strategies may consist of gathering or seeking out information, evaluating the upside or downside of a given action, and taking action (Lazarus, 1993).

Emotion-focused coping relates to individuals' management or control of emotive responses to stressful events in situations where the source of stress is beyond their control.[22] Attenuation of emotional distress is achieved via cognitive reappraisal of the perceived stressor—a reframing of how a stressful situation or environment is viewed. It may involve altering the meaning

one attaches to these experiences, such as denying an encounter with racism in order to distance oneself from the stressful event.

Problem-focused and emotion-focused coping efforts are generally viewed as diametrically opposed. The former is considered superior, in that it has been linked with positive adaptation and overall good health, while the latter response is negatively correlated with adaptation and good health outcomes.[23] However, this binary logic simplifies an exceptionally complex process. For example, problem-focused coping does not always enhance positive affect, and emotion-focused coping can help shift how a potential stressor is perceived and experienced. Additionally, very similar coping strategies may serve more than one purpose. A gay person of color may seek professional support to obtain practical guidance on dealing with racism (problem-focused) or to gain emotional support and validation (emotion-focused). The same individual may, having cognitively reappraised the precipitating event, identify other options for taking control of the situation (problem-focused), or reevaluate his emotional response to the stressful event to make it more manageable (emotion-focused). Still, it may be that different coping techniques are employed consecutively or in conjunction with other strategies to promote adaptation to stress (Lazarus, 2000; Matheson & Anisman, 2003). Ultimately, the effectiveness of these coping responses may be contingent on the situation, on the individual's personality, and on the evaluative sense of one's internal and external ability to cope with stress (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; Cheng, 2001; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Meyer (2003a) emphasized the importance of social support for GLBT people, as a means of responding to stigmatization. Minority coping or group-level resources—support derived from one's membership in a stigmatized group—can counteract adverse mental health effects of minority stress (Peterson, Folkman, & Bakeman, 1996). For example, in one study, sexual-minority men and women who conveyed greater feelings of connectedness to the GLBT community experienced higher levels of social well-being (Kertzner, Meyer, Frost, & Strirratt, 2009). Notably, their higher level of social well-being was connected to fewer depressive symptoms and enhanced psychological health. This finding highlights the importance of social support as an important predictor of quality of life. Underpinning the idea of social support, therefore, is that although having a minority status can be challenging, having support in common with others having this identity can be a source of resilience and coping with prejudice and related stressors. The camaraderie and cohesiveness of a minority group can provide a buffer zone that is validating of an individual's experience (Harrell, 2000). In addition, it can facilitate the reappraisal of a stressful experience and minimize the negative attribution of stigma-related stress on mental health outcomes (Jones et al., 1984; Pettigrew, 1967; Thoits, 1985).

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

For gay men of color, experiencing racism yields social, psychological, and physical consequences. Social exclusion may cause these men to resort to psychological defenses for purposes of self-preservation. Sometimes, the effects of racism may even take a toll on the physical body. Coping—whether personal or community supported—serves as a moderator of their experiences of individual- and structural-level discrimination based on race.

THE KNIFE EDGE OF RACISM AND RESILIENCE

Much has been written about racism, most of which has pointed to its mechanics and contexts—its starting points in history, its language, its methods of reproduction, and so on. One of the major narratives about racism is that the ones who suffer it are its victims. The actual experiences and effects of racism on those oppressed have been well documented by writers such as Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, and Erika Lee, among many others, yet the stories need repeating. Racism's impacts on gay men of color are not hard to find: their identity, health, relationships, work life, and home life are deeply affected. These effects have been difficult to contemplate, and therefore seem to recede in the public (i.e., White) imagination. In this chapter, I have argued for an integrated theoretical approach to racism, one that looks at the multiple intersecting realities lived by gay men of color, allowing for a broader understanding of these realities and their consequences. Racism, as a social stressor, does not simply oppress; it can also produce psychological and other adverse health problems. The model I have presented in this chapter provides a pathway for understanding the role of racism in the stress process for gay men of color.

NOTES

1. Fleras, 2014; Henry & Tator, 2010; J. M. Jones, 1997; Sue et al., 2007.
2. Aylward, 1999; Bell, 1992; Berman & Paradies, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2014; Collins, 2000, 2004; West, 2001; Wise, 2010.

3. See Harrell, Burford, et al., 2011; Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou, & Rummens, 1999; Noh, Kaspar, & Wickrama, 2007; Paradies, 2006; Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Williams & Mohammed, 2009.

4. See Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Mays, Cochran, & Zamudio, 2004; Paradies, 2006; Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000.

5. See Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999; Paradies, 2006; Steffen & Bowden, 2006.

6. See Brondolo et al., 2008; Gee, Spencer, Chen, & Takeuchi, 2007; Harrell, Hall, & Taliaferro, 2003; Lewis, Williams, Tamene, & Clark, 2014; Peters, 2004.

7. See Bennett, Wolin, Robinson, Fowler, & Edwards, 2005; Choi, Harachi, Gillmore, & Catalano, 2006; Gee, Delva, & Takeuchi, 2007; Krieger, Smith, Naishadham, Hartman, & Barbeau, 2005; Landrine, Klonoff, Corral, Fernandez, & Roesch, 2006.

8. A visible minority is "an ethnic group whose members are clearly racially distinct from those of the predominant race in a society" (Barber, 2004). See also Khan, Kobayashi, Lee, & Vang, 2015; Nestel, 2012; Veenstra, 2009.

9. See Khan et al., 2015; Nestel, 2012; see also Hyman, 2001; Kobayashi, Prus, & Lin, 2008; Varcoe, Browne, Wong, & Smye, 2009.

10. Beiser, 2005; Gupta et al., 2002; Leenen et al., 2008; O'Loughlin, 1999; Shah, 2008; Sohal, 2008.

11. See Beiser, Simich, & Pandalangat, 2003; Chen & Kazanjian, 2005; Jarvis, Kirmayer, Jarvis, & Whitley, 2005; Lovell & Shahsiah, 2006.

12. See Gee, Kobayashi, & Prus, 2007; Lasser, Himmelstein, & Woolhandler, 2006; Lofters, Glazier, Agha, Creatore, & Moineddin, 2007

13. See Choudhry, Srivastava, & Fitch, 1998; Jackson et al., 2003; Nelson & Macias, 2008.

14. See Lau, 2010; Leiter et al., 2011; Shah, 2008.

15. Akerlund & Cheung, 2000; Conerly, 2001; Dubé & Savin-Williams, 1999; Gibbs & Jones, 2013; Icard, 1986; Manalansan, 1996; Stokes & Peterson, 1998.

16. Adams & Kimmel, 1997; Christian, 2005; Crichlow, 2004; Manalansan, 1996; Morrison, 2008; Stokes & Peterson, 1998.

17. Ayala, Bingham, Kim, Wheeler, & Millett, 2012; Diaz et al., 2001; Diaz & Ayala, 2000; Ellerbrock et al., 2004; Jarama, Kennamer, Poppen, Hendricks, & Bradford, 2005; Yoshikawa, Wilson, Chae, & Cheng, 2004.

18. See Ayala et al., 2012; Bruce, Ramirez-Valles, & Campbell, 2008; Diaz & Ayala, 2000; Diaz, Ayala, & Bein, 2004; Fields et al., 2013; Kraft, Beeker, Stokes, & Peterson, 2000; Mizuno et al., 2012; Nakamura & Zea, 2010; Stokes & Peterson, 1998.

19. Cass, 1984; Frost & Meyer, 2009; Gonsiorek, 1988; Troiden, 1989.

20. Crocker & Major, 1989; Herek, 2002; Herek & Glunt, 1991; Pescosolido, Martin, Lang, & Olafsdottir, 2008.

21. These are discussed more fully in chapter 5.

22. Lazarus, 1993, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Stanton et al., 2000.

23. Carver, 2011; Compas, Malcarne, & Fondacaro, 1988; Endler & Parker, 1994; Harrell, 2000; Rostosky, Otis, Riggle, Kelly, & Brodnicki, 2008; Szymanski & Owens, 2008.

Chapter 2

Excavating Racism in Gay Men's Communities

Gay men's communities are a microcosm of the broader Canadian society. Thus, they are not immune from the influence of the dominant culture in how racism and discrimination can manifest. Racism operates in these communities in much the same way that it does in the rest of society (Callander, Newman, & Holt, 2015). Whether in gay men's communities or in the broader Canadian society, everyday racism and discrimination rely on a logic of superiority and subordination that is premised on "hierarchies, power, control, and privilege" (Riggs, 2018, p. xi). In gay men's communities, this has the effect of conditioning social interactions and relationships so as to advantage White gay men and disadvantage gay men of color.

A significant point of this book is that racism is insidious and operates over all of society, including in gay men's communities. A focus on the driving forces behind racism will help decode racist behaviors in those communities. Discussions about whether or if racism within gay men's communities is really all that different from racism expressed in the general public, although interesting, can obscure a broader analysis of the mechanisms by which racism operates. Of course, context is also important in how racism is manifested and experienced. Gay men's communities lay claim to inclusivity and diversity, in discourses embedded within Canada's overarching narrative of diversity. But in fact, the negative effects of racism and discrimination experienced by gay men of color within those communities are not that different from those experienced by the general population of non-White racial groups. Exploring this phenomenon in the latter context can inform understanding about how racism plays out in the former.

Canadian society at large promotes a culture of White superiority,[1] which White people—and White gay men in particular—have internalized as part

of their individual and collective identity. White superiority describes racist social actions, practices, or beliefs that uphold White people as inherently superior to other groups or races (DiAngelo, 2018). At best, White gay men are likely to deny they are racist (Bérubé, 2001; Robinson, 2015). At worst, they may blame gay men of color for their experiences of racism (Han, 2008b). Racism in gay men's communities is founded on a deeply rooted sense of internalized cultural superiority. White racial socialization appears to be a key part of the problem. Often, when confronted with allegations of racism, White gay men have been found to behave defensively (Han & Choi, 2018; Robinson, 2015), as if to guard against the view that their actions were racist. In doing so, they may fail to consider how living in a majority White society has shaped their views of people who are not White.

Such majority White views may be reflected in the different ways that gay men of color experience racism directed at them. For example, racism directed at Asian gay men may confer on them the sexualized racial stereotype of them as effeminate (Han, Proctor, & Choi, 2014a). Racism perpetrated against Black or Arab/Middle Eastern gay men comes with a different stereotype. Black gay men, for example, are subjected to sexual stereotypes suggesting that they have large penises, are deviant, and are promiscuous (Calabrese et al., 2018). In a post-9/11 context, punctuated by the Orlando nightclub shooting in June 2016 (History.com Editors, 2020), Arab/Middle Eastern gay men have become seen as a threatening other or "Arab faggot terrorist." However, as Bishop (2015) argued, similar to Black gay men, Arab/Middle Eastern gay men are also portrayed in gay male pornography literature as both hypermasculine and sexually insatiable. And sometimes, of course, such forms of racism can work to coopt these men into performing their own oppression, reflecting what Riggs (2018) called the "logics of marginalization" (p. xi). Gay men of color are thus often left separated or isolated from each other, unable to explore their shared common interests and ways to work together to address the different processes by which individual and structural acts of racism intrude into and shape their everyday experiences.

White gay men's understanding seems to be that, living in a country like Canada, they are incapable of acting in racist ways. Such an absence of accountability speaks to White racial innocence—an unearned cultural privilege. Both are made possible by the Canadian narrative of multiculturalism's claim to equality and social inclusion. The cultural myth of Canada as a country that respects racial and ethnic differences has been implicated as a factor contributing to racial discrimination, influencing White gay men's response to claims of racism. Based on liberal values of accommodation and cultural diversity, it can act to insulate White people from criticisms of

wrongdoing, thus providing an environment of racial protection (DiAngelo, 2011). An inherent danger in this national narrative is its creation of a blind spot, in which White people are unable to appreciate the complexity of the racialized experiences of people of color, including those of gay men of color. White people may therefore unwittingly discriminate against them. White gay men's positive internalization of the multicultural ideals of Canada may thus conflict with accounts of racism levied against them by gay men of color.

Since the process of internalization can be intensely entwined with one's self-concept, White gay men may resort to defensive moves as a way to assuage their feelings of guilt or uphold their racial innocence. Such defensive moves have been the focus of previous research (van Dijk, 1992). For example, in her examination of the concept of White fragility, DiAngelo (2011) discussed how the smallest amount of racial stress—for example, people of color calling White people out for racist behavior or language—can trigger unconstructive emotional responses from White people, such as anger, fear, and guilt. Far from advancing the racial dialogue, when White people express themselves by arguing in defense of their virtue, keeping silent, or leaving the stressful situation, the balance of the scales of power may be tipped in the White group's favor.

White gay men often deny the racialized accounts of gay men of color, and instead blame them for their negative experiences with racism (see Giwa, 2018; Han, 2008b). Most such denials of racism occur at the individual or interpersonal level, but when White gay men come to each other's defense, there is also an indication of a social dimension to these denials. Such defense aims to portray a positive image of the dominant White group, in order to shield its members from allegations of racism (van Dijk, 1992). This public discourse of denial is the more disconcerting, given its potential to shape consensus within the group.

Socialization processes for White gay men promote the group's intragroup identity and cohesion; at the same time, they seem to have excluded non-White racial others from the White imagination. Bonilla-Silva (2014) referred to this social experience as *White habitus*, "a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates whites' racial taste, perceptions, feelings, and emotions and their views on racial matters" (p. 152). If they grew up in a homogeneous environment, White gay men may have been conditioned to believe in the superiority of the White majority culture and therefore the inferiority of people of color. Lacking exposure to racial diversity, a subconscious racial attitude may fuel White gay men's discrimination against gay men of color.

Social discrimination and related intolerances are not uniformly experienced by all members of the GLBT community. Individuals belonging

to more than one distinct social group may experience multiple forms of oppression. Gay men of color are affected by homophobia or heterosexism within communities of color, and also by racism within GLBT communities (George et al., 2012; Hart, Sharvendiran, Chikermane, Kidwai, & Grace, 2020; Husbands et al., 2013). As a result of the social discrimination arising from racism and homophobia, they experience exclusion and marginalization within ethnoracial and GLBT communities.[2] The combination of heterosexism and racism leaves these individuals with little or no access to resources, services, and a community where they can truly belong. With limited and questionable support structures, their ability to counteract the oppressive attitudes they may encounter in their own ethnoracial or their predominantly White GLBT communities can become compromised (Akerlund & Cheung, 2000; Meyer, Frost, & Nezhad, 2015; Meyer, Schwartz, & Frost, 2008).

Institutional and cultural practices in predominantly White GLBT communities play an important role in perpetuating and maintaining racial inequalities. The gay media, including pornographic media, are major players in shaping popular ideas about these communities.[3] Exclusion of gay men of color from media productions reinforces their status as inferior, which helps to fuel their otherness and status as outsider. The lack of inclusion and diversity in gay media makes clear how gay men of color are seen by White gay men, especially by those responsible for the production of these magazines and media involving sexual activities. Such exclusion constrains gay men of color from fully participating in gay communities and, once more, promotes a cliquishness in White gay men that keeps gay men of color at a distance. This cliquishness may be responsible for the lack of racial integration within gay men's communities. Ultimately, it upholds the basic power of the dominant White group and culture.

Portraying Whiteness as the standard beauty has normalized White gay male attractiveness, casting off non-White ideals of beauty.[4] Gay men of color may feel powerless to attract White gay men, since they have to wait to be chosen, and may exert more effort in looking good than their White counterparts.[5] The resulting myth of White beauty affects how gay men of color see themselves and each other; by their choice of sexual and romantic partners, they may help to perpetuate the logic of "White is best." This pattern of self- and group devaluation reflects, ultimately, an internalization of racial oppression. The valorization of White gay men has the effect of segregating gay men of color from each other and can lead to ingroup competition for attention from White gay men (see chapter 4 for more on this). It can also challenge the dominant group's association between Whiteness and gayness, with the result that coidentities of race and sexual orientation are rendered unimaginable for certain groups of gay men of color.

SO, WHAT DOES GLBT RACISM LOOK LIKE ANYWAY?

Racism comprises the oppressive behaviors and attitudes of those in positions of power toward ethnoracial others. Its chief purpose, expressed in so many ways, is to exclude racialized others. Much like its heterosexist cousin, racism is an additional source of minority stress when experienced by gay men of color within predominantly White GLBT communities.[6] These communities are far from being places of solace and reprieve from the harsh realities of life for gay men of color. Indeed, White members of these communities express racist ideologies of dominance and superiority, and not through isolated instances of oppression; rather, they mirror images of racism found within the broader societies of Western industrialized countries (Callander, Holt, & Newman, 2015; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han, 2007).

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

> mirroring the whiteness of men who run powerful institutions as a strategy for winning credibility, acceptance, and integration; excluding people of color from gay institutions; selling gay as white to raise money, make a profit, and gain economic power; and daily wearing the pale protective coloring that camouflages the unquestioned assumptions and unearned privileges of gay whiteness. (Bérubé, 2001, p. 246)

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

Racism can lead people of color to internalize White people's negative messages (Brennan et al., 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han, 2007). They may collude with the oppressor, thus maintaining the status quo of White power and privilege, and further entrenching biased beliefs about their own humanity. In looking to White gay men for validation, gay men of color may demean others who look like them, in an attempt to mirror the dominance of the racial group in power. They may expect that their actions will grant them acceptance into the dominant social group. By engaging in behaviors that perpetuate White dominance, they inadvertently maintain the ideology

of White supremacy (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han, 2013). Moreover, in mirroring the dominant relations of oppression, gay men of color contribute to the devaluation of themselves while helping to fortify the normative aspect of Whiteness that enforces their subordination.

Empirical findings on the impact of encounters with racism reveal the embeddedness of racist attitudes and behaviors in GLBT communities. Subtle and blatant forms of racial discrimination affect sexual-minority men of color, as well as revealing the mechanism for maintaining the status quo. Their components follow.

EXCLUDING GAY MEN OF COLOR: INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIAL NUANCES

Conscious and Unconscious Racism

Similar to interpersonal and intergroup manifestations of racial discrimination, the expression of racism at the general and institutional levels reinforces the view that gay men of color are inferior to White gay men.[7] For example, even well-intentioned organizations may engage in questionable business practices, becoming complicit in reproducing racism when they overlook how their practices unfairly advantage White gay men and disadvantage gay men of color. Perhaps more disconcerting is the unapologetic position of some individuals and organizations when they have been made aware of their unfair or exclusionary business practices. For example, it is problematic to use only images of White gay men on outreach posters for HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention (Lechky, 1997); one must also see the exclusion of gay men of color from such posters as contentious. Refusing to see the importance of including these men suggests that the general inclination to think of institutional or structural racism as ordinarily unconscious—outside of an overt/blatant demonstration of discrimination—may actually be part of the problem.

Questioning the necessity for Black representation on HIV/AIDS awareness posters *aimed at Black gay men* comes across as nonracist, but is problematic since, in many ways, HIV is a highly racialized disease. If Black gay men do not access HIV/AIDS support and care with the same frequency as White gay men, how would the use of White-themed posters encourage them to seek such services in the future? Would a Black gay-themed poster be used to persuade White gay men to seek HIV/AIDS treatment and support services?

Unlike conscious racism, in which an individual or organization is implicated in a racially motivated behavior, *unconscious* racism can undermine

accountability. Rather than hold individuals or organizations responsible for their racist actions, they may be forgiven for not knowing better, since they would have acted differently under a more enlightened circumstance. The problem with this kind of thinking is that it fails to recognize how individuals and organizations may intentionally act in discriminatory and exclusionary ways to maintain the status quo. The rhetoric of innocence implied in the concept of *unconscious* may provide a convenient way for some individuals and businesses to express their racist views without having to take accountability for their behavior when it is time to do so. Psychologists Blanton and Jaccard (2008) found that, while people may not always know or have control over the causes and consequences of their racial biases, this did not amount to evidence to support the claim that they possessed an unconscious racism. They asked: "How do researchers show that people possess [racist] views that they cannot perceive?" (p. 281).

Invisibility or Exclusion from Institutional Venues and Media Cultural Productions

Despite the preferred discourses of a multicultural gay community, the racial formation of Whiteness that now so largely prevails in this space highlights the deep-seated nature of racism and racial hostility directed at sexual-minority men of color (Nero, 2005). Gay men of color are made to feel invisible through their exclusion from White gay circles. Nakamura et al. (2013) researched the experiences of community integration among first- and second-generation Asian MSM in Canada. The authors found that, although some Asian MSM held a more positive impression of the gay community than their ethnoracial community, others found it racist, and difficult to make friends and meet people; the sense of the gay community as being "cliquey" and "hard to crack" were highlighted as contributing factors in this experience. Such behaviors suggest that some White gay men may be averse to pushing beyond their comfort zone to embrace people who do not belong to their racial/ethnic and cultural groups. In addition to mirroring each other's aesthetic qualities, the insularity of the group was seen to contribute to the lack of racial integration within the broader GLBT community.

The "controlling images" (Collins, 2000, p. 5) of gay men of color—especially Black gay men—in largely White GLBT cultures are as impostors who exist only to satisfy White gay male desire. This one-dimensional representation of Black gay men reinforces the notion that race and sexual orientation, as they exist for these men, are incompatible: the dominant narrative is that to be gay means to be White, period. Gay men of color thus represent seemingly incompatible categories. They are an anomaly or inauthentic; only White

gay men are bona fide gay men, and only they can lay claim to a same-sex orientation.

This is the sine qua non of the former's exclusion within the community: "the ubiquitous image of the black gay male as an impostor or a fraud naturalizes and normalizes the exclusion of black gay men from sites of territorial economies where wealth is created" (Nero, 2005, p. 235). This exclusion is paradoxical: it defeats the ideas articulated under the social inclusion agenda of multiculturalism and explains in part why gay ghettos—territorial and economic spaces from which the cumulative effects of racism relegate Black and other gay men of color to the bottom of the social hierarchy—remain putatively White.

Yet if it is deleterious for Black men to self-identify as gay—or masculine, for that matter—the negative framing of a gay identity raises two important questions: if claiming a gay identity is bad for Black men, why is it respectable for White men? How is that White men are able to maintain their sense of masculinity while at the same time affirming a gay identity?

Consistent with previous research on gay Whitening practices (Bérubé, 2001), the construction of a gay identity as something damaging to Black men may reflect an attempt by White gay men to exclude Black men from their cultural space. In doing so, White gay men are thereby allowed to retain their sense of dominance and racial hierarchy.

Allusions to invisibility or feelings of exclusion within GLBT communities are commonplace in the narratives of gay men of color, who feel unwelcomed and alienated in these social environments.[8] Continuous attempts by White nonheterosexual people to construct a monolithic image of the GLBT community have the effect of keeping gay men of color from feeling a sense of belonging.[9] For these men, perceived differential treatments are borne out in everyday encounters and actions aimed at denying them membership in order to promote the interests, cultural norms, and aesthetic values of the dominant White group.

In one study, gay men of color were often subjected to the practice of triple carding at entrances of gay bars and nightclubs: that is, in an overt, blatant form of racism, they had to produce three pieces of identification (Bérubé, 2001). The example of a gay Latino man in the Castro district of San Francisco illustrates this point:

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

Similar occurrences of discrimination have been reported elsewhere in the United States—in cities like Washington, Boston, Los Angeles, and New

York—and in countries such as Australia. For example, in a study involving eight Southeast Asian gay men in Melbourne, some participants were refused entry into a popular gay nightclub and, on the off-chance that entry was gained, the men were met with condemnatory racist remarks from staff and other (White) patrons, such as: "This place is crawling with Asians!" (Ridge et al., 1999, p. 51). Underlying this crude racial remark was the view that this largely White gay space was being encroached upon by a racial other, whom the White patrons of this establishment perhaps felt did not belong and were culturally, socially, and aesthetically inferior to them.

As these examples demonstrate, such incidents are not limited to a few bad apples. On the contrary, they represent Whitening practices designed to exclude gay men of color from largely White GLBT institutions: "the attempt to patrol the borders of whiteness in gay-owned business establishments seems to be a systematic practice to ensure only certain types of people are allowed into gay bars" (Han, 2007, p. 60). Ahmed (2006) intimated a similar logic in her theorization of habits and space, suggesting that Whiteness is a form of "bad habit" (p. 129) in which White people are allowed to occupy space otherwise restricted to non-White bodies. In inhabiting such space, the space is transformed into the quality of the bodies occupying it—that is, the White bodies. Thus, in the context of GLBT communities, the exclusion of the bodies of gay men of color ensures that White gay men continue to assume the Whiteness of the space, reinforcing the equation of gay and White.

The proliferation of media images of White gay men is a form of subtle racism that perpetuates a monolithic view of the GLBT community in which gay men of color are constructed as outsiders looking in. Far from innocent, the circulation of such images functions as a divisive trope intended to produce an idealized imagery of the cultural community as White, legitimizing White power and privilege. The invisibility of gay men of color within cultural spaces such as gay advertisements and magazines further augments the notion of their subordination:

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

Juxtaposed to the affirming images and messages White gay men daily receive about themselves, gay men of color experience devalued and discredited identities related to the diminution of their sexual currency.[10] Comparative studies of gay print media have consistently shown that White gay men are depicted more often on the covers and inside the pages of commercial gay magazines than their racialized counterparts.[11] For instance, in

his analysis of the representations of queers of color in Québec's three main gay magazines (*Fugues*, *RG*, and *Être*), Roy (2012) found that White gay men—regardless of age—accounted for the significant number of those represented on these magazine covers, at 89.4 percent. This finding is consistent with that of previous studies: the general aesthetic tendencies of comparable leading magazines reinforce a dominant, White, representation of male beauty (Han, 2008b).

Through its endorsement of White, gay male beauty, the gay print media reinforces the value of Whiteness, while at the same time resisting and stymieing discussions about racism. This stance serves to contradict any notion of ignorance as innocent or disorganized: "Ignorance—the privilege of not having to know about something—is calculated" (Morgan, 1996, pp. 280–281). In the sense described here, the subjugation of gay men of color, through a carefully calculated representation, "promotes a vision of the gay community where 'race' [becomes] a non-issue" (Han, 2008b, p. 15). These contrived attempts at diversity and inclusivity notwithstanding, gay men of color continue to be affected by discriminatory practices. Devastatingly, their experience of racism is linked to poor mental and physical health.

A major factor contributing to the experience of racism among gay men of color is that, within the mainstream gay culture, the White gay man is celebrated as possessing the standard, ideal beauty.[12] White gay male beauty is applied to all other gay men, without regard for cultural specificity in shaping hegemonic notions of desirability and social relationships. But White beauty is achieved through framing non-White racial beauty as ugly. Hence, gay men of color are reminded of their diminished sexual capital or currency in the marketplace of desire, and their pool of romantic interests is significantly reduced.

White gay men have grown up and been socialized in a cultural context that amplifies their importance and value.[13] They have not been conditioned to think about race and its related unearned privileges. Race and racism, including how the beauty discourse is shaped, is something that happens to other people, people who do not look like them. White gay men's unquestioned dominant position over non-Whites in the beauty parade is consistent with their experience of living in a society that prioritizes their reality and perspective. Their Whiteness thus assumes an unassailable status, supported by the ubiquity in gay communities of positive White images and the expectation of racial comfort and belonging. Constructing White beauty as supreme means that different racial and ethnic groups end up competing against each other for the next best spot in the beauty hierarchy, so as to avoid the social pathology or stigma of one's group being branded the least desirable.

Often, the outcome of this process is influenced by the actions (or lack thereof) of White gay men. So, White gay men's prioritizing of Latin

American men as the most desirable among non-White racial groups reinforces their attractive value. In turn, other gay men of color may judge their self-worth and value based on the ability to date a White or Latin American gay man, placing their psychological health at risk (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Poon, Ho, Wong, Wong, & Lee, 2005). A study of internet sex ads, documenting the differential value placed on gay men from diverse racial and ethnic minority groups, emphasized this point—being rejected or devalued because of one's race can result in psychological distress (Paul, Ayala, & Choi, 2010). Ahmed (2006) summarized it best: "In a way, if Whiteness becomes what is 'above,' then Whiteness is what allows some bodies to move 'upward'" (p. 137). Ultimately, what is important to understand about this hierarchical system of racialized beauty is the ability of White gay men to maintain and extend their power, by narrowly defining beauty ideals through a White frame of reference, without regard for the damage or impact their actions may cause.

RACIAL STEREOTYPES AND SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION OF GAY MEN OF COLOR

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

Despite the marginal representation of gay men of color in commercial gay magazines, certain aspects of their bodies are overrepresented in salacious and sensual images. That is to say, while the entire bodies of gay men of color may not always be fully represented on the covers of *Fugues*, *RG*, and *Être*, some parts of their bodies are "often fetishized and exoticized as objects of desire" (Roy, 2012, p. 181; see also Brennan et al., 2013). Cropping photographs to show body parts in place of the entire body reduces gay men of color to consumable, commoditized objects. It invalidates the existence of gay men of color and demonstrates how racialized images can affect self-perception and bolster negative racial perceptions of gay men of color in others.

Sexual objectification has been defined as "the experience of being treated as a body (or collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 174). White gay men fetishize and commoditize body parts of gay men of color, such as

their penises; this sexual objectification is both exploitive and dehumanizing (Grov, Saleh, Lassiter, & Parsons, 2015). Gay men of color are made to feel inadequate or embarrassed about themselves when they do not "measure up" to the standards and racially imposed stereotypes enacted on them by White gay men. One study explored the relationship between body image and social oppression among 61 ethnoracialized gay men in Toronto (Brennan et al., 2013). Among the study's findings was that unreasonably high expectations placed on gay men of color, expectations that White gay men had largely escaped, might contribute to low self-esteem and reinforce existing stereotypes and taboos related to their bodies. One participant from the Black, African, and Caribbean group in Brennan et al.'s (2013) study, whose sentiment echoed many others, was quoted as saying:

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

Such unfair racist expectations are not limited to Black, African, and Caribbean gay men. The same study also found that East and Southeast Asian men, for example, were subjected to a form of feminization, emasculating their bodies to justify their submissive sexual position in anal intercourse. One participant stated:

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

The feminization of Asian men is based on a binary construction of hegemonic masculinity, in which White men understand themselves as "properly" masculine (as opposed to the hypersexualized, hyperdeviant image of Black men) and Asian men as subordinate and effeminate. Constructed racial stereotypes concerning the gender models of masculinity and femininity serve more than just sexual position, however. They also determine one's place on the social and sexual desirability scales: "If gay white men are masculine, they are masculine compared to gay Asian men. If masculinity is desirable

and femininity is not, then clearly white men are desirable but Asian men are not" (Han, 2013, p. 97).

American research by Robinson (2008) on the structural dimensions of romantic relationships in online dating environments suggested that sexual approbation and desirability were tied to the performance of sex role stereotypes. For example, many studies have associated Asian gay men with the stereotype of the submissive bottom (although other research has contradicted this; see Han et al., 2014a; Robinson, 2008; Tan, Pratto, Operario, & Dworkin, 2013). Yet, in many accounts, Asian gay men's effort to neutralize the single story of their perceived femininity thrives. Rather than distancing themselves from the submissive stereotype, thereby leaving the issue unacknowledged and unaddressed, some Asian gay men have spoken out against this stereotype, saying that they "want to be the man in the relationship" (Han et al., 2014a, p. 229). Other gay men of color have reported similar experiences. A common theme underlying the so-called Mandingo mythology is that Black men have extremely large penises, which makes them ideal as tops during anal intercourse.[14] R. K. Robinson's results demonstrated that Black MSM who identified as bottoms received far fewer messages of interest compared to those who identified as tops, thus confirming the Mandingo sexual fantasy advanced by Boykin (1996) and McBride (2005).

Despite the negative consequence of being overlooked for not conforming to the masculine insertive stereotype, this study clearly demonstrated the limits of racial stereotypes and sex roles, by revealing the fluidity in conception of sex roles among Black MSM. The needs of sexual-minority men of color—Black or otherwise—who may wish to assume sexual positions other than those prescribed for them by the stereotypes become secondary to those of White nonheterosexual men engaged in racialized sexual encounters.[15]

Notwithstanding gay men of color's experience with racism in the context of gay life, there is in fact no shortage of interest in them for indiscriminate sexual pleasure. But the objectification of their body parts, for the sexual enjoyment of White gay men, reflects the unimportance of their human worth and value. Gay men of color are valued only to the extent that they are able to satisfy the exotic fetish of White gay men.[16] As persons, they are mere commodities for the spectacle of White curiosity. Their mortal existence is rendered a footnote in the drive for an exotic encounter. Far from a shift in consciousness on the part of White gay men, the practice of only valuing the body parts of gay men of color is not different from rejecting them as romantic partners. Sexual objectification is the enactment of power; it is a mode of relation in which the dominant group "innocently" exercises control over people with less power. In doing so, they become blind to the full humanity and complexities of the objects of their desire (Ayres, 1999; Green, 2008; Han, 2008b).

An American study by Teunis (2007) reached a similar conclusion. Reflecting on the sexual power dynamic involved in the process of sexual objectification of Black men, the author suggested that White gay men, in expecting to be catered to sexually by gay men of color, maintain positions of privilege and dominance. Even when they take the sexually submissive, bottom, role with Black men, White gay men ensure that power remained firmly in their control. Black men, like other gay men of color, are merely made to perform the sexual role that had been scripted for them.

THE NEW, ONLINE SEXUAL RACISM

In the past, racism was mostly perpetrated in volatile, emotional, and often face-to-face confrontations. Nowadays, the direct and often indirect racism of the online world has been added to this dynamic, targeting gay men of color, especially in personal ad sites used for cruising and locating potential sex partners.[17] This type of social discrimination has been described as sexual racism, which is said to occur in the context of sex or romantic relationships when one partner rejects another based on racial identity (Callander, Newman, & Holt, 2015; Stember, 1978).

Overt, blatant forms of racism very likely contribute to the displacement of related racist behaviors onto new spaces of contestation, such as the internet. As some social commentators have implied, the internet represents the latest frontier where racism is being propagated, debated, and contested (Chee, 2012; Manske, 2014; Weber, 2012). The movement of bodies into technological space assures that perpetrators of racism are protected by the shield of anonymity afforded their targets (Callander, Holt, & Newman, 2012; Paul et al., 2010; Poon et al., 2005). Such anonymity means that gay White "men [can] express blatantly racist comments in exchanges of messages and be shielded from any real-time interpersonal or social consequences" (Paul et al., 2010, p. 6).

Among gay men of color, identification of racial discrimination in this context is unequivocal; racial politics are not filtered out on these sex-seeking websites (Callander, Holt, & Newman, 2012, 2015; Paul et al., 2010). Nevertheless, what is important to understand about this prejudice is that it is an exclusionary form of sexual segregation based on race. Members of the dominant racial group, White gay men, have the power to deny sexual approbation to and shun same-sex activity with men from racialized groups, whom they perceive as sexually undesirable or to have a devalued sexual currency.[18]

Several studies have examined the phenomenon of online sexual racism, noting how the issue of race factors into the production of sexual

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

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

> However, when I'm online it's a constant reminder in terms of . . . the details of the ad and the specifics. You know, if they say "Asian only" or more frequently, "no Asians," then I say oh, yeah, that's right. That's me. . . . In the online world, it's all about the specifics, so it's either, you know, "looking for Asian" or "no Asians, please." So it's kind of like, it's hard not to, you know, it's hard to ignore it. It's constantly in your face. (Paul et al., 2010, p. 7)

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

Gosine's (2007) personal exploration of, to use his words, "'race' play" (p. 140) in the Toronto chat rooms at gay.com illustrated a comparable occurrence. He alternated between his true (Indian) and pseudo (White) racial identities, to examine the interactive influence of race "on the organization, flow of dialogues and relationships between users in the chat rooms" (Gosine,

2007, p. 140). Based on a comparative analysis of instances where he identified as Indian and passed as White, he found that White men responded more positively to the latter than they did the former, with conversations often ending abruptly once it was revealed that he was not White. He recounted one such conversation between him ("Garf23") and a potential suitor ("badpup"), to demonstrate the salience of race in online interactions:

<badpup> What's ur background?
<Garf23> Indian
<badpup> Oh
<Garf23> "Oh?"
<badpup> Not into that Sorry

Consistent with findings from other studies, this interaction between "badpup" and "Garf23" typifies the overt racism encountered by gay men of color in online dating sites such as gay.com. While some people may view the author's (i.e., Gosine, 2007) chosen method with skepticism, similar conclusions were reached in research employing comparable methods to investigate the occurrence of sexual racism online and in gay social venues such as nightclubs (see Caluya, 2006; das Nair & Thomas, 2012; Raj, 2011). This suggests that, regardless of the method chosen to collect the data, the same results are found time and again.

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

Online technologies for sexual and intimate encounters are constituted by race and imbued with negative affect. Two consistent effects of sexual racism have been identified in the literature, along with the corresponding impacts they have for gay men of color. First, this form of discrimination may

contribute to feelings of indifference and rejection of members from their own racial and cultural groups.[19] Such dislike or aversion has been likened to individual self-contempt or hatred. For example, Han (2007) postulated that among same-sex men of color, the exaltation of White men perpetuates negative racialized stereotypes in which White men are constructed as ideal partner preferences and men of color are viewed in pejorative terms. Romantic or sexual relations between men from the same racial backgrounds may even be perceived as incestuous (Brennan et al., 2013).

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

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

The consistency of these findings is not surprising, since gay men of color are continually exposed to overt and subtle forms of racism. The cumulative effect of racism-induced stress can take a toll on psychological well-being and produce feelings of powerlessness and low self-esteem, which can then heighten health-risk behaviors. Despite this pattern of relationship, there remains some question whether race-based sexual desires constitute racism (Callander, Newman, & Holt, 2015). In the online profiles of White gay men seeking men for sex, several of Paul et al.'s (2010) participants expressed reservation about whether race-based sexual preferences were necessarily racist, even when they or members of their own groups were rejected or excluded as potential sexual partners because of the color of their skin. One Vietnamese man was quoted as saying: "I don't think it's racism, necessarily. You know, it's people's preferences" (Paul et al., 2010, p. 7).

More than just about personal preference, however, splitting desirability along racial lines illustrates how the structure of systemic racism operates to privilege a White, middle-class gay ideal and aesthetic. Gay men of color live

in a culture that depreciates them and exalts White gay men.[20] The preferential treatment for White men over men of color fuels competition for their interest as partners and may result in the latter finding themselves in compromising positions not of their choosing, such as being unable to negotiate safe-sex practices (Ridge et al., 1999; Teunis, 2007). Further, statements such as those of the Vietnamese man above—suggesting that White gay men's exclusion of gay men of color as sexual partners is not racist—are problematic for their apologetic stance. Such attitudes legitimize and contribute to internalized racism that can lead gay men of color to think of themselves and each other as inferior:

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

Han's (2013) observation about the way many Asian gay men—and by extension other gay men of color—contribute to their own oppression is illustrative of how racism can operate as an open wound. Despite repeated rejection by White gay men, gay men of color may hold out the hope that White gay men will come to appreciate and love them for who they are. Sadly, this expectation for White approval leaves gay men of color unable to live their lives to the fullest. When validation and recognition of their worth from White gay men does not come, the experience of rejection can be degrading. It can feel like a reopening of a wound that has not fully healed. Repeated many times over, it is not hard to see how damaging this action can be to the individual and collective psychological health of gay men of color, which may include the loss of connection to supportive racial and ethnic networks.

This is why, when gay men of color dismiss White gay men's exclusion of gay men of color as merely "preference," they enable White gay men to become blind to the cultural circumstances that guide their beliefs and shape their decisions. These cultural circumstances are underpinned by White gay men's position of privilege and dominance, which is supported and reinforced by systemic racism, as embedded in the social structures and institutions of gay men's communities and the broader Canadian society.

The power of sexual racism lies in its ability to evade attention and scrutiny—to disguise itself as something other than what it truly is: a racist practice that is profoundly shaped by the logic of White racial supremacy. Racialized beliefs that support the pattern of the sexual preference for White gay men reinforce structures of power, where Whiteness is constructed as superior and non-Whiteness as inferior. It is no wonder that gay men of color,

according to one study of sexual desirability, were more likely to exclude men of other races who are not White: 97 percent of Asian men, 90 percent of Latino men, and 88 percent of Black men stated a sexual preference for White men (Rafalow, Feliciano, & Robnett, 2017).

From this example, it is easy to see how the structures of power that privilege and place a premium value on White gay men are implicated in the imbalance of power that creates and maintain hierarchies of sexual desires. The reproduction of racialized hierarchies further excludes and marginalizes gay men of color from gay communities and spaces aesthetically defined as White. Rather than accepting the discourse of racialized preferences as simply personal preference, this thinking might best be understood as rooted in larger structures of power and racialized beliefs that collude in actively promoting Whiteness as the norm.

LOOKING BELOW THE SURFACE OF RACISM

The kind of racism suffered by gay men of color in GLBT communities and described in this book may be painful to contemplate by the White gay men and others in those communities who believe they are a bulwark against various societal oppressions—even while unknowingly perpetuating them. The trifecta of race-based social exclusion, sexual objectification, and sexual racism are manifestations of how societal privileges benefit White gay men over gay men of color. These are not issues to be isolated or extricated from the larger structural system of racism, which organizes gay men's communities, social networks, and institutions and structures. Clearly and poignantly, this racism serves to illustrate the very underlying patterns of domination and suppression that the GLBT communities were first set up to counter. These are patterns that affect everyone. Their roots go very deep, and they affect not only the gay men of color concentrated on in this book; these men are not an unusual case, an outlier. They are not somehow individual "bad apple" cases of something having gone wrong. In fact, they are the tip of an iceberg: they tell us what is going on underneath the surface of society, if only society would choose to look. In this book, I hope to have provided some of the means with which to do that.

NOTES

1. Fleras, 2014; Henry & Tator, 2010; Pon, Giwa, & Razack, 2016; Yee & Dumbrill, 2016.

2. See Brennanet al., 2013; Crichlow, 2004; George et al., 2012; Gibbs & Jones, 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han, 2007, 2008a; Han, 2013; Hemphill, 1991; hooks, 1989; Husbands et al., 2013; Manalansan, 1996; McBride, 2005; Nero, 2005; Sohng & Icard, 1996.

3. Eshref, 2009; Fung, 1996; Han, 2008b; Roy, 2012.

4. Ayres, 1999; Caluya, 2006; Husbands et al., 2013; Roy, 2012.

5. Brennan et al., 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han, 2008b; Norsah, 2015.

6. Brennan et al., 2013; Choi et al., 2011; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han et al., 2015; Nakamura et al., 2013; Ro et al., 2013.

7. Bérubé, 2001; Cho, 1998; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han, 2008b; Ratti, 1993; Riggs, 1989.

8. Brennan et al., 2013; Diaz, 1998; George et al., 2012; Giwa, 2010; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Green, 2008; Han, 2007; O'Neill, 1999.

9. Brennan et al., 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Minwalla, Rosser, Feldman, & Varga, 2005; Norsah, 2015.

10. Green, 2007; Husbands et al., 2013; McKeown, Nelson, Anderson, Low, & Elford, 2010; Walcott, 2006.

11. Eshref, 2009; Han, 2008b; Roy, 2012; Saucier & Caron, 2008; Sonnekus & van Eeden, 2009.

12. Brennan et al., 2013; Callander, Newman & Holt, 2015; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Green, 2008; Roy, 2012.

13. Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Choi et al., 1999; Harro, 2000; Pease, 2010; Roy, 2012.

14. e.g., Brennan et al., 2013; Husbands et al., 2013; Paul et al., 2010; Plummer, 2007; Teunis, 2007.

15. Green, 2005; Han, 2007; Han et al., 2014a; Husbands et al., 2013; Teunis, 2007.

16. Crichlow, 2004; Fung, 1996; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; McBride, 2005; Teunis, 2007.

17. Brown, 2003; Paul et al., 2010; Phua & Kaufman, 2003; Plummer, 2007.

18. Brown, 2003; Caluya, 2006; Green, 2007; Han, 2007; McKeown et al., 2010; Phua & Kaufman, 2003.

19. See Ayres, 1999; Phua & Kaufman, 2003; Poon et al., 2005; Ramirez, 2003.

20. Boykin, 2005; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han, 2009; Poon & Ho, 2008.

Chapter 3

Sociospatial Contexts of Racism in Gay Men's Communities in Ottawa

"Are Gay Communities Dying or Just in Transition?" is the title of a study by Rosser, West, and Weinmeyer (2008), in which the authors examined factors underlying the changes in gay communities. Their thesis, backed by findings from their study, was that gay communities were disappearing or on the decline, due to multiple structural factors. For example, gains in civil rights for GLBT people, and their increased social acceptance in society, had minimized their risk of experiencing discrimination. This had resulted in straight communities moving into gay communities and vice versa, mirroring Ghaziani's (2019) concept of *spatial plurality*. At the same time, the gentrification of gay-identified neighborhoods was forcing many gay clubs, pubs, and other businesses to shutter, in order to make way for expensive condominium developments and other infrastructural ventures. Such displacement could explain an observed decrease of gay people in visibility and community identification, as well as their movement into the suburbs. What's more, the burgeoning virtual gay community, which Rosser et al. reported had now eclipsed the offline physical community, suggested an unrecoverable demise of once-thriving gay enclaves.

However, as Ghaziani (2019) has argued, gay communities are not disappearing; rather, they are becoming far more diverse and dispersed. Arguably, Rosser et al.'s (2008) discussion assumes a spatially singular gay community. But this concept contrasts with the spatial plurality advanced by Ghaziani, out of which diverse gay spaces are seen to emerge. Juxtaposed to the view that gay communities are disappearing, spatial plurality views the development of "mini-enclaves"—expressed in terms of communal spaces outside of gay communities—as significant compared to the question of whether gay communities are in decline.

From these debates, one thing is clear: The realities of life continue to unfold in gay communities, whether virtual or offline. In fact, the structural

issues identified by Rosser et al. (2008) may have less relevance for those who find themselves already excluded or marginalized from the predominantly White middle-class gay culture. According to Lewis (2017), gay men's internalization of the neoliberal urban development strategies—for career development, home ownership, and social hypermobilities—operates along racial lines. Thus, while the effects of gentrification may impact the entire gay community, for example, racial and ethnic minorities are the groups most negatively and disproportionately affected by the changes around them. Ghaziani's (2019) work is therefore instructive in its critical reminder of the need to not dwell on or overemphasize the loss of the gay community, as doing so could overshadow other important developments taking place, such as the location and relocation patterns of people from the gay community. Further, if we consider, as Ghaziani does, that gay communities are expanding and not disappearing, this understanding makes intelligible the existence of cultural enclaves where many people continue to live, work, or patronize businesses. In this way, the need to better understand the experiences of individuals and groups within gay communities remains, given that these spaces have not always—if ever—been inclusive, considerate, or attuned to the circumstances of gay men of color.

This chapter turns to the crucial sites where the gay men of color (participants in the study reported on in this book) experienced racism in the GLBT community of Ottawa in the period 2012 to 2017. Their accounts reveal how racism and White supremacy function in gay men's physical and online communities, reproducing a homogenized White space in which gay men of color are positioned as outsiders looking in, or as vessels for the fulfillment of White men's sexual fantasies. The unique perspectives of these men are not presented to reflect a standard experience of all gay men of color. Yet their insights can contribute to our understanding of racism-related stress and provide a counternarrative to the predominant Whiteness of the established gay men's community. Gay men of color are subjected to racist situations in the White gay spaces they patronize, negatively impacting their health and well-being. Thus, obtaining empirical data about how gay men of color experience racism in mainstream White GLBT communities is vital and can suggest ways for combating it.

WHERE AND HOW DID THE GAY MEN OF COLOR EXPERIENCE RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION IN THE GLBT COMMUNITY OF OTTAWA?

General and Institutional Contexts of Racism

Participants declared that racism permeated all areas of Ottawa's GLBT community. They said it was everywhere but nowhere, referring to the dual

expression of overt and covert racism through which White gay men exercised their power and dominance over gay men of color. Some even raised the concern that racism was much worse there than in the city of Ottawa in general. Anil, a participant from the South Asian group, said: "I would agree . . . that racism is kind of everywhere in the GLBT community . . . it's to some extent worse than it is in the broader public . . . you have more visible South Asian people." For Anil, the lack of a visible representation of South Asian people reflected the extent and degree of racism in the GLBT community of Ottawa compared to racism in the rest of the city, where South Asian people were more visibly represented. In the former context, the impression was given that South Asian people were not gay or gay people were not South Asian. This logic of erasure maintains a racial hierarchy, which privileged and asserted the humanity of White people while denying the same to gay men of South Asian descent. In the latter context, the visibility of South Asians in the broader society suggested that they were part of the social fabric of Ottawa, or that efforts were being made by city officials and planners to include them. Notwithstanding the presence of racism in both contexts, Anil seemed to intimate that racism was much worse in the GLBT community because of the form of misrecognition encountered by South Asian gay men. In a word, they did not exist.

Anil's point connected deeply to the views shared by other gay men of color in the study, who expressed feeling invisible. The men perceived that White gay men acted as community gatekeepers, deciding who could and could not be a member:

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

Matthews's observation about the lack of mixing between different racial and ethnic groups points to a possible explanation for why racism persists. The lack of integration reinforced the idea that differences between White and non-White gay men were too large to overcome, with White gay men preferring to keep with their own racial group. The segregation of racial groups enabled White gay men in particular to maintain their superior social status; mixing with non-White others might be thought to put them in jeopardy because of their portrayal as inferior to White people.

A number of participants also discussed how racism was deeply embedded in the institutional fabric of the community, such as in the mainstream gay media, including advertisements, magazines, and businesses that sold goods and provided services. Gay men of color felt invisible or unimportant in these contexts. Their exclusion served to reinforce their marginalization and

reflected the dominant White group's attempt to erase their existence from the community entirely:

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

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

The aforementioned quotes demonstrate two ways that gay men of color were made to feel that they did not belong in the GLBT community of Ottawa. In Dexter's case, we see how gay men of color are often an afterthought in White imagination; they are not directly seen as central figures or main characters in stories that the community chooses to tell about itself. Here, on the part of the staff person from the local business, the image of beauty is a White gay man. Brown gay men are not instinctively seen to be beautiful as underwear models. When attempts are made to include gay men of color, as was the case with Dexter, the impression is that White gay men are doing gay men of color a charitable favor. Indeed, as Dexter observed, the fact that he was later asked to be a model may be a function of him looking aesthetically like his White friends rather than a desire on the part of the business to reflect the diversity of the GLBT community. In other words, Dexter's proximity to Whiteness may have prompted the request, which he aptly declined.

Similarly, Amare articulated the challenge of working in a health and social service organization where there was a reluctance to acknowledge the unique lived experiences of Black gay men. He recounted how, among the White service providers that he worked with, White gay men's experiences were viewed as being interchangeable with Black gay men's experiences. For this reason, his colleagues did not see any reason why the HIV/AIDS poster they used for outreach with Black gay men needed to include the images of Black gay men. Once more, the message being communicated was that the needs and concerns of Black gay men for culturally responsive service were not as important as Amare was making it out to be. After all, Black gay men should be able to see themselves reflected in the images of White gay men.

Interpersonal and Intergroup Situational Contexts of Racism

Participants unanimously agreed that they encountered racism in one-on-one situations and in groups with White people. The dynamic of these encounters often meant that the gay men of color felt that White gay men ignored them or only cursorily acknowledged their presence in public spaces and had no real intention of getting to know them. When gay men of color wanted romantic relationships, they often found that White gay men would rebuff their advances and opt for platonic friendship instead, out of fear of dating someone from a different racial and ethnic background:

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

For gay men of color attracted to White men, the likelihood of romance was diminished, since White men were likely to seek out other White men before considering men outside their race. Repeated exposures to racism can dissuade gay men of color from seeking out individuals for romantic opportunities:

> I've had people come up to me and go, "Well, I don't date Asians because you're all bottom." So I'm like, "Well, I'm not." And they go, "Well, you can't . . . you have to be," or, "You're all very submissive." Well, I'm not. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

> Whereas with someone who is a minority, if you have someone who is more inclined to be attracted to a Caucasian, you are definitely limited in your selection. . . . Minorities will be less inclined to approach a Caucasian man, you know, if they have had these experiences of racism. (Al, East Asian, gay)

> I think that if you are White, you may have more selection because you are kind of at that top, you are the epitome of that pyramid. . . . And then, if you are not White, then you essentially start [thinking], "Oh, I'll never get a White guy," or, "I'll never get this, I'll never get that." (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Among the different groups of gay men of color in the study, the color of their skin was a salient reminder of their otherness. Compared to White gay men, gay men of color were believed to rank low on the sexual and romantic desirability hierarchy. There was the belief that, in the eyes of White gay

men, they were not relationship material. Even when they attempted to challenge the stereotypes about their racial groups, they encountered resistance from White gay men, who insisted that they fit into the denigrating fantasy and tropes that might not represent the fullness of their humanity. The reality, according to participants, is that for gay men of color attracted to White gay men, their options are limited. This is because White gay men might opt for relationships with other White men rather than with gay men of color. The experience of racism may, however, complicate this process for gay men of color, leaving them circumspect about seeking out White gay men for relationship. In this way, a past experience of racism can negatively shape the perception of gay men of color about White gay men, such that all White gay men may come to be seen as racist. In turn, potential White suitors—in the case of gay men of color attracted to White gay men—are inadvertently missed or overlooked.

Sometimes, the racism could be so blatant that gay men of color were left silent or speechless:

Justin: Well, one thing in the community, frequently me and two other friends of mine that are Black . . . we have all experienced this reoccurring where, out of the blue, in the bar, somebody will come up and assume that we deal drugs, that we have drugs for sale or that we know where to get drugs (laughs), especially the heavy drugs. It's crazy.

Giwa: What kind of heavy drugs are you talking about?

Justin: Well, I . . . have been asked if I could get crack, coke, [and] Ecstasy in the bars. (Justin, Black, gay)

Justin's experience of being mischaracterized as a drug dealer represents a blatant form of racism. The only reason he and his friends were being approached by White gay men was because they were seen to fit the racial profile of someone who was a drug dealer or supplier. The association of Blackness with drug use reifies the idea that, while Black men cannot be gay members of the GLBT community, they can most definitely be drug dealers whom White gay men can count on to meet their drug needs. Who deals and consume drugs is, thus, shaped along racial lines. Drug dealing is constructed as something that Black people and not White people do.

At other times, however, the racism could be as subtle as simply refusing to stand or sit beside someone of color at a gay venue:

> I came out in Ottawa, so I was looking for that place of affirmation. But when you go to those places, it's like the people don't see you. You can walk into the gay bar and no one will see you. And even the place that you go and stand, people start moving away. And yeah, if you go and sit down, no one will sit around

> you. People will sit around when it's the last seat, the actual last seat. And [the racism] was unspoken, it was unspoken. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

Kwame's quote is illustrative of the pain that can result from the Whites' fear of the non-White in social spaces where they are not thought to belong. There is no shortage of reminders or clues of their non-belongingness. White gay men pretending to not see gay men of color in gay bars or clubs and not wanting to sit or stand too close to them perpetuate an unfounded fear of contagion. The presence of gay men of color in these spaces is unreasonably interpreted to soil the environment for White gay men, who are then made to feel out of place.

The subtlety of racism common to this experience is such that racist incidents appear to be either innocent, unintentional, or nonexistent:

> I remember sitting down—getting there early once and there was a long table and I sat in the middle. And everyone gathered here [on one side], and they're like, "Oh, we don't have enough chairs." I'm, like, "There's some here." "Oh, well, it's okay. We'd rather move another table here." (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

> At the . . . Christmas party, . . . you could see the guilt all over his face because he was looking at me very condescending and, like, "Why are you here? Can't you see we're all White?" kind of look. . . . I know when somebody is being racist because I grew up with it most of my life. . . . I mean, you can't pull the wool over my eyes. . . . It's, like, I can hear what you're thinking. (Justin, Black, gay)

> As an Arab, . . . the first thing they will ask is "Where is your gun," right? That could just [be] because you are an Arab and it is associated with having a gun or being a terrorist. It was a one-on-one conversation, in public, with people passing by. I was asked loudly, where's my gun. (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Although the participants quoted earlier all experienced racism, the racism was implicit or indirectly expressed. The choice of seating, away from Jordan, communicated that he was not one of the other White gay men. Even when Jordan presented the opportunity for everyone to sit together, pointing to empty and available chairs, his offer was rebuffed. The unequivocal message from the group to Jordan was that they did not want to be seen or associated with him in public. The same dynamic occurred for Justin, who was made to endure the disparaging looks of White gay men at a Christmas function, with the purpose being to remind him that he was not welcomed at the party. Ali's experience, on the other hand, showed how racism and Islamophobia functioned in gay men's communities. The idea that because

he was an Arab/Middle Eastern meant that he must be a terrorist with a gun perpetuates a negative trope, which might fuel hatred and incite violence against him. The fact that Ali was not in possession of a gun did not matter; it only mattered that he was Arab/Middle Eastern. While it may be self-evident to the questioner that Ali was not a terrorist or in possession of a gun, the point of the question was to indicate that he did not belong, because people like him were dangerous.

Likewise, participants reported being objectified—treated as if they were properties for the pleasure of White men to gaze at, while simultaneously being found repulsive. This objectifying behavior made them feel uncomfortable or insulted:

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

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

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

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

of race-based rejection. A participant in the South Asian group, Dexter, said: "Like, you could work out your whole life and be . . . jacked like Mr. M and you'd never experience acceptance." Dexter touches on an important issue in gay men's communities, one centered on body image. One's physical appearance matters a lot; specific physical ideals are held in higher esteem than others. In particular, gay men with muscular physique are considered to be the standard for others to aspire toward; in turn, they are rewarded with power and influence in gay men's communities. Those who fall short of the muscular ideal are made to feel shame about their bodies through exclusionary practices that reinforce their assumed inadequacies and inability to achieve the muscular ideal. Yet, as Dexter pointed out, for gay men of color who do meet or exceed the muscular ideal, they continue to experience a lack of acceptance related to their racial disadvantage.

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

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

For Mr. M, the issue of attraction or lack thereof was not about racism that he may or may have not experienced. Rather, he saw the matter as being about the White gay man that he was interested in not finding his body type attractive. Mr. M's characterization of the rejection as related to him not being found physically attractive, or about the White gay man having a specific preference, conflicted with Dexter's description of Mr. M as being "jacked." It is possible that Mr. M, not wanting to deal with the racism directed at him, chose to alter his understanding of the issue rather than challenge the racism head on. What emerges from Mr. M's account is that, in discussion about gay body image, the idealized male physique is presented as being divorced from other intersecting identities such as race and ethnicity; it assumes the myth of neutrality. However, in gay men's communities, simply having a muscular or athletic body without the race to match can lead gay men of color to feel left out or not valued.

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

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

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

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

> My experience is, you know, I have gone online and, you know, tried to talk to people, but they would say, you know, "Caucasian only." Or, "White only," or "No Asians, no Blacks," you know? So that is where I have seen more of it. I don't see it going out because I mean, I don't think anybody would want to be outright racist toward you, to your face. So I see it more in the online sense. (Al, East Asian, gay)

As Dexter's and Al's quotes suggest the fact that gay men of color encountered racism online was not unusual, since racism was an unfortunate part of their daily lives in general. What is noteworthy is that they were more likely to experience blatant, direct, forms of gay racism online than in-person. The clear threat of physical violence against Dexter or the exclusionary and racist comment of "No Asians" directed at Al are examples of blatant racism. Both examples are important reminders that, even as gay racism has morphed to become more subtle and indirect (as discussed earlier), overt or blatant racism remains an endemic feature of gay men's communities. So, while one could conclude that the decline in blatant gay racism offline is reflective of the social progress made in eradicating racism in gay men's communities, it

is more likely that the internet has created a new home for White gay men to express their racist—and, at times Islamophobic—views knowing that the likelihood of them being confronted by the targets of their racist comments or behaviors in person was next to none. Thus, examining both blatant and subtle forms of gay racism directed at gay men of color remains critical to a deeper understanding of their lived experience.

These encounters with racism on online dating websites persisted regardless of whether gay men of color in the study met the requirements or dating checklists of White gay users:

> But I find that coming here [to Canada] and facing that sense of racism in the gay community where people . . . on, you know, Squirt or Craigslist [will say that] "You're not my type." "Well, what is your type?" You know, if someone's ad listing is saying, "I'm looking for someone who is understanding and financially and emotionally stable," I fill all of those requirements. But when I send a picture, I'm suddenly no longer their type. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

Jordan's account points to the untenable position that gay men of color may find themselves in online dating sites: even when they possess qualities that would make them ideal partner choices, such as having financial and emotional stability, they continue to be rejected by White gay men. Of particular concern is that the stated qualities of financial and emotional stability were the ones articulated by White gay men themselves. Yet, as Jordan's experience showed, it is not enough that gay men of color met these specific requirements; what mattered was that they were not White.

Cyber racism can also be manifested with respect to the suspension of rules of order and decorum, in which gay men of color are expected to acquiesce to the needs of White gay men:

> *Matthew:* . . . there are different etiquettes that I don't . . . buy into, but other people do.
> *Giwa:* What about etiquette?
> *Matthew:* Etiquettes online, you can pretty much say anything, and . . . there's no sort of limits. For example, I get messages online like, "Fuck me. Fuck me without a condom," which I would never encounter someone saying that in person to me. Why would you feel compelled to say that to me online? So, there are fewer limitations. (Matthew, East Asian, gay)

Matthew's experience demonstrates the double bind of racism experienced by gay men of color: they are seen either as undesirable or are fetishized by White gay men for their racial differences based on stereotypes about the cultural groups they belong to. Embedded in the process of fetishization,

however, is the unspoken racist trope about gay men of color as sexual beasts or vectors of diseases. The White gay man's emphasis on being fucked by Matthew, without condom, exemplifies this point. Matthew, in this exchange, is constructed as a means to an end. What is striking about Matthew's experience, albeit silent, is that, because the person making the request was White, it was not expected that Matthew would find the demand repugnant. The level of confidence demonstrated by the White gay man in making such a request speaks to an air of White superiority, in which White people are understood to be the preferred or idealized racial group. As a member of the idealized group, gay men of color such as Matthew must succumb to a desire to be fucked condomless or risk being passed over for another gay man of color.

Physiological and Psychosocial Impact of Racism on Sense of Community Connectedness

Participants in the study were unequivocal about the impact of racism on themselves and their relationship to the GLBT community: they generally reported feeling uninterested or uncomfortable with being in the mainstream Ottawa GLBT community because of the discrimination they were exposed to there. Instead, most preferred to connect with gay men from their own or other ethnoracial communities and described the significance of this connection in a positive way.

Professional (i.e., work) factors kept some connected to the GLBT community. Talking about the impact of racism on his connection to the broader GLBT community, Matthew, a participant in the East Asian group, observed: "Only because I work in the sector. I have a feeling that if I didn't work in the sector, I wouldn't be connected." The perception of the community as extremely cliquish added to a sense of exclusion for these men. Amare, a participant in the Black group, noted the cliquishness among White community members: "One thing I notice in Ottawa, it's so cliquey. People don't mix that easily like the other places, like people from Montréal or Toronto."

For some, this preference for connection was limited to those with reciprocal feelings; it was not felt for everyone. An inclination for connection with other gay men of color was not expressed equally for all persons:

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

Anil's description of the discrimination among Indian gay men demonstrates the challenge faced by them and other gay men of color who are

judged by others from their cultural communities as not measuring up. What becomes painfully obvious is that the same exclusionary standards applied by White gay men to rebuff sexual or romantic advances from gay men of color are being used by gay men of color alike to deny or discount each other as potential mates.

Regardless of the GLBT context, the experience of racism can have physical, psychological, and social impacts. Socially, gay men of color are made to feel that they don't belong and are reminded of this reality on a daily basis through exclusionary practices that normalize Whiteness:

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

Feeling socially rejected can take a psychological toll on the well-being of gay men of color; it can precipitate cognitive defenses to maintain emotional balance and limit beliefs of being "less-than" their White counterparts. In addition, physical and physiological responses to racism can exacerbate health problems:

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

Kwame's description of his experiences with racism in gay men's communities, especially racism's impact on his health, speaks to the stress pathways that can influence negative health outcomes. The added effects of racism exacerbated his already-existing medical condition, irritable bowel syndrome, such that he was forced to remove himself from the concerned social space. Taking this step allowed him to regroup or recuperate from the racist event. However, as Kwame further explained, the effects of racism were not limited to the physical dimension. Racism can and does affect one's psychological or mental well-being, and the experience itself can be traumatic. For Kwame, the trauma of racism was enough to keep him from going back to these communities out of fear that he would be subjected to the same negative treatment, with the racism-health cycle repeating itself. For Kwame, as other gay men of color in the study, the solution to this problem

was to find or create spaces for gay men of color where their full humanity would be affirmed.

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

> I think for sure . . . many Asian guys don't even feel connected or feel validated, and . . . they may feel like . . . they don't have as much sexual capital. So, I think that people who do experience racism . . . or discrimination will maybe resort to decisions that will lead to unsafe sex practices. (Matthew, East Asian, gay)

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

Matthew and Dexter painted a disconcerting reality that East Asian and South Asian gay men might be experiencing. The devaluation faced by these men in the gay marketplace of desire was an important factor in some of them choosing to engage in unprotected sex with White gay men. As both participants explained, East Asian and South Asian gay men might question their own worth and value when the approval of White gay men is not forthcoming. However, where such approval could be anticipated, they might be willing to engage in riskier sexual practices in return. This defeatist attitude—that because White gay men do not desire or value them means that they should not care about practicing safe sex—might influence the men's risk of HIV infection.

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

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

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

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

The challenge of being the only person of color at a curling club was enough for Mr. M to deal with, but the added subtle messages of "why are you here" made a challenging situation intolerable. As Mr. M noted, his biggest worry or concern was not his physical safety—perhaps he was accustomed to being the only person of color in many situations, and felt confident in his ability to handle difficult confrontations. But he could no longer put up with being made to feel uncomfortable and unwanted at the club. He had reached a critical point: he no longer had the energy to exert or try to convince White gay men that he deserved to be in the same space as them. Similarly, Kwame saw no point in talking to White gay men about their racism because of the usual tired obfuscation, refutation, and denial, all of which reinforced that he was the problem.

Racism, Self Identification, and Connection to Gay Men's Communities

Experiencing racism did not impact how the majority of participants self-identified. Many of them did not identify more with their ethnoracial identity because of the racism they encountered in the GLBT community. However, this was not true for two African participants from the Black group, who understood that their oppression was based on the visible marker of their skin complexion:

> For me, in North America, because this question is being asked in Ottawa, I do identify more with my ethnicity, Black or African, more than with my sexual orientation. In North America, people see my skin, but people don't see my sexual orientation. . . . When I tell people that I'm gay, they don't even believe it. Are you really sure, you don't look gay. In Ghana, I would say that I'm more gay than I am Black. . . . So it depends. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

In North America, these participants were more likely to experience intolerance and discrimination because of their race than because of their sexual

orientation, since people might not know that they were gay or same-gender-loving or homosexual. The same could not be said for their experience in their home countries in Africa, where Black people are the numerically dominant racial group. In this case, they would identify more with their sexual orientation for the reason stated earlier, in order to bring visibility and attention to this aspect of their identity.

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

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

> From a similar perspective, . . . I think to be Filipino is to have strong ties with the family. So, if you deviate from what is considered the norm, then you're not being a good Filipino. In a lot of ways, I had to suppress my own sexual expression whenever I was with my family. I would be kind of, like, separating the two [ethnocultural and gay identities]. It didn't work. I think there is a bit of a freedom about it now because I don't have family association here in Canada. I probably identify with my sexual identity. (Matthew, East Asian, gay)

> My ethnocultural identity makes up very little of who I am. I grew up in rural [Western Canada]. And especially being a gay person, when I did get encultured, like, when I encountered my culture or my tradition, I was rejected from it so aggressively that I just, I didn't identify with it, right. I identify as being more gay than I do South Asian. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Despite the challenges posed by the heterosexism of communities of color and the racism of the GLBT community, the men still felt it was possible for them to integrate their separate social realities, to live as whole beings. Their ethnoracial and sexual identities could be integrally connected—interlocking, rather than being isolated or compartmentalized. Amare, a participant in the Black group, remarked: "Yeah . . . it's exactly the same thing for me too. I do identify myself as, yeah, Black and gay, but because the society ask—they want like a label, which is so North American." A similar point was made regarding the interconnection of these identities, regardless of their distinct and unique features:

> Yeah, I'd say it's equal, you know. But it's just because they're very, they're sort of two separate worlds, right. And I mean, when I'm in one world obviously

> I feel more connected to that, and when I'm in the other world I feel more connected to the other. (Mr. M, South Asian, gay)

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

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

Chike's account reveals a yearning for an integrated whole, in which he no longer has to compartmentalize or catalogue himself into different boxes. His reference to intersectionality speaks to the desire for a unified, inseparable selfhood, which transcends an independent or one-dimensional view of social identities. His multiple and interdependent identities of race, sexuality, and disability work together to shape his experience of the gay men's community. However, perhaps because of the obstinacy of racism that he is subjected to, he feels inclined to identify more with his race and ethnicity, as a way to center his experience of racism.

Gay men of color, learning about who they are through their social environments, are vulnerable to discriminatory messages about themselves (Allport, 1954). Living in a racist and heterosexist society, these men are repeatedly judged for the color of their skin and for their sexual orientation. Having internalized negative messages about their racial or ethnic minority status and sexual identity, they begin to view themselves as less than their heterosexual and White counterparts. This feeling of inadequacy and worthlessness precipitates the tension that results in minority stress (Meyer, 1995, 2003a; Pearlin, 1999; and see chapter 1 of this book). For gay and bisexual men and

other sexual minorities, "negative regard from others therefore leads to negative self-regard and adverse mental health outcomes" (Meyer, 1995, p. 39).

WHOLE SELVES IN DIVIDED COMMUNITIES

In concert with ongoing debates over whether and to what extent the gay community is dying is the reality of racism experienced by gay men of color. These men's accounts revealed the manifestations of racism in institutional and interpersonal contexts, evidenced both in the physical and virtual online gay communities. The day-to-day experiences of overt and mostly subtle racism produced a negative sense of non-belonging, in which gay men of color were left feeling like social outcasts or pariahs. Their invisibility, reinforced by the logics of Whiteness, structured everyday interactions and relations such that they were left with limited opportunities to create intimacy and connections in sexual relationships. When on the off chance such an opportunity arose, an expectation for risky sexual behavior might follow. The real physiological and psychosocial effects of racism forced the gay men of color to reevaluate their connections to gay men's communities, whether because the experience aggravated preexisting health problems, putting them at increased risk for additional complications, or left them feeling exhausted from talking to White people about their racism. However, despite not being able to extricate themselves completely from the predominantly White gay men's community for professional or nonprofessional reasons, most of the men saw value in being among other gay men of color outside of that community, even when they had experienced other gay men of color reproducing racial dynamics of White hegemony in their interactions with them and with gay men from their racial/ethnic cultural communities.

Chapter 4

Causes and Factors Contributing to Racism in Gay Men's Communities in Ottawa

Assumptions of a unified gay men's community conceal more than they reveal about the insidious nature of racism. Part of the problem, as I alluded to earlier, stems from Canada's historical—and continuing—embrace of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism—a sociological, ideological, and political force—has become synonymous with Canadian identity and has served to solidify the myth of social progress.

For example, Canada always seeks to retain its global position as among the most tolerant countries in the world for immigrants and minorities, where freedom of expression and beliefs is sacrosanct. The growing migration and settlement there of people from diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds cements this position. The symbolic embracing of such immigrants to Canada further serves the ideological purpose of promoting ideas and ideals of harmony, unity and togetherness, which are played out in cultural celebrations such as Canadian Multiculturalism Day, June 27.

To manage this diversity, formal policies and practices have been implemented by different levels of government. The federal multiculturalism policy has evolved over time, from about 1971—when the idea was first being introduced—to the present, where efforts have focused on institutionalizing or establishing it as a norm. It has enjoyed incremental support from Canadians for its advancement of cultural integration and diversity of cultural expressions, as enshrined in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* of 1985.

Thus, as a defining characteristic of Canadian heritage and identity, multiculturalism shapes Canadians' understanding of themselves and Canada as a multicultural country. The sociological, ideological, and political discourses of multiculturalism affirm a belief in a Canadian society where everyone is imagined to get along. But this construction of Canada as a multicultural haven obfuscates important conversations about racism and discrimination,

which, when addressed, are asserted to be isolated incidents. Claims of racism and discrimination can thus be dismissed, deflected, or ignored.

One of the leading proponents of multiculturalism in Canada, Will Kymlicka (1998), argued in his book *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* that multiculturalism policy has worked because it has not promoted ethnic separatism or segregation. Separation might not have been the intent of the policy, considering its equity or rights-based and anti-racism/anti-discrimination foci in the 1980s and 1990s, respectively. Yet it is hard to ignore the ethnic and racial segregation observable in many regions across Canada today, including in contexts such as gay men's communities. This segregation persists despite the progressive reputation of Canada—and GLBT communities especially—as welcoming and inclusive spaces for all; where multiculturalism thrives. In fact, racism is a major issue in GLBT communities in general and in gay men's communities specifically (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012), where being a member of an "unsexy ethnic group is to be equated with an inferior form of existence" (Jackson, 2000, p. 184).

The factors that contribute to the experience of racism among gay men of color are multilayered. These factors have hardly been given the space to breathe in ways that can support community members to identify and take concrete steps to eliminate racism from gay men's communities. Stepping out of the shadows of the Canadian multicultural identity discourse, wherein the virtues of cultural plurality are promoted, is an act of creating discursive spaces for contesting and circulating counternarratives whose protagonists are gay men of color. The factors that the gay men of color in my study understood as contributing to their experiences of racism are presented in the following pages. A much-needed discussion, heretofore supplanted by the discourse of multiculturalism, it reveals the dimensions of racism experienced by gay men of color across gay social spaces.

CULTURAL FACTORS, WHITE FEAR, AND THE DENIAL OF RACISM

The participants discussed a number of key factors that they felt contributed to their own and other gay men of color's experience of racism or discrimination in the GLBT community of Ottawa. They were largely in agreement with the Canadian myth of social progress. Most had had a long-held belief in the country as a just society, but in the end, they expressed disillusionment with the reality of life in Canada.

Structural inequality in the labor force, for example, was an area where people of color were seen to fare worse than their White counterparts. The ubiquity of racism in the GLBT community cast doubt on the ability of gay

employers to hire on merit and to not discriminate based on ethnicity. Ali, a participant from the Arab/Middle Eastern group, remarked: "So if you apply for a job and the owner is, let's say, gay, and if the employee is an Arab, how much is that going to affect the decision of hiring or not, right?" Al, a participant from the East Asian group, agreed:

> For example, in the . . . workplace, . . . you still can't avoid some people having more biases toward other races. And you can't necessarily capture that. So, in an interview process, you may have one person who may not think they are racist, leaning toward . . . one candidate because they can identify more with them. [T]hey may look at a name which they, as well, can identify with, like some generic ones, like John or Alex, as opposed to, say, a more, you know, ethnic name. So it's there but, you know, it might be taking place on a subconscious level.

Most participants in the study found that White gay men had an internalized sense of dominance, attributable to this larger Canadian narrative of cultural superiority. According to them, White gay men would point to their own social values as progressive, making it difficult for them to gain insight and understanding into how their behavior and actions might be complicit in enacting racism. When feelings of superiority were challenged or an individual's behavior was called into question for being racist, the shared sentiment was that White gay men engaged in defensive moves that distanced them from the issue at hand, in an effort to rebalance the scale of dominance and reestablish their presumption of innocence:

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

> I think that there are racist people in Ottawa, but it's so politically correct here that people are so afraid to be seen or to be told off as being racist. . . . That guy that we were talking about earlier, . . . he made some . . . pretty banal stereotype about Asians. And then . . . I said, "You racist. Why would you say something like that?" And then he retorted, "Why do you think I'm racist? That's a really horrible thing for you to say." . . . And so I think there is racism . . . [and] people are afraid of being called out as being racist. (Matthew, East Asian, gay)

> I remember seeing a poster in the GLBTQ Center that said gay is the new Black. I really hate that slogan, for many reasons, but mainly because it makes

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

Across the different groups of gay men of color quoted earlier, omnipresent in their shared experiences is White gay men's abhorrence of being called out for their racist behaviors. Instead of being a teachable moment about what not to do because it is racist, White gay men in these encounters were more concerned with not being seen as racist, often challenging the gay men of color for daring to expose their racist ways. Evident in the men's accounts also is the potency of the culturally racist ways that acts of racism are effortlessly dismissed as inconsequential, a joke or "tongue-in-cheek," which reinforce the notion of Canadians as "perfect" for not perpetrating racism against people who are not White. For Chike, this belief was amplified or reinforced in popular culture, such as on television. It may in part explain the problem of racism in gay men's communities.

The usual Canadian narrative depicts an image of enlightenment and cultural superiority—the country is said to include people from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. This broad cultural sentiment of diversity and inclusion that Canadians pride themselves on—and which the Ottawa GLBT community also claimed as its own—was thought to be superficial. Participants found that White gay men were easily dismissive of gay men of color, seemingly because of ingrained racist beliefs. In doing so, White gay men were no different from their American neighbors:

> But then again, to be sidelined without first someone knowing you is . . . for me, it's appalling, and it's appalling it happens in Canada, a country that is supposedly open and more diverse and more accepting of all people versus, let's say, our neighbors down south. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

Some of the participants from the East Asian and South Asian groups noted that White gay men often relocated to Ottawa from small homogenous

towns and cities—for example, from the Canadian maritime provinces—where people of color were not significantly represented. The homogeneity of these places of origin was seen to negatively shape their worldview, in that most had grown up without exposure to people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, resulting in them lacking the motivation to push beyond cultural conditioning and upbringing. Consequently, when White gay men behaved in racist and discriminatory ways, they might have been unconscious of, or lacked awareness of, their racism. Lacking exposure to diversity held some explanatory power, in that racism could thus be perceived as not a deliberate act. On the contrary, it could be seen to operate outside of conscious awareness:

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

> I think it's different maybe for people who have . . . traveled or have had exposure to different cultures. . . . The White Canadians that I meet in the GLBT community in Ottawa, a lot of them have come from smaller towns and villages . . . maybe from the Maritimes or whatever, and Ottawa is the city to come to for the opportunity. So, perhaps there is that lack of exposure to people of different cultures or races, which they may have still taken on from their home towns. So, it's probably a work in progress. I don't think, for me, the racism in Ottawa isn't serious, but I think it actually comes from . . . lack of exposure as opposed to it being about direct hatred. (Matthew, East Asian, gay)

According to Mr. M and Matthew, while racism in gay men's communities in Ottawa was a problem, its manifestation was not thought to be intentional on the part of White gay men, but rather reflective of a different cultural norm. Nevertheless, despite this perspective, gay men of color saw that a lack of environmental exposure to diverse racial and ethnic cultures could lead to racial prejudice and racism among White gay men.

Lack of racial diversity at some social venues reinforced the view that the gay men of color were unwelcome or did not belong; it fostered a "red-neck attitude" environment. Racialized stereotypes emphasized the point that they lacked sexual or erotic capital; it legitimized their exclusion as sexual partners. White gay men's limited interest in them generally was demonstrated in their derogatory race-based remarks. In the same way, the

concept of *community* was critiqued as a misnomer due to exclusionary practices that marginalized racialized members. Non-White identity was constructed as a weakness, revealing the intolerant character of some White GLBT people:

> As an immigrant to Canada, . . . I come from a faraway land that doesn't support homosexuality. Coming here you would think that people, being more open and we talk about diversity in Canada, that you think the gay community will understand. And yet I find . . . that the gay community is like its own little nucleus where everyone is concerned about, you know, "Are you White? Are you blond? Are you brown-haired? Are you smooth? Are you [a] twink and are you young?" And unfortunately, if you're a person of color you don't fall into that category even though I'm smooth, I'm pretty young, I'm good looking, I think. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

> I feel that there is, like, this very redneck, gay redneck attitude that comes from [the Gay Venue A]. But not at the [Gay Venue B]. . . . Not at [Gay Venue C], not at any of the other places. The [Gay Venue D] was never like that; it was real nice and mixed. And I like that; I like that mix. [At Gay Venue A] it's . . . basically . . . the same crowd, the same people, a lot of chronic alcoholics that go there every day at the same time and whatnot, and . . . that's actually a culture, it's a culture. And so I rattle things up when I walk in. (laughs) (Justin, Black, gay)

> Just because of comments that you hear, here and there. For example, you know, you will hear the sort of prejudice . . . or the sort of cliché, if you are Asian, you must have a small penis or, you know, . . . you'll hear different derogatory comments or perhaps misconceptions that people are sort of saying, and therefore maybe limiting other social groups. And I think that that's . . . definitely sad. (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

As the aforementioned participants' experiences demonstrate, the gay men's communities in Ottawa were not spaces where they felt able to develop relationships or imagine themselves as full members. If anything, these spaces reinforced their marginality through a centering and recentering of White gay men, thus emphasizing the primacy of Whiteness as an organizing principle in these communities. From who is desired, to who is included or made to feel welcomed at local gay venues, to overt racism toward gay Asian men, these men experienced themselves as disadvantaged at different points within these communities. What Jordan, who had immigrated to Canada, imagined the gay men's community would be turned out not to be in reality. His expectation for a gay men's community, where members understood

and were open to discussing about diversity, was replaced with a focus on Whiteness as a marker of desirability, with gay men of color constructed as the other out-group.

Several participants noted an unspoken racism in the community, signifying it as a taboo topic. In their view, the combination of fear, lack of knowledge, and discomfort in addressing racism among White GLBT people ensured that the problem remained unchallenged, and contributed to a climate of intolerance. Asymmetrical power relations between White and non-White gay men promoted racial or cultural bias and exclusion, especially when gay men of color voiced a position that might deny privilege or benefits to White people. The silence around racism was perceived to add to the lack of progress on the issue, having potentially deadly consequences for gay men of color.[1] In this way, racism operated under the veil of hypocrisy, hidden beneath a smile of seething resentment:

> There has been no response because no one talks about [racism]. People know it happens. People don't want to talk about it. . . . And if we're going to keep doing that, it's going to get worse. We're going to see maybe an increase in the spike of suicides, you know, among not just teens now but among gay people of color because there's no support. It's like they're crying out for help. They don't know where to go. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

> I know when people will smile to you and then, behind your back, say something different. That's also being somebody not living here all my life and moving here and then, you know, going through a rough time and then, boom, now I've got my own business and I've got a whole window on Bank Street. There were so many haters for the first three months, jealous, resentful, hating guys, especially from Gay Venue A. (Justin, Black, gay)

> In terms of power, we . . . are not equal, we [are seen not to] understand Western culture; we are here, immigrants, right? We are second citizens. If we . . . say "no" to something, [White people] may say, "Oh, well, go back to your country." (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

For these and other participants interviewed for the study, the lack of frank conversation about racism contributed to their experiences of racism, with possible life-and-death implications. Continued avoidance of the topic, combined with the absence of supports, could increase the risk of suicide for gay men of color. Even if they were to insist on the need for a conversation about racism, they would run the risk of being silenced for not being knowledgeable about Western cultures, since, after all, they are immigrants. Seen as second-class citizens, with no power, they are relegated to the margin where any

display of resistance might subject them to racial insults, such as the demand that they go back to their country of origin.

For a small subset of participants, the experience and causes of racism were not uniform. Gay men of color who were able to pass as White experienced the least racism, but encountered other types of bias such as anti-Muslim discrimination, regardless of whether they identified with the religion or not:

> You see, . . . I am probably [in] better [shape] than any Arabs here [in Ottawa], because of my blue eyes and my skin color. So that's my defense, right? [White people] won't see me as an Arab, immediately. . . . And when I say, "Oh, I am from Syria," there is a, "You're not an Arab. You don't . . . look like an Arab," right? So I don't know, what does that mean? Is it a bad thing to be an Arab? Or not, right? . . . So . . . sometimes I get away from racism because of that, probably. (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

> I think . . . a lot of people have trouble . . . identifying my ethnic background. I have had people ask me if I was Italian, or Brazilian, or Portuguese, or from different regions of the world, where it is still considered maybe White or Whitish. . . . Italian may be easier for [White gay men] to relate [to] than Tunisian, . . . or maybe they think that, you know, "Oh, . . . he's Tunisian, he's Arab. He may be Muslim. This is what he thinks about women," or, "This is what he thinks about that," and so they are able to sort of put me in a box. This is their frame of reference concerning this ethnic group/religion/this area of the world. So yeah, . . . it might be easier for them to think I am Italian or Brazilian; maybe this is a happier place for them. (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

For Ali and Maximus, the way that Whiteness operated in the gay men's communities was clear to see. Both men identified as Middle Eastern, although their White or light skin pigmentation and Ali's blue eyes were not typically associated with a Middle Eastern culture. These different physical attributes meant that they were less targeted by racism, as they were assumed to be of European culture and geographical ancestry. In this way, their proximity to Whiteness shielded them from racism but not from Islamophobia, perhaps reflecting what Bonilla-Silva (2004) termed the *tri-racial* system—an organized racial stratification comprising Whites, honorary Whites, and the Black collective. Such an honorary attribution of Whiteness to Ali and Maximus—to the exclusion of Asian and Black gay men in the study—suggests that White gay men may have preferred to see them as White-identifying and not as Syrian or Tunisian, given the negative stereotypes of people from Muslim countries, thus maintaining the system of White supremacy.

Participants were emphatic about the predisposition of White gay men in denying their experience of racism, dismissing their past and present reality. In this, they were made to be the source of the problem—the onus of responsibility was placed on them to prove the racist perpetrators' transgressions. In these encounters, White gay men reportedly trivialized the occurrence of racism as a relic of an earlier time and to mischaracterize their actions as innocent or innocuous, thus discrediting the gay men of color and raising doubts about the authenticity of their reproaches. For them, the idea that racism could still exist seemed so unbelievable that it must be false. Thus, White gay men were thought to seem completely ignorant of the enormity of their discrimination, with the result that the gay men of color were subjected to demoralizing verbal insults and slighting remarks or innuendoes. Other White gay men might come easily and swiftly to the support of the perpetrator, subjecting the target of racism to criticism and condemnation:

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

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

Giwa: Denied by whom?

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

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

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

One participant had a different opinion about this theme. He took culpability for racism away from White gay men and put the blame squarely on gay men from his ethnoracial group, especially those outside of Canada:

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

According to Tobey, White gay men were then made the victim or injured party in the encounter. The actions of gay men from his own ethnoracial community brought about their negative experiences, not the actions of the White gay men who might be targeting gay Filipino men for the fulfillment of race-based sexual fantasy.

RACIAL NUMERIC UNDERREPRESENTATION AND THE SILENCE OF RACISM

One consequence of the media's portrayal of the GLBT community as White is that gay men of color have been rendered invisible at Pride festivities, within gay sport associations, and in the context of their circle of friends. They have been maligned, placed on the periphery, or seen to be less of a priority than their White counterparts. One participant saw the deficit perception of gay men of color perpetuated in the White and non-White imagination. In his image, gay men of color were positioned as dependent, reliant on the services of benevolent White people and organizations:

> I remember . . . working very hard . . . with Pride. I went out to all of those events, because before me I think Organization A was a very White organization. Gay White, lesbian White. . . . I remember one person actually coming to tell me, "Look, the only colored people we ever saw were those in the support groups or those who were about to commit suicide who needed help." They . . . met me and they go, "Wow. We're blown away. There's a person of color who is stable and working for Organization A in a public profile role, a high profile role." So I think I helped to break down some of those barriers. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

In Jordan's account, people of color were not expected to be in high-profile positions within the GLBT community. Being one of the first people of color to work with Organization A, he felt, allowed him to break down

barriers and challenge stereotypes about people of color, including the deficit view of people of color as either unstable or merely consumers of community services and resources. In his high-profile role, Jordan believed that he was able to offer a different perspective to his organization and the broader GLBT community about the contributions that people of color could make if obstacles—limited expectations for people of color and racism—to their success were removed.

At the same time, some researchers (e.g., Bérubé, 2001; Nero, 2005) have concluded that the low number of gay men of color in GLBT communities may act as an incentive for racism among White gay men, contributing to their efforts to keep the physical and social spaces of these communities exclusively—or at least predominantly—White. Some participants agreed with this perspective: their invisibility—and their experience of racism and social exclusion—were due to their low numbers in the GLBT community as a whole:

> Well, . . . you know, our community is very small, . . . I think there are definitely a lot more Whites as opposed to visible minorities. Like, being Asian myself, I don't see too many Asians, gay Asians out as much as . . . our Caucasian counterparts and things like that. So I do have a group of Asian gay friends but, you know, few and far between. I do have, you know, Caucasian friends as well but I have more of them than Asians. (Al, East Asian, gay)

> I think it also has to do with population, the amount of GLBT [people of] color in our community. We don't have [the numbers]; . . . And that's why I got excited before because I know that there is now a community of us. (Justin, Black, gay)

> So [White gay men] are very ignorant with respect to everything they do. . . . There are lots of things they ignore, [and] one of them is racism. So, as a White man, it is not a priority to talk about someone who is Arab, who is probably Black, who is Asian; it is not a priority, right? We are the minority in the majority, even if it's [the] gay community [that] is the minority. But for us, they are a majority. So . . . I think there is always going to be that power imbalance between us versus them, right? (Ali, Middle/Eastern, gay)

The different groups of gay men of color were unequivocal in their observation about the small numbers of people of color in the GLBT community of Ottawa. This had an impact on the makeup of their friendship circle, which was more likely to include White people than gay men of color. Yet, there was a sense of optimism that the community was slowly growing, which could support more gay men of color in forming relationships

with others who looked like them. However, this optimism collided with the reality of racism within the GLBT community, which thrived on the knowledge that few people of color existed in the community. According to the participants, this awareness was something that White members of the community leveraged in asserting their dominance over people of color, for example, choosing to ignore issues or concern that affected this population, such as racism.

Some Black and South Asian participants also expressed concern over the group's small number and representation in the GLBT community compared to their White counterparts. Without the strength of numbers, they saw racism as inevitable, since White gay men would lack the opportunity for positive relations and exposure to people from different social groups and backgrounds. Some may have decided to leave Ottawa for more racially and ethnically diverse cities, out of feeling a sense of not belonging or having the desire for social inclusion. The situation would tend to be self-perpetuating:

> Brown people in Ottawa don't typically stay in Ottawa. . . . You guys both work here and you have awesome jobs here, which is why I think you stayed. . . . All of my Brown friends, especially guy friends, who I've known through university or who have been here, are like out of here as fast as they possibly can. . . . They just want to be part of the mainstream. So, I think the absence of a population contributes to that discrimination. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

Dexter pointed to an important phenomenon—outmigration from Ottawa to other major cities, where gay men of color may find themselves represented in the GLBT community. There was the sense that, if employment was not an issue for consideration, other participants might have chosen to leave Ottawa. Well-paying employment emerged as an important factor for why some people decided to stay in Ottawa, including Dexter. Yet, many of Dexter's friends chose to leave Ottawa perhaps because they were not able to secure a well-paying job after university or due to racism, which made it difficult for them to imagine themselves as part of the community. Regardless, the process of outmigration maintained the underrepresentation of gay men of color in Ottawa.

The importance of numbers extended beyond a yearning for belonging and inclusion within the mainstream GLBT community. It also included the possibility of creating a distinctive space for gay men of color. Kwame, a participant in the Black group, said: "I always tell myself it's unfortunate we don't have the numbers here. If we had our own numbers, we'd have our own space, you know."

A related dynamic was the culture of silence that one participant, for example, attributed to racism. Some gay men of color were criticized for

not challenging racism, often choosing to ignore the problem or to pass for the dominant race, thus maintaining the dehumanizing effects of racism. By remaining silent, these individuals were believed to permit White gay men to perpetuate racism:

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

For Anil, some gay men of color were part of the problem of racism in gay men's communities, by not challenging it, believing they themselves were White, or by pretending that racism was not a problem. When racism is not challenged or is denied, especially by other gay men of color, the message might be sent to White people that they are free to continue as normal. White gay men would then be absolved of their racist actions by gay men of color who see their proximity to Whiteness as a shield from racism. The refusal of some gay men of color to see and challenge racism might allow racism to flourish.

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

Silence served another purpose for some participants. Not all gay men of color are open about their sexual orientation, to themselves or those around them, including family members and friends. By speaking up, they might risk disclosing their gay identity before they are ready to reveal it. For this reason, silence or omission about racism could seem a logical solution for self-preservation.

SEXUALITY, MASCULINITY, BEAUTY, AND COMPETITION

Participants, particularly those from the Black group, found themselves situated at a crossroads of conditional citizenship where race, sexuality, and masculinity were conflated. They felt that the sexual orientation of Black gay men was constructed so as to undermine their masculinity. In the White gay imagination, they opined, Black masculinity presumes the absence of same-sex attraction or relationship. Black men simply cannot be gay. Black gay men were therefore often perceived to be suffering from a type of identity

crisis—a stable Black man would not identify himself as gay. From this point of view, the thinking was that only White gay men could be gay:

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

According to Chike, identifying as Black and gay was tantamount to having a damaged identity in the eyes of White gay men. To identify as Black and gay was to call into question one's authenticity as a man; these identities were read as mutually exclusive and noninterlocking. Compared to Black gay men, White gay men were believed to enjoy the privilege of having their masculinity go uncontested. They might act toward Black gay men in a discriminatory manner because Black gay men were not "real" members of the GLBT community. This attempt to erase an aspect of Black gay men's identity means that their full humanity would fail to be recognized.

For Justin, a participant in the Black group, White gay men displayed deep feelings of ambivalence and polarization toward gay men of color. In his view, they had a love-hate relationship that reinforced, on the one hand, the marginality of gay men of color and, on the other, emphasized their sexual or erotic capital. He said: "[White gay men] either really love [gay men of color], and that's what they like, or they are indifferent. And you can tell the clear line between those that have absolutely no interest and those that are only interested."

Justin's explanation for why masculinity matters also has to do with its particular currency in gay men's communities, as it relates to sexual attraction. Ethnoracial stereotypes built on ideals of masculinity reward men who reflect those stereotypes, such as the tough muscular Lebanese man, but punish those who do not, such as the effeminate Black man.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The participants agreed about the ordering of racial groups according to their desirability within the GLBT community, an issue they clearly felt exposed them to racism. Not everyone agreed that this was a positive thing or a good practice to continue. One participant expressed the following position: "But it's horrible that we have to think like that" (Anil, South Asian, gay).

The exalted White beauty ideal was critiqued for its dominant message of White supremacy, given its narrow definition and exclusion of gay men of

color from its description, according to which only White gay men could be seen as beautiful. This narrow definition might additionally work to segregate gay men of color from each other, in forcing them to think of any race other than White as substandard. The idea of sociocultural situatedness and its influence on understanding beauty and the aesthetic would be omitted from consideration:

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

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

Whitewashing beauty is not practiced solely by White gay men; gay men of color can be lured into the performance of prejudice and discrimination. Although White gay men were generally exalted for their Whiteness, this valorization was unevenly distributed; only certain kinds of Whiteness were considered beautiful. This restricted concept of attractiveness could influence a person's perception of beauty, and arouse question of counterracism or "reverse racism," on the part of gay men of color:

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

Many participants found that the role of the media in perpetuating a one-dimensional representation of the GLBT community had contributed to their experience of racism. It reinforced the idea that to be gay was to be White—in magazines or gay calendars, in movies, and at work. In each of these areas, White gay men overwhelmingly represented the image of the community:

> Oh, skin color's the most obvious. I think in part it's the gay media. You know, if you look at gay media and you have a twink, jock, or hot men 2015 calendar,

> maybe you see one Brown guy, . . . but the other 11 months are, you know, White. "Oh, look, he's . . . so diverse from this model because he's blond haired, blue eyed and this one is brown haired, brown eyed." Well, that's not fucking diverse. That's two White guys. Diverse is Black guy or Asian guy. How often do you see an Asian person in the calendar? Like maybe never. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

> You won't see this [racial diversity] at . . . Gay Venue A. This is my cover photo; this is . . . actually our model in here. But this is our cover photo of our underwear model, the MC, my business partner, and myself. That, you don't see at Gay Venue A. We make our shit colorful. (laughs) (Justin, Black, gay)

> I think that here in Ottawa, in the GLBT community, I think that being White is sort of the epitome of . . . I guess the pyramid, if you want, . . . you can't go any "higher." And I think that's a little bit sad, truthfully. . . . And it is very dangerous because [gay men of color] can begin to have very negative self-esteem or no self-esteem, . . . and begin to think that they are not attractive. They may become depressed, . . . anxious in social scenarios, where they don't need to feel anxious. But I do think that [the White beauty ideal] exists, though. I do think that we . . . have to transcend this sort of mentality. I would like . . . to think that I have transcended it; . . . I don't know. (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

The role of gay stock stories in the marginalization of gay men of color has been researched (Han, 2008b). Stories that have placed White gay men on a pedestal result in the loss of power for gay men of color in their sexual choices and, more devastatingly, have led them to see each other as competition and not as allies. This latter finding is consistent with those of the current study. Some participants from the East Asian and South Asian groups saw themselves as in competition for the attention of White gay men, with the result that there was considerable resentment and distrust among group members.

Participants did not always feel that gay men of color were united in their struggle against racism, due to internal competition for the attention of White gay men or the preferential treatment of another gay man of color by White gay men. This view was commonly reported in the South Asian and East Asian groups. The feeling of competition created cleavages and division within a group and might go undetected until it might be too late—after the group's relationship had completely disintegrated.

Embedded within the dynamic of intragroup competition was the issue of internalized racism. Participants felt mistreated by other gay men of color in social situations where White gay men were made the center of attention,

demonstrating the same racist attitude and practices of White gay men, with the result that they were overlooked and rejected as potential dating partners or suitors:

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

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

However, far from being a completely negative experience, such disruption would sometimes create opportunity for new insight and perspective into the impact of power relations on the group dynamic. Internalized racism was not restricted to discrimination perpetrated between gay men of color; it also involved individual internalization of the dominant White group's racism, which manifested in the expression of a sense of inferiority to members of the dominant race, and having a limited sense of self and others from the same racial and ethnic group:

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

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

The ubiquity of Whiteness in GLBT communities in general (e.g., Eshref, 2009; Han, 2008b; Roy, 2012) and in Ottawa GLBT community in particular

added to the experience of racism encountered by the gay men of color in the study. White gay men benefited from the privilege of seeing themselves reflected everywhere in the community, while gay men of color were rendered invisible. As the most desirable social group, they enjoyed a position of dominance on the beauty scale, while gay men of color were positioned on the bottom rung.

SHINING A LIGHT ON THE EXPERIENCE OF RACISM IN MULTICULTURAL CANADA

Gay men of color experience racism; that is not at all surprising. However, factors that contribute to the experiences of racism among gay men of color are myriad and effective in reinforcing the interlocking systems of oppression in their lives. These same factors support White gay men's access to social, cultural, and economic power and privilege based on their skin color. What is clear is the influence of the dominant White culture in shaping how gay men of color understand their experiences of racism. There is an aspect of culture in which White gay men are perceived to internalize dominant ideas about White superiority, and an aspect involving their general socialization in contexts where racial and ethnic diversity is almost nonexistent. Together, these factors work to structure relations between White and gay men of color, resulting in the latter group's othering and the continuation of racism in gay men's communities.

The underrepresentation of gay men of color was an additional factor in the men's experience of racism. Without a critical number of gay men of color in gay men's communities, participants thought it would be difficult to effect the kind of change needed there—namely, to address the pervasive negative effects of racism. The men were concerned that the small number of gay men of color could limit interaction and contact between them and White gay men. This might contribute to the quality of gay men's communities being measured by the absence of gay men of color and legitimating the silence of racism.

Racist beauty standards were perceived to normalize White gay men as ideal romantic and sexual partners to the exclusion of gay men of color, except where they were exoticized or fetishized. In turn, gay men of color sometimes internalized White beauty standards in reifying the conditions of their subordination, thereby aiding the cycle of racism in gay men's communities to continue uninterrupted.

The multitude of factors discussed earlier raises important questions about the kind of gay men's communities that White gay men and gay men of color desire for themselves. If gay men of color are to feel a sense of belonging

and inclusion, where they experience themselves as actively integrated into community life, things cannot stay the way they are. The pervasiveness of racism underscored in this study by gay men of color points to the need for a different kind of relationship, in which the perceived empathy gap created by conscious or unconscious racism fuels apathy toward systems of racial advantage, allowing White gay men to enjoy structural advantages denied to gay men of color. Transforming the power dynamics of White racial dominance in gay men's communities means rejecting the status quo, and creating conditions for hard conversations that may be uncomfortable for some people.

Just talking about conflictual things can help create different realities. It can free gay men of color to break their silence—to speak out about their experiences of racism uninhibited, with the understanding that they will be heard and taken seriously about things that need to change for better. This conversation can be instructive for White gay men, too. It can support their understanding of the need to actively listen for how racism in gay men's communities has impacted—and continues to impact—the lives of gay men of color.

Active listening and reflection is an important step but is not a solution in and of itself. Action must follow. It is through this process of knowledge-to-action that White gay men can intercede, disrupting entrenched racism and discrimination in gay men's communities, thereby addressing the myriad factors identified by gay men of color that contribute to their experiences of racism.

NOTE

1. See more on the topic of silence in section "Racial Numeric Underrepresentation and the Silence of Racism."

Chapter 5

Coping Strategies for Confronting Racism in Gay Men's Communities in Ottawa

Racism in any form can result in stress and challenges. The pervasive and systemic nature of racism in Canada makes it important to understand the strategies that the gay men of color in this book used to cope with it in the GLBT community of Ottawa. As a stressor, racism contributes to disparities in mental and physical health in the lives of gay men of color (Brondolo, Brady, Pencille, Beatty, & Contrada, 2009). Dealing with it may require mobilizing coping strategies or resources, as reflected in Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) well-known stress and coping typologies: emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping. Tobin, Holroyd, Reynolds, and Wigal (1989) elaborated on these typologies in their Coping Strategies Inventory, in which they included two tertiary subscales: engagement and disengagement. In emotion-focused coping and disengagement, the aim is to reduce one's negative reactions to racism-related stress; in problem-focused coping and engagement, the aim is to seek to remove or eliminate the cause of racism-related stress.

According to the stress and coping literature regarding stress types and coping responses, which is backed up by the findings of the current study, people are more likely to use emotion-focused coping if the stressful situation is perceived to be outside of their control (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). If the situation is within their control, people will use problem-focused coping. Individual, institutional, and cultural racism is beyond the power of gay men of color to control—the sheer systemic magnitude of racism in Canadian institutions and culture makes that unlikely. It is simply not possible for an individual to predict if and when he will be discriminated against because of his skin color.

The taxonomy of coping strategies belies their complexity. The labels *engagement* and *disengagement* might give the impression that the latter

coping strategies are inferior to or not effective as the former. In the study for this book, it was found that these binary categories could be further distinguished to more accurately reflect their perceived utility.

Although problem-focused engagement coping strategies are thought to have an adaptive mitigation effect, the findings did not always reflect this outcome. To illustrate, the coping strategy of confrontation was found by participants to be both effective and ineffective in coping with racism. The findings also demonstrated that not all coping strategies were created equal. The emotion-focused disengagement coping strategies of expressing anger and drinking or taking drugs, for example, were found to be counterproductive in dealing with racism-related stress. However, venting to a romantic partner was seen as effective, if done in a considerate and respectful manner.

The data therefore suggested that not all emotion-focused coping was negative, as disengagement would imply. Similarly, not all problem-focused coping could be considered positive. Coping characteristics and effectiveness were context-dependent, requiring an individual to recognize and appraise the level of threat, select a coping response, and evaluate the benefits of that coping response. There was little difference in the type of coping strategies used in response to overt and covert racism. An individual's reaction to online racism, for example, was not considerably different from what he might experience offline.

The gay men of color in this study used all four coping strategies.

EMOTION-FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT COPING

Using emotion-focused engagement strategies helped a significant number of participants cope with racism. These self-management techniques included humor, deep-breathing exercises, meditation and prayer, going to the gym, and support from friends or a romantic partner. They focused on participants' emotional reactions to the stressful situation and were not intended to eradicate the source of their stress. They were used in a multitude of contexts.

Self-Acceptance and Understanding of Self and Others

One strategy involved accepting others as they were, and recognizing what one can and cannot control, to avoid being pulled down by other people's negativity. Tobey, a participant in the East Asian group, stated:

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

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

> I think in some ways, there is an acceptance that people have different levels of exposure and people have different values. . . . And I think for me, it's come to accepting that much more. . . . So, part of that is resilience and acknowledging that people may say things that you might consider stupid or that you just do not agree with. . . . So all that I can control is here in me. (Matthew, East Asian, gay)

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

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

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

Evidenced in these narratives is the importance of recognizing situations within one's power to change and letting go of circumstances beyond one's control or influence. This point resonates with the notion of saving one's energy for battles that matter, where one might be able to influence a particular favorable outcome. Participants seemed resigned to the fact that the racism directed at them would not disappear any time soon, so they would be wise to minimize the wear and tear of racism on their bodies, by being selective in their responses to it. The perceived ability to manage their emotions

and thoughts in this way was believed to reduce their negative emotional response to racism, which was seen as a sign of resilience in the face of adversity.

Humor and Physical Activity

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

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

For these and other participants, humor served a couple of functions. It was a way for them to cope emotionally with the stress of racism, either alone or in the company of friends. Humor expressed in the company of friends had the effect of reducing the profound disorientation of being alone in one's experience of racism (Swaminath, 2006). It also acted as an expression of criticism or opposition to a White person's negative statement or action (Swaminath, 2006), such as Amare telling his friend about the "racist guy" he used to greet all the time. Ultimately, humor allowed participants a way to bear the burden of the racism and to regain their sense of self-worth in the face of that difficult experience without directly confronting its source.

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

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

Although another participant found participation in recreational or leisure activity—such as swimming—helpful, especially for developing self-confidence to complete a task and life in general, its connection for dealing

with racism was not evident. This remained true after further probing by the researcher:

Giwa: So, being part of the swim team, how has that helped you cope with racism?
Tobey: I don't really cope.
Giwa: You don't cope?
Tobey: Yes. For one thing, they're all White. Like, seriously, I'm the only Brown there, they're all White. And I felt like I belonged, like I actually belonged. And the more I hung out with them, it felt good. (Tobey, East Asian, gay)

For Kwame, time spent doing physical exercise was helpful with channeling the negative energy from his experience of racism to setting and achieving higher goals in his life. Running marathons constituted focusing on something within his power to control; it was how he weathered the difficulty of racism to enhance his well-being. By making running a part of his self-care routine, he was able to focus and recharge his batteries, so that activities of daily living did not become unmanageable. For Tobey, swimming provided an outlet for making connection with mostly White gay men. In their company, he felt a sense of belonging, which resulted in his continued participation in the swimming group. In this way, swimming offered the possibility for breaking down racial barriers, if any, eliminating Tobey's need to have to cope with racism.

Spirituality

A unique finding in the Black group was the use of Africultural spirituality-centered coping for mitigating the effects of racism, facilitating the attainment of meaning and purpose in one's life:

> Traditional African spirituality, . . . [t]he idea that . . . ancestral spirits are always with us, they are always helping us . . . I can relate to that kind of . . . philosophy compared to the Judeo-Christian world view of how life is, so that is helping me a lot. . . . I gain more understanding and more appreciation for my life through that medium. And that helps me also to feel good about my sexual orientation. . . . I'm finding ways of using the traditional precontact notions of spirituality . . . as a coping strategy. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

Kwame's account suggests that he drew much strength and resolve from using culture-specific coping behaviors in response to stressors resulting from racism. The knowledge that ancestral spirits surrounded him affirmed his belief that he was not alone, as if to say he was being guided by the spiritual wisdom of his African ancestors. This spiritual sensibility was key

to his ability to cope with racism and cultivate a sense of appreciation about his person that came from deep within. Such awareness and connection to his African ancestors was a positive force for feeling good about himself; it helped him express his sexual orientation and ultimately strengthened his resilience. Africultural coping thus promoted holistic well-being. The practice of gratitude for his life helped Kwame to develop a healthy relationship with himself, beyond simply coping emotionally with his experience of racism.

EMOTION-FOCUSED DISENGAGEMENT COPING

In their effort to cope with racism, participants did not always express their emotions or seek support from intimates and others. Instead, at times they withdrew or distanced themselves from the GLBT community, or limited their involvement in it, so as to focus on things and people that brought them fulfillment.

Self-Criticism, Social Withdrawal, and Suppression of Feelings

The psychological impact of racism was, at times, so strong that it induced internal self-blame and feelings of hatred for self and others within one's racial and ethnic community:

> I remember when I was still learning my emotional management, . . . to understand, you know, the dissociative and the hyperarousal and stuff that came from PTSD. . . . I get down on myself, . . . and then actually judge and criticize myself. . . . That kind of hate, that kind of racism diseased my mind, where I am, like, reprogramming it now at this age. It diseased my mind, it caused me to think bad things about myself and the world as a whole. It caused me to be actually ignorant toward my own people because that kind of hate caused me to have shame and false guilt. (Justin, Black, gay)

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

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

> Certainly, for me, I am happy living my life, whether it's in the band or with my business. . . . I don't know if I sweep it [racism] under the carpet just to not think about it. I do think about it, but I don't make that a principal priority in my life right now. . . . But to go out there in the community and spend all this time to end up either getting so little or to end up . . . being hurt or being potentially hurt by an idiot who can't see beyond your skin color isn't a good use of my time, and my time is precious. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

The idea of withdrawing or disengaging from the GLBT community is a decision reached with careful deliberation. Mr. M, Chike, and Jordan were clear in their intention to redirect their energies toward activities and connections that led to enriching, purposeful life. In this way, they would not be confronted with everyday racism or feel trapped in a cycle of anger and hopelessness, where they were passive recipients of racism or discrimination. Yet, in withdrawing, they were also not engaged in actions that might change the situation.

Suppression would sometimes be employed because of the fear of reprisal: "Just harder to say what you think most of the time. I . . . self-censor a lot more" (Anil, South Asian, gay). Another group member expressed a similar idea, fearing that his words or actions could have punitive consequences on him:

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

The gay men of color quoted here were clear about the way that racism operated for them. For them, racist situations were stifling: they were forced to hold back from speaking out about their experiences, for personal or professional reasons, or both. Justin noted how his experience of racism had led him to internalize the hate in an unhealthy way. He had to reprogram how he thought about other Black gay men, who he had not always treated with respect, and about himself. Jordan's account shows how racism

became too much to handle, such that the only way to deal with it was to try to not think about it or make it a priority in his life. This freed him up to use his time in more effective ways, but with the understanding that he may or may not have suppressed the issue by sweeping it under the carpet. And, with Dexter, we see how the concern for professional and personal consequences constrained his ability to speak out in the way he wanted to. The power dynamic evident in the social interactions he described regulated how he could feel and express those feelings, thus reproducing racist outcomes.

Substance Use

Using alcohol to cope with racism was not a common strategy among the participants. For those who did use alcohol, it seemed to serve as an escape route, helping them numb the emotional pain of racism; this sometimes compromised their thinking and judgment, leading to situations where unsafe sexual practices were likely to occur:

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

It is possible that the fear of judgment from others deterred participants, particularly in the focus group, from disclosing their own use of substances for coping with racism. Thus, while the majority of participants reported not using alcohol as a coping strategy, most believed that alcohol and drugs were means by which other gay men of color dealt with racial discrimination. This was a consistent finding across the different racial and ethnic groups in the study:

> Xavier,[1] the gay guy . . . that I was talking to you about, he has started taking drugs. Drugs have been a good coping strategy to deal with the kind of social stress . . . that he's facing. (Kwame, Black, same-gender-loving/homosexual)

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

One participant from the East Asian group also understood alcohol to be a universal coping strategy for other problems, including peer pressure:

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

Still, the marginal finding of alcohol as a coping strategy for racism may accurately reflect the experience of study participants. Previous research has demonstrated an association between the experience of stigma and substance use. McDavitt et al. (2008), for example, found that gay and bisexual young men used drugs to manage the emotions of sexual stigma and to deal with feelings of isolation. Although the researchers focused on strategies for coping with heterosexism, their finding points to the function of substance use as a stigma management strategy, and can be extrapolated to the current study.

PROBLEM-FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT COPING

Most participants adopted either behavioral coping strategies (intended to remove the source of stress) or cognitive strategies (aimed at altering the meaning of the stressful event—to see the situation from a different angle). These included information seeking; confronting the perpetrator and seeking retribution; vigilance; travel outside of the local area and dating only gay men of color; and advocating and volunteering.

Information Seeking

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

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

Only Kwame in the Black group used this strategy. This suggests that information-seeking may be limited to those feeling they lack social network support or a repertoire of coping strategies to validate their personal experience of racism. The reputable standing of the race scholars and their presentation topics might have helped this participant sort through his thoughts and validate his experience. Here, the finding points to the possible isolating feeling that racism can produce; individuals may feel they have to deal with their experience of racism alone. External validation, however, may help them to not internalize the racist event. In this way, they may come to understand their exposure to racism as not their fault, but as reflecting systemic and structural inequalities in society.

Confronting the Perpetrator and Seeking Retribution

A common strategy among several participants was to confront or challenge someone about his racism. Talking about the importance of recognizing racism for what it is, Chike, a participant in the Black group, opined: "I call out the shit for what it is, right. And that's where I am at." Other participants expressed related sentiments about their coping strategies:

> For example, I've had someone say to me, "Well, you know, Asian people are all great and all . . . but you all here are, like, taking away jobs from us, you immigrants." And I go, "Well, I didn't take away any job. I created my own company." You know, I have White guys working for me. But that's essentially . . . the underlying racial . . . undertone. And that undertone, that undercurrent is not on the surface but it certainly, I think, inhibits people's thoughts. Maybe subconsciously, maybe it's on the back of their mind when they're talking to an Asian person in a bar saying, "Well, you know, I'd rather go for a White guy." (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

Matthew, a participant in the East Asian group, noted how sometimes the desire to challenge racism offset the need to explain why a particular event was racist. He remarked:

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

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

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

Behavioral retribution took the form of treating White gay men in the same negative way that this participant believed he and other gay men of color were treated:

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

Engagement in retribution-type behavior such as switching from English or French to Burundi ensured that White gay men were kept at a distance. At other times, Amare and his friends would extricate themselves from the particular setting, so as to make White gay men feel they were invisible and inconsequential. This was not a surprising finding, given the number of men in the study who reported feeling excluded or invisible, or treated as if they were imposters in the GLBT community.[2] The finding also suggests that Amare might have thought that his actions would help him to regain his sense of power. Indeed, a study by Wilson and Yoshikawa (2004) pointed to a similar account. As opposed to switching from one language to another, some of their participants put down or insulted the source of their discrimination.

Vigilance

Another behavioral coping strategy participants used was to be vigilant about identifying potential racism, both in their personal lives and in other social contexts. This ensured that they were not serendipitously confronted with racist actions without the resources to adequately analyze and reframe ongoing processes of racial discrimination. A participant in the Black group said he thought critically about his surroundings in order to analyze the problem,

thereby avoiding feelings of self-blame. Being alert to the reality of racism helped him from inadvertently becoming the target of discrimination:

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

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

Vigilance can help to develop or maintain sensitization to racism, pushing one to always be on the lookout for signs of discriminatory practices. Maintaining vigilance, however, can be taxing (Lewis, Cogburn, & Williams, 2015). The effort required to always be on guard can deplete personal resources needed in other areas of one's life.

On a more perilous level, vigilance can expose one to many instances of discrimination, directed both individually (racism against gay men of color) and at a group level (racism against people of color in general). There is similarity between the current findings and those reported by Wilson and Yoshikawa (2004), with respect to self-attributed responses for coping with social discrimination. For example, to avoid being the target of racism and homophobia, one of the participants in that study stated that he would avoid being too "flamboyant" or "loud" in public. This self-policing behavior was consistent with the type of regulatory vigilance demonstrated by the participant in the current study.

Travel Outside of the Local Area and Dating Only Gay Men of Color

Several interesting findings also emerged from the current data, reflecting behavioral and cognitive coping differences among racial and ethnic groups. In the Arab/Middle Eastern group, one participant said he dated only gay men of color. This strategy is comparable to the vigilance demonstrated by the participant in the Black group. Here, however, the participant felt that by not dating White gay men, he would lessen the likelihood of coming into contact

with racism: "I am not very attracted to a lot of White men. So that's just . . . it's just the way I am, but maybe that's my way of coping with, you know, the sort of discrimination that may ensue" (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay).

In the South Asian group, participants said they might look for and date gay men from outside of Ottawa and Canada, and might go abroad—for example, to the United States—to find a romantic partner, as a way to reduce exposure to racial discrimination. One participant reflected on how his experience of racism in Ottawa impacted his ability to date and be romantically involved with another person:

> Over the years, just the way I've dealt with the whole dating situation, or whatever, was to travel and to meet people from other places and connect with people who don't live here and can give me the same kind of, I guess, acceptance that I crave here. (Anil, South Asian, gay)

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

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

This finding suggests that gay men of color might take drastic actions to deal with their experience of racism. Going abroad could be seen as an attempt to escape an unpleasant situation, and take control of it. One participant was able to circumvent his local dating problem by traveling to the United States, thereby widening his pool of potential mates. The change in thinking and environment may have contributed to his renewed self-confidence, since he was able to find a partner. There is an economic dimension to this finding, with implications for other gay men of color: an individual's ability to travel abroad implies a certain level of economic freedom. Not all gay men of color have the funds to look for a romantic partner abroad. Thus, this coping strategy may be limited to gay men of color who are financially successful or well off.

Perhaps the strategy could bring one closer to others who have perceived shared values and interest. Rejection by White gay men in one's country of origin can lead to a negative impression of them; traveling abroad may help to renew optimism in the possibility for long-term relationships with White men who have similar romantic aspirations. An individual's negative impression of White gay men—as a group—may change because of the positive

experience of dating one; he may now not see all White gay men as racist. The appeal of this strategy may also lie in the perception of Americans as less likely to hide their intolerant racist views than Canadians (Javorčíková, 2005). Direct knowledge of the reason for one's rejection may be seen as less difficult to process than a rejection shrouded in mystery, as is the case with subtle racism. The benefit of the former is that it would reduce the amount of time one might spend looking for a partner and, in turn, minimize exposure to racist episodes.

Advocating and Volunteering

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

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

> Like . . . I even started volunteering, because everywhere we go, we see only White people. Like, the services, it's as if they're designed, like, for White people only. So I went to Organization B to create visibility so that people like me can identify and know that they can have those services. (Amare, Black, gay)

Justin: I participate in a support group. I offer my services as a recreations facilitator for African-Caribbean Black men and women living with HIV.

Giwa: And how does your volunteer work with that organization help you to cope with the experience of racism?

Justin: Oh, it's so empowering. No. 1, you know, if you are experiencing racism, you really and truly need to connect with community and get the support so, No. 1, you are not isolated. Because racism can create isolation, and isolation creates fear and . . . other negative attributes that come with it. (Justin, Black, gay)

Advocating for or volunteering on behalf of gay men of color was a valued experience for these participants. It was another opportunity for them to name and expose racism in its various permutations across gay men's

communities. For Dexter and Amare, representation of gay men of color in films and as providers within social service organizations were important ways of validating and affirming that the lives of gay men of color matter. It matters that they are seen on the big screen and it matters that practitioners who look like them met their social service needs. There was an empowering element to volunteering, too. As Justin remarked, his own experience of racism influenced his decision to volunteer and help create the community support people needed so they would not feel isolated or alone in their experience of racism.

PROBLEM-FOCUSED DISENGAGEMENT COPING

Half of the participants coped with racism by way of behavioral and cognitive strategies that were the opposite of the active coping responses reported earlier. The most common of these included denying, refusing to see race or racism, and avoiding, ignoring, or walking away from the problem.

Problem and Cognitive Avoidance

Walking away and choosing to ignore or not think about racism were particularly notable strategies. In this way, participants avoided dealing with stressful racism-related situations. These strategies may have provided immediate reprieve from an otherwise difficult and painful experience, while also making sure that the racist incident did not get out of hand.

Tobey, a participant in the East Asian group, knew that some White gay men found him attractive because of his skin color; he suggested that this was enough for him to overlook acts of racism directed at him: "Even though I will get a racist remark, I know that . . . there are lots of White people out there who are so attracted to me just because of my color." Other participants echoed the sentiment that they would disregard or not think about the racist event:

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

> I don't always think about it. And, but the difference, like I said earlier, I'm interested in people, not in their color. . . . There are some people who, any small thing they see racism in it. Like it's as if they're looking for that, you know, that

> racist comment, all the time. I'm not like that. I'm just, I don't want to think about it. (Amare, Black, gay)

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

Despite their different experiences of racism, these participants were similar in their use of cognitive avoidance strategies to prevent from having to deal with the stress of racism. Tobey preferred to focus on the positive rather than the negative, and in the process avoided the racism problem entirely. Even though he had been subjected to racism, he chose to emphasize the fact that a lot more White gay men found him attractive, and so did not allow the racism of other White gay men to affect his self-concept. Dexter approached the situation a bit differently. Context mattered to him. Perhaps feeling that racist incidents were more prevalent or "worse" in gay men's communities, he was less inclined to intervene in these situations, thus avoiding the stressful situation itself. However, at work, he was more responsive to the problem. In this way, cases of racism outside of work were reframed as taxing, causing them to be overlooked, ignored, or avoided. For Amare, other people's focus on examples of racism in their social interactions did not reflect the kind of person he was. Where others preferred to identify occurrences of racism, he preferred to not see the race or color of people. The framing of other people—and not him—as being on the lookout for racism provided enough cognitive distance for him to avoid dealing with the problem of racism. Further, as Kwame's accounts revealed, racism steals time away from its target. Lost time cannot be regained. He pondered the possibility of time unencumbered by the heavy weight of racism so he would be free to accomplish creative tasks, including becoming an entrepreneur. In this sense, he seems to wish for a different experience other than one stained by racism.

The stress of racism can sometimes prove too taxing. In these instances, participants might choose to cope with the stressful situation by electing to not personalize racist actions. In the past, they may also have used drugs or alcohol as coping mechanisms:

> But I . . . tried not to take it to heart because obviously these people are looking for something else. And they have these . . . internal issues with themselves that, you know, I am not going to . . . deal with it, and, you know, it hurts a little bit at first but then, you know, you just move on. (Al, East Asian, gay)

> Of course, I would turn to alcohol and . . . whatnot, in the bar, and then drugs. . . . I was doing it then, for the wrong reasons, because it was out of self-pity and it was out of shame. I found I got overintoxicated. The last time I think I have ever been overintoxicated in a bar, I can't remember when the last date was. It's been at least a couple of years. (Justin, Black, gay)

> I tend to just kind of let go of the [racist] comment, sort of transcend the experience, and to not let this negative energy penetrate me or affect . . . my self-esteem [or make me feel] that something is wrong with my ethnic background. . . . You can't let people sort of transform your perception, or . . . try to crush [you] because it's a very White world, right? (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Active avoidance, as revealed in Al's, Justin's, and Maximus's narratives, suggests that the decision to walk away or ignore a racist episode may be a deliberate calculation on the part of the target (Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004). Some of the gay men of color may have chosen to avoid stressful situations of a social nature for fear of being outnumbered by members of the dominant racial group; perhaps they feared that they would not be supported in their effort to challenge racism directly. Thus, as opposed to blindly ignoring the problem, avoidance may be a carefully thought-out response to a situation in which the target feels disadvantaged compared to the perpetrator. This understanding may help to explain one participant's outright expression of aversion to racism in environments where he perceived himself to have the upper hand, such as in the context of delivering an anti-oppression training.

In addition, the strategy of avoidance may reflect an individual's normal disposition, in which thinking about racism may come to represent an irritation; it may be out of one's character to do. Not thinking about racism may help to facilitate the recognition of others as human beings and discourage the focus on their skin color. There are limitations to this thinking, however. In overlooking a person's race or skin color, an aspect of their humanity is diminished. At the same time, being color-blind can occlude consideration of the far-reaching systemic effects of racism for White people and for people of color, and limit the target's own understanding of his oppression (Han et al., 2015).

COPING: RESILIENT DESPITE THE BURDEN OF RACISM

The gay men of color in the study for this book coped with their experiences of racism in multiple ways. They mainly used emotion- and problem-focused

coping as strategies for responding to the racism encountered in the GLBT community of Ottawa. These approaches reflected the complexity of the racism they were subjected to. Throughout, they showed that they were not passive recipients of racism and discrimination in gay men's communities. In their stories, we witness the ingenuity and creative means by which the men navigated through their individual and collective challenges of racism, remaining resilient in the face of unrelenting discrimination. This account of resiliency is important not because the pain of racism is not real—because it is—but because the gay men of color reflected the range of their selves in ways they were traditionally not permitted to do. In their stories about the workings of Whiteness, including the way power discursively and materially contributed to the complacency of racism in gay men's communities, their humanity shines through. The fact that the gay men of color had to cope with racism at all is itself problematic. Alongside general life struggles and challenges, which everyone has to face, they found themselves requiring armor, in a situation where they needed coping strategies to resist the violence of racism targeted at them. This burden of provocation adds to a quality of life that is harder and makes the connectedness of livability in gay men's communities almost impossible for gay men of color.

NOTES

1. A pseudonym.
2. Brennan et al., 2013; Cho, 1998; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han, 2007, 2008b; Nero, 2005.

Chapter 6

Coping Strategies

What Works and Does Not Work for Gay Men of Color?

Gay men of color, as targets of racism, have personal and vicarious experiences of being discriminated against based on their skin color. This discrimination is based on—and upholds—the power disparity that exists between perpetrators and targets of racism. Living within this power disparity, gay men of color have developed coping strategies to help reduce the stress and handle feelings of distress deriving from racist discrimination. These strategies have been used to manage their thoughts, feelings, and actions in response to racist events. Thus, they hold knowledge about different coping strategies and their associated outcomes.

There is an understanding in the stress and coping literature that coping strategies are not all created equal. Coping strategies have been classified by function (Brondolo et al., 2009; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and some are suggested to be healthier and more effective in coping with life stressors than others (Matheson et al., 2020). For example, problem- and emotion-focused *engagement* strategies may be more helpful in coping with stressful events than problem-and emotion-focused *disengagement* strategies. However, this is not always a hard and fast rule. Decisions about which coping strategies to use depend on a number of factors, such as personality traits, social context or environment, and nature of the stressor; and all coping strategies have their limitations.

Problem- and emotion-focused engagement coping might not work well for everyone; often, its effectiveness appears to be situation-specific. At the same time, problem-and emotion-focused disengagement strategies might prove useful for an individual dealing with the stress of racism (Brondolo et al., 2009). People tend to use flexibility in choosing from among a plurality of coping strategies to manage their experience of racism—it is not an either/or situation (Joseph & Kuo, 2009). The gay men of color in my study

discussed the perceived effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the different coping strategies that they used for dealing with racism-related challenges. Reflecting on the sources of their coping strategies helped them contextualize their approaches to dealing with racism-related stress.

EFFECTIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Across racial and ethnic groups, strategies that focused on communicating or educating others about racism were the most commonly reported. Interacting with the perpetrator of a racist act was felt to open up lines of communication for dialogue, education, and mutual understanding. Similar advantages applied to the strategy of education. The possibility that the target might have a positive influence on helping others to increase their awareness of racism was seen as a strength—the target would feel like a part of these individuals' change and transformation: "communication is the key for everything. Because we learn, we educate, everybody is entitled to their own opinion. By talking about it and mentioning it, it helps. So for me . . . communication is really the key" (Amare, Black, gay).

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

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

Amare and Dexter both found that communication and education were two powerful ways for raising awareness about racism in gay men's communities and for getting White gay men to be part of the solution. For them, the transformation they saw in some people they had spoken with about racism attests to the utility of such strategies for change. These approaches, they felt, worked because the problem was named and there was therefore an opportunity for conversation and learning. Naming racism is a powerful process, making the problem evident for the perpetrator and validating the reality of gay men of color regarding their experiences of racism. The opportunity to be part of another person's evolution and personal change is a notable advantage of these strategies for gay men of color.

Reliance on spiritual beliefs, meditation, prayer, and acceptance of what one can and cannot control emerged as effective strategies for coping with

racism. For example, one participant said his spirituality developed out of a perceived lack of social support. He did not draw strength from other gay men of color; instead, his spiritual beliefs deepened to where he felt strengthened by his connection to ancestral spirits. The ability to motivate himself was deeply connected to his sense of spirituality, which gave meaning and purpose to his life:

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

As Kwame seems to suggest, spirituality can give purpose to one's life by helping the individual to make sense of his pain and suffering. Beyond this benefit, however, it can also nourish a constructive self-concept and promote positive self-evaluation and psychological adjustment; an individual may come to appreciate his own value and worth.

Along the lines of spiritual coping identified by another participant in the Black group was the invocation of meditation and prayer as an effective strategy for dealing with racism, especially with letting go of negative thinking:

> I do a lot of meditation and prayer. . . . [This] helps me to surrender all negative thinking. . . . Teaching myself to love and helping others to love themselves, that's what prayer is for me. It's eradicating all negative thinking and things that . . . are lies of the past, of our forefathers and whatnot. It's about the truth now, the absolute truth. We were created to love. That's what I believe. And so when I remind myself of that, then I can let go of all of the hurts and the pains that have been inflicted on me, and also all the hurts and pains I have inflicted on others, because I was hurt. (Justin, Black, gay)

These findings are not atypical, especially in the context of religious heterosexism. For example, several studies have noted the importance of religion and spirituality in the lives of gay men of color, despite their being subjected to religious intolerance because of their sexual orientation (e.g., Garcia et al., 2008; Kubicek et al., 2009; Pitt, 2010). Similarly, knowing what one can and cannot control may lessen the stress of racism. Understanding that racism is an inevitable aspect of the general social fabric can make the experience less isolating or stigmatizing.[1] This awareness can alter one's perception of a racist situation, including unrealistic expectations that one might have of other people. At the core, then, is the realization that the only real control people have is over themselves—in this case, the way they choose to respond to an incident of racism.

Participants further relied on the support of platonic friends to cope with the racism encountered both inside and outside of the GLBT community. These were gay and queer-identified friends of color, gathered together in a safe space to debrief about personal and collective experiences of racism, and demonstrate support for one another:

> Another thing I do, some of my fabulous, radical, queer friends of mine, we have Black family evenings and stuff. And so we go out and we have martinis and we just get together and talk about stuff . . . and really vent and . . . get that off our chest, right. We party together. (Chike, Black, gay)

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

The ability to debrief with other gay men of color was seen as an effective strategy, perhaps because of the men's shared experiences of racism. Such groups offered the space for gay men of color to be heard and not judged; to feel they would not have to explain their experiences to be understood. The chance to make connections between others' experiences and their own meant that they would not feel alone in their feelings and reactions to the racism directed at them.

A strong social support network can also include nonplatonic relationships, such as an intimate partner. This individual may or may not be from the same racial and ethnic background. The strategy of venting to a romantic partner of a different race—White, for example—was sometimes used to cope with racism. Anil, a participant in the South Asian group, said: "If I've experienced a racist incident, I sometimes will vent to my partner. And sometimes he gets it a lot." Ali, a participant from the Arab/Middle Eastern group, commented: "That time . . . when [racism] happened, . . . I was with my partner, so I had support. I wasn't alone. . . . So probably that was my support."

Each of these participants valued the opportunity to have an intimate partner to turn to when they had experienced racism. In their accounts, having a partner to lean on for support appears most significant as an effective way to cope with racism. Ali's partner was able to bear witness to Ali's experience of racism, providing a close-up understanding of the operations of racism in gay men's communities. For Anil, venting to his partner was a means of releasing the pain and frustration of the racist encounter, especially since his partner had not been there to witness the incident. What Anil and Ali had in common was that neither one looked to their partner to fix the problem, to solve

racism. They just wanted to feel seen and heard, and to have their experiences validated by someone they loved.

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

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

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

As expressed by these participants, informal social groups are effective strategies they found helpful in coping with racism. In a way, these strategies are not completely different from the one involving platonic friends, as sources of support. The important difference perhaps is that the latter strategy would entail friends known to each other, whereas the informal social groups would be opened to gay men of color in general. With the informal social groups, participants seemed to emphasize the need for these groups to be participant-led, which has the advantage that gay men of color would be placed at the center of their own lives, empowered to find solutions that would work for them rather than having a formal organization-led solution foisted on them.

INEFFECTIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Not all coping strategies were found helpful in dealing with racism. Participants were not uniformly of the view that communication and education were effective strategies for coping with racism. The perceived inability of these strategies to have a bigger impact on a national or global scale was seen as their drawback, in that the process of oppression was limited to a microlevel analysis. In discussing personal strategies that may have proven

effective in coping with racism, the participant quoted here offered a revealing account of the strategy that he viewed as ineffective:

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

Communication and education as coping strategies focused on microlevel change—change at an interpersonal level—overlooking the kind of effort needed to effect the macrolevel social and systemic change articulated by Chike. This observation points to the possible danger of looking narrowly at the problem of racism and its possible solutions. Rather than binary, either/or thinking, the findings point to the importance of system-wide approaches, with the potential to eliminate racism and its pernicious effects.

Similarly, expressing anger—one form of communication—was perceived to trigger stereotypes unflattering to the self, and to undermine the target's ability to rise above the experience of racial oppression:

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

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

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

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

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

Venting to one's intimate partner was considered helpful for dealing with racism, although inattention to a partner's tolerance threshold could have the opposite effect. In the process of wanting to be heard and validated, there is the potential for the venting partner to neglect the welfare of the listening partner; the latter may be treated as an emotional punching bag for the other's frustration and anger. Venting's inclusion here reflects the potential for misuse, with possible relationship consequences. Anil, a participant in the South Asian group, said:

> You know, it's good to vent. And [his boyfriend] likes to listen. He's very comforting but I shouldn't just use him that way, just as a punching bag, and just to sort of, you know, unload. It is not helpful to unload to your partner all the time.

Relationships in which the partners are from different racial and ethnic backgrounds may be more vulnerable to this predicament. A White man in a romantic relationship with a South Asian man illustrates this point. Beyond the status of a lover, the White man represents the dominant racial group that is the source of his partner's negative experience. Despite the White partner's efforts to be supportive, he may not fully understand the experience of racial discrimination. Venting can disintegrate into an attack against the White partner, and the external stressor of racism misdirected toward him. In the end, both partners may feel overwhelmed or defeated in their need to be supportive and to feel heard and validated.

Using drugs and alcohol, overlooking a racist incident, denying the incident's existence, and confiding in a romantic partner or friends were thought to be counterproductive:

> I just don't think about it. I'm sure [sweeping racism under the carpet] is not helpful in that it doesn't solve the problem. If I go out to a [gay] bar, I'm sure that [racism] would arise again and so I just don't go out to a bar. If I do go out to a bar, which is once every three years now, it's usually because my gay friends are there and it's a bunch of them. So I do it because it's a party for them or whatever and it's a social time. And I hang out just around them. I don't really talk or socialize with anyone else. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

> It was drinking and using drugs. All they brought was resentment, anger, rage, and jail. (laughs) Yeah. . . . And the addiction brought me to places where I . . . would steal to get my next fix and whatnot. And . . . I had such . . . lack of love of self that I would go, frequent, places that I knew there would be guns and knives and whatnot. . . . Like I said, I feel like a walking miracle, I really do. (Justin, Black, gay)

> [My partner] told me, "Oh, just ignore [it]," you know. But no, wait a second. You would not understand what . . . it means to . . . face racism, because you're White. Right? . . . So, in that way, it was a tough go. But talking to his friends . . . they all [were, like,] "Oh, . . . things happen." (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

These participants did not always find the strategies they chose for coping with racism effective, perhaps because the strategies did not directly address the source of the problem. Instead, they could lead to self-destructive behaviors, as Justin described in his story. At other times, where the decision seems to have been removed from their choice, a person could end up isolating themselves from social venues, as a way to avoid being the target of racism. The strategy of confiding in a romantic partner who is White was equally imperfect, since the partner may not understand the impact of racism and its cumulative effects. Lacking a first-person experience with or understanding of racism, a White partner or friend may offhandedly dismiss a gay person of color's concerns about racism. Such a response can reinforce the racism acutely felt and experienced by gay men of color.

Altering one's accent to appear more English-sounding was perceived by one participant to be ineffective in dealing with racism. In the East Asian group, attempts to speak "more American" or "more Canadian" added to an already challenging situation, making it difficult to be understood by native English-speaking people, and resulting in the decision to communicate more naturally, even with an accent:

Tobey: Changing my accent, basically, is the only thing.
Giwa: Has it helped you cope or not cope with racism?
Tobey: Not really. . . . I get bothered every time I had a remark about my accent. So, I try to sound more English. It didn't work because they did not understand it more. I tried to sound American. Also didn't work. So I'm, like, okay, I will just speak and try to shape my words right. I don't care if I have an accent whenever I speak anymore. (Tobey, East Asian, gay)

Tobey did not encounter any support for his efforts to sound more English. In fact, each word he uttered reinforced the fact that he had an accent, that he was from someplace else, not Canada. As he observed, the act of trying to sound more English or American was a futile exercise because it did not generate the outcome he wanted. When he spoke, he was asked to repeat himself, a request he found frustrating. White gay men's comprehension of him did not change. In the end, Tobey decided to be himself, to speak the only way he could, with his accent.

INFLUENCES ON COPING STRATEGIES

Differences were found across three racial or ethnic groups. South Asian gay men reported that education influenced their choice of coping strategies. The type of degree program they studied at university—psychology and political science in particular—seemed critical to their exposure to social justice issues and may have helped them to develop a wide range of personal and social responses to inequality and discrimination:

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

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

Among Black and Arab/Middle Eastern men in the study, external sources of influence had a positive impact on some of their coping choices. In the Arab/Middle Eastern group, one participant, Ali, expressed being influenced by the pioneering work and research of a highly regarded psychologist. He emphasized Rogers's particular method of active listening to clients: "The way I coped, I would say the person who influenced me was Carl Rogers." In the case of Black participants, esteemed public intellectuals and activists of the same race occupied important roles in their lives. These individuals symbolized good, living, role models and, in one case, may have inspired a commitment to activism and engaged scholarship:

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

In addition, the choice of coping strategy may be influenced by an individual's personality and temperament. One participant in the East Asian group considered that his ability to differentiate between what he could and could not control had helped him cope with racism most effectively—he was now able to maintain a positive state of mind, and not dwell on negative thoughts:

> I think it has actually helped me in some ways to accept that racism is always going to be around. So that's something that . . . I can't control, I can't change. So I think

> it's about knowing what I can control, and usually that's just my own reactions, perceptions, and feelings. And really, all I have to do is stay focused on things that are positive and not dwell on things that are negative. (Matthew, East Asian, gay)

In a small number of cases, people close to the participants—supportive and caring individuals with a positive outlook on life, such as parents (specifically, their mothers)—had an influencing role on their coping choices. Anil, a participant in the South Asian group, commented: "Yeah, and you interact with people who are supportive and so you kind of develop coping strategies based on your interactions with positive people, as opposed to, I don't know, people who are negative." Another participant had a similar sentiment, reflecting the close relationship between him and his mother:

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

In some ways, there is similarity in the accounts of Matthew, Anil, and Amare. Matthew's decision to focus on things within his power to control mirrored the advice that Amare received from his mother, to not worry about what other people said about him; racism was inevitable. She encouraged Amare to stay focused on what he had control over—namely, his reactions to racist events. Such positive feedback from an important family member connects to Anil's remark about the importance of surrounding oneself with positive people as opposed to people with a critical and negative outlook.

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

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

The possibility of positive role models and mentors to have influence on one's coping strategies was a significant topic of concern. Participants imagined that these individuals could, for example, offer advice and insight into their own struggles and coping strategies. However, the lack of opportunity to connect with successful gay men of color who had gone through similar life challenges was a problem. Participants did not feel that they had access to such people:

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

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

> I actually can't think of a queer person, or Brown person of color. There are no representations or role models. And those people who dare to be role models, like El-Farouk Khaki, who you know, he tried to be a role model. Like, I mean they just . . . get knocked down so fast. Like, they get bitch slapped out of the spotlight. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

There was a deep feeling of pain and loss attached to the absence of role models in these participants' lives. This was a perceived social reality that White gay men did not have to contend with. The pain could act as a force for creativity and incentive to find solutions to their unmet needs; but it could also highlight the significance of this loss of relationship and support for one's sense of identity and place:

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

Chike's expression of the need for love, affection, and support from Black gay men is significant. The absence of such affirmation and support weighed heavily on him; he was reminded about the nonexistent reciprocal affirmation and support from others within his cultural community. Expressing that he did not feel in the right space, Chike gave voice to the value of this connection. The connection to space in Chike's account suggest a relationship with other Black gay men, through which the burden of navigating White gay men's communities could be made less painful. Knowing that a Black space existed, which he felt the right to occupy, he could be himself.

BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING FORMAL AND INFORMAL SUPPORTS

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

> Counseling, because there is lots of sex addiction in the Arab community, lots of STIs [sexually transmitted infections; among] Arab gay men. . . . Because remember, like, LGBTQ [people of] color, I am sure you know this, but, like, they always [face] discrimination, right? [Both] in the GLBTQ [community] and then their [ethnoracial] communities, if they are out and gay. So if there are no . . . places to go for counseling, how are they going to cope? Lots of gambling, drug addiction [and] sex addiction. (Ali, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)

Despite the unavailability of critical support for addressing racism, some participants believed that gay men of color could be served by going to Organization A, where support can be provided on a limited scale, or similarly related mainstream social services, such as Organization C. This view was expressed mainly by participants in the East Asian and South Asian groups; none of the participants in the Black group shared this point:

Matthew: You can go to Organization A, yes.
Giwa: Do you think that Organization A would be able to provide the level of support needed to deal with racism?
Matthew: They will provide you with a certain degree of support. I think that they will have a certain level of cultural understanding, and I think that they would try their best, but I think that's also limited. (Matthew, East Asian, gay)

> I think if you live in Ottawa, you could go to the family counselor, like the LGBT family counselor at Organization C . . . or counselor at Organization D. And then Organization A, which very racistly started up this ethnocultural group. . . . I mean when they restarted the group recently, it was very racist because it was run by a White person. . . . I'm just not interested. (Dexter, South Asian, gay)

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

Mainstream GLBT services were critiqued for their lack of attention to issues of race, ethnicity, and the interlocking relations with sexual orientation. Agency staff might behave in ways that reproduced racialized oppression, without regard to how service users were directly affected by a program or lack of one. In the Black group, participants reflected on how service providers were not always sensitive to their needs and realities. Some practitioners were found to be dismissive or prejudicial in their outlook, and to lack appreciation of their varied aspirations beyond a focus on and promotion of safer sex:

> I think we need to reframe certain conversations. Because for me, what I've noticed is that whenever you bring up issues pertaining to gay Black men, it usually revolves around sex, right, and sex education. *Down low*, I hate that term so much. But I think we need to recognize that there are deeper issues, other than just sex. I think issues around mentorship and love, communal love and what that means, and healthy relationships and how we begin fostering that and developing that. So I think it's a recognition that we have other aspirations, we have many aspirations that aren't taken into account and that we have many experiences. . . . I don't think there's a blanket policy for service providers that, you know, just do these type of things and you'll be able to reach a wider group. I don't think it quite works that way. I think that they need to open themselves up to celebrating and recognizing the difference within our community. Because

> even the same ways that the GLB community is not a homogenous group, neither are gay Black men. We aren't homogeneous either and I think we need to have a heterogeneous space where we recognize that there's difference and that we all come from different locations and every location should be validated. (Chike, Black, gay)

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

For Chike and Kwame, part of the challenge with mainstream service providers was their single story perpetuated about Black gay men, a story centered on sex. This singular focus overlooked the complexity of the men's lives, discounting their other experiences or needs. By treating all Black gay men in the same way, as if the group were homogenous, differences in their lived experiences are erased, and service providers were absolved of the need to do better in meeting the unique needs of every Black gay men encountered in practice. For Kwame, the need for voice was important. He observed that the inability of service providers to listen to Black gay men contributed to stereotypes about them as being "too angry," for example. Such negative portrayal of Black gay men provided a convenient way for mainstream service providers to ignore or dismiss the concerns of Black gay men.

Other available services had a narrow focus, such as coming out, or living with HIV/AIDS. Tobey, a participant from the East Asian group, for example, said: "I noticed, in my perspective, support for the gays [is] just for a few things: coming out and being HIV positive. I don't feel like there's services or support for race or racial discrimination whatsoever." Agencies like Organization E could provide some culturally specific services, but personnel constraint was likely a barrier to quality support. An organization dedicated to serving gay and other sexual- and gender-minority people of color would be ideal:

> Someone of color could come to Organization E for support as a person of color, and [he] could [be provided with] support. But that level of support is limited because there are only two people within the institution that provide more mainstream services. I think that it would be great if there were more organizations dedicated to assisting gay men from cultural groups. . . . So, if you had an organization that was more dedicated to it, then there would probably be a

much higher level of support. So, there is support, but there's a ceiling on it. (Matthew, East Asian, gay)

For a couple of participants, the combination of the low number of gay men of color in Ottawa and their increasing integration into mainstream gay services and programs was thought might not justify the creation of a dedicated organization or services specific to helping them:

I don't know if Ottawa is big enough really to have one dedicated organization for that. . . Ottawa is a very transient community. . . . I'd say that Ottawa has a lot of movement in and out. Just on a daily basis, about half the people who work for the government don't live in Ottawa. And when I say Ottawa, as in most of them may just be in Nepean/Kanata/Orleans. . . . I know people [who] commute from Kemptville, Rockland, you know, way out west, like to Arnprior. So on a daily basis, Ottawa is almost like a commuter town, right? (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

Although the majority of the men emphasized their wish for more formal support, informal support was not seen as less important. Their expectation was that gay men of color could connect with each other to provide comfort and emotional care that their White friends, for example, could not provide because of their different lived experience and social location:

I think an action needs to be done in terms of creating some kind of a resource or a support network. And I say that in very broad terms because . . . I don't like to define things sometimes. . . . Like, I don't know, Organization D, right? . . . would have a safe space to have it. I know they have the gay men's nights on Thursdays. . . . Or, like, the [LGBT] Restaurant. I'm sure they'll host one. . . . This is not a, you know, find sex or relationship [social gathering]; if it happens, it happens. But this is really support [for] each other. (Jordan, East Asian, gay)

I believe it is these social groups. It's like a coffee club, a bowling club. You know, bowling's easy; you just get together and pay $3 a game, you know? I mean, and it's fun. You go to West Park Lanes and I don't see why not. Or, you know, everybody coming together and going to Rainbow Cinema on a Tuesday night because it's only $2. Like, I mean, a group of six costs $12, you know? (Justin, Black, gay)

Jordan and Justin, echoing the perspectives of other participants, were of the view that informal social groups could help to bring gay men of color together, as a complement to formal social supports. They were not advocating for one approach over another. Through connecting over dinner or games, they thought, informal social groups offered the possibility for fun

and community building, without the agenda or need of always talking about racism. The message seemed to be that there is a time and place for talking about racism. This separation, even if abstract, provided a way for gay men of color to practice communal self-care. Despite the persistence and long reach of racism, Jordan and Justin seemed to intimate that it did not have to saturate all aspects of their lives. The time when gay men of color came together for fun was a time when discussion about racism could take a back seat.

WHAT COPING REVEALS

The gay men of color in this study demonstrated that coping strategies are dynamic, reflecting the heterogeneity between and within their groups. While they alluded to particular strategies they found helpful or not helpful in responding to or reducing the stress of racism, their accounts also suggest the importance of context-specific factors. That is, coping strategies that might work for one person may not work for another person, and are shaped in part by the sociocultural and environmental contexts of the racist events. This insight is helpful in tempering any rush to dismiss certain coping strategies as inferior to other coping strategies.

Moreover, the men's narratives are a study in mental, emotional, social, and physical resilience. Regardless of the racism they endured, they found ways to respond to racist indignities through recourse to problem- and emotion-focused coping strategies. Of course, as the men themselves observed, these strategies served particular purposes in their ability to deal with difficult racist situations. This remained true despite their understanding that specific coping strategies might yield different and, sometimes, unanticipated outcomes.

Ultimately, the men's choices of coping strategies were not isolated but influenced by and rooted in a foundation of personal, social, and cultural histories and vulnerabilities. Importantly, their awareness of the present revealed what was missing, lost, and exposed in their relationship—and need for relationship—with others from their own cultural group. With this awareness also came the understanding that formal and informal supports could form important elements of the care cascade for gay men of color, in helping them to cope with their experiences of racism.

NOTE

1. Aylward, 1999; Bell, 1992; Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Razack & Jeffery, 2002.

Chapter 7

Weaving the Tales

Bringing It All Together

For most of the participants, racism was encountered in general, social situations. It often took the form of microaggressions masquerading as compliments, such as being perceived as speaking good English; racial tokenism (i.e., recognition as an honorary White person); exclusion from White cliques; receiving disapproving looks from White gay men; and being the target of terrorist innuendos.

Racism was also enacted in the context of sex and dating. Dating proved particularly challenging, given the conflicting dominant White racial sentiment about gay men of color as appealing—and appalling.[1] Although *in private* White gay men may be disposed to sleep with gay men of color, they are indisposed to being seen in romantic relationships with them *in public*. Befriending gay men of color may not carry the same level of discomfort; however, the literature on interracial relationships among adolescents suggests that this type of friendship is more difficult to maintain and tends to be less reciprocal because of social stigmas, such as those based on race (see Billy & Udry, 1985; Kao & Joyner, 2004; Vaquera & Kao, 2008).

It appears from the findings that, among gay men of color, image and perception are of great import for White gay men. Who they date and are seen to be dating matters a great deal; it functions as a status symbol used to denote one's social standing in the community. Thus, to date outside of one's race may be seen to result in a diminished social status. The experience of race-based dating preferences was generally perceived by participants to be more subtle in person than online (Callander, Newman, et al., 2015). Given the silence around the reason for the participants' rejection, these preferences reinforced the men's social exclusion from the GLBT community. Online racism, by contrast, tended to be more overt or blatant. Expressions of racial

hatred were more clearly communicated, and sometimes included threats and intimations of violence.

The issue of dating preferences based on race has been examined in other studies,[2] where similar conclusions have been drawn. However, some of these studies also revealed mixed interpretations among participants regarding the meaning of this phenomenon; some found the act racist and others did not (e.g., see: Callander, Holt, et al., 2015; Callander, Newman, et al., 2015; Paul et al., 2010). In the latter case, the tendency was to think of racial dating bias as a matter of preference or taste. The present study supports these findings.

Yet it is worth highlighting that the majority of participants also found dating preferences based on race deplorable. White gay men's repudiation of gay men of color on the grounds of their skin color amounted to racism. It was a mode of othering, implicated in the construction of arbitrary ingroup and outgroup categories, with gay men of color situated on the periphery. The framing of gay men of color as outsiders served to maintain a homogeneous and incomplete picture of the GLBT community, in which the perception of gay sexuality was inferred to mean White. What is more, allowing racism in dating practices to be conceptualized as a so-called preference could result in a situation where certain iterations of racism go unchallenged.[3]

When going to an online platform to meet men for sexual hookups or friendship, most participants encountered vitriolic racist epithets and displays of racist attitudes and stereotypes on the part of White gay men—for example, "No Asians." Using this problematic setting to establish connections with others might prove menacing, as it could facilitate messages of racial superiority and hatred. When face to face, the subtlety of in-person racism might be tempered by a perpetrator's need to avoid being confronted by his target. But similar restraint seemed less important online, where users' anonymity acts to privilege their freedom of expression—a White gay man can articulate a racist thought without regard for the implication of his words or actions. Findings from other research support those of the current study: namely, online anonymity provides the opportunity for some White gay men to air their racist views openly, without fear of repercussion or consequence.[4]

Interestingly, not all participants in the current study labeled the online sex and dating practices of White gay men as racist. This finding corroborates the work by Callander, Newman, et al. (2015), which also advanced the idea that the reluctance to do so may be because of their participants' strong connotation attached to the word *racist*, and the possible suggestion that they were implicated in the same behavior as White gay men. Indeed, in the current study, one participant expressed doubt about labeling such practice *racist*. He queried whether he was equally guilty of racism, having conveyed in the past his aversion for White gay men with red hair and freckles.

His account poses an interesting conundrum but, much like the explanations offered by Callander, Newman, et al. (2015), overlooked one difference: when White gay men claim to not desire Asian men, as captured in the phrase "No Asians," the plurality of the signifier *Asian* suggests the exclusion of *all* Asians and not just the individual Asian man. This is not the same as saying that one is not interested in certain types of White gay men, since not all of them have red hair and freckles. In this way, the possibility exists for dating other White men with features considered desirable. Along this line of thought, current findings suggest caution with respect to the interpretation of why some gay men of color choose to not label an incident racist: they may shy away from doing so to avoid the negative emotions aroused by racism.

Such reluctance, however, is not to suggest that the word *racism* lacks import or that people should refrain from using it where merited. Words and language help us to communicate: they reflect the ways we create and transmit our thoughts, values, and meanings. Having words to articulate how one experiences the world can be liberating; it is the difference between feeling heard and interiorly silenced, feeling seen and discounted. For the gay men of color interviewed for this book, the word *racism* was central to a narrative of oppression and discrimination in gay men's communities. It was how they communicated their experiences of and resistance to everyday racism, expressed through behaviors, institutions, and cultures. In this way, their accounts reinforced the value and significance of the word, not just for themselves but for White gay men too. The latter are invited to see how the practices of racism diminish them as well as the targets of racism. Thus, as a word, racism is an invocation for change; it rests on the idea that, learning about the evils of racism, individual and collective efforts could be mobilized for social change.

Less frequently reported by participants was that online dating provided user anonymity to both gay men of color and White gay men, for different reasons. For the former, it offered a defense against disclosure of racial or ethnic identity, thus delaying a possible rejection based on race or ethnicity. For the latter, those with racist views were afforded the platform for transmitting messages of racial exclusion.

Because participants found such sensitivity among White gay men to being labeled as racist, and because the word connotes such a moral transgression, gay men of color may be careful to not offend White gay men by calling them out as racist, because they do not want to deal with the repercussions—the White men justifying their behavior or language. As an alternative, and a way to process race-based social rejection, they could look to non-race-related explanations, such as thinking that White gay men do not find them physically attractive in terms of body shape, size, and muscularity (e.g., see: Brennan et al., 2013).

Racial discrimination exists at multiple levels and is embedded in everyday interactions. White privilege results from processes of institutional and cultural conditioning, by which White attitudes of racial and cultural superiority are maintained; racism buttresses this White structural advantage.[5] Such conditioning requires a critical interrogation of cultural permissiveness toward racism, which may privilege a postracial discourse. The social construction of racism as a historical artifact makes antiracism work difficult (Pon et al., 2016); it can help to perpetuate racism in subtle ways. On some level, perhaps, the postracial narrative can be understood as an attempt to claim liberal ideals of equality and social justice. Yet, in a climate of racial hostility and intolerance, it is clear that racism remains an intractable feature of contemporary gay life.

The findings of the study—that gay men of color encountered racism and discrimination at various levels within the GLBT community—are therefore significant, but not surprising. This account of oppression mirrors that of the broader Canadian society, as experienced by visible minorities in general, and is equally consistent with other studies of gay men of color, in which everyday racism has been shown to be a common experience. The interpersonal, cultural, and institutional dynamics of racism illustrate the mechanisms by which White gay men seek to exclude gay men of color and create spatial distance. This mode of territorialization echoes Lipsitz's (2011) concept of White spatial imaginary, in which Whiteness is rewarded and reinscribed into the operation of power relations. For gay men of color, this results in a lack of a safe space for reprieve from the negative conditions of racism. This lack of safe space reinforces the hostile environment of the GLBT community and may be seen to contribute to the feeling of dissonance and fragmentation among gay men of color, with implications for their psychological sense of community.

Acts of racial discrimination carry through the entire community, including businesses, and help to uphold the system of White supremacy (Bérubé, 2001). The differential treatment of gay men of color based upon skin color communicates the message that they are unwelcome, and adds to their struggles for identity and belonging. Racism's less overt forms makes it tempting to believe that there is less discrimination in the GLBT community. However, the perception of less racism in the GLBT community can lead to illusory or mistaken conclusions. There is a need to be concerned about the transposition of racism online, where expressions of racist beliefs are commonplace, and the shift to online communication technology helps to conceal racism from the general public view.

This study's revelation that racism occurs in multiple spaces within the GLBT community is an indictment of its pervasiveness, and an affirmation that White GLBT people are not immune to racism, regardless of their sexual

and gender minority status. Having experienced sexual and gender prejudices is not a deterrent against perpetrating oppressive practices. In the GLBT community of Ottawa, gay men of color were most likely to experience racism in interpersonal and intergroup relations, where they felt that White gay men at the same time desired and were averse to them. For example, despite being seen as desirable for private sexual encounters, they were less ideal for public romantic relationships. For some participants, it was a common experience to be kept on standby in sexual situations, as a last-minute option to the preferred company of White gay men.

The objectifying behaviors of White gay men at gay bars and on the internet have added to the dehumanization experienced by the majority of gay men of color, who perceived that they were treated as sexual objects and not as human beings. In describing their lack of attraction to gay men of color, White gay men's claim of racial preference facilitated their expression of overtly racist remarks. This situation was most pervasive online, where user anonymity functioned as a shield for White gay men to articulate their racist beliefs (Callander, Holt, et al., 2012, 2015).

Experiences of racism also manifested at the institutional or organizational level. Some participants felt unsupported by GLBT individuals and organizations in their community work, compared to the support received by their White colleagues. Similarly, apathy about targeting outreach materials to gay men of color reproduced the sense of their lack of importance. The community's expectation seems to have been that gay men of color would see their image reflected back to them in White gay men. In addition, business owners ignored or failed to notice gay men of color as models for promotional events, preferring White men for the role instead. At other times, the resistance could be felt through the effort of White members of the community to frustrate or discredit the leadership of gay men of color for having different opinions from the dominant White group. Finally, GLBT organizations might be less inclined to recruit from racialized communities to fill staff or volunteer vacancies. In one case, the decision was made by an organization to hire a White person to run a drop-in group for people of color.

An overwhelming 85 percent of the participants reported experiencing racism in the GLBT community of Ottawa, confirming prior research on the topic.[6] The extent of the problem, coupled with its effect on gay men of color, suggests that racism is a source of stress. Cumulative exposure to racism can become overwhelming (Pascoe & Richman, 2009), and raises questions about one's inner sense of self-worth and value. Like all things, however, the stressor of racism is not experienced equally. Racist incidents were more common among the Black, South Asian, and East Asian participants and less common among the Arab/Middle Eastern group in the study.

Thus, it may appear that "special attention" was reserved more for Asian and Black gay men than Arab/Middle Eastern gay men. Asian and Black men, who are visibly different, experienced situations in which ascribed negative meanings of racial/ethnic difference placed them at a disadvantage. Hence, they were more likely to report personal or group experiences of racism than their Arab/Middle Eastern peers. Couzens, Mahoney, and Wilkinson (2017) reached a similar conclusion in their study about the experiences of homophobia among LGB people in St. Lucia, West Indies. Specifically, they found that darker-skinned LGB people reported increased levels of homophobia and psychological distress and anxiety compared to their lighter-skinned counterparts. Their study demonstrated how the phenomenon of skin-tone stratification or colorism can materialize in communities of color. Greater social value may be placed on lighter skin. In non-GLBT populations, White people have also been found to exhibit preference for Asian and Black people with lighter skin tones (Glenn, 2009; Norwood, 2014; Russell-Cole et al., 2013), reinforcing the discriminatory treatment of individuals with darker complexions. These authors' findings connect with my own research on racism in gay men's communities, suggesting that one's proximity or adjacency to Whiteness can shield against or reduce exposure to race-based discrimination.

Why the Arab/Middle Eastern gay men reported little direct, personal racism in GLBT communities is an important finding, considering the geopolitics of anti-Arab/Middle Eastern sentiment in Canada and other Western countries (Hennebry & Momani, 2013; Iyer, 2015; Salaita, 2006). One possible explanation is that the outward appearance of Arab/Middle Eastern gay men in the current study closely matched that of White gay men. The whiteness of their skin complexion—and, in one case, having blue eyes—may have facilitated their ability to "pass." Racial passing has, historically, referred to an individual of *mixed* racial identity who successfully passes for and is accepted as a member of the dominant White racial group (Dawkins, 2012; Larsen, 1929). Passing can afford safety and protection to certain individuals, ensuring that they are shielded from the negative effects of racism. Yet as the findings in this study corroborated, the concept can equally apply to individuals with a *monoracial* identity like the participant whose physical facial characteristics resembled those of White people.

An earlier investigation by Ibanez et al. (2009) found that Latino gay men with darker skin color and Indian or African features were more likely to be discriminated against than their more European-looking, lighter-skinned counterparts. More recent research, which explored race relations and racism from the perceptions of gay and queer social service providers of color in Toronto (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012), reported a similar dynamic. In that study, among the Latin American participants, the light-to-pale skin

complexion of a foreign-born participant from Mexico was inferred to have mitigated his exposure to racism, with discrimination on the basis of his accent identified as the main source of bias. What emerges from these studies is that the darker in complexion or further away from Whiteness one is, the likelihood or odds of being targeted for racism increases. Although there is need for more research to establish causality, the evidence seems to suggest a relationship between racism and being dark skinned or having nondefining White characteristics (e.g., facial features).

The gay men of color in this study adopted and tailored their coping strategies according to the stress experience of racial discrimination. Participants coped with the discriminatory experiences of interpersonal racism in several ways. Emotionally accepting perpetrators as they were, seeking social support from other people of color or romantic partners, and using humor to reduce the stress of racial discrimination encapsulated some of the different emotion-focused engagement reactions. In many ways, the first strategy reflected participants' attempts at managing expectations they had of others, especially White gay men. Understanding that White gay men might have grown up in environments that lacked racial diversity helped to contextualize encounters of personal racism. In this sense, a higher expectation might be placed on individuals from racially and ethnically diverse communities (e.g., Toronto) compared to those from homogenous areas (e.g., the Canadian Maritime provinces).

The process of managing one's expectations of others, however, might reveal ideas about what one can and cannot control. Having this insight might help to orient one's energy output, so that attention could be focused on things within one's power to change, minimizing further risk or impact of racism on the self. There is a parallel between this finding and those reported by Choi et al. (2011). In that study, the researchers reported that when participants perceived their stigmatizing situation as inevitable, they chose to dismiss the stigmatization. This way of responding to racism is consistent with the ideology of emotion-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Related to the aforementioned strategy was rumination. Some participants rejected negative treatment as an inevitable rite of passage. Instead, they chose to think about racism, thereby avoiding becoming desensitized to it. Although thinking about racism did not end the discrimination directed at them, it enabled them to understand what conduct they could expect from White gay men, in effect removing the sting of discrimination or minimizing their emotional response to it. Similar findings have been reported in other studies, including those with non-GLBT samples. For example, in a study comparing how African American college students coped with racially and nonracially stressful events, the authors found that participants used

ruminative coping strategies when faced with racially rather than with nonracially stressful situations (Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers, 2012).

The social and emotional support of other racial/ethnic minority group members, both gay and nongay, was found to play a positive role in managing racism-related stress and discrimination. These support structures provided a safe space where participants could discuss personal and group-specific issues of racism. The non-White racial composition of the group seemed to have been an added benefit, helping to bring together people who shared a common experience. The way they nurtured each other seemed to help individuals to feel their experiences affirmed, so that they could begin to heal. As well, the close emotional ties and bond that developed between individuals in the group might act as a source of positive reinforcement for weathering future life challenges. In addition to relying on the support of their social networks (e.g., the "Black Fam")[7] for coping with racism in the GLBT community, findings demonstrate that some participants used the same coping strategy in response to racism outside of the GLBT community, such as in processing the incidence of racial discrimination experienced in a classroom. This finding accords with those of other studies, such as Noh and Kaspar's (2003). In their study of Korean immigrants in Toronto, Canada, those authors showed that social support seeking (talking to family, relatives, or friends) reduced levels of depression from perceived discrimination.

The current study's findings emphasized the value of informal social network systems. Receiving social support from others within one's network can be a good defensive measure against racism (Bryant, 2008; Noh & Kaspar, 2003; Yoshikawa et al., 2004). In this way, social support appears to have a protective property in managing individual and group experiences of racism. However, as the research by C.-S. Han et al. (2015) cautioned, this finding must be interpreted with care, given the mixed results of the benefits of social support strategies in coping with racism.

Some participants used humor as a way to challenge racism. The ability to make fun and light of an issue appears to have favorable implications (Allport, 1961; Freud, 1928/1959; Maslow, 1962). In addition to naming the issue, which can help to normalize the experience, the target is able to keep the source of the problem engaged in the discussion process. Maintaining an open line of communication can help reduce the negative stress of racism, and the perpetrator might find his capacity for change bolstered. In addition, humor appears to provide participants with perspective, ensuring that their experience does not become overwhelming. Moreover, compared to anger or dramatic interactions, which may have a counteractive effect for the target, humor may be useful for cultivating prospects for desired change (Abel, 2002; Kuiper, Martin, & Olinger, 1993).

The finding of the positive effects of humor on cognitive appraisal of a stressful situation is consistent with other research in this area (e.g., Kuiper et al., 1993; Lefcourt et al., 1995). For example, Abel (2002) investigated the relationship between humor, stress, and coping strategies among undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory psychology course. She found that participants with a high sense of humor appraised everyday problems as less stressful and reported less current anxiety, compared to those with a low sense of humor. These participants were also more likely to use problem-solving coping strategies than participants in the low humor group. There is a gender dimension to humor as a coping strategy. According to the study by Brown et al. (2011), among African American young adults, men were more likely than women to employ humor and substance use to cope with racism. The former finding mirrors those of the current study, in which the participants were all men. Gender socialization, as argued by Atkinson (2004), may influence men's choice of coping strategy, since they may have to contend with their perception as aggressive, intimidating, or violence-prone. This is especially true in the case of Black men, which makes humor a less threatening response to the violence of racism.

Patterns revealed in several studies point to the importance of physical activity for managing stress. For example, a study that investigated the relationship between stress, physical activity, and body mass index concluded that non-physically active participants were stressed at a higher level compared to their active counterparts (Lippke, Wienert, Kuhlmann, Fink, & Hambrecht, 2015). Because the study was cross-sectional, the authors could not confirm whether physical activity buffered stress or, in the case of inactive participants, if high stress level was the result of not adopting a physically active lifestyle. The positive benefits of physical exercise on well-being and coping with stress was confirmed in a qualitative study with nine university students (Kim & McKenzie, 2014). The researchers found that engaging in physical activity had the following six advantages, affording: positive emotions; unity of mind and body; heightened self-esteem; leisure; problem-focused coping; and enhanced health behavior. Other studies have reported similar findings (see also Truong & Museus, 2012). In the current study, several men indicated participating in individual and group recreational activities out of interest, such as swimming and curling, but only two participants discussed how running or working out at the gym related to coping with racism. In the former example, the experience of racism can leave one feeling precarious, and running can act as a conduit for releasing pent-up emotions and anger—getting "some of the edge off." In this way, it may help to reduce stress hormones and maintain homeostasis in the body (Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006).

One other interesting finding of this study, which has not been discussed in earlier studies, is the coping strategy of venting to one's romantic partner.

This is not a commonly used strategy across the different racial/ethnic groups. It was reported and discussed by one participant in the South Asian group for whom venting was an effective method of coping with racism. (See also Kawakami et al. (2020), in which venting was reported as an Asian-specific coping strategy, possibly reflecting cultural norms and values.) In addition to expressing painful feelings and aggravation, it permitted him to receive support from someone close and nonjudgmental. Much like the encouragement offered by individuals in social support networks, a romantic partner can provide a safe space for a man to comfortably and candidly speak about his experience of racism. In this way, he can feel respected and affirmed. A participant in the Arab/Middle Eastern group indicated receiving some support from his romantic partner. However, compared to the South Asian participant, the quality of support was not as strong as he would have wanted. Other participants, the majority of whom reported as single, did not identify this strategy. Those in monogamous relationships, other than the South Asian and Arab/Middle Eastern participants, reported differential risk exposure to racism. The minimal experience with racism may have resulted in their lack of need for venting to intimate partners. It is also possible that when they did encounter racism, they perceived the experience as not acutely stressful, further negating the need for emotional support from a close partner.

There is empirical support for venting as a way to cope with stigmatization. For example, in a study that looked at the strategies used by gay and bisexual young men who were coping with heterosexism, McDavitt et al. (2008) reported that venting emotions—talking, crying, and involvement in creative expressions such as drawing—emerged as an important outlet for youth who felt socially isolated. Although the study did not focus on racism specifically, the research finding confirms the salience of venting as a coping mechanism for dealing with stigma and discrimination. Other research, however, posits a differing viewpoint. A study involving non-GLBT Native Hawaiians found that, although participants used venting and behavioral disengagement (e.g., withdrawing from a stressful situation) as coping strategies for racism, these strategies mediated a significant indirect effect on psychological distress. The more venting and behavioral disengagement participants engaged in, the higher their chances were of experiencing psychological distress (Kaholokula et al., 2017).

Findings in the current study also illustrated that participants coped with their experience of racism using emotion-focused disengagement strategies. Although these strategies may provide temporary relief or escape from the stressful situation, they do not actually resolve the problem. This is because, on the whole, emotion-focused coping aims to reduce or manage emotions caused by a stressful event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The most common

strategies were emotional distancing or suppression, social withdrawal, and self-critical thoughts.

Consistent with the premise that people use emotion-focused coping when a stressful situation is perceived to be beyond their control, participants did not always express their real emotions, especially to the perpetrator—the source of their stress. They may have thought that expressing such emotions would bring about little change. Indeed, the data indicated that participants considered that, were they to make their exact feelings known, negative consequences might result. Fear of retaliation by someone known to the perpetrator emerged as important to their decision to conceal anger, and their preference for using profanity to express their feelings. This finding suggests that Whiteness, as a manifestation of privilege and power, can both inflict wounds and curtail expression of open opposition to the system of White supremacy. Although emotional distancing and suppression can seem beneficial to the target, some scholars have suggested that this style of coping can lead to negative health outcomes (e.g., Feagin & McKinney, 2003).

In terms of social withdrawal, the decision to spend less time in the GLBT community and more time with heterosexual and nonheterosexual friends enabled participants to avoid the negative experience of racism. The need for validation from others with shared experience and values looked to be a compelling factor in this decision. Participants appeared to have accepted the fact that White gay men would not give them the recognition and validation they needed, and thus did not see any reason to continue to involve themselves in the community. In making this decision, they seem to have moved toward regaining a sense of power over their lives, by refusing to allow White gay men to dictate their worth and value.

At the same time, retreating from the community seemed to come at a cost. The decision seemed to have been foisted on the men. They were faced with a choice: withdraw from a community where they knew they would experience racism, or continue their membership in it. Indeed, it is likely that participants' decision to leave may have been motivated by their need for self-preservation, even though they may have preferred to maintain their connection with the GLBT community.

Previous research with MSM of color regarding their coping strategies for dealing with racism and homophobia revealed a similar pattern (Choi et al., 2011). Some participants in the study by K.-H. Choi et al. intentionally avoided social situations and settings where they expected to be subjected to racism. Others, however, chose to avoid certain individuals rather than distance themselves completely from these settings (see also Han et al., 2015). Studies of non-GLBT people, such as youth from migrant backgrounds, provide additional support for this finding. In one study, the racism experienced by migrant youth was found to impact their settlement and transition

processes. Pertinent to the current study, it acted as a deterrent to their active involvement and participation in general life, so that sometimes they might withdraw from the broader community (Francis & Cornfoot, 2007).

Some participants employed the self-critical notion of "trying harder" in their efforts to cope with racism. At first glance, the idea may seem unproblematic. However, a closer analysis of the participants' data revealed the possible internalization of the stressful racist event. They may have blamed themselves for their negative experience of racism, believing that they could have done more to prevent the situation from happening in the first place. In this way, they diminished the responsibility of the perpetrator, and transferred the full burden of the racist event to themselves. Indeed, compared to the strategies already discussed, trying harder implies that racism is something within the target's control. Yet, as the evidence suggests, there are two outcomes to this emotion-based coping: one either becomes like White gay men, or resents the feeling of having to exert more effort than them. Regardless, rather than engage in behaviors that would address the real problem, participants focused more on actions (e.g., doing community or volunteer work and putting more effort into looking good) that might win them acceptance or validation from White gay men. Their efforts seemed to err on the side of risk, with no assurance they would be recognized as equals by White gay men.

Experiencing racism may thus provoke feeling directly responsible for discrimination perpetrated by the dominant White group, and fuel corrective actions on the part of the target for perceived recognition and affirmation. In a study of body image among ethnoracialized gay and bisexual men, Brennan et al. (2013) found that participants engaged in a number of bodily corrective measures (e.g., skin lightening), as a way to negotiate their experience of racism and to achieve acceptance from White gay men. As in the current study, Brennan et al.'s participants looked to have internalized the experience of racism, believing that by altering the way they looked—that is, to appear more White—White men would find them more desirable (see also Han, 2008b).

There was clear indication that participants also sought to cope with racism by taking a problem-focused engagement approach. The strategy of confronting or challenging the perpetrator was widely reported. In taking this action, participants wanted to resist their oppression by calling attention to the aggravating situation and its source, regardless of whether the event took place in public or in private. There is an empowering quality to this strategy—it allowed participants to exercise autonomy and voice, so as to avoid the label of victim. This finding substantiates previous research that found that gay men of color engaged in open and direct confrontation to actively counter racial stigmatization (e.g., Choi et al., 2011). The finding is also consistent with studies where participants were not necessarily GLBT-identified. For example, in a study of Black, Indigenous, and people of color's responses to

racial microaggressions (Houshmand & Spanierman, 2021), the researchers found that confronting perpetrators and challenging stereotypes were ways that participants sought to repudiate racism in its varied forms.

However, Choi et al. (2011) reported that direct confrontation was the least used stigma-related coping strategy among their participants. In this regard, their finding contrasts with the current study. The difference may be explained by the researchers' focus on multiple experiences of social discrimination, specifically racism and homophobia. The present study only looked at the coping responses of gay men of color to racism. Scholars such as Bryant (2008) and Wilson and Yoshikawa (2004) have reported similar findings. In their investigation of the experiences of racism and sexual discrimination among Asian/Pacific Islander MSM, Wilson and Yoshikawa (2004) found that participants used confrontational and nonconfrontational coping strategies in response to racism and homophobia. Bryant (2008), whose investigation examined how Black MSM learn to cope with homophobia and racism, reported comparable findings.

Taking concrete actions—such as advocating for the interest of sexual minorities of color during a gay film festival and doing volunteer work to help demystify the perception of gay services as limited to White people—were means by which a small number of gay men of color coped with racism. In addition to benefiting themselves, there was a potential social value to these strategies for other gay men of color, who might see themselves reflected in the media and services they consume. As the findings further suggest, there is an opportunity for White people to develop a heightened awareness of racialized discrimination as manifested in the media, social services, and health care environment.

Moreover, unlike direct confrontation, the strategies of advocacy and volunteerism demonstrated specific efforts that could be undertaken to effect a particular change. They should not be seen as superior to other strategies, since the choice of coping strategy may be influenced by the social situation and individual motivation. Yet, according to some researchers (e.g., Mattis et al., 2004; Szymanski, 2012), racism-related events are a predictor of an individual's involvement in social change activism. For example, Szymanski's study on racist events and individual coping styles as predictors of activism found that African American men and women were more likely to engage in activist-related activities, with benefit to the whole group. The researcher also found that, when experiences of racist events were low, individuals with high-reflective coping participated more in activism compared to those with low-reflective coping. However, when the level of racist events was high, all of the participants engaged in activism. Szymanski's (2012) study concluded that activism was one way that African Americans coped with racism.

SO, WHAT TO DO?

Notwithstanding the complex issue of racism, participants were commonly optimistic about the possibility for change. Individually and collectively, they wanted White gay men to take on greater responsibility for educating and confronting racism. This way, gay men of color would not always be burdened with the responsibility of teaching them about how or why their actions are racist.

From a collective standpoint, participants discussed the need for White gay men to take proactive steps in securing the kind of change desired. The suggested recommendations, however, differed by racial and ethnic groups. For example, participants in the East Asian group articulated that, as part of any problem resolution effort, the first step was to recognize that a problem existed. This began with an accurate identification and naming of the issue.

Similarly, participants in the South Asian group expressed a need for visibility and representation in key areas, including, but not limited to, porn. Of concern was the Whitewashing of the adult gay porn industry, which marginalizes gay South Asian men. Such action could help to normalize the group's sexual appeal and desirability. By not taking the dominant position, White gay men could be integral to bringing about real positive change.

The aforementioned issues and strategies or action plans included gay men of color themselves, with additional differences in findings across racial and ethnic groups. Specifically, it was felt that gay men of color who witnessed racism should denounce the bigotry, as opposed to keeping silent. Part of this effort would require, when possible, occupying positions of influence and using these platforms to effect change.

At other times, a commitment to collective understanding and appreciation of each other's culture—that is, dominant White and racialized ethnic groups—could promote positive interethnic relations. Time and patience were seen as crucial to the realization of this change process. Even then, some participants in the Black group suggested that the formation of a racialized cultural space was necessary to ease their continued exclusion from the mainstream White gay culture. Still, gay men of color may need to be proactive in celebrating and embracing their own beauty, as a way to challenge the mainstream definition of attractiveness.

The small number of gay men of color in GLBT communities was identified as a contributing factor to racism; many White gay men have simply lacked exposure to people of color, the participants suggested. Increasing the visibility and representation of gay men of color could help to improve race relations. However, this would require addressing the problem of racism. But gay men of color were leaving Ottawa or had thought about doing so. Welcoming environments, in which gay men of color felt that they

belong and were included, would be necessary to their sense of connection; these might influence their decision to stay, and add to the community's racial makeup. Their low numbers were also seen to affect the willingness of some gay men of color to speak out about racism, since doing so could result in repercussions to the self, especially if help and support from others were missing. Knowing that one had the support and backing of gay men of color—and White men—could give them the confidence needed to challenge racism. Further, strength in numbers could augment the group's ability to pursue strategic goals, such as the creation of a space for gay men of color (Giwa, 2010; Norsah, 2015). Increasing understanding of racism among White gay men could help to address this issue of subconscious racism.

Participants stressed the importance of informal support; in fact, they clearly preferred informal to formal support. By informal support, they meant the opportunity for gay men of color to come together as a group, in an informal setting, and offer assistance to each other. Such support could take place over dinner gatherings at a local restaurant; going to the apartment of one group member on a Friday night for drinks and conversation; or driving to Toronto each month to attend gay South Asian parties. Participants indicated that the informal nature of these activities could create a social support network of people for fun and supportive relationship that could be helpful for managing stress in difficult times.

The other advantage of an informal group was that it offered an outlet for gay men of color who could be struggling with their sexual orientation or looking to build their social support network. These individuals might be reluctant to seek out support from formal organizations, possibly to avoid stigma and any negative consequences related to their sexual orientation and race (Crichlow, 2004).

Informal mentoring and access to positive role models were also recognized as important components of psychosocial support. However, structural inequalities were believed to have contributed to the paucity of role models for gay men of color within the GLBT community, an experience that the participants did not believe was common to White gay men.

However, as the findings further suggest, informal support and formal support were not mutually exclusive; both could coexist, and both were needed to provide optimum support to gay men of color. For example, gay men of color who lacked access to informal support because of the location of the group might continue to feel alone in their experience. Having a competent professional to talk to could be helpful. Likewise, because gay men of color are not from uniform backgrounds, their experience of the informal group could vary; they might not all derive equal benefit from participation. For these individuals, an alternate support option would be ideal.

The same concern applies to mainstream organizations that have programs and services directed at people of color. In this case, gay men of color may lack support in dealing with racism, perhaps because of the concentration of services on the needs and priorities of their heterosexual counterparts. Like GLBT organizations, these agencies and their providers may lack appropriate knowledge about working with same-sex people of color (Lundy, 2011; O'Neill, 1999, 2010; Poon, 2011), and consider that they would be best served by a GLBT organization. In fact, a study by B. Ryan, Brotman, Baradaran, et al. (2008) explored queer people of color's access to health care and social services. Participants believed their health care needs would be best met through "specialized community-driven initiatives" (p. 329), and mainstream health care services were thought to be in need of a transformation, in order to address their specific needs and realities.

All of these factors may contribute to the current situation of a service gap in meeting the needs of gay men of color, especially in relation to the experience of racism. From the data, it is clear that gay men of color would benefit from a formal system of care in dealing with stressful racism-related situations. In particular, individuals without informal social support might derive the most advantage from this type of service, as would those whose support does not adequately help them to cope with racism.

WHAT RACISM TEACHES

Racism in gay men's communities is a stain on the character of these communities. It not only consolidates a collective and cultural understanding of Whiteness but also maintains the oppression and subjugation of gay men of color. Everyday racism—built on the foundation of unequal power relations and the enactment of White people's superiority over non-White people—is exhibited in visible and invisible ways through the actions and behaviors of the dominant group in power, whether calculated or otherwise. Thus, it is easy for the injustices of racism in gay men's communities to go unnoticed by White gay men, who benefit from their racial hierarchy of power, privilege and social status, and may not know or choose to ignore the realities of groups different from their own. The double consciousness Du Bois (1903) described so many years ago is apropos; under the conditions of White supremacy, White gay men cannot easily comprehend what it means to be a gay man of color, with his experience of racism and discrimination. White gay men are shielded from the ongoing costs and burden of racism; the dominance and privileges of Whiteness provide safety from which they remain complicit in racist structures. Defensive actions, feelings, and behaviors triggered by naming White gay men's connivance in racism maintain cultural norms and

standards that delegitimize the challenges that gay men of color face within gay men's communities. In the face of racist oppression, the gay men of color were challenged to respond to racism. The different coping strategies they drew on are counter-defenses against visible and invisible forces of White supremacy and racism. In "talking back" (hooks, 1989) to White gay men's enactment of racism, the toll of everyday racism for gay men of color was laid bare. Despite the pain of racism, the men exhibited resistance and resilience, revealing the duality of critical consciousness and actions needed to ending White supremacy and racism in gay men's communities.

Learning about the lives of gay men of color and what they have done to cope with the racism that affects them every day comprises the story of this book. It is a story that ends with hope, for their resistance and resilience shows how oppression and discrimination are not a one-way street.

NOTES

1. Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; C.-S. Han, 2008b; Munoz, 1999; Poon & Ho, 2008.
2. Callander, Holt, et al., 2012, 2015; Gosine, 2007; Paul et al., 2010; Phua & Kaufman, 2003; Plummer, 2007; Poon et al., 2005.
3. Callander, Holt, et al., 2012; Callander, Newman, et al., 2015; Han, 2008b; Phua & Kaufman, 2003.
4. Callander, Holt, et al., 2012; Callander, Newman, et al., 2015; Gosine, 2007; Paul et al., 2010; Poon et al., 2005; Suler, 2004.
5. Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Essed, 1991; Fleras, 2014; Harro, 2000; Henry & Tator, 2010; Rollock & Gillborn, 2011; Wise, 2010.
6. Brennan et al., 2013; Callander, Newman, et al., 2015; Crichlow, 2004; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han et al., 2015; Husbands et al., 2013; Poon & Ho, 2008; Roy, 2012; van der Meide, 2001.
7. *Black Fam* was a term used by one participant to refer to the Black racial composition of the social support group he was part of.

Conclusion

Addressing Racism in Gay Men's Communities: A Call to Action

Despite the presenting challenges of racial discrimination, participants held hope for change. In keeping with critical race theory and queer crit's broad action-oriented goal, they identified progressive steps that could be taken by White gay men to address racism in the GLBT community. In order to deal with racism most effectively, it is first necessary to identify that a problem exists (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; South Asian Network & Satrang, 2006). This means explicitly naming racism for what it is, not as a race-based descriptor or a point of reference for racial/ethnic preferences in sex and relationship partner selection, but as a material underlying structure that has created differences among groups of people based on the social construct of race. The practice of naming is critical to problem resolution; it can help to frame an issue and structure thinking about what needs to be done (see also Yee & Dumbrill, 2016). In addition, naming can facilitate dialogue and the movement of a problem from obscurity into light, thereby ensuring greater accountability. However, while the data indicate that White gay men may be cognizant of racism in the GLBT community, the social advantages and benefits of Whiteness result in their reluctance to solve it. This can have the consequence that racism remains hidden or ignored.

Along with naming is the importance of individual and collective responsibility to learn about racism (Kivel, 2011). Participants considered that White gay men could do more to educate themselves on how their actions supported the differential treatment of gay men of color. In this way, gay men of color would not be laden with the stress of having to always teach them about racism. That process can be taxing and onerous. Although learning about racism can entail formal sources of information, the learning process need not be so formal. Keeping an open mind and seeking opportunities for connection with people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds are ways that White gay

men could improve their self-knowledge and awareness about racism. These informal ways of learning can help to disrupt the privilege and entitlement of the dominant White group, which maintain and reproduce racial inequalities. This point also suggests that the concept of learning about racism may seem an arduous task for some White gay men. They might feel inundated by the amount of literature available on the topic. Although educational resources are appropriate references for some people to learn about racism, others may prefer a different way of connecting with the issue (i.e., learning about non-White cultures through their food), eschewing the "one size fits all" approach.

White gay men can also fight against racism and discrimination by ensuring diversity in race and other social identity matrices in media and cultural content consumed by members of the GLBT community.[1] The continued Whitewashing and erasure of gay men of color from these spaces normalize the image of the GLBT community as White. As the data show, this practice can have important implications for community functioning. For example, the perceived invisibility of South Asian men in gay porn may reinforce the group's marginalization (Fung, 1996), resulting in their characterization as undesirable. The logic is that if South Asian men are not visible as desirable in sexually explicit content like pornography, White and other gay men of color might not think to consider them as potential sexual partners. This perspective reflects the view that gay male pornography plays an important role in the construction of sexual desirability; it helps to define what is and is not socially desirable. Thus, if South Asian men are not represented in pornography, it must mean that they are not sexually desired.

Several participants discussed other concerns that can be substituted for the example of pornography, such as the lack of racial diversity in mainstream gay advertisements. Regardless, what the main idea seems to suggest is that increasing the representation of sexual minority men of color in gay media and other cultural productions might help to normalize their reality, and promote their inclusion and sense of place in the GLBT community. Diversification in cultural portrayal could help to correct the invisibility and silence that result from the substantial representation of Whiteness in the GLBT community, which limits the ability of gay men of color to define themselves.

White gay men can play a positive role in the fight against racism, and gay men of color also have a role to play, according to the findings from the study. As one way to resist racist power structures, they can take a more active role in denouncing racism and discrimination (Kivel, 2011). More broadly speaking, those with platforms to advocate change should exercise this privilege and draw attention to racism as a social reality. Remaining silent, as the data underscored, is counterproductive to the goal of ameliorating racism directed against non-White racial minorities in the GLBT community. The importance of this idea is that, while gay men of color might perceive that

speaking up about racism would lead to negative consequences, they fail to realize that their silence will not protect them (Lorde, 1980). In staying silent, they collude with the oppressor in their own oppression. This point echoes the conclusion reached by Callander, Holt et al. (2015), whose respondents tended to demand change from themselves rather than from those who had discriminated against them.

Further findings point to engagement in self- and group-affirmative practices as another action that could be taken by gay men of color to assert their humanity and dignity in the face of racism (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012). This effort might be particularly helpful in challenging White gay men's endorsement of racist attitudes about the group's desirability. As opposed to seeking or waiting for validation from White gay men (Han, 2008b), gay men of color could take a more proactive measure in validating their own beauty, lives, and existence. Indeed, it was posited that gay men of color might want to create their own cultural or affinity space, where the totality of their lives could be fully affirmed. These findings indicate the desire of gay men of color to gain control over their racist treatment by White gay men, in order to safeguard and nurture personal and group well-being. Also, they point to the extent that gay men of color might be willing to go to meet their own needs, perhaps because of the belief that White gay men would continue to discriminate against them. By not allowing White gay men's criticism or judgment to define their value and worth, they would retain the power and confidence to accept themselves and each other.

SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH STUDY AND RELEVANCE TO HUMAN SERVICES

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

This research has much relevance for the allied health and social care professions, such as social work, since it draws on those professions' social justice values. From its earliest beginnings, social work has strived to be a catalyst for social transformation. Social workers continue to work to unchain

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

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

Communities of color seek to offer protection for their members, in their resistance to White hegemony. However, GLBT people often find their marginalization is exacerbated within communities of color because of heterosexism or sexual stigma.[2] The result is that GLBT individuals are left with little, if any, professional help or social support systems to negotiate their identities within often hostile social environments (see Crichlow, 2004). As well, the almost nonexistent communal and professional support for GLBT people of color reinforces a negative conception of same-sex orientation and gender identity. These conditions intensify the need for mainstream social services to expand and develop culturally appropriate support services for GLBT people of color.

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

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

SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

When considering the implications of the findings for research, what emerges is the need for more empirical studies with and for gay men of color. The literature on the group leans heavily toward the deficit side. The current study was an attempt to intervene in the knowledge process and challenge this one-dimensional view of the complex lives of gay men of color. Despite the fact that gay men of color hold more than one minority identity and face adversity, they manage to survive and even flourish. Understanding the processes that make this possible is important to the goals of advancing knowledge about them. The present study is one small contribution to this larger goal. Other research informed by a strength perspective could contribute to thinking more complexly and richly about the lived experience of gay men of color, beyond the prevalent deficit discourse of HIV/AIDS. This focus is consistent with a social justice–oriented research, in which the goals are to expose systems of oppression and develop strategies for social change.

The aforementioned contributions notwithstanding, the findings also underscored potential areas for future research. First, the phenomenon of online racism appears to be an area for further exploration into the experience of racism among gay men of color. In the online environment, participants were more likely to encounter blatant forms of racism. It would be important to understand how the manifestation of racism in communication technology fits within the larger discourse of offline racism in GLBT communities. For example, is the movement to and expression of racism online the effect of White gay men feeling unable to talk openly about racism? How, if at all, does this shift of pattern shape social debates about and mass mobilization against racism both on- and offline?

Second, considering the low visibility of gay men color in Ottawa, investigation into retention factors is needed to increase an understanding of migration patterns. This research could help to identify systemic factors, beyond racism, that fuel the exodus of gay men of color to racially and ethnically diverse GLBT metropolitan areas.

Third, this study focused specifically on the coping strategies used by gay men of color in Ottawa to deal with racism in the GLBT community. It would be important to expand the scope of research to consider whether the same coping strategies are used to address systemic racism in the broader Canadian society, and heterosexism within communities of color. One study could explore, for example, whether exposure to racism in the larger society hardens gay men of color in dealing with racial discrimination in the GLBT community. Another study could ask whether earlier exposure to sexual prejudice in communities of color influences coping strategies used by gay men of color to cope with racism and discrimination in the GLBT community.

Fourth, given that gay men of color are impacted by the minority stress of racism, and may respond in a number of ways to manage the situation, it remains crucial to identify strategies that buffer the impact that racism has on them. The present study provides some preliminary insight, including contextual factors that lead to the utilization of one strategy over another; however, a large-scale study is needed to better understand the motivation that drives this decision. This investigation may also confirm the generalizability of current findings.

Lastly, on a methodological note, attention needs to be paid to strategies for increasing the quantity of research with gay men of color in Ottawa. The selection of Ottawa as the study site was a unique departure from other research exploring the experiences of gay men of color in Canada. In most cases, and not surprisingly, such studies have been conducted primarily in major cities, such as Toronto. The experiences of gay men of color in metropolises like Ottawa have, for the most part, been ignored. It is necessary for academic research to move beyond Toronto and similar leading cities in order to increase a national discussion of issues faced by this population, and for researchers and practitioners to have a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges encountered by racialized members of GLBT communities.

Despite the significant amount of time allotted in the current research to recruitment and the wide-ranging strategies and services engaged in the process, the recruitment of study participants proved challenging. As was pointed out by participants in the study, however, the opportunity to participate in the research could result in the creation of a living document that would both catalogue their voices and reflect their lived experiences of racism. In this way, the study will help to advance research collaboration with

gay men of color, and create opportunity for other researchers to strengthen a research capacity to broaden our knowledge base.

The challenge encountered in recruiting participants for this study speaks to the consequence of being overlooked and reflects a broader discourse of erasure. Complexification of research methodologies in which researchers look to outside experiences, in addition to those of participants in their regional settings, may help to address the lack of research and knowledge infrastructure about gay men of color in Ottawa. The results of a comparison group study could strengthen research evaluation and improve service outcomes. Helping gay men of color in Ottawa to build trust and confidence in the research enterprise is one way to improve their participation in empirical studies. This could be accomplished through their continued engagement and sustained involvement in research that matters to them. Researchers play a critical role in making this happen and must be willing to make adjustments to their research design to accommodate the interest and needs of this population.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

As an exploratory investigation into how gay men of color coped with racism, this study adds another dimension to an understanding of their marginalization in the GLBT community. It reveals the various coping strategies gay men of color used to mitigate the impact of racial discrimination. By looking at individual and group assets and strengths, it pushes past the deficit focus of other research. This approach is critical for identifying unique capabilities and interventions for vulnerable individuals, who may require support in dealing with their experience of racism.

Health Outcomes

In this study, the operations of minority stressors enabled an understanding of the negative effects of racism-related stress on socially disadvantaged groups, including the link between stress and health outcomes (Alessi, 2014; Meyer, 1995, 2003a). My investigation of the minority stress of racism on gay men of color facilitated an assessment of their coping strategies and provided an insight into the impact that such stress may have had on their health. The negative consequences that can result from discriminatory experiences were borne out in the findings. These findings contribute to the growing empirical literature on the potential physical and mental health consequences of racism on gay men of color and add to the stress-coping literature in Canada.

Linking racial discrimination and health is vital for service delivery to this vulnerable population. Without an awareness of the challenges faced by this group, it is difficult to formulate a model for a conceptual pathway that shows the health effects of racism-related stress. In Canada, data addressing the coping strategies used by gay men of color to manage the stress of racism are nonexistent. The lack of such information limits what can be known about the interlocking pathways by which racism impacts mental and physical health outcomes.

A major finding from the study is the lack of formal systems of support aimed at helping gay men of color to cope with racism. The perceived lack of support can compound their experience of stigma and discrimination. At the same time, the absence of professional resources can leave them feeling unsupported and alone in dealing with their difficult situation (Crichlow, 2004). This finding presents challenges with three options for resolution. First, community health and social services can improve the competence of their practitioners through acquisition of skill sets to meet the needs of gay men of color. Second, mainstream community health and social services can expand the scope of their practice to include the development of infrastructure services that address the stressful impact that racism in the GLBT community has on gay men of color. Third, as some participants noted, it might be worth the effort to institute a GLBT-people-of-color organization.

Improve the Competence of Health Care Professionals

The study's practice implications for allied health and social care professionals may help to inform their work with gay men of color. Among them is the need to recognize "the danger of a single story" (Adichie, 2009). Working with gay men of color, health professionals might incorrectly focus attention on sex education, concentrating on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. In doing so, salient issues of concern to the group, such as the need for positive role models and mentors, might be overlooked. The life aspirations of gay men of color might be ignored and not taken into account. This oversight is understandable and, perhaps, inevitable. Practitioners are influenced by scholarship relevant to their field of practice. When such scholarship is heavily skewed in the direction of a deficit perspective, which emphasizes disease prevention, they may orient their practice toward this aim, in belief that they are meeting the needs of their service users. However, as the findings from this study demonstrated, such professionals may be helping to perpetuate negative outcomes for gay men of color. Thus, when working with gay men of color, allied health and social care professionals should think critically about the sources relied upon to inform their practice.

It may also be helpful to draw on research from non-White scholars, for the purposes of achieving a balanced perspective. Ultimately, however, there are no prescriptive guidelines for practice. Although gay men of color have shared histories of racial oppression, their needs are not all the same. Like gay men in general, they may encounter sexual prejudice in society, but their experience of life bends in different directions. Being sensitive to the different experiences of gay men within the GLBT community is essential to the delivery of effective social services.

Similarly, there is a need for service providers to understand the realities of gay men of color. Lack of knowledge about their experience of racism in the GLBT community can impact direct professional work.[3] Service providers may disbelieve the validity of racism there, out of a lack of exposure to racial discrimination. Thus, they may act in dismissive ways, disregarding the accounts of gay men of color about racism. They may overlook the need to suspend judgments about service users, seeing them as either "too angry" or "too focused" on the issues of race and racism. More importantly, to better serve them, they should create space for the men to speak about their experience. With increased knowledge, they could support gay men of color in having access to resources needed to support themselves and each other.

This option has the least, if any, fiscal strain on an organization's bottom line. The main effect is that practitioners who work with GLBT people will be required to take a more holistic approach to their work with gay men of color, in which issues of race and racism are not obscured. Personnel training to help practitioners develop awareness of race and racism and its possible central role in their service users' lives can be helpful in this regard. Although treating gay men as if they are all the same streamlines service delivery, the practice overlooks their unique differences and experiences. In the case of gay men of color, it could mean denying them access to much needed supportive services. Continued professional development in this area will ensure that gay men of color receive the support they need and contribute to a good standard of practice and care.

Expand Social Services' Scope of Practice

Mainstream community health and social services could expand the scope of their practice to include the development of infrastructure services that would address the stressful impact racism in the GLBT community has on gay men of color. Financial resources could be diverted to creating a targeted health and care service section that would be responsible for meeting the needs of GLBT people of color. Here, as aforementioned, it would be important to recruit and retain practitioners of color who identify as GLBT. Previous research has shown that non-White racial minority service users are

more likely to express preference for a same-race practitioner (Lum, 1986), with underutilization of services related to the perceived lack of culturally competent providers (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1998). Thus, the matching of service providers to service users could facilitate the uptake and delivery of appropriate services that can lessen the negative impact of racism.

Institute an Organization Devoted to GLBT People of Color

An organization for GLBT people of color would run independently, as opposed to being institutionally embedded within a mainstream organization. This configuration would allow more creativity in the service-delivery process and more flexibility in operational decision making than would be possible in a mainstream organization. Reflecting the epistemological and ontological beliefs of queer crit, for example, the proposed organization could adopt a race-and-racism lens in its operations and services. Rather than focus solely on issues of racism, insight from these perspectives would inform the delivery of a comprehensive service, such that other aspects of an individual's identity will be considered. The centrality of race and racism as core operating principles of this organization would thus contrast with the additive model typical of most mainstream organizations, where issues of race and racism tend to be an afterthought.

The common thread in all three considerations, particularly the first two, is the need to diversify service providers. It is likely that the racial makeup of mainstream social services and GLBT organizations is predominantly White. The case for diversification is about ensuring effective delivery of services, best offered by service providers with similar backgrounds to service users. GLBT people of color may be suspicious of White service providers because of perceived bias or direct experience of racial discrimination. The important currency of race leads to different life outcomes. White service providers may be less knowledgeable about the impact of racism on the lives of gay men of color, since they have not had to endure such discrimination. Moreover, they may not understand how their membership in the dominant racial group shapes their worldview or informs their conceptualization of the struggles of gay men of color. Direct services and important factors that should be assessed for during intake could get ignored; gay men of color might not receive adequate support for dealing with oppression and discrimination. White service providers might not understand the unique needs of gay men of color that arise from their membership in multiple marginalized groups. They might not recognize the need to tailor services to gay men of color and White gay men differently. Hiring service providers who are gay and who identify with a non-White racial/ethnic identity could address most, if not all, of these concerns.

Apart from formal support services, gay men of color in the study also alluded to the importance of informal support systems for coping with racism. Here, allied health and social care professionals could advocate on behalf of the group for resources to help make this a reality. They could help find physical space for the group to meet on a regular basis or provide assistance with grant writing for funding to be put toward the group's operation, in whatever way they see fit. This kind of support would contribute to the group's autonomy and control over its affairs. In their capacity as ally, they could promote and refer to the group other gay men of color struggling with racism or looking for a place to belong. In addition, they could work with the group to denounce racism in the GLBT community. Such engagement and support would help gay men of color to feel validated and understood. Finally, practitioners could leverage the group's insight and knowledge about everyday operation of racism in the GLBT community to inform professional development and practice competency.

NOTES

1. Brennan et al., 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Han, 2008b; Roy, 2012.
2. Brennan et al., 2013; Crichlow, 2004; George et al., 2012; Husbands et al., 2013; Nakamura et al., 2013.
3. Lundy, 2011; O'Neill, 1999; Poon, 2011; Ryan et al., 2008.

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About the Author

Sulaimon Giwa is assistant professor and associate dean of undergraduate programs in social work with a cross-appointment to the Department of Sociology (Police Studies) at Memorial University. Dr. Giwa is also endowed chair in criminology and criminal justice at St. Thomas University, and is antiracism, equity, diversity, and inclusion trainer and consultant. Dr. Giwa's applied research program and professional activities centralize critical race transformative pedagogies and human rights theories as frameworks and analytic tools for social justice and equity. Dr. Giwa's interdisciplinary focus includes LGBTQ+ experiences, anti-Black and antiracist community and organizational change, and direct practice in diverse contexts, including policing and corrections. Dr. Giwa's coedited books include *Acceptance: Stories at the Centre of Us* and *Africentric Social Work* (2021).